

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 16 NOVEMBER 2016

**LEAD OFFICER: STEVE MITCHELL – COUNTYSIDE ACCESS TEAM
MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE: GREEN LANE – PEDESTRIAN RAIL
CROSSING**

DIVISION: ASHTEAD



A petition with 609 signatories has been received by Surrey County Council requesting to support the retention and improvement of the railway line crossing between Green Lane and Links Road, Ashtead.

The petition received reads as follows:

1. The Green Lane footpath crossing over the railway line has been in use consistently and openly as a public path since the advent of the railway in 1856 and Network Rail's own website describes this crossing as a 'Public Footpath Crossing'. Surrey County Council's own Definitive Map shows this crossing as a Public Footpath. This crossing is used by an average of over 230 people a day, in excess of 1600 per week, amounting to over 80,000 crossings every year, figures which indicate the importance of this crossing to local residents. There has not been a serious accident here since 1967, a remarkable fact given the frequency of trains and that in the intervening 50 years, millions of pedestrians have responsibly and safely traversed the track. Given the extraordinarily high level of pedestrian usage and the unusual geographical predicament of the 'landlocked' residents to the north of the crossing who are isolated by the railway tracks, this public footpath crossing is a vital link for cyclists and pedestrians to local shops, schools, and bus routes, while many residents south of the crossing use it to access the common for recreation.

Response:

2.1 Public Footpath 24 Leatherhead crosses the Epsom railway line approximately 750m south west of Ashtead Station. It is recorded on the County Council's Definitive Map and Statement (DMS) of Public Rights of Way. It provides a pedestrian link between the residential areas on both sides of the railway with local services and access to and from Ashtead Common.

2.2 Network Rail has recently undertaken consultation with local residents and the County Council concerning the crossing as part of a national policy to review the safety of all uncontrolled, at grade, rail crossings. They have

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assessed it as the highest risk footpath crossing on the Wessex Route and the 11th highest nationally.

2.3 Network Rail has stated that they do not believe the crossing to be a public right of way and have discussed the matter with the County Council and also alternative options for the crossing. The County Council has explained that Network Rail are free to submit a formal application for the DMS to be modified. If an application is submitted and following detailed investigation, evidence establishes that public rights do not exist over the railway line, the County Council would be required to modify the DMS. The County Council has a legal duty to investigate such applications and must take into account relevant historic evidence. For the purposes of a Definitive Map Modification Order, the evidence the Council is required to consider does not include public need or safety considerations.

2.4 Network Rail has considered options including a stepped footbridge and miniature stop lights to improve safety at the crossing.

2.5 County council officers support the principle of making the crossing safer and have emphasised to Network Rail the value of the crossing to local residents.