

Public invited to comment on signalling renewal proposals for Cambridge area

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Network Rail to launch public consultation on proposals to renew the railway's signalling system and upgrade of seven level crossings across the Cambridge area.

Network Rail is proposing to replace hundreds of signalling assets across an area of 125 miles of track, stretching from Meldreth and Elsenham to the south, through Cambridge, up to Ely to the north and Thurston to the east, as well as Croxton level crossing (in Norfolk) on the cross-country line to Norwich.

The public are being invited to comment on the proposals that will be presented as part of a virtual consultation that will run for six weeks from 1 March.

The signalling systems around Cambridge were installed in the 1980s and are reaching the end of their expected operational life. We need to modernise these signalling systems to:

- Improve reliability, performance, and efficiency of the railway
- Improve safety for all rail users in the Cambridge area
- Improve safety at seven level crossings

Updating the existing signalling systems in the Cambridge area will also help to support the national strategy to create a Digital Railway.

The public will be able to view the proposals and speak with Network Rail representatives over the phone before submitting comments which will be considered as part of the design process. The proposals include:

- Upgrade of signalling control equipment at Cambridge power signal box (PSB)
- Upgrade of signalling systems with a modern, computer-based digital system
- Upgrade of seven level crossings to full barrier with obstacle detection or CCTV technology
- Relocation of signalling control from the Bury St Edmunds, Dullingham and Chippenham signal boxes to the Cambridge PSB
- Upgrade of telecommunications and power supplies to support the new systems

The consultation will focus on changes to the seven level crossings at Meldreth Road, Milton Fen, Waterbeach, Dimmocks Cote, Six Mile Bottom, and Dullingham in Cambridgeshire and Croxton level crossing in Norfolk. Comments received will help to continue the development of the project ahead of preparing a Transport and Works Act order expected to be submitted later in 2021. Other comments on the wider proposals will also be welcome.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia said: "This is an exciting time for the Cambridge area as we embark on a huge project to renew the signalling systems across a large area of the railway. We've been working on the early stages but now would like to ask the public for their views.

"We're really keen to hear from those who live next to the railway, specifically around the level crossings which we are looking to upgrade. These views will help us to make the best possible decisions and I would encourage everyone in those communities to have your say."

The work is expected to begin by the early part of 2022 and is currently planned to be complete by 2025. Upon completion the project is expected to have replaced almost 700 signalling assets.

For more information about the proposals and details on how to contact us during the consultation, please view our project webpage: www.networkrail.co.uk/cambridge-resignalling

Photo credit: Network Rail