

EXAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL

To Whom it may concern

I am (example) Fred Bloggs, of 12 Acacia Avenue, Shepreth.

"I am writing to make sure my own and my community's opposition is known to the planned 'upgrade' of the Meldreth Road level crossing

When a change from current to double barriers similar to those at Shepreth Station was considered at the April 2023 Planning Inquiry the change was rejected.

The rationale for that was that while there would be a potential reduction in rail/road risk there would be a much larger increase in risks elsewhere to other road users and which were not being considered by Network Rail- mainly to pedestrians (from motorists speeding to beat the barrier's new much longer downtime) and from the 5-10 minute increase in emergency service access time for residents of northern Meldreth. In addition there were issues with the traffic and downtime modelling which understated the impact in terms of new downtimes, and incidents unrelated to the crossing cited as examples of risk - as was admitted at the Inquiry. The directly comparable change at Shepreth Station in 2018 caused mayhem, but had not been considered at all!

I have seen ORRs initial response which cites among other things:

- Network Rail's obligation to minimize barrier downtimes. At a recent meeting between the local parishes and Network Rail they baldly stated that this was 'not their job', amply evidenced by the long downtimes at Shepreth Station. We understand a new Meldreth Road Level Crossing will be visually checked before opening. Just as Shepreth Station is down longer than Foxton (where the controller is located), so Meldreth Road will inevitably be down even longer than Shepreth Station, as 3rd priority for the controller.
- Network Rail's own data on the 'danger' at the crossing was admitted to be wrong. A 2025 Freedom of Information request saw many of the previous 'incidents' at Meldreth Road removed/redacted, as they were attributed to Meldreth Road in error. In addition it showed that in the years since Shepreth Station's new barrier has been installed there have been 4 incidents, comparing to 1 over the same period at the 'less safe' Meldreth Road.

How can Network Rail can be allowed to proceed, despite the clear decision of the lengthy and expensive Inquiry?

To add insult to injury the change was found to be very poor value for money, even by Network Rail's own flawed model and without any of the other knock on costs of delays from additional downtimes having been costed, as the Inspector concluded.

We hear constantly about the lack of funding available to government and public institutions. What a shame the £2 million + this will cost cannot be spent on something our community WANTS - like for example fixing our very poor roads, or creating a bridge at Shepreth Station!

This 'upgrade' would be no such thing. Network Rail will be creating a new problem when none currently exists, at great cost and against our communities wishes. They would be doing so solely in order to satisfy their internal measurements, having had this change rejected in the only forum where its pros and cons were judged in the round alongside the other challenges it will cause.

This change would have immediate and significant negative impacts for our community, and I ask for your help in ensuring this project is halted immediately,

Yours sincerely

Fred Bloggs"