

Tom Silsbury
Driver Standards Manager
CrossCountry
5th Floor Cannon House
18 The Priory Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6BS

31st August 2024

Reference: **Planning Ref: 23/02098/OUT** Begbroke Science Park

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to submit the following objection to the proposed planning application as referenced above on behalf of CrossCountry.

CrossCountry are a train operating company that operates InterCity train services across the United Kingdom.

The above planning application affects CrossCountry due to the level crossings at Sandy Lane and Yarnton. Our trains approach these crossings at a maximum speed of 100mph in the Up direction – Banbury to Oxford, and 95mph in the Down direction – Oxford to Banbury.

Both road crossings are automatic half barrier crossings with treadles activated by the passage of trains that operate the barriers as the train approaches.

Due to the nature of the automatic half barrier crossings and the approach speed of the trains, the barriers can remain in the lowered position for considerable periods of time.

Automatic half barrier crossings only lower a barrier to stop road traffic in the direction of travel, which promotes a high level of risk due to pedestrians and vehicles being able to openly maneuver around the half barrier and cross the railway lines when the barriers are lowered and the lights flashing.

We have had two instances in recent years of cars being struck by trains travelling at high speeds whilst motorists have chosen to ignore the warnings and barriers and navigated around them. Pedestrians have also chosen to ignore the warnings, with several 'near misses' reported by CrossCountry train drivers at both crossing locations.

The proposed planning application concerns CrossCountry greatly due to the inevitable increase in road traffic it will generate over level crossings that already see misuse.

CrossCountry have been working closely with Network Rail and other passenger and freight operating companies on schemes to close both Sandy Lane and Yarnton crossings, but a lack of funding has so far resulted in both crossings remaining open for use.

Given the scale of the planning application, we would urge the developers to work with Network Rail to find an alternative solution to the crossings, be it road bridge or underpass in order that the level crossings can be closed and a safer method of crossing the railway lines at these locations implemented.

Yours Sincerely



Tom Silsbury