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To: Planning <Planning@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>; Somerton Parish Council
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Subject: ref Master Plan 18/00825/HYBRID SPC attn Andrew Lewis

I am concerned about the proposal to close Somerton (Railway) Crossing for pedestrian access.

The Network Rail submission argues that the increase in the local population from the development at Heyford Park could significantly increase the number of people using the crossing and increase the risk of injuries or death on the crossing. The submission states that 12 people per day currently use the crossing and then forecasts that the Heyford Park development could increase that figure either to 37 per day or 100 per day. I think those increases are exceedingly unlikely and as Network Rail argues for two entirely different likely increases I don't think they have a good basis for making an estimate.

The problem with Network Rail's approach is that it ignores any benefit to the incoming population at Heyford Park. If access to footpaths in the Cherwell is a public good then it is presumably better if the new population shares that benefit.

It is difficult to be certain how the FWI index figures translate into injuries and fatalities per year but I suspect that the figure for Somerton Crossing is very low. If so, the extra risk is probably still very low after the increased population is allowed for.

I can see that from Network Rail's perspective an increase in risk is undesirable. However, the risk per head of population is not increased at all and I would have thought that was what the District Council and Parish Council should be looking at.

I hope the planning authority will ensure that pedestrian access is maintained.

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