

Zac Goldsmith MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Our Ref:** ATZGRPC005

26 October 2017

Dear Mr Goldsmith,

I am writing to you regarding Mortlake level crossing following our meeting on the proposed Stag Brewery development.

Mortlake level crossing offers the highest level of protection for users. Further detail is in the attached risk assessment. Risk at the site is from deliberate misuse and vehicular and pedestrian interaction, which is increased by congestion at the site when the barriers are lowered. However, the crossing is safe when used correctly.

We are concerned the significant increase in residential units and new school from the proposed development would increase usage of the crossing, especially by unaccompanied young people and other vulnerable users. Pedestrian usage is already near maximum capacity and any further increase would compromise safety in relation to user interaction.

To manage this risk, we believe the developer should fund the cost of integrating the development with railway infrastructure, and in particular the crossing. Richmond Borough Council would need to coordinate this. We are requesting a meeting with the developer to discuss our concerns and measures it could fund, such as a ramped footbridge. However, if our concerns are not addressed we would strongly consider objecting to the development through the planning process.

It is highly unlikely we would have a business case to fund a ramped footbridge, given the existing protections. Widening the footways would mean moving essential crossing equipment, costing millions of pounds, which we are not funded to deliver. Closing the crossing and installing an underpass or overbridge would cost tens of millions and be severely disruptive. This is not feasible.

We met the Mortlake Brewery Community Group, copied to this letter, recently to discuss the development and the implications of increased usage of the crossing. We will reference its independent research on the crossing, showing heavy usage and deliberate misuse, with the developer.

In the meantime, we will look into improving road and footway markings at the crossing and work with Richmond Borough Council. We are also looking into signage at the footbridge to encourage usage with the station operator. However, these upgrades are behavioural nudges and will not alone manage risk from increased usage.

We have investigated using countdown timers at full barrier crossings, such as Mortlake crossing, but have discounted this. Barrier down time is determined by a number of factors, including station dwell time and varying speeds of oncoming trains. It would be very difficult to predict accurately how long each wait time could be. We will be looking into signage to show the average or worse case wait time, to encourage drivers to switch off their engines.

It is vital the strategic plan for Mortlake and the surrounding area is integrated with railway infrastructure. There are a number of level crossings in the authority area and these must be considered as a whole in planning, rather than in piecemeal. We will be writing to the Chief Executive and Leader of Richmond Borough Council to request a meeting to discuss the development and the authority's wider strategic transport plan.

It is worth noting, we cannot support increased frequency of trains on the line via Richmond unless barrier down time at level crossings in south west London is addressed. If a scheme allowed trains to run between London Waterloo and Heathrow Airport, services would need to take existing train paths, run via Hounslow or services via Richmond would need to run as non-stopping services to reduce barrier down time (which we anticipate would be unacceptable to passengers). Any other future increases in services will need to run via Hounslow.

I hope this information is helpful. We will contact you again to update following further meetings. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me through our route public affairs manager, Aeneas Tole, on [aeneas.tole@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:aeneas.tole@networkrail.co.uk) or 07734 650 550. I would be grateful if you could share this letter with those who attended the recent meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart Firth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

**Stewart Firth**  
**Director of Route Sponsorship, Wessex**

cc Robert Orr Ewing, Chair, Mortlake Brewery Community Group