

From: [REDACTED]
To: [TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE](#)
Subject: Network Rail Stalybridge to Diggle TWA Order
Date: 03 December 2025 16:18:02

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FAO The Secretary of State for Transport

Regarding the order, I strenuously object to the proposal by Network Rail to close footpath 209 in Uppermill and also not to provide a safe footbridge in lieu of the current crossing over the railway tracks.

My comments in support of my objection are as follows:

- This footpath connects some locally important sites for walkers and has done so for way over 100 years.

The destination sites within only 100 yds of the path include Moorgate - a designated Local Nature Reserve (a regionally important home to 16 recorded species of Dragonfly), Saddleworth Golf Club and a number of well used Saddleworth walking routes around Wharmton Hill, Greenfield, Uppermill and Dobcross.

These are used regularly by folk coming to visit Uppermill and go for such walks.

Similarly this applies to locals - I am one of those and have used this path frequently for over 50 years without issue.

I feel this attempt to subvert my continued use of the path is unacceptable and smacks of big brother.

The premise this is built on by Network Rail, besides cost, is that trains will be faster and more frequent and thus more hazardous for a crossing. This may be so, but not unduly so - this aspect has been over-emphasised - trains cannot be anywhere near 100 mph here, the track has too many bends, a bridge and a curved viaduct at either end of the site - and doesn't seem to take into account that visibility from the crossing is very good - there are clear and straight stretches of line either side for about 1/4 of a mile.

Not a great deal different from now.

Nevertheless, in the interests of safety, a footbridge is a simple solution. It just needs some money from the budget.

- The alternative path mentioned by Network Rail (the operator), number 244 SADD, is dangerous, difficult and virtually unwalkable and has steep damp mossy steps, which will not change as it runs through woodland and very steep slippery banks. Planning to put in 63 steep steps here will add to the hazard - they cannot be used or maintained in a safe way.

This path runs under the railway through a tunnel, so is naturally much lower in its first section, meaning the upper section then has to be steep to reach the public road

above, requiring all those steps. So steep, dark, damp, narrow and stepped is a recipe for disaster.

It is also extremely narrow, being single track for much of its length, which will again cause issues both to walkers and to maintaining it with tools and machinery.

The land is not owned by Network Rail to my knowledge, so they would have costs to buy that and ongoing costs to maintain it.

This alternative has not been considered adequately because if so it would be recognised as unviable.

Another example of trying to pull a fast one over users with a simplified approach.

- The most effective way of safely maintaining a route is to build a footbridge at the existing crossing place. Network Rail knows this.

Network Rail proposed this in 2022. It submitted a planning application for a footbridge, and this was approved by Oldham Council.

Now Network Rail is not prepared to meet the cost. Instead, it suggests that walkers should use a different path, as above, one which is dangerous and inconvenient.

- It appears to me that this has been ill thought through and has been subject to budgetary constraints which should have been properly worked out and included in the first place by central government and the Railway planners.

Apparently this was not the case, so we are meant to suffer for this apparent incompetence.

- Please note, I also fully support the objections and solutions being put forward by the Moorgate Footbridge Campaign Group to persuade the operator to revisit planning and create a bridge at Moorgate.

I hope you can attach appropriate significance of the above points to your considerations and support this objection and footbridge solution.

Please let me know if you need anything further.

Yours sincerely
Ken Gartside

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