

Future Planning

From: Grace Lewis [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 February 2026 16:28
To: Future Planning
Subject: Network Rail comments - Torbay Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation

OFFICIAL



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Date: 2 February 2026

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)
PROPOSAL: Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. This email forms for the basis of our response.

Network Rail is a statutory undertaker responsible for maintaining and operating the country's railway infrastructure and associated estate. Network Rail owns, operates, maintains and develops the main rail network. This includes the railway tracks, stations, signalling systems, bridges, tunnels, level crossings and viaducts. The preparation of development plan policy is important in relation to the protection and enhancement of Network Rail's infrastructure.

Chapter 2: Strategic Policy SDT3: Newton Road to Torre Gateway – A regeneration corridor for homes, jobs, health and connectivity:

Torre Station

There is an opportunity for the Plan to explain more clearly what "*improved integration of sustainable transport at Torre Station*" could look like in practice. The station forecourt, for example, appears capable of accommodating upgraded facilities such as a bus stop, enhanced waiting areas and secure cycle parking. Clarifying the intended nature and scale of the improvements would help set expectations for future development in the corridor.

It would be helpful for the Plan to acknowledge whether sustainable transport improvements along the corridor could be coordinated with enhancements to rail facilities, including opportunities for joint funding.

Closer alignment between corridor works and improvements to station access, facilities or accessibility would strengthen the role of rail in achieving the sustainable mobility objectives of SDT3.

Urban Development Around Torre Station

Increased development around Torre Station, along with intensification elsewhere in the corridor, could help support the Plan's wider aims of improving local employment opportunities. If delivered effectively, regeneration in this location may reduce pressure on commuting flows and congestion on the Exeter-bound corridor by enabling more residents to work locally.

Clarity on Terminology for the Proposed New Station

Point 5 of the policy chapter references "*delivery of a new railway station at Newton Road.*" For consistency with both strategic transport planning and wider public documentation, it may be clearer to refer to this explicitly as "**Edginswell Station**," reflecting the scheme's established name.

Chapter 4: Building a Prosperous and Inclusive Torbay

Strengthening the Link Between Sustainable Tourism and Rail

Strategic Policy TOS could more explicitly acknowledge the important role of rail in supporting sustainable tourism. Longer-distance GWR and CrossCountry services form a key part of Torbay's visitor economy by providing car-free access from London, the Midlands and the North. Highlighting these connections would reinforce the Plan's commitment to sustainable, low-carbon travel.

The Plan might also note the potential for developing a national rail station at Goodrington as a means of supporting its status as a Core Tourism Investment Area. Improved rail connectivity could help underpin visitor access and reduce seasonal road congestion.

Chapter 6: Moving Torbay: Sustainable Travel and Inclusive Access

- We are supportive of the development of mobility hubs – out of the various options listed, we feel that a Paignton transport gateway should be prioritised for investment given its centrality, the number of modes involved and the wider need for improving pedestrian safety/traffic calming in the area surrounding the station.
- Alterations to operation of level crossings associated with future developments - would support this particularly if would mean closing/upgrading Paignton South LC, given co-benefit of potential to remove operational constraints which could become a limiting factor in any future frequency increases/extensions to Goodrington.

The Plan could further highlight the wider connectivity benefits of the proposed new Edginswell Station and planned enhancements to existing stations. These improvements would strengthen Torbay's integration with the regional and national rail network, supporting growth by improving access to Exeter, the wider South West Peninsula and destinations across the country.

It may also be beneficial to reference ongoing or potential "access for all" improvements at Torquay Station, which would complement the Plan's ambitions for inclusive, sustainable and accessible travel.

Chapter 12: Responsible resource use - Waste and Minerals

- We support in principle the suggestion that rail should be considered for transporting waste. We would encourage engagement with NR's freight team at the earliest possible stage if any active consideration

is being given to new waste management facilities so that they can advise on opportunities/points for consideration.

Level Crossings

Any development of land which would result in a material increase or significant change in the character of traffic using rail crossings should be refused unless, in consultation with Network Rail, it can either be demonstrated that the safety will not be compromised, or where safety is compromised serious mitigation measures would be incorporated to prevent any increased safety risk as a requirement of any permission.

Network Rail has a strong policy to guide and improve its management of level crossings, which aims to; reduce risk at level crossings, reduce the number and types of level crossings, ensure level crossings are fit for purpose, ensure Network Rail works with users / stakeholders and supports enforcement initiatives. Without significant consultation with Network Rail and if proved as required, approved mitigation measures, Network Rail would be extremely concerned if any future development impacts on the safety and operation of any of the level crossings listed above. The safety of the operational railway and of those crossing it is of the highest importance to Network Rail.

Level crossings can be impacted in a variety of ways by planning proposals:

- By a proposal being directly next to a level crossing
- By the cumulative effect of development added over time
- By the type of crossing involved
- By the construction of large developments (commercial and residential) where road access to and from site includes a level crossing
- By developments that might impede pedestrians ability to hear approaching trains
- By proposals that may interfere with pedestrian and vehicle users' ability to see level crossing warning signs
- By any developments for schools, colleges or nurseries where minors in numbers may be using a level crossing
- By any development or enhancement of the public rights of way

As Network Rail is a publicly funded organisation with a regulated remit it would not be reasonable to require Network Rail to fund rail improvements necessitated by commercial development. It is therefore appropriate to require developer contributions to fund such improvements.

We trust these comments will be useful in the preparation of the forthcoming plan documents.

Yours Sincerely,

Grace Lewis MRTPI

Town Planner

Network Rail

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