

Communication from Train Horns Steering Group

Issue 4

July 12 2006

The cross industry Train Horns Steering Group met on 5 July 2006 to review progress and agree further action.

1. Progress since third steering group in May

- Compiled an updated cross industry database of complaints (to 30.6.06)
- Published a project summary and plan – outlining logic, work under way and timescales
- Confirmed that the possible outcomes being evaluated are:
 - Broadband Horns
 - Reducing level of sound of train horns
 - Night time ‘ban’
 - Reducing the number of locations horns are sounded (Whistle Boards)

At this stage all four identified outcomes are still being seriously considered

- Met with the all party group of MPs (May)
- Developed first estimate of the impact of noise on neighbours (now being validated and developed alongside risk work)
- Commenced work in the following areas:
 - Developing specification for Broadband Horns (tenders received and under evaluation)
 - Detailed assessment of risks at footpath crossings being carried out by consultants – preliminary review delivered – review of 50 sites about to commence
 - Commissioned consultants to understand specific local impacts and to measure noise in three locations (to validate initial estimate mentioned above)
 - Commissioned work to define the old ‘de facto’ standard

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- Network Rail have continued with their programme to review particular problem areas and the following table summarises the progress, including that previously reported:

Constituency	Date of Meeting Where held	Result
Arundel and South Downs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistle boards removed at Warning Camp, Arun Valley. • Options at Peppering re: whistle boards are still being investigated and discussed locally, such as diversion of the footpath.
Rochford and Southend East		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistle boards removed at Woodgrange Close, Southend-on-Sea, Essex after extensive vegetation clearance.
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	3 March 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whistle-boards at Church Street (Newington) and Bobbing where visits were undertaken have been removed after vegetation removal. • Frognaal Farm (Tonge) boards also removed. • Teynham FP needs some minor vegetation or other work undertaken before it can go – is currently being scheduled. • Bax has been removed. • Goodhews, London side of the one at Bobbing, was also recently assessed and boards now removed.
Basildon	10 March 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed whistle boards at Stanford-Le-Hope on 21 May after sensitive discussions with local resident, vegetation removal and new risk assessment.
Wokingham	21 April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set of whistle boards removed between Sandhurst station and Crowthorne station.
Canterbury	5 May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited nine locations • Sturry FP, Milner Court, Park Alley and Deanery and Tonford B all removed. • Folly Farm to have foliage cleared before removal. • Kent CC is looking in to the closure of Sanpit footpath crossing.
Romsey		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crampmoor to be removed by the middle of June.
Guildford		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinks Hill will soon be removed, with an awareness campaign being planned before its removal.
Bexhill and Battle		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge, Etchingam - Removed
North East Hampshire		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistle boards removed at Rooksdown, Isington, Hants • Bentley, Hants. Removal of set of whistle boards and amendment to working practice with SWT so trains no longer whistling when leaving the station.
Surrey South West		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shutters, Haslemere. Whistle boards removed after consultation with neighbours and removal of foliage from their property.
Hampshire East		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liss Forest, Hants. Whistle boards removed after sighting improved by removal of vegetation and old TP hut.
Thanet North		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookend, Birchington – Removed
Westmoreland and Lonsdale		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train horns between Oxenholme and Windermere. Two of six whistle boards to be removed in July 06, following work by Network Rail to achieve safe sight lines. A third whistle board is

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		the subject of an on-going survey.
Aylesbury		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saunderton. One whistle board relocated closest to the complaint. Great Kimble. The curve and vegetation on land make it not possible to remove whistle boards at present.
Warwickshire North		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitacre Junction at Nether Whitacre. Seeking to divert two of three footpaths over an accommodation bridge in order to take away four whistle boards. Business case in development.
Loughborough		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountsorrel, Kirby Muxloe. Mountsorrel crossing goes over six tracks and freight loop on a high speed line which has made finding a solution difficult. Kirby Muxloe crossing is to a golf club and a few houses. Resident's failure to use crossing safely means freight drivers sound additionally. Council speaking with EWS but the curve is too tight to relocate or remove.
Vale of Glamorgan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llantwit. Whistle boards re-sited after local consultation
Oxford East		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake St. Newly reported by Member of Parliament and will be investigated.

2 Commentary on progress

- Some new locations have raised complaints – such as Windermere. This has already led to a risk review of the crossings at Windermere which took place on 5th June, and following this review Network Rail is shortly to remove three whistle Boards from this location.
- A significant number of complaints have been received personally addressed to the director standards at RSSB, arising from publicity from the Noise Abatement Society. However, the preliminary review of the complaints received by all parts of the industry in the six months to the end of June 2006 shows an overall reduction compared to the previous six months.
- Most work to explore possible national solutions continues and is on target for completion during 2006. The only work that is expected to go into 2007 is the actual implementation of any agreed changes and the development of the Broadband horn for railway application. If the national rules from noise levels are changed, it is likely to take Train Operators some time to change their horns to adjust to new levels
- Some of the recent complaints relate to locations where 'whistle boards' have been removed but horns continue to be sounded. These complaints are followed up by the relevant train operators to ensure that horns are used in appropriate circumstances. Train Drivers always sound their horns when they see people on or near to the track.

3. What we are now going to do

- Meet with All party group of MPs on 12th July
- Meeting with ORR and the Noise Abatement Society (provisional date in early August)
- Pressing on with the work identified and commissioned
- Consider whether the industry can provide better guidance to train drivers where whistle boards have been removed
- Meetings of the Steering Group have been arranged for September, October, November and December to enable the early review and assimilation of the work being undertaken
- Timescales; Project plan was published at end of June and is reviewed by the steering group at each of its meetings

The cross industry Steering Group consists of representatives from: Rail Safety and Standards Board, Network Rail, Passenger Train Operators, ATOC, Freight Train operators, ORR, and is supported by RSSB's technical and risk expertise. If you want to communicate directly with the steering group you can do so through the Chairman, Anson Jack, who is director, standards at the Rail Safety and Standards Board at anson.jack@rssb.co.uk