

Network Rail and GWR warned over depot noise and air pollution

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Trains wait in sidings alongside housing before entering the GWR depot

Noise and air pollution from a new rail depot in Reading could prompt legal action, it has been warned.

Reading Borough Council said it had written to Network Rail and Great Western Railway (GWR) demanding action following complaints from residents.

People in Cardiff Road had complained of trains parked in sidings with engines idling.

GWR has previously said the introduction of electric trains in 2019 will reduce the problem.

An online petition set up by residents living close to the GWR depot complained about "low-frequency noise" from trains idling in the early hours of the morning.

The council said it has warned GWR and Network Rail it could face an abatement notice.



Deputy council leader Tony Page said the responses from the companies had so far been "inadequate".

"The council is fully supportive of the huge benefits the realignment of rail lines in and around Reading has brought.

"By the same token, the concerns local residents have [about] noise and air pollution are very real and the council is lobbied on these issues regularly.

"We hope that escalating local concerns to senior management will prove more effective."

Earlier this year, GWR said the noise was within safe levels and it had changed the way it operated trains on the sidings.

Jonathan Dart, chairman of the Bell Tower Community Association, said he warmly welcomed the council's announcement to "put an end to the nuisance being caused to the residents of Cardiff Road".

However, he criticised the time it took the authority to investigate the issue.

"It took nine months and a press campaign for the council to release an officer's report stating that being in part of Cardiff Road at 03:29 was akin to being backstage at the Reading Festival," he said.

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