

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Draft Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 30 September 2020, commencing at 10 am

Present: Paul Sherwood (Chair), Doug Cartwright, Roma Haigh, County Councillor David Jeffels, Barrie Mouny, Carol Murray, Janet Cochrane, Will Scarlett and Rachel Connolly.

Apologies: Helen Soutar, David Lepper and County Councillor Robert Heseltine

Also in Attendance: County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access) and Jon Hunter (North Yorkshire Police Representative)

NYCC Officers: Kerry Green (Interim Countryside Access Manager), Barrie Mason (Assistant Director) and Melanie Carr (Legal & Democratic Services - Local Access Forum Secretary)

295. Introductions & Apologies for Absence

Following members of the Local Access Forum introducing themselves, the Chair confirmed apologies had been received from Helen Soutar and County Councillor Robert Heseltine.

It was also noted that two Forum members (David Lepper and Rachel Connolly) were having technical issues and would join the meeting in due course.

296. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

297. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

298. Attendance of North Yorkshire Police Representative

The Chair welcomed Jon Hunter (NYP Traffic Management Officer) to the meeting.

Forum members raised a number of issues:

- The legalities around the appropriate use of motor cycles was raised. In particular the illegal use of areas not designed for motorcycles e.g. bridleways and footpaths and the difficulties with enforcement - Jon Hunter confirmed he had provided NYP with information on which routes were legal and which were not, and an understanding about what could be considered a road legal motorcycle. He also confirmed NYP shared a mapping system with NYCC showing maintained roads and their status and rights of way, but not temporary regulation orders. Doug Cartwright made Members aware that the Police could also access courses on technical issues and rights of way;

- NYP's response to obstructions to rights of way and threats by landowners to people on land that they perceived to be a right of way - Jon Hunter confirmed the Police had dealt with one or two of those types of incidents in the last year. However, the number of those incidents was generally low and therefore no specific policy was in place on how to deal with it;
- The role and purpose of the Rural Task Force;
- Use of the 'What Three Words' App;
- Problems arising from the increase in the number of walkers and cyclists during the Covid-19 pandemic period, and the possible need for a campaign to raising awareness on road safety – Jon Hunter confirmed there had been an increase in road accidents since the start of the lockdown period, the larger proportion involving cyclists only. He agreed all road users needed to be considerate of other road users, and recognised the conflict of space i.e. problems associated with narrow roads in rural areas etc. It was noted that NYCC were offering courses in some areas for born-again cyclists.
- Pegasus type crossings on 60mph roads – Jon Hunter confirmed that NYP would not be in favour of their use and noted they had been removed from the A66. He also noted many sets of traffic lights previously sited on other 60mph roads had also been removed, as they were considered unsafe;
- Public reporting of trail bikes on bridleways etc – It was confirmed that reporting the incident with a note of the registration plate was the best way;

The Chair thanked Jon Hunter for his attendance at the meeting.

299. Attendance of the Executive Member for Access

County Councillor Don Mackenzie provided a detailed update on all of the service areas within his Executive member portfolio of Access, (both physical and digital) and confirmed he was both the Road Safety Champion and the Cycling & Walking Champion for NYCC. He included in his update, an overview of work associated with sustainable transport. This highlighted the County Council's two successful bids to access Emergency Active Travel Funds. The first to pay for measures already introduced in various towns to create more footpaths to assist with social distancing, and the second to improve cycle lanes throughout the County. He noted the costs associated with the installation of segregated cycle lanes, but confirmed North Yorkshire still remained a very safe place to be on the roads, with the long-term trend for deaths and serious injuries on the road reducing year on year.

Paul Sherwood drew attention to the appalling state of the edges of some roads making it unsafe for cyclists, and County Councillor Don Mackenzie confirmed it was the Council's long-term aim to improve the condition of roads throughout North Yorkshire.

Doug Cartwright raised the issue of the danger from cattle to walkers and drew attention to a recent incident.

Roma Haigh questioned whether the County Council would consider trialling a policy on giving priority to pedestrian on rural roads thereby improving the connectivity of footpaths. County Councillor Don Mackenzie confirmed that it would require national legislation, but that he would consider championing any form of improvements to road safety.

Will Scarlett raised concern about the lack of consultation by NYCC with the Forum, noting that earlier in the year, a public consultation had taken place to gather views on

improvements to North Yorkshire's walking and cycling infrastructure (linked to NYCC's second funding bid), for which the Forum's views as a statutory body had not been sought. It was noted there was an ongoing issue with the lack of consultation with the Forum by NYCC e.g. a number of LCWIPs were in place but the Forum had only been invited to consult on one of those to date. Barrie Mason, Assistant Director for Highways confirmed NYLAF would be consulted on future LCWIPs going forward.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for his attendance.

300. Secretary's Update Report

Considered - The report of the Secretary, which updated on developments since the last meeting. Attention was drawn to the overview provided on the work of the Countryside Access Service throughout the pandemic period, and the update on the working relationship between the NYCC's Countryside Access Service (CAS) and the District Council's planning departments, both provided by Kerry Green, Acting CAS Manager.

Forum members noted the increase in customer reports received during the pandemic period.

Will Scarlett confirmed he welcomed the update on the work of CAS and suggested it should be a regular update. He went on to request an overview on the number of registered DMMOs across North Yorkshire and a the time it was taking to process them etc. Also the associated selection criteria and the process for scoring/prioritising DMMO applications.

In response, it was confirmed there were currently just short of 150 DMMO applications waiting to be processed, with an increasing number of applications expected in the lead up to 2026. It was also confirmed that a forthcoming Deregulation Bill would result in a change to the way those application had to be processed, all of which would create a resource issue for CAS. It was agreed that a regular overview of the work of CAS would be provided for future meetings.

It was also confirmed:

- There were no Covid related restrictions in place on PROW;
- The Government and Natural England had actively encouraged that PROW remained open because of their positive contribution to mental health and exercise;
- There had been some temporary narrowing of roads in some populated areas to enable social distancing and some temporary road closures e.g. Northallerton Market place on market days;
- Rights of Way Improvement works would inform part of the strategic Local Transport Plans going forward, replacing the previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan;

Resolved – That the update be noted.

301. District Council & LAF Project Updates

Considered –

The report of the Secretary giving LAF members the opportunity to update the Forum on District Council liaison and other LAF representative project activity since the last meeting.

In addition to the information provided for the report, the Chair confirmed he had received no further information on the progression of the A66 works.

Resolved -

That the additional information provided at the meeting be noted alongside the written updates provided in the report.

301. Forward Plan

Considered -

Members considered the Forward Plan provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and invited members to identify any additional items of business to be added.

At this stage, Rachel Connelly joined the meeting.

Will Scarlett offered to be the district liaison representative for the Craven area, and Janet Cochrane suggested that further clarity was needed for new members on the role of the Forum and its focus, and it was agreed that this issue be discussed further at the next meeting.

It was noted that Will Scarlett had pulled together comments from Forum members in response to the Highway Code consultation, and would send it to the Secretary for submission on behalf of the Forum. It was also agreed that Rachel Connelly would circulate some guidance notes on good practice for liaison with District Councils.

Finally, the Chair confirmed that in light of the limited number of meetings held this municipal year because of the Covid pandemic, the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair would be delayed until the first meeting of the new Municipal year.

Resolved - That the Work Programme document be updated and noted.

The meeting concluded at 12pm
MLC