

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held in the Grand Committee Room, County Hall, Northallerton on 21 August 2013, commencing at 10.00 am.

Present:-

John Taylor in the Chair.

Les Atkinson, George Bateman, David Barraclough, George Bateman, Rachel Connolly, Leo Crone, David Gibson, John Gibson, Roma Haigh, Tom Halstead, County Councillor Robert Heseltine, County Councillor David Jeffels, and Tony Martin.

Officers:- Ian Fielding, Aidan Rayner, Phil Ingledew and Susan Stott (NYCC Waste & Countryside Services), Andrew Bainbridge (NYCC Highways) and Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services).

In attendance County Councillor Carl Les.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

The Chairman announced that letters of resignation had been received from Pat Whelan, Alan Littlewood and Martin Whiles. The recruitment of replacement members along with the reappointment or replacement of those Members whose term of office was due to expire would commence following the meeting.

11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor John Fort, and Penny Noake.

12. Minutes

Resolved –

That subject to the deletion of paragraph 2 of Minute No 6 'Leeming to Barton A1 Upgrade' the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2013, be agreed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

13. Matters Arising.

Minute Number 8 – High Speed 2

The Chairman informed Members that he had not written to the HS2 Project Team and North Yorkshire MPs as had been agreed at the previous meeting. The consultation document for the proposed route of Phase 2 of the project from Birmingham to Manchester and beyond had been launched on 17 July 2013 and he proposed that the Forum should instead submit a response to the consultation.

Members supported his proposal and agreed to discuss the matter in detail at the next meeting. In the interim Aidan Rayner agreed to identify the rights of way affected by the proposed route and to do a comparison of the proposed HS2 route and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and for this information to be made available for the next meeting.

The Chairman to circulate to Forum Members the link to the High Speed 2 Phase 2 consultation document.

The agenda of the next meeting to include an item on consultation on Phase 2 of High Speed 2.

Minute Number 10 – North Northallerton Development Area – Visit to Hambleton District Council

Rachel Connolly and David Barraclough reported the outcome of their meeting with Mark Harbottle Hambleton District Council's Chief Planning Officer to discuss the North Northallerton Development Area. Proposals were still at an early stage with submission of an outline planning application anticipated by the end of 2014. Officers at Hambleton District Council had been receptive to ensuring the existing rights of way network was not disrupted and exploring opportunities to increase the connectivity of the new development and had agreed to keep the Forum informed of progress of design proposals for the development. Central to the development was a new link road between the A684 and A167 which would necessitate the building of a new road bridge over the railway line. The new road would need to accommodate non-motorised users as it was proposed that existing farm crossings would be closed.

Rachel Connolly said it would be useful to meet with Officers from the Leisure Department at Hambleton District Council to discuss 'leisure' aspects of the development. She also referred to recent press coverage about a possible large residential development in Great Ayton. Having now established a link with officers at Hambleton District Council, Rachel Connolly was keen to explore with them the preservation and improvement of rights of way provision for this new development. Forum Members agreed to her offer to arrange further meetings with David Barraclough and officers at Hambleton District Council.

On behalf of the Forum the Chairman thanked Rachel Connolly and David Barraclough for the work they had undertaken.

David Barraclough to write a letter of thanks to the Chief Planning Officer at Hambleton District Council.

Rachel Connolly and David Barraclough to hold further meetings with Officers at Hambleton District Council to discuss leisure aspects of the North Northallerton Development Area and a potential new residential development at Station Road, Great Ayton.

Aidan Rayner to invite Philip Robinson (Natural England) to attend the November meeting to explore the interface between LAFS Natural England and DEFRA and explain changes to the Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

14. Public Questions or Statements

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

15. North Yorkshire National Parks Local Access Forums

The draft Minutes of the meetings of the North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales National Parks Local Access Forum held on 11 June 2013 and 18 June 2013 respectively were received by the Forum for information.

Aidan Rayner agreed to keep the Forum updated on progress of the application by York Potash for the largest potash mine in the world at Boulby.

Resolved –

That the Minutes of meetings of the North York Moors National Park Local Access Forum held on 11 June 2013 and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Access Forum held on 18 June 2013 be noted.

16. Record of Actions

Considered –

The report of the Chairman listing actions completed by him on behalf of the Forum during the period since the previous meeting.

With regard to the Leeming to Barton A1 upgrade, the Chairman sought confirmation from the Members who had attended the August exhibition that suggestions made during the June consultation had resulted in the proposed scheme being modified.

Rachel Connolly expressed concern about several specific design aspects of the scheme which she said were contrary to the recommendations made by the Inspector in his report. She sought the support of the Forum to challenge the Highways Agency immediately with her concerns in an attempt to prevent them from being accepted as part of the final scheme and ultimately adopted by the County Council.

It was reported that confirmation was still awaited from the Highways Agency of the final design for the scheme.

Members debated at length the value of the Forum raising new concerns after having already submitting a formal response especially when confirmation of the final design was still outstanding.

It was confirmed that the safety audit had been completed but not yet finalised and that dialogue between the Highways Agency and the County Council was still on-going.

Members agreed that with the exception of references to the cycling strip the four other points raised by Rachel Connolly in an email to Forum Members in respect of the surface material of the LAR, the width of the bridleway from Scurragh House Farm to Gatherly overbridge, the link between Kneeton Hall bridge and Dere Street and provision for non-motorised users from Gatherly overbridge to Brompton be referred to the Highways Agency.

<p>The Chairman to write on behalf of the Forum to the Highways Agency bringing to their attention concerns about four aspects of design as referred to in the Minutes above.</p>

17. Highways Capital Programme 2013

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services seeking the LAFs approval of the list of Highways and Transportation Improvement Schemes and Policies it wished to be consulted on for 2013/14. The list of recommended schemes and policies appended to the report had been compiled in accordance with the agreed protocol which was also attached to the report.

The report was introduced by Andrew Bainbridge who said that the programme of schemes and policies for 2013/14 had only just been approved. Council budget cuts meant that the programme was focused on highway maintenance as opposed to improvement schemes.

Forum Members offered no comment on the content of the report.

Leo Crone said he was aware that the North York Moors National Park was currently consulting on a definitive map modification order which if approved would downgrade an unsurfaced unclassified road to a footpath. The route in question was at Scugdale near Swainby and he questioned whether the National Park had the authority to make such an order. Aidan Rayner said he unaware of the application in question but that the terms of the agency agreement between the County Council and the National Park meant that that the National Park had authority to make rights of way orders within their boundaries.

Aidan Rayner to contact Doug Huzzard to check the status of the Scugdale route.

18. Public Rights of Way Maintenance Update

Considered –

The report of the Public Rights of Way Team Leader providing information requested by Members at the previous meeting concerning the types of issues resolved over the previous financial year, numbers of high and low priority issues reported and resolved and the age profile of the backlog. The report also contained details of the real time network condition data being collected.

George Bateman recorded his thanks to Aidan Rayner for providing the information requested at the previous meeting and commented as follows:-

- That the total of 9281 reported backlog issues represented four years work. Whilst the number of reported issues had declined in recent years this was due in part to surveys not being carried out. The information in the report was therefore misleading as it gave the mistaken impression that the number of reported issues was keeping pace with the number of issues that had been resolved.
- The proposals for the collection of network condition data concentrated on issue types and gave no indication of the length of the route
- Suggested that the criteria for awarding priority be revised as currently very few issues were awarded high priority which did not show the County Council in a positive light

County Councillor David Jeffels said that drastic cuts to the County Council's budgets meant that in reality the maintenance of rights of way was awarded low priority. Increasingly the County Council would look to parish councils and volunteers to do more low level work.

The Chairman commented that there was no shortage of skilled volunteers, the problem rested with the County Council who lacked the capacity to co-ordinate and direct their activities.

Aidan Rayner disagreed with his comments and said that the County Council was looking to engage more with communities and parish councils than specific volunteer groups. He confirmed that a job description for 'super volunteers' was in the process of being drafted.

Tom Halstead said that he had been trying since the beginning of the year to arrange a meeting with Penny Noake to discuss the use of archive/research volunteers without success.

That a report on Volunteers be included on the agenda of the next meeting.

19. Definitive Map Team Update

Aidan Rayner reported that Penny Noake had been unable to complete her report before departing on annual leave. She had however completed schedules containing details of the progress of applications which were tabled at the meeting. Members were advised that a full report would be referred to the next meeting.

A request was made for the report to include details of action taken where a route had been obstructed.

Forum Members were introduced to two new members of the Definitive Map Team Susan Stott and Phil Ingledew.

Penny Noake to prepare a report on Definitive Map Modification Order applications to be considered at the next Forum meeting.

20. North Yorkshire Local Access Forum Annual Report 2012/13

The Public Rights of Way Leader invited Forum members to submit supplementary comments for inclusion in the 2012/13 Annual Report appended to the Agenda before submission to Natural England by 30th September 2013.

Forum Members went through each of the questions in turn on the 2012/13 Annual Review Form. Aidan Rayner noted Members comments in respect of each of the questions.

Aidan Rayner to complete the 2012/13 Annual Review Form with the comments made by Members at the meeting before submitting it to Natural England before 30 September 2013.

21. Forward Plan

Considered –

A report setting out possible future agenda items.

The following items were added to the agenda of future meetings:-

20 November 2013

- Definitive Map Team update
- Unsurfaced, Unclassifieds Road (including Dead Man's Hill and Scugdale Update)
- Draft De-Regulation Bill –
 1. Invite to Philip Robinson (Natural England)
 2. Reaction of NYCC to draft bill and its approach to 2026 cut-off date.
- HS2 Phase 2 - Response to consultation
- NYCC Volunteers

Resolved –

That the content of the Forward Plan be noted and approved and the suggestions made during the meeting and recorded in the Minutes incorporated.

The meeting concluded at 13:20 pm

JW/JR/ALJ