

**North Yorkshire Local Access Forum****6 April 2017****District Council Updates****Report of the Secretary****1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update the Forum on liaison with District Councils.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The LAF operates an agreed list of nominated representatives willing to act as the first point of liaison with the constituent District Councils in relation to planning and other relevant matters. From time to time the Forum also nominates representatives to take a lead on a particular issue or to attend a meeting on behalf of the Forum.
- 2.2 This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Forum to be updated on activity since the previous meeting.
- 2.3 As requested at the last meeting, Rachel Connolly has provided the attached summary of the work that she has undertaken with regard to the A1 project.
- 2.4 Nominated representatives are invited to report verbally at the meeting on activity undertaken.

**3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 That members note the updates.

BARRY KHAN  
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON

Report author: Kate Arscott, Secretary to North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

**Background Documents:** None

## **A1 upgrade summary**

The Public Inquiry was in 2006, and the project is nearing completion. The section from Leeming to Dishforth was constructed first, but the Leeming to Barton section was rejected by the Inspector first time around and tweakings were made through supplementary orders. That section together with the third section (Scotch Corner to Barton) will now be completed 'late spring' – which in Highways England jargon means June or thereabouts barring further setbacks. As I write the late-running archaeological scratchings near Catterick have unearthed a wicker basket down a well this week, which requires further investigation, for which read 'delay'! The great-crested newts near Scurragh lane brought work on the bridleway to a halt over 18 months ago, and that's now ceased to be a work in progress.

Throughout that time – and before – there have been round-the-table meetings of various representatives from the design and construction interest together with the NMU groups (Ramblers, BHS, cycling groups and the LAF) to raise concerns as Highways and North Yorkshire vie to cut corners and save every last penny – hardly surprising. However, as you may imagine, no expense has been spared for archaeology, badgers, newts, and otters leaving the NMU's as the ones to bear the brunt of expense cuts. Safe surfaces and road margins, promised at Inquiry, have not materialised in the way they should to the frustration of the NMU group, of whom the equestrian interest has been most affected by the short-comings.

The project team is made up of numerous different agencies: design, construction, independent technical directors and the project management team with an evident lack of joined-up communication between the various factions. Add to this the particularly unfortunate fact that the Project Manager has changed five times, four in the last 4 years, and the lack of continuity has left its mark with mistakes that need not have been made. The NMUs have not been welcomed to inspect the work in progress, which would have made sense, as users are likely to spot problems before they are made, thus saving much time and money, with the result that now there will be aspects too late to rectify and journeys suppressed through lack of safety or amenity.

On a brighter note, a constructive meeting was held at the beginning of February with the heads of the NMU groups along with the project director for the first time, since which there has been a marked improvement in pulling

together to achieve what can be rescued before the HE claims its job is done and walks away from the scheme. The date that NYCC will take over responsibility for the Local Access Roads has been brought forward to 'this spring' from the original plan of November 2017. Following this there will be a stage 3 audit and a separate one for NMUs which the NMU group will scrutinise – the combined Stage1 and 2 audit was criticised by us because it did not address issues on the A6136 adequately and failed to include traffic flows within the report provided as required.

Rachel Connolly

March 2017