

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday, 26th January 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

Paul Sherwood in the Chair. Plus Dick Brew, Janet Cochrane, Rachel Connolly, Roma Haigh, David Lepper, Will Scarlett and County Councillor David Jeffels.

Officers present: Ian Kelly, Louise Neale and Allan McVeigh.

Apologies: Kath Topping and County Councillor Robert Heseltine.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

329 Introductions & Apologies for Absence

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

330 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 September 2021

Resolved - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. A number of outstanding matters arising were discussed, and it was agreed that:

- Ian Kelly would circulate a previous 2017 CAS Prioritisation report;
- Ron Allan would provide an update on the Definitive Map Team at the next Forum meeting;
- Louise Neale would provide a future update on the ongoing A59 Knaresborough to York Study;

Ian Kelly also confirmed the User Group had not met since May 2021 and that previously a number of ex-Forum members had previously attended those meetings, but not as a representative of the Forum, as a representative from other interested user groups.

331 Public Questions & Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

332 Update on Active Travel in North Yorkshire

Louise Neale, Transport Planning Team Leader highlighted a renewed and extended emphasis on sustainable travel nationally, and provided an update on Active Travel which included:

- An overview of a new local transport note – LTN120 issued in July 2020, covering how to plan for cycling, the required space for cycling, junctions and crossings etc;
- The barriers to modal shift to cycling i.e. the perceived danger associated with cycling such as the volume and speed of traffic;

- The various categories of infrastructure e.g. segregated cycle paths, light segregation, cycle lanes etc;
- The challenges associated with the implementation of LTN120;
- An update on cycling in relation to the Definitive Map – it was noted there was no facility to record cycle paths and cycleways on the Definitive Map;
- Use of the planning process to increase active travel infrastructure – it was noted that whilst there was no obligation on developers to improve active travel opportunities, they were often asked to. Whilst the Authority could ask for cycling infrastructure, the associated costs were often a barrier to their inclusion in planning applications.
- Funding for cycling improvements came from central Government;
- The changes to the Highways Code would affect cycling but would not affect the design of infrastructure;

Paul Sherwood raised the issue of the Authority's interface with National Highways in relation to cycleways / bridle path. He noted that they often end when they come to a trunk road with no facility for onward movement. Louise Neale confirmed that where this issue occurred, it was often an historic scheme. On newer schemes, the Local Authority worked with partners e.g. National Highways, Network Rail etc in an attempt to ensure a meaningful end to cycleway / bridle path route, but that it was not always possible due to a range of reasons e.g. lack of funding.

County Councillor David Jeffels referred to the use of barriers to aid cyclists by making the road safer and reducing the speed of traffic. He also suggested the use of 106 money from housing developers to finance the appropriate infrastructure to enable sustainable travel options.

It was noted that the Highways Asset Management team were currently mapping the entire cycling infrastructure across the county that was not public rights of way, which once completed would be added as an additional layer on the map available via the NYCC website.

Rachel Connolly drew attention to the NYLAF letter to the DfT, which highlighted the lack on inclusivity in DfT's policy and approach, and noted that the ambiguity of the DfT's response. Louise Neale confirmed the Authority did refer enquiries to, and consult with, the British Horse Society where appropriate.

In regard to Active Travel Plans, Louise Neale confirmed that to date the focus had been mostly on urban areas, but the Authority was currently in the process of developing a feasibility plan for the Stokesley/Guisborough area. She noted it was harder to get funding for not urban areas and confirmed that LGR was not preventing the team's work from progressing. Will Scarlet suggested that horse riders and carriage drivers would welcome the opportunity to be consulted on schemes.

Finally, the Chair suggested that the condition of the highways made cycling hazardous.

The Chair thanked Louise Neale for her update, and it was

Resolved: That the update be noted.

333 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 Ian Kelly, CAS Manager.

It was confirmed that the future of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum would not be affected by the introduction of the new Unitary Authority to May 2023, as there would still be a requirement for it to exist. It was also noted that the Executive intended to recommend to County Council that meetings would continue to be held virtually unless they were formal decision-making meetings. Members confirmed they would prefer to meet in person, particularly when a meeting was to include a presentation. It was agreed that the Chair would write to the Leader to make him aware of the Forum's views, with a request that the next meeting be held in person, and Cllr David Jeffels agreed to make Full Council aware of the Forum's views at the meeting of Full Council in February 2022.

Finally, consideration was given to the draft UUR position statement at Appendix A and Forum members agreed to sign it off for adoption and it was agreed to formally submit a copy to NYCC.

Resolved – That

- i. The update be noted;
- ii. The Chair write to the Leader with a request to hold the next NYLAF meeting in person;
- iii. The draft UUR position statement at Appendix A be signed off for adoption and formally submitted to NYCC;

334 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, Will Scarlett confirmed that his work to consider the four consultation policies referred to in paragraph 3.2 was ongoing, and that he was pleased to note the positive way in which they had been written, all referencing active cycle routes etc.

In regard to the table at paragraph 2.1, the following amendments were agreed:

- Selby District Liaison to be removed from David Lepper and 'Protected Landscapes' added;
- HS2 to be removed;
- A19 to be removed from Rachel Connolly and taken on by Roma Haigh

Roma Haigh confirmed she had responded to a Ryedale District Council consultation on housing developments. She also drew attention to the coming 40th Anniversary of the Yorkshire Wolds Way.

In regard to the A1, Rachel Connolly confirmed that fencing was to be removed and laurel bushes planted in order to address the issue with glare.

In regard to the Coast to Coast National Trail, Ian Kelly suggested an update be brought to the next meeting and that a representative from National England be invited to attend.

Andrew Mackintosh from Natural England joined the meeting at 11:27am to provide an overview of Natural England's new land management scheme, and to provide feedback on

a list of questions previously drawn up by Forum members.

In response to those questions Andrew Mackintosh confirmed his particular role was as a specialist for public access, recreation and rights of way, providing input to environment schemes and the interaction of other interests such as conservation, bio-diversity and landscape, and their interaction with public access etc. He also confirmed Natural England's access team was expanding to allow their role within public access to expand.

Members noted that much of the current rights of way network was fragmented, and questioned whether under ELMS, farmers would be offered grants to create new permissive routes. They also noted that although new or improved public access was included as one of the 'public goods' in the original ELMS consultation, it appeared to have slipped down the agenda. They expressed concern that it might even disappear as an option. In response, Andrew Mackintosh confirmed the question of what public goods might cover was yet to be made clear as a final announcement was still awaited. He also confirmed Natural England had put evidence forward to DEFRA on a range of things for consideration, including the pros and cons of permissive access, permanent access and the advantages of enhancing accessibility and better infrastructure all round.

He also confirmed:

- If access was not included in ELMs, Natural England would be seeking the introduction of some other delivery mechanism;
- The future timetable would not be known until the expected announcement was made;
- The timespan for new ELMS agreements was still unknown.
- Countryside Stewardship Access Agreements were coming to an end, meaning that many well used and valued permissive paths could disappear. In response, Natural England had submitted a bid for an evidence project to look at what happened to those permissive access agreements under stewardship;
- The current cross compliance system would come to an end within the next couple of years and the future regulations would look like for a whole range of environmental issues was still unknown;
- The Coast to Coast Path was currently being reviewed and Natural England was currently carrying out an initial survey of the route to look at the practicalities involved, after which a timetable would be drawn up and a consultation process undertaken;
- His main concern was whether landscape and bio-diversity would be prioritised over public access;
- A case had been made for providing more Local Access Forum support in the future, via a new part-time role within Natural England;

The Chair thanked Andrew Mackintosh for attending the meeting and requested that an update on the Coast to Coast National Trail be brought to the next Forum meeting.

Resolved – That:

- i. The additional information provided at the meeting be noted;
- ii. The table at paragraph 2.1 of the report be updated to reflect the information provided at the meeting;
- iii. An update on the Coast to Coast National Trail be added to the work programme for the next meeting;

335 Work Programme

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.

It was also noted that an informal meeting was being arranged with National Highways to enable them to discuss with Forum members design proposals for A19 safety improvements. The suggested date for that meeting was 1st March 2022. It was noted that National Highways would then attend the Forum's next scheduled meeting to formally present and consult on the agreed design.

Finally, Members requested an update on the work of the Countryside Access Service, to include an update on how ROW issues were managed and prioritised, and on CAS budgets. In response, Ian Kelly requested a list of specific questions to give clarity on exactly what information members were seeking. He also confirmed that the planned development and introduction of an online customer portal had been delayed.

In light of the discussions at the meeting, it was

Resolved - That :

- i. The Work Programme document be updated for the next meeting to include:
 - An update on the Definitive Map team
 - An update on the Coast to Coast National Trail from Natural England;
 - A presentation from National Highways on their proposed A19 Safety Improvements;
- ii. A sub-group be formed to draft a formal LAF response to the Landscapes consultation;
- iii. Forum members draw up a list questions about CAS, for Ian Kelly's consideration, so that a written response can be provided;

336 Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.

David Lepper provided a brief overview of his consideration of the 'Landscapes' consultation and suggested he draft a response and circulate it to other Forum members for their views.

Ian Kelly confirmed he had some consultation with the AONBs, and that his team managed all the ROW in the AONBs.

Resolved:

That a sub-group be formed to draft a response to the Landscapes consultation, made up of the following Forum members, (for later circulation to all members for sign off):

David Lepper
Janet Cochrane
Will Scarlett
Dick Brew

The meeting concluded at 12.26 pm.