

Update provided by Rachel Connelly on Sec 94(4) reports.

District Planning

Referrals are patchy and although it had been hoped to have a consistent communication system in place following a meeting with Martin Grainger, nothing has changed. It is very disconcerting how little weight is given by planners to existing legislation to protect the rights of the public on their paths. This needs discussing.

RC

Update provided by Rachel Connelly and Pat Coulson following a meeting with Martin Grainger, Head of Development Management.

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Subject: Engagement with the Local Access Forum

Date: Fri, 1 Nov 2024 08:08:42 +0000

Dear Mr. Grainger

Thank you for your time on Tuesday which we hope will lead to a more productive engagement with the LAF. We were encouraged to hear you have worked on rights of way advice to the planning departments and look forward to receiving a copy of what you are going to circulate which we can share with our members.

However, rights of ways are only a part of our Access remit to sec 94(4) bodies which includes the two aspects we discussed: The planning side where we would expect to be consulted on major developments and those affecting rights of way. At the moment the Forum is advising on any application which fails to reflect Best Practice such as providing Public Open Space, play areas in the right places, or giving sufficient thought to sustainable transport opportunities. A pre-app tick list is going to eliminate many of our issues and lead to better-designed development thereby reducing the need for adjusted or rejected plans. Until that is implemented and there is a more 'access awareness' at the early stage please could David Clothier direct planning officers to ensure the Forum is consulted on all larger developments as well as those with rights of way near them, bearing in mind that we work to guidance in the NPPF, local plan policies, the 1980 Highway Act and NYC guidance. We see the Forum's role as adding strength to planning officers rather than as a challenge to their competence, recognising the massive work load they

face. Maybe the Forum could help by sending you a few points that could be included in the proposed pre-app check.

The other way in which NYC should be engaging with the Forum is in policymaking and the lack of consultation over cycling and Active Travel projects was mentioned. NYC's Interim Guidance on residential development 2015 has been under review for a while but, again, the Forum hasn't been asked if there is any constructive advice they could offer. We should also like to be kept in the loop for progress on the development of the county Local Plan. You told us that Linda Marfitt is heading this and it would be good to know if the work the Forum put in so far has helped shape her views. The Forum are keen to be kept up-to-date and included in this big challenge. We stress that the Forum cannot be proactive and advise (as required by the Secretary of State) unless consulted when we do our best to be constructive, informed and inclusive.

Thank you for the helpful offer to be a critical friend which the Forum will take up in the future, and we would welcome your suggestion of participation in Team meetings of development managers.

Kind regards from Rachel Connolly and Pat Coulson
on behalf of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum