

NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Draft Position Statement for Preliminary Involvement in Major Projects

e.g. the recent York-Knaresborough and the Stokesley-Guisborough 'corridors', and to be incorporated with general development queries.

In effect, we need an assurance that developers:-

- Ensure that existing public rights of way are retained to the same or better surface standards applicable to the level and classification of usage.
- In situations where partial resurfacing of a route is a requirement, an example being where an existing rural 'footpath' is subsumed as part of a development and therefore becomes a 'pavement' this must, whenever practical, be to an acceptable standard commensurate with the type of usage. Surface is more critical if the existing public right of way is a 'bridleway' catering for equestrian & cycle use and becomes subsumed into a development as a 'road'. Surfacing and structures/street furniture are to comply with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.
- All structures (gates etc) are to be constructed with suitable materials and specification that complies with BS5709:2018 and to comply with relevant requirements of s147 of the Highways Act 1980. A stile is no longer considered acceptable for a new location, due to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.
- When it is necessary to divert or re-route sections of public rights of way these must, whenever practical, be carried out to the local highway authority and/or national standards with acceptable 'approved' surfacing materials to a standard commensurate to the type of usage (equestrian) etc.
- Any temporary diversion or closure during construction phases to be to a minimum time scale and in agreement with the local authority.
- Any temporary diversions or re-routing should try to alleviate excessive additional distance, although the shortest alternative may not necessarily be the best - in many cases a longer route (away from a busy road, or around the perimeter of a field rather than across it) can be more pleasant for the user, especially when people like circular routes from home for exercise. All proposed temporary diversions or re-routing is to be correctly negotiated with the local highway authority and/or rights-of-way department.
- Any re-alignment or alterations to the public roads network should not cause the existing public rights of way network to be severed or terminated, a suitable and safe means must be negotiated for onward travel applicable to the level and classification of usage of the public right of way. Major roads are specifically hazardous for all forms on non-motorised user, pedestrian, cyclist, horse rider & carriage driver.
- New housing and commercial/industrial developments need suitable safe access for non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists, equestrian users) to facilitate access to

local shopping, local services and relevant public transport services. Railway stations and other public transport hubs need safe & secure bicycle storage facilities. Public Rights of Way on new developments need to utilise and interlink with the existing public rights of way network to enable longer-distance recreational use of the existing public rights of way network, and not to be specifically for 'local' use.

- Many proposed housing and commercial/industrial developments are on 'green field' sites, possibly in areas with few existing public rights of way. It is important for people to have access to countryside on their doorstep for enjoying informal recreation, walking, riding, or cycling. If a new community is being created and existing public rights of way are lacking, then new access should be created for local circular walks and rides, for dog walkers, families with pushchairs etc, to be able to gain access to the local natural environment close to where they live.

Drafted by Paul Sherwood
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