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**Yorkshire County Council**

Business and Environmental Services

## **Quiet Lanes Protocol**

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Quiet Lanes are an initiative of the Countryside Agency, supported by the Department for Transport (DfT) and North Yorkshire County Council. They are intended to form a network of country lanes, suitable for use by walkers, cyclists and equestrians as well as by motor vehicles, with the aim of helping preserve the character and tranquillity of rural areas and encouraging an increase in non-motorised users, whilst maintaining vehicle access. The intention of a Quiet Lane is to encourage motorists to be more aware of non-motorised users (NMUs) and, over time, to reduce the number and speed of motor vehicles by changing the 'hearts and minds' of local residents rather than lowering the speed limit or using physical measures for enforcement.

The minor highways, footpaths, bridleways and byways of North Yorkshire constitute an extremely important resource particularly (but not exclusively) for recreation in the countryside.

For a proposed Quiet Lane scheme to be considered, a self-appointed champion needs to come forward. This champion could be a resident, the local County Councillor or a member of the parish, district or town council.

It should be noted that Quiet Lanes will not be introduced in North Yorkshire for the foreseeable future unless specific external funding is available. Therefore the local champion is free to seek funding from other sources to implement Quiet Lanes and only this option will be pursued to augment the initiative.

The County Council has since 2006 adopted a Highway Maintenance Plan which incorporates a network hierarchy as a means of prioritising routes across the publicly maintainable highway network on the basis of the volume and composition of traffic using it, risk assessment and the role of the route concerned in the network as a whole.

Based on the North Yorkshire Classified Road Network, Quiet Lanes are generally considered to be appropriate on category 4b rural roads. (although public rights of way and category 6 unsurfaced roads could be included within the network but not as stand alone routes).

Category	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road General description	Detailed Description	AADT Rural
4b	Local Access Road	Road serving a limited number of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are sometimes only single lane width and unsuitable for HGV.	200+/-

Quiet Lanes would be suitable on category 4b rural roads that mostly satisfy the following criteria:

- Narrow and winding road
- Very low vehicle flows
- Not a main access route
- Low existing vehicle speeds
- No street lighting
- National speed limit
- Road already used by NMUs

## **2.0 DEFINITION OF QUIET LANES**

The Countryside Agency has a formal definition of a Quiet Lane. They are defined as minor rural roads that are appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and motorised traffic. These roads should already have low traffic flows travelling at low speeds. Quiet Lanes should not be used as a traffic calming device or to prevent rat-running. The aim is to preserve the character of rural roads by seeking to contain traffic growth.

## **3.0 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF QUIET LANE SCHEMES**

### **3.1 FUNDING**

The local champion is free to seek external funding from other sources to implement Quiet Lanes and only this option will be pursued to augment the initiative. Current funding limitations dictate that even when the criteria in this protocol is triggered, Quiet Lanes will not be introduced in North Yorkshire for the foreseeable future, unless specific external funding is available.

### **3.2 QUIET LANE CHAMPION**

For a proposed Quiet Lane scheme to be considered, a self-appointed champion needs to come forward. This champion could be a resident, the local County Councillor or a member of the parish, district or town council.

The champion will be responsible for identifying the level of support by canvassing the community and other key stakeholders who will use the route. The champion is advised to contact the County Council at the earliest possible opportunity for guidance before approaching the community and stakeholders.

### **3.3 DESIGNATION**

The Transport Act 2000 enables local traffic authorities to designate roads for which they are the traffic authority as a Quiet Lane. In this instance 'road' has the same meaning as in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, where it is defined (in section 142) as meaning any length of highway or other road to which the public has access.

Local highway authorities should bear in mind that designation as a Quiet Lane neither provides the road with any additional legal protection, nor does it alter local

authorities' other powers and responsibilities, for example when implementing traffic calming measures. Designation will, however, enable the local traffic authority to make use orders and speed orders which will set out authorised uses for the road, a specified speed and the measures to control speed.

There is no requirement to make a use order and/or a speed order for a road designated as a quiet lane. However, given the overriding objective for introducing Quiet Lanes, it is unlikely that these interrelated orders will not be made.

The critical element in developing proposals for a successful Quiet Lane scheme is involving the local community fully in the process. The local traffic authority and the community will want to debate the range of activities that they wish to permit in the designated roads and the appropriate speed for vehicles travelling along them. The activities described in the use order, the specified speed and any associated measures described in the speed order will then reflect the local traffic authority's and local community's expectations for the scheme, the new activities expected within it, and hence help to alter driver behaviour.

### **3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS**

The success of a Quiet Lane can be judged by the extent to which the people who use the road or live there recognise the need for the scheme and take ownership of it. Such ownership largely depends upon effective community participation and involvement at all stages, from the original selection of the area through to implementation and beyond. The means for involving the community in developing a scheme are wide ranging, and there is no one approach that is most effective. A combination of methods is usually best, with the aim of engaging all sectors of the community, particularly groups that are often under-represented in the decision making process; for example children, young people, people with disabilities (especially those with visual or hearing impairments, wheelchair users or people with learning difficulties) and people from ethnic minority groups.

In developing schemes, authorities should bear in mind that a number of stakeholders, not just local residents, will have an interest. It is important that all stakeholders are involved at the development of proposals stage, so that their requirements are not overlooked, leading to objections during formal consultation. Those with an interest may include other sections of the authority promoting the scheme, for example maintenance and service provision, as well as the emergency services, operational services, other local authorities, businesses, groups representing those using the road, local access groups, disabled persons groups and utility or service companies.

The authority needs to bear in mind that effective community and stakeholder participation to develop a scheme is likely to be time-consuming; and should ensure that adequate resources have been allocated for this phase. It is also important that people's expectations are realistic, as there is little benefit in encouraging the community to design a scheme that is physically, legally or financially impossible to implement or maintain. Care should be taken to ensure that communities are also given realistic predictions of the impact of the measures to be implemented.

### **3.4.1 FORMAL CONSULTATION**

Following development of proposals, before making a designation or a use order or speed order, the local highway authority must formally consult those persons likely to be affected. It is important that all affected groups are consulted. Consultation should include those likely to benefit from the scheme as well as those who may be adversely affected.

The requirements for publishing proposals are broadly similar for designation and for use orders and speed orders. They entail:

- Publishing a notice of proposals in a local newspaper circulating in the area to which the designation or order relates.
- Sending a copy of the notice of proposals to each person required to be consulted.
- Displaying notices on the roads affected and at other places the authority considers appropriate, for example in local community gathering places such as village halls, religious centres, doctors' surgeries, community centres, public houses, sports halls, schools etc.
- Taking such other steps as is considered appropriate to give adequate publicity about the proposals to those people likely to be affected, for example publishing documents on the authority's web site and permitting online responses.

### **3.5 NATURAL ENGLAND GUIDANCE**

Natural England suggests using the PACE (Plan, Activate, Check, Enable) process to assess requests for Quiet Lanes. PACE sets out criteria against which each project can be assessed and developed. Each Quiet Lane project will need to action all the points in the PACE process.

The PACE process should broadly comprise of the following:

Plan – set objectives, define areas/ roads, identify interested parties

Activate – develop a strategy, engage the community and local businesses, undertake a signing audit, assess potential network, calculate financial implications.

Check – community participation, scheme objectives, identify potential impacts of the project

Enable – detailed design, stage 2 Road Safety Audit, construction, stage 3 Road Safety Audit, monitoring of traffic and NMU flows

Detailed guidance on Natural England's PACE process can be found at:

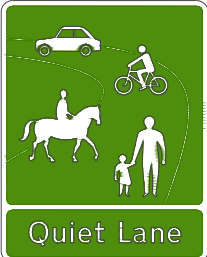

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Quiet%20Lanes%20technical%20guidance\\_tcm6-9068.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Quiet%20Lanes%20technical%20guidance_tcm6-9068.pdf)

## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

### Signing

In order to inform people that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane, the local traffic authority must arrange for traffic signs to be erected as prescribed in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2002. The signs must be maintained for as long as the designation remains in force.

It is considered important that traffic signs are consistent. Signs to be used at the start and end of a designated Quiet Lane in England were added to TSRGD, as diagrams 884 and 885, through the Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Diag. 884 – Start of a Quiet Lane	Diag. 885 – End of a Quiet Lane
	

### Traffic Calming

Urban street furniture is inappropriate in rural areas. Solutions are likely to involve changes to road and verge maintenance, soft landscaping, removal of road signs, introduction of local way-marking and different surface treatments, if these are appropriate to the area.

## 5.0 TRIAL SITES

There have been two Quiet Lanes National Demonstration Projects, in north Norfolk and west Kent; supported by the Countryside Agency working in association with Norfolk and Kent County Councils.

The schemes in Norfolk and Kent have been monitored by TRL, in conjunction with the county councils, in terms of traffic speeds, as well as attitudinal surveys (Kennedy et al., 2004a; Kennedy et al., 2004b). Traffic Advisory Leaflet 03/04 summarises the results of these schemes.

The monitoring showed that vehicle flows were reduced slightly compared to control roads in both the demonstration projects. Vehicle speeds were low both before and after scheme implementation, with negligible changes compared to control roads. Numbers of non-motorised users were very low both before and after scheme implementation and fluctuated throughout the monitoring period. Attitude surveys showed that the two schemes had strong support both before and after scheme implementation (at least three-quarters being in favour). However, there were a significant percentage of respondents who did not feel the schemes were working in

practice, because of concerns such as rat-running and inappropriate vehicle speed. Almost 40% of respondents in Kent, and almost half of those in Norfolk, reported that they now drive more carefully along the lanes.

## **6.0 CURRENT SITUATION IN NORTH YORKSHIRE**

At present, there is only one “Quiet Lane” within North Yorkshire. Long Lane and Crab Lane are narrow rural roads (approximately 2.5m in width) which link the villages of Seamer and Crossgates on the outskirts of Scarborough.

The route is popular with walkers and regularly used by school children attending Seamer Infants School. The aim of the Quiet Lane was to make Long Lane and Crab Lane safer for all road users, including walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The route is single track with low levels of vehicle flows with low speeds.

The original request for designation as a Quiet Lane was received from Seamer Parish Council, and following initial investigations, Area 3 Whitby Area Office undertook a full consultation with all key stakeholders. This included sending a proposals drawing, scheme background and simple questionnaire to County Councillors, Parish Councillors, local schools, the local ramblers association, the local disabled action group, local residents and a presentation at Yorkshire Coast and Moors County Area Committee.

The scheme received 100% support and Long Lane and Crab Lane were designated as a Quiet Lane in 2009.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

Designation as a Quiet Lane can be a suitable method of maintaining the tranquillity and character of minor rural roads, but with community involvement alone it is unlikely to significantly reduce speeds or the number of vehicles. If rat-running or high traffic speeds are a problem then physical measures will be needed, such as the implementation of traffic calming.

As mentioned previously, the Local Champion is free to seek external funding from other sources to implement Quiet Lanes and this option should be pursued to augment the initiative. Current funding limitations dictate that even when the criteria in this protocol is triggered, Quiet Lanes will not be introduced in North Yorkshire for the foreseeable future, unless specific external funding is available.

## Notes:

- Quiet Lanes should generally be pleasant to walk, cycle, or ride a horse along. This would involve low traffic speeds (85th percentile <30mph), low traffic flows approximately 200 vehicles per day or less) and narrow road widths (<5 m). If not, traffic calming such as gateway features, chicanes, road narrowing etc may be required before designation.
- If linking roads are too busy to be designated as Quiet Lanes then they should have suitable non-motorised user provision, and should be short. Consideration should be given to the needs of visually impaired people if the footway is to be converted to shared use.
- Consultation with the local community should lead to 100% support, from those who respond (must be a minimum 50% response from the consultees), on the lanes to be designated and the objectives for the scheme as a whole. Objectives should be realistic and not raise expectations beyond a level that can be achieved with the planned measures and the available funds.
- Quiet Lanes maintain low speeds and flows through community involvement; this must therefore start early and be maintained throughout the life of the project.
- The Quiet Lane network should fit into the local route hierarchy with suitable diversion routes available.
- Monitoring of the schemes should be undertaken to ensure the scheme is meeting its objectives; methods will vary depending on the objectives set. For example, if implemented to improve quality of life, before and after attitude surveys of local residents would be appropriate.
- Consideration should be given to the needs of disabled people using the road. For example wheelchair users may consider rumble strips undesirable.

**Appendix A**  
**Procedure for assessing the appropriateness implementing a Quiet Lane**

