

York Access Forum (YAF)
28th May 2025 10.30am -1 pm
Hudson Room, West Offices and on Teams
Minutes

Attendees

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Christine Kyte (CK)	Support Worker (CYC) – note taker
David Smith (DS)	Access Officer CYC
Diane Roworth (DR)	Independent York Access Forum Chair
Dionne Grover-Jacques (DG)	York ME Community
Marilyn Crawshaw (MC)	York Human Rights City Network +York Disability Rights Forum
David Carr (DC)	York Carers Action Group
Barbara Fairs (BF)	Deputy Chief Executive Mysight York
Lauren Talbot (LT)	Wilberforce Trust Sensory Business manager
Hilary Boon (HB)	York Sightloss Council volunteer
Anne Norton (AN)	York Disability Rights Forum
Anna Baldwin (AB)	York Macular Society
Srish Arjen (SA)	Independent
Stephen Hind (SH)	Head of Business Development Network Rail. Project leader for York Central.
Matt Lewis (ML)	Senior Development Manager Network Rail
Ian Parker (IP)	Senior Engineer Network Rail, National Register of Access Consultants
Josh Chapman (JC)	Project Manager, Network Rail
Allan Cook (AC)	Arlington

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Helen Marriage (HN)	Arlington – Public Space, community engagement
Greg Morgan	Active Travel CYC
Apologies	
Sian Balsom	Healthwatch
Flick Williams	Independent

No.	Item
1	Welcome and introductions
	<p>DR Welcomed all and asked them to introduce themselves.</p> <p>DS General housekeeping re room and etiquette for hybrid meeting re questions, use of mic etc.</p>
2	YAF updates
	<p>DR All action points for the last meeting are in progress. Re the update on wheelchair accessible taxis, she clarified that all refusals logged at York Station had been made by customers, not by taxi companies.</p>
3	York Central – First Session Wilton Rise Footbridge and New Station building on West Side
3.1	<p>DR outlined that this is the YAF's first meeting in relation to the York Central project and stressed how vital it is that the whole site needs to be accessible for disabled people. She welcomed all who had come to talk about York Central, and the opportunity of developing ways of moving forward with them on this project.</p> <p>SH We are in listening mode. He gives an overview of York Central – the largest development of a brownfield site next to a rail station in England. It was not previously developed because it was still in operational use. £130 million grant funding for this project has been approved. Currently the Infrastructure is being put in –roads, drainage, power, plus building a new road and cycleway bridge. The scheme includes</p>

building over 2,500 new homes and providing better connectivity into the station to attract high quality jobs. 1 million square feet of commercial space to attract over 6,000 jobs to be retained in the city. The site should add £1.2 billion to the economy through future jobs and the additional people who will be living on the site. The time frame for the road bridge opening is late 2026 into 2027. Planning permission is already granted for the Government Property Agency. We will start to see things happen really quickly now. Size of York Central is between 1/3 and 1/2 size of York city centre.

SH describes colour coding on slides. Blue blocks are the commercial area, yellow is a new hotel, orange is residential, and green is the central park. Grey section is new station entrance.

3.2 Wilton Rise Footbridge

SH Planning application for this will be submitted in September where we outline the design, so we are now very much in listening mode.

ML Talks through several slides relating to the footbridge design. 3 options for footbridge considered over a year.

Option 1 was a standard Network Rail bridge with back and forward ramps. It was felt that something more than the normal bridge was wanted for this site, so this option was discounted.

Option 2 was a curved bridge from Wilton Rise. Restrictions at Wilton Rise due to housing and narrowness where the current steps are. This would mean the bridge could only be 2.2m wide, so not wide enough.

Option 3. The chosen design. From Upper St Pauls Terrace, where the height over the railway infrastructure is more suitable. It uses the topography and is a straight alignment. It is step free and follows good design principles. Embankments can be used to make it feel more open. Feedback on this is welcomed.

MC The images are difficult to envisage. In terms of disability access, what are the advantages of option 3?

SH You don't need a ramp going north to get an acceptable gradient. There is clear visibility on a straight bridge which

option 3 give us. Unlike first option has which has 90-degree angles.

ML This is a shorter route than the first 2 options. There is also a set of steps halfway down the bridge.

AC Taking account of gradients and heights it gives the shortest possible, most efficient route. It also allows us to keep the existing bridge open whilst the new bridge is being built.

ML Flat platforms and resting places will be looked at as we go into the next stage of the design. There will be 2 phases to the delivery of the new bridge.

DR Asks about width of bridge and segregation between pedestrians and cyclists.

ML The bridge is 4 m wide. Physical separation hasn't been worked out yet, but they are using Scarborough bridge as a guide.

DS Very clear guidance in LTN120 and Inclusive Mobility regarding segregation. We don't support shared spaces in general as it creates areas of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. Segregation by means of a raised white line and appropriate corduroy markings are needed as a minimum.

DR There is no segregation on Scarborough bridge, we want the security of knowing where the pedestrian area is and where the cyclist area is.

ML We are aware of this and that it is a requirement to look at in the design phase for all bridge users.

AN Where does the bridge end up and will that increase your travelling distance?

SH It follows the natural desire line. There is little difference in length to the current route or other options. Gradient – aiming for 1 in 20 with landings. If it is 1 in 25 it will be a slope not a ramp. Horizontal span going into a ramp access.

DS Preference for 1 in 20 with landings as this gives people the option to rest e.g. ambulant disabled. Landings can provide refuge if cyclists are speeding.

IP Safe refuges are considered so you could get yourself off the ramp. Diversity Impact Assessment has looked at local and

national demographics. Key areas of impact, e.g. lighting good enough but not too intrusive – use of downlighters.

DS Offers help with engagement with learning disability groups.

DR Do you foresee that this route may be used by people from that side of the city to get across York, or into the station rather than going into the main entrance – is there parking?

IP This consideration has been built into the western development site diversity impact assessment and parking is available.

ML If gradient is 1 in 25 landings can still be provided. A shallower gradient gives more flexibility about where to put the landings. Also, the overall length, where the platforms will sit and where the steps are. These are the level of detail that will need to be worked out prior to the planning application in September which will be 2 weeks before **AC**'s main phase.

SH We have a dedicated design team on this, and a construction company appointed. This is an outline concept. In the coming weeks the detail will be formed how we make it as usable as possible.

DR So the comments we have made will be fed into the design process?

SH Yes.

IP The Disability Impact Assessment done by Network Rail will be married with an Equality Impact Assessment on what sits on both sides of the boundaries.

DS We will want to see the detail before it goes to planning to see how our comments have been included. York Station Gateway is an example of where this didn't happen.

SH We would welcome you feeding in David. I don't want any surprises. Consultation events will take place closer to Sept.

ML Re timeline: Planning application in Sept, then detailed design of scheme which will take us into early 2026. Projected start on site April 27 with completion of Oct 2027 for the bridge. The plan is for the bridge to be open prior to occupation of buildings.

<p>3.3</p>	<p>AC The Gov Property Agency building has been delayed; we are working with Network Rail so they can complete the bridge before occupation of buildings.</p> <p>Western Station Entrance</p> <p>ML Network Rail is delivering the connection from the new Station building (near the Railway Museum) into the station. Providing step free access into the station is part of the York Central development requirement. We are extending the current wider section of footbridge through to the new Station building and will install a lift from the footbridge to the platform where Costa currently is situated, to access platforms 5,6,8 and 9 and connect with the underpass. Lifts will be provided in the new building.</p> <p>SH We need a graphic to clarify the stages of all the elements of this project as different parts are being provided by different organisations and pots of funding. Here we are talking about how we improve access from York Central through the station. We currently have the funding for this. SH continued - I want to do a strategy for the entire station and accessible routes through the station. I want to open up access on the eastern end of the station as well. Due to the Northern Powerhouse and expanding rail system we will need another platform on the western side so the new bridge deck will be longer than needed at present. When the new platform is built, we will put a lift in to access the overbridge.</p> <p>AN asks for clarification on the location of the new lift.</p> <p>AC It is from the subway to platform 9, where currently Costa Coffee is and will connect with the footbridge which will extend to new station entrance on the western side. You will be at the same level as the footbridge. There will be new lifts in the station entrance to take you down to ground level. Suggests looking at this in more detail later today.</p> <p>SH We don't have the money to do the eastern side yet. Currently we have the money for the new western station entrance, the new bridge to platform 9/5 and the lift shaft down.</p> <p>ML The completion of phase 1 is mid-2028 to tie in with the construction of the buildings. (Shows slides of proposed station building layout and possible option for eastern access). We</p>
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	<p>need to plan ahead to make the western side work long term. The signal box is listed so we are limited in what we can do there.</p> <p>DS requests slides to show different phases as some of the diagrams are difficult to visualise.</p> <p>ML We will work on this for next time we speak to you.</p> <p>SH New station entrance will be a great addition. Also upgrading the tunnel in Leeman Road including the footpaths. We need a strategy on how to work with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority etc to get extra investment to make it all fully accessible. How do we work together to attract funding?</p> <p>DS Ask if it is possible to lengthen the underpass.</p> <p>SH Extending the tunnel is not viable. Instead, they are looking at the compromise of using the underpass with lifts to the overbridge.</p> <p>DR Good that there is time to talk about this. Suggests organising further discussions.</p> <p>MC The station needs more reliable lifts. To avoid people becoming stranded.</p> <p>ML There is currently a scheme to upgrade lifts in the station, but this doesn't sit with the current team. He will share his email address for questions which arise after the meeting.</p> <p>SH Offers to show people around the station rather than just looking at images of what is planned. This was agreed as an excellent way forward and should be arranged</p>
4	York Central – Second Session New Station Building, hotel, housing, transport and public spaces
	<p>AC Shares PowerPoint slides which are a range of images of the new buildings, parkland, square from different viewpoints, to show what Phase 1 includes. He feels that the project can achieve more by pushing planning to some extent by removing cars and carparks in favour of increasing commercial space and housing. He is targeting 3,000 homes on the site (instead of 2,500). By creating 1.4million square feet of commercial and retail space, up to 10,000 new jobs would be created (rather</p>

than projected 6,500). Gross development value will be £2.5 billion. Hope to be on site for Phase 1 in July 2026. New Railway Museum building and Gov property building have reserved matters consent. They are working on design for the Innovation Hub which will be next to the Gov building. He shares an animation showing the route into York Central from the extended footbridge and a film showing the ambition of the scheme. The Reserved matters planning application should be submitted in October 2025, followed by a detailed design for construction.

DS In order to travel independently, Blue Badge (BB) parking will be required at the western entrance.

AC He will be putting in a parking strategy as part of the reserved matters application in Sept. There is no shortage of land, parts of the site are laid to parking. We want to discourage car use to the station. We will design for taxis to drop off at the station. There is a desire to close the Leeman Road tunnel. We are working to the masterplan that has consent. Public consultation will be starting in late June and then will take place once per month. We need feedback from stakeholders.

DS Wheelchair Accessible taxis are not a substitute for parking for people with a Blue Badge therefore parking will be required. The new hotel will have BB parking. There is a difference between what the Civic Trust want to have and what disabled people need. We will work with you to ensure access is provided for those who need it.

SH There is a difference between a rat run through the site and dropping people off. Each building will have its own allocation of BB spaces.

AC Parking strategy can move. The usage of remaining land will determine the amount of parking. Design teams are listening.

SH Comments given now are much easier to absorb. There will be access for people who need to get into the site. This doesn't distract from disabled people being able to get to the site.

DR This is an issue of real importance. There is a real concern about removing cars and car parks to make commercial space.

Disabled people with a Blue Badge need to be able to access all parts of York Central, including housing.

AN Public consultation is different to public duty. Public sector equality duty brings obligations. You need to provide some BB parking

AC Not referring to BB parking in earlier comments. We may need to build more car parking because of the businesses who will be using the area. We are appointing an Access Consultant so there will be more interaction as the design evolves.

DR Disabled people want to be able to access the same things that everyone else does. The overall vision should be that whatever is built, disabled people can use it all.

AC Value of designing in accessibility for all.

DS Currently writing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). There will be a number of properties that will be Building Regulations Part M level 3 and require a parking space. These houses need to be dotted around the development not all in one place.

AN What percentage of houses will be accessible housing and how will carers access the site?

AC Many city centres have been delivering purpose-built housing blocks for years. The buildings will be institutionally managed. We are still in process of deciding on registered provider – hopefully by June. Joseph Rowntree Foundation is one possibility.

DS. The Access Forum is asking for 20% Part M Level 2 and 4-5% at Level 3 in new housing developments. When cars are excluded, the issue is around having a parking space adjacent to the home, additionally many disabled drivers will need to charge their vehicle. CYC housing team understand the need for a minimum number of accessible houses and parking in new developments. The SPD gives guidance for the planning committee where private developments aren't meeting its demands.

DR You mentioned Active Travel i.e. encouraging cycling and walking throughout. Some Active Travel schemes can cause conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

AC We want Phase 1 of York Central to look and feel as it will in the longer term. Part of this is to encourage active travel, so there is a ribbon of parkland throughout. The day for publishing plans for the first phase is 12th June and this will enable people to see what it is for the first time. It is high quality public realm.

DR It is important how space is allocated. We need safe continuous routes for disabled pedestrians that are easy to navigate. We want to achieve a site that has connections throughout so disabled people can use all areas of it. Also, the design of open space must be navigable for disabled people. For example, outside London Kings Cross Station may look accessible, but is not accessible for visually impaired people. We need continuing dialogue to ensure complete accessibility.

AC At the end of June the engagement process will start with all stakeholders (public, civic trust, business and yourselves)—4 stakeholder events will be held. Their feedback will be given to the design team.

DR asks what 'rating' will be given to the access needs of disabled people during the consultation phase.

SH Good design can be inclusive, £135 million has gone into this site. This is a newly designed infrastructure, so it is easier to make accessible than older sites.

DS Principle of this design needs to be who **can't** use it? Disabled people, including wheelchair users are at the top of the hierarchy of road users. We can't allow public opinion to make decisions on behalf of disabled people.

AC Backbone of project has already been designed in. There is already a design guide. These are reserved matters. The access consultant will reach out to the Access Forum.

MC Access consultant is very good thing. But lived experience of disabled people is that even new design can have flaws. The importance of weighting for disabled people is essential. Shifting private car use is problematic. She asks if the publicity given for the scheme can refer to disabled people and how their car needs will be incorporated. She advises that on 11th July a policy advisor to South Africa on universal design will be

	<p>speaking at the Centre for Applied Human Rights in York and extends an invitation to attend.</p> <p>IP Network Rail and CYC Diversity Impact Assessments will force the development to do something.</p> <p>AC Language is car light not car free.</p> <p>LT Agrees with MC. She was involved in the Station Gateway project and is aware of the mistakes made there. We need to give disabled people another form of access into the area. Lots of shared spaces can make people feel unsafe. You must Include disabled people before planning is completed.</p>
5	Actions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DS and ML to meet AB to clarify where the new bridge is. 2. Site visits to York Central for disabled people to be organised 3. The Issues raised today to be fed into the design and planning process at an early stage 4. ALL to bring more accessible slides at next meeting 5. DS to liaise with speakers in relation to organising future meetings 6. Today's presentations to be circulated to attendees.
6	Next Meeting
	Wednesday July 23 rd 10.30am – 1pm