

York Access Forum
22nd November 2023, 10:30–13:00
Hudson Room, West Offices and on Teams
Notes

Attendees

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Dave Smith (DS)	Access Officer, City of York Council (CYC)
Brendan Murphy (BM)	Senior Transport Project Manager (CYC)
Jan Tuson (JT)	Support Worker (CYC)
Diane Roworth (DR)	Independent
David Sweeting (DSW)	Avison Young
John Micklethwaite-Howe (JMH)	Barton Howe Associates Ltd
Anne Norton (AN) [Online]	YDRF
Emily Yates (EY)	MIMA
Vicky Dixon (VD)	Community Links
Louise Fisher (LF)	Community Links (Interpreter)
Iain Mitchell (IM)	TPT / York Sight Loss Council
Abi Willis (AW)	OCA Y
Flick Williams (FW) [Online]	Independent
Hannah Hardcastle (HH) [Online]	Accessible Arts and Media
Scott Jobson (SJ) [Online]	MySight York
Emma Brown (EB)	Avison Young
Lauren Talbot (LT)	YorSensory

Note takers

Sam Ross	Support worker to Will Orpin
Will Orpin	Apprentice, Access Team (CYC)

No.	Item
1	Welcome and introductions
	<p>DS Welcomed people in the room and on teams and introduced the purpose of the meeting. General housekeeping.</p> <p>FW raised a point that if the meeting is informal will it be minuted?</p> <p>DS explained that notes are being taken and will be passed around.</p> <p>Introductions by people in the room.</p>
2	Presentation – Brendan Murphy – York Station Front
	<p>BM: went through slides and highlighted that the project started on site one month ago and highway works will last for about a year (to include the demolition of Queen St Bridge).</p> <p>BM: North shed is where current accessible parking and short stay car park is. South shed is where platform 1 is where there is cycle parking.</p> <p>BM: On the left side of the photo would be accessible parking only (no other parking).</p> <p>BM: Visual guidance is provided in line with Network Rail's Wayfinding Design Guidance</p> <p>FW: – When will everything in blue zone (public realm) be submitted for planning?</p> <p>BM: – Scheme has received planning consent back in 2018/2019 – blue and red (Packages 2 and 4 on slide) to be completed by November 2024. Packages 3 and 5 will begin in November 2024 and will take a year to complete.</p> <p>FW: – Is this a done deal or has the detail of the public realm yet to go to planning?</p>

BM: Various planning conditions around the public realm are being discharged. Planning took place in 2018/2019. The detail was consented to in 2021.

FW: – Is there any point making comments if nothing can be changed? Expressed concern over the fact that at the planning stage we did not have access to the same detail as we have now.

BM: – the scheme was consented to but now need to determine surfaces, including test panels of paving, kerbing etc.

DR: – Has the planning been approved even if it makes it difficult for disabled people to negotiate?

BM: – yes, approved in 2021.

DR: hard to believe it was agreed when it proves so difficult for disabled people. Not a matter of surfaces but of people being able to safely navigate around the whole area. Frightening as someone with a visual impairment, given that pedestrians are at the top of the road user hierarchy.

IM: Need more detail – what does 'Obstacle free routes will be identified with visual information' mean? It doesn't talk about audio for people who have no sight. It seems to omit help for people with visual or hearing impairments. Concern expressed over ticket machines not standing out against the background. Lack of information about how these spaces will be primarily safe for disabled people, then accessible to get around.

BM: – Need to adhere to Network Rail's guidance (see above). During the planning process, consultation took place with groups including the Blind & Partially Sighted Forum and people with hearing impairments. Received 1400 responses from public (Statement of Community Involvement available on the planning portal). Has been carefully designed with the most vulnerable people in mind.

IM: – Re the Network Rail guidance: This is guidance only, not best practice, but the bare minimum. Forum's such as this should be involved to ensure best practice.

This is a great opportunity to show off York as a city that does what is best for human rights not just following minimum guidelines and also informed by people with lived experience of navigating these areas.

BM: Although planning has been agreed, can provide the technical specifications used, as it may still be possible to change certain elements and building work is yet to start.

FW: Requested planning reference to access relevant docs and decision meeting on portal. Confusion expressed over things not being able to be changed whereas lots of things have changed in the process so far (e.g. Queen St resident spaces, North Shed access for British Transport Police (BTP) vehicles).

BM: Technical drawings and specifications can be made available. Queen's Street parking removed for safety due to potential conflict between cyclists and parking. Tea Room Square at the station is owned by LNER, so CYC had to accede, despite trying to persuade LNER to make it a pedestrianised zone.

FW: But CYC owns the public realm around this. Concerned that pedestrians have to cross many cycle lanes and that cycle lanes are bi-directional on both sides of the road. Explained that transport for London guidance suggests a reduction in bi-directional cycle lanes and that cycle lanes should be narrowed behind bus stops to slow cyclists.

VD: Concerned about safety for hearing impaired people trying to cross multiple bus lanes. Have hearing impaired people been consulted over the design and whether they'd be able to navigate the current plans? Should be co-production.

DS: What can still be influenced?

BM: Locations of where things are e.g. cycle lanes can't be changed, but the details of them (width, configuration, materials etc.) can be.

VD: If the layout can't be changed at least make the surfaces soft so that when they get knocked over at least they land on soft surfaces. REMOVE??

DR: Need a safe route through and to be able to independently negotiate areas from the station to the city centre. Not a great introduction to the city for disabled visitors. Requested a tactile model be produced to enable a review of hazards and what layout will minimise hazards so the route is negotiable by everyone. Cyclists have a safe route through, but pedestrians do not.

BM: – Will check whether that can be done and feed back.

AN: No one reached out to YDRF about the planning.

BM: – Confirmed that consultation was in 2018/2019

DS: Agreed to forward the details of the engagements to the group.

AN: Given the move of accessible parking to further away from ticket office and Changing Places toilet, is it possible to provide seating (per guidance – every 50m)? Can accessible parking be available near the changing places and accessible toilets?

BM: Seating – BTP don't want seating as it encourages anti-social behaviour, therefore they had to compromise on the seating. Can share where the seating will be.

BM: - Currently negotiating with Network Rail re retaining some of accessible parking in North Shed.

AN: – Have cyclists been consulted over the bus stop bypass changes as it looks like it could be easier to stay on the road?

BM: The scheme was planned with more vulnerable cyclists in mind (e.g. those on adapted bikes, unconfident cyclists). Serious cyclists unlikely to use the bypass lane.

LT: Agree with DR and IM. Having a cycle lane next to a bus stop is not good for visually impaired people. Concerns over tactile paving needs to be right. Tactile route used by local residents to get to/from station, but very difficult for people getting off the train who are not familiar with the city.

IM: Road user hierarchy has been turned on its head. Concern that vulnerable cyclists are being prioritised over disabled people and other vulnerable pedestrians. Safety issue of people trying to cross cycle lanes.

IM: Can we see the level of consultation that was taken with the visually impaired people?

FW: Why do cycle lanes need to be bidirectional, forcing pedestrians to cross a double cycle lane? Concern that cyclists may not stop and that many disabled and older people would struggle to get across on a light change. Changed orientation of bus stops (so glass is next to kerb) makes it harder for a) the driver to see a waiting wheelchair user and b) a wheelchair user to see when a bus is coming.

BM: The orientation of the bus stop could possibly still be changed.

DS: Request BM review these notes and highlight what we can still influence and then have a dedicated meeting to discuss those options and find out what the time scales are for that.

DR: Reiterated request for tactile model.

FW: What influence has DS been able to have on decisions?

DS: Has had consultations with LNER about decisions regarding blue badge parking in North Shed. Requested EV charging. Highlighted increased distance to ticket machines and CP toilet and required seating. Received response that they may put an accessible toilet in the First-Class lounge (but only accessible when lounge open). Fed back re drop-off/pick-up taxi area not being under cover. Objected against the residents of Queen's Street (including disabled people) losing their parking.

We have campaigned over quite a few of the issues but felt like the consultation with LNER was a tick box activity.

FM: What about all the public realm?

DS: We can still look at this.

DR: Is it possible to look at how the bus interchange is designed? Could be made very user friendly if we can input into it.

BM: – Agreed and asked for the details of how that could work.

IM: Audio bus stops to be put in place.

AN: Queried the inclusion of sets in various places which are very uncomfortable for wheelchair users and potentially not pleasant for cyclists. Also asked about the road when it goes into Queen St. as the pavement is very narrow. Concerns around congestion if cycle lanes on both sides.

DS: Layby in front of Queen St to be incorporated to widen.

BM: Bridge demolition will be from Spring 2024. Procurement of materials has a 6-8 lead-in unless coming from abroad.

Agreed Actions

1. **DS** to send group the notes from this meeting.
2. **DS** to send group the Statement of Community Involvement
3. **DS & BM** to meet to identify what can still be influenced
4. Group to meet again once 3. Above completed.

4	<p>Discussion – Emily Yates – David Sweeting and John Micklethwaite-Howe – The Square: National Railway Museum</p>
	<p>Introductions made by EY, DS, JMH and EB</p> <p>JMH – Asked if people are familiar with where the site is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Space currently used as a storage area and parking space. • Part of the site is a road. Old buildings on two sides of the square. • Aim is to make the space as pedestrian friendly as possible. Only deliveries will have access into the space. • A new building will be built to bridge the two existing buildings. • Adapted cycle spaces included (about 20%). • NRM proposing outdoor seating area with café. • Difference between upper and lower level is about 3.5m. • Average gradient on North side 1:28 • Everywhere will be wheelchair accessible and compliant. • Planning went in end of July 2023. • Additional planting and cycle loops have been put in since planning. • The space can also be used for events as well. <p>EY – Shared updated diagram on screen to show how the bollards now follow the curve. Bollards have been reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 cycle hoops near Mineral office building. Green landscaped area added near Central Hall. <p>EY – What would make the Square inclusive for you and your accessibility requirements?</p> <p>FW – Concerns over shared space with cyclists and cyclist behaviour where there are segregated cycle lanes.</p> <p>EY – Colour contrast of cycle lanes and tactile contrasts between cycle lanes with signage for cyclists to slow down and give way.</p> <p>JMH – Explained that the cycle lane includes curves which means that cyclists won't be able to travel at such speed. Expressed concern over cycle lanes being places next to bus stops not giving enough space for pedestrians. In the Square there is a lot more space for pedestrians which should prevent people spilling over into the cycle lane.</p>

DSW – There will be an option for cyclists going down Hudson Boulevard of two paths in.

FW – Expressed interest in a crossing point where cyclists are forced to stop.

JMH – Explained this creates a change in hierarchy that says to cyclists that if you are not being told to stop by lights that you have right of way. From watching cyclist behaviour in shared areas like outside York Minster generally speaking the behaviour is good and courteous. JMH emphasised that the idea is to make the space available for as many people as possible.

EY – Explained that they have had the same discussion about people who have no vision at all and how they tackle this problem.

DS – Explained that for visually and audio impaired people need to know they can cross the spaces safely.

EY – Asked if its possible for DSW and JMH could send over updates to YAF.

DR – Explained that vast areas of no pavements make it difficult for visually impaired people to navigate. Asked if there are two routes for cyclists is there a need for the shared space as well?

What features are being designed into this to help visually impaired people navigate the area.

DSW – Principle of the second cycle route was approved 4 years ago. To remove it is very difficult contractually. It is something they will discuss.

JMH – Textural changes will help guide people using a cane. If this needs improving this can be done at the design stage. The planning does not show these textural differences.

EY – Another thing being implemented is a tactile map but tactile paving needs to lead to the tactile map.

DS – Asked how YAF can be involved in the detail stage of the process?

DSW – Could be in a workshop or this type of forum.

There isn't a blank canvas on the site because of current mitigations in place.

DS – What can we influence and can we have a forum to discuss those options?

	<p>DR – Suggested bringing in the mobility officer in York to help bring suggestions of how people can navigate places in York.</p> <p>FW – Explained that the issues have occurred in both situations because a lot of the detail is not available at an early enough stage to influence.</p> <p>DS – Emphasised this is an ongoing issue that we bring up as people with disabilities are often not consulted until too late in the process.</p>
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