

York Access Forum (YAF) Meeting
23rd July 2025 10.30am -1 pm
West Offices City of York Council (CYC) and on Teams
Minutes

Attendees

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
In person	
Diane Roworth (DR)	Independent YAF Chair
David Smith (DS)	Access Officer CYC
Laura Swiszcowski (LS)	Head of Equity Diversity +Inclusion CYC
Christine Kyte (CK)	Support Worker (CYC) – note taker
Marilyn Crawshaw (MC)	York Human Rights City Network +York Disability Rights Forum (YDRF)
David Carr (DC)	York Carers Action Group
Barbara Fairs (BF)	Deputy Chief Executive Mysight York
Hilary Boon (HB)	York Sightloss Council volunteer
Iain Mitchell (IM)	Senior Engagement Manager Thomas Pocklington Trust
Allan Cook (AC)	Arlington Real Estate Developers
Online	
Srish Arjen (SA)	Independent +YDRF
Sian Balsom (SB)	Healthwatch York Manager
Julie Day (JD)	Wilberforce Trust rehab specialist
Flick Williams (FW)	Disability rep on Enhanced Bus Partnership Forum
Jake Furby (JF)	Equality, Diversity +Inclusion Advisor at York St John Uni. York LGBT Forum
Duncan McIntyre (DM)	iTravel Programme Manager CYC
Apologies	
Anne Norton (AN)	York Disability Rights Forum
Rachel Barber	Living 4 Moments

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>DS summarised contents of YAF updates document which had been circulated to attendees prior to the meeting. Questions and discussion followed as below.</p> <p>2.1 WAV vehicles</p> <p>MC Uber have a 5-year contract. Does this contract include requirements to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV)</p> <p>DS I will clarify this with Dave Cowley licensing officer. If they have 99 vehicles, they must have at least one WAV.</p> <p>SB Highlights the changes in non-emergency patient transport nationally. Some people are no longer eligible for this and there may be a lack of WAV alternatives for them. So, the concerns about Uber not providing WAV may compound the problems for people trying to get to medical appointments. Concerned that Yorkshire and Humber Integrated Care Board do not realise the lack of community transport options for people.</p> <p>FW Agrees with SB and raises the issue of medical appointments being offered in Selby. It is 19 months since there was a Dial a Ride service in York and CYC are not addressing this. When Uber were given a licence in 2024, it was for 1 year and then to be reviewed. She gave evidence to the licensing committee that ride sharing companies reduce the number of WAV in the rest of the fleet. She was disappointed that the licensing decision was made by delegated officer decision and not a full meeting of licensing.</p> <p>2.2 York Central. DS advised he was now invited to the FW: Hudson Boulevard doesn't meet the seating standard agreed for the city. It provides benches with an open end. But they don't have enough room for wheelchair transfer adjacent to the end of the bench. This is a worrying start to the scheme.</p>

	<p>DS confirmed he had sent them the accessible seating guide and remained in dialogue with them. However, now on site there are 7 separate designs all of which are inaccessible. This has been highlighted since installation.</p> <p>DR Echoes disappointment about the amount of effort that goes in to agreeing accessibility standards without resulting in a good outcome for disabled people</p> <p>IM 6-8 months ago he had asked DS for Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for Station Gateway, but has not received any information.</p> <p>DS Acknowledges IM's request advising that the relevant officer is no longer in post. DS will follow up.</p> <p>Castle Gateway DS highlighted the positive involvement of YAF in the plans now being submitted for approval.</p>
3	<p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy - Laura Swiszcowski, CYC Head of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p>
	<p>3.1 DR welcomes LS to her new role and the meeting, stressing the particular importance of the EDI Strategy to this group.</p> <p>LS talked through Power Point slides shared during the meeting and sent to attendees. Additional information below:</p> <p>The EDI strategy was approved on 15th July 2025 and has 5 objectives. Public consultation on the strategy closed on 3rd March. Her post started on 5th March whereupon she synthesised the responses from the public to ensure feedback was embedded.</p> <p>Objective 2 is going beyond no discrimination to ensure best practice.</p> <p>Objective 3 Human Rights Equality Impact Assessment (HREIA) is unique as no other organisations are using this tool.</p> <p>Objective 5. We have an ambition to be excellent in the Local Government Equality Framework.</p> <p>3.2 Re table summary of key deliverables: and success measures</p> <p>Over 30 champions have been recruited, 2 parts to their role:</p>

1. Be trained on the tool and ensure that their teams use its screening process to look at the impact of any change in service across the protected characteristics.
2. Signpost colleagues to advice on human rights and EDI and to further information about their job e.g. doing HREIA

First training session was on 7th July. In 2 weeks, there will be training on being a trans and non-binary ally. Champions will have training quarterly on a range of EDI and HR topics.

Recruitment and Progression EIA. This covers all protected characteristics, seeking to find out what barriers staff experience and how to address this. EDI training will have a strong anti-racism focus. EDI should be built into training plans and be in -person training. Aim for a reduction in staff and service user complaints.

3.3 Disability Equity Training. This was set out in the Social Model of Disability (SMD) paper. We want to implement this model

3.4 HREIA Tool. Currently impact assessments tend to be done last minute and by one individual. It will become part of performance development review for heads of service. Also aiming for heads of service to be signing off EIA. HRE Board will look at random samples of assessments to monitor quality. We will start a repository of completed EIA. Tool to be used as part of forward plans in CYC e.g. in early discussions about service change. All service plans to have at least 1 EDI objective.

Questions.

SA Is intersectionality of experience included in all areas?

LS The training provider will demonstrate this in training and it will be made clear in the training specification. The general EDI training is around intersectionality as people tend to think in silos. LS is mapping training which exists across CYC to use existing good practice as well as using external training ideas. Intersectionality is in the screening tool.

DS We haven't been good at collecting EDI data which doesn't help.

IM Cultural change in a bureaucratic system is extremely difficult but there is evidence of CYC not following the social model of disability. How will you hold CYC to account?

LS Leadership accountability came out of the public consultation. We will use staff to hold us to account via champions and staff networks. Get the Leading Together group to do training and track who attended.

In Performance Reviews staff must demonstrate that they have done HR and EIA's.

There is a change in leadership currently which gives an opportunity to get senior leaders to hold each other accountable. Also, groups like this. There should be a working group of Assistant Directors that reports to the corporate EDI group. Culture change takes time.

DR Is there a mechanism for recording noncompliance?

LS Not currently but there should be. We should turn away an inadequate assessment. She will work with new Head of Governance to ensure HREIA's become "business as usual".

DS We have processes, and we give accessibility advice, but the response often is that CYC needs to consider the needs of many people.

BF What will the practical outcome of attitudinal change be? For example, we need to ensure people who can't use online methods can be included in consultations etc.

DS The Access Team will use multiple formats if a consultation comes through us. But CYC does 100s of consultations.

LS CYC recruited a communication officer for the EDI consultation which made it more effective.

FW Cites the Leader's executive decision to remove CYC from X as how not to do an EIAI. Her complaint was not followed up. She asked if elected members included in this training They do not make the reasonable adjustments that have been requested in public participation.

LS Elected members are included in the EDI training. She will look at best practice for training on EDI for elected members and replicate that and work with Cllr Lomas as Inclusion Lead on how that training is tailored.

	<p>DR Asks for more information about the HREIA tool.</p> <p>LS The tool is a screening which looks at how protected characteristics and human rights intersect and what are the impacts of the change being assessed. There is a form and a guidance document which tells you how to use the tool. The completed form will be attached to key decisions and reports. Current guidance is too long – 26 pages – so needs reducing. The tool needs to be made more accessible and then will be shared with YAF.</p> <p>MC The limitations of the consultation should be in the report i.e. who wasn't reached during the process.</p> <p>MC is happy to share a document on organisational change used successfully in the past. A key part was regular opportunities to share positive and useful resources and information. YDRF has made a toolkit of resources about Human Rights and the Social Model of Disability. This may be useful for staff and could be made available. This was supported by DR, who said that it could also be useful to YAF member organisations and individuals.</p>
4	<p>Making bus transport accessible for all – Duncan McIntyre iTravel Programme Manager</p>
	<p>DR introduced the session by highlighting the pressure on people to use bus services, yet little progress is being made on making bus services accessible to disabled people.</p> <p>DM Shared Power Point “Making bus transport accessible for all “previously circulated. Additional information below.</p> <p>This presentation will be about the ‘tracker’ compiled to show progress on issues relating to bus accessibility. DM described his role at CYC as a go- between on many travel schemes.</p> <p>He explained the 3 levels of governance in terms of how decisions are made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bus Enhanced Partnership (BEP) Forum which has a strategic role. Members are CYC, bus operators, and representatives from around the city. 2. Operational Delivery Group (ODG) which discusses what schemes need to be done and when, and approves funding. Members are CYC and bus operators.

3. Different themed groups including Bus Ticket Group, Marketing Group, Passenger Liaison Group.

EP Forum meetings were not going well as no one had an answer to the queries raised at the meetings and there would be a big delay in getting a response. So, a Task + Finish group was set up to deal with this. This group created a tracker which lists issues and progress.

Driver training can be difficult to change as some schemes are national, but work is being done to identify the content.

DS Gives more detail about plans at Park + Ride sites including improved signage and way finding and more Electric Vehicle charging points in Blue Badge parking spaces and Changing Places toilet provision at 2 sites. He also explained a new development which would allow disabled people who had been refused entry onto a bus, to be provided with the option of a taxi. Final details to come soon.

Questions regarding the 'tracker'.

FW The figures relating to audio real time information at bus stops don't seem correct, does this include the 6 new bus stops on Cinder Lane.

DR Audio is essential to visually impaired people when using buses so it would be good to know which stops have it. Also, where the push button unit is, as many blind people would not be able to find it. Can we be more constructive in how we publicise audio at bus stops?

IM The system used is REACT. This can work on 3 platforms – push button, fob or on an app. But people may not know they need to find an app to use the audio. Also, QR codes on bus stops can be used by some people.

DS E-ink display is poor for people with visual impairment.

FW Thanks **DM** for his work. Also, the taxi initiative is very positive. But where is the discussion about the tracker taking place? The BEP has been cancelled today and it may be reduced to meeting only twice a year instead of 6 times.

There has been no data on access refusals since February. First buses have a persistent problem in not providing the information. Between July 2024 – Feb 2025 there were 140 refusals to wheelchair users. First need to be made to show

their figures and with the reduction in frequency of the BEP meetings how will we keep bus operators accountable?

Re iTravel website – good that this has been updated to reflect issue re mobility scooter users. Please can you confirm on this website the following statement “anyone trying to board a bus with their mobility scooter folded as luggage does not require a scooter permit”. Have First agreed to this wording on the website?

DM Yes, the wording comes from First. The scooter user needs to be safe driving on and off a bus. So, if the scooter is folded the issue isn't there and you don't need a permit. First have confirmed that.

MC Does the wording say you don't need to show **your** permit rather than **a** permit? This implies that the scooter owner needs to have a permit but doesn't need to show it. The point is that they don't need to have one.

DM agrees that the reduction in the BEP meetings is an issue for the tracker. So, we need another way of looking at the tracker that is accountable. He will discuss this with the Partnership.

DS Suggests a Tracker Progress group to keep on the work of the Task + Finish group. Raises concern that standards of York BEP forum are being reduced, and there are additional worries now that we are part of the Y and NY that our standards will be reduced.

MC Alarmed by reduction in the BEP meeting frequency which ignores the terms of reference and accountability of the group.

DR echoes concern about accountability. On the tracker there are at least 13 points where more feedback is needed. What mechanism is there to gather this feedback? There are so many different groups involved, how do we bring together the feedback on bus related issues for disabled people?

FW Unless bus operators are at meetings, they are pointless. she had raised the number of access refusals with the Mayor in April. He had not been able to get this information although he had asked for it. So, we need to keep pressure on bus operators who are not subject to Freedom of Information requests. CYC must require them to answer questions and give

	<p>information. She said she would like to know how many applications for scooter permits there have been since a very public access refusal last Jan.</p> <p>DM said he updates the tracker and sends out emails to chase others for information. He looks through the issues to see if anything can be added to workstreams which deal with the issues.</p> <p>DS Recommends that future bus meetings have appropriate council officers in and are coproduced.</p> <p>DM The Passenger Liaison Group purpose is to improve how we get feedback from people around the city. CYC does small events around the city to get people's views about buses. DM checks that these events are reaching enough people. The data collected is presented to the ODG. YAF members can attend Passenger Liaison Group meetings. He said that he has not organised a meeting of the Passenger Liaison Group for a while and needs to do that</p> <p>DS suggested that the Passenger Liaison Group might be the place to monitor the Tracker, but whichever forum was used, there needed to be accountability, so CYC members and officers needed to attend and take action.</p> <p>IM asked if the terms of reference for the Liaison Group could be circulated.</p> <p>DR Advised that we need to get more input from disabled people on the accessibility of bus services. She explained that the York Bus Forum is independent bus users group, and they would like more disabled members. Information will be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>DS The Task + Finish group on community transport is currently looking at how to reignite a service like Dial A Ride.</p> <p>MC and FW raised wording about home visits on the scooter permit page.</p>
5	Any Other Business
	<p>E-Scooter and e-bike service</p> <p>MC York Sightloss Council, Mysight York and YDRF were approached by Lime Bikes implying that an e-bike and e-scooter service is to be started in York. A CYC officer has been</p>

	<p>asked to look at feasibility of a service restarting. Concern that no disabled groups had been consulted about this first. Lime has appointed someone working in this region,</p> <p>IM CYC Deputy Leader said that disabled groups would be involved prior to restarting e-bikes. We have contacted the Executive Member for Transport without a clear response yet.</p> <p>DS I have had reassurance from Cllr Ravilious that we will be involved in any decision-making process.</p> <p>MC This involvement should take place before an officer scopes out companies for a service, which is in line with doing an EIA at an early stage.</p> <p>DR suggested that the YAF write to the Executive Member for Transport asking for DPO's to be involved at an early stage, as they have much valuable information based on past experience and the experience of other cities.</p> <p>MC First Bus Community Engagement. The Community Engagement officer for First buses has contacted YDRF requesting setting up regular meetings with disabled people in the city as he has been doing in Leeds. She has suggested he contacted YAF instead of YDRF. YAF await that contact.</p> <p>SB Healthwatch. Sian was sad to report that Healthwatch is ending in October 2026. This was greeted as very bad news. She will share a petition about this with YAF in due course. It is hoped that another mechanism can be found to do this work.</p> <p>DR and FW express sympathy, and hope that Healthwatch role can be continued in some way.</p> <p>DS has met with Carl Wain to see how we can continue to have independent scrutiny in CYC.</p>
6	Actions
	<p>DS will clarify details about Uber's 5-year contract, specifically in relation to WAV, with Dave Cowley.</p> <p>DS will give IM name of Council officer to contact about the EIA for Station Gateway.</p> <p>MC to share document on organisational change and resources from YDRF toolkit with LS.</p> <p>LS to share HREIA tool with YAF members</p>

	<p>DM will check the accuracy of the figures shown in his presentation in relation to audio real time information at bus stops.</p> <p>DM will work with DS, IM and My Sight on a public guide on audio at bus stops which YAF members can promote.</p> <p>DS speak to Richard Hampton about the accessibility of e-ink.</p> <p>DM to change wording about mobility scooters on the iTravel webpage to say you don't need to show a permit if you have a folded mobility scooter.</p> <p>DM will raise with the BEP that another means needs to be found to keep account of the issues on the tracker</p> <p>DM to look into attendance at tracker progress group.</p> <p>DM will follow up whether there are home or local visits for scooter permit and how this is worded on the website.</p> <p>DM to circulate TOR of Passenger Liaison Group to YAF and organise another meeting..</p> <p>DM Will ask for scooter permit data from First buses.</p> <p>DR Information about the York Bus Forum to be circulated with the YAF minutes. YAF members to encourage disabled people to join the Bus Forum.</p> <p>ALL Send suggestions about dealing with the changes in the BEP forum to DS,</p> <p>DS Will find out which CYC officer is scoping for e-bikes.</p> <p>DR/YAF to contact Cllr Ravilious about process of involving disabled groups when researching e-bike services for York,</p>
7	Next Meeting
	Thursday 25 th September 10.30am – 1pm