York Access Forum

23rd July 2024, 10:30–13:00

Hudson Room, West Offices and on Teams

Notes

Attendees

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Dave Smith (DS)	Access Officer, (CYC)
Christine Kyte (CK)	Support Worker (CYC) – note taker
Diane Roworth (DR) Chair	Independent
David Carr (DC)	York Carers Action Group
Anne Norton (AN) [Online]	York Disability Rights Forum
Dionne Grover-Jacques (DG) [Online]	York ME Community
Anna Baldwin (AB) [Online]	York Macular Society
Flick Williams (FW) [Online]	Independent
Scott Jobson (SJ)	MySight York
Belle Whitely (BW) [Online]	Sight Loss Council
Greg Morgan (GM)	Active Travel Transport Planner CYC
Matthew Costa (MC) [Online]	Lead landscape Architect BDP
Katie Peeke -Voute (KP) [Online]	Head of Regeneration CYC
Simon Cording (SC) [Online]	Landscape Architect BDP
Steve Wragg (SW)	Highways + Asset Management CYC
David Mercer (DM)	Highway Engineer +Design Mgr CYC

Apologies

Alison Wheatley	York Carers Centre
Marilyn Crawshaw	York Human Rights City Network
Iain Mitchell	Thomas Pocklington Trust/York Sight Loss Council
Janet Dale	Shopmobility
Srish Jain	Independent
Lauren Talbot	YorSensory

No.	Item
1	**Welcome and introductions**
	DR Welcomed everyone, gave apologies and asked all present to introduce themselves. **DS** General housekeeping re room and etiquette for hybrid meeting re questions, use of mic etc. **DR** outlined meeting schedule and handed over to first speaker.
2	**Castle Gateway presentation by Matthew Costa BDP**
	PowerPoint summary of information shared over Teams during the meeting and paper/digital copies shared with all attendees prior to meeting. **MC** Still early stages of project design. Changes have been made to initial brief in order to create a greener space and 30 Blue Badge (BB) parking spaces. Currently in stage 2, approximately ¾ of the way through concept design, several months before the next stage which is planning design. There will be engagement through the whole of this process. Aim is that it is an accessible space for everyone focussing on 3 key themes: new green space, heritage and importance of water in the site. 1. Unique design of a green circle around the city. Streets around the Eye of York are busy with constraints on space. New design for Eye of York is to make an

	accessible green space that will provide respite for all and allow for a range of uses within this space. E.g., when play facilities are put in, they allow sufficient space for wheelchairs. 2. Heritage- strategic position historically e.g., entrance to the castle. 3. Story of how the role of water shaped this site and the importance of York (confluence of Foss and Ouse). Blue area around Clifford's Tower to represent Moat. Presentation then looked at how the design meets accessibility requirements across specific parts of the site: • Improved junction with Castlegate. Aim to reduce the width of the road and widen the pavements. Widen the crossing and make it as accessible as possible. **MC** suggests a raised table, but highlights the need to look at this in detail e.g., kerb heights, tactile surfacing etc. • New car park is only for BB parking which will also make the area more pedestrian friendly by reducing vehicle numbers. There are options for the configuration of BB spaces. Comments about design and location welcomed. • New riverwalk and new footbridge (part of Castle Mill scheme). • Create 3-4 m direct footway access to museum and court from Castlegate. • Eye of York space – don't use bollards to manage vehicle access. Find other ways to limit vehicle access only to vehicles using the court and maintenance vehicles for the museum. **AN** Consideration needs to be given to BB holders so they can park within 50m of court or museum, as 50m is minimum walking guidance. Consider the needs of disabled museum and court staff. Also asks if improving drop kerbs is on task list. **MC** Will explore reprovision of BB parking to see some spaces are within 50m radius of court. Kerbs will be redesigned so they are fit for purpose. Eye of York space will be resurfaced. **FW** Removal of bollards is positive. However, concerned about taxis being able to drop off and collect from the court and museum. **MC** Currently there is a taxi drop off in Tower St area. Need to look at how that works. Need to make sure that the site is as

	accessible as possible. Suggests a follow up session to look at how to configure the BB spaces and details for taxi access. **DC** Asks if there will be water around Clifford's Tower. Water creates a long-term maintenance issue. **MC** Water will be referenced through the planting design. In certain areas rain gardens may be created to reduce the flow of rainwater from the car park to the Foss. Currently working on cost plan to estimate ongoing costs of maintenance requirements over the next 10 years. **DR** Echoes **AN**'s request for BB parking close to museum and appreciation that this has been taken on board by **MC**. **MC** Reiterates that accessibility is key element of this design. Suggests a follow up meeting in @ 2 months to see how many of the forum's questions have been addressed within the ongoing design. Then **MC** continues with looking at specific areas of the site. There are some existing narrow pavements but in new design the narrowest pavement or crossing with be 2.1m. There will be 2.1 m in front of the BB spaces and 3.1 m on Clifford's Tower side. Current BB parking on Tower St is not fit for purpose. New design will ensure that the spaces in Tower St meet modern standards. **FW** As in her original planning objection, still concerned that the BB spaces which are in front of the Hilton Hotel may be used for loading and deliveries. As the Hilton hasn't objected to the plans this may indicate that they will carry on business as usual i.e., use BB spaces for loading etc. **MC** will speak to the Hilton again about their loading requirements. They have a dedicated loading area north of the entrance to the hotel. **MC** will check that this meets their requirements. If so and they don't stick to using the dedicated loading bay, then strict enforcement is needed. **FW** Echoes that enforcement is crucial. **MC** Moves on to topic of crossfalls. No steep falls in this area. However, there is a lot of street clutter near the Tower St crossing. Aspiration is to install a wide level crossing area with a raised table. Feedback from the forum requested on this. There should be reduced numbers of

	vehicles in the area because they won't be coming in to use the car park. **FW** In favour of raised tables if they have the correct paving at either side. They have the additional benefit of slowing vehicle speed. **DS** Agrees with **FW** point above and adds the need for consistency of road design across York. The images shown on the PPT aren't suitable from an accessibility perspective. They were presented to workshops looking at the design for Front St Acomb and rejected. So in principle raised table is a good idea but **MC** needs to continue to consult with the forum on the detail of these tables. **MC** agrees to further joint work on the look and feel of raised tables and to include Julie Stormont Dawber and **DS** in this work, using what they have learnt from previous consultations on access for other York projects. **MC** agrees with the need for consistency in design across York. **AB** Agrees that raised tables are a good idea and this contrasts with the new crossing from St Georges Car Park over the inner ring road. This is not a raised crossing and is dangerous for her to negotiate with a stick. **DS** asks **MC** if there are any specific areas of design he would like feedback on due to limited time remaining. **MC** All routes are being made as compliant and accessible as possible. All gradients are being improved by profiling the ground to make a better crossfall. E.g. the route from Castlegate to Eye of York will be altered from 1:30 to 1:40 or 1:60. Remaining topic is rear of museum. Proposal is for a new boardwalk to connect Eye of York to new bridge over the real Foss into Piccadilly. Plan is for boardwalk to be 3m wide. Surfacing needs to be slip resistant. Suggests that this is also discussed at next meeting with Forum. This location also needs the agreement of the Environment Agency. **FW** Encouraged by **MC** presentation as he is obviously considering accessibility in a way not considered by the previous scheme. Seeks clarification about location of pedestrian and cycle bridge into Castle Mills. Reassured that there wont be fast moving cyclists neat the new BB parking. **FW** feels that most of the BB spaces (17) should be closer to Castlegate.

	MC Confirms that the boardwalk will not be a cycle access route. Cycles will not be going through Eye of York space. **GM** Asks how the connection onto Castlegate and Coppergate relates in terms of access to this new development. **MC** CYC currently talking to Coppergate owners about their service yard. **MC** will add information about accessible toilets in that area to the new presentation. **AN** Asks MC if he is aware of a plan to improve route for pedestrians over Skeldergate Bridge, Bishopsgate and Tower Street (as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan). **KP** Advises that CYC Highways and Transport are still looking at improving the pedestrian connectivity between Tower St and Skeldergate Bridge. Pedestrian facilities are of highest importance and anything to improve their accessibility is welcome. **DR** Requests that the remaining time focus on design of BB spaces **MC** BB parking options: 1. 13 spaces near Coppergate and 17 spaces near Castle Museum. This creates a large central open green space. 2. 17 spaces near Coppergate and 13 spaces near Castle Museum. This option means that the open space will be smaller. Comments requested. **DC,DR,DS**,and **DG** all preferred Option 2, but recognised the value of more open space. (**FW** had earlier expressed the same preference). **MC** advises that there may be a hybrid option that works for all. So the 17/13 split may not be the only option **DG** Expresses concern about having BB spaces set back behind greenery due to safety concerns. Prefers spaces not to all be together. **MC** Advises that as part of the planning application he will speak to the Design Out Crime Officer. Also, site will be illuminated and include CCTV. This is another area to cover in the next presentation. **KP** There will be a public engagement event on 7th September which will be publicised in mid-August, followed by more

	engagement later in September. **KP** will liaise with **DS** to ensure these events are accessible and that they are publicised in an accessible way. **Actions** **MC** Topics agreed as part of follow up meeting of Forum with **MC**: • Correct use of loading bay outside Hilton Hotel. Update from **MC**'s discussion with Hilton. • Forum to advise on detail of raised table design. • Timing of taxi access to Court and museum. • Surface of boardwalk • Update on accessible toilets at Coppergate • How safety is being included in design of BB spaces. • Further update on configuration of BB spaces e.g. is there an option 3? **KP** Check accessibility of publicity for engagement events with **DS**. Check accessibility of engagement events with **DS.**
3	**Foss Island Roadworks**
	DR Outlines concerns due to effect of roadworks on access for disabled people. Suggests that initially forum members give their views about this, followed by CYC members explaining how it happened. **FW** expressed concern that this means it is not going to be redesigned and that she feels it is completely unacceptable. **DR** clarifies that the current forum can point out the difficulties to the CYC members as there is not the time and space to redesign a scheme in this meeting. Requests that CYC members introduce themselves and outline their role. **SW** Head of Highways and Asset Management. This team is responsible for delivery of projects and maintenance schemes. This covers construction and street lighting and drainage. Also manages one of the CYC design teams (which **DM** works in). **DM** Highway engineer and design manager. Manages the team which designed the Foss Island project. **GM** Travel Transport Planner who was involved with the consultation during the process. Present in this meeting as an observer.

SW asked that he and **DM** could speak first. **DR** reiterates that forum members want to give their feedback on the scheme as it stands. But agrees that **DM** can give a quick timeline.

DM Objective was to improve cycle services following accidents mainly with vehicles and cyclists. Closely linked with Navigation Walk and Cycling Improvement scheme.

(PPT presentation shared on screen at this point).

Project stages starting in 2020:

- Navigation Road made one way to control amount of traffic in this area.
- Foss Islands Road had a lack of offroad cycle and pedestrian facilities. Disjointed route for cyclist and pedestrians. Lots of conflict between vehicles in and out of Travis Perkins and wine merchants on Foss Island Road. This led to accidents, and action needed to be taken to remedy this.
- Extensive consultation on this project in 2020 – online, leaflets and press releases led by Andy Vose.
- Report taken to executive members in Feb 2021 and approved.
- 2021 Detailed design process.
- October 2021 One way plug scheme implemented on site.
- January 2023 local safety scheme completed and put to Transport Board in February 2023.
- May 2023 new administration appointed. Project budget held up.
- Scheme issued for implementation October 2023. Additional checks made – extra drainage and resurfacing.
- Final approval by Transport Board May 2024 and works started on site.
- 14.6.24 Contractor pulled off site as street works permit had expired. Servicing outside Travis Perkins and Wine merchant not finished. Lots of complaints at this point. Works finally completed 25.6.24.
- Internal discussion with executive member. Agreed to take a review of the scheme to check it is compliant with guidance. Not undertaken yet as waiting for safety audit. Will soon be reporting back to executive member with findings.

FW There are multiple issues. Effectively a no man's land has been created where pedestrians on Navigation Road have

	cyclists criss-crossing them from both sides. Too many conflicting movements at this point. Made worse by positioning of a lamppost near Travis Perkins. Pedestrians and wheelchair users need to look in 2 opposite directions at the same time. Also anyone visually impaired has cyclists crossing in front and behind them as they try to cross. Disabled people are now saying this is a no-go zone. Safety relies on 100% perfect cyclist behaviour. Although some disabled organisations were consulted, this was during lockdown when many disabled people were overwhelmed with managing day to day living. **SW** Thanks **FW** for comments and notes that he has seen comments on her Twitter page. Refers to road safety audit where this site will be looked at in the round. There is an expectation that cyclists will obey rules of the road. There has been good feedback from the cycle campaign as reported by Tom Horner , head of accessible transport. **DS** Expresses frustration as he was nearly hit by a cyclist when filming in this area. Cyclists vary in their behaviour as do any road users. However, it appears that you cannot raise concerns about cyclists' behaviour in York without being ridiculed. Disappointed that Tom has said this is an accessible area. For example, the corduroy surface should mean that the pedestrian is walking into a pedestrian only space. The blister tactile pavement is for visually impaired people and it needs to be in the correct place so that they can navigate the footway as safely as possible. There is a lack of awareness about how disabled people interact with the environment. This is why we need officer training. One of the corduroys in this design leads visually impaired people into the road. Aim of this session is to come to some resolution so that schemes like this are not implemented in the future. **DR** Has also visited the site. The no man's land is very difficult to negotiate so she is handing over her safety into the hands of cyclists. Guidance is to avoid shared spaces. Segregation between cyclists and pedestrians either by difference in level or raised white line. If disabled people had been able to contribute earlier in this scheme, it may have been more suitable for us. **SW** Confirms respect for the views expressed. Enlightened by **DS** comments about the corduroys pointing towards the road.

	Goes on to give information about the structure and processes related to developments. All highways and transport schemes go via Transport Board, chaired by head of Highways and Transport Michael Howard , **SW**'s reporting manager. Schemes go through a Project Management Overview (PMO) process. The initial discovery part of this governance process gives all the relevant parts of the authority a chance to feed in. It seems like this has been a little lost and the views of the community aren't getting fed in at that stage. Construction, Design and Management regulations are where you go through feasibility, design and delivery. There are gateways between these stages where the board sign off the project. If there were issues it would remain at that stage until a solution was found. Catherine Bushby who started October 2023, manages this PMO process. She is refreshing the process. The new Council administration has a new transport strategy. This is looking to include the views of this group active travel and everything surrounding public transport. Now is a good time to flag up that some people's views are not being represented in this process. CYC should do this through **DS**, separate to this meeting, but this is a pledge to everyone that we can take this forward. We need to make sure that disabled people's views have input at the very beginning of the process. **AN** Pre Access Officer post why was there no process for access arrangements e.g. consultancy? Can we make sure that **DS** gets relevant information so there is not a repeat of the current issue. Also what access training is there for the department? **FW** Raises Inclusive Design training. Disabled people shouldn't have to police the Council about this. It should be done as standard. Also raises the excessive use of tactile paving in this project e.g., use of 6 tiles where 2 would be enough. Tactile paving is essential but it should be proportionate as it causes problems for people who find it painful underfoot. This again shows a lack of understanding of inclusive desig **SW** We need to review what's happening re the new Transport Strategy. Catherine Bushby is already reviewing all that is

	currently in the programme. Again, we need to have that discussion with Michael Howard and **DS** to see if there is anything in progress that needs to be reconsidered. Agrees about the training. There is money that can be used for this. Requests **DS** to help with recommending training providers. Internal highway guidance needs updating. The new work under local transport strategies has given the opportunity to do this. There will be considerable funding to review the guidance due to the new mayoral set up . **DS** Helene organised 2 training session for highways team which were well attended. York Access Guide is also being worked on.T his has been presented to highways. Their response is " we have the red book". **SW** Only been in post since March 24, so after the highways training. His understanding is that the training focused on transport side of the team and is needed across the whole team i.e. highways and design. Red book is Dept of Transport guidance re traffic management and signage for roadworks and projects 2013. New version expected which will have more about access. We can develop local variants and take them through our governance processes. Health and safety advisors attend all schemes and put notices on if we are not compliant with their rules. **DS** In 2023 as part of the local action plan following the Martin Higgitt report, an executive decision was made to complete the Access Guide. **FW** Welcomes **SW** embracing need for inclusive design and accepts funding constraints. However, disabled people are the most vulnerable road users and the metric often used is accident data. But if a wheelchair use collides with a cyclist the police would not make an accident report. **GM** has been charged with producing a policy document for **SW** on how we improve signage for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclist around roadworks in the city. **Actions** **SW** Ensure **DS** is involved in each stage of the new transport strategy so that access needs are embedded in the PMO.

	SW, DS and Michael Howard to meet to check if there are any existing projects that need to be reviewed in order to improve accessibility. **SW** Arrange Inclusive Design training for whole team. Consult **DS** and **FW** about training providers
4	**Work Plan**
	DR Asks for comments on the draft workplan she has shared with group members. As there are no comments/amendments requested **DR** says she will take it forward as it is. **Action** Work Plan to be followed over next 12 months.
5	**York Station Gateway (YSG)**
	DS has tried to get a formal update on YSG from Brendan Murphy (Transport Project Manager) and Gary Frost, (Head of major Transport Projects) with no response. So **DR** contacted Councillor Kate Ravilious (**KR**), executive member for transport. **KR**'s response was that a lot of the requests made by the Access Forum have been adopted. No final report has been published. The scheme has already been approved and the recent changes won't require executive approval, but she will check governance re this. No specific timeline given, but **KR** doesn't think there are further gateways at this stage. **DR** expressed that we don't know which elements that the forum requested have been incorporated. **DC** Should issue of floating bus stops be raised with **KR**? **DR** These were raised in the meetings about YSG as a major issue for disabled people, but it appears to be too late in the process to address it again. The most appropriate way to address this in the future can be directed to **KR**. **BW** Requests that the Access Forum see any Equality Impact Assessments for YSG. **DS** This can be shared again. It may not have been updated since the workshops. **FW** Growing concerns about YSG. Due to a change of executive member for transport, issues covered in previous meetings will be lost to institutional memory. So even when

	concerns have been raised in the earlier stages of project development, they may not be realised in the final stages. Suggests taking a different stance in communicating with executive member e.g. by writing to express disquiet that the Forum are still not being involved adequately. **DR** Will contact Brendan and circulate response with the Forum. **GM** Raises national Federation for the Blind video on safety and accessibility in active travel design. This confirmed that bus islands failed most users. He feels this also applies to zebra crossings. The changes being made to YSG for bus stop bypasses are much better than guidance in LGM120. **FW** Research shows that zebra crossings on cycle tracks are not being respected as per the law. Concerned about Active Travel recommendations for push buttons on cycle tracks. These use a camera which waits for a gap in cycle traffic before the person can cross. This is inverting the transport hierarchy. Also discussion in CYC planning committee on 22.7.24 which has unrealistic expectations of how to change cyclists' behaviour. **Actions** Equality Impact Assessment re YSG to be shared with Forum. **DR** Contact Brendan Murphy for update re YSG and share his response with the Forum
6	**Access Guide**
	DR Any comments about the Access Guide, send them to **DS.** Please bring your own experience to bear in helping to develop this guide.