

York Access Forum (YAF)
25th September 2025 10.30am -1 pm
Craven Room, West Offices and on Teams
Minutes

Attendees

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Diane Roworth (DR)	Chair Independent
David Smith (DS)	Access Officer, (CYC)
Marilyn Crawshaw (MC)	York Human Rights City Network + York Disability Rights Forum (YDRF)
David Carr (DC)	York Carers Action Group
Christine Kyte (CK)	Support Worker (CYC) – note taker
James Ryan (JR)	York Central lead for Highways
Andrew Harrison (AH)	Communications Team CYC
Helene Vergereau (HV)	Head of Highway Management CYC
Jane Freer (JF)	Blue Badge Manager CYC
Brett Britton (BB)	Streetworks Manager CYC
Online	
Dionne Grover-Jacques (DG)	York ME Community
Flick Williams (FW)	Independent
Srish Arjen (SA)	Independent + YDRF
Jake Furby (JF)	York St John University
Barbara Fairs (BF)	My Sight York
Hil Boon (HB)	Sightloss Council
Struan Cameron (SC)	David Bonner Associates (DBA)
Shannon Keys (SK)	David Bonner Associates (DBA)
Apologies	
Sian Balsom	Healthwatch

Name	Organisation (if applicable)
Anne Norton	York Disability Rights Forum

No.	Item
1	Welcome and introductions
	DR Welcomed all and asked them to introduce themselves. General housekeeping re room and etiquette for hybrid meeting re questions, use of mic etc.
2	David Bonnet Associates
2.1	<p>DR welcomed SC and SK who would talk about their role in making York Central a place that is accessible for everyone.</p> <p>SC Speaking to presentation. DBA have been appointed by McLaren and Arlington as design consultants for Phase 1C of York Central masterplan. SC's interest is in inclusive design and has been employed by DBA since 2013. He has a family member with cerebral palsy. Now in charge of operations and project coordination. Apologies given for Alan Pottinger.</p> <p>SK Experience in disability related fields including mother who is deaf. Has a Masters in Disability Studies and a Diploma in accessibility and inclusive design. Has worked at DBA for 10 years</p> <p>DBA was founded by Dr David Bonnet. He grew up with polio and drawing from his lived experience and professional expertise as an architect established DBA in 1994. Team includes architects, interior designers, landscape planners, surveyors. They combine a detailed understanding of legislation and standards with an insight of how people move through and experience spaces.</p> <p>DBA has contributed to British standards including The Urban Design Guide. DBA has contributed to the Stratford Olympics Athletes Village where their role was to embed inclusive design from the earliest stages. Most of the masterplans worked on have been in London, most recently Earls Court and Canada Water. This is an example that could be compared to York</p>

	<p>Central in terms of size. DBA role is not to draw the designs but to advise the design team and the client on accessibility from the start; ensuring routes are step free, gradients are manageable and the connections between buildings and public spaces work for everyone.</p>
2.2	<p>DS has attended pre- application meetings where key concerns have been raised, and DBA are working with the team to incorporate as many of these recommendations as possible. The feedback given to the presentation on 18th September was extremely valuable. Next consultation is 6th October at National Railway Museum which DBA will attend.</p> <p>DBA's appointment is limited to the reserved matters application for Phase 1C,</p>
2.3	<p>MC The London examples shown are for areas with a very different transport infrastructure to York.</p> <p>In York we use the term cycling, walking and wheeling rather than just cycling and walking and it would be great if you could use this also.</p> <p>MC asks - In these schemes how did you ensure access for people with limited mobility? Also how did you successfully challenge developers when disability related "hiccoughs" came up?</p> <p>SK Re the first question: it is about advising people about the good practice guidance. E.g. if there are long distances between entrances and drop-off consider mitigating factors such as seating at regular intervals so people can rest (where there are constraints that make reducing the distance difficult).</p> <p>MC Agreed that this was the sort of thing needed. But also consider that they may not be able to walk a long distance if they are carrying something.</p> <p>SK At this stage we are not at detailed design, so it is difficult to comment on what is going to come but advising for principles to take forward as design develops. We consider the design of seating, surfaces, segregation between modes of movement, so people feel comfortable and safe and can distinguish between these different elements. At this stage</p>

	<p>sometimes the detail isn't there, but these are principles that we advise broadly.</p>
2.4	<p>SC Re second question the key instrument is developing inclusive design codes but there haven't been any inclusive design codes produced for the York Central masterplan and that is something that we would encourage the York design team to do. We try and promote the voices of disabled people and can set up a consultation group.</p> <p>DR asked for clarification of the Inclusive Design Guide for York Central?</p> <p>SC We have provided our scope and deliverables for Phase 1C. We need to speak to the client moving forward on the project and that is something we will be suggesting.</p>
2.5	<p>SK Re the topic of Blue Badge spaces., also identified in the consultation - this is something that the client and project team have to discuss further. DBA advises in terms of proximity.</p>
2.6	<p>DS At the pre planning meetings I raised signage and wayfinding around the site and was told that wayfinding experts are involved. However, there are some experts outcomes which are very challenging. What advice are you giving about navigating the space?</p> <p>SK This is difficult to answer. The spaces are designed to be intuitive but that doesn't eliminate the need for signage. It is finding that balance between well laid out spaces that are easy to navigate without over reliance on additional things that are confusing. At this stage it would be advising that they look at good practice guidance such as BSAD 300. There is a sign design guide updated recently and a colour light and contrast manual. I'm recommending that they consider these key principles re viewing height. We are not at detailed design stage yet and I don't think they've got signage proposals available for us to review.</p>
2.7	<p>FW Outlined how, prior to DBA involvement, she had had had to convince elected members that it was essential to have red tactile paving at a controlled crossing. Also, we spent a lot of time creating an inclusive seating design which the Access</p>

	<p>Officer provided to York Central partners. This was basically ignored, and seats do not meet the agreed design.</p> <p>SC The seating guide has been forwarded to McLaren, and they will be taking that forward in future benches. We agree that a lot of the seating is not accessible.</p> <p>FW Outlined how, prior to DBA involvement, she had had to convince elected members that it was essential to have red tactile paving at a controlled crossing. Also, we spent a lot of time creating an inclusive seating design which the Access Officer provided to York Central partners. This was basically ignored, and seats do not meet the agreed design.</p> <p>SC The seating guide has been forwarded to McLaren, and they will be taking that forward in future benches. We agree that a lot of the seating is not accessible.</p>
2.8	<p>DS Returning to wayfinding:-people have different levels of intuition. Navigating the space independently is really important to disabled and non disabled people. Even though a space may be designed to be intuitive, we still want signs we can read. We are not at that level of detail yet, but wayfinding goes hand in hand with designing a step free environment. I can't seem to find out who to invite to talk to us about the wayfinding strategy. We do want to be included in its development.</p>
2.9	<p>DR asked for clarification regarding DBAs length of engagement in York Central. Is it just for the Reserved Matters Application (RMA) only?</p> <p>SC When the Reserved Matters Application for Phase 1C is submitted it is for the client to approach us if they want us for the next stages of the project. There is no fixed date for the RMA for phase 1C yet due to delays with certain plots.</p>
2.10	<p>DS Asks SC to summarise what is included in Phase 1C.</p> <p>SC On the south side there will be a new hotel which will connect to a new Western Station Entrance. Outside the hotel will be Coal Drops -a public realm space. There will be food and beverage on the ground floor of the hotel which will lead onto this public space. To the west of the Coal Drops will be the Innovation Hub -an office building of 5-7 storeys. To the west of the site will be 2 residential plots E and F. A central</p>

	<p>park running from north to south will sit at the middle of the scheme. To the northeast of the site there are 2 residential plots which include townhouses.</p> <p>DR There are a huge number of different elements to York Central. Are there other opportunities for people to contribute to the final plan that will be submitted?</p> <p>SC We will need to touch base with McLaren about further consultations. There is a public consultation on 6th October at the NRMet.</p> <p>DS Can you keep us up to date about the advice you are giving?</p> <p>SC We need to speak to McLaren about what further meetings will take place in the next couple of months.</p> <p>DS I will pick that up with Tom. We would like to be involved in as many different elements that we can.</p> <p>DR If it is possible for you to send us information, we would dearly like to receive it.</p> <p>DS Struan what do you think were the key messages to take away from last week's York Central workshop?</p>
2.11	<p>SC DBA and McLaren's notes are being compiled, and the design team are meeting today face to face to review the feedback from the session. We are not party to that, but we have a follow up call with McLaren today or tomorrow. Blue Badge (BB) parking is first on the list.</p> <p>SK Seating also although that is more of a detailed design.</p> <p>DS Key items were: - toilets, accessible housing and the unavailability of blue badge parking next to this, and at the hotel and the rear entrance to the station. Also concern about the road train, which is taking up space. Concern about conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists on the route from the cycle hub to the station. There is concern that the notes are not written and agreed, and that a meeting is taking place without reference to them.</p> <p>FW The workshop also raised access from the west side of the station going up the footbridge then down to platform 9. Then requiring people to find lifts to go down to the subway to get to</p>

	<p>the other side of the station. I know the application does not cover the internal arrangements in the station, but it is very relevant. Not least because of all our concerns about the lack of BB parking.</p> <p>DS We need to consider BB holders living on the site and visitors and access for carers. We were told that all who attended the meeting would receive a summary of the points taken away. When will that be available?</p> <p>SC Confirmed their minutes from the 2nd session had been submitted and asked for CK's. He thought Anastasija was taking notes for McLaren.</p> <p>DS There was an agreement that they weren't going to meet until all the notes were received. I understand that they need to meet quickly but I don't want any of the notes to be missed.</p> <p>SK will confirm with McLaren.</p> <p>DR I appreciate you have arrived into a plan that is partly complete and your ability to change certain things may be limited. But you can tell from the strength of feeling that accessibility is something we are very keen to ensure. Thank you for coming and we would appreciate further opportunity to hear from you.</p>
3	Report back from last meeting. E-bike and e scooter scheme
	<p>DR Feedback on a task from the last Access Forum meeting which was to communicate with Kate Ravillious Executive Member for Transport about this scheme. Cllr Ravillious' response was:</p> <p>"I'd like to reassure you that we are not looking to introduce any e-scooter or e-bike scheme in York. Currently we have recently appointed a new head of projects Josh Singer, and he is putting together a priority programme of works over the forthcoming year. We haven't currently got the resource to explore e-scooter or e-bike schemes, and our priority is to progress the schemes for which we have funding for.</p> <p>Lime approached us last year and came to York to demonstrate their products to myself and officers. We have not</p>

	<p>followed up on this since then. Any approach that Lime have made to yourselves or others has been instigated by them. They appear to be aggressively commercial, which I confess puts me off working with them. If and when we do consider micro mobility schemes for York, I will ensure that we involve the Access Forum at the earliest opportunity. And take into account the valuable lived experience that members can bring.”</p> <p>This is a positive response which will be circulated with the minutes.</p>
4	Guaranteed Wheelchair scheme
4.1	<p>DS Gave background to scheme, which means that when a wheelchair user is refused access to a bus they will have the opportunity to call a taxi which will take them to their onward destination. CYC has funding for the first year as a trial and is working with York Station Taxis because they have significantly improved the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in the city.</p> <p>Process of scheme:</p> <p>If a wheelchair user cannot board a bus the driver will give them an A5 sized card with the drivers ID, time and date of issue, bus route and refusal code. The passenger then makes a call to York Station taxis to book a taxi instead. If they are unable to make a call the bus driver should make it on their behalf. The call for a taxi must be made within 30 minutes of receiving the card. The caller will tell the call handler that it is a bus refusal. The caller will be informed of the wait time for a taxi, and they can decide whether to wait for the taxi or get the next bus.</p> <p>DS showed map of York boundary bus stops which will be the extent of the route that taxis will take passengers before charging for the remainder of the journey</p>
4.2	<p>FW Expressed appreciation of this huge step forward. but added that no update on access refusals had been received since February. She hoped bus companies would not misuse the scheme as the only acceptable codes were those that identified another wheelchair using the one space, or another bus passenger refusing to move, or the bus being full.</p>

	<p>FW gave an example of where she had alerted a bus driver to a wheelchair user waiting at the stop where students had already boarded, and he had to ask some students to disembark to allow the wheelchair user on board. So, if the bus is full to capacity, the driver may think they can just issue a taxi card. When will it come into operation, do we know the budget and what happens if the budget is reached before the end of the year?</p> <p>DS Budget is £5,000. Based on the number of bus refusals at present that is enough for a year. There is a wider conversation to be had about the categories. This is an officer decision not an executive decision.</p>
4.3	<p>MC Agrees with FW 's points. She said it feels like the penalty is going to be met by the Council, yet they are not responsible for the refusals – it feels uncomfortable that the bus companies are getting away with it.</p> <p>Re the Card, it should say “driver must complete”.</p> <p>What are the sanctions against a driver who refuses to do it?</p> <p>Re refusal figures, most First Bus refusals come under the full to licence capacity which doesn't tell us whether the wheelchair space is in use. Add a column to say if a card was provided.</p> <p>DS Drivers should present their ID. There will be a complaints process built in when we do the full instructions.</p> <p>FW Stated that as a visually impaired user she had never been able to get the identifying number if the driver. So, take a photo of the front of the bus or rear if it is departing. This gives you the bus number, registration number and the photo is time stamped.</p> <p>SA What about when buses just pass by because in that scenario a wheelchair user won't be able to get a card. And it relies on them having a phone ready to capture information,</p> <p>DS I will add that to the list of things to talk about in the internal meeting which will include driver training which will be needed to get the drivers to understand how the scheme works.</p>
5	<p>City Centre works and its impact on Blue Badge holders.</p>

<p>5.1</p>	<p>DR welcomed Helen, Brett, Andrew, and Jane.</p> <p>HV introduced the team who deal with street works – when the road needs to be dug up and repairs made. They would like feedback on the process by which they communicate when works are taking place, how best to do it and how much in advance to ensure they reach as many people as possible.</p> <p>They know from the Access Forum that if there is an impact on either of the BB loops, people need to know.</p> <p>BB CYC would never choose to close both loops.</p> <p>FW The 2 loops are not interchangeable. I wonder about the effectiveness of sending out letters due to the length of time it may take to receive them. The bold yellow warning signs are effective. Is it possible to trawl through the data you hold on BB holders who access the city centre and prioritise those people for letters?</p> <p>HV said they don't have that data and would have to ask permission to record it. They currently record the number of people who come through the gates, but not who they are.</p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>AH Could we have a leaflet for Gough and Kelly staff to hand out to those using the gates?</p> <p>DS Targeting people who regularly use the gates is a good strategy. The leaflets are a good idea, but it isn't a replacement for the 5 principles that where there is a significant impact on BB holders, we would reach out to all on the registry.</p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p>DGJ When people are applying or re- registering for a BB could you ask people how they want to be communicated with e.g. by email, text, or post?</p> <p>JF There is already an option for people to state their preferred method of communication. The data is held at the application level not at the applicant level. We can't amend this because it is set on the manage blue badges government website. It could be put on the paper application. To get the data to do the mail shots they run a report on how many BB holders there are. It is currently above 8,000 for CYC. They write to about 1,100, the other 7,000 are on email already. It is not a problem writing to</p>

	these 1,100 people when there is a significant reason to do so. We just need to identify what this is.
5.4	<p>AH In terms of the channels we use there are emails for individuals and groups such as the Access Forum, letters, social media, website information, signage on the road, handouts, and local media. One issue is that so many are late notifications, so CYC needs to let organisations know that they need to give more notice, unless of course it is an emergency</p> <p>DR We should email 7000 people and explore ways to contact the others (in the ways you have suggested). Also, put something on the website so people can see where the road closures are. This would benefit other people who don't have BB. It could also apply to other information relevant to people travelling in York e.g. when bus stops are moved. Whilst we are discussing this issue could we extend the email system to anyone who wanted information about a road closure? Because for visually impaired people a road being dug up is going to impact their journey through the city.</p>
5.5	<p>AH There is a 'One Network' system that we encourage people to sign up to. This is online and available to people in and outside York. You can request notifications for when there are roadworks in a certain area.</p> <p>HV Feedback as to whether this system is accessible as it is via an external supplier would be appreciated.</p> <p>MC JF supplied us information about One Network as part of her update on BB and it was sent out to YDRF members. We need to consider how to keep this at the forefront of people's minds e.g. with regular updates. E.g. a standard insert that goes out with everything to prompt people.</p> <p>JF We can look at this in the next communication with the BB network.</p> <p>AH On Streetworks template One Network is referenced on every letter.</p> <p>DS Closure of any BB loop requires us to contact all BB users. as does closure due to an event in the city. If it is an emergency, we still email all BB users.</p>

<p>5.6</p>	<p>AH Does the length of time of the closure affect the approach?</p> <p>FW CYC is watching costs, but we don't want to deny people something that they might really need, so I think this is one example where the Council needs to make its decision.</p> <p>HV We are not asking you to decide. We are listening to your views before deciding.</p> <p>FW Ideally everyone would be contacted including those who have requested to be by post.</p> <p>MC Length of time before the closure would be one guide to whether to post out to people.</p> <p>AH It takes about 2 weeks to prepare the comms so, if we have a 2 week window prior to the event we can do emails and letters at the same time.</p> <p>BB Road closure standard is 12 weeks' notice.</p> <p>AH Sometimes a planned project doesn't go ahead so ideally a letter would land 1-2 weeks before the work starts. Hopefully, this will help give us a framework for the utility provider as well.</p> <p>HV Even for events that last less than one day we can let people know.</p> <p>DS Make It York will be doing some comms once the Executive have decided the days the BB loop is going to be closed because of the Christmas Market. Make it York are responsible for paying the communications costs.</p> <p>AH Asked if there are any other organisations that cover York and North Yorkshire that can help publicise more widely.</p>
<p>5.7</p>	<p>DS Advised they have worked with the web team to identify websites and relevant pages where these announcements need to go. 2 days if needed for this.</p> <p>DR 12 weeks' notice is a key thing because a lot of organisations produce newsletters on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>FW Access during the Christmas Market has not yet been revealed. This is particularly important given the length of the road closure due to Yorkshire Water.</p> <p>DS Make it York is waiting to hear from the Executive about their plans for closures this year.</p>

6	Any Other Business
	<p>York Station Gateway</p> <p>DR advised that Matt Lewis from Network Rail has confirmed that there will be an additional 6 BB spaces in the current north shed location. This will mean a total of 12 spaces. However, what will happen to the 12 spaces that were going to be in the southern end of the station is unknown. As is whether there will be EV chargers.</p> <p>FW This is good news, the fear is that we may lose the new ones in the south. The BB spaces in the north shed are being abused by Uber drivers. This needs to be rectified by LNER.</p>
7	Actions
	<p>ALL to use the term cycling, walking and wheeling rather than just cycling and walking</p> <p>SC/SK update DS about ongoing York Central developments including the Inclusive Design Guide for York.</p> <p>DS Change wording on wheelchair taxi scheme card “driver must complete”.</p> <p>DS to raise issue of buses driving past without stopping internally, and to bus operators.</p> <p>AH Follow up re leaflets about road closures which can be handed out at barriers to BB holders.</p> <p>JF Reminder about One Network to be sent out with BB communications.</p> <p>JF/AH BB holders who prefer information to be sent by post will be informed by post of all planned road closures providing they have 1-2 weeks’ notice of closures.</p>
8	Next Meeting
	2-4:30pm Wednesday 26 th November 2025