

Brief History of Lendal Sub-Station

- A1 The former electricity sub-station adjacent to Lendal Bridge has reverted back to council ownership since being decommissioned in 2004. The sub-station is a Grade II listed building constructed circa 1920 by the then York Corporation. It has been operated by various electricity boards in the interim and was finally decommissioned by Northern Electric Distribution Limited (NEDL). The building has a gross floor area of 105 square metres (1139 sq ft.) and comprises one large split-level room, the raised section of which formerly housed the electricity board's equipment and a very small storeroom. The building forms part of the city's flood defences and following decommissioning the Environment Agency made some minor alterations to the raised section of the floor to partially fill in the now empty equipment trenches and to the inside of the windows on the side of the building facing the river to bolster its flood-protection properties, they also installed a water-tight door between the main room and the storeroom. The building is currently not connected to a water or electricity supply and has no sewerage connection, however, it does have a telephone connection.
- A2 The Council's Property Services section investigated the feasibility of converting the building to a visitor centre, although feasible, this proposal was rejected due to the significant cost of converting the building. Following the rejection of this proposal the option of selling the building was investigated. At this point the option of the use of the building as a secure cycle parking facility was suggested by the Micklegate Ward Members. The Council's Local Transport Plan includes an option to open a secure cycle park on the periphery of the city centre where cyclists would pay a nominal daily fee to have their cycle stored under cover in a staffed facility. A cycle park would offer a more secure and weather-proof alternative to locking a cycle to a Sheffield stand in the city centre. A secure cycle park facility in or close to the city centre was also one of the recommendations of the former Planning & Transport EMAP Scrutiny Panel's recent report on Cycling in York. This recommendation was subsequently included as a policy in the most recent Cycling Strategy produced for the second Local Transport Plan.

Outcome of the Feasibility Study

Private Sector Interest

- A3 The Council would find it difficult to operate the cycle park itself, therefore it was necessary to assess whether there was any private sector interest in operating the cycle park before undertaking any further aspects of the study. Eight out of thirteen local cycle-related companies contacted expressed an interest in operating the cycle park. They all suggested that the parking fees collected from cyclists would not be sufficient to sustain the operation on its own and suggested other cycle-related activities they would like to offer on-site to supplement their income and make the venture commercially viable such as cycle hire, cycle repairs, cycle sales, changing and left luggage facilities.

Similar Facilities Elsewhere

- A4 The desk-top study of other similar cycle parks in the UK and abroad showed that for a facility to be commercially viable other services such as those listed above are essential. The facility's proximity to the city centre or public transport interchange was also a critical factor to its success. The charging levels for other cycle parks tend to be at or below £1 per day which would indicate that there is a ceiling price, above which, cyclists are not willing to pay to park their cycles.

Building Location & Capacity

- A5 The building is located just south of the River Ouse off the Inner Ring Road and less than three minutes walk from the edge of the "Footstreets" area. Modelling has shown that the majority of key city centre sites, shops, and offices are within an 8 minute walk of the sub-station. The building is also located on Route 65 of the National Cycle Network (NCN) which also forms part of the Trans-Pennine-Trail coast-to-coast route. The site would be convenient for intercepting cyclists entering the city from the south and east and in particular the Blossom Street corridor that accounts for 21% of cycle movements during the morning peak. A further 23% enter the city centre via the Bootham corridor, a smaller percentage of these will then cross Lendal Bridge to reach their final destination therefore there is the potential to target these trips as well. The cycle park will have less appeal to those approaching from the north or east for whom the existing city centre cycle racks are probably a more attractive proposition.
- A6 The building is large enough to accommodate approximately 100 parked cycles on the raised concrete plinth with the remaining ancillary activities and toilet facilities / rest area occupying the remainder of the ground floor.

Potential Demand

- A7 A small market research exercise was undertaken to gauge current users of city centre cycle parking's potential transfer to the proposed cycle park. A sample of 43 people were surveyed at various locations throughout the city centre. A summary of the main findings is below.
- i work and leisure trips accounted for 75% of all cycle parking demand;
 - ii the average walk times to their final destination was in the region of 4½ minutes;
 - iii almost half could have undertaken their journey by car;
 - iv the most important factors of cycle parking were availability and the provision of a secure stand;
 - v a £1 charge to use the cycle store appeared to be acceptable to most users;

- vi respondents were only willing to walk 5 minutes from the cycle park to their final destination;
 - vii only 9% of respondents would have used and paid for the cycle park; and,
 - viii the main reason for not using the potential cycle park was the adequacy of their current stand and/or it being located on the wrong side of York for them.
- A8 It is very difficult to assess the levels of suppressed demand for such a facility as many of the potential users are probably not prepared to bring their cycles into the city centre currently due to not being prepared to leave an expensive cycle locked to a Sheffield stand out in the open. They may, however, be prepared to pay to have their cycle stored securely under cover at a staffed facility.
- A9 Similarly, it is difficult to assess the potential use by cycle tourists who wish to leave their cycles and luggage whilst they explore the city unencumbered. The proximity of the cycle park to the National Cycle Network and Trans-Pennine-Trail should help to raise the awareness and subsequent use of the facility by cycle tourists. The levels of tourist trade will also fluctuate across the year because of the seasonal nature of the market. There will also be the opportunity to advertise the cycle park's location on both Sustrans publications and Trans-Pennine-Trail marketing materials to raise the profile of the facility to cycle tourists.
- A10 Many of the larger city centre employers provide cycle parking at their own premises but there will be exceptions and there may also be some that are over-subscribed therefore there is the potential to attract commuters.

Use of the Roof

- A11 Structural Issues - As there wasn't sufficient time or funding available to undertake a full structural survey of the roof only a visual survey was possible. The roof appears to be in a good state of repair from the exterior, there are some small areas of ponding where surface water has not drained away (all surface water on the roof drains away towards the river side of the building through cut-away sections and guttering). Inside the building there is some evidence of damp penetration along some of the roof beams and on the river elevation, however, this is most probably due to the exterior guttering being blocked and broken thus causing rainwater to run over the façade of the building. The thickness, integrity and design loading of the concrete roof slab is not known, however, it should be possible to strengthen the roof. The additional loading of the roof will also have an impact on the building's foundations, the exact design of which is not known but they are most probably shallow spread brick footings due to the proximity of the building to the river. Further investigation would be needed both to assess the integrity of the roof and the capacity of the foundations to take the additional roof loading.

A12 Access Issues - There will be problems to be overcome to satisfy the Disability Discrimination Act requirements due to the difference in levels between the floor of the café and the roof of the potential cycle park. It may be possible to build a ramp between the two buildings but this will add additional loading to the roof and will also reduce the available space for the roof terrace. An alternative solution was put forward during the discussions to turn the building into a visitor centre which involved building a bridge between the roof and Lendal Bridge but this was rejected on conservation grounds as the fabric of the bridge would be altered. Another issue would be one of access to toilet facilities, these could only be located on the ground floor thus taking more space away from the cycle-related activities and in order to access these from the roof either a staircase or a lift would need to be installed, both of which would add significantly to the cost of the project.

A13 Design Issues - Another issue relates to the bridge parapet which is insufficiently high enough to be suitable and the fact that an inner parapet would need to be constructed, this would keep users away from the edge of the roof with its drainage cut-aways. The design of this inner parapet would need to be agreed with the relevant bodies. Concerns have also been raised about the visual impact of the furniture used on the terrace and any umbrellas canopies which would be used on the view of the Guildhall and riverside properties from the bridge. The storage of the roof furniture when not in use would need to be addressed both from a visual impact point of view and from a safety point of view in adverse weather conditions.