

Annex F

From: Pickles, Jonathan
Sent: 25 August 2006 14:55
To: Vose, Andy
Cc: Clarke, Tony; Stokes, Ian
Subject: FW: Clearance Procedure Report & Annexes
[Andy,](#)

As discussed earlier today, the e-mail below contains what was submitted to Network Rail for the Access ramp to Station Scheme. Please also find attached below the supplementary note to the report, which tries to answer some questions from GNER:



Network Rail
Clearance Procedu..

I'm hoping for a response from Network Rail on their discussions with GNER sometime next week. At that point I will try to establish when (and if) the report can be submitted for the clearance procedure, and whether they will agree to support, in principle, the planning application that we're hoping to submit for processing concurrently with the clearance procedure to save some time. I'll keep you informed of developments.

Cheers,

Jon.

-----Original Message-----

From: Pickles, Jonathan
Sent: 07 August 2006 09:47
To: 'joanne.mcclure@networkrail.co.uk'
Cc: Durkin, Mike
Subject: Clearance Procedure Report & Annexes

Hi Jo - thanks for calling back this morning.

Please find attached below a copy of the report text;



Network Rail
Clearance Procedu..

.....Annex A of the report - the planning drawing (from a previous version, hence the Annex B tag below);

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Annex B (dr).pdf

.....Annex B of the report, showing the path and cycle parking area;



Path and Cycle
Parking.pdf

.....and finally, Annex C of the report, showing the Network Rail Maintenance Vehicle swept path:



Maintenance
Vehicle Swept Path..

If you have any problems opening any of the above documents, please let me know.

Kind regards,

Jon.

Network Rail Clearance Procedure Submission

PROPOSAL FOR NEW ACCESS TO YORK STATION

Summary

City of York Council have aspirations to construct a new access to the city's railway station, and the purpose of this report is to facilitate the proposal being taken through the Network Rail Clearance Procedure. This report outlines the City Council's reasoned justification in promoting the proposal, and seeks to address the concerns and issues that have already been raised about the scheme proposals through previous discussions with Network Rail, GNER and the British Transport Police (BTP).

Reasons for Promoting the Scheme

The York Station Access Scheme aims to provide pedestrians and cyclists with a safer and more direct access to the northern end of the station. Currently, these people are faced with accessing the station at the rear (to the west) via stairs and a footbridge, or at the main front entrance (to the east) via a lengthy detour along busy roads. The scheme would be of particular benefit to disabled people with mobility handicaps, and it is estimated that around 55 disabled pedestrians per day might use this new access.

In addition to these obvious benefits for these three top user groups in the Council's Hierarchy of Transport Users, the scheme is also believed to have potential to contribute to many of the key objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan. For example, with the improved accessibility that this would provide, some existing car drivers would be more likely to walk or cycle to the station. So, as well as reducing congestion, there would be positive benefits for road safety, air quality, and quality of life issues. In addition, this could reduce the pressure on the current levels of car parking at the station.

The scheme is fully supported by Sustrans, as it would provide a high quality direct link from York Station to the National Cycle Network, and into key local and strategic cycle routes, whilst reducing accidents and congestion, as well as shortening cycle journey times.

The proposal also fits in well with the Government's 'Access for All' initiative, and a recent bid for additional grant aid funding has been successful, with an agreed grant allocation of £125,000. However, the timescale for using this funding is critical, as the grant can only be used for this scheme, and the funding is only available during the current financial year. It is therefore imperative that a firm commitment from all parties concerned is agreed as soon as possible in order to implement the scheme within the stipulated timescale.

Background to Scheme Development (Scheme History to date)

In 1999, Sustrans approached the Council about an idea they had been working on with Railtrack to provide improved access to York Station for cyclists and pedestrians. Their proposal was to create a completely new access into the station at its northern end. It was suggested that this could be achieved by building a new link from the existing path that runs from Scarborough Bridge through to Leeman Road (between the railway and the Post Office building). See the location plan in **Annex A**.

Following further development of the idea, a planning application to create the new link path, was submitted. Subject to various conditions, mainly relating to the protection of one specific tree on the rail embankment, planning approval was granted in June 2000.

Following this, a significant amount of discussion took place between the key organisations involved (Sustrans, CYC, and Railtrack) concerning the implementation of the scheme. Many difficult technical and legal issues were identified at this stage, particularly concerning the implications of building the path on railway land adjacent to a live track. Nevertheless, by the end of 2002, most of these issues appeared to have been resolved to a point where the main terms and conditions upon which a tripartite agreement between CYC, Sustrans and Railtrack could be set out to enable the scheme to proceed.

Having reached this point, the detailed design of the link path was progressed. Unfortunately, this revealed many further difficulties in actually building the proposed path on the steep railway embankment which is currently heavily populated with mature trees. The most significant problem identified was that the alignment of the path proposed by Sustrans would result in a gradient that would exceed the maximum put forward in national design guidance for accommodating people with mobility handicaps. This would be a failure in terms of meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It was concluded that an acceptable gradient could only be achieved by ‘zig-zagging’ the path up the embankment, and incorporating resting places (this revised alignment is shown in **Annex B**).

Unfortunately, this would necessitate the alignment of the path going outside the area of the embankment covered by the existing planning consent. Hence a new planning application would now be required.

Cycle parking is also a key issue within the overall scheme. We have previously explored proposals to have additional cycle parking inside the station, but this was rejected mainly due to a conflict with GNER’s future development plans, and concerns about cyclists riding through the existing car park. Providing cycle parking on the wooden decked area at the end of the existing car park has also been explored and discounted due to structural issues. The best alternative as suggested by Network Rail is to focus cycle parking on the ballast area at the end of the existing car park. The plan in **Annex B** also shows that approximately 180 cycles could be accommodated within this area.

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As a result of the technical difficulties of building the proposed path and the additional costs of building a covered cycle parking facility, the estimated cost of the scheme has increased considerably to around £375,000. Within this there are some costs that cannot yet be accurately quantified, such as dealing with some underground cables, which are known to cross the line of the proposed path. Therefore, this represents a major investment and significant commitment by City of York Council and central Government to improving access to the station.

Current Concerns and Issues

There are a number of key concerns and issues that the City of York Council are already aware of through discussions with other relevant parties influential to the delivery of the project. These are discussed below:

1. *Safety Issues Within the Station*

Network Rail, GNER and BTP are all concerned that the proposed access may encourage cyclists to travel through the station car park in order to access the existing cycle parking provision at the other end of the station. This could create conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians within the station, but also between cyclists and motorists within the existing car park. To avoid these potential conflicts, the BTP think it would be best to physically prevent cycle access to the car park and station from the new access. However, it is difficult to see how this could be achieved whilst allowing both pedestrian and disabled persons access, which is a key City of York Council requirement. This is also a condition of the 'Access for All' grant award, as well as meeting the aims of the Disability Discrimination Act. Therefore, in order to remove the need for cyclists to enter the car park or station, it is essential that a good level of cycle parking provision must be achieved to serve the new northern access, so that its capacity is unlikely to be exceeded.

It has already been established that the ballast area is the favoured place to locate this provision. Network Rail have stipulated that any provision should be no less than six metres clear of the nearest railway track, including the associated security fencing that would be required to prevent unauthorised access into that area. Through recent discussions with GNER, their representatives recognised that the loss of a limited number of car parking spaces may be required in order to accommodate such an arrangement. Plans showing the proposed location of this new provision and the layout of the proposed access link can be seen in **Annex B** of this report. In addition, the plan in **Annex C** identifies the extents of the required six metre limit, and shows the swept path of a large vehicle, to show how a Network Rail vehicle would be able to access the track side to undertake maintenance work.

Other measures to deter cycling through the station, such as appropriate signing and 'disabled friendly' barrier arrangements, would be included in the scheme.

2. Security and Crime Issues

BTP and GNER have concerns that an extra entry point into the station could compromise security and lead to an increase in crime, particularly in the short stay car parking area, and fear that this could jeopardise the future retention of their current car park security award. These issues are probably best addressed in the following ways:

- suggested operating times (already accepted in principle by BTP and GNER) where the new northern access would be closed to the public between approximately 10:30pm and 6:30am;
- some form of barrier ‘chicane’ arrangement would be provided in order to limit the speed of cyclists on the access ramp, thereby making it less attractive as a quick escape route (as well as providing a deterrent to cyclists accessing the car park and station area);
- additional provision of CCTV cameras (linked to the Council’s central CCTV station, which is based and monitored at the Fulford Road Police Headquarters);
- lighting of the access ramp and the cycle parking area (again already accepted in principle by BTP and GNER);
- the general increase in pedestrian flow through this area and the associated passive surveillance should in itself help to deter the potential for criminal activity.

3. Maintenance and Repair of Access Ramp

A commitment from City of York Council to maintain and repair the new path and cycle park has been agreed by senior officers, and a formal agreement would need to be drawn up with Network Rail to set out the details.

Anticipated Timescale for Implementation

Within the current financial year (2006/07), £250,000 has been allocated by City of York Council to allow for detailed design and construction. This represents a significant proportion of this year’s capital funding for the Cycling Programme (representing approximately 52% of the total budget). In addition, we have secured a £125,000 grant from central Government. Crucially, the Government’s grant aid funding must be spent by the end of the current financial year. Therefore, given that the timescale for scheme implementation is very limited, we are extremely anxious to move things forward as quickly as possible to give ourselves the best chance to deliver the scheme in full before the end of March 2007 deadline. In broad terms, the timetable we must achieve is set out below:

- complete agreements with Network Rail and Train Operating Company end of September 2006;
- complete detailed design October 2006 and invite tenders November 2006;
- award Contract December 2006 and commence construction works January 2007;
- construction complete and ramp open to the public at the end of March 2007.

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Although detailed design is well advanced, a previous Planning Consent has since lapsed, hence the need for a new Planning Application to be submitted. However, in order to meet the above deadlines, we feel that it is necessary to submit this application concurrent with the Clearance Procedure. This carries a small risk if the scheme were to change significantly from the current proposal as a result of the Clearance Procedure, but it is considered to be worth taking to give the project a better chance of being delivered on time. Therefore, we would hope that Network Rail, GNER and BTP can support this planning application on the understanding that the scheme would only be able to proceed if the Clearance Procedure is successful, and all of the necessary agreements are put in place afterwards.

Closing Statement

Through recent meetings with the relevant organisations involved, City of York Council has sought to address all of the concerns raised, offer a reasonable alternative wherever possible, or provide a reasoned explanation where appropriate. As part of the initial Clearance Procedure, it is sincerely hoped that any remaining issues could be resolved through subsequent negotiation. The proposed access ramp and cycle parking facility promise to provide numerous advantages, apart from the principle aim of improving access for all users, which crucially, is in accordance with several Local Transport Plan key objectives. It is anticipated that the proposed scheme would bring mutual benefits to all the organisations involved, and therefore, representatives of Network Rail, forming part of this initial Clearance Procedure, are urged to consider fully the wider benefits that a completed project could deliver. It is also important to emphasise that the City of York Council needs a swift and decisive resolution to be made in relation to this initial stage of the Clearance Procedure, given the acute urgency imposed by the deadline date. This decision needs to be made at the earliest possible opportunity to enable us to undertake the necessary contingency plans that would be required, should the access to station scheme be found unsuitable for implementation.

Contacts for Further Information

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Project Manager: Mike Durkin (Tel: 01904 553459)

AutoCAD Drawing production: Tom Blair (Tel: 01904 553461)

Transport Planning Officers:

Ian Stokes – author of ‘Access for All’ grant bid (Tel: 01904 551429)

Andy Vose – Cycling Officer (Tel: 01904 551608)

Supplementary Note in Response to GNER's Queries

After the submission of our report to Network Rail on the proposed construction of the new access ramp to York Railway Station, GNER have raised some queries. These queries have been summarised below, together with a response:

- Have the Council conducted a feasibility study with station users? If so, can you let me have a copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the results?

The Council has not undertaken any feasibility studies with station users, so there are no questionnaires or results. However, a footfall survey was conducted earlier this year, showing that approximately 8697 passengers access the station on foot each day from 7am to 6pm. The quoted estimate of 55 disabled pedestrians that might use this new access is worked out based upon the following:

Analysis of travel to work, the station data and Census data shows that 21% walk. Approximately 25% of passengers, approaching the station from the north western quadrant of the city, would benefit from the new access ramp. As 12% of the City of York's economically active population is disabled, this equates to 55 disabled persons that might use this route each day.

- Have the disabled lobby been consulted about this scheme and the findings from the consultation?

Not initially. However, a more recent informal consultation exercise has been conducted, involving the York Access Group and the York Blind & Partially Sighted Society. Both are in strong support of the principle of an improved access to the station. However, both have also raised their concerns about safety for disabled users (particularly the blind and partially sighted) passing through the car park area. They would prefer to see a segregated path provided, but it would appear that this is not feasible without significant physical alterations to the car park, which are likely to affect its operation and/or capacity. As a minimum, we would look to provide tactile guidance paving to help the blind and partially sighted to pass through the car park area.

- Has a Risk Assessment of the whole scheme been conducted in respect of the pathway, access into the car park and the impact of pedestrians/cyclists and wheelchair users in the car park with moving traffic?

A meeting was conducted with representatives from GNER (Graham North and Peter Hurley) and the British Transport Police (Fred Tomlinson and Fred Hardy) on 13th April 2006. During our discussions at this meeting, an informal assessment was made of the risk to pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users moving through the car park, alongside manoeuvring traffic. All those present at the meeting concluded that because traffic speeds would be very low within the car park, the risk of any accidents occurring was minimal. In addition, with a ramped access in place, the increased usage by pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users through the car park would make motorists more aware of their presence, and therefore, the risk of any accidents occurring would be further minimised.