

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

17 October 2018

District Council & LAF Project Updates

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 An opportunity for LAF members to update the Forum on District Council liaison and other LAF representative project activity since the last meeting.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The LAF operates an agreed list of nominated representatives willing to act as the first point of liaison with the constituent District Councils in relation to planning and other relevant matters.
- 2.2 Individual LAF members are also nominated from time to time to take a lead on specific projects that the LAF has an interest in or in representing the LAF on other partnership bodies
- 2.3 This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Forum to be updated on activity since the previous meeting.

3.0 District Council Liaison

- 3.1 A draft response to Richmondshire District Council's Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation is attached at Appendix 1 for LAF member's consideration.
- 3.2 District Liaison representatives are invited to report verbally on any other activity.

4.0 LAF Projects

- 4.1 An update on a recent 'Stage 1' meeting of the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Route Stakeholder Reference Group held 25 September 2018 is provided at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 LAF members are invited to report verbally on any other activity.

5.0 Local Liaison Groups

- 5.1 Appendix 3 summarises key issues and items of interest arising from Public Rights of Way (PROW) Local Liaison Group Meetings, as provided by George Bateman. The supporting documents have been circulated separately to LAF members.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That members note the updates.

BARRY KHAN
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

Report Author: Melanie Carr, Secretary to North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Background Documents: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft response to Richmondshire District Council’s Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation

Appendix 2 – Update on ‘Stage 1’ meeting of A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Route Stakeholder Reference Group held 25 September 2018

DRAFT RESPONSE TO RICHMONDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Background

1. The current Richmondshire Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014. At that time, the District Council's intention was to proceed with the preparation of supporting development plan documents that would provide detailed guidance on matters such as the location of new development and development management policies. This approach was abandoned last year when the District Council decided that elements of the Core Strategy were already out of date and that, in line with current Government guidelines, a full review of the Local Plan was a more appropriate way forward. The new Local Plan will include revised strategic and core policies, a Catterick Area Masterplan, strategic site allocations and detailed development management and planning obligations policies.
2. The Issues and Options Consultation Document is the first stage in the preparation of the new Local Plan. It can be viewed at www.richmondshire.gov.uk/local-plan-review and responses are required by 31st October 2018.

The Issues and Options Consultation Document

3. The Consultation Document adopts a "broad brush" approach as is appropriate for what is very much a scene-setting document for later more detailed work. This is aptly demonstrated by the chapter headings which, in sequence, are – Strategic Issues, Vision, Strategic Objectives, Local Objectives and Spatial Principles - though it might be argued that the Council's vision for the future development of the District is a more logical starting point than consideration of strategic issues.
4. The Key Strategic Issues appear largely aspirational and might be likened to motherhood and apple pie. Many of them, especially where economic or social issues are involved, will be difficult to address through local planning policies alone and will require the intervention and co-operation of other agencies if they are to come to fruition. They are listed as follows –
 - (a) Achieving rural sustainability, while retaining local character;
 - (b) Developing a complementary relationship between the town centres in Richmond and Catterick Garrison and the Scotch Corner Designer Outlet Centre;
 - (c) Supporting the integration of communities in the wider Garrison area through development of a main town centre and related services;
 - (d) Securing wider local benefits of a sustained and increased military presence;
 - (e) Improving access to facilities in the villages;
 - (f) Dealing with poor housing mix and lack of access to a wider range of tenures, including affordable housing;
 - (g) Promoting a more diverse rural economy with a wider range of employment opportunities and wages;
 - (h) Developing the quality of the tourism offer;

- (i) Conserving and enhancing natural and built heritage;
- (j) Increasing installed renewable electricity and heat capacity and reducing carbon emissions;
- (k) Complementing neighbouring areas and supporting communities in the Yorkshire Dales National Park;
- (l) Addressing the declining and ageing population particularly prevalent in the rural parts of the plan area; and
- (m) Securing wider local economic and employment benefits of an upgraded strategic road network.

5. The Forum will note that none of the identified Key Strategic Issues, beyond the very broad and unspecific “*achieving rural sustainability*”, can be construed to cover access or the development and encouragement of more sustainable modes of transport, or acknowledge the needs of non-motorised users in the plan area.

6. If the Key Strategic Issues appear aspirational, the Consultation Document actually describes the Vision as a “*statement of ambitions*”. It sets out what changes and developments the new local plan seeks to achieve by 2035 in the following terms –

“In 2035, sustainable growth in the Richmondshire plan area’s towns and villages supports the quality of life of rural communities and addresses their needs for local homes, work and leisure, through development and provision of services. This growth has also complemented neighbouring areas by supporting communities in the Yorkshire dales National Park and the regeneration strategy in the Tees Valley.

“The towns of Richmond, Catterick Garrison and Leyburn play distinct roles as centres for local communities and are the main focus for housing and employment, offering a wide range of services and facilities. Their growth has led to improvements in links to and from surrounding villages and other centres. Richmond has realised the potential offered by its heritage and increased its economic importance to the surrounding area. Private and military investments have transformed Hipswell, Scotton, Colburn and Catterick Garrison into an excellent living environment shared by local and military communities, with a modern town centre, high quality development, accessible green corridors and improved road network.

“Historic Richmond, the modern Catterick Garrison town centre and the Scotch Corner Designer Outlet complement each other in the range of facilities and opportunities they offer to the District. Leyburn continues to be an important centre for a large rural area extending over Wensleydale and Swaledale. The area retains its character and sense of place while offering wider housing and employment choices. The villages and countryside beyond continue to reflect their high quality settings, but a flexible approach to development has provided a range of accessible housing and employment opportunities for local people.

“A diverse, competitive and successful rural economy, providing access to local job opportunities has grown alongside market and affordable homes and embraced

opportunities offered by the upgraded A1(M) and improved digital infrastructure. More people live and work locally, with commuting to and from the plan area reduced. The area's strong rural cultural identity, with its variety of environmental and historical assets, has been sustained and enhanced. Local measures have helped the area to respond to climate change and mitigate the impact of development. Installed renewable electricity and heat opportunities have been realised and green renewable and low carbon industries have developed. These have supported renewable energy provision and low carbon developments."

7. The Forum will have noted that the Vision refers to "accessible green corridors", and to increased sustainability generally. What it does not do is acknowledge the excellent network of footpaths and bridleways that already exists in the plan area and that might be extended to provide sustainable links between communities, nor is there any reference to the potential health benefits to communities in the plan area through increased provision for cycling and walking.
8. The remainder of the Consultation Document consists of sections on the District Council's Strategic Objectives, Local Objectives and Spatial Principles. These provide further detail on the topics already identified as the Key strategic Issues, as described above, but do not contain any specific material on access.
9. A draft response on the Consultation Document follows.

The Forum's Response

10. As the District Council will be aware, the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum exists to advise a range of public bodies (in North Yorkshire outside the National Parks) on the improvement of public access to the countryside and public rights of way in both rural and urban areas. In this role, the Forum welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Richmond Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Document.
11. The Forum sees the Consultation Document as an important first step in reviewing the Richmondshire Local Plan as it provides the overall context for the plan-making process. Topics that do not appear in the Council's Vision for the Richmondshire of the future, or are not identified as Key Strategic Issues at this stage, are unlikely to feature prominently in the evolving Local Plan.
12. The plan area is already blessed with an excellent network of footpaths and bridleways that provides links for non-motorised journeys between communities and from the towns and villages into the countryside. This takes on a greater significance given the current emphasis on the importance of exercise – in this case, walking and cycling - in maintaining the health of the population.
13. Both the Key Strategic Issues and the Vision refer to sustainability at some point. The Forum advises that these statements should be expanded to take on board the health and access issues and that these might be elaborated In the Strategic or Local Objectives. The end product should be policies in the Local Plan that seek to

enhance the public right of way network by making good any missing links and ensuring that all new housing and business development is accessible from the network, so enabling both commuting and recreation by non-motorised means. Such policies would be capable of implementation directly through the development management process or as a result of planning obligations.

David Barraclough
2nd October 2018

Highways England A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Route Stakeholder Reference Group Stage 1' Meeting held 25 September 2018

Pre-amble to the Report

I attended the second of the 'Stage 1' meetings regarding the £1.2b improvements to the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine route, which runs for fifty miles between Scotch Corner and Penrith. A lot of background information on traffic volumes, usage, costings, time-scale etc were given in my report of the first meeting last October. I will try to avoid too much reference to discussions concerning sections of the A66 out of North Yorkshire. The delegate list is an attachment from Highways England.

Report

I don't know how many of these invited delegates actually attended, there appeared to be about sixty five people, including Highways England & Transport for the North staff there when the discussions commenced at 1030hrs. I did note an absence of the Cumbria LAF, however I understand they were invited but unable to attend this meeting - and more importantly still interested in participation.

I was talking to Brian Williams the A66 Project Director & Matt Townsend the A66 Senior Project Manager before the meeting commenced, and it appears that the project management are listening to the opinions expressed by user groups. I have been in contact with Matt Townsend several times.

During the presentations by several staff, Brian Williams did make comments about the importance of NMU connectivity and trying to avoid route severance. Listing existing problems & project objectives.

He continued by stating that since the meeting last year there are now options to do further work on the M6 (J40) interchange at Penrith and on the A1(M) interchange at Scotch Corner, the latter may concern us.

A long presentation from Owen Wilson (Transport for the North) over possible projects for the 'Central Pennines Corridor' including rail travel, trying to "reduce social isolation & giving health and wellbeing benefits" - this was for a period of up to 2050.

The A66 Design Director (HE) Steve Davis, raised issues as diverse as more parking for HGV's on the A66, Smart Technology on the entire route for advance warning to drivers, this is of importance to the Traveller Community when Appleby Fair is on, and information on a system to assist the emergency services by improving radio communications on the route (this is currently in the Department for Transport & Home Office planning stages). He continued by assuring none motorised users that any obstructions to NMU routes would be kept to a minimum during the construction phase. And made similar comments regarding the effects on North Yorkshire & Cumbria tourism during the construction phase. He raised safety concerns at the Mainsgill & Ravensworth junctions. All these points to be fully addressed in the Stage 3 Preliminary Design stage.

Various other speakers talked at length about issues that don't concern North Yorkshire Local Access Forum.

It appears that a lot of these people had addressed (or were implying they had) points raised by the various user groups (NMU included) as each of these have had at least two meetings since last October.

Item 7 - Appendix 2

After lunch there was an hour or so of questions from the floor, mainly on things such as Environmental Assessment/Impact reports, Flood Plains, Constraints such as Warcop MOD range, North Pennines AONB. Both the CTC & BHS raised concerns about safe use of the A66, and the Traveller Community had concerns about 'rest places' for horses during the construction phase. CTC asked about a budget split for NMU use, he thought it was 4% of total budget, Jacqui Allen, H.E. Divisional Director said there were no such things as 'splits' or 'ring fence', it's an overall budget.

The point about parking for HGV's was again raised, not in the construction phase, but eventually, Jacqui Allen said they are looking into where they could be, and also the possibility of a Service Area, but not as part of this project.

Lighting was discussed, as part of the North Pennines 'Dark Skys', Owen Wilson said this was under investigation under the CO₂ & Environmental impact assessments, suitable luminaires to be selected.

The next stage (Stage 2) will involve non-statutory public consultation commencing in May 2019, H.E. are planning 20 events in Penrith, Appleby, Barnard Castle & Richmond, where people can call in to (as yet undecided venues) between 1100hrs & 1900hrs to talk to staff, there will also be an 'on-line' brochure and 'on-line' facility to leave comments. The non-statutory consultation closes on 20th July 2019 when analysis begins. At this point an A66 route will be identified, so until then there's no point getting very involved in particular NMU routes, as we have no idea which ones are involved!

Detailed design, planning and Development Control 2019-21, Full public consultation 2021-2023, and assuming there's no 'appeals' and inquiries, completion by about 2028.

This whole scheme is in the early stages, and as Brian Williams said to me "a change of government or a change of policy could bring it all to a halt" - however, Owen Wilson said there was no E.U. funding involved so no Brexit issues!

The meeting closed at 1330hrs.

Paul A. Sherwood
26 September 2018