

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

c/o Leeds City Council
Public Rights of Way
Natural Environment
Climate, Energy and Green Spaces
Farnley Hall
Hall Lane Farnley
Leeds LS12 5HA

20 August 2023

Dear Secretary of State

Network Rail (Leeds to Micklefield Enhancements) Transport and Works Act Order

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Leeds Local Access Forum. The Department for Transport and Network Rail are required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to have regard to relevant advice from this Forum in carrying out their functions.

The Leeds Local Access Forum (LLAF), established by Leeds City Council as a statutory advisory body under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, has as its main purpose the provision of independent advice on the improvement of public access to land within Leeds for the purposes of openair recreation and enjoyment of the countryside, and also for 'functional' or 'utility' access issues such as using the public rights of way network to get to work, school, shops and local amenities.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Network Rail's Transport and Works Act Order application for the enhancements between Leeds and Micklefield. Whilst the LLAF does not raise objection to the principle and objective of the scheme, the LLAF wishes to object to Network Rail's proposals to close Peckfield Level Crossing at Micklefield.

These objections are made on the following grounds:

1 Closure of the level crossing with no replacement bridge will sever Definitive Bridleway Micklefield 8. This will cause serious harm to the rights of way network in this location as it will sever off road connectivity between residential development in Pit Lane and local amenities including schools north of the railway.

2 The alternative routes put forward by Network Rail increase hazards for bridleway users as they involve use alongside motor vehicles on the Great North Road and involve a more circuitous route. Safety on public rights of way is a key concern of Local Access Forums along with seeking an improvement of public access.

3 Network Rail originally consulted on a number of options which included a stepped footbridge and a proposal for a new bridleway to the west which would provide a crossing of the railway at its junction with the A656 Ridge Road. The LLAF welcomed the proposal for a new bridleway as this met its statutory obligations set out above. It was also willing to support the stepped footbridge rather than the diversion as this provided a safer option albeit for walkers only.

4 Network Rail seek to argue that a stepped footbridge is no longer a viable option and that there is no requirement to provide a bridleway extension as part of the proposals. LLAF would question

these conclusions and seeks to challenge these claims as part of this process. Furthermore if Network Rail believe these options are not suitable it raises questions as to why they were put forward as part of the consultation process and brings into question its legitimacy.

Yours sincerely

Dr M Willison
Chair of Leeds Local Access Forum