

Micklefield Parish Council
(Sole Trustee of Micklefield Recreation Ground
Charity, Reg. No. 523780)
Joanne Hebden
Clerk to the Parish Council

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25 August, 2023

Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
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

Your Ref:
Our Ref: 23/X15

Dear Secretary of State,

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

I'm writing regarding the above Transport and Works Act order, to which Micklefield Parish Council (which is also the sole trustee of Micklefield Recreation Ground Charity) has several objections and comments related to the following parts:

- (i) Peckfield Level Crossing Closure Mitigation
- (ii) Demolition and Replacement of Grade II Listed A656 Ridge Road Bridge
- (iii) Phoenix Avenue Temporary Compound and Micklefield Track Sectioning Cabin

(i) The Parish Council contends that in the likely event of the closure of Peckfield level crossing, pedestrian connectivity needs to be maintained via a footbridge, in the location and design proposed in Network Rail's scoping exercise (stakeholder consultation Phase 1). It is unacceptable for the public right of way to be extinguished.

A footbridge is required to maintain the pedestrian link between the southern and northern parts of the village. This link provides a non-vehicular route to access the local school, only local shop, doctors' surgery, sole public house and workplaces from the south of the village (increasingly necessary due to the large housing development being built on Pit Lane) and for residents in the north of the village to access workplaces, including those within Peckfield Business Park, adjacent to the level crossing.

To the best of the Parish Council's knowledge, the last user survey was undertaken circa 2019/2020 and since that time several large housing developments have arisen in the village, including at Pit Lane. The survey results are therefore out of date. Furthermore, Network Rail's reason for closing the level crossing i.e. that it is unsafe, is also the public perception, which reduces the number of people that use it, further undermining the validity of the survey data.

The provision of a replacement bridleway is not required (in Micklefield Recreation Ground or elsewhere). The existing bridleway starts at the 's' bends on Great North Road and on Network Rail's bridleway diversion proposal, the replacement bridleway exits onto Great North Road a few hundred metres south of its beginning. The same point can be reached by continuing along the Great North Road, which would also avoid the need to make two of the

right turns required to access and exit the bridleway and the associated danger of crossing the main road through the village against oncoming traffic.

It is inappropriate to route a bridleway through a recreation ground and take away some of its land for the spurious purpose of an unnecessary replacement bridleway. The proposed bridleway diversion is simply a redundant 'dog-leg' that offers no more than would continuing along Great North Road; a road which riders have to traverse for a significant distance in order to access the bridleway. (There are no adjacent bridleways that can be used to access Micklefield No. 8).

A 10 acre recreation ground, which includes football pitches, rugby facilities and dog walkers, is not a suitable place to give horses and riders absolute rights, for the health and safety of both horses and riders and recreation ground patrons. In addition, the proposed bridleway diversion crosses directly in front of, and will impede access to, the charity's property (4 and 5 Railway Cottages), which is used as a sports changing rooms and for storage.

A bridleway in any part of Micklefield Recreation Ground will by its nature permanently remove part of the ground from use by the general public (and thereby interfere with the general rights of patrons to use any part of the ground freely) and reserve it permanently for defined users and their rights. Similarly, a bridleway in any part of Micklefield Recreation Ground will segregate what is essentially an open ground. A footpath in Micklefield Recreation Ground, whilst acceptable in principle, would be rendered unnecessary as part of the scheme by the provision of a footbridge

The Parish Council notes that the feasibility of an underpass, as a mitigation option that would maintain connectivity, was never examined and should have been.

The Parish Council supports the upgrade of Lower Peckfield Lane, as it will maintain services to residents.

(ii) Micklefield Parish Council objects to the complete demolition of a grade II listed railway overbridge, which Network Rail itself acknowledges is rare and unique as there are few other examples. Furthermore, the Parish Council cannot accept the extended closure of Ridge Road due to the demolition and reconstruction of the bridge.

(iii) Micklefield Parish Council has no objection to the Phoenix Avenue temporary compound location but recommends that it needs round the clock security staff and that the site should be restored when Network Rail vacates it. The Parish Council also has no objections to the track sectioning cabin.

Please accept the above as Micklefield Parish Council's representation in relation to Network Rail (Leeds to Micklefield Enhancements) Transport and Works Act Order.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Joanne Hebden, Clerk and RFO
Micklefield Parish Council
(Sole Trustee of Micklefield Recreation Ground Charity)