

Committee: ACCESS
Date: 15 October 2009

Report: CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL BYWAY TRUST – PENNINE SPUR CYCLE ROUTE

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) inform members of the proposal, by the National Byway Trust, to develop a spur to the National Byway cycle route through the Yorkshire Dales which would be known as the Trans Pennine Spur.
 - (b) agree the Authority's response to North Yorkshire County Council's public consultation on this proposal.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

National Park Management Plan

AR6. Through sustainable travel partnerships increase the integration and use of sustainable transport modes for leisure and everyday life within and to the National Park ...

AR8 Develop opportunities, including a National Park-wide programme of events, walks and other activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and assist in the Government's target of increasing levels of physical activity amongst residents and visitors by 1% per year.

EE8 Develop the scope, quality and co-ordination of recreational infrastructure to increase and promote the area's appeal to a wider range of people and groups and to increase the economic value to local tourism businesses.

Background

3. The National Byway is a 4500-mile recreational cycle route around Britain which is being developed and managed by The National Byway Trust, a registered charity. The purpose of the Byway is to make a contribution to the quality of British life through the integration of the environmental, health, educational, social and economic benefits derived from cycling. As well as creating opportunities for the communities it passes

through. Cyclists spend money on food and accommodation in communities they pass through, spending as much as £50 per person per night. More information is available on the National Byway's website www.thenationalbyway.org .

4. The route is signed and meanders through Britain's rural landscape visiting picturesque areas and places of interest using the public highway. It currently passes through both North Yorkshire and Cumbria in north/south directions.

The proposal

5. It is proposed to join the North Yorkshire and Cumbria parts of the Byway route with a Trans-Pennine Spur across the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales. The proposed spur is 180 miles in length, travelling on lightly-trafficked rural lanes between Middleham in the east and Ingleton in the west. The plan in **Figure 3** shows the existing routes and the proposed link across the Yorkshire Dales. Three loop routes are also proposed based on Masham, Ingleton and Settle, utilising sections of the Byway.
6. The proposal would use an estimated 65 signs to sign the 'on-road' spur linking the already established routes on the east and west of North Yorkshire. The Byway uses signs approved by the Department of Transport, which are erected only where required: at junctions where a directional decision needs to be taken by the user. The signs are brown and white (**figure 1**), indicating that the Byway is a tourism product.

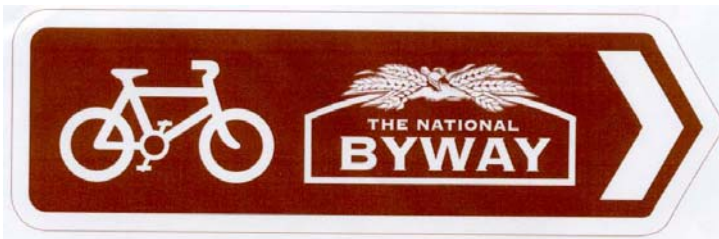


Figure 1 An example of a brown Byway sign

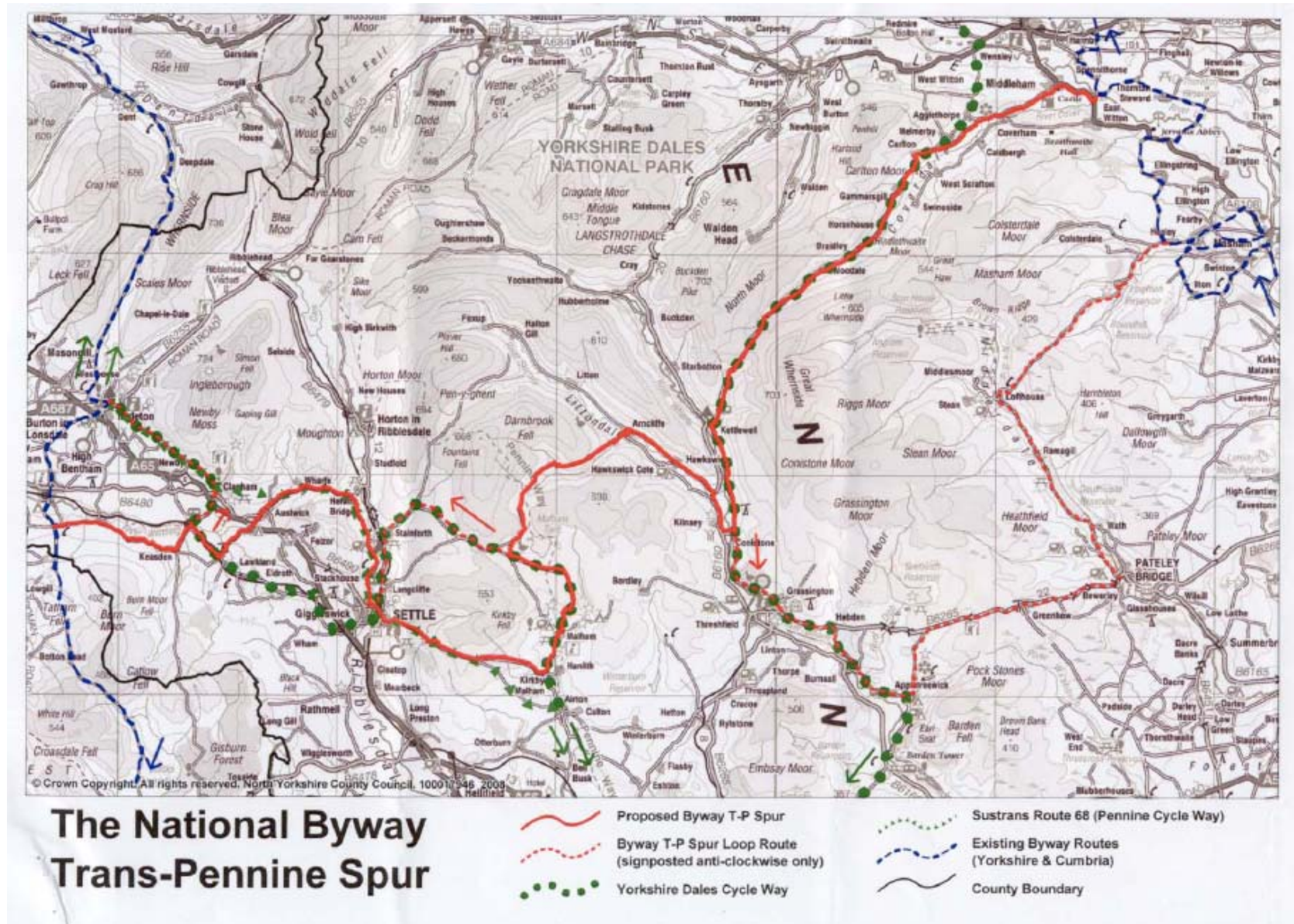
7. It is recognised that the signing of the route should avoid unnecessary clutter. To this end it is proposed that the Byway signing will use, where possible, existing street furniture and be combined with existing cycle routes signs (**figure 2**).



Figure 2 A Byway sign combined with an existing national cycleway sign.

8. It is estimated that once completed the Trans-Pennine Spur will make a substantial contribution towards the National Byway's objectives, including contributing £250,000 a year into the local economy.

Figure 3 A map showing the existing cycle routes and proposed spur



Consultation

9. As the relevant Highway Authority, North Yorkshire County Council is consulting widely on the proposal with Parish Councils, the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum, and the public via the County Council Web site and the North Yorkshire Times Free Newspaper, as well as the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.
10. The consultation takes the form of a questionnaire. The questions, in summary, are:
- do you support the proposal yes/no
 - please make any comments on any of the proposed spur route
 - please make any additional comments regarding cycling in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB.

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum View

11. Members of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) received a presentation from Michael Brecon of the National Byways Trust at their meeting on the 17th June 2008. At the YDAF meeting on the 22nd September LAF members discussed the proposal and agreed the following response to North Yorkshire County Council's consultation:

We support the scheme enthusiastically. The route is well-chosen and will offer riders some rewarding, if challenging, cycling.

The safety of cyclists is of concern to us. We appreciate that it is not possible to supply cyclists with separate cycle-lanes along the route, but we support any measures that will contribute to cyclists' safety when using the route.

The Authority's officer view

12. Officers do have some concerns about the type of signs to be used, and the potential for signage clutter. It was suggested to the National Byway Trust, by officers, that the Trust look to integrate their signs with existing signs. The Trust has acted upon this advice and now intends to integrate the signs with other cycleway signs wherever possible. Further, the Trust proposes to reduce their size to the minimum the regulations will allow.

Financial implications

13. There are no financial implications for the Authority as the proposal is being developed by the National Byways Trust and as the route is entirely on road will have no impact on our public rights of way maintenance responsibilities.

Conclusion

14. Whilst officers continue to have concerns about the proliferation of signs within the National Park, it is recognised that the National Byway Trust have gone a long way to address these concerns and keep any signage to a minimum. This issue must be set against the Authority's commitment to promote sustainable tourism, which includes

promoting multi-day cycle routes such as the National Byway, because of the amount of income that can be generated within the local economy. On balance it is suggested that the proposal be supported by the Authority.

15. It is also suggested that the Authority endorses the comments made by the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum regarding users' safety.

RECOMMENDATION

16. It is recommended that:

- (a) the proposal for the development of the spur route through the Yorkshire Dales National Park be supported; and
- (b) the view of the YDAF regarding users' safety be endorsed.

Andy Ryland
Transport and Visitor Management Officer

30 September 2009

Background papers

Letter of consultation dated 24 June 2009 from North Yorkshire County Council on the National Byway Trust proposed Spur Route
Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum held on 22 September 2009