

6 February 2024

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL  
(LEEDS TO MICKLEFIELD ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

JOHN A BOOTH CEng, MICE, MCIHT

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

## SUMMARY PROOF

This Proof of Evidence is provided in relation to the proposed closure of the Peckfield Level Crossing, which carries Micklefield Public Bridleway No.8 and the proposed alternative route and the additional length of journey, inconvenience and road safety risks associated with the use of the alternative routes. It is not intended to repeat the evidence provided by my colleague, Robert Buckenham of LCC Public Rights of Way, and will, instead, focus specifically on those elements impacting upon the adopted highway network.

Given that Network Rail is seeking as part of its proposals to close the Peckfield Level Crossing to extinguish a public right of way over the railway, in doing so the Secretary of State must be satisfied that there is an alternative right of way that is being proposed as part of the Scheme.

Consequently, the scope of this document will consider the proposed diversion of the public right of way, where it utilises the existing adopted highway, and considers the implication of this on:

- Whether the proposed alternative is longer and more inconvenient for users?
- Pit Lane south of the railway from Phoenix Avenue to Great North Road, including;
  - (a) Carriageway/footway alignment;
  - (b) Traffic flows;
  - (c) Safety; and
  - (d) Suitability.

Great North Road from Pit Lane/Station Hill to Pit Lane, including:

- (a) Carriageway/footway alignment;
- (b) Traffic flows;
- (c) Safety; and
- (d) Suitability.

The evidence provided in this proof is in addition to the Proof of Evidence submitted by my colleague Robert Buckenham, which should be read in conjunction with this proof.

This proof considers whether the proposed diversion of the public right of way, where it utilises the existing adopted highway, is adequate to accommodate the diverted bridleway users safely.

The diversion along the public highway would add an additional journey time of 3 minutes and 22 seconds to the route which represents an increase of 43%. This would be a significant increase and make the route unattractive for some users.

Pit Lane, south of the railway, is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the southern side. Although there are footways present on this section of Pit Lane, they are not continuous on both sides of the carriageway, meaning that the diverted bridleway users would have to cross Pit Lane without adequate crossing facilities.

Further, the footways on Pit Lane are not wide enough to provide, safely, a shared use with cyclists who, consequently, would have to cycle on-carriageway.

Pit Lane is a cul-de-sac and serves as the main access road for around 190 properties and the Enterprise Court which has 15 light industrial units. The two-way daily traffic flow on Pit Lane is 756 vehicles.

There have been no recorded road traffic collisions on Pit Lane in the most recent five year period but there is evidence to show that some vehicles exceed the existing 30mph speed limit.

The route along Pit Lane offers no facilities for horse riders, requiring them to use the carriageway. There are also no facilities for horse riders to navigate the crossroads junction at Great North Road.

Great North Road, is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the section between Pit Lane (south of the railway) and Pit Lane (north of Haver Drive). The carriageway varies in width between 7.8m and 8.5m, although the effective width towards the railway bridge is narrowed by on-street parking bays and a bus stop clearway.

Whilst there are footways along both sides of the carriageway on Great North Road they are narrower than 2m in some sections.

The two-way traffic flows along Great North Road equate to 3,333 vehicles per day.

There has been one road traffic collision in the most recent five year period on Great North Road and traffic speed has been shown to be in excess of the signed 30mph speed limit.

The footways along Great North Road are not wide enough to provide a shared use with cyclists. In fact the footways are less than 2m wide in some sections, particularly towards the northern end, which would have a corresponding impact on those with mobility issues.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (DfT July 2020), at Figure 4.1 sets out appropriate separation from traffic for cyclists against anticipated daily traffic volumes. At 30mph and with a daily flow in excess of 3,000 passenger car unit's (pcu's) LTN 1/20 states that such routes are "suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns".

The route along Great North Road offers no facilities for horse riders to either transition between the bridleway and carriageway, or navigate the crossroads junction at the Pit Lane/Station Hill. This is particularly hazardous for horses making the right turn in from Great North Road as they are waiting in a live carriageway of limited width at this point of approximately 7.4m.

The route along Great North Road would include utilising the carriageway under the railway bridge which is narrow, unlit and would not leave sufficient room for both horses and cars to safely use the highway simultaneously. The heightened traffic noise created by the narrow and enclosed nature of the route under the railway bridge creates an unsafe environment for horses, and any other bridleway users using the route.

In addition, the presence of on-street parking bays and bus stop clearway along Great North Road mean that horse riders would also need to negotiate around stationary vehicles while travelling along Great North Road which means that the route is not safe for horses and their riders and vehicles would not be able to pass in accordance with Highway Code Rule 215.

It is therefore contended that the alternative route proposed by Network Rail making use of Pit Lane / Great North Road is not a suitable alternative for cyclists and horse riders and does not meet the test required of the TWAQ.

It is clear that there are potential negative impacts of the proposed diversion along the adopted highway, taking into account the points raised in this proof.

The level crossing currently offers a PRoW on foot, horse-back and by pedal cycle. Closure of the crossing will sever the bridleway. The proposed footpath through the recreation ground will only serve walkers with no public rights for equestrians and cyclists.

It is the Council's contention in this case that the evidence brought before this inquiry provides a compelling case that the proposed alternative right of way is neither suitable or convenient.

The adopted highway has been described in this proof and it demonstrates that the needs of the diverted bridleway users, particularly cyclists and horse riders, cannot be accommodated safely.

On the basis of my evidence, and the other evidence presented to the Inquiry on behalf of Leeds City Council, I respectfully ask the Inspector to recommend to the Secretary of State that the **TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (LEEDS TO MICKLEFIELD ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER** be modified in this case to include the provision of a bridleway bridge instead of Network Rail's existing proposals for the Peckfield Level Crossing.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 My name is John Booth I have been asked to prepare this Proof of Evidence in relation to the proposed extinguishment of a section of Public Bridleway Micklefield No. 8 where it crosses the Trans Pennine Railway at Micklefield, known as the Peckfield Level Crossing by:

1.1.1 addressing the effects on the public of using the alternative proposed route; and

1.1.2 examining the benefits of a suitable bridge to replace the level crossing in connection with the Council's submitted Statement of Case.

1.2 All cross references to appendices in this proof are referenced by my initials (for example JAB 01, JAB 02 etc.)

1.3 This Proof of Evidence needs to be read in conjunction with the Proof of Evidence on this matter provided by my colleague Robert Buckenham of Leeds City Council (**LCC**) Public Rights of Way and the legal submissions made by LCC.

## **2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

2.1 My name is John Booth and I am a Principal Engineer in Transport Development Services at LCC. I provide advice on Highways, Traffic and Transport aspects of development at all stages from identification of concepts through to feasibility appraisals, detailed design and implementation.

2.2 I am a Chartered Civil Engineer and have been a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers since 1990 and a Member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport since 2006, with more than 40 years' experience providing technical advice across both the public and private sectors. I have worked in my current role at LCC since 2021.

2.3 From 2005 to 2021, I was employed by Tetra Tech, a multi-disciplinary consultancy, where I was Associate Director leading the Yorkshire and Humber Transport team providing technical advice and support to developers in pursuit of their developments.

2.4 Prior to that, from 2001 to 2005, I worked for Mott MacDonald where I was Principal Engineer of the Transport and Highways team providing highways related leadership on a number of significant transport projects, including Route Management Strategy, for the Highways Agency (now National Highways).

2.5 Before that, I was a Project Engineer at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (now City of Doncaster Council) where I was employed in a number of roles over a 19 year period with responsibility for the design, implementation, certification and delivery of Highway and Transport projects within the Borough.

2.6 Consequently, I have a wide range of experience in the Highways, Traffic and Transport sector

which is directly relevant to this project and the issues I am addressing in this evidence.

### 3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

3.1 This Proof of Evidence is provided in relation to the proposed closure of the Peckfield Level Crossing, which carries Micklefield Public Bridleway No.8 and the proposed alternative route along the public highway the associated additional length of journey, inconvenience and road safety risks associated with the use of this alternative route. It is not intended to repeat the evidence provided by my colleague, Robert Buckenham of LCC Public Rights of Way, and will, instead, focus specifically on those elements impacting upon the adopted highway network.

3.2 When looking at whether a public right of way can be extinguished under a TWAO, the test that the Secretary of State is to consider is set out in Section 5(6) of the Transport and Works Act 1992 (**Act**) provides that:

*'An order under section 1 or 3 above shall not extinguish any public right of way over land unless the Secretary of State is satisfied—*

- (a) that an alternative right of way has been or will be provided, or*
- (b) that the provision of an alternative right of way is not required.'*

3.3 The closure of the existing Peckfield level crossing will sever the Micklefield Public Bridleway No.8, leading to users either being unable to use the bridleway as a through route or being diverted out of their way.

3.4 The proposed alternative route will utilise existing adopted sections of highway, namely, Pit Lane, where it is adopted, leading to Enterprise Court south of the railway and running parallel to it, and the Great North Road, including where the road subsists in a tunnel under the railway. As adopted highways these roads are available for public use.

3.5 With regard to the Micklefield recreation ground (**MRG**) where an alternative route is proposed to be created there are disadvantages that have not been properly considered by Network Rail both with the proposed route and accessibility, what it is to be dedicated as and how it will be safely provided and maintained. This is considered further in the Proof of Evidence prepared by my colleague, Robert Buckenham.

3.6 The distance of the public right of way to be extinguished compared to that proposed to be provided as an alternative will be considered as will the implications of this.

3.7 The loss of the railway crossing and connectivity within the public rights of way network, and the effect on the local community, particularly with reference to new housing development, along with

the relevance of the LCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan is also considered in the evidence prepared by Robert Buckenham.

3.8 LCC's position is that the alternative route proposed by Network Rail are not suitable and convenient, and that the only alternative that would be appropriate would be the provision of a bridleway bridge over the railway, as this would provide a continuation of the route with appropriate facilities for those users and remove the need for them to come into conflict with other road users on the public highway. Network Rail have dismissed the provision of a bridge over Peckfield level crossing as an option on the following grounds:

- landscape and visual impacts and the extent of Grade 2 agricultural land take it would require,
- that NR considers that there is an appropriate alternative,
- the impact on adjoining properties,
- lack of current use (not taking into account the cumulative impact of future proposed residential and commercial development nearby that would generate increased use.

3.9 Network Rail have stated that the cost of building a bridge is not within the TRU budget, which is estimated could amount to approximately £6-8 million.

3.10 Given that Network Rail is seeking as part of its proposals to close the Peckfield Level Crossing to extinguish a public right of way over the railway, in doing so the Secretary of State must be satisfied that there is an alternative right of way that is being proposed as part of the Scheme (or that an alternative is not required). Given Network Rail have proposed an alternative right of way as part of the application it is assumed that they acknowledge that an alternative is required; the issue being whether the alternative is suitable.

3.11 Consequently, the scope of this document will consider the proposed diversion of the public right of way, where it utilises the existing adopted highway, and considers the implication of this on:

- Whether the proposed alternative is longer and more inconvenient for users?
- Pit Lane south of the railway from Phoenix Avenue to Great North Road, including;
  - (a) Carriageway/footway alignment;
  - (b) Traffic flows;
  - (c) Safety; and
  - (d) Suitability.

- Great North Road from Pit Lane/Station Hill to Pit Lane, including:
  - (a) Carriageway/footway alignment;
  - (b) Traffic flows;
  - (c) Safety; and
  - (d) Suitability.

## **4. ISSUES**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 Surveys provided by Network Rail in their Alternative Options Evaluation Summary show that the Peckfield Level Crossing is well used by a variety of users. The maximum daily use consistently occurs at the weekend with an average maximum of 126 users being observed.
- 4.1.2 The Alternative Options Evaluation Summary (dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023), prepared on behalf of Network Rail, describes an additional public consultation on the closure of the crossing showed that:
- The largest used purpose (48%) was for leisure purposes;
  - 73% of crossings were on foot;
  - 18% of crossings were by bicycle;
  - 2% of crossings were by wheelchair or mobility scooter; and
  - 3% crossed with a horse.
- 4.1.3 This demonstrates that the level crossing is used by all categories of user who, if the crossing were to be diverted, would have to use sections of Pit Lane and Great North Road.
- 4.1.4 A plan showing the extent of the adopted highway considered in this Proof is included at **JAB 01**.

### **4.2 ISSUE 1: IS THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE LONGER AND MORE INCONVENIENT FOR USERS?**

- 4.2.1 Network Rail prepared an Alternative Options Evaluation Summary which concluded that their Option 1 was preferred which consists of diverting the route along Pit Lane



(south of the railway) to Great North Road, then along Great North Road to its junction with Pit Lane. Option 1 is the option that has been included in Network Rail's Application for a TWAO.

- 4.2.2 The diversion route along the public highway is approximately 900m in length, measuring from the level crossing on Pit lane to the point where Pit Lane (north of the railway) rejoins Great North Road. This area is shown on **JAB 01**. The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation in their publication "Planning for Walking" (April 2015), which represents current guidance, show that the average walking speed is 3 miles per hour, which equates to 1.34m/s.
- 4.2.3 Consequently, at a speed of 1.34m/s, the diversion route, as described above, would take 672 seconds (11 minutes and 12 seconds) to navigate. By comparison, the existing route, from the level crossing and along Pit Lane (north of the railway) is some 630m long which would take 470 seconds (7 minutes and 48 seconds) to navigate.
- 4.2.4 Therefore, the proposed diversion route will take an additional 202 seconds, or 3 minutes and 22 seconds, which represents an increase in journey time of 43%. This would be a significant increase and make the route unattractive for some users.

#### **4.3 ISSUE 2: EXISTING USE OF THE ROUTE PIT LANE SOUTH OF THE RAILWAY FROM PHOENIX AVENUE TO GREAT NORTH ROAD**

##### **4.3.1 Carriageway/Footway Alignment**

- (a) Pit Lane, south of the railway, is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the southern side. It connects to Great North Road at a cross roads junction with Station Hill. The carriageway, for a distance of 270m from Great North Road is approximately 5.5m wide, which then widens out to approximately 8m wide at the Phoenix Avenue roundabout.
- (b) From the junction with Great North Road/Station Hill, for a distance of 135m, there is a footway along the southern side of the carriageway only, which is approximately 2m in width. After that, there is a footway along both sides of the carriageway up to the roundabout with Phoenix Avenue, where it connects to the Peckfield Level Crossing.
- (c) A Plan showing the location of features along Pit Lane is included as **JAB 02**.

##### **4.3.2 Traffic Flows**

- (a) Pit Lane is a cul-de-sac and serves as the main access road for around 190 properties and the Enterprise Court which has 15 light industrial units.

- (b) No additional traffic surveys have been undertaken for this Proof. However, in order to derive an understanding of traffic flows in the area and how these are impacted by recent and ongoing development, traffic flows along this section of Pit Lane have been estimated from the Transport Assessment prepared for the ongoing residential development on the southern side of Pit Lane. The Transport Assessment (Planning Ref: 19/05296) used traffic surveys carried out in 2019, and also include committed development flows and traffic growth for the period 2019 to 2024 derived from TEMPro v7.2 (0.959 and 0.930 respectively for the AM and PM peak periods).
- (c) The resultant peak period turning movements are included as **JAB 03**.
- (d) The resultant peak period two-way traffic flows along Pit Lane for the AM and PM peak periods respectively are 88 and 84 vehicles. When these are extrapolated across the whole day, using a residential TRICS profile, the resultant daily two-way traffic flow along Pit Lane is 756 vehicles.

#### 4.3.3 Road Safety

- (a) There have been no recorded road traffic collisions in the most recent five year period along this section of Pit Lane.
- (b) A review of traffic speeds along Pit Lane show that some vehicles, particularly towards the western, less developed, end of the lane, travel in excess of the existing 30mph speed limit, with the recorded 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed being 42.67 mph an extract from the Crashmap website, showing the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is included at **JAB 04**.

#### 4.3.4 Suitability of the Route

- (a) Although there are footways present on this section of Pit Lane, they are not continuous on both sides of the carriageway. Consequently, those diverted from the Micklefield Public Bridleway No.8 along this route would need to cross the road more than once with no adequate provision for crossing such as dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Whilst this may be an existing situation the diversion of bridleway users along Pit Lane brought about by closing the level crossing increases the impact of these road safety issues.
- (b) Further, the footways are not wide enough to provide a shared use with cyclists who, consequently, would have to cycle on-carriageway.
- (c) Local Transport Note 1/20 (DfT July 2020), at Figure 4.1 sets out appropriate separation from traffic for cyclists against anticipated daily traffic volumes . At

30mph, even for low levels of traffic, LTN 1/20 states that mixed provision for cyclists *“is not suitable for all people and will exclude some potential users and/or have safety concerns”*. However, it does also state that speeds of up to 30mph with traffic flows below 1,000 pcu’s per day will be generally acceptable in rural areas. Figure 4.1 from LTN1/20 is included at **JAB 05**.

- (d) Therefore, given the quiet nature of this section of Pit Lane it may be considered acceptable for cyclists to use the carriageway albeit would be a different scenario compared with the current route such that users (particularly leisure users which may include inexperienced cyclists and horse riders) would have to adjust to being on the carriageway.

4.3.5 The route along this part of Pit Lane offers no facilities for horse riders, requiring them to use the carriageway as there is no soft verge. There are also no facilities for horse riders to navigate the crossroads junction at Great North Road.

#### **4.4 ISSUE 3: GREAT NORTH ROAD FROM PIT LANE/STATION HILL TO PIT LANE**

##### **4.4.1 Carriageway/Footway Alignment**

- (a) Great North Road is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the section between Pit Lane (south of the railway) and Pit Lane (north of Haver Drive). The carriageway varies in width between 7.8m and 8.5m, although the effective width towards the railway bridge is narrowed by on-street parking bays and a bus stop clearway. Additionally, there are a number of residential and commercial properties along the western side of Great North Road with frontage access which will increase the interactions between the diverted bridleway pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- (b) There are footways along both sides of the carriageway, although they are narrower than 2m in some sections
- (c) A Plan showing the location of features along Great North Road is included at **JAB 06**.

##### **4.4.2 Traffic Flows**

- (a) Traffic flows along this section of Great North Road have also been estimated from the Transport Assessment prepared for the new residential development on the southern side of Pit Lane. The Transport assessment used traffic surveys carried in 2019. The Transport Assessment also included committed development traffic flows and traffic growth for the period 2019 to 2024 derived from TEMPro v7.2 (0.959 and 0.930 respectively for the AM and PM peak

periods).

- (b) The resultant peak period traffic flows along Great North Road for the AM and PM peak periods respectively are 388 and 315 vehicles. When these are extrapolated across the whole day, using a residential TRICS profile, the resultant daily two-way traffic flow along Great North Road is 3,333 vehicles.

#### 4.4.3 Road Safety

- (a) There has been one recorded road traffic collision in the most recent five year period along this section of Great North Road. The collision occurred in June 2022 and was of serious severity involving a child in collision with a motor vehicle during daylight hours.
- (b) A review of traffic speeds along Great North Road show that some vehicles, particularly towards the northern end of the section, travel in excess of the existing 30mph speed limit, with the recorded 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed being 36.60 mph an extract from the Crashmap website, showing the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is included at **JAB 07**.

#### 4.4.4 Suitability of the Route

- (a) The footways along this section of Great North Road are not considered wide enough to provide a shared use with cyclists who, consequently, would have to cycle on-carriageway. In fact the footways are less than 2m wide in some sections, particularly towards the northern end, making them too narrow for two-way pedestrian usage, which would have a corresponding impact on those with mobility issues.
- (b) As stated previously, Local Transport Note 1/20 (DfT July 2020), at Figure 4.1 sets out appropriate separation from traffic for cyclists against anticipated daily traffic volumes. At 30mph and with a daily flow in excess of 3,000 pcu's LTN 1/20 states that such routes are *"suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns"*. This, coupled with the existing on-street uses including parking bays and bus stop clearways, makes the route unsuitable for on-carriageway cycling for most people. Given that the existing bridleway is mainly used for leisure purposes those using the route are likely to include cyclists with limited experience including children.
- (c) The route along this part of the Great North Road offers no facilities for horse riders to either transition between the bridleway and carriageway or navigate the crossroads junction at the Pit Lane/Station Hill. This would be particularly hazardous for horses making the right turn in from Great North Road as they are

waiting in a live carriageway of limited width at this point of approximately 7.4m.

- (d) Further, one of the updates to the Highway Code that the Council is concerned with relates specifically to Rule 215, which states:

*"Horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles. Be particularly careful of horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles especially when approaching, overtaking, passing or moving away. Always pass wide and slowly. When you see a horse on a road, you should slow down to a maximum of 10 mph. Be patient, do not sound your horn or rev your engine. When safe to do so, pass wide and slow, allowing at least 2 metres of space."*

*Feral or semi feral ponies found in areas such as the New Forest, Exmoor and Dartmoor require the same consideration as ridden horses when approaching or passing.*

*Horse riders are often children, so take extra care and remember riders may ride in double file when escorting a young or inexperienced horse or rider. Look out for horse riders' and horse drivers' signals and heed a request to slow down or stop. Take great care and treat all horses as a potential hazard; they can be unpredictable, despite the efforts of their rider/driver. Remember there are three brains at work when you pass a horse; the rider's, the driver's and the horse's. Do not forget horses are flight animals and can move incredibly quickly if startled."*

- (e) The route along this section of Great North Road would include utilising the carriageway under the railway bridge which is narrow, unlit and would not leave sufficient room for both horses and cars to safely use the highway. The heightened traffic noise created by the narrow and enclosed nature of the route under the railway bridge creates an unsafe environment for horses, horse riders, and any other bridleway users using the route.
- (f) In addition, the presence of on-street parking bays and bus stop clearway mean that horse riders would also need to negotiate around stationary vehicles while travelling along Great North Road. The route is not safe for horses and their riders and vehicles would not be able to pass in accordance with Rule 215 of the Highway Code.
- (g) It is therefore contended that the alternative route making use of Pit Lane / Great North Road is not a suitable alternative for cyclists and horse riders and does not meet the test required under Section 5(6) of the Act.

#### **4.5 POTENTIAL ROUTE FROM PIT LANE TO GREAT NORTH ROAD THROUGH MICKLEFIELD RECREATION GROUND.**

- 4.5.1 The issues regarding creation and the uncertainties regarding standard of this potential route are covered in the evidence of Robert Buckenham, however I have concerns regarding the road safety implications relating to the shared use of the access road and car parking area which are pertinent to highways evidence.
- 4.5.2 The access into the Micklefield Recreation Ground has a height restricting barrier at the entrance from Great North Road and a usable width of less than 3m due to the location of trees along both sides of the track. This makes it unsuitable as a shared route for horse riders due to the height restriction, but also the width of the track would not permit vehicles to pass a horse rider safely.
- 4.5.3 The route through or adjacent to the car park would have the same constraints/safety concerns as stated above
- 4.5.4 A series of photographs taken on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, along the proposed diversion route, from Peckfield Crossing, along Pit Lane and Great North Road, are included at Appendix **JAB 08**.

#### **5. SUMMARY**

- 5.1 The evidence provided in this proof is provided in addition to the Proof of Evidence submitted by my colleague Robert Buckenham, which should be read in conjunction with this proof on behalf of LCC.
- 5.2 This proof considers whether, if Peckfield level crossing is closed, the proposed diversion of the public right of way, where it utilises the existing adopted highway, is adequate to accommodate the diverted bridleway users safely.
- 5.3 The diversion along the public highway would add an additional journey time of 3 minutes and 22 seconds to the route which represents an increase of 43%. This would be a significant increase and make the route unattractive for some users.
- 5.4 Pit Lane, south of the railway, is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the southern side. Although there are footways present on this section of Pit Lane, they are not continuous on both sides of the carriageway, meaning that the diverted bridleway users would have to cross without adequate crossing facilities.
- 5.5 Further, the footways on Pit Lane are not wide enough to provide a shared use with cyclists who, consequently, would have to cycle on-carriageway. Consequently, increased use by those diverting from the bridleway will result in increased conflicts between different users.

- 5.6 Pit Lane is a cul-de-sac and serves as the main access road for around 190 properties and the Enterprise Court which has 15 light industrial units. The two-way daily traffic flow on Pit Lane is 756 vehicles.
- 5.7 There have been no recorded road traffic collisions on Pit Lane in the most recent five year period but there is evidence to show that some vehicles exceed the existing 30mph speed limit.
- 5.8 The route along Pit Lane offers no facilities for horse riders, which would require them to use the carriageway. There are also no facilities available for horse riders to navigate the crossroads junction at Great North Road.
- 5.9 Great North Road, is a single carriageway which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with street lighting along the section between Pit Lane (south of the railway) and Pit Lane (north of Haver Drive). The carriageway varies in width between 7.8m and 8.5m, although the effective width towards the railway bridge is narrowed by on-street parking bays and a bus stop clearway.
- 5.10 Whilst there are footways along both sides of the carriageway on Great North Road they are narrower than 2m in some sections.
- 5.11 The two-way traffic flows along Great North Road equate to 3,333 vehicles per day.
- 5.12 There has been one road traffic collision in the most recent five year period on Great North Road and traffic speed has been shown to be in excess of the signed 30mph speed limit.
- 5.13 The footways along Great North Road are not wide enough to provide a shared use with cyclists. In fact the footways are less than 2m wide in some sections, particularly towards the northern end, which would have a corresponding impact on those with mobility issues.
- 5.14 Local Transport Note 1/20 (DfT July 2020), at Figure 4.1 sets out appropriate separation from traffic for cyclists against anticipated daily traffic volumes. At 30mph and with a daily flow in excess of 3,000 pcu's LTN 1/20 states that such routes are "*suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns*".
- 5.15 The route along Great North Road offers no facilities for horse riders to either transition between the bridleway and carriageway, or navigate the crossroads junction at the Pit Lane/Station Hill. This is particularly hazardous for horses making the right turn in from Great North Road as they are waiting in a live carriageway of limited width at this point of approximately 7.4m.
- 5.16 The route along Great North Road would include utilising the carriageway under the railway bridge which is narrow, unlit and would not leave sufficient room for both horses and cars to safely use the highway. The heightened traffic noise created by the narrow and enclosed nature of the route under the railway bridge creates an unsafe environment for horses, and any other bridleway users using the route.

- 5.17 In addition, the presence of on-street parking bays and bus stop clearway mean that horse riders would also need to negotiate around stationary vehicles while travelling along Great North Road which means that the route is not safe for horses and their riders and vehicles would not be able to pass in accordance with Highway Code Rule 215.
- 5.18 It is therefore contended that the alternative route making use of Pit Lane / Great North Road is not a suitable alternative for cyclists and horse riders and does not meet the test required under Section 5 of the Act.
- 5.19 It is clear that there are potential negative impacts of the proposed diversion along the adopted highway, taking into account the points raised in this proof.
- 5.20 The level crossing currently offers a PRoW on foot, horse-back and by pedal cycle. Closure of the crossing will sever the bridleway. The proposed footpath through the recreation ground will only serve walkers with no public rights for equestrians and cyclists.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 It is the Council's contention in this case that the evidence brought before this inquiry provides a compelling case that the proposed alternative right of way is neither suitable or convenient.
- 6.2 The adopted highway has been described in this proof and it demonstrates that the needs of the diverted bridleway users, particularly cyclists and horse riders, cannot be accommodated safely.
- 6.3 On the basis of my evidence, and the other evidence presented to the Inquiry on behalf of Leeds City Council, I respectfully ask the Inspector to recommend to the Secretary of State that the TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (LEEDS TO MICKLEFIELD ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER be modified in this case to include the provision of a bridleway bridge instead of Network Rail's existing proposals for the Peckfield Level Crossing.

## **7. WITNESS DECLARATION**

- 7.1 I hereby declare as follows:
- 7.1.1 This proof of evidence includes all facts which I regard as being relevant to the opinions that I have expressed and that the Inquiry's attention has been drawn to any matter which would affect the validity of that opinion.
- 7.1.2 I believe the facts that I have stated in this proof of evidence are true and that the opinions expressed are correct.
- 7.1.3 I understand my duty to the Inquiry to help it with matters within my expertise and I have complied with that duty.



**SIGNED:**



**DATED:** 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024