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Acknowledgements

1. I wish to thank the people of Addingham, Bolton Abbey and Ilkley who have responded to this public consultation, including landowners, business people and local and regional bodies. I would also like to offer my apologies to those residents in Ilkley whose completed responses were lost due to the theft that occurred last October.
2. I thank the people who volunteered by helping at the exhibitions held during June and September.
3. I thank Bradford Metropolitan Council, whose library service performed a great public duty through the staff at Addingham Library, and Ilkley Library. The support of Bradford Metropolitan Council was vital to the completion of this public consultation.
4. Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Brian Hall (ex Addingham Middle School headteacher) who acted as independent scrutineer.

Executive Summary

The public consultation, held between June 2007 and January 2008, was an exercise to determine the level of support, if any, for the proposal to create a trail for cycling, walking, and horseriding between Ilkley and Bolton Abbey via Addingham.

The Wharfedale Trail Forum, promoting the proposal, commissioned JeffMcQuillanConsulting, referred in the report as 'the Consultant', to carry out this exercise on their behalf.

The consultation was carried out in two parts. In June, the residents of Addingham and Bolton Abbey were given their opportunity. Between September and January, the residents of Ilkley expressed their views.

The consultation was made difficult and prolonged through the actions of landowners, supported by others, who showed strong opposition and anger that such a scheme was being promoted to provide public access over private land. As a result of opposition, from wherever it came, a number of actions took place extending from intimidation to false allegations made against the Consultant. The most serious was the theft of completed responses from a box in Ilkley Library. This criminal act has marred the consultation, but it had not brought it to an end, as was the aim of the few.

The consultation has now been completed and the key outcome is that there is widespread support for the proposal in both Ilkley, and Addingham; the Bolton Abbey area, with its relatively tiny population, responded more by way of silence than participation. Whereas there were high emotions felt in the Addingham area, this was absent in the Ilkley area.

Of every ten people in Ilkley who responded, nine were in support of the proposal to one against. The relatively low response implies that the Trail is not an issue for the town. On the other hand, the situation in Addingham was very different. For a village with a quarter of Ilkley's population, the total number of responses was greater. For every three people who responded, two were in support of the proposal, to one against.

The many comments made during this consultation, whatever the view expressed, have provided valuable information over the issues raised by this scheme. In Addingham, the issues are over the traffic and car parking in Addingham village, and the impact on wildlife of the proposed trail along the former railway track. For Ilkley there was concern over the lack of facilities within the town of Ilkley for families to enjoy cycling in a safe environment. There was support for continuing the trail around the pumping station, near Ilkley, and not going up to the A65 road. All communities expressed concern over the possible use of asphalt or tarmac, together with the risk to public safety over having horseriders and cyclists mixing with walkers and families with young children.

A number of recommendations have been made, such as looking again at the route at the pumping station near Ilkley, the need for an environmental impact study, the need to explore how best to engage with landowners in meaningful dialogue, and the future role and composition of the Forum. The exercise has achieved its aim at informing the process.

Section 1 – The Background to the Public Consultation

Background to the Proposed Trail

The Wharfedale Trail Forum did not originally conceive the proposed Wharfedale Trail. The Forum has promoted the proposal identified by Sustrans for the purpose of testing public opinion, having concluded that this was an essential next step if the proposal was to hold any public credibility.

The proposal emerged from a feasibility study commissioned by Target 2 partnership – a group comprising the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), Metro (the lead partner in this European programme), North Yorkshire County Council, Leeds City Council, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, The Countryside Agency, and the Yorkshire Dales Public Transport Users Group. Its aim was to implement ways to promote travel alternatives to private car use.

In December 2003, the Target Project, with European funding, commissioned Sustrans (the national sustainable transport charity) to provide an outline appraisal for a cycleway between Addingham and Bolton Abbey where opportunities exist to utilise the former railway line until rail re-investment becomes a viable option. They reported back in February 2005 by identifying a route from Addingham Main Street to Bolton Abbey village.

A second study was commissioned by YDNPA with funding from Yorkshire Forward (Yorkshire's regional development agency). Sustrans was asked to investigate a sustainable public access from Addingham to Ilkley Railway Station. A number of options were looked at, and a preferred route was recommended, subject to consultation and land negotiation. This report is dated September 2005.

It was on the results of these reports that The Wharfedale Trail Forum based their public consultation. The only change was to omit the section from Main Street to Back Beck Lane, Addingham so as to mitigate any potential increase to the current on-street car-parking problem.

Current Planning Policies

Part of the former railway line from Ilkley to the county boundary is protected in Bradford Metropolitan Council's Replacement Unitary Development Plan for 'sustainable transport purposes'. This was adopted in October 2005, following a long public enquiry. It appears that the only section not protected is from a point west of Ilkley, near to Yorkshire Water's pumping station to the existing A65 road, and from there, to the old A65 road.

Where the route crosses over into North Yorkshire, this too is protected along the former railway line in Craven District Council's adopted local plan for the purpose of 'The Yorkshire Dales Railway Museum Trust' (the Embsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway).

The Client

For the purpose of this public consultation, the client is The Wharfedale Trail Forum, based in Addingham. It has used these earlier studies, generated by Sustrans, as a basis for testing public opinion on a cycling, walking and horseriding route between

Ilkley and Bolton Abbey through Addingham. It is also planned to accommodate wheelchair users.

An earlier petition by Addingham residents indicated that there was support for the proposal. This, together with further representations from the public, led to Addingham Parish Council agreeing to support a public consultation, even though concerns had been expressed over issues such as car parking in the village and disturbance to wildlife along the former railway line.

Following that decision, a Working Group of the Forum was formed, in order to coordinate the process. The group comprised two representatives of the Addingham Parish Council, the local resident who established and organises the Forum, the Addingham Parish Council's Footpaths Officer (who represents Addingham on Bradford Council's Rights of Way Forum), and District Cllr. Michael Kelly. Addingham Parish Councillor Gordon Campbell was originally a member of the Working Group, but has recently ceased his involvement with the process.

The Client's Brief

The Consultant was instructed in April 2007 by the Forum to carry out a public consultation with the residents of Addingham and Ilkley over a proposal to create a cycling, walking and horseriding trail between Ilkley and Bolton Abbey through Addingham. It was to take the form of two parts, starting with Addingham, which later included Bolton Abbey. The Ilkley consultation would take on a slightly different form, recognising the size of population in relation to that of Addingham.



Addingham – Suspension Bridge over River Wharfe

Section 2 – The Method Adopted for the Public Consultation

The public consultation expected by Addingham Parish Council for its residents over the proposed trail from Addingham to Bolton Abbey, was for a leaflet distribution to every household within the parish boundary. [On the 2001 Census of Population figures, the population of Addingham was 3,579 with 1,636 households]. It also included a number of public exhibitions in Addingham to give the public an opportunity to view detailed plans of the route and to ask questions about the proposal. Before the consultation could take place, the Forum had to secure the necessary funding.

When the Forum was seeking funding, Bradford Metropolitan Council was only prepared to part-fund the consultation, and to insist that the Ilkley to Addingham section was included because it would add ‘more strategic weight’ to the proposal. It was expected that North Yorkshire County Council would fund 25% of the total cost, based on an apportionment of the total length of the route (seven and a half miles or twelve kilometres).

The Consultant advised that a series of exhibitions at venues in Ilkley using the same publicly-available information and a similar consultation period of five weeks would be satisfactory for a town the size of Ilkley with a population of 13,828 and 5,898 households. This represents nearly four times the population of Addingham.

Since the appointment of the Consultant, the Forum was advised to include the residents of Bolton Abbey otherwise they would rightly feel excluded from a process that affected them. An additional exhibition was therefore planned at Bolton Abbey.

In order to use the opportunity of running part of the consultation before the summer holidays, a process was agreed with the Forum to stage it in two parts – Part One for the residents of Addingham and Bolton Abbey from 16 June to 20 July 2007, and to follow on after the summer holidays with Part Two for the residents of Ilkley from 15 September to 20 October 2007.

The Part Two consultation for Ilkley residents comprised three exhibitions dates at local venues in Ilkley, followed by an unmanned display in Ilkley Library, where residents could avail themselves of response forms that, when completed, could be handed to staff at the library.

Whereas the consultation developed with two methods of consultation, the crucial fact was that everyone could view the same information on display over a similar period of time.

In both parts of the consultation, a similar pre-amble and key question was printed on the Consultation Response Forms: (see Appendix 2 and 3)

The Pre-Amble

‘The purpose of this consultation is to test the level of support to the principle of the trail whilst setting out the Forum’s desire for a trail that is sympathetic with the rural environment and its wildlife habitats.

The consultation will help to raise awareness of the design issues and the public's comments will inform the Forum if and when it should approach the design stage of the scheme. An environmental assessment and further public consultation will take place prior to the submission of any planning application'.

The Question

Therefore, having studied the description of the route and the description of the type of trail that is proposed, do you support the development of the trail for cyclists, walkers, horseriders and wheelchair users from Ilkley via Addingham to Bolton Abbey?

Rather than follow this by a series of questions with tick (✓) boxes, it was considered that a free hand should be given for people to express their views in writing in their own way. Space was provided on the form for this to take place.

The exhibition material was presented on display stands to show details of the route on seven Ordnance Survey maps. These also contained the existing public footpaths and bridleways and were accompanied by a description of the route. Other displays attempted to show the alternative path surfaces that could be used as opposed to tarmac, as well as views on wildlife and its effect on public access, and the process that might apply if the trail was to be developed.

In addition, letters were sent to all known landowners asking them for their comments. Business people in Addingham and in the Bolton Abbey area were also given a copy of the leaflet and response form but this opportunity was not given to businesses in Ilkley, given their scale and diversity. Relevant statutory bodies and local organisations were also consulted, and letters informed relevant members of parliament, county, metropolitan district, district, and parish councillors. The aim was to consult widely so as to better inform the process.

North Yorkshire County Council, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Addingham Parish Council and Ilkley Parish Council were not consulted since it was considered that these statutory bodies would wish to consider the proposal with the benefit of a report on the public consultation.

As a result of concerns by a small group of people over the appointment of the Consultant, the Forum provided an independent scrutineer. He was Mr. Brian Hall, an ex-headteacher of Addingham Middle School. It was his role to witness the opening of completed responses.

Section 3 – Conduct during the Public Consultation

It is with great regret that a process of public consultation should result in conduct falling short of what would normally be expected from such an exercise within a local community. There appeared to be an orchestrated campaign by a small minority of people, including some landowners. This seems to have been borne out of frustration and anger over a scheme that threatened landowners who felt unable to accept it. However, that in no way condones certain actions that took place, which seemed to have been aimed at bringing the public consultation to an end. It is in the public interest that these actions are reported to show the context in which this consultation took place.

By way of background, the public consultation came soon after the Addingham Parish Council elections, which saw a significant change in its membership. The trail proposal was seen by some as the reason for having such an election. The distribution of leaflets to Addingham and Bolton Abbey residents on behalf of the Forum soon after those elections, seems to have sparked off a campaign from landowners along the Addingham and Bolton Abbey section in particular, who were, and still are, vehemently opposed to any such proposal along the former railway track.

A small group of people had criticised the consultation as being flawed and a waste of money. It appears to have been viewed by such as a battle to be fought and won. However, the consultation was not a ballot or a single-issue referendum. It was about gauging public opinion before a lot of time and effort is spent by the Forum on investigating all the issues. It was also about gathering information and views about the trail proposal, and to use that resource to help decide if or when the proposal should move forward. The consultation has made an important contribution to the overall process – but it is not the end or be all of everything as some think it is.

Alongside the Forum's website was one from the 'Vote No' group containing reasons why the Forum's proposal should be opposed. This provided the public with an opportunity to listen to a different viewpoint. Whilst there has been criticism from certain members of the public to the Forum's website, it should be noted that the Consultant had no influence in any way over its content. In addition to the 'Vote No' website, a group of people opposing the proposal appeared outside each venue in Addingham, Bolton Abbey, and Ilkley to influence those entering the exhibition hall. In Ilkley, a leaflet was distributed that referred to a 'blot on the landscape' and 'Mugabe style land grab'.

It seems that an orchestrated campaign came into operation judging by the series of methods used to frustrate or at best end the consultation, and with it the trail proposal itself. It was not the views of those opposed to the trail that caused the difficulty but the tactics that were used.

The Wharfedale Trail Forum received public money to test public opinion on a specific proposal that was seen as offering benefits to all communities concerned. This provided the local communities an opportunity to express their views in writing whatever those might be. Those who opposed the scheme had the same opportunity.

The specific matters that should be noted are as follows:

False Allegations

During the consultation, the appointed Consultant was made the subject of a formal complaint to his professional body alleging a 'conflict of interest'. This was a serious allegation made by an Addingham landowner, the purpose of which was to damage the professional reputation and integrity of the Consultant, and thereby stopping the public consultation going any further. This proved an unwarranted and unwanted distraction during the consultation over a period of three months. The professional body concerned in the matter cleared the Consultant of this allegation.

Libellous Messages

A number of potentially libellous and offensive remarks were posted on the website of the local newspaper that displayed such a level of abuse that these had to be removed. Such people chose to remain anonymous, whilst attacking the Consultant and the Forum's main representative.

Intimidation

There was also intimidation by the campaign group at the Addingham venue. The tactic seemed to be that of approaching members of the public who were viewing the information on display within the venue with the aim of influencing them against the scheme. Several complaints were received from members of the public. This led to contact being made with North Yorkshire Police, who mounted a presence at the Bolton Abbey venue to ensure that it didn't happen again. West Yorkshire Police were also informed with regards to the Ilkley consultation.

Further False Allegations

Addingham Parish Council meetings provided a public platform for landowners and others to make further allegations about the consultation, and the Consultant. This led to a letter being sent by the council to both North Yorkshire County Council and Bradford Metropolitan Council. (These were the statutory bodies that funded the consultation). The effect of this was to distance the Consultant whilst these claims were being investigated. However, both authorities seem satisfied with the appointed Consultant and of the quality of the work being undertaken.

Theft

On 17 October 2007, the consultation for Ilkley residents was delayed over the theft of completed forms kept in a sealed box during opening hours at Ilkley Library. It is assumed that the person(s) who carried out this audacious and criminal act was/were opposed to the scheme. The sealed box containing completed responses was forced open and a significant number were stolen. The matter was immediately reported to the police and investigated.

Missing Leaflets

It was decided to hold a further period of consultation before the Christmas period by means of a leaflet inserted in the free newspaper, 'The Ilkley Target'. The consultation period was planned for an extended period of two weeks, ending on 30 November. The aim was to distribute the new leaflet to all households in Ilkley. This arrangement was made purely on grounds of security, a situation that would not normally be contemplated in this kind of area. Residents were given the opportunity

of using a pre-printed freepost address. Once again, Bradford Council's library service at Addingham was identified as the depository for such completed responses. However, the leaflets that were printed for this purpose were delivered to a private company chosen to carry out the distribution to households in Ilkley. However, all went missing and this incident can only be described as highly suspicious. The opportunity to carry out this further consultation before Christmas passed, and this outcome only served to delay the completion of the process.

Therefore, in order to once again complete the task to the satisfaction of the Consultant, new leaflets were designed and printed. Another private company distributed these during the early part of January with a consultation period of some two to three weeks, ending on 31 January. On this occasion, no press statement was made until the distribution was completed, in order to reduce the risk of another theft. It is with regret that the completion of the Ilkley consultation had to be carried out with security as the key factor. It was vital to the integrity of the consultation that the people of Ilkley had the same opportunity as those in Addingham and Bolton Abbey to participate.

Those involved in these shameful actions were serious in trying to prevent local people from having their say. It set back the public consultation by four months. The purpose of these actions was to discredit the Consultant, the process of consultation, and the trail proposal itself. The Consultant can report that the consultation has been successfully completed and the public interest has been served, albeit with considerable disruption and personal cost.



Bolton Abbey Priory

Section 4 – The Analysis, Results and Comments Received

4.1 The Analysis of Returns from Residents of Addingham and Bolton Abbey

The use of the respondents' name and postcode and the pre-printed envelope provided the basis for analysing the public consultation. The envelope could indicate whether the response was delivered by hand or posted to Addingham Library. The regular collection of those responses could indicate the volume of responses week by week during the five-week period.

The total adult population of Addingham and Bolton Abbey for the purpose of this exercise was 3,077 persons, based on the 2001 Census of Population. The total number of responses from the residents of Addingham and Bolton Abbey was 809. That represents a response rate of 26%. An exercise of this nature normally generates a response of 10%, but given the level of interest in this proposal, especially from residents in Addingham, the rate of 26% represents an excellent response.

RETURNS POSTED COLLECTION DATE

	Single Person Household Response			Two+ person Household Response		
	YES	NO	OTHERS	YES	NO	OTHERS
14-Jun	183	40	6	69(138)	10(20)	1(2)
21-Jun	11	10	1	5(10)	3(6)	0
26-Jun	30	21	2	9(18)	5(10)	1(2)
10-Jul	18	23	2	11(22)	8(16)	0
20-Jul	6	13	1	6(12)	6(12)	0
02-Aug	3	0	0	1(2)	1(3)	0
17-Aug	0	0	0	1(2)	0	0
18-Sep	1	0	0	0	0	0
16-Jun	0	0	0	0	0	0
19-Jun	0	0	0	0	0	0
21-Jun	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS						
No. of Persons	252	107	12	204	67	4
No. of Households	252	107	12	102	33	2
Exclude Late Returns	4	0	0	2(4)	1(3)	0
Add Resident Landowners	0	11				
FINAL TOTAL	248	118	12	100(200)	32(64)	2(4)

The completed forms were first validated to check name and postcode against the postcodes applicable to that area. In certain cases reference was made to the Electoral Roll. Only one form was issued to householders, and this has proved adequate for households with more than one person as can be seen from the above table.

In relation to the total number of households, the rate of response was 36%. Basically, one household in every three made a response. In elections at ward level in Bradford District, the average turnout in 2007 was 41.6% within a range of 28% to 53%. In the local Addingham Parish Council election in May 2007, the turnout was 49.7%.

**RETURNS BY
HAND
COLLECTION
DATE**

	Single Person Household Response			Two+ Person Household Response		
	YES	NO	OTHERS	YES	NO	OTHERS
14-Jun	26	9	0	15(30)	2(4)	0
21-Jun	0	0	0	0	1(2)	0
26-Jun	4	6	1	1(3)	5(10)	0
10-Jul	4	3	0	5(10)	2(4)	0
20-Jul	2	19	1	7(14)	5(10)	0
02-Aug	1	0	0	2(4)	0	0
17-Aug	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-Sep	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-Jun	11	1	4	2(4)	0	0
19-Jun	3	0	0	0	0	0
21-Jun	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS						
No. of Persons	51	38	6	65	30	0
No. of Households	51	38	6	32	15	0
Exclude Late Returns	1	0	0	2(4)	0	0
FINAL TOTAL	50	38	6	30(61)	15(30)	0

Notes:-

Responses made after 20 July NOT included in figures, but all comments considered.

'Others' include spoilt responses, and those with no preference, but all comments considered.

Shaded area relates to late returns

16,19,21 June were exhibition days

14,21,26 June and 10,20 July were collection days

The Number of valid 'YES' Responses came to 559, representing 69%. The number of valid 'NO' Responses came to 250, representing 31%. Roughly, two out of every three persons who responded were in favour of the project, but there is a significant minority that must be clearly noted.

The Consultant was first aware of a Vote 'NO' campaign on the first day of the exhibitions on 16 June, and of their website (www.thewharfedaletrail.co.uk). From some of the returns received, it appears that leaflets had been distributed to householders. It is impossible to gauge how effective this campaign had been. On the other hand, The Wharfedale Trail Forum have a website (www.wharfedaletrail.co.uk), promoting the proposal.

In terms of the rate of response, 56% of the total returns (450 out of 809) came in before the exhibition commenced on 16 June. Of that number, 84% indicated a preference for 'YES'. The rate of 'NO' returns increased over the remaining period. In fact the rate of 'NO' returns was at 46% up to 10 July, and this increased even more to 54% on the 20 July returns. This suggests that efforts of the Vote NO campaign to secure 'NO' preferences were being maintained up until 20 July.

A small number of returns (15) came in after the consultation period ended on 20 July. In fact one arrived in September! The responses were mainly for a 'YES' preference. These were not included in the official returns.

Equally, a small number of returns were either spoilt (9) by having either no name, postcode or outside the area. Thirteen people were unsure whether or not to support the proposal. However, the comments made by these people have been considered along with the others.

78% of the responses were sent by post using the free pre-printed envelope. Considering the availability of posting the response, it is significant that 22% of the total were delivered by hand to Addingham Library in Main Street.

In terms of geographical distribution of valid returns, 79 came from outside Addingham village but within the parish boundary. Of that number, the majority (80%) were in favour of the proposal.

The response from the relatively few residents in Bolton Abbey village was disappointingly poor with only four returns with two in favour and two against.

90% of the returns came from Addingham village with returns coming from nearly every street. There were pockets of strong support from the Moor Park area where 13% of the total were in favour of the proposal. Equally, there was strong support against the proposal from the Bark Lane area.

Part One of the consultation, being aimed at the people of Addingham and Bolton Abbey, resulted in most respondents commenting on their familiar patch with very little mention of Ilkley or Bolton Abbey.

4.1.1 Comments Received from the Residents of Addingham and Bolton Abbey

Comments from those with a 'YES' View

Of the 559 people who made 'Yes' returns, 47% made no comment at all. This means that some 300 did; this provided a wealth of information that will help to inform the process. The main concerns made came under the headings of car parking, traffic, the proposed route, wildlife, and timescale. These and others will be referred to below. The Consultant has endeavoured to keep to the wording used by the respondents wherever possible in both parts of the consultation.

Overall Comments

There were some 116 supportive phrases such as 'excellent project', 'fantastic idea', 'brilliant addition', 'an exciting prospect'. It was seen as a great benefit to the village of Addingham. A 91 year old woman said: 'I wish I was able to use it'. A mother said: 'I would absolutely love the freedom to walk or cycle with my three children'. One person was even willing to help construct the trail. These superlatives summed up the strength of support for what was seen as a trail with many benefits for everyone.

Benefits

In terms of the benefits, both safety and health were seen as the key factors – the ability to cycle, walk or horseride away from 'menacing' motor traffic, and the ability to exercise and enjoy a safe environment. The busy B6160 road from Addingham to Bolton Abbey was seen as a deterrent to all three potential users let alone those with disabilities and young children. One saw the trail as a 'safe place for young cyclists to practice their skills'. There seems to be a hidden demand from families who would value the ability to cycle along a traffic-free route, getting away from the noise, rush and pollution of cars. Reference was made to the proposed trail as a potential lifesaver from the dangers of the B6160 road (Addingham to Bolton Abbey). The trail would encourage more people to take up walking and use the countryside without the need for cars. Those who use the Dales Way experience danger when crossing the B6160 at Lob Wood with a blind summit and corner.

Some referred to the beautiful countryside and the 'impressive views' in which the trail would be set, and this was seen as an added benefit for the village of Addingham.

The health benefits of people exercising were well made. Older people, including 'active pensioners', could see the benefit of walking along easy gradients. The route would encourage more people to become active, including children.

Some felt the local economy would benefit, especially Addingham in that tourist money would help to sustain local businesses by keeping trade going. A comment was made about promoting the Dales through cycle hire and provision of car parks like at the Camel Trail in Cornwall.

From a social point of view the trial would help to bring families together through either cycling or walking. Some referred to the educational benefits of the trail.



Addingham Memorial Hall

Car Parking

The inadequate level of car parking in Addingham village was seen as the major concern. Many thought it would add to the already short supply of parking as well as the congestion along the main road. Reference was made to the privately operated pay and display car park at the Swan public house. More publicity should be given to this facility was one comment. People referred to plans to increase the use of yellow lines, which would further restrict the ability to park. So, the parking provision is already an issue and that more car parking was needed.

Reference was made to sites that could accommodate car parking at former garage site to the rear of the cricket field and the use of land at the former infants school, land around bridge 55 at Back Beck Lane, and echelon parking at Old Station Way. Many spoke of the cars brought in by walkers intent on using the footpath network around Addingham. There is a real perception that this kind of trail will generate more cars and add to the existing congestion in Addingham. There was the view that the trail would not cause serious problems of congestion and car parking; this was all down to unnecessary fears. Some urged people to visit other villages that had cycle routes in terms of dealing with car parking.

There was support for the use of the primary school car park area at weekends and holidays. The school could charge, and those funds could help to support the school activities. A few mentioned the need for extra parking not just in Addingham, but also in Ilkley and Bolton Abbey and all other points where the public could access the proposed trail.

Traffic

Both the A65 road from Ilkley to Addingham, including the old Ilkley road, and the B6160 Bolton Road were cited as dangerous for horseriders, walkers and cyclists. Even the quieter old Ilkley road from Addingham to Ilkley had problems from racing

buses to commuters using this as a rat run during peak hours; this posed a danger to children cycling, and a suggestion was made for a speed limit. The perceived increase in the number of motorised traffic and their speed is preventing people from cycling on these busy roads in order to access the Dales.

Public transport was given a rare mention, especially the hopper bus from Ilkley to Bolton Abbey in the summer months; one complained that there was no set-down point in Addingham and, if allowed, would help to reduce the car parking problems in Addingham.

The clear message from these views on traffic was that the existing roads are too dangerous for non-motorised traffic and hold back use by cyclists, horseriders especially. Even walkers who can use the Dales Way experience danger when crossing the busy B6160.

The Route

There were safety concerns over the multi-use of the trail for cyclists, walkers and horseriders. Many felt that walkers should be given top priority when cyclists and horseriders approach. On straight stretches of the route, especially the former railway track, some saw this as an opportunity for cyclists and horseriders to speed and risk danger to children and others walking. There was mixed views over the multi-user nature of the trail; some thought that cyclists, walkers and horseriders don't mix, other thought that they work elsewhere. There was a call for a code that required cyclists to show respect and use bells and not to use excessive speed. People didn't want the trail to be opened to motorised traffic such as motor bikes and quad bikes and asked whether or not gates would be used.

The old railway track was seen as an excellent use, although one wanted to see the railway line opened for trains in the long-term. It would provide easy cycling using a level route. It would also provide a safe and more pleasant route for cyclists, although concerns were expressed over the existing crossings along the former railway track between Addingham and Bolton Abbey Station.

On the Ilkley to Addingham section, some thought that the Low Mills route should be followed i.e. the Dales Way route rather than use the old Ilkley road. Others wanted to see less use of public roads in the proposal. One idea was to form a new path alongside the old Ilkley Road.

There was support for avoiding the A65 road by taking the route past the pumping station from Ilkley and so continue along the Dales Way until the old Ilkley road is reached. Some saw this proposed route as helping to ease traffic congestion by offering a safe route between Ilkley and Addingham.

Strong support was made for accommodating people with learning difficulties, wheelchair users and pushchairs, even to the extent of marking separate lanes for cyclists and horseriders on one lane with walkers on another. Some saw the need for priority for walkers and wheelchair users through the use of signage.

Dogs needed to be provided with dog gates and bins for dog dirt. Horseriders should clean up horse manure, otherwise no horses should be allowed. There was a request for seats, shelters and signs.

Concern was expressed over cycle clubs using the trail since they tend to ride two abreast; club cycling should be banned says one person. Another preferred walkers and cyclists to horseriders, although one observed that there are few bridleways to the west of the river Wharfe.

References have been made to the experience enjoyed through cycling in France and Germany, and concern was expressed there were no off-road routes in this area of beautiful countryside with superb views over Beamsley. Perhaps, with the existing Dales Way in mind, one person thought that cyclists would use the proposed trail rather than walkers.

The idea of a circular walking route between Addingham, and Bolton Abbey was shared in which one suggested a new path to the east of the river Wharfe and accessing Addingham by the existing suspension bridge.

Path Surface

The clear message was to avoid tarmac or asphalt if at all possible. Some suggested using crushed stone as on the Selby to York route. One thought that other paths don't seem to be as tarmaced as this proposed route. Many felt that tarmac increases the opportunity to speed to the detriment of other users like walkers. The idea of a speed limit for cyclists and horseriders along straight stretches was put forward. Some suggested gates to help reduce speed. So the idea of natural materials such as cinders, crushed brick – something porous rather than tarmac, even to the extent of the bare earth, was preferred. Many saw tarmac as encouraging speeding.

Some saw the need to make a wider path to cater for the multi-purpose users with perhaps white lining, as is the practice in Germany. Where waterlogged areas existed, a more robust surface was required.

Wildlife

Many thought that with careful management along the proposed route, wildlife would not be disadvantaged, and examples of other cycle paths were quoted. One felt that wildlife could adapt better than human beings. Nevertheless, there was a clear view that minimal disruption to the route was needed and complemented by adding extra interest through hedge planting, wildflower seed planting, and erecting nesting boxes. Some noted that farmers have done damage in the past by pulling up hedges and ploughing existing paths. Another view was to make this route into a nature trail with interpretation boards and literature for public enjoyment.

Timescale

Many came with the view that five years is too long to realise this trail. It couldn't happen soon enough. One stated that: 'It's about time there was a safe route to Bolton Abbey'. Another suggested the construction of the Ilkley to Addingham section first, since this seemed less problematic.

Landowners

One thought that they should be treated with utmost respect and use kind persuasion – the means as important as the end. One questioned whether landowners used the former railway corridor in a meaningful way – they didn't acquire it to create a wildlife habitat. One didn't want the route to turn into a playground but living areas for farmers and locals.

Other Views

The Parish Council of Addingham came in for some criticism by being 'stagnant with cronies carefully protecting their interests and political affiliations'. However, there was one view, which praised the Council for understanding the changes needed to turn the mill village into its present success.

In terms of management of the trail, one suggested that somebody needs to be responsible. It should be well-maintained, free from litter and dog dirt and policed in some form – perhaps using volunteers. Some were concerned over vandalism, given the experience in Addingham.

A few views related to the consultation itself. One felt disgusted at the way the consultation was run and that the objectors should have been able to present their argument; therefore the consultation was therefore not valid. On the other hand, one thought the tactics of the 'Vote No' campaign as disgraceful and intimidating. Another was very impressed by the way the consultation was presented. The Wharfedale Trail Forum was praised for moving this proposal on, although it needs to include disabled persons and young people.

Comments from those with a 'NO' view

Overall Comments

Of the 250 'No' returns, only 22% made no comment at all. Therefore, those who could not support the trail were more likely to make comments than those who supported it. Some strong emotive statements were expressed that shows the strength of feeling against it. One saw it as a 'total waste of council taxpayers money', 'an expensive monster acting as a magnate', and 'whole idea ill-conceived'.

Many saw this proposal as a waste of money, totally unnecessary, ill-conceived, a non-starter, expensive, and that the money could be put to other more important needs such as the health centre, new scout hut, or improving the existing footpaths. There were also suggestions about a new car park, solving the parking problem, and the improvement of local shops as greater and more pressing priorities.

There are adequate routes for walkers, cyclists and horseriders and that this proposal is not needed. It would destroy the wildlife and 'a road of asphalt' or 'a human motorway' would spoil the countryside. One person described as 'a blot on our beautiful landscape'. Many appreciate this beauty and want it protected and left alone. Also, some people did not want to see Addingham developed as a visitor destination like Haworth, but keeping the village as a quiet and tranquil place. One resident expressed the fear of Addingham becoming a Bolton Abbey on a bank holiday. It would bring in more cars, rubbish and dogs.

There didn't seem to be any benefit for the residents of Addingham, but only for the visitor. Some thought that walkers only want to use the public toilets, so that there is no benefit to the village.

Some comments referred to the divisive nature of the proposal that seems to have been the concern at the recent parish council election in Addingham. The hostility seems to have come from the Sustrans camp and not from those opposing the scheme.

A few, who agreed with the proposal in principle, were either not happy with the route as set out for cyclist and walkers, or would support it if it was for walkers only, but not with tarmac. Infrastructure in Addingham was thought to be needed first.

Benefits

Many people challenged the potential benefits as expressed by the Forum in its leaflet. Many thought that Addingham would be used as a free car park and toilet with visitors spending their money in Bolton Abbey. Most people saw no economic benefit to Addingham, such as sustaining local businesses. Any little benefit would be to the pubs. Many didn't want Addingham to become a tourist destination. One person suggested re-laying the railway track and linking Skipton with hopper buses to Bolton Abbey. Another saw crime being introduced as a consequence of this route.

Car parking

This issue was far the greatest concern, with most people stating that there was a lack of car parking in Addingham already. Main Street has cars parked all day with the village overrun by cars parked in the streets and that this situation is made worse at peak times.

There was a strong feeling that this proposal would attract an influx of cars from visitors with their bikes and trailers, horseboxes, and vans bringing wheelchairs. Already residents observe that walkers come to Addingham, park their cars, and then proceed out of the village; this means that the spaces that could be used for locals are denied. There was a sense of unfairness that could get worse. They thought that Addingham would turn into a free car park for those going to Bolton Abbey, where they would spend their money. One person saw the need for a parking management strategy.

The view was that Addingham couldn't take any more cars or it will clog the village. The Parish Council has been slow or reluctant to tackle the problem. Allowing this trail would be 'opening Pandora's Box'. A few saw that this was happening already in Ilkley.

There was a need for a proper car park first before the trail is progressed. One person suggested the land beside the cricket club, but another was not in favour of this field being used for car parking. The current problem with car parking is a deterrent for local businesses and so there would be no benefits for them through the trial.

Traffic

Concerning the movement of traffic through Addingham village, there were strong views over congestion through parked vehicles in the village that hinders the free flow

of vehicular traffic especially along Main Street, and also Bolton Road, and at the beginning and end of the school day at the school car park. Buses have great difficulty, along with delivery vehicles. The view is that the village cannot take an influx of visitors. Terms like 'grid-lock', 'bottleneck' and 'horrendous' express some of the emotions people have. One person observed that the current 20mph speed limit seems to be ignored. In order to ease this problem on congestion, double yellow lines would reduce the space for people to park. Whereas most comments have been made about the route from Addingham to Bolton Abbey, there were some who felt that the use of the old Ilkley road was not safe because of fast moving buses, and the likely increase of traffic as a result of the completion of the Low Mill Fold residential development.

The Route

One of the main points expressed on this matter was the existing availability of routes from Ilkley to Bolton Abbey with the Dales Way and the minor road through Nesfield and Beamsley. There is therefore no need to build another 'road' that spoils the countryside when there is already an extensive network of paths and tracks. Walkers have use of the Dales Way.

The other key point related to the fact that a multi-use path of 8 feet in width is dangerous especially for wheelchair users and families with young children; some thought it needed to be wider, but on the whole, the safety aspect was strongly felt. It was made loud and clear that horse, cyclists, walkers, wheelchair users simply don't mix. A few people thought that it was not wide enough for safe use by all the proposed users.

There was concern over the behaviour of users along the trail in which cyclists were especially marked out for their speed and being inconsiderate of other users such as walkers. Mountain bikes were seen as a potential hazard since they travel fast and have no bell.

The suggested use of tarmac or asphalt met with strong disagreement, and some see this surface as 'a blot on the landscape' and not aesthetically pleasing in a rural environment. Most people value the quality of the countryside in this area of Wharfedale and don't want to see it spoiled by an unnecessary path, described either as a 'human motorway' or 'an asphalt highway'. Tarmac was seen as a deterrent for horseriders at the expense of cyclists and walkers.

Also, there was the view not to create a new path alongside the A65 road, but to carry on along the Dales Way from the old Ilkley road into Ilkley. In terms of alternatives to the former railway line, suggestions were made about the use of the Dales Way and the riverside at Bolton Abbey – both public footpaths. One thought it would be cheaper to build alongside the existing B6160. The general view was that there are enough footpaths, bridleways and roads to cater for all users, and therefore no need to create another path, and certainly not one in tarmac.

Wildlife and the Countryside

The key point being made by many that there would be great disturbance to the habitat along the former railway track, which, since it was closed some forty years ago, has returned to a natural state with an abundance of wildlife. This area should be

left well alone. Some even went further to say that a proposal of this kind would destroy that habitat through the construction of the trail and its on-going development and use. This piece of rural vandalism in a sensitive rural area would destroy the natural habitat and not increase biodiversity. One person felt that landowners had done a good job in conserving the area of the former railway track. Reference was made to the Village Design Statement about green routes for wildlife such as the former railway track. An environmental assessment was needed before any decision was made. Badgers were particularly mentioned, and a letter from a local group is included in the appendices.

Landowners/Farmers

Many people were against the use of compulsory purchase powers in order to acquire the land needed to construct this route. To threaten landowners in this way was seen as unfair or even bullying. Since the Addingham Parish Council appears to be against the use of this procedure, it was felt that the trail, going along the former railway track, was a non-starter. One person was concerned over residents living alongside the proposed trail. Landowners, whose rights need to be acknowledged, are against the proposal.

Management/Maintenance

Litter, crime, dog dirt, and vandalism were seen as the downside of this proposal with many asking 'who will police the route?' It would provide a route of escape for the theft of horse and equipment. Litter especially is seen as a big problem and assurances were being sought as to who would manage and pay for cleaning this up.

The Consultation

Some saw the public consultation as a complete farce, a waste of money, flawed in every way and open to abuse. The brochure/leaflet was seen as one-sided with no mention of a lack of car parking or wildlife disturbance. Some felt concerned over the methodology used, and that there was only one response form for each household. One thought that outsiders had voted and that a proper controlled ballot was needed. There was a shameful lack of contact with landowners, whose consent should have been received before wasting public money on this consultation. The issues should have been explored first before proceeding to consult.

There was criticism over the public meeting held in March this year at short notice by the Keighley Area Co-ordinator. The meeting was full of cyclists from outside the area. The meeting was seen as a forgone conclusion with no opportunity to debate the consultation. The view was that the consultation was going to take place anyway and it was just concerned about finding the money. It was going to be independent but turned out to be one on behalf of the Forum.

The issues over the proposal should have been planned and researched better before a consultation took place. There were concerns over the way the Addingham Parish Council's annual meeting was used to gain support for a consultation and for getting this proposal onto the agenda. One person saw the vote as unconstitutional.

4.2 The Analysis of Returns from the people of Ilkley and Ben Rhydding

This exercise was protracted after experiencing difficulties in bringing the consultation to a satisfactory conclusion. These matters have been documented in Section 3 on ‘Conduct during the Public Consultation’.

Just over 500 hundred responses were received of which some 20 responses were invalid. Of the total of 502 valid returns, 451 indicated a preference for ‘Yes’, while 51 indicated ‘No’. Three valid responses were made but with no preference given. There has been overwhelming support for the trail by 90%. So, for every ten people, nine have supported the trail proposal against one who has objected to it.

The completed forms were first validated to check name and postcode against the postcodes applicable to that area. In certain cases reference was made to the Electoral Roll. In addition, checks were made for any duplicated responses that might have arisen because of the need for an extended period of consultation. Some twelve duplications were spotted.

ANALYSIS OF ILKLEY RESPONSES – PERSONS WITH A ‘YES’ VIEWPOINT

Postcode	YES			With No		
	Single Person	Comments	%	2+ Persons	Comments	%
0	75	42	56%	11(22)	8(16)	72%
8	97	53	55%	11(22)	8(16)	72%
9	171	88	51%	32(64)	14(28)	44%
Total	343	183	53%	54(108)	30(60)	56%
‘YES’ Total of Persons	343			108		
Late Returns	1			1(2)		



Old Bridge Ilkley

ANALYSIS OF ILKLEY RESPONSES – PERSONS WITH A ‘NO’ VIEWPOINT

Postcode	NO			With No		
	Single Person	Comments	%	2+ Persons	Comments	%
0	9	4	44%	5(10)	2(4)	40%
8	10	4	40%	-	-	-
9	20	3	15%	1(2)	-	0%
	39	11	15%	6(12)	-	40%
‘NO’ Total Of Persons	39			12		

For the purpose of the above tables, postcode ‘0’ refers to the Middleton area, postcode ‘8’ refers to the eastern half of Ilkley and includes Ben Rhydding, and postcode ‘9’ refers to the western half of Ilkley.

Some 500 people made returns against an adult population of some 11,000 people, giving a percentage response of 5%. This represents a figure of 7% in terms of households. It seems quite clear that the proposal is not a contentious issue to the people of Ilkley and Ben Rhydding. This view is supported by the high level of people who made no comments on the form, especially indicating a ‘Yes’ preference.

4.2.1 Comments Received from the Residents of Ilkley and Ben Rhydding

Comments from those with a ‘YES’ View

Of the 451 ‘Yes’ returns, 55% made no comment at all. In some parts of Ilkley this figure rose to 72%, which indicates that the proposal has not raised the same high level of emotions as in Addingham and Bolton Abbey.

The comments raised were very different in some ways from those at Addingham and Bolton Abbey. Whereas traffic in Main Street, Addingham and car parking were seen as major issues, this did not appear as such with Ilkley residents in terms of the likely impact of the proposed trail.

Overall Comments

Over seventy people gave their support in such terms as: ‘excellent’, ‘great idea’, ‘very much in favour’, ‘strongly support the concept’, ‘support the development all the way’. Part of this view may be attributed to the lack of safe routes for families to cycle within Ilkley. It is the families who seem to support the route wholeheartedly because of the urge to get out as a family and enjoy a safe and pleasant experience on the doorstep. One such quote stated: ‘As a family, we look forward to being able to cycle along this route. Trails like this are essential for walkers and cyclists especially those with young families’. Others saw the health benefits such as exercise, fighting obesity and reducing NHS costs.

A mother with children would prefer to walk to Addingham from Ilkley to see friends rather than take the car. There was a wheelchair and mobility scooter user who said: 'this would be wonderful for me'.

There was dismay over the way the trail has been viewed by some people in the Addingham area:

'Sorry that such a benign proposal appears to have created such an ugly war of words, which does the people of this area no credit'.

'Any opponents of this scheme should be ashamed'.

'Dumb-founded by the selfish, ignorant minority who are preventing a major improvement to the lifestyles and the environment of the majority of Wharfedale residents'.

'I am puzzled as to why this has raised so much controversy'.

Benefits

Those who responded with YES returns believed that a wide range of benefits were available to the public and that the wildlife matter was outweighed by the benefits to health, well-being to all users through such a beautiful and safe route. Wheelchair users would particularly benefit. It would encourage cycling, and help to appreciate our heritage.

Economic

One person thought that Devonshire Estates would benefit commercially from this development but thought also that there would be punitive parking charges at Bolton Abbey through the trail. Several thought that the cafes, shops, pubs, tearooms, and the steam railway would benefit. Services and businesses could be linked without adding to traffic on the A65 road. Even commuters from Addingham could cycle to Ilkley.

Family enjoyment

The route was particularly suitable for children and families. It was seen as a safe place for children to learn to cycle and to practice safely. Many thought that the trail would help to promote safe cycling for families, and perfect for families enjoying being out together. One described it as 'a fantastic amenity for families to get out'. Public art was suggested as an interesting feature or climbing/investigative structures for children to enjoy.

Safe route

The trail would provide the freedom for young children, and in fact, a safe place for young and old to walk and cycle. It was seen as a safe and direct route from Ilkley to Bolton Abbey that would benefit all users. One person referred to a 'desperate need' for traffic-free areas to enable children and others to walk and cycle in comparative safety. Safe routes were seen as essential to encourage children to exercise and take keen interest in the environment. Someone saw it as the only bike route in Ilkley that would be traffic-free and suitable for all ages.

Reduced Car Travel

The route would encourage more people to use alternative means of travel, such as cycling to Ilkley from Addingham for shopping or visiting the area and getting

fresh air without the need for a car. Another saw railway lines as the opportunity to get out of cars and onto the bicycle. One saw the route as brilliant for cyclists.

Health

Many linked the need for exercise with the current issue of obesity. Many saw the trail as promoting good health for the communities of Ilkley and Addingham. A parent of an autistic child saw the long-term health and education benefits for such a trail for that person. In overall terms, one person summed it up as a positive contribution to peoples' well-being.

Environment

The traffic-free trail would help combat pollution, parking problems, traffic congestion and global warming, and the provision of a 'green' trail into the National Park would offer a huge benefit.

Scenic Beauty

Several people saw the positive benefit for all concerned. The trail would enhance the countryside. One person referred to the elderly walkers by giving them access in the countryside. Some saw the trail as opening up a beautiful stretch of countryside, and one thought that that would be a huge benefit to the whole community of Ilkley and Addingham; another described as an absolutely vital public amenity.

Parking

This aspect did not raise anything like the strength of feeling at Addingham. However, one thought that Addingham objectors have a valid point on adequacy of parking, and that this requires more thought; another said that Addingham residents should not be inconvenienced by excessive parking. If anything, one mentioned the need for parking at Ilkley. Another thought that the proposal would ease the parking situation in Ilkley since parking is insufficient in Ilkley.

Traffic

The A65 road from Ilkley to Addingham was seen as dangerous, especially for families and young children when cycling. Even the old A65 road was used by fast traffic, and at peak time cars are rat-running from Addingham to Ilkley using this stretch of road. One person viewed Nesfield road in the same way – increasingly becoming a rat-run, and dangerous for cyclists. Then there was a plea for safe cycling routes in Ilkley. More safe routes to All Saints Primary School could encourage children to cycle to school, and reinforce what the school is trying to do. A view was expressed that children are kept like battery hens and never have the chance to run or walk freely because of the persistent danger of fast traffic. The Addingham to Bolton Abbey road was also referred to as dangerous for cyclists.

Route

Several people spoke of the route as providing a traffic-free access to the Dales – something that Ilkley and Addingham lack. It would also create a safe, gradient-free access, and would be well supported by locals and visitors.

There were several comments on amending the route between Ilkley and Bolton Abbey. Many voiced a concern over taking the route up to the A65 road from the pumping station near Ilkley, and suggested that this path could continue along the Dales Way to the old Ilkley to Addingham road. One said that this would avoid noise

and unpleasantness. The old road should have a designated cycleway with signage, as it is quite dangerous and used as a rat-run.

One person also described the B6160 road from Addingham to Bolton Abbey as dangerous, and many have expressed that point in the Addingham and Bolton Abbey part of the consultation. With regards to the A59 road, concern was expressed over crossing over it near Bolton Abbey Station.

It was suggested that the recommended route through Ilkley to the railway station could go along the river rather than divert up to the main road at All Saints Primary School; one preferred the open space route rather than residential areas, and another thought that The Grove should be avoided. Another suggested taking the route through Ilkley to the old bridge via Castle Road down to the river.

There was a plea to sort out the railway as to how this could be accommodated, and not prevented from coming into Addingham. One person would only support the trail if it didn't prevent the restoration of the railway between Bolton Abbey and Addingham.

A few people wanted the route extending into Burley and Otley and beyond Bolton Abbey. One thought that the trail should show alternative means of travel at both ends.

A view was expressed about taking the Dales Way along the river from Ilkley Tennis Club so that this section could be used for walkers only. At this section, it was suggested that drainage should be in place to avoid future flooding.

Path Surface

There is strong concern over the use of tarmac or asphalt for the path, but the strength of feeling does not match that from residents of Addingham. Nevertheless, the clear statement from residents was for a natural look such as the use of crushed stone or gravel so that a sympathetic material can be used that fits with a rural environment. Some were prepared to concede to a sealed surface where high usage was envisaged along some sections. The Keswick Trail was mentioned in which crushed hardcore and gravel is used along this railway path and yet it has a better sense of naturalness than tarmac.

Several people mentioned that walkers do not like walking on asphalt, and that this may not suit horses. There was a concern that a smooth surface might encourage speeding cyclists. There was a dichotomy of views when some wanted a narrower path on environmental grounds and another wanted a wider path for safe two-way passage of people along the trail.

One person observed that the access road to Ilkley Tennis Club gets flooded and access is prevented.

Mix of Users

The same concern from Addingham residents was also expressed at Ilkley, although far less forcibly. The concern is about the speed of some cyclists and horseriders who could put at danger young children, people in wheelchairs, and parents with

pushchairs. Many thought that a bell is essential for cyclists so that people would not be surprised by cyclists passing from behind. One horserider was concerned by a bolting horse, and another from the danger of a horse spooking, when other users are on the trail. Some people were suggesting separate paths or defined space between horseriders and cyclists as against walkers. One thought that horseriders were arrogant, and another called for respect by all users on an equal basis. A view was expressed about horseriding on the trail, presumably on safety grounds, and others thought that priority should be given to walkers and cyclists. Another saw the trail being used by ‘packs of racing cyclists’.

The section at Ilkley from the old bridge to the tennis club was highlighted; this should be used for walkers only, and support for the trail was made on this basis.

One person asked not to exclude roller-blading, and another not to exclude runners. Yet another wanted to see horse carriage driving along the trail.

Wildlife

There were some mixed views on this issue, but most thought that on balance the wildlife would not be unduly disturbed, one of whom was a member of the RSPB. One thought that wildlife was more threatened by the erosion of ‘Brownfield land’ by people selling off their gardens. Another person preferred hedges to fencing.

Management and Maintenance

Many people thought that there was a need for litterbins and receptacles for dog mess with accompanying signage. Signs were also mentioned with regards to identifying local attractions; one suggested local village maps to inform visitors of the amenities available. Several people thought that benches, picnic tables would prove useful. Another person asked for lockers for cycles and pushchairs so that people could wander around Ilkley and Bolton Abbey freely. Another thought that the fear of attack was misplaced. There appears to be a lack of understanding by some over the legitimate users on the trail when reference was made to no skateboarding or motorbikes or large number of group cyclists dominating the trail. One person thought that worthwhile views of the countryside could be obtained from Lobwood viaduct if these could be opened up.

Landowner/farmers

One thought that earlier consultation with landowners would have helped to ease the way forward, and there was the issue over compensation and compulsory purchase. Another view was that landowners ‘should be welcoming the public to improve their understanding of each others’ needs and concerns – education not exclusion, caring and sharing is what is needed. Isolation and individualism breeds contempt’.

Timing

Several people expressed the urgency in getting this trail up and running since their children will be grown up if it will take at least five years. One person advocated the use of compulsory purchase.

The Consultation

A concern that the leaflet had not been distributed to households as promised since the first lot was stolen. One thought that the maps should have shown contour lines,

conservation areas, administrative boundaries, along with the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway and the Dales Way. [These were in fact included on the maps where they applied.] One person could not offer unconditional support until a viable business plan and sources of funding could be identified.



Clarke-Foley Centre Ilkley

Comments from those with a 'NO' View

Just over fifty people were against the trail. As a proportion of the total returns, more comments were made (76%) as against those who favoured the scheme.

Overall Comments

The scheme was seen as an expensive gimmick, unnecessary, and inherently dangerous. Another saw it as a terrible idea in which bikers would come by car with bikes on top and park. There was no acknowledgement over the risks or adverse consequences. One person thought there were enough footpaths to cater for all users.

A few expressed their feelings as 'an abhorrent idea', 'an unwarranted intrusion into totally private land', 'another example of politically correct extravagance', 'ripping up the countryside to create a man-made monstrosity', 'a path to nowhere'. One wanted to see Ilkley's priorities sorted out first, such as the mess and litter brought to Ilkley by tourists and visitors.

Benefits

Several saw the trail as unconvincing and rather one-sided with untested assertions over the benefits; one person described them as spurious.

Economic benefits

There seems to be no evidence that the trail will increase tourists above existing levels, and certainly no attempt to spell out the benefits to local businesses. One thought that the advantages of tourism are all too often over-stated with disadvantages often ignored.

Educational

One person couldn't see school classes going out on the trail on bikes.

Environment

In terms of the path surface, asphalt was not seen as good for the environment. One thought that there was a strong argument for not disturbing the natural resources.

Reduced Car Travel

The claim that cars would be reduced was seen as not just credible, and the likely increase in car parking is just side-stepped.

Safe Route

One person noted that the route is not traffic-free. Another was concerned over walkers contending with the hazard of cyclists. However, one horserider thought that a few horseriders along part of the old railway at Addingham would benefit since there are no bridleways in the Addingham parish area.

Health

No evidence had been shown that the trail would increase exercise. One thought that the idea of encouraging outdoor exercise through the trail was pious statement in an area well served by footpaths with no shortage of cycling enthusiasts.

Scenic Beauty

Some thought that the appearance of the path would spoil the natural beauty of existing pathways, and deter other walkers. The 8 foot wide path would seem more like a road and would spoil the countryside.

Route

One person was enthusiastic for the route in principle, but not an 8 foot wide tarmac path. Another person thought that there is already a good route for cyclists north of the river, and in any case there are enough places for cyclists and horses without replacing green countryside with tarmac paths.

One horserider thought that the old railway was a mixed blessing for horseriders, but considered the trail north of Lobwood House near Addingham could link the bridleway at Haw Pike Farm and over to Draughton and Rylstone; one referred to the poor drainage in that section of railway.

In terms of amending the route, one suggested taking the trail from the railway station in Ilkley down Wellington Road and Castle Road by crossing the A65. There was a concern over horse hoofs disturbing residents at the old bridge in Ilkley if horses could use the path along the river to the tennis club.

Path Surface

Several people were unhappy with upgrading the Dales Way from Ilkley Tennis club to the pumping station; it was seen as very user-friendly for walkers and didn't want to see this used by cyclists. Another saw this section as a well-frequented route for families with young children going out for a quiet stroll, and thought that it would be foolish to encourage cyclists and horses to mix. A suggestion was made to take this route along the A65. Again, the use of asphalt is questioned and seen as an intrusive suburban form into the countryside. This material was seen as inconceivable by another person along the section northwards of Haw Pike Farm, near the A59 road at Bolton Bridge. A separate path was requested along the old railway at Addingham for horseriders so that they could use a softer surface and so provide a less smooth path of equal status. It was suggested that cyclists should walk their bikes under the A59 road, where an underpass exists.

Mix of Users

One person considered that the proposed mix of user is like waiting for an accident to happen and very irresponsible. If horses don't get you (according to a walker), the cyclists will. Another considered that families would not be safe. Then there was the view that the trail would be abused by motorcyclists and skateboarders and so the path would not be a quiet trail. In terms of attitude from bikers and horseriders, one walker was met with the phrase: 'get out of my way'.

There was a concern about walkers and cyclists sharing the old railway track with horseriders, who already have access from Lobwood House, where there is a livery yard. Again, the argument that walkers don't mix with cyclists, and horses with walkers continues to recur whatever the view of the public to the proposed trail. The feeling is that horses are seen as more dangerous to have on the path especially where wheelchair users and children are present. Others are concerned that the trail will become a high speed run for cyclists, and make it dangerous for other users; an apt phrase was used about cyclists as 'lycra-style speeding cyclists'. Again, cyclists came in for criticism for coming up from behind without warning.

Wildlife/Countryside

The section of the old railway track from Lobwood House to Hawpike, near Bolton Bridge, was peaceful and seen as good for birds. The wood itself was described as wild and unvisited. One person thought that the disturbance and possible destruction to habitats and fauna was not justified. An issue was raised about keeping wildlife as it is, or such wildlife as can be retained if it is to be accessible to the public.

Management/Maintenance

There were a few concerns over public liability if one got injured, and who would pay to maintain this path. Litter and other rubbish, already a problem along the River Wharfe could become a problem on the trail.

Cost

With the roads in an appalling state, this trail would be expense better left at this time. One person suggested the path be narrower and for walkers only in that it would be cheaper, and people could still get exercise. The view that this proposal was a waste of money and ratepayers footing the bill still persists by a few people. One person suggested that the money should be spent on improving the existing footpath and bridleway network instead of on government gimmicks.

The Consultation

One considered the leaflet as distorted to the pro-lobby. One expressed the view that a photograph of the path more than double the proposed width was deceiving people.



Bolton Abbey Station

Section 5 - The Views of the Landowners

The main conclusion is that the affected landowners are not in support of the proposal. Some landowners have agreed to their comments being published in this report, but most of them declined the invitation. For those who have agreed, these comments can be viewed in the Appendix 12. As far as Addingham landowners are concerned, the reasons for opposing the scheme are summed up in the petition sent to Sustrans; these are personal, agricultural, environmental, health, safety and access traffic reasons.

An Addingham farmer who owns part of the former railway is vehemently opposed since there are already too many walkers using his land. Another Addingham landowner is strongly opposed since it is incompatible with the farming business.

Another concerned Addingham landowner explained in detail the reasons for opposing the trail. These relate to the following: theft of materials, the loss of security in which the route would be opened up to 'undesirables', the lack of communication by those who undertook feasibility work and of the public consultation itself, prior need of an environmental assessment, the attitude of the local council to badger setts, protection of local water supply, mix of user along what is portrayed as a safe route, which is in fact highly dangerous, the misrepresentation in Addingham Parish Council minutes (March 2005) that local landowners have been consulted and are in agreement, no invitation to landowners at a public meeting held on 22 March, the problem of car parking and resultant congestion in Addingham village, criticism of content in the Forum's website, environmental assessment and consultation all back to front.

Yet another Addingham landowner reiterates the point that no landowner is supportive of the Sustrans proposal, and that the family concerned is categorically opposed to the trail.

Ogden (see letter in Appendix 12)

Ogden's own a section of the former railway line near Bolton Abbey Station, is not prepared to allow their land to be used for the proposed trail.

The Bolton Abbey Estate (see letter in Appendix 12)

The Estate owns of part of the proposed route along the railway, as well as the field edge route from The Devonshire Arms to Bolton Abbey village. Their Estates Manager sees little to commend the proposal as currently presented. Their reservations are as follows: the sensitivity of Lob Wood and Eller Carr Woods for supporting deer and badgers and the need to balance public access with the care of fauna and flora, the rights of way network already caters for cyclists, walkers, and horseriders, trail could be abused through its use by motorcyclists, and as a route for miscreants, the current problem of vandalism, theft, and litter, and increased public access will blight the asset value. He sees bias in the brochure as to the potential benefits of the proposal.

Ilkley landowners are concerned over the lack of prior warning or consultation before the start of the public consultation. Despite efforts made to establish ownership along this section of the route, it is regrettable that this situation occurred in some cases, and apologies were offered at the time to those landowners concerned.

Clay's of Addingham (see comments in Appendix 12)

Clays state that they have never been contacted as landowners despite it categorically stating on the website that initial contact with landowners has been done.

Concern over public safety with regards to running a suckler herd of cattle – some issues in the past involving members of the public.

No mention of how much land will be required.

Mr. Dickinson (see comment in Appendix 12)

Mr. Dickinson went to exhibition after being told that a track the length of the field of which he is a tenant-in-common. He is absolutely against the trail. He is one of the most affected as it cuts right through field and wood. He is concerned about not hearing beforehand but told of the proposal by a friend in Addingham. The trail would have a damaging effect on the wildlife in the area – badgers, owls, deer who enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the area. His field provides a valuable crop for winter food for farm animals and a tarmac path would make it uneconomical and difficult to harvest. Woodland management is needed from time to time and could pose a danger to the public. Finally, he suggests the trail idea be scrapped; consultation has been over controversial and a lot of bad feeling about the area this far.

Another landowner is absolutely disgusted to hear of the news about the trail for public use. Not willing to let anyone use any part of the land. The person feels that this should have had prior agreement from all landowners concerned!

There was concern over the statement on the Forum's website stating that the landowners had been consulted when this was clearly not the case. One landowner saw the exercise as a waste of money and the presentation of display material was seen as a deliberate ploy to mislead the public with misinformation. 'Over my dead body will you come through my land' was one quote.

Further concern was felt over suffering devaluation, loss of privacy, and increased risk of theft. The section of route from the pumping station is a private access road. Wildlife would be adversely affected such as badgers, deer, heron, kingfisher and yearly nesting swallows. There seems no need for the trail and strong opposition is felt along the Ilkley stretch as much as the Bolton Abbey section. Other concerns related to issues of maintenance, public safety over mixed use of trail and public liability, and that the opinion of landowners should be recognised. There is also concern over the negative reporting of the anti-trail supporters and the right to express views in a reasoned manner and not chastised or ridiculed because of opposition.

A landowner claims that he had not been contacted nor read of any Ilkley to Addingham cycle path plans in the local press and request that Sustrans formally approach them with their plans; he would hate to think that Sustrans are trying to muster public opinion for the plan before approaching landowners.

Section 6 The Views of Addingham and Bolton Abbey Businesses

All businesses in Addingham and all those comprising the Bolton Abbey and Wharfedale Consortium were given a copy of the leaflet. There were sixteen responses, mainly from Addingham businesses, of which fourteen were positive with two against. This total of sixteen responses includes the Embsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, and the Bolton Abbey Estates, both of whom were invited to respond as consultees. The railway charity is broadly supportive. The Bolton Abbey Estate's views are expressed above under Section 5 and in Appendix 12.

For Addingham businesses, signage was seen as important in order to attract people into the heart of Addingham village, where more custom would be generated for food and gifts from shops and pubs. One Addingham pub-owner whole-heartedly supports the scheme, but wants it carried out sympathetically. He felt that the majority of his customers would also be in support. He further states that the proposed trail was important to family cyclists and would encourage young children to exercise in the great outdoors. It could help reduce traffic flow to Bolton Abbey from Ilkley, and offered a great way to introduce the disabled and young children to the amazing Wharfe Valley. Some businesses were in sympathy with the landowners, and there was concern over the loss of car parking for visitors as opposed to customers and suppliers.

Responses in the Bolton Abbey area were relatively few, despite the fact that it comprises well-known businesses attracting significant numbers of visitors and tourists alike. It seems that silence was preferred to participation.



Bridge 55, Back Beck Lane Addingham

Section 7 The Views of the Statutory Bodies and Local Groups/ Organisations (see Appendix 7 for published letters and comments)

CTC – UK’s national cyclists’ organisation

CTC is supportive of the principle of the route and the proposal to use the former railway from Addingham to Bolton Abbey. Suggestions include improving the existing bridleway under the A59 road, making the footpath past West Hall that links the suspension bridge at Addingham into a bridleway, use of Beamsley and Nesfield road as part of the scheme and to close it in the middle to prevent rat-running. Concern expressed over the new path alongside the A65 near Ilkley hard up against the carriageway.

The Dales Way Association

Strongly in favour of the project going ahead as soon as practicable. It will not have any adverse serious effect on the Dales Way. The section between the tennis club at Ilkley and The Hollins will change the Dales Way, but on balance, the overall benefits outweigh this change.

Wharfedale Naturalists Society

They acknowledge the possible benefits of the scheme with regards to sustainability, but express concern to see that the current wildlife interest be conserved and where possible enhanced.

Need for a proper Ecological Impact Assessment; once carried out, the Committee would be able to review the mitigation proposed and come to an informed opinion regarding the ecological impacts of implementing the scheme.

Concerns at present that there may be significant negative impacts such as:

Route relatively undisturbed and of itself is of significant benefit to wildlife such as badgers, tawny and Little Owls and Woodcock.

Considerable scrub and tree removal required between the railway viaduct and Bolton Abbey Station. The White-letter Hairstreak butterfly is of particular note. Loss of trees and scrub need to be part of an assessment.

Assessment needs to address the on-going disturbance from usage of the trail.

Implementing the trail may well impact upon protected species not immediately apparent; the assessment should address such potential impacts.

Need for a robust and transparent Ecological Impact Assessment and that sufficient weight given to habitat loss and impacts on species of nature conservation importance.

The Ilkley and Wharfedale Tourism Partnership

The partnership has consistently supported the proposal as part of a campaign for more sustainable tourism for both visitors and locals. Route would be excellent for walkers, joggers, cyclists and horseriders and especially give a safe passage from Ilkley through to Bolton Abbey. It would help bring visitors to Addingham, and could be used by people cycling to work.

Ilkley Design Statement Group

With reference to the Design Statement, the group is in favour of the trail in principle as it fulfils their recommendation for more dedicated cycle tracks and bridleways.

The route needs to be discussed with landowners before public consultation. Dales Way popular with walkers who may be reluctant to see an 8ft wide shared path. The development at Low Mills will make the old A65 road busier.

Might be preferable to continue the route over and past the pumping station near Ilkley than form a new 800metre path next to the A65 where it is noisy and busy.

The access road to the tennis club at Ilkley is potentially dangerous – a separate path needed. Awareness of flooding problem.

A route from the tennis club to Ilkley railway station would be a boon if made through the recreation ground.

Concern expressed over conflict between different users.

A built heritage and archaeological survey of the route should be done in addition to a natural environment study.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

The authority supports the development of the trail

The proposal would contribute to their objectives of increasing accessibility to users of all abilities, and developing the scope, quality and co-ordination of recreational infrastructure to increase and promote the area's appeal and increase the economic value to local tourism businesses.

The proposal would form a very valuable access route from West Yorkshire, provide a facility benefiting wheelchair users, those with limited ability, and those with sensory disabilities, provide safe off-road route for cyclists that avoids the Bolton abbey Bridge, and contribute to the need in the Craven for a safe off-road facility for family cycling, providing a facility for young children to learn to cycle.

It would also improve the walking and cycling route between Bolton Abbey Station and Bolton Abbey. The busy B6160 road lacks an adequate footpath. Usage of this footpath likely to increase if the railway at Bolton Abbey opens up to Skipton. (Current study underway)

The proposal would contribute to 'Getting into Gear, the cycling tourism strategy for the N. Yorks. and York Sub-region by providing a traffic-free off-road route from tourist centres and urban areas.

Natural England

This body is working towards four strategic outcomes, one of which is the enjoyment of the natural environment with more people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve the natural environment more often. The trail would help to increase the number, diversity, and frequency of people enjoying the countryside; therefore the body is happy to support the idea of a multi-user trail.

Ramblers' Association

The Ramblers wish to give the proposal their enthusiastic and unconditional support. They make the following points:

Willing to offer a member to serve on the steering group.

Need to be consulted on the width and nature of the surface.

The path from the tennis club near Ilkley to the pumping station could be separated so that walker follow the river bank, and request that this be formalised for walkers only.

The rights of way status of the trail needs clarifying. Preference given to registering this trail as a right of way with upgrading certain sections to bridleway status.

The British Horse Society

There is a need for good off-road riding, and local riders would welcome the link from the Ilkley end. A concern was expressed over bringing the route along the field edge of the A65 road, and suggests that the route continue and join the old A65 road further along.

The use of the old railway line seen as an excellent idea although part of the route is straight and could become a racetrack for horses and cyclists.

Asphalt is noisy and slippery and doesn't look nice in beautiful surroundings. Small gauge quarry bottom material would be a better surface. Rabbits can cause more damage than horses along country tracks. They are confident that a solution can be reached.

Gates along the trail should be self-closing and open both ways, but with no springs; a holding pen is an alternative.

The majority of horseriders would be local, and only 20% have transport. Those with access to transport could be dropped off allowing the rider to access other bridleways. The proposal will open up routes to local riders unable to get further up the Dales, and any safe riding is always appreciated.

Ilkley Civic Society

Comments only refer to the route as far as Cocking Lane/A65 road.

Support is given to the principle of increasing the cycle and footpath network in terms of sustainability for residents and visitors and access to the countryside.

However, there is concern that the route is not direct and may encourage cyclists to take short cuts along the A65 road.

They suggest a route through Ilkley using Bridge Lane, Castle Road, New Brook Street, and Brook Street.

Design concerns include the section at the old bridge, where they wish to conserve the environment, and to encourage the section west of the bridge to the tennis club to be as natural as possible. No lighting of the section from the tennis club across the fields to Cocking End. Hedging preferable to wire fencing. Request for a maintenance and cleaning plan.

Embsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

The trust is broadly in support of the scheme, subject to the trust's aspirations to extend the railway to Addingham. The trackbed was formally double-tracked and could provide sufficient space for the cycle way and railway to run side by side.

Addingham Primary School

They take a neutral position, but the Governors are mindful of the safety of the children in school, and of the potential educational benefits, and the potential problem of car parking in the school's car park and turning circle. The Governors appreciate the consultation.

West Yorkshire Pennine Local Access Forum

Their minutes of the 17 October 2007 refer to the proposal under item 170. It was agreed that the Forum supports the proposal although there is scope for further improvements in that links could be upgraded.

The following groups also responded during the consultation, and a summary of their comments is set out below. (see their comments in Appendix 9)

The Understated

They are an Ilkley-based group and represent some 25 or so women in their 30s and 40s. They welcome the proposal as it would massively increase opportunities to cycle or walk safely between Ilkley and Bolton Abbey. It would provide benefits such as cutting down carbon emissions, help people to become more active in relation to the problem of obesity, engage more family-based activity on a safe and flat route, provide good role models for their children, encourage children to enjoy outdoor activity from an early age, and spend money at nearby eating outlets and shops.

Concern was expressed over a small minority of landowners, vehement in their opposition, especially as they should understand that financial compensation would be offered.

They see no reason why the trail should have a tarmac surface, although some have seen this as a strong reason to oppose the scheme.

A number of commuters from Ilkley would prefer to cycle to Ilkley railway station rather than take the car. They hope for the trail to be sooner rather than later.

Craven Badger Group

The proposal is not acceptable as there are two badger setts with a third on the periphery. The flora is well established and the route would destroy biodiversity. There is a need for an in-depth environmental assessment as soon as possible.

Open Country

This is a Harrogate-based charity helping people with disabilities to access the countryside. Keen to register their support for the trail. An assumption is made that the route is fully accessible, which legally it must be. The trail would present a wonderful access opportunity for people with disabilities to enjoy the superlative Wharfedale countryside.

Concern over the ill-educated propaganda being espoused by opponents with an offer to take such on one of their rides. A traffic-free route is a must in their view and would solve more problems than it creates.

Otley Cycle Club

The group states their support to what is seen as an excellent project. Whereas they state that the proposed trail would not be used by large groups of cyclists or ridden at speeds in excess of a leisurely pace, some members would appreciate the attraction of a leisurely and gentle route. They saw it as an opportunity for parents to introduce their children to the pleasure of cycling away from road traffic. The 'back road' to Bolton Abbey, through Nesfield and Beamsley, can pose a problem for pedal-powered machines. The group refers to Sustrans routes around the Wetherby and Spofforth area.

Otley Walkers

A local group of over 100 walkers, and at its meeting on 3 October unanimously agreed to give the proposal its full support. It will enlarge considerably the amenity of non-motorised users of rights of way leading to the Lower Wharfedale Valley. The scheme is imaginative and well thought out. Reference is made to tarmac used on the path between Harrogate and Knaresborough, where families and children can cycle in a safe environment.

South Pennine Packhorse Trails Trust

The trust supports the trail and is pleased that it includes horseriders. User-friendly infrastructure is essential to the successful promotion of 'green transport' and healthy exercise. It is necessary and desirable because of the increase in speed and quantity of traffic making the Ilkley to Bolton Abbey road dangerous for vulnerable road users, and cyclists and horseriders are completely excluded from the existing rights of way network on the south of the river. Neither the road nor the existing rights of way are capable of providing a safe alternative route for traffic-free journeys and recreation between Addingham and Bolton Abbey.

They are agreeable to the route into Ilkley town centre since it would provide a safe route to school children going to the grammar school and encourage them to use their bicycles. An alternative is to use Castle Road and Bridge Lane. Also, the section from the old bridge at Ilkley going west along the river is used by horseriders with no reported incidents. At the pumping station, near Ilkley, the route could continue close to the river along the Dales Way away from the A65 road using the old pre-turnpike road.

At Addingham, Long Riddings was once a bridleway but deleted from the definitive map in 1965. Fisher's Fountain ford near the suspension bridge north of Addingham could provide a possible link.



St. Peter's
Church
Addingham

Section 8 The Views of Elected Bodies/Members Draughton Parish Council.

It was not unsupportive of the proposals but wishes to express concern over car parking at Bolton Abbey and Draughton as bases from which to access the trail. They also wished to see it used by bicyclists, walkers and horseriders but not motor trailer bikes; it was felt that such usage by such bikes could damage the pathway.

Cllr. Robert Heseltine – North Yorkshire County Council member for Skipton East, Bolton Abbey and Draughton

He objects to the trail as it has little merit and even less support locally. To progress the trail further would be insensitive and not reflect the vast majority of local opinion.

David Curry MP

He acknowledges the letter on the public consultation.

Section 9 Recommendations and Conclusion

The public consultation process has been held under a atmosphere of suspicion, fears, mistrust and mis-information. Emotions were running high throughout the consultation in Addingham and Bolton Abbey during June of last year, and this hasn't helped people to engage in listening to differing views nor a willingness to understand the aspirations of people on the one hand and the fears of others on the other hand. It is indeed rare for a local scheme to generate opposing views in a way that has resulted in a lot of 'mud slinging', with serious attempts made to thwart the public interest. By contrast, there has been an apparent absence of controversy in Ilkley, and the difficulties in completing the public consultation exercise for the people of Ilkley, as described in Section 3, in no way reflects on their conduct.

Recommendations

If the trail is to further develop, then the following recommendations are made for the consideration of the Forum:

The Proposed Route

Quite a lot of people have expressed concern over taking the route along the A65 road near Ilkley. This creates a new section of path from Yorkshire Water's pumping station by the River Wharfe along residential properties to the A65 road, and then follows the field edge parallel to the road. However, given the apparent difficulty of providing a path at the pumping station and existing gradients, **detailed feasibility work is needed to see if the route could continue along the Dales Way to join the old Addingham to Ilkley road.** This would provide a more natural and direct route, even if more costly.



Yorkshire Water's Pumping Station near Ilkley

Path Surface

There have been strong feelings from all sides of the community over the suggested use of asphalt. The area through which the trail is proposed is set in a very beautiful part of Yorkshire, and to make the surface as natural as possible is strongly felt.

The issue over a sealed surface needs to be reconsidered in the light of usage, maintenance, and appearance. It was noted that the section near the Ilkley Lawn Tennis and Squash Club is prone to flooding that could affect the surface of the proposed route.

Mix of Users

Many people have expressed concerns over public safety through the proposed use of the trail by walkers, cyclists, horseriders, wheelchair users, parents with buggies and young children. Some people suggested separating walkers from horseriders and cyclists as a way of reducing the risk of accidents. **It is recommended that the Forum look into this issue whilst noting that there are many such mixed user trails throughout the UK.** There might be reasons for preventing a type of user over part of the route following a risk assessment.

Wildlife

The former railway track has generated the most concern when it comes to the impact of the trail on existing habitats that have developed over forty years since the railway was closed. Whilst noting the planning status of this section and the aspirations of the Embsay and Steam Railway Company, **there is an essential need for an Ecological Impact Assessment along the whole route** as has been stated by the Wharfedale Naturalists Society, who have provided a basis for the scope of the study. It is noted that the Forum has always seen this as an essential study to be undertaken and has made this clear in the Consultation Response Form (see Appendix 2).

Landowners

Landowners feel angry over the line of the route proposed and that they have not been consulted before the public consultation took place. It is regrettable that a few landowners only found out when the consultation got underway. It is rare for any landowner to welcome a new public access over land that they own, and one landowner feels that this proposal is already a done deal with Bradford Metropolitan Council. **The Forum needs to acknowledge the strength of feeling among landowners over the whole route and to explore how best to engage with them in a meaningful and constructive way in order to improve understanding on both sides.**

The section of route along the former railway track from Addingham to Bolton Abbey Station has been a particular source of concern and an issue that has been around since Sustrans carried out their study in February 2005 on behalf of the Target 2 partnership.

The Forum

The Wharfedale Trail Forum needs to consider its future role, and the composition of its members in the light of this consultation. **If the trail is to continue to be developed, there is a need for a Steering Group to drive the project forward, drawing from people who are supportive of the trail.** Whether this group is still named as the Wharfedale Trail Forum is a matter for the Forum to decide. Any project of this nature is a long-term commitment and requires a range of skills and experience to lead it forward. **There is also a need for regular, constructive engagement and communication with all parties concerned within the communities of Addingham, Ilkley and Bolton Abbey.**

Conclusion

This consultation has been undertaken as part of a process to inform the decision-making process and to establish whether or not there is a basis for the proposal to advance. Whereas there is support for developing the trail, the Forum needs to work sensitively within a transparent process. It will need to convince both Bradford Metropolitan Council and North Yorkshire County Council in particular that this is the right scheme, and that the benefits of that project are, on the whole, for the overall well being of all local communities concerned and for any strategic support expressed within those authorities' policies. The consultation has provided a rich base of comment, and an opportunity has been given for local communities to give the Forum their response as to how people feel about this proposal.

Appendices

1. Consultation Leaflet for Part One (Addingham and Bolton Abbey residents)
2. Consultation Response Form for Part One (Addingham and Bolton Abbey residents)
3. Consultation Response Form for Part Two (Ilkley residents)
4. Public Advertisement in Ilkley Gazette for Part Two that appeared on 6 and 13 September 2007
5. Extended Consultation Response Leaflet/Response Form for Ilkley residents through Ilkley Target
6. Extended Consultation Leaflet/Response Form for Ilkley Residents Distributed in January 2008.
7. Letters from Invited Consultees Responding to Consultation
8. List of Invited Consultees not Responding to Consultation
9. Unsolicited Responses from Groups and Organisations
10. List of Elected Members of Local Government and Parliament contacted
11. Responses received from Elected Members of Local Government and Parliament.
12. Letters from Landowners, who have given consent to publish.