



Northumberland County Council

We Asked, You Said, We Did: Northumberland Line, Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing

We Asked

In November and December 2020 we undertook a public consultation on the Northumberland Line project. As part of this consultation, we asked for feedback on the closure of Palmersville Dairy level crossing and the option of replacement access being provided via a new pedestrian footbridge.

As the project progressed the proposals for a footbridge were no longer considered appropriate. Following detailed discussions with North Tyneside Council, in July and August 2021 we undertook further targeted consultation and asked for your feedback on a revised proposal to close Palmersville Dairy level crossing, replacing it with a new pedestrian underpass.

You Said

We received twelve responses to the consultation. We have analysed the feedback received and reviewed the main themes raised.

Supportive comments noted that an underpass would be more accessible than a footbridge. Questions were asked about the design standards for the underpass, reasons for retaining the right of way and whether/how access would be maintained for cyclists.

Some comments related to the risk of flooding in the area, with particular queries about whether the project had considered a drainage scheme to prevent this in the future.

Some concerns were raised about impacts on the local environment, with queries about how construction impacts would be minimised and the future management of the site.

Some comments were also received about the location of the underpass in relation to the existing level crossing, including the cost of such a diversion.

Some concerns were also raised about antisocial behaviour and the safety of an underpass, including whether lighting would be provided.

It was also queried whether access along the right of way would be maintained during construction.

We Did

Feedback has been reviewed by the design team, and where possible we have incorporated this into the proposals and have outlined our response to key areas of interest below. Your feedback will continue to be considered as the detailed design

progresses, including any feedback received as part of the planning application for the underpass.

Design standards and cycle access

The underpass has been designed in accordance with [DfT Local Transport Note LTN 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design'](#) as a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists.

The detailed design of the underpass is currently ongoing and will be the subject of a planning application to North Tyneside Council later in 2021.

Drainage

The detailed design of the new underpass and localised improvements have considered the risks posed by surface water flooding are intended to improve the drainage at this location. However, changes to the existing retained underpass to the north of the scheme are outside the scope of the Northumberland Line project.

Impacts on environment

Ecological surveys and assessments have been undertaken to inform our understanding of the existing wildlife context at Palmersville Dairy level crossing. During construction we will seek to retain as much of the existing landscape as is possible; where new planting is required, we will use as many native and local species of plant as possible.

Underpass location

The location of the underpass has been moved closer to the alignment of the existing level crossing. This location maintains the closest possible position to the existing level crossing and public footpath while ensuring compliance with the standards referenced above. This change has been facilitated by reducing the depth and width of the underpass, meaning the approach paths ramps can be shorter.

Antisocial behaviour

The proposed underpass will be sensitively designed to discourage antisocial behaviour and create an appealing walking and cycling route. This includes limiting the length of the underpass to minimise the amount of time users spend in it and improving visibility by providing splays at the underpass entrance, which will limit blind spots and improve users' personal security. Approaches to the underpass will also be improved, making them more spacious.

Additional safety considerations at detailed design stage will include surfacing and materials, including those that prevent graffiti and vandalism.

As well as the stated design improvements, Northumberland County Council will work closely with and engage the local police, British Transport Police and Fire Service, who will play a role in ensuring that the underpass is a safe space for users.

There are currently no plans to include lighting within the underpass, but the entrance to the underpass will splay and the structure will have a minimum width of 4 metres to improve natural lighting and forward visibility.

Maintaining access

Where feasible and safe, a crossing over the railway line will be maintained for the public during construction of the underpass. Localised diversions may be necessary and these will be agreed with the rights of way officer at North Tyneside Council and signed locally.