

**North Yorkshire County Council**

**Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee**

**6 January 2022**

**Receipt of Petition “Stop The Station Gateway Project  
and the Pedestrianisation of Harrogate’s Town Centre”**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To advise of a petition containing more than 500 signatures.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Constituency Committee to consider a response.

**2.0 The Petition**

- 2.1 A petition has been received by the County Council. This is an electronic petition containing 714 signatories, some of whom County Council officers are unable to verify whether they live, work or study in the county.
- 2.2 The wording of the petition is set out below:-

“STOP The Station Gateway Project & the Pedestrianisation of Harrogate’s Town Centre

To: North Yorkshire County Council & Harrogate Borough Council

Looks can be deceptive.....

This plan proposes drastic changes to the whole of the centre of Harrogate, not only around the Rail and Bus Stations.

This will adversely affect every resident in Harrogate. Forcing the traffic from the town centre onto the surrounding roads - RIPON ROAD, LEEDS ROAD, COLD BATH ROAD, SKIPTON ROAD & WETHERBY ROAD.

This is a very extensive scheme with proposals to alter access to both the Bus & Train Stations and to put wide cycle lanes on both sides of many roads, including Station Parade and East Parade, with one option being a single lane for cars throughout. It would also put cycle lanes on Cheltenham Parade and Bower Roads and make several other roads one way within the town. It also proposes pedestrianising major parts of Harrogate, e.g., James St, Princes Sq.

As well as possibly making the major routes through the town one lane only for cars the following is suggested:

- Albert Street could become one-way eastbound between John Street and Station Parade.
- Changes could be made to the Albert Street/Station Parade/Station Bridge junction with movements from Albert Street for vehicles limited to right turns only (onto Station Parade towards Victoria Avenue).
- Two-lanes for general traffic would remain on Station Parade (southbound) between Albert Street and Victoria Avenue.
- We have proposed one-way cycle lanes be delivered on both sides of Station Parade in this location. This may involve moving some existing trees.

- We hope to be able to retain the majority of on-street parking including the existing Blue Badge parking.

Click here to access the proposal, plans of Zones 1 & 2 & survey plus more:

<https://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/harrogate>

Harrogate council say that: "Sustainable transport is a key priority for this council." Yet they continue to build more and more homes, which simply bring more cars and more congestion.

Now is your chance to do so, voice your opinion and have your say in the future of your town.

Why is this important?

1. It will make it more difficult for disabled users and the elderly.
2. It will not improve traffic flow & congestion.
3. It will be bad for businesses and residents.
4. It will be more difficult for loading & deliveries.
5. It will not encourage people to cycle instead of drive and the air quality will not improve.

All we need to do is look at Oxford Street, Cambridge Street and Beulah Street to see the detrimental effects pedestrianisation has on shops, businesses and the appearance of our town. We need a flow of people through the town to support business, not to cut it off.

It has been stated on more than one occasion these measures will benefit business, but with as many as 60-70 per cent of visitors arriving by car, we are not sure how it will. Those visitors bring a substantial amount of income to hospitality and retail without which, we fear it would be terribly damaging to the town's economy.

The reality is that if businesses do not have access all day for customers and deliveries, they will not be able to function and may have to close unless a satisfactory solution is found.

Harrogate is currently a wonderful place to live, work and bring up a family. It has a unique and vibrant character and is a happy place too. It has even been voted so!

With great buildings, wonderful shopping, fabulous restaurants, and cultural life, all surrounded by our beautiful Stray.

We welcome improved cycling provisions across the District, to encouraging people to walk and cycle, however, what we are opposed to is anything that could have a detrimental impact on our livelihoods, our environment, our businesses, our conference trade, and our town as a whole? Wholesale introduction of cycle lanes through the town is not necessarily the answer. Harrogate has steep roads, and the climate is not always warm and sunny...too often it is cold, windy, and wet.

We must work together to find better alternative solutions.

Harrogate Residents Association"

### **3.0 The County Council's Arrangements for Receiving and Responding to Petitions**

3.1 The key features of the County Council's arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the County Council's website, are as follows:-

- Receipt of the petition is published on the County Council's website (which has been done in the case of this petition).
- If a petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate Area Constituency Committee.
- The petition organiser is offered the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the Area Constituency Committee meeting to present his/her petition. Subsequently, at the meeting, the petition will be discussed by County Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.
- Possible responses by the County Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:-
  - (a) to take the action requested by the petition;
  - (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate;
  - (c) to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or
  - (d) where the issue is one on which the county council executive are required to make the final decision, the county council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the website.

3.2 In accordance with the arrangements described above, the petition organisers have been invited to join today's meeting to present their petition. They have accepted the invitation and have confirmed that they will be attending.

### **4.0 Business and Environmental Services Officers' Comments Regarding the Petition**

4.1 The Harrogate Station gateway proposals are at a preliminary stage of design and have undergone two rounds of public consultation, with round 1 taking place between 24 February 2021 and 24 March 2021 and round 2 between 18 October 2021 and 12 November 2021.

4.2 The petition draws on the questions asked as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round consultation and encourages people to respond in the negative against five areas. The key concerns raised are that the proposals will be bad for business as a result of pedestrianisation and that cycle lanes are not the answer to improved cycling provisions across the District.

4.3 The proposals include the pedestrianisation of the eastern end of James Street and provision of cycle lanes on Station Parade and seek to balance the needs of all users in ensuring continued access to businesses for loading and the ability to drive into and park within the town centre area, albeit with a predicted modest increase in average car journey times.

- 4.4 The proposals aim to introduce a significant high quality uplift to the public realm in the heart of the town aimed at increasing footfall and quality of experience for residents and visitors. They will also provide safe cycling infrastructure and improved footways which is key in promoting healthier and more sustainable travel choices.
- 4.5 Currently no decision has been taken on implementation of the project, the results of the second round of consultation are being analysed and a report with final recommendations will be taken to the Executive early in the new year.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

- 5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and considers a response.

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Background Document: North Yorkshire County Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the County Council's website at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/petitions-information-and-advice>