

North Yorkshire Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

8 June 2023

Receipt of “Gateway Opposition Petition”

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

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 North Yorkshire Council. This is a petition on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) with over 2000 signatures, of which over 500 people live, work or study in the county. A paper version of the petition has been received.
- 2.2 It is a “Gateway Opposition Petition” the reason for the petition states that “The Harrogate Gateway Scheme and the building works that come with it, will be detrimental to the residents who live and work here. Shops and businesses will not survive this they are still recovering from the pandemic! Our voices have not been heard!!”
- 2.3 The information for the petition provides the following context:

“We the undersigned are totally against the Harrogate Station Gateway Project as proposed by North Yorkshire Council and supported by the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee on 5th May 2023. Reducing the main A61 road through the centre of the town to a single lane, together with other proposals such as the partial closure of James Street, will hamper access by emergency vehicles, increase congestion and pollution, force cars and all other vehicles onto other roads and have an extremely detrimental effect on both the residential and business areas. The whole premise of the scheme is nonsense and will irreversibly damage Harrogate. Those who live and work in the town centre are not being listened to. Our voices must be heard. As a result we have no confidence in the Highways Executive of North Yorkshire Council and their officers who are leading on the Project.”

3.0 The Council’s Arrangements for Receiving and Responding to Petitions

- 3.1 The key features of the Council’s arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the Council’s website, are as follows:-
 - Receipt of the petition is published on the 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 Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.

- Possible responses by the 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 council Executive is required to make the final decision, the 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.

4.0 Highways and Transportation Services Officers' Comments Regarding the Petition

- 4.1 The Harrogate Station Gateway Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) project is one of 35 projects within the Leeds City Region area that were announced in March 2020. Since that time the project design has been developed in accordance with West Yorkshire Combined Authority's governance and assurance processes and HM Treasury's business case process.
- 4.2 The project has been developed by engagement with specialists, stakeholders and is the only TCF project to undergo three rounds of public consultation across the wider portfolio, which resulted in some changes made to the proposals following this engagement. Professional traffic and air quality modelling was used in order to understand the potential impacts on road users of various options. The current proposals were developed as the preferred option having taken a range of factors such as benefits, impacts, cost and deliverability into consideration.
- 4.3 The project strategic case recognises town centres and the high street face renewed pressures post pandemic together with the rise of online economies; uplifting the tired urban realm to the eastern side of Harrogate is designed to embellish the visitor experience, encouraging patronage of the town centre environment as a desirable destination. In turn the towns economic opportunities will be enhanced which is reflected in the positive Business Case Benefit Cost Ratio.
- 4.4 The traffic model indicates that a worst-case scenario (peak 2018 traffic volumes / no modal switch outcome / includes future local plan development network demand) would be within acceptable levels, and that this worst-case scenario would be unlikely to be realised. The highway network efficiency is not reliant upon the number of vehicle lanes in Station Parade; this is controlled by corridor traffic signal interaction. In this case the project introduces new modern signal upgrades to largely maintain network capacities in a single lane scenario. Other options modelled, such as East Parade suggested more impact on adjacent residential roads and were not considered acceptable very early in the project development period.
- 4.5 Emergency services have been consulted on the Harrogate Gateway proposals since the initial concept. Most recently emergency services were consulted about the specific Traffic Regulation Order(s) proposed and the advice provided has been taken into account, including relating to proposed road closures.

- 4.6 As the project enters the next stage of development and delivery the project team will engage further with those who live and work in the town centre, including the Area Constituency Committee, about what the next steps entail. A construction management plan will be developed that seeks to minimise construction impacts as much as possible.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and considers a response which rejects the project discontinuation call, while maintaining focus upon a successful deliverable outcome

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Background Document: North Yorkshire Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the Council's website [Petitions | North Yorkshire Council](#)