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22 March 2021

Karl Battersby  
North Yorkshire County Council  
Directors Office  
East Block  
County Hall  
Northallerton  
DL7 8AH

Dear Karl,

### **Transforming Cities Funding – Harrogate Town Centre Consultation**

Harrogate BID welcome the news that North Yorkshire County Council, Harrogate Borough Council, and West Yorkshire Combined Authority has been successful in securing £7.9m for investment in projects for Harrogate town centre, through the Leeds City Region Transforming Cities Fund.

We are pleased that the investment aims to create a step change in travel and forms part of a much wider plan to tackle the climate crisis and deliver a more sustainable future for the town centre.

We acknowledge that the investment will improve opportunities for sustainable travel and link transport hubs with centres of education and employment and that this is a once in a generation chance to totally re-design parts of the town centre.

We hope that this investment will help to support our journey to recovery but urge that consideration is given to the consultation feedback to ensure that we capture the views and ideas of businesses, residents and visitors to shape and influence the proposed plans. The economy of the town centre is in a fragile state and we need to be confident that we are delivering changes that ensure Harrogate can thrive and prosper for many more generations.

We note the ambition to reduce car trips by 21% and increase cycling trips by 2,000%, walking trips by 78%, bus trips by 39% and rail trips by 53% to achieve our aim of becoming a net zero carbon economy by 2038.

The stated objective of the proposals is to tackle congestion across Harrogate by putting infrastructure in place to enable people to make walking, cycling or public transport their first choice for journeys. Currently in Harrogate there are no cycle routes that continuously link from residential areas to major destinations such as the town centre, Cardale Park and Hornbeam Park. Evidence from elsewhere in the UK and around the globe suggests that when cycling facilities are delivered more people will choose to cycle and some may choose to leave their car at home.

The key proposed components are:

- Improvements to James Street that will provide a better retail environment to help support the economy of the town centre
- Public realm transformation of Station Gardens and One Arch
- Provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycling access along Station Parade and East Parade

The BID Board have attended various presentations on the Transforming Cities proposals, have undertaken discussions with a number of town centre businesses and residents, and have studied the outline plans. We are pleased that through the hard work of officers and members in both Councils, the funding bid has been successful and support the aims and objectives of the project.

We do, however, have a number of comments and observations that we believe will enhance the proposals, and maximise the benefits accruing from the investment, which we have set out below, following the sequence set out in the consultation plans:

## **Zone 1: Cheltenham Parade, Station Parade (north), Bower Road and East Parade (north)**

### **Cheltenham Crescent - Cheltenham Mount – Cheltenham Parade**

We agree with proposals for a one-way restriction on Cheltenham Mount at the Mount Parade junction to prevent westbound traffic using Cheltenham Mount and Cheltenham Crescent, as well as increased bus priority and improved access to the bus station, and suggest that Cheltenham Crescent should be retained as two lanes but with one dedicated to Buses and Taxis only.

We don't agree with the proposed short section of eastbound segregated cycle track connecting to the Station Parade junction as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians with the retention of the two lanes.

### **Station Parade - between Bower Road and Cheltenham Parade**

We agree with making this section of Station Parade one-way (southbound) and creating a new bus lane to reduce congestion but have concerns that this may cause an increase in traffic on Commercial Street.

We don't agree with the proposed two way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians.

We support some reduction in the amount of on-street parking and would like to see the pavements widened, introducing trees to enhance the look and feel of the street for pedestrians.

Making the junction between Station Parade and Cheltenham Parade safer for walking and shorter crossing distances is essential as the current "scatter crossing" is confusing and is a primary cause of congestion.

### **Station Parade – between Cheltenham Parade and the Bus Station exit**

We support the proposal for a new pavement on the east side of Station Parade, adjacent to the Bus Station if this can be achieved whilst retaining one lane for cars and one lane for buses/taxis.

We don't agree with the proposed two way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians.

### **One Arch underpass – north of the bus station**

We support proposals for entrance and lighting improvements to the underpass to make it more welcoming at all times of the day and night but are concerned that the current state of this area results from poor maintenance and it is essential that the long term maintenance requirements of all the proposals is considered.

### **The two-lane Option**

The BID supports the two lane proposals but with one dedicated to Buses and Taxis only.

We don't agree with the proposed two way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians - We would prefer to see some pavement widening.

## **Zone 1: Cheltenham Parade, Station Parade (north), Bower Road and East Parade (north)**

### **Bower Road - between Station Parade and East Parade**

We don't agree with the proposed two-way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route.

We support new fully segregated cycle tracks on both sides of East Parade and

believe that these should be extended along Dragon Road to connect to the existing cycle route through Bilton to Ripley and beyond, connecting substantial residential areas to the town centre.

The East Parade cycle lanes can connect to the railway station adjacent to Victoria Car Park and secure undercover cycle storage could be made available in the car park with existing pedestrian links available to connect to the town centre and the bus and rail stations.

We believe that an East Parade cycle route can form the backbone of a more ambitious cycling network linking via North Park Road and Victoria Avenue to Beech Grove, Lancaster Road, Cold Bath Road and beyond.

This route can also be developed from Victoria Avenue, along South Park Road and Stray Rein connecting with Slingsby Walk to St Aidans School and the Hospital. Further development, via the introduction of low traffic neighbourhoods, along St James Drive, Warwick Crescent and Rayleigh Road would connect to Hornbeam Park.

The route can be extended further via St James Drive, South Drive and St Georges Road to connect to Harrogate Grammar School and then on to Ashville College and Rossett High School via a widening of the pathway alongside the Rossett Nature Reserve.

A final extension from the schools, along Whinney Lane, could connect to Cardale Park.

Through connected and segregated cycling infrastructure, and introducing more low traffic neighbourhoods, this proposal would provide a safe route to and from the town centre, connecting significant residential areas, four secondary schools, the hospital and two business parks.

## **Zone 2: Station Parade (central and south), Station Square, Station Bridge and East Parade (south)**

### **Station Parade – between the Bus Station exit junction and Victoria Avenue**

We support the proposal for a new pavement on the east side of Station Parade, adjacent to the Bus Station if this can be achieved whilst retaining one lane for cars and one lane for buses/taxis.

We don't agree with the proposed two way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians.

### **Station Square**

Whilst Harrogate BID welcomes the creation of a more flexible public space, with the potential to host a range of events and activities, the introduction of water jet fountains and a reflection pool to provide a link to Harrogate's spa town heritage, new planting and trees and a potential site for a new public art feature, we are concerned

that the previous event space in the square as well as the water features, introduced as part of the Shopping Centre development, were eventually removed, due to the poor location and regular vandalism.

The BID would prefer to see minor improvements carried out to this area, to roll back the effects of poor maintenance over many years, and see some of the funding invested in improvements to Cambridge Street which is in a very poor state.

Cambridge Street is the main pedestrian link between the rail and bus stations and the actual centre of the town around the war memorial.

### **James Street – east of Princes Street**

Three potential options for making improvements to James Street have been proposed, minor pedestrian improvements, part time pedestrianisation, and full pedestrianisation. The BID would prefer to see the pavements widened in this area, with some loss of car parking, allowing a single carriageway for vehicles, with some short stay/blue badge/delivery bays, as well as limited public realm improvements to the area adjacent to the Victoria Monument to provide a better pedestrian connection between Station Square and Albert Street, the Everyman Cinema building, Prince Albert Row and Library Gardens

### **Station Bridge**

We don't agree with the proposed two-way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route, and would result in reduced space for pedestrians. We would like to see wider pavements for pedestrians, particularly on the south side of the bridge.

With regard to Albert Street, we believe there is an opportunity to widen the pavements from Princes Square through to Station Parade to support the large number of hospitality businesses in this area. We cannot see any benefit in reversing the flow of traffic on this section.

### **East Parade – between Station Bridge and the Victoria Car Park Access junction**

We support new fully segregated cycle tracks on both sides of East Parade and believe that these should be extended to form part of a much bigger and connected cycling network, by introducing more low traffic neighbourhoods. Details of our proposals are included in our response to Zone 1 East Parade (North).

### **The two-lane Option**

The BID supports the two lane proposals but with one dedicated to Buses and Taxis only.

We don't agree with the proposed two way cycle lanes as it doesn't form part of a connected and segregated cycling route and would result in reduced space for pedestrians - We would prefer to see some pavement widening.

Whilst the stated aim of the proposals is to tackle congestion across Harrogate by putting infrastructure in place to enable people to make walking, cycling or public transport their first choice for journeys, we must be mindful of the fact that a significant percentage of Harrogate's economy, is driven by Visitors from outside the Town and the District, and we need to welcome them not drive them away. It is essential that we continue to invest in infrastructure for cars, particularly off street car parking, park and ride, improved signage, and electric car charging to ensure that Harrogate can thrive and prosper for many more generations.

Creating safer connections for cyclists and pedestrians will mean a reduction in space for people travelling by car and this is a clear trade-off. We need to find a balance which helps promote all travel.

We are concerned that the current consultation process hasn't engaged the wider Harrogate community and urge you to consider sending details of the proposals via email and post to all Harrogate residents as this is such a significant step change in travel.

We believe that the comments and proposals that we have put forward build on the significant work that has already been undertaken and would welcome the opportunity to meet and explain our ideas in more detail.

Yours sincerely



**Sara Ferguson**  
**Chair of Harrogate BID**