

# HARROGATE GET AWAY

Simon Lightwood MP  
Minister for Local Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Rd  
London SW1 P 4DR

17<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear Minister,

**Re: Harrogate Station Gateway**

I wish to draw your attention to significant concerns that the Harrogate business community has over North Yorkshire Council's proposed Station Gateway scheme, funded by the Department for Transport and West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

I represent the majority of Harrogate businesses who fear that the Station Gateway scheme proposal will not achieve its stated benefit of boosting the local economy and will actually have the opposite effect in both the short and long term.

We have launched a 'Getaway from Gateway' campaign and website<sup>1</sup> to highlight the growing groundswell of opposition to the proposals and feel that businesses have not been properly consulted during the planning process and that North Yorkshire council have not allowed businesses to make their voices heard. We have conducted a survey of local businesses, and with over 150 responses, 94% of respondents believe the Station Gateway will not benefit the local people or visitors and only 10 respondents said they supported the scheme.

More than 80% cited concerns about the lack of consultation, the negative impact they fear it would have on Harrogate and whether the scheme was needed at all.

Given the state of the national economy and that spending by local authorities up and down the country is being increasingly scrutinised, this is now the time to question whether this is a good use of public funds. Our survey shows that Harrogate businesses certainly feel money would be better spent on more pressing local issues such as road repairs, lack of car parking, better policing and attracting more shoppers and visitors to the town centre.

We have also shared our concerns with North Yorkshire Council and given them notice that we are seeking a High Court Judicial Review into their failings over how the planning process into the Harrogate Station Gateway has been conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> [Harrogate Get Away – Get Away from Gateway](#)

The scheme fails to address the actual transport needs of Harrogate. It removes key parking spaces, increases congestion on major routes and disrupts access to Harrogate's rail and bus stations - directly undermining the very objectives it claims to support. The proposals prioritise cycle lanes and pedestrianisation in a way that actively reduces accessibility for disabled passengers, older residents, and those reliant on cars for travel.

Crucially, there has been no meaningful engagement with transport groups, businesses, or commuters to assess the long-term impact of these changes. The Council has not produced an updated Harrogate Gateway economic impact assessment, nor has it conducted a proper public consultation on the revised scheme.

With the March 2025 deadline for the TCF funding approaching, the rush to deliver this project is overriding proper scrutiny and democratic accountability. We firmly believe that there is still time to ensure these funds are redirected towards transport initiatives that genuinely improve connectivity, rather than hinder it.

We would be most grateful if we could arrange a meeting with you to discuss our concerns over the lack of proper consultation on the scheme; the potential transport disruptions and economic damage this project will cause and alternative approaches that would better serve Harrogate's transport needs.

I have copied this letter to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon. Heidi Alexander MP for information. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Baines

For and on behalf of Harrogate business operators and residents.