

Report of the Director of City Development

## **Rougier Route; Improving Bus Reliability in York City Centre**

### **Summary**

1. The report seeks the views of scrutiny members regarding potential options and considerations associated with the Rougier Route project following recent public consultation.

### **Background**

1. The Council's Big Transport Conversation, undertaken to inform the Local Transport Strategy identified that;
  - a. 79% of respondents told us that they would, or maybe would "use buses more often if we introduced dedicated priority routes for buses and sustainable transport".
  - b. 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed when asked "To what extent do you disagree with the introduction of dedicated priority routes for buses and sustainable transport".
  - c. 88% supported 'improving public transport'.
2. A range of ideas were examined to provide bus priority in the City Centre, largely focussed on how to reduce through traffic but maintain access to where people need to get to destinations within the City Centre. Travelling through the centre of York is still the quickest way to get from some residential areas to key destinations. Traffic undertaking those journeys isn't interacting with the city centre, other than passing through it and delaying people and vehicles who do need to access services in central York.
3. The Rougier Route proposals are shown in a plan in Annex A. The key project components that were consulted on are;

- a. Bus Lane on George Hudson Street southbound and bus gates on Micklegate between the George Hudson Street and Skeldergate junctions.
  - b. Enabling Micklegate to go one way to provide additional space for businesses and a contraflow cycle lane.
  - c. Remodelling of the Micklegate/Toft Green junction.
  - d. Contraflow cycle lane on Toft Green and Tanner Row.
  - e. Remodelling of the Rougier Street/George Hudson Street/Tanner Row junction including cycle crossing facilities.
  - f. Improved bus stops
  - g. Closure of Victoria Bar to motor vehicles
4. The design consulted on ensured that every parking space, blue badge space and loading bay remained accessible to all permitted users of those bays at all times. The change being that, for some users, different routes to those spaces and bays may need to be taken than have traditionally been the case.
  5. There are a number of exemptions that could be applied to the bus lane, bus gates and to locations in Bishophill. The detail of the various legal requirements, signage implications and the social and traffic impacts of exempting or not exempting certain types of vehicle or user are currently being worked through by the project team. Views from scrutiny members on the appropriate balance between exemptions and achieving the desired outcomes of the scheme are welcome ahead of developing a preferred option for Executive approval. Views from scrutiny members on the timings of operation for the bus gate would also be welcomed.
  6. Further background and rationale for the project is available at the consultation webpage<sup>1</sup>.
  7. The project is proposed to proceed on an experimental basis with a full monitoring plan, considering redistributed traffic flows, bus reliability and journey times, road safety, numbers of walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists and wheelers and people's views.

## **Consultation**

8. Extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken on the principle of bus priority during Summer and Autumn in 2025. There was sufficient understanding and appreciation of the importance to improve bus

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<sup>1</sup> [Rougier Route Proposals - City of York Council - Citizen Space](#)

services in the city and the difficulty of the potential solutions to progress to public consultation.

9. Initial public consultation on the proposals was undertaken between 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The aim of this consultation was to understand if there were any issues that would detrimentally affect people as a result of the initial design proposals so that the project could be amended or rethought depending on the information received. A full report on the consultation results will accompany the future report to Executive.
10. A significant amount of valuable information was received at the in person events held in Bishophill and at York Library. In particular, understanding how the proposals impacted local residents and businesses in the Bishophill area. Key findings from these events included;
  - a. Concern around extended journeys for those in the Micklegate loop to access the south of the city which would increase journeys from this area across the Station Frontage.
  - b. Concern around extra time/difficulty for business owners on Micklegate accessing the south of the city.
  - c. Concern that the proposed Victoria Bar closure would lead to additional pressure on the Nunnery Lane/Price's Lane Gyratory and the Skeldergate/Bishopgate Street junction.
  - d. Parking on Fetter Lane causing problems for pedestrians and wheelchair users.
  - e. General preference to retain bollards on Bishophill Senior.
  - f. Site specific issues associated with Buckingham Court.
  - g. Concern over additional taxi movements in the Bishophill/Skeldergate area.
11. The survey asked whether people would support roads in the corridor being set at 20mph in the future. A significant majority agreed. The principle is supported by officers and aligns with the city's transport strategy, but is a longer-term project due to implications on the City Centre; the corridor connects to the Footstreets area at the Spurriergate / Nessgate junction so 20mph on the corridor requires full consideration of the entire City Centre. The Council's Forthcoming Movement and Place Plan will progress this idea further.

## Options

12. The considerations and options presented below represent a range of potential exemptions to the bus gates and bus lane and potential solutions for how to approach the matters raised by Bishophill residents. Multiple options could be taken forward together. Emergency services on blue light response will be exempt from the bus lane and bus gate during their hours of operation.
13. **Consideration One:** Hackney Carriages.
14. **Consideration Two:** Blue Badge Holders.
15. **Consideration Three:** Private Hire Taxis.
16. **Consideration Four:** Bishophill Resident and local Business Access - Victor Street and Victoria Bar
17. **Consideration Five:** Micklegate Resident and local Business Access – Fetter Lane / Bishophill Junior.

## Analysis

18. **Consideration One: Hackney Carriages.** Consultation with Hackney Carriage operators has highlighted the importance of journeys through the Rougier Route corridor, particularly between St. Saviourgate and the York Rail Station. The alternative routing if Hackney Carriages were not permitted to pass through the bus gates would likely be down Skeldergate onto Bishopgate Street then Nunnery Lane and onto the station.

Bus gates in Leeds permit Hackney Carriages so there is a local precedent for allowing them into bus lanes and through bus gates. The impact on bus times by allowing Hackney Carriages through the bus gates is likely to be minimal.

19. **Consideration Two: Blue Badge Holders.** The Blue Badge Scheme helps people park closer to their destination. The Blue Badge

Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England<sup>2</sup> clearly states that Badge holders are not entitled to drive in bus lanes during their hours of operation.

20. The project allows for Blue Badge holders to access any blue badge bay as they can currently. It does not prevent access to any blue badge spaces. For some users, it will change the route to get to some blue badge spaces in the city; for instance Leeman Road to the proposed Blue Badge car park at Clifford's Tower. The alternate route would be to use Nunnery Lane and Skeldergate Bridge. Should it be felt that any additional travel time associated with this changed routing requires reasonable adjustment then Blue Badge holders may be able to be exempted from the bus gate.
21. Implementing a blue badge exemption would require a new registration-based process to be set up. Blue badges are allocated to a person, not a vehicle so it would be likely that each blue badge would need to potentially register up to four or five vehicles – many would need less. There is no staffing resource in place to administer such a process currently so there would be cost of a new member of staff and cover for that person to account for. It is envisaged that this cost would be in the order of £40k per annum.
22. At stakeholder events and via a dedicated question in the online survey, some Blue Badge holders told us that any additional journey time would cause them physical discomfort and have mental health impacts as well as additional financial cost if in a taxi. They also said they had concerns about being late for work, appointments and education if taxis were not allowed through.
23. We also heard that some Blue Badge holders cannot use buses for health reasons and that people caring for Blue Badge holders may face additional journey miles and time. More widely there was concern for access to facilities and around the quality and standards of pavements in York particularly for wheelchair users.
24. We should also note that there was also support for the proposals from Blue Badge holders. We heard from young adults with SEND that bus delays adds to anxiety and can have knock-on effects on their education and travelling independently. We also heard from disabled people who said they would feel safer and more confident

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<sup>2</sup> [The Blue Badge scheme: rights and responsibilities in England - GOV.UK](#)

walking and using wheeled mobility aids if there was less vehicle traffic in this area of the city centre.

25. **Consideration Three: Private Hire Taxi's.** Consultation with Private Hire operators identified one operator who is currently contracted to transport SEND students, carrying out a number of cross-city journeys to access the various SEND teaching facilities in the city. Consultation with SEND students identified that their journeys often involve multiple pick-ups and drop-offs on route.
26. If SEND transport provision continues to be contracted to private hire operators then allowing access to Private Hire taxis using the Rougier Route corridor would reduce the overall journey time for the SEND user group. However, it would also reduce the effectiveness of the reduction in vehicle traffic and improvements in road safety that the scheme seeks to achieve, with pre-consultation traffic surveys showing that taxis (both Hackney and Private Hire) make up 15% of current weekday traffic on the Rougier Route. Further work is ongoing to understand the potential implications and opportunities regarding private hire access through the bus gate / bus lane.
27. **Consideration Four: Bishophill Resident Access - Victor Street and Victoria Bar** Access restrictions were included as an option in the initial consultation, effectively closing the through route to vehicular traffic. Bishophill residents who attended stakeholder events and made comments via the online survey were strongly opposed to this idea. Residents told us that additional journey time would be incurred and additional financial cost if travelling via a taxi due to increased journey time via alternative routes. The alternative route out of Bishophill was limited to the entry / exit point via Cromwell Road, Bishopgate Street and Skeldergate.
28. Based on feedback received during the consultation, the preferred option is to leave Victor Street and Victoria Bar open as per the current Traffic Regulation Order for local residents only. Bishophill resident access could be controlled by new ANPR camera associated to the database of users in the parking zones. The ANPR camera could replace the current defunct rise/fall access bollard and be enforced by means of a new back office operating system similar to that used to enforce other moving traffic offences in the city. There will be additional cost associated with the ANPR camera and back office system and further work is ongoing to understand this.

29. **Consideration Five : Micklegate Resident Access – Fetter Lane / Bishophill Junior.** The Consultation options presented to residents included the introduction of new modal filter restrictions at the junction of Bishophill Junior and Fetter Lane, effectively closing the through route from Micklegate via Trinity Lane, Bishophill Junior and through Fetter Lane onto Skeldergate to vehicular traffic. The existing closure of Bishophill Senior would then be opened up to through traffic.
30. Micklegate and Bishophill residents who attended stakeholder events and made comments via the online survey were strongly opposed to these ideas. Residents of Trinity Lane told us that additional journey time would be incurred and additional financial cost if travelling via a taxi due to increased journey time via alternative routes. The alternative route out of Trinity Lane via Priority Street, Micklegate, George Hudson Street, Rougier Street, Station Road was thought to be excessive and would place additional traffic directly on the route in front of the Station. Residents of Bishophill Senior were strongly opposed to opening up the road to through traffic.
31. The option for consideration is to leave Bishophill Junior and Fetter Lane open for local resident access via Fetter Lane. To prevent unwanted additional through traffic using this route to navigate around the Rougier Route bus gate restrictions, resident access on Fetter Lane would be enforced by new ANPR camera linked to the database of users in the residents parking zones with a supplementary permit system for local businesses. Similar to with blue badge holders, there is currently no staffing resource in place to administer such a process so there would be cost of a new post and cover for that person to account for.

### **Council Plan**

32. The Council Plan has seven priorities; the City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor will contribute towards the following priorities:
33. Health & Wellbeing. The project could have significant road safety benefits along the corridor as well as enabling more active travel and improving air quality.
34. Sustainability. Reducing bus journey times on the Rougier Street – Micklegate – Tower Street corridor will make bus travel more attractive, enabling a shift away from car use, which will in turn reduce congestion in the city. Mode shift towards public transport and active

travel also strongly contributes towards reducing carbon emissions from transport and helps the Council meet its net zero target.

35. **Economic.** A safer environment for pedestrians, wheelchair users, wheelers and cyclists will help to connect the eastern and western sides of the river, linking the footstreets to Bishophill and increasing footfall on Micklegate and Tower Street. A more reliable bus service will attract more people to travel by bus to the city centre.
36. The project is included within the Council's Local Transport Strategy and its accompanying implementation plan. Delivering bus journey time improvement within the City Centre is an integral part of the Council's BSIP and forms part of the programme of works agreed with the Department for Transport as part of the BSIP1 funding award.

## **Implications**

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37. **Financial** *This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.*
  38. **Human Resources (HR)** *This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.*
  39. **Equalities** *This is a report for discussion – there are no implications. A full Human Rights and Equity Analysis is underway, informed in part by the consultation.*
- b. **Legal** This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.
- c. **Crime and Disorder** This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.
40. **Information Technology (IT)** This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.
  41. **Property** This is a report for discussion – there are no implications.

## **Risk Management**

42. This is a report for discussion – there are no risks associated with the recommendation.

## Recommendations

43. Members are asked to;

Provide their views on the potential exemptions and ways of addressing the issues highlighted by Bishophill and Micklegate residents and businesses.

Reason: To enable the views of scrutiny members to inform the recommendation to be made to Executive.

## Contact Details

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

***Garry Taylor***  
***Director of City Development***

**Report Approved**  *tick* **Date** 16/03/2026

*Chief Officer's name*  
*Title*

**Report Approved**  *tick* **Date** *Insert Date*

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

*N/a.*

**Wards Affected:** Guildhall and Micklegate

**All**  *tick*

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

***All relevant background papers must be listed here.***

*City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor – Executive Member Decision Session 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.*

## **Annexes**

***Annex A*** – *Consulted on project outline*

***Annex B*** – *Consultation Layouts - For Rougier Route*

## **Abbreviations**

*N/a*