

## Council Address Script

Hello and thank you for having me here today.

On Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of January York IWGB delivered its proposal regarding City Centre Access for Gig Economy Couriers to the council. As such, some pre-emptive clarification is necessary. This address is specifically requesting that identifiable gig economy courier cyclists be given urgent access to Blake Street, Lendal and Coney street for loading and unloading. A temporary, identifiable and specific permit, alongside a feedback system for public concerns is deemed an accountable anchor for this, however difficult that may be.

There is four lines of reasoning for this measure.

Firstly, York's footfall is significantly reduced. Yes safety is still a paramount concern, but we cite shared pedal cycle pedestrianised zones in Oxford, Peterborough and Chichester, where the government's own department for transport drew the following conclusion - quote:

*"Observation revealed no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas, suggesting that cycling could be more widely permitted without detriment to pedestrians."* -

Unquote. - <https://aseasyasridingabike.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/cycling-in-pedestrianised-areas/>

Second, the algorithms that manage us and terminate us for quote "untimely delivery" unquote do not care about local law and restrictions, including York's pedestrian zone. They take no excuses. They do not care. It is a real everyday choice between a fixed penalty notice, and destitution for all pedal cycle couriers. If we are late continuously that's it.

Third, in regular times, our work contributed to about one third of a restaurants revenue. Now, when it's not safe for customers to travel in lockdown, we contribute significantly more. York's restaurants are relying on us, the revenue generated literally off of our backs and bicycles contributes significantly to their ability to pay wages, rent and keep going. We are vital to York, and we are here to stay. The gig economy is not going to go anywhere, and this will keep happening. We will keep doing what we have had to do so far because we do not have the choice.

Fourth and finally, we are just trying to survive the pandemic like everybody else, but there is altruistic value in our work. We are key workers. We deliver medicines, essential groceries and hot food to the vulnerable and shielding, as well as the families who are already struggling.

We understand that this measure is scary, difficult and contentious. I personally understand why nobody has ever tried to do this for cycle couriers. But together we can do it. We plead with the council to take this opportunity, and we are willing to sit down for as long as is necessary to devise a tenable solution. But key workers cannot continue to be unnecessarily penalised, we need the councils help. We need you to help us. Couriers are losing their livelihoods over this.

So, York council, please grant this urgent measure, and then develop the measures we proposed on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> to fully resolve the situation that is hurting so many key workers, vulnerable people and local businesses.

Please, help us help York.