



York City Centre Accessibility Findings and Recommendations Report

City of York Council

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Document Control

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Introduction

01

Project Overview

Introduction

Mima have been appointed as independent access consultants by the City of York Council (CYC) to carry out a series of workshops for York residents and city centre businesses. The aim of this research is to:

1. Understand what short-term improvements could be made to improve city centre access.
2. Review the process to reinstate Blue Badge holder access in the city centre and provide recommendations for improvement.
3. Identify longer term options to make the city centre more accessible.

This report initially sets out the project background and context including any pertinent legislative context. It then describes Mima's methodology when conducting workshops before setting out key findings from the online consultations and in-person workshops. These insights have been used to help shape recommendations in Chapter 6.

Alongside this research, Mima has produced a benchmarking report which considers scenarios and practices implemented by other UK cities with similar challenges to York.

Mima consultants have worked closely with the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) when designing and carrying out the consultation workshops and producing this report.

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Photograph taken from Monkgate looking towards the City Walls and Goodramgate.

Project Overview

Scope of Work

Our work primarily focuses on York city centre, the space within the city walls and adjoining spaces, including the train station and access routes into the city. Throughout the report, some references are made to spaces outside the city centre, where these were discussed by participants in this study. The adjacent 'Access in York' map shows the main city centre area our project focuses on.

Our findings and recommendations are based on people's lived experience of York. Our scope of work did not include a technical access audit of the city centre. An access audit would help provide a deeper understanding of some of the physical access issues identified, for example an access audit could help identify specific locations where dropped kerbs are missing or a feasibility study could identify where accessible seating options could be best located.



'Access in York' map showing the extent of the city centre, and key access features such as blue badge parking, accessible toilets and Shopmobility.

Timeline (2020-2024)

Timeline

March 2020 - Pandemic Policy introducing TRO, and restrictions to Blue Badge access

November 2021 - Permanent Decision relating to Blue Badge access

Summer 2023 – Council consultation on Blue Badge access principles

December 2023 - Council Workshops

January 2024 – Goodramgate reopens for Blue Badge access

March 2024 – Lendal reopens for Blue Badge access

March 2024 - Mima Workshops (phase one)

May 2024 - Mayoral Election

May 2024 - Mima Workshops (phase two)

June/July 2024 - York City Centre Accessibility Report published

Ongoing - Human Rights and Equalities Indicator Report and consultation commentary by CAHR.

Project Background and Context

Access to the Footstreets

Vehicle access to the city centre is restricted daily between 10.30am and 5.00pm by automated hostile vehicle prevention barriers, this time is referred to in this report as 'footstreet hours'.

Historically, Blue Badge holders had access to parts of the footstreets during footstreet hours via an exemption, this was discontinued temporarily in 2020, at the start of the COVID pandemic, and in 2021 this decision became permanent. In October 2023 the Council agreed to restore vehicle access for Blue Badge holders via an exemption.

Blue Badge holders can now use two routes into the city centre during footstreet hours, the routes are:

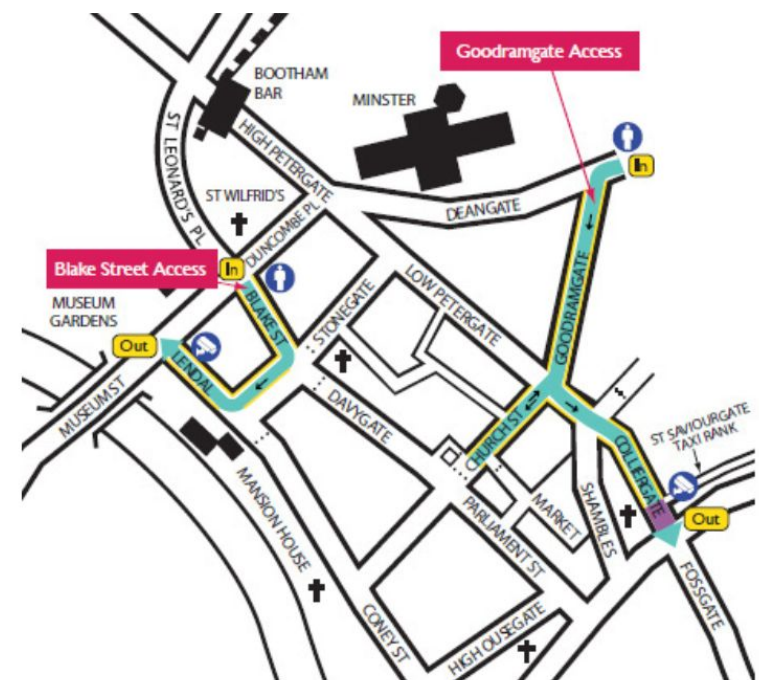
- Goodramgate to Colliergate (giving access to Church Street).
- Blake Street to Lendal.

Blue Badge holders can arrive at Goodramgate or Blake Street and enter by showing their Blue Badge to staff at the sliding bollards, they can then exit via Colliergate and Lendal. The adjacent map shows these two routes. Footstreets parking is for up to three hours on double yellow lines (where not causing an obstruction). It is possible for people with a Blue Badge to be dropped off or picked up by private car or by taxi along these routes.

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Cycling is prohibited in the footstreets between the hours of 10.30am-5pm (with the exception of Minster Yard).

Map of restored access



A map showing restored access routes to the footstreets. *Since the writing of this report, Mima understands that this restored access map has been updated.

Project Background and Context

Previous Accessibility Reports and Studies

In 2021, Martin Higgitt Associates was commissioned by CYC to examine access to the city centre for disabled people. The aim of this report was to identify options for access arrangements and physical measures that could be implemented to improve access.

This report is referred to in some of the workshop documents, and is referenced in the some of the data gathered in the workshop and provides useful context for this 2024 study, particularly to highlight some historical and ongoing barriers to city centre accessibility for disabled people.

Since the Martin Higgitt report was published, there have been changes to local government administration, and the following notable changes have been made to date:

- CYC now have an Access Officer.
- Blue Badge access has been restored to part of the footstreets via two access points.
- An access forum has been established. The role of this forum is discussed in further detail on page 61 of this report.
- Accessible cycle parking guidance has been developed.
- Some new dropped kerbs have been implemented in various locations around the city centre.

- Refurbishments to the Silver Street toilets, including the accessible toilet.
- A new Changing Places facility has been built in Haxby.
- A pavement cafe policy has been introduced.

Local Transport Strategy

This project forms part of the CYC Local Transport Strategy Consultation and Engagement Plan, which sets out 5 stages of consultation, listed below:

1. Exploring policies to make the city centre more accessible.
2. A survey conducted by the Council to understand the lived experiences of people accessing the city centre (now Blue Badge exemptions have been reintroduced).
3. Desktop research to collate best practice from similar cities.
4. Workshops facilitated by the Council.
5. Independent workshops in collaboration with the Centre for Applied Human Rights.

As a result of feedback from community groups during the first stage of this consultation, the Local Transport Strategy Consultation and Engagement Plan was updated to include significantly more opportunities for face to face workshops targeted at different community groups, including accessibility issues encountered by disabled residents (stage 5).

The Equality Act and Accessibility Standards

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in the UK on 1st October 2010. It brings together separate pieces of legislation into one Act. It sets out 9 characteristics which are protected by the Act and behaviour that is unlawful. These characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

This report focuses on accessibility issues in the city centre, which primarily impacts disabled people, however issues that impact disabled people often impact those with other protected characteristics listed above, for example improved toilet facilities and accessible seating would also benefit elderly people, pregnant people and those with young children. Accessibility improvements also have the potential to benefit those with multiple, intersecting protected characteristics.

The Equality Act, 2010 places a duty on both public and private service providers, to provide services that ensure people are not discriminated against. As a public sector body, there is an additional requirement for York City Council to meet obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires public authorities to have due regard to certain equality considerations when carrying out public functions.

This sets out the duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.

The PSED requires every public and private organisation that provides a public service to evidence and demonstrate the impact of their actions on protected characteristic groups.

The Equality Act and Accessibility Standards

Accessibility Standards and Guidance

This report makes reference to the following accessibility standards and guidance documents relevant to some of the barriers and recommendations described in this study.

- BS 8300-1:2018 Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment. Part 1: External Environment - Code of Practice.
- PAS 6463 Design for the Mind: Neurodiversity and the Built Environment, 2022.
- DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021.
- DfT Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces, 2021.
- Easy Access to Historic Landscapes, 2015.
- A Guide to Inclusive Cycling, 4th Edition, Wheels for Wellbeing, 2020.

Following access standards and good practice guidance is one step towards meeting duties under the Equality Act, through eliminating barriers in the built environment and adopting good practice.

Mima were aware of the following relevant documents at the time this report was written:

- Our City Centre Vision, CYC, 2024.
- One City for All, City of York Council Plan 2023-2027.
- City Centre Cycle Parking Design Guidance, CYC.
- York Cycle Campaign, 42 ways to Transform York, 2023.
- York City Centre Active Travel Access Study, Martin Higgitt Associates, 2021.

At the time of this report, the Draft Transport Strategy is being developed. The local transport strategy will set out a decade of ambitions for York's transport network and infrastructure. Further information on how our project fits within the transport strategy can be found on page 9 of this document.

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act (1998) came into force in the UK on 2nd of October 2000. It incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) into UK law. The Human Rights Act protects everyone not just those with protected characteristics. Articles include:

- Right to life.
- Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way.
- Right to be free from slavery or forced labour.
- Right to liberty (freedom of movement).
- Right to a fair trial.
- Right not to be punished for something which was not against the law when you did it.
- Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Right to freedom of expression.
- Right to freedom of assembly and association.
- Right to marry and family life.
- Right to property.
- Right to education.
- Right to free elections.

This project focuses on the following rights: to not be treated in a degrading way, right to liberty (right to freedom of movement), right to freedom of assembly and right to property. This will be unpacked in more detail in CAHR's HREIA guidance.

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Applying Human Rights

The Human Rights Act applies to all public authorities within the UK including national government, local authorities and bodies carrying out public functions.

Applying human rights legislation requires public bodies to balance rights, priorities and risks. Many rights are not absolute but can be limited or qualified under specific circumstances.

Guidance

When City of York Council is evaluating the human rights impacts of policy proposals individual rights may come into contention. When this happens, the following questions provide guidance on balancing human rights:

- Why are a person's rights being restricted?
- What is the problem being addressed by the restriction on someone's rights?
- Will the restriction lead to a reduction in the problem?
- Does that restriction involve a blanket policy, or does it allow for different cases to be treated differently?
- Does a less restrictive alternative exist?
- Has sufficient regard been paid to the rights and interests of those affected?
- Do safeguards exist against error or abuse?

Respect, Protect, Fulfil - Human Rights Framework

International human rights can be understood through the respect, protect, fulfil framework.

- Respect: This means States should do no harm and not restrict freedoms or rights.
- Protect: States have a duty to protect individuals and groups from human rights violations by third parties.
- Fulfil: The obligation to fulfil human rights commitments means that States must take positive action to facilitate enjoyment of human rights.

The Human Rights Framework has been applied previously to transport issues in the city. This acknowledges that there are complex issues that need to be balanced in relation to transport policy making.

Guiding principles for providing balance:

- Participation and consultation.
- Legality, necessity and proportionality when rights are being restricted.
- Non discrimination.

In addition the Council has a responsibility to:

- Respect: Not unnecessarily interfering with the rights of those who live, work and visit the city.
- Protect: Regulating businesses and transport providers in accordance with human rights.
- Fulfil: Providing a safe space and enabling environment regarding access for all.

Methodology

02

Methodology

Overview

To produce this report, Mima has analysed data captured from the following sources provided by City of York Council:

1. Online Survey 'Restoring Blue Badge Access Phase 2'
2. Data collected from our in person and online workshops conducted in March 2024.
3. Redacted data from the 'Our Big Transport Conversation' online survey.

Findings from the online surveys are set out in Section 4 of this report. Insights from these findings along with the workshop data have fed into our draft recommendations.

Recruiting Workshop Participants

Mima carried out a 'targeted' recruitment process, potential participants were invited to sign up to the workshop most suitable to them.

After 48 initial sign ups, we had a total of 30 attendees for the March workshop, plus 3 carers/support workers. A total of 27 participants attended the follow up workshops in May.

Mima set out to recruit participants from the following groups:

- York residents and commuters.
- Disabled residents.
- Support workers and carers.
- City businesses and business representatives.

First Workshops

The first eight workshops took place in March 2024, following this a second set of four follow up workshops took place in May 2024. The initial workshops were aimed to understand the current 'as-is' scenario, and discuss future solutions to improve accessibility.

The first workshops were carried out between Wednesday 13th March and Monday 18th March with the following groups, the adjacent numbers show the number of people who attended each workshop:

- Disabled residents (18)
- The Learning Disabled community (4)
- Businesses (2)
- York residents (6)

Methodology

Second Workshops

Four workshops took place between 8th and 9th May, all previous participants were invited to attend one of the following workshops:

- An in-person workshop held at the Citadel (City Centre).
- An in-person workshop at St Sampson's (City Centre).
- An online workshop.

Mima also held a workshop at Brunswick Organic Nursery for the Learning Disabled community.

The aim of these latter workshops was to test and develop recommendations before these are officially presented to CYC.

Surveys

Given two people attended the first workshops aimed at businesses, Mima produced a survey which was sent out to businesses via York BID, responses were received from 49 York businesses.

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Findings

Our findings reflect the views of participants who attended the workshops during March and May 2024, these findings also include data from those who could not attend the workshops in person, and have provided their views by email or through a survey format.

Data Analysis

Two accessibility consultants attended the March and May workshops along with a representative from CAHR. Written notes were taken from these workshops. Findings were initially grouped into themes and common issues identified, following the workshops Mima met with a representative from CAHR to discuss the findings.

Developing Recommendations

When using data to develop recommendations, consideration must be given to the Council's duties under the Equality Act to actively work towards eliminating discrimination against disabled people, as well as other protected characteristic groups. Weight also needs to be given to any Human Rights implications of our recommendations. The CAHR has had access to some data and provided suggestions regarding the running of workshops, analysing data and developing recommendations.

Limitations

Every report has necessary limitations and representation challenges. Four key areas have been identified: engagement, timing, communication and human rights analysis.

Engagement

- The regular Council meetings to check-in and discuss the project have been with officers, this limits the engagement to civil service rather than a mix of elected and non elected staff.
- Workshop attendance and the subsequent representation of diverse stakeholders was limited due to communications not always reaching the intended audience, turn around between events and consultation fatigue.
- Feedback from some representative groups - including several businesses and cyclists - was incorporated as part of refining the recommendations, and impacted the ability for all groups to co-produce recommendations.

Timing

- On the 2nd of May 2024, David Skaith was elected as the Mayor of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority for the first time. The Combined Authority has a significant transport settlement together with funding for skills, housing and policing. The potential for the Council to apply for funding to support this report's recommendations is currently unknown.

- The first round of workshops was pushed back to allow more time for Council communications to be distributed. The second round of workshops was later to allow for recommendations to be pulled together. This resulted in a two-week window to finalise recommendations from the last workshop (9th May) to the deadline (24th May). This deadline was set pre-the election period being announced.

Communication

- There have been challenges with the Council's necessary gatekeeping of personal data and subsequent passing on Mima's invitations to workshops.
- The deadline, timescales, and data included in the study have all changed since the start of the project. This has complicated the timeline and placed undue stress on the project.

Human Rights

- The two week window between final workshop input and finished report was insufficient to provide in depth human rights analysis. This will be absorbed into the Human Rights and Equalities Impact Assessment (HREIA) commentary, as a trial of the new HREIA process.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data

03

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Data (workshops and follow up surveys only)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Data Collection

Participants who signed up to the workshops were invited to complete an optional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion form, participants could also identify any accessibility requirements for the in-person and online workshops. Not all participants completed the EDI survey, therefore the following EDI data should be considered indicative.

All data and quotes from the workshops and online surveys have been anonymised.

Disability/Impairment disclosed	Response
Arthritis	2
Autistic	1
Chronic Pain	2
Fibromyalgia	1
Hearing Loss	1
ME/CFS	2
Mobility Impairment	4
Mobility scooter user	1
Parkinsons	1
Sight Loss	1
VI/Registered Blind	4
Wheelchair user	6

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Data (workshops and follow up surveys only)

Age	Responses
Under 18	0
18-24	7
25-34	3
35-44	5
45-54	7
55-64	13
64+	12

Blue Badge Holder	Responses
Yes	24
No	24

Disability/Impairment or long term health condition	Responses
Yes	38
No	11

Ethnic and Racial Background	Responses
White	44
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	0
Asian, Asian British	0
Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups	1
Other Ethnic Group	1

Gender	Responses
Female	27
Male	16
Non-binary	2
Other	0
Prefer not to say	2

Online Consultation Findings

04

Findings from Online Survey: Restoring Blue Badge Access Phase 2

The City of York Council held a two phase consultation to discuss the process of restoring access to York city centre for Blue Badge holders. The Phase 2 Consultation online survey ended on 4th February 2024. The following questions were asked:

1. Do you understand the temporary arrangements for Blue Badge holder access to the city centre and how they will work?
2. How can we ensure Blue Badge holders coming into the city centre by taxi or being dropped off by family / friend / carer can then be picked up by the driver who won't have your Blue Badge?
3. What information do you need about Blue Badge holder access and where would you prefer to get it from?

There were a total of 267 respondents. Respondents were asked if they were a disabled person or carer and if they owned a Blue Badge. **45% of respondents** said that they were a disabled person with a Blue Badge. **8% of people** said they were a disabled person, **18%** of respondents were carers and **29%** of people selected 'other'.

84% of people said that they understood the temporary arrangements for Blue Badge access.

Findings from Online Survey: Restoring Blue Badge Access Phase 2

How can we ensure Blue Badge holders coming into the city centre by taxi or being dropped off by family / friend / carer can then be picked up by the driver who won't have your Blue Badge?

44 respondents (the majority) suggested that drivers should have to obtain proof that they are collecting a Blue Badge holder. The following other suggestions were provided which relate to providing proof of Blue Badge:

- Escort the driver to the pick up.
- A secure pass code generated by entering a specific Blue Badge number.
- Proof via a name, and registration plate/number plate recognition.
- Blue Badge details are provided to the driver.
- Digital proof via a pre-booking system.

11 respondents suggested providing designated pick up and drop-off areas, some of these respondents suggested that the pick up points should be out of the footstreet zone.

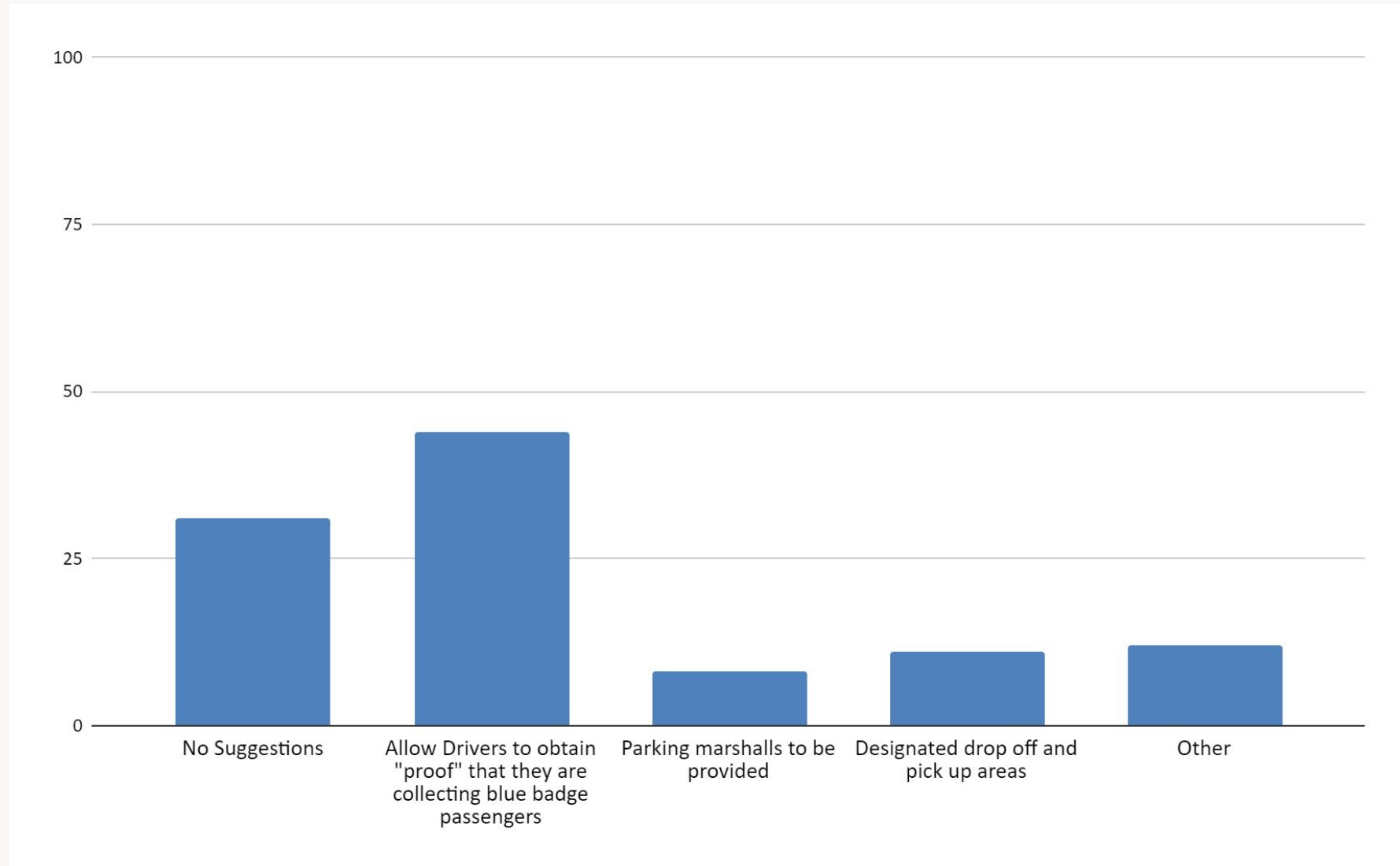
Suggestions described as '**other**' include:

- Opening the barriers up/get rid of restrictions.
- A shuttle bus to take people out of the footstreets.
- Do not allow vehicles into the city centre.
- Parking marshals.

There were responses where people expressed concerns over safety of letting vehicles in to the footstreets at all relating to the threat of terrorism. There were also concerns that solutions have the potential to increase negative attitudes/discrimination towards disabled people from non-disabled residents in York.

All of these responses are summarised in the graph on the following page.

How can we ensure Blue Badge holders coming into the city centre by taxi or being dropped off by family / friend / carer can then be picked up by the driver who won't have your Blue Badge?



Findings from Online Survey: Restoring Blue Badge Access Phase 2

What Information do you need about Blue Badge Holder access and where would you prefer to get it from?

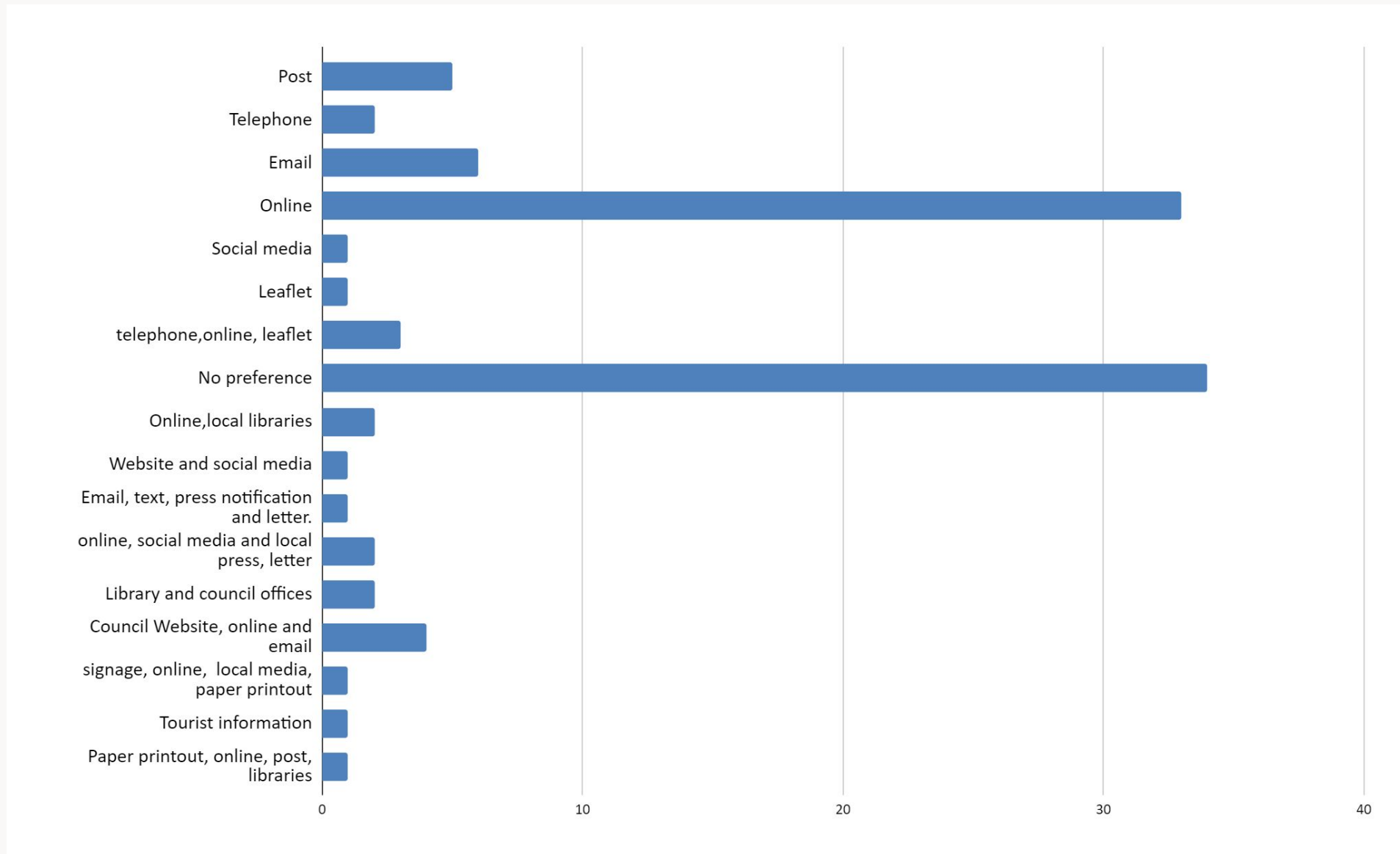
Most people said that they had no preference to how they received information (**34 respondents**). **33 respondents** said that they would prefer to receive information online. Other responses included:

- Email
- Post
- Telephone
- Library and Council offices
- Social Media
- Tourist Information

This data highlights the wide range of different means and formats people require or prefer to receive information on Blue Badge access.

A summary of these responses are shown on the graph on the following page.

What Information do you need about Blue Badge Holder access and where would you prefer to get it from?



Restoring Blue Badge Access: Findings

Mima have been provided with data from a survey asking for people's experiences of Blue Badge access into the footstreets since this access has been restored. A letter was sent out to all Blue Badge holders, asking similar questions to the Phase 2 survey discussed on the previous pages.

75% of people who answered this survey identified that they were a disabled person with a Blue Badge.

How can we ensure Blue Badge holders coming into the city centre by taxi or are being dropped off by family / friend / carer can then be picked up by the driver who won't have your Blue Badge?

Most people could not provide a solution for this issue, or did not answer the question. **21 people** suggested that there could be a system where drivers obtained some sort of proof that they were collecting passengers with a Blue Badge. **6 people** suggested that this could be dealt with via the marshal at the entrance to the footstreet, who could check for details or escort drivers.

Other suggestions made included the following:

- The driver having the details of the Blue Badge to match the person they are picking up; either the badge number or photo could be sent by phone.
- An authorised permit could be issued during footstreet hours.
- Designated pick up and drop-off areas.
- A marshal could check that the pick up driver has been provided with the Blue Badge details of the person they are picking up.

What information do you need about Blue Badge Holder Access and where would you prefer to get it from?

The majority of respondents said that they would like to get this information by post (**34 people**). Respondents wished to receive information on parking, and know more about the location of Blue Badge parking. Others said that the current information provided was sufficient.

Findings from Our Big Transport Conversation

Between November 2023 and February 2024, CYC held a public consultation looking at 10 policies to deliver a more sustainable future for York's transport.

For the purpose of this study, Mima have analysed responses from the Local Transport Strategy Consultation 'Our Big Transport Conversation' where questions specifically related to transport accessibility in the city centre and wider areas. Mima have focused on questions relating to the following:

- How different types of transport infrastructure is meeting disabled people's needs.
- Where people would like to see Blue Badge parking.
- Where people would like to see seating.
- People's overall experiences travelling in York and barriers to travel.

345 people that responded identified that they had a disability. Mima has been provided with responses from this group of people for the purpose of this study.



Image showing the logo of 'Our Big Transport Conversation' in yellow, blue and purple speech bubbles.

How well does transport infrastructure meet people's needs?

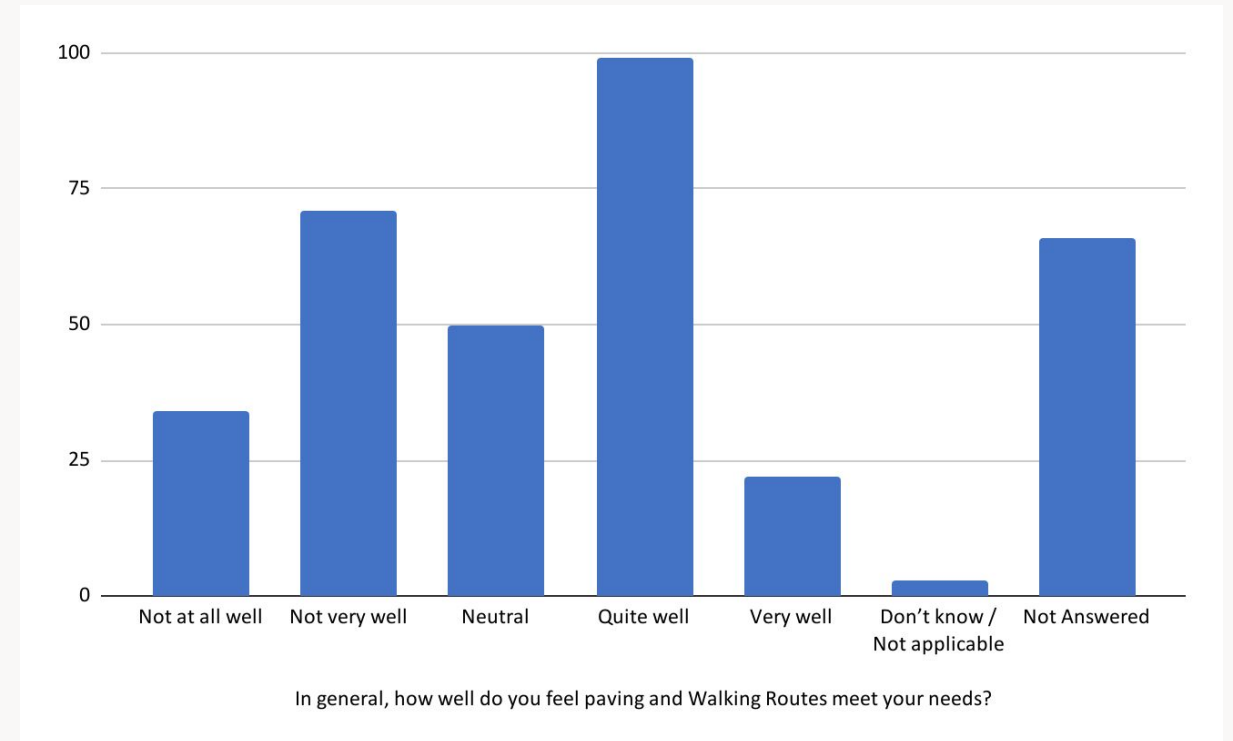
The consultation asked participants how well the following transport infrastructure met their needs:

- Pavements and walking routes
- Cycling routes
- Bus routes
- Road networks
- Taxis
- Scooter routes
- EV charging points

Each of these transport methods have been discussed in turn.

Pavements and walking routes

Out of **345 people**, when asked about paving and walking routes **35% of people** said that walking and cycling routes either met their needs very well or quite well, whereas **30% of people** said that their needs were not met very well or at all.



How well does transport infrastructure meet people's needs?

Cycling Routes

When asked the same question about cycling routes, most participants felt that this was not relevant to them or did not answer this question. 51 people said cycling routes did not meet their needs well and 39 people said they did not meet their needs at all. This equates to **26%** of disabled respondents.

Junctions and Crossings

Participants recorded particular areas or junctions which needed attention from an accessible design perspective:

"The area between Station Rise and the Memorial is very difficult to navigate because there are no kerb edges so I am never sure if I am on a safe area or not."

"Physical features are important, such as kerb edges and barriers. For example, standing at a busy street corner crossing point, barriers are important to keep me safe and to give me confidence that I will not come into conflict with cyclists or motor vehicles."

Junctions mentioned as a text response included:

- The area between Station Rise and the Memorial.
- Poppleton Road.
- Junction of Fulford Road and Broadway.
- Riverside walk from Water End, including the path along the river from terraced houses, and the path at the start of Hospital Fields Lane.
- Parliament Street, St Sampson's Square, St Helen's Square.
- Farndale and Hartoft Street.
- Clifton Backies, the path from the nature reserve towards Blatchford Mews.
- The crossings at Bootham/Gillygate, Clifton/Burton Stone Lane, and Clifton/Clifton Green.

Blue Badge Parking Requests

Parking Requests

The survey asked respondents to tell the Council where they would like Blue Badge parking in the city centre and surrounding villages. Maps were provided for people to utilise and add 'pinpoints' to. Some people did not use the link and instead responded by text.

The map on the following page shows the 'pinpoints' and text requests in particular areas within the city centre and footstreets. These include:

Parliament Street: 29 requests are shown in the map, along the length of Parliament Street.

St Sampson's Square: 8 requests were made around St Sampson's Square.

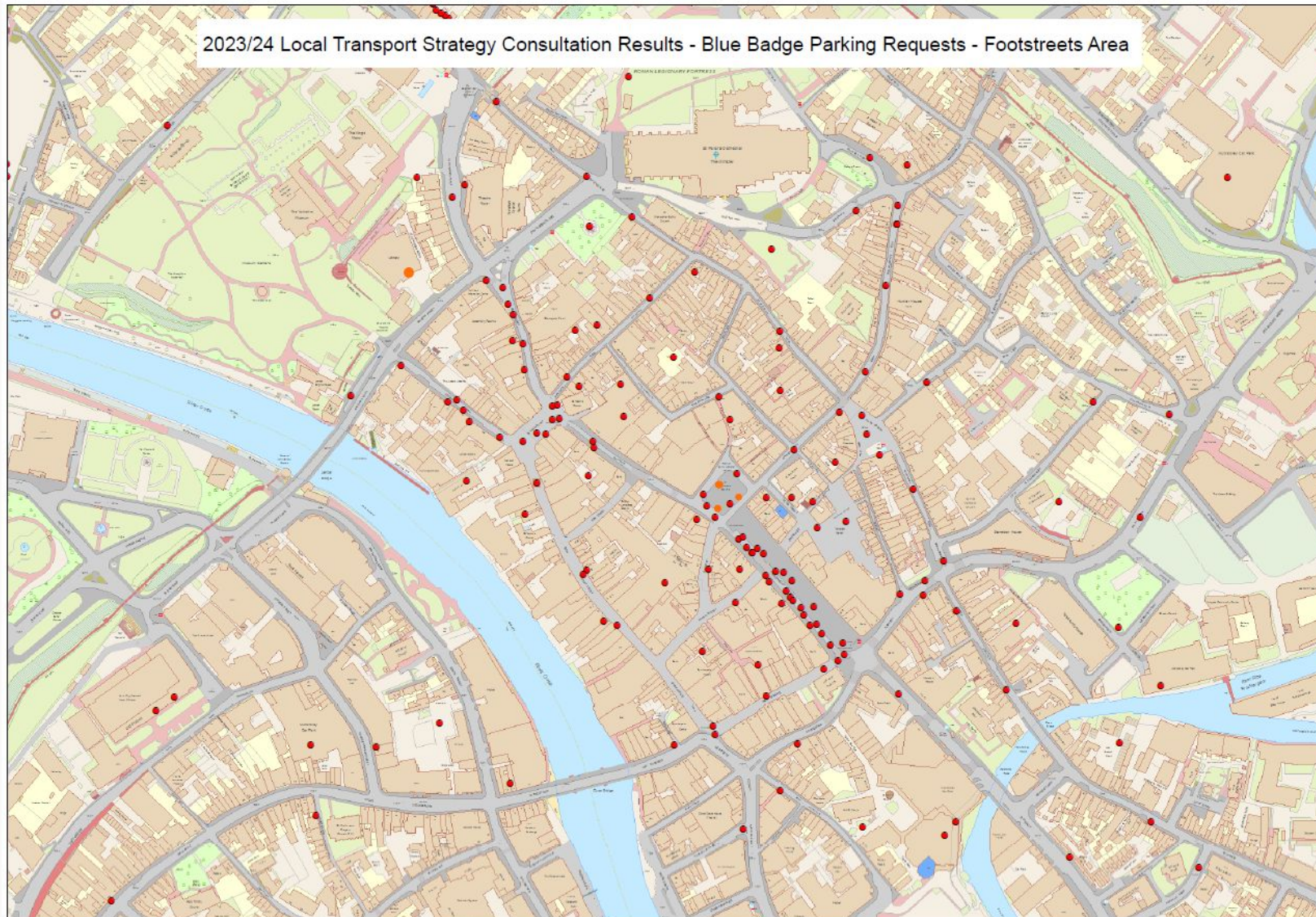
St Helen's Square: There were **8 requests** for Blue Badge parking in this location, and further requests for parking on the streets that lead into St Helen's Square.

Coney Street: There were **6 requests** for Blue Badge parking on Coney Street.

A high number of requests were made inside the footstreet areas, demonstrating a high demand for accessible parking in this area.

Currently, there is no Blue Badge access to some of the areas requested. An example of this is Parliament Street where most requests were made.

Blue Badge Parking Requests



Seating Requests

Seating Requests

The survey also asked respondents to tell the Council where people would like seating in the city centre and surrounding villages. Maps were provided for people to input pinpoints on. Again, maps were provided for people to utilise and add 'pinpoints' to. Text responses varied in terms of how specific the locations were (for example 'Quaker wood area').

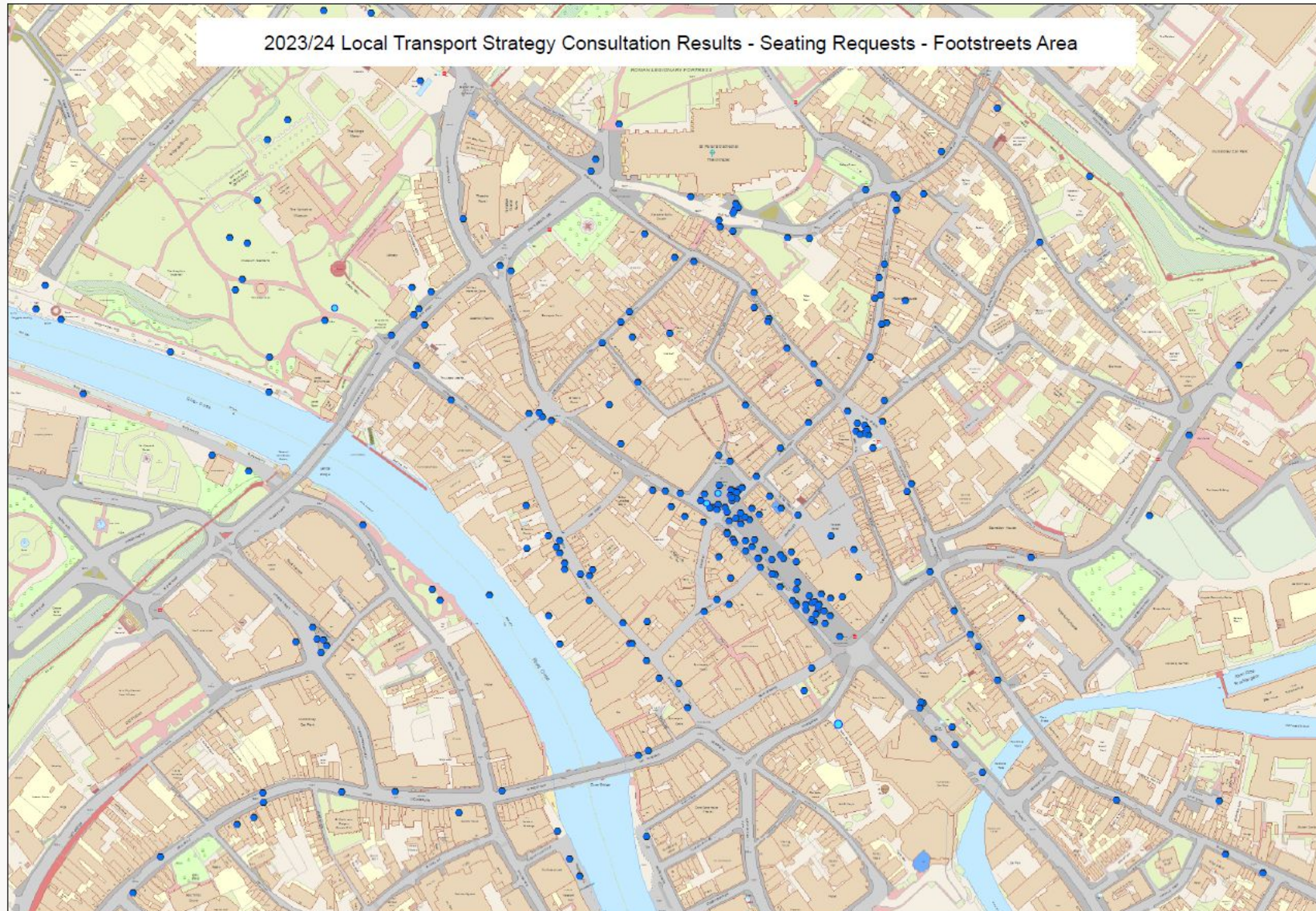
The map on the following page shows where respondents requested seating. Similar to the parking requests, there is a cluster of requests along Parliament Street and in St Sampson's Square (approximately **68** in total). Other areas include the following:

- Along the length of Coney Street (with a small cluster of requests on the junction of Coney Street and New Street).
- Kings Square.
- Along Colliergate and Low Petersgate.
- A small cluster of requests are shown on the junction of Tanner Row and Rougier Street.
- The Museum Gardens.
- Some requests along the river.
- Along Goodramgate.



Photograph showing Kings Square where seating requests were made. Seating is currently accessed via steps shown on the right of the photograph.

Seating Requests



Questions on Experiences travelling in and around York

Respondents were then asked about their experiences travelling in and around York, if they felt safe and if they could go everywhere they wanted to.

Responses to this question mainly focused on travel by car, walking or wheeling, cycling and making journeys by bus.

Some disabled people expressed that they have felt cut off from the city centre since the Blue Badge ban was imposed, particularly where car is their only form of transport. Other common restrictions to travel included inaccessible pavements, limited bus provision and poor and unsafe cycle infrastructure.

Other restrictions to moving around the city included:

- Poor quality of pavements impacting wheelchair users, visually impaired people, and people with pushchairs and young children.
- Unreliable bus services.
- Noise pollution (particularly for some neurodivergent people).
- Difficulty booking, or knowing the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis.
- Limited Blue Badge access.
- Abuse/lack of enforcing Blue Badge bays.
- Micro-aggressions towards disabled people
- Temporary access/roadworks (Leeman Road).

“There's so many great things in York that I just can't get to and it makes me feel like these things aren't meant for people like me. We're saving up for a car because of it.”

“I feel quite safe in York city centre, but I don't feel like I am able to go everywhere I need to because of lack of public transport.”

“I use cycle paths where there are some but they're often either poorly maintained or add unnecessary distances to work journeys. Apart from dangerous drivers and inadequate cycle lanes, numerous potholes make cycling even less pleasant and sometimes outright dangerous or painful. I have arthritis and sometimes feel every bump and jolt but I don't have another choice.”

Questions on Experiences travelling in and around York

Bus Routes

35% of disabled respondents felt that current bus routes did not meet their needs well or at all. Respondents were asked if buses (and trains) were accessible to them. Most people said that buses and trains were not accessible to them. The following barriers experienced and noted when using buses included:

- Unreliability of buses.
- Too expensive.
- Too infrequent.
- Inadequate wheelchair space on the buses.
- Limited capacity for wheelchair users (only one allowed on).
- Buses are too crowded.
- Lack of audible announcements on buses.
- Bus stop seats not being accessible.
- Lack of awareness training for bus staff.
- Lack of awareness on buses for people with non-visible disabilities.
- Limited time options to use a bus pass.
- Not enough space for pushchairs.
- Too daunting to use.
- Bus stops too far to walk to.

Two respondents added that driving is a more accessible option for them than bus travel.

When asked about improvements, respondents said they would like to see:

- Accessible live bus information.
- Better shelter.
- Accessible seating.
- Better accessibility for visually impaired people.
- Raised pavements.
- Space around the bus stops (including space for wheelchair users).

Barriers to Taxi Travel

When asked about booking a wheelchair accessible taxi or private hire vehicle **27 respondents (8% of the disabled people taking part)** said they had problems with these not being available to book. Common barriers included:

- Problems with the location of the taxi stand.
- Problems with seating whilst waiting for a taxi.
- Problems getting information relating to an accessible service.

Questions on Experiences travelling in and around York

Barriers to Train Travel

Respondents were asked to describe any barriers when using York or Poppleton Railway stations. Barriers that were noted at York Station included:

- Broken lifts at York Station (this was mentioned by **11 people**).
- Assistance desk/ area is hard to use for a visually impaired person.
- Signage needs improvement.
- Not enough cycle parking.
- Car parking is too far away.
- Not enough seating.
- Lots of announcements can cause overwhelm for autistic passengers.

“The signing of lifts at York railway station needs improvement (text as well as box symbol, which can be mistaken for a toilet). I've often seen people struggling, probably because they haven't been able to find the lifts.”

“I struggle at York station as there often isn't many seats available. There is also often a broken lift which I know can't be helped but it doesn't seem to get fixed very quickly? Other than that I find it quite accessible though and the women's toilets are always clean!”

Workshop Findings

05

Council Action, Strategy and Culture

This section of the report focuses on Mima's findings from the independent workshops held with York residents, disabled people and city centre businesses in March 2024. For ease and action, findings have been grouped into themes.

Council Action

In the disabled residents workshops, the majority of participants said that they had experienced consultation fatigue and that Council action has been too slow. Participants referred back to existing recommendations in the Martin Higgitt report and felt that many of these still applied, and should be actioned.

Training for Council Staff

During the workshops, participants expressed that they felt that there is a lack of awareness amongst decision makers when it comes to improving accessibility. Several participants suggested that Council officers, designers and decision makers should receive disability awareness training. There is also a desire to see disabled leaders within the Council.

Participants felt that better training would help officers understand the impact their decisions have on disabled people, and that this would help inclusivity to be implemented at the start, avoid retrofitting and the need for so much consultation.

An Accessibility Charter

An accessibility charter similar to 'One Planet York' was suggested to help make sure accessibility is part of all Council decisions. A draft version of a street charter has been co-produced by various disability organisations and was sent to Mima following the workshops.

Engaging with Disabled People

All disabled residents felt that disabled people should be more involved in the design process as well as 'testing' new and existing spaces to help identify barriers.

"Disabled People need to feel confident that the Council are listening." - Disabled Resident.

Pedestrian Spaces: Footpaths and Crossings

Pavements and Footpaths

Crowded spaces in the city centre was described as a barrier for some participants from the learning disabled community, this was reported to be particularly problematic around Betty's Tea Rooms and The Shambles.

Participants with mobility impairments and wheelchair users highlighted poor quality footpaths and the lack of dropped kerbs, or dropped kerbs which were not level with the pavement, as being both inaccessible and a safety issue. This was noted to be particularly bad on Parliament Street. Whilst some participants supported the principle of a pedestrian space in the city centre, they felt that this could be more inclusive for disabled people.

Tactile guidance paths in the open area around the Minster and the Art Gallery were considered positively. Coney Street was considered to be better than other areas, in terms of quality of the footpaths.

Crossings

York was described by several participants as "notoriously bad for short crossings" (in terms of length of time to cross), however the principle of having more controlled crossings - and particularly those with detection systems - would be beneficial for many of the participants we spoke to, including those from the learning disabled community.

Mima Commentary

Pavement accessibility was one of the barriers mentioned most frequently in the workshops and had a significant impact on travelling around the city safely. It impacted visually impaired people, wheelchair users and people with ambulant mobility impairments. This is also likely to impact other groups such as people with pushchairs and older people. These results align with findings from online consultations.

Pedestrian Spaces: Footpaths and Crossings

Suggestions for Improvements

Participants emphasised the need to find a balance between retaining the 'character and charm of the area' and improving accessibility. It was also pointed out that improvements to pavements could be 'quick wins' that are easily actionable. Suggestions included:

- A maintenance plan, which focuses on notably bad locations first (e.g. Parliament Street).
- Consistency when applying tactile paving (design, placement and contrast).
- Longer crossing times at controlled crossings, and further installations of detection systems to prevent changes to traffic whilst pedestrians are still crossing.
- Kerbs should be designed to have a sufficient gradient that can be detected by a cane.

"Do not tarmac over York, but please do maintain it." - York Resident.

Pedestrian Spaces: Pavement Cafés

Pavement Cafés

For disabled people, pavement cafes can be a barrier when not implemented in an accessible manner. For example they can impact visually impaired people navigating this space safely, and can narrow pavement widths for wheelchair users and other mobility aid users. Several participants highlighted that many disabled people were not against pavement cafes in principle, but highlighted the importance of maintaining an accessible layout, design and presence.

Businesses highlighted via surveys sent out and in the May workshops that these spaces were important and generate an income particularly in the spring and summer months, where these spaces were used by a variety of people, including disabled customers.

“There is a huge conflict between businesses and disabled communities with issues such as pavement cafés. Businesses are likely to cut corners due to time, space and resources.” - Workshop participant.

“Issue with pavement cafés is not that businesses disagree that design, layouts etc. need to be tightened up, but that the new guidelines came in without any consultation.” - Workshop participant.

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Mima Commentary

City of York Council currently require a licence to put table and chairs outside of a premises. CYC have produced a set of guidance notes which sets out the approach to issuing pavement licences, this can be found on the [CYC pavement café licence guidance](#) page.

In terms of accessibility, in York licences are required and the following is required by the adopted guidance:

- On footways, the café furniture (including barriers) will need to leave at least 1.5 metres available for pedestrians to get past. This is increased to 2 metres for high pedestrian flow areas (for example busy junctions, areas near pedestrian crossings or near bus stops).
- In the pedestrianised area or where traffic is restricted, it may be possible to license a pavement café area on the carriageway. The café furniture (including barriers) will need to leave at least 3 metres available on the carriageway (minimum width required for emergency vehicle access). In some cases, an alternative access arrangement for emergency vehicles may be agreed with the emergency services. Where this is possible, a corridor for passing pedestrians with a minimum width of 1.5 metres will still be required, increased to 2 metres in high footfall areas.

Pedestrian Spaces: Pavement Cafés and Seating

Mima Commentary

The wording on the CYC website is generally aligned with national guidance relating to pavement widths and pavement cafes, as set out in DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021:

- Under normal circumstances a width of **2000mm** is the minimum that should be provided, as this allows enough space for two wheelchair users to pass, even if they are using larger electric mobility scooters. Local authorities should take a proportionate approach if this is not feasible due to physical constraints. A minimum width of **1500mm** could be regarded as the minimum acceptable distance between two obstacles under most circumstances, as this should enable a wheelchair user and a walker to pass each other.

This guidance is in place to ensure there is sufficient space for pedestrians including wheelchair users and mobility scooter users. This is also beneficial for people who fall under other protected characteristics, for example an older person using a mobility aid, or someone with a pushchair.

Seating

There is a desire for quiet clusters of seating away from crowds of people, where people can rest or eat their lunch (and that only residents might be aware of). This should be inclusively designed and tested by disabled people. One location for seating that was suggested was by the fountain on Parliament Street.

Some businesses felt that the pedestrian space around Parliament Street should be managed better, particularly in regards to seating during event times.

Signage and Wayfinding

Barriers to Access

Signage and wayfinding was described as difficult by representatives from businesses in the workshops, and as potentially having a negative impact on visitor awareness of certain areas and the businesses in them.

“Narrow streets are part of the charm, but navigation is almost impossible, especially for those who are unfamiliar with York.” - Business Representative.

The lack of signage in relation to parking near to the HVM bollards was considered to be poor, resulting in drivers not knowing what to do, and pedestrians feeling unsafe. This was also true for some Blue Badge holders travelling into the footstreets. This is a challenge noted by both Blue Badge holders and businesses.

Mima Commentary

Mima are aware that the Council have recently installed signage for Changing Places facilities across the city centre, in addition to improved signage for these toilet facilities in car parks.

Suggestions for Improvements

A number of participants (including two business representatives, members of the learning disabled community, and several disabled participants) suggested an ‘accessibility hub’ which could provide on-the-ground information on accessibility. West Offices were suggested as a potential suitable location for this hub. This led to additional discussions suggesting more information could be provided in rail stations (across the UK).

Another resident suggested that a large map should be made available in the city centre which shows accessible features and facilities.

Cycle Infrastructure

Cycle Infrastructure

Workshop participants highlighted the following challenges and barriers:

- A lack of defined cycle lanes which could create more distinction between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Unsafe cycle infrastructure (on roads).
- Restrictions in the footstreets meaning cyclists have to dismount has greatly and negatively impacted delivery drivers using this space, leading to a loss of jobs in some cases.
- Poor quality cycle paths (e.g. potholes).

Some participants used cycles to access York as a means of transport and for work, and commented on the poor quality of cycle paths, the lack of cycle infrastructure in the city centre as a whole and the difficulty of using the footstreets without a cycle.

No one in the workshops said that they used adapted cycles, however one person used a cycle as a mobility aid, and commented that the restricting cycle access to the foot streets has had a negative impact on disabled people who use cycles as a mobility aid.

Suggestions for Improvements

Suggestions for improvements related to the wider cycle infrastructure around York and in the footstreets, and included the following:

- Safer cycle routes.
- More clearly defined spaces for cyclists and pedestrians to improve safety.
- Access to the footstreets for cyclists, including cyclists who access spaces for work (for example, food delivery).
- More cycle parking for people working and living in York.
- Allowing cycles into the footstreets, including people who use a cycle as a mobility aid.
- Better connectivity for cycles in the city centre.

Some participants felt that cyclists should not be allowed in the pedestrian zones, and that this should be better policed, whereas others thought there should be defined cycle routes through the footstreets. In summary, the issue of cycle infrastructure continued to promote mixed feelings and feedback throughout our workshops.

Cycle Infrastructure

Following the March and May workshops, the York Cycle Campaign got in touch with Mima to provide perspectives of disabled cyclists in York. The YCC is a stakeholder group with a strong track record of supporting city centre access for disabled cyclists. The York Cycle Campaign have created several documents which were highlighted in their correspondence as being relevant to this study:

Inclusive & Disability Cycling in York, A Report to City of York Council, July 2021. This sets out a number of recommendations and actions to improve the design for Inclusive cycling in York including provisions for inclusive cycle routes, temporary cycle routes, cycle storage and parking within the Footstreets.

42 Ways to Transform York A report by the York Cycle Campaign which includes a section on making York accessible for everyone.

Mima spoke to three cyclists following the second workshops in May, to understand their experiences of cycling in York, these cyclists used a cycle as a mobility aid:

- The consensus of opinion between these participants was that there is a different culture/attitude towards cyclists in York in comparison to other places, and that cyclists are viewed negatively by pedestrians. It was felt that this is something that has developed over time as a result of Council actions.

- For people that use cycles as a mobility aid, one of the biggest barriers is accessing the footstreets, this has resulted in some disabled people being 'locked out of the city centre'.
- There is a lack of secure, accessible cycle parking.
- Arriving and leaving the city centre is the main issue.
- The anti-terror bollards on St Andrewgate are narrower than LTN 1/20 says is the minimum.
- Cycling on Blake Street is on a level, wide road but there is only one way into Blake Street; people cannot cycle out again and have to dismount as a pedestrian. If unable to push a cycle and use it as a mobility aid, it is impossible to exit here safely.
- Low Ousegate - the space is cluttered with signs and the pavement is narrow; adding cyclists into this space creates stress for all and 'pits all types of active travellers against each other'.

The York Cycle Campaign highlighted that the Martin Higgitt Report identifies that the lack of city centre access for cyclists presents as a major obstacle for many cyclists such as those using cycles as a mobility aid, cycle couriers, people carrying small children and shopping on their bikes and some women who feel safer on their bike (rather than walking or using public transport).

Cycle Infrastructure

Participants' suggestions for Improvements

- Introducing a Blue Badge cycling scheme to allow access to the footstreets.
- Secure, accessible cycle parking.
- The Council should aim to lead a shift in culture in terms of how cyclists are viewed.
- Improved connectivity of cycle routes (particularly where cycle lanes just end part way along a route).
- Areas where there are wider pavements have the potential to accommodate cycles and pedestrians.
- Allowing cyclists access to the footstreets, via accessible routes.
- Some participants were in favour of shared spaces over segregated cycle routes. This opinion contrasted with views from blind and partially sighted participants in the workshops who expressed a need for more distinct and segregated cycle routes which can be clearly identified.

All three participants we spoke to were in favour of enabling disabled cyclists access to the footstreets. In addition to this, participants were in favour of opening up this space to cyclists in general.



A photograph provided by a participant of Nessgate/Low Ousegate taken in May 2024, looking towards Spurriergate, showing bollards, temporary yellow signage, and pedestrians using this space.

Cycle Infrastructure

The discussions that took place acknowledged that there are differing views amongst the disabled community with regards to cycle access and use in the city centre. Many disabled people rely on cycling as a mobility aid and form of transport, and benefit from low traffic, or pedestrianised spaces. Whereas other disabled people do not or can not use cycles and rely on vehicle access as their only means of accessing the city centre.

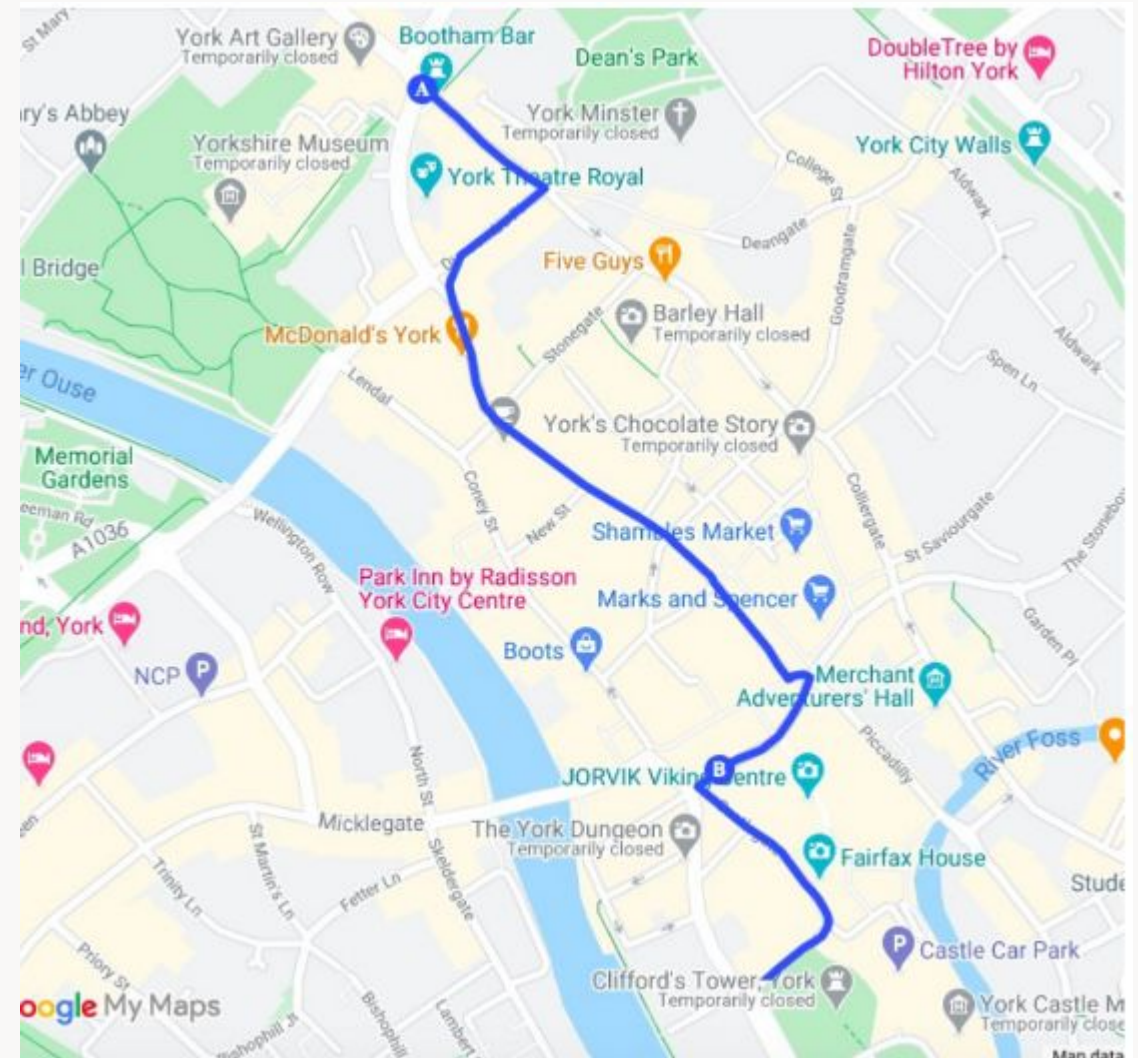
Mima Commentary

The footstreets prevents access by vehicles, including bikes and cycles between 10.30am and 5.00pm.

Nationally, adapted cycles are not currently considered a mobility aid, although there have been campaigns to change this. Mima understands that there are not currently any exemptions in place which allow disabled users to access the footstreets using an adapted cycle.

In 2021, the York Cycle Campaign proposed a 24/7, two-way north-south cycling route shown on the adjacent map, which was welcomed by some participants. This proposed route would run through the city centre utilising the widest streets of Castlegate, Parliament Street, Davygate, and Blake Street. YCC also noted that kerbed footways would be proposed either side, creating a distinct pedestrian edge and ensuring blind and partially sighted people are not disadvantaged.

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Cycle route through the footstreets suggested by the York Cycle Campaign.

Public Transport

Most discussions on public transport within workshops focused on access to bus networks across York. Barriers that were discussed included:

- Not being able to access bus services in a powerchair.
- A lack of concessions during certain times (including before 9am).
- Bus passes and concessions being limited in their 'lifespan', even when conditions that individuals have will not change.
- A lack of awareness on buses of non-visible disabilities, and not being able to get a seat.
- Bus routes not being near to where people live or want to travel to.
- Unreliable bus services.
- Travel training being difficult to access.

Positive experiences included the provision of audio announcements on buses, and the presence of talking bus stops in some locations, which benefit people who can not access visual information easily such as visually impaired people and people with learning disabilities.

Poor bus services also have an impact on businesses operating in the city centre where parking is expensive, and staff need to access work.

“Talking bus stops are a game changer along with the audio announcements on board the new fleet of busses. There needs to be a standardised design across all bus stops in the inner and outer city.” - Disabled Participant.

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for improvements to transport included:

- The reinstatement of the Dial-a-Ride service.
- The organisation of familiarisation training for people with learning disabilities and neurodivergent people, on how to use the bus.
- Better awareness of non-visible disabilities.
- Introduction of talking bus stops across the city.
- A more reliable and more frequent bus service.
- Buses that can accommodate for larger wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
- Disability awareness training for bus staff.
- Involvement of disabled people in new infrastructure projects such as York Station Gateway.
- More accessible seating at bus stops.
- Better access to travel training and further support for people with learning disabilities using public transport.
- Access to easy read information.

Vehicle Access to the Footstreets

Experiences accessing the Footstreets

In the workshops, participants were asked if they had experience accessing the footstreets via the two access points. Most people who attended the workshops had not experienced this, and many were not aware that they could now access the footstreets using a Blue Badge.

Two participants had a positive experience passing through the Goodramgate bollards, noting that staff members were there ready to let them through and that pedestrians did not cause too much of an issue. Others described challenges of knowing where to go and where to park, and found it difficult to navigate the space when there was a high volume of pedestrians.

It is clear from the workshop and survey data that there are divided opinions on access to the footstreets. Many Blue Badge holders rely on their car to access the city centre, and need to park close to the space or premises they are visiting, and otherwise cannot access many parts of the city.

Some participants described not being able to access the city centre at all since access restrictions were put in place for Blue Badge holders. Another did not feel comfortable driving into the footstreets anymore due to the volume of pedestrians and instead now uses taxis.

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Opinions from businesses on vehicle access to the footstreets were mixed, the data captured highlighted the following themes and sentiments on vehicle access:

- Businesses experience difficulty getting deliveries to their premises.
- There are challenges with the number of vehicles in the morning.
- Some businesses felt that there should be no access for any vehicles to the footstreets when the barriers are active, including Blue Badge holders.
- Vehicle movement is made more difficult and unsafe as a result of the amount of bollards, meaning drivers have to do 3 point turns in shared pedestrian spaces, such as St Sampson's Square.

Mima's Experience accessing the Footstreets by Car

Mima consultants drove into the footstreets via the Blake Street barriers in March 2024 in order to carry out our workshop at St Sampson's. Our first challenge was knowing which access point we should use to get as close to St Sampson's as possible.

Once accessing the footstreets, the space was busy and it was difficult to know where we were permitted to park due to a lack of signage or marked bays. It was also challenging to negotiate the space due to the number of pedestrians. The marshal at the barrier helped to indicate where we could park, and how to exit. We noted that we would have benefited from signage confirming parking and routes out of the space.

Vehicle Access to the Footstreets

Alternative Method of Access

During the workshops, participants were asked for their suggestions on alternative ways to access the footstreets.

Suggestions included:

- Automatic number plate recognition, having registered or booked in advance and inputted Blue Badge details.
- An pass with access for a limited period of time to make access into the centre of York safer.

The principle of an online booking system was the most popular alternative option, however many residents also noted the complexities of how this might work in practice, and how distinctions may be made between residents needing regular access and visitors requesting access for a day. No participants were aware of anywhere else where a similar solution had been implemented.

Several participants felt that having a technological alternative to a staffed barrier would be a better use of Council spending.

Participants raised concerns about the introduction of such a solution, particularly in ensuring this is accessible. For example, would people need to be able to physically hold a Blue Badge up to a camera?

Mima Commentary

There is no one clear solution to providing access using technology alone. A summary of how this is managed in other cities is provided below:

Chester: Access to pedestrian areas when bollards are in place requires drivers to show their Blue Badge to a marshal on a gate. This is a similar set up to the process in York. Further information on how accessibility is managed in Chester can be found in Chapter 9 of the accompanying benchmarking report.

Bath: Bath's City Centre Security Scheme has continued to evolve following a ban on all vehicles, including Blue Badge holders, into certain areas of the city centre in 2022. Further information on these measures, and how the current system works, can be found in Chapter 7 of the accompanying benchmarking report.

Parking

Accessible Parking

Many participants felt there was not enough Blue Badge parking, and a need for more accessible parking provision around the city centre in general, however they also felt that the details of how this is provided should be reviewed further by the Council.

People noted that the overall availability of accessible parking was an issue, and that levels should be returned to the pre-pandemic amount. Others highlighted the need for increased number of bays across different parts of the city, rather than Blue Badge parking being provided in one specific area.

Participants felt that Blue Badge parking was not well enforced, which limited the number of overall spaces available.

Whilst this study focuses on city centre parking, some participants said that they found it difficult to find accessible parking in areas outside of the city centre such as Acomb.

Suggestions for Improvements included:

- A request for a dedicated Blue Badge car park next to the Castle.
- Accessible parking to be made available on Davygate (where the loading bays are).
- Accessible parking to be made available on Goodramgate.

- Accessible parking to be made available on Duncombe Place.
- Accessible parking to be reinstated on St Sampson's Square (where the taxi rank is), participants noted that there used to be accessible parking in this location.

Participants were generally not in favour of accessible parking being located further away from the city centre. If parking were to be proposed further out, an alternative means of transport such as an accessible shuttle bus was suggested. It was, however, also noted that the pick up/drop off location and timetabling of this service would need to be carefully considered in order to provide users with an equitable experience.

“Behavioural change is also vital, those who misuse accessible parking spaces should be held to account.” - York Resident.

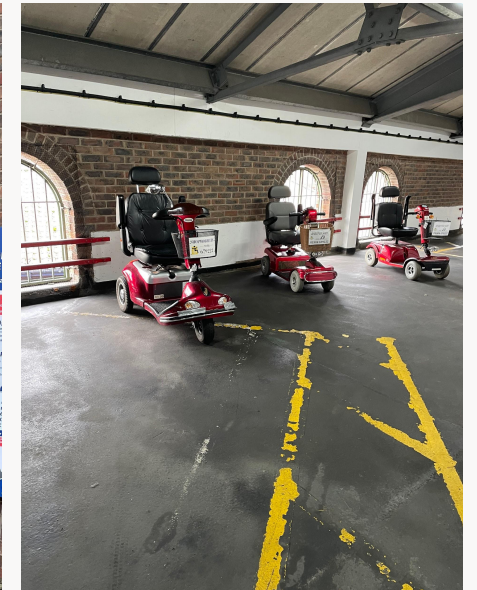
Shopmobility

Shopmobility Service

A number of disabled residents feel that the Shopmobility service is not well located, with added frustration that this issue has previously been raised numerous times but little has changed. Two disabled participants really liked and benefited from the current Shopmobility service, with all other responses relating to negative experiences.

Participants in the disabled residents workshops felt that the current location of Shopmobility is inaccessible and unsafe. They felt the service could be better used and celebrated if it was better placed and advertised. In terms of location, consensus was that Shopmobility should offer ground floor access (which avoids people having to use lifts, as is the case with the current location).

Participants highlighted that the community bus scheme that was made available during the blue badge ban to get to Shopmobility did not work well, and were concerned about anything like this being reinstated again if the Shopmobility location were to change.



Left Image: Vehicle entrance to the Coppergate Centre Car Park. Right Image: Shopmobility offer on the second floor.

Car Parking Proposal in the Footstreets

As part of Mima's workshops, participants were asked to review a potential solution proposed by the Council, to provide up to five accessible parking bays around St Helen's Square - two on Blake Street, two on Davygate and one on Lendal. These bays would allow for longer parking durations than the current 3 hours on double yellow lines, and provide ease of access to city centre restaurants, the cinema and Guildhall, the main venue for Council meetings.

This solution would not provide more parking spaces, just more 'official' ones with a longer parking duration. Participants were made aware in workshops that bays like these of the correct dimensions would be likely to reduce double yellow line parking capacity in some areas.

The Principle of more Formalised Parking Bays

The majority of disabled residents felt that the proposal was a good starting point, but was not enough and that the overall provision of accessible parking should be increased (back to pre-pandemic amounts). The lack of formal parking spaces was noted to be a particular challenge for people who need space to the rear of the vehicle for wheelchair access and that consideration should be given to how space can be provided for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) with rear ramp access.

There was, however, concern relating to this being an experimental order, and that this might be 'done and never looked at again', causing issues with changes to surrounding infrastructure and a long-term lack of accessible parking.

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Map showing the location for potential Blue Badge parking on Blake Street, Davygate and Lendal.

*Since the writing of this report, Mima understands that these bays have now been implemented.

Car Parking Proposal

The Principle of more Formalised Parking Bays

There were conflicting opinions on the removal of the cycle parking bays on Lendal in order to install a potential second accessible parking bay in that area (with particular resistance from delivery drivers and cyclist group members). Some, not all, disabled participants were in favour of removing cycle parking on Lendal. The wider residents group highlighted the need for cycle parking and improved cycle infrastructure in this area given there is not enough cycle parking in the city in general.

Time Duration

Responses were varied in relation to the time limit which should be imposed for these proposed accessible bays. Two disabled residents were not supportive of parking spaces being available for more than 3 hours as it would reduce the overall number of people who could use the parking bays. More participants were favourable of the parking bays being available for longer than 3 hours, with suggestions such as half days or 5 hours being mentioned to allow a slight flex for leisure activities, in particular. There were concerns from some participants that an unlimited timeframe would limit overall availability of the bays.

It was raised that communication, signage and information would need to be a key consideration if this solution were to be implemented, to ensure that people know these bays are available and how they can be used.

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Location

Two participants suggested that the proposed spaces outside McDonald's would be in the incorrect location as it is too busy with pedestrians and deliveries, and does not always feel safe. There were also discussions relating to crowds outside Betty's on Davygate, and how this might relate to difficulty getting in and out of vehicles, or social anxiety in doing so.

Additional Comments and Suggestions

Participants highlighted that pavement infrastructure would need to be considered where new Blue Badge parking bays are to be installed, this includes access onto the pavement via dropped kerbs or raised crossings, and the overall accessibility and quality of the pavement. The existing pavement surfaces in this area were described as a barrier and safety concern for many disabled participants, and the vast majority of workshop attendees as a whole.

Access to Information and other Services and Facilities

Lack of Online Information

Disabled residents, in particular, feel that there is a distinct lack of online and printed accessibility information, including information on maps and signage around the city centre. Most workshop participants we spoke to had not realised that the Blue Badge access into the footstreets had been reinstated, for example.

Where online information is provided it was suggested that this is currently disjointed, with information spread across different platforms.

Toilets

Improved, free and well-maintained toilets are needed in the city centre. One participant expressed the need for larger accessible toilets which can accommodate mobility scooter users. A number of people highlighted the importance of providing Changing Places facilities, which should be installed alongside all other public toilets.

The toilets behind Coppergate were described as not fit for purpose by one resident. There was some confusion in one workshop on where current accessible toilet facilities are located, and which ones are currently open, including the Silver Street toilets.

During the May workshops, Mima discussed the idea of a community toilet scheme with participants, similar to other community toilet schemes that have worked well in other cities in the UK.

There were some concerns that businesses would not want to participate in such a scheme if they were required to provide a new toilet facility. They were assured that this is not the purpose of the scheme, and rather it is for existing facilities to be advertised and celebrated.

Discussions took place about the purple pound, and many participants felt that businesses could make their spaces more attractive to disabled customers if they advertised their accessible facilities.

This led to further discussions around how businesses could better promote their facilities through platforms such as Euan's Guide, AccessAble and Sociability.

Access to Information and other Services and Facilities

Suggestions for Improvements for Information

There is a desire for improved information on accessibility physically in the city centre and online. One participant suggested that there could be inclusively designed signposted routes around the city centre for people using mobility aids.

It was suggested that toilets could be better advertised so both residents and visitors can easily find them.

In terms of online information, it was suggested that access information could be better streamlined across one main platform, particularly information provided on Travel York, Live Well York and the CYC website.

Another suggestion was to provide information to help support businesses wanting to make access improvements to their buildings and services. Some of these could be quick wins, for example providing a 'ring for assistance' bell.

Participants also suggested that they would welcome access to:

- The reporting of issues (knowing what has been logged and what action has been taken).
- A notice board in the city centre where people can share their ideas for improvements.

Mima Recommendations

06

Short Term Recommendations: Blue Badge Parking

Improved Online Information on Blue Badge Parking

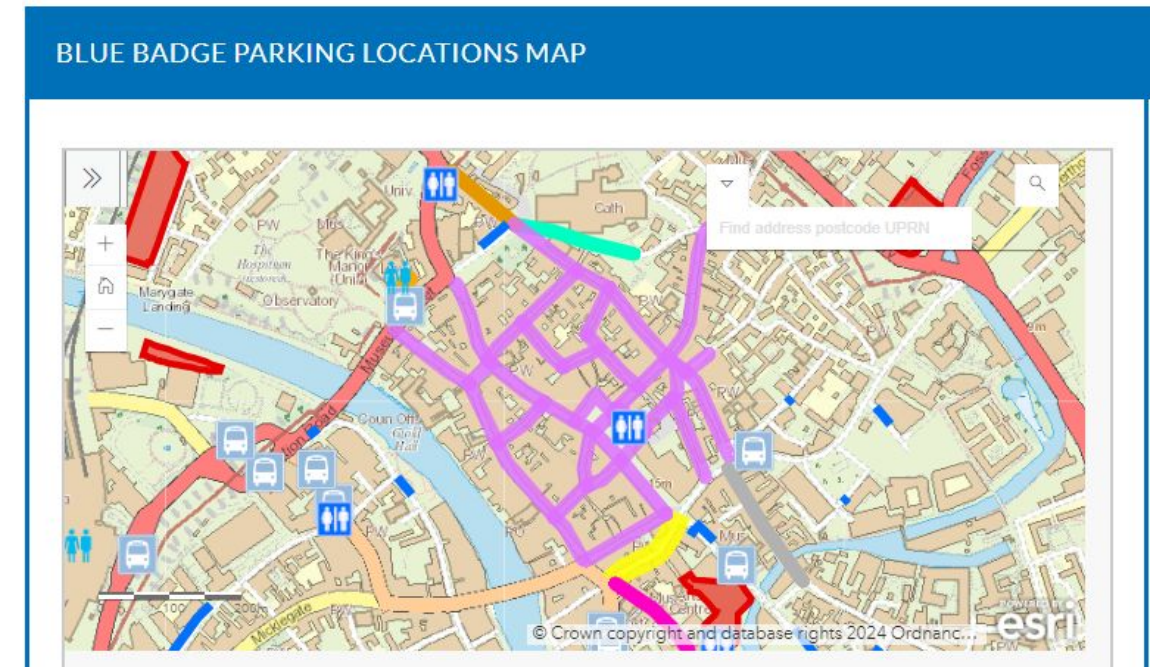
It is recommended that information on Blue Badge parking is better promoted, including for on-street parking. Information should be available in a variety of different formats and should be communicated through a variety of different channels.

Information should be kept up to date. It should be clear when online information was last updated, to ensure information is accurate.

Improved information on accessible parking was something that was raised in almost all the workshops we carried out, it is suggested that this is a short term, 'quick win' priority for the Council. Participants expressed a need for more information on facilities such as toilets and parking. The interactive access map and downloadable PDF show locations of Blue Badge parking, which provide useful information, however our research suggests that people are having difficulty finding this information and it is not updated regularly enough.

Most respondents were in favour information on access (including Blue Badge parking) to be on one webpage to make it easier to find.

Examples of how blue badge parking is promoted in other cities includes Edinburgh and Oxford. Edinburgh provides a map showing the different types of parking bays within the city including Blue Badge parking. Oxford have produced a map showing the locations of Blue Badge parking and the number of bays, although it is not clear how up to date this map is. Further information on these cities can be found in Mima's accompanying benchmarking report.



City of York Council's Blue Badge Parking Locations Map.

Longer Term Recommendations: Blue Badge Parking

Increased Blue Badge Parking Provision

In addition to the new Blue Badge bays proposed by the Council, it is recommended that further Blue Badge parking bays are identified. The Council should consider more formalised on-street parking in the short term, to allow Blue Badge holders to park for more than 3 hours in City Centre locations. Examples of locations suggested by participants can be found on pages 31 and 52.

One way of increasing Blue Badge parking could be to create a dedicated Blue Badge car park, this should be in addition to any new on-street parking bays within the footstreets.

Whilst a specific location was not discussed (aside from potential plans surrounding Castle car park), feedback from workshop participants suggested that a dedicated Blue Badge car park could ensure accessible design features, and minimise misuse.

All new and existing Blue Badge on-street parking bays should meet current guidance set out below:

- The dimensions of a standard accessible parking bay should be 2400mm x 4800mm, with 1200mm hatchings to either side and at the rear, and 3600mm x 6600mm for bays parallel to the street.

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- A dropped kerb should be provided either in front or behind the bay to allow access onto the kerb.
- Clear signage should be provided to indicate the length of stay permitted.
- The pavement next to the bays should be level (not sloping) to allow for a passenger to safely exit and enter their car.
- The bay should be clearly marked out with the international symbol of accessibility.

Pavement improvement works should align with any new Blue Badge parking spaces introduced to help create an accessible pedestrian environment route around the bays.

The online transport consultation highlighted a high demand for parking in areas within the footstreets that are not accessible by car, notably Parliament Street. It is not known if any future vehicle access points will be proposed in the future.

If a new access point is proposed, it is recommended that the spaces around Parliament Street are considered for on-street Blue Badge parking to meet this demand.

References:

BS8300-1:2018 Design of an accessible and Inclusive built environment, Part 1: External environment.

DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021.

Short Term Recommendations: Council User Engagement and Training

Council Engagement

Disabled people, disabled people's organisations and those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) should be consulted at the start of a project or proposed change in the city where this has an impact on accessibility. This could involve online meetings, in person consultations and user testing with the York Access Forum and other similar established groups. Whilst it is appreciated that so many projects are often 'live', medium to large projects that specifically relate to disabled people should be prioritised, with an appraisal/audit of the project being carried out, at minimum. This recommendation should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; it may often be necessary and appropriate to consult wider than the York Access Forum, depending on the topic at hand and the reach of its impact.

Workshop participants emphasised the need for meaningful engagement with disabled people.

The York Access Forum exists as a formal way for disabled people and representatives of groups supporting disabled people to meet Council officers and members. The forum is used as a means of consulting with disabled people on the implications of plans and policies. It is understood that there is now a new chair of the forum and that they will help shape the direction of how the forum operates.

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There are several examples of where a similar approach has already been established, including the Chester Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF). This group is made up of a number of local and regional disability organisations, which meet every two months. Further information about CDAF can be found on the [Cheshire West and Chester](#) website.

Another example includes the Hammersmith and Fulham Resident Access Co-production Implementation Group (RACIG), where the Council have moved from a consultation approach to a co-production approach. As part of this shift, the Council are in the process of recruiting the RACIG group. Further information can be found on the [Hammersmith and Fulham](#) website.

Having a clear approach sets a path for meaningful engagement with disability groups helps to ensure that inclusive design has been considered in projects from the outset. The Council should seek to ensure that such groups are consulted at the start of a project, and engagement should continue at key stages of the project development.

In addition to establishing an approach to engaging with disabled people, it is recommended that CYC improve communication with businesses, residents and private organisations, on issues relating to access.

Short Term Recommendations: Council User Engagement and Training

Training for the Council

It is recommended that Council staff undergo training to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Social Model of Disability and inclusive design to inform future briefs of new schemes. Staff should also be trained on how to carry out Human Rights Equality Impact Assessments.

Regular training should be implemented as part of a longer term training strategy to ensure that all new employees have a good level of understanding and awareness of barriers faced by disabled people.

To deliver this training, it is recommended that the Council work with Disabled People's Organisations to provide training that reflects people's lived experiences in York. It is suggested that this training could include content on:

- An understanding of models of disability including the Social Model, Purple Pound and Spoon Theory.
- Inclusive design.
- Duties under the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Inclusive Recruitment and Internal Culture.
- Engaging with Lived Experience Groups.
- Carrying out Human Rights Equality Impact Assessments.

This is recommended to help ensure that all departments and people in leadership positions have a better understanding of accessibility and the Social Model of Disability.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Public Realm

Improvements to Footpaths and Pavements in the City Centre

It is recommended that the Council review the current maintenance plan to improve footpaths and pavements in the city centre, to ensure that the areas with the worst conditions are identified and prioritised. Areas which require significant investment should be identified and factored into the Council's annual maintenance plan. Existing dropped kerbs should be assessed and areas where dropped kerbs are lacking should be identified.

Further, a plan should be put in place to introduce new dropped kerbs, this should include areas where new Blue Badge parking spaces are being proposed.

Based on our findings in this report and feedback from participants, we suggest that the following areas are reviewed and areas repaired as a priority:

- Parliament Street
- Davygate
- Coppergate
- St Michael le Belfrey

It should be noted that the 2021 Martin Higgitt report provided a very similar recommendation for improvements to footstreets (page 95 of the Martin Higgitt report). Subject to any improvements that have been made between 2021 and 2024, this recommendation in the MH report is still relevant.

Mima understands that since the Martin Higgitt report was published, York has made improvements to Fossgate, Stonegate, Blake Street and Goodramgate.

Where upgrades to pavements and street surfaces are made, these should follow the following good practice guidance:

- Accessible routes should have a firm, slip-resistant and reasonably smooth surface.
- Where is it practicable to do so, cross-falls should be minimised as much as possible. To meet good practice these should be no more than 1:50 on pavements.

The presence and quality of existing dropped kerbs in the city centre should be audited during maintenance works. Tactile paving on dropped kerbs should be applied consistently across the city centre.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Public Realm

Seating

It is recommended that the Council carry out an audit on the current seating provisions across York, to establish if there is enough seating, and if this seating is designed to be accessible.

The Council should then identify areas where new accessible seating can be provided and work with city partners to ensure this is installed in line with the Council's Accessible Seating and Inclusive Design Framework.

The following locations were frequently identified in Mima's consultation, and should be considered for future schemes, following a feasibility study:

- Parliament Street and St Sampson's Square
- Kings Square
- Coney Street
- Along the river (Wellington Road)
- Museum Gardens
- Colliergate and Fossgate

It is recommended that the Council identify locations for some quiet seating areas where people can choose to sit to escape from crowds of people.

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It is recommended that a feasibility study is carried out to assess if the above locations provide a suitable space for accessible seating. Accessible seating should follow the Council's Accessible Seating and Inclusive Design Framework. This provides details of a new 'accessible bench' which has been subject to seating trials.

This provides details of a new 'accessible bench' which has been subject to seating trials.

Careful consideration should be given to the positioning of seating so it does not significantly reduce the access route of a path, or cause an obstruction.

*Survey data shows that there is a high demand for seating in the footstreet area (p.33).

Following a feasibility study, new seating should be installed which meets the Council's accessible seating design guide.

Implementing these recommendations has a positive impact on a wide range of users within the protected characteristics listed on page 10 of this document, this includes disabled people, older people, and users who are pregnant or with young children.

Recommendations: Pavement Cafes

Pavement Cafés

Our study has shown that there are conflicting views on pavement cafes. These can create barriers for disabled people where these obstruct the pavement, or reduce the pavement width to allow people to safely pass. These spaces are valued by businesses who benefit economically from using them for outdoor seating, particularly in spring and summer months. There are also many disabled people who enjoy, and want to use these outdoor dining spaces.

Mima recommends that licences for pavement cafés continue to only be granted where these meet the current guidance in DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021 and guidance set out on the CYC website at the time of this report.

This is to ensure that pavements and premises remain accessible, for example by providing a sufficient clear width for access into the premises, tapping rails, and an accessibility corridor of at least 2000mm where possible. If this is not feasible a minimum width of 1500mm could be regarded as the minimum acceptable distance as it allows a wheelchair user and walker to pass one another.

Further information is available in section 4.2 of DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021.

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Moving away from this guidance would have a negative impact on accessibility in the city centre for disabled people as well as other user groups such as older people, and people with young children in prams.

If new pavement cafés are to be permitted, subject to this guidance being met, sufficient levels of Blue Badge parking should be retained on the footstreets.

Businesses feel that historically they have not been consulted with prior to policy being implemented. As such the following is recommended:

Where changes are made to pavement café policy, relevant stakeholders should be consulted, this should include city centre businesses, disabled people, and any other relevant stakeholders impacted by these changes.

Consultations should be communicated clearly and transparently to allow for maximum engagement from a variety of stakeholders impacted by these changes. Data gathered in consultations should be reviewed with an understanding of people's legal rights under the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, any decisions or recommendations made as a result of such consultation should also reflect current accessibility standards and guidance.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Toilet Facilities

Improved Access to Accessible Toilets

In the shorter term, the Council should work with businesses in the city centre to provide a community toilet scheme which is clearly promoted across the city centre and online.

In the longer term, the Council should identify spaces for new public toilet facilities in the city centre. Where new toilet facilities are provided, these should include an accessible toilet and a Changing Places toilet

Workshop participants highlighted the need for more and better maintained toilet facilities in the city centre. Currently the only city centre public toilet facilities shown on the CYC Council website are:

- York Explore Library.
- York Station.
- Nunnery Lane.
- Coppergate shopping centre.
- Silver Street Changing Places (closed for refurbishment at the time this report was written).

A community toilet scheme would involve businesses making their toilet facilities available to the public, without the requirement to buy a product or service. It is recommended that the Council work with businesses to promote and make available clean, safe and accessible toilets. To be successful a community toilet scheme should:

- Be well promoted online and around the city centre, and clearly displayed on shop doors.
- Include toilets that comply with good practice accessibility guidance, i.e they are the correct dimensions and provide the correct features and facilities.

It should be noted that a community toilet scheme would not require businesses to provide new toilet facilities where these do not already exist (although this is something that would be beneficial and should be encouraged) instead, a suggested scheme would utilise existing facilities that already provide accessible toilets and or Changing Places facilities.

It is recommended that the Council work with businesses to help promote the benefits of being part of such as scheme. Promoting accessibility has a positive impact on business, and may encourage more disabled people to spend money in that premises over time.

The availability of additional facilities will benefit the wider population of people in or visiting York, and would also have positive benefits for people who fall under other protected characteristics under the Equality Act such as age, gender and pregnancy and maternity.

Examples of community toilet schemes elsewhere

Community Toilet Scheme members:

Toilets available without the need to make a purchase.

- 3 Costa Coffee**
Next to Andover Bus Station, SP10 1NF
Monday to Saturday 7am to 7pm
Sunday 9am to 6pm
- 4 Caffè Nero**
11-19 High Street, Andover, SP10 1LJ
Monday to Saturday 7.30am to 6pm
Sunday 7.30am to 5pm
- 5 The Redbridge**
5 Bridge Street, Andover, SP10 1BE
Monday to Wednesday 8am to 11pm
Thursday 8am to midnight
Friday to Saturday 8am to 1am
Sunday 11am to 11pm
- 6 Café Bridge**
31-33 Bridge Street, Andover, SP10 1BE
Monday to Friday 9.30am to 2.30pm

Example of a community toilet scheme in Andover, which provides a list showing the location and opening hours of available toilets.

We're in the
Community Toilet Scheme
Use our facilities for free



Example of community toilet scheme signage in Ashford, with a QR code linking to a community toilet scheme map and list of venues. We are aware that this format would not be accessible to all.

Bristol Community Toilet Scheme



Use our facilities for free

Facilities available here



An example of community toilet scheme signage in Bristol, the sign says "Bristol community toilet scheme. Use our facilities for free". It shows symbols for male and female toilets, accessible toilets and baby changing facilities.

Toilet Facilities

Accessible Toilet Facilities

Where toilets are promoted as accessible, either as part of a community toilet scheme or as a Council owned toilet facility, these should as a minimum meet the requirements set out in Approved Document M Volume 2, and ideally BS8300:2018.

These should be checked to ensure that the space is well maintained, and that the emergency alarm cord is left untied and works. Accessible toilets should not be used to store equipment (e.g. cleaning equipment or high chairs) to ensure that there is sufficient circulation space for wheelchair users, and people using mobility aids.

Changing Places Toilet Facilities

Standard accessible toilets do not provide equipment such as changing benches or hoists and most are too small to accommodate more than one person. Many disabled people who require these accessibility features need to use a Changing Places facility. Providing and promoting these spaces in York city centre (and in the wider York area), makes the city more accessible for disabled people who require Changing Places toilets. The adjacent symbol is used to depict a Changing Places facility.

Further information on Changing Places facilities can be found on the [Changing Places website](#).



Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Access to Information

Accessibility Hub

It is recommended that the Council consider one or several locations for an accessibility hub/s which would act as go-to places for accessible information.

The CYC website provides information on access in York city centre, however not everyone can access the internet. Findings from online and in-person consultations tell us that people want to access information from physical locations. Suggestions of locations include York libraries, the train station and any Shopmobility location proposed in the future. An alternative to a dedicated hub could be providing information on city centre accessibility in popular locations or public buildings and spaces.

It is recommended that information is provided in a variety of different formats and includes physical copies of the access guide which is available to download from the CYC website. Our consultations also highlighted the need for easy read information.

It is recommended that additional information is provided on the following:

- Information on accessible parking and taxis.
- A list of all public toilet facility locations.
- Information on the accessibility of buses and their routes.
- Information on access during any upcoming events.

Online Information

Findings from our workshops highlight the importance of clear up to date information that can be easily located.

Alongside a physical 'accessibility hub/s' it is recommended that an online accessibility hub is provided. This should provide access to or signpost clearly to information for residents and visitors. To help identify up to date information, the website should clearly display when information was updated and if any information is due to be updated. This online platform should be digitally accessible.

To be digitally accessible the platform should be accessible to as many users as possible including:

- Blind and visually impaired users.
- Users with cognitive impairments and learning disabilities.
- D/deaf and hard of hearing users.
- People with motor impairments.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Transport

Improved Access to Train Travel

It is recommended that the Council and Mayoral Combined Authority liaise with the train station management/operators to improve signage to accessibility features and facilities, and step-free access to platforms where lifts remain out of service for a significant period of time.

Our recommendations reflect that CYC do not own or manage this space.

We are aware from our research that navigating York station can be difficult for disabled people. At the time of this report, work on the York Station Gateway project is ongoing. This project focuses on the re-organisation of the station frontage, taxi drop-off and pick up points, parking and pedestrian spaces.

Whilst Mima are aware of this project, any comment on the accessibility of this scheme falls out of scope for this piece of work.

Potential Shuttle Bus Services

Whilst the provision of a shuttle bus service was not discussed in detail within Mima's workshops (with the majority of participants not requiring such a service and instead discussions focusing on parking and cycling requirements), we are aware that informal discussions with some members of the disabled community and other stakeholders suggest that the reinstatement of the Dial-a-Ride service would be preferred over the introduction of a new accessible shuttle service.

It is recommended that this is further investigated and considered by City of York Council.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Transport

Improved Access to Bus Facilities

Part of the Council's 10 proposals for improving transport is improving public transport. Mima have made a number of recommendations for improved bus services, based on our findings.

The Council and the Mayoral Combined Authority should further review the reliability, accessibility and frequency of bus services into the city centre.

The Council should work with key stakeholders such as the Enhanced Bus Partnership to introduce more information on bus times and live information. The Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan should continue to explore opportunities to provide information in different formats.

Talking bus stops should continue to be rolled out at bus stops in York.

Our workshops highlight talking bus stops are beneficial to many disabled people, including people with visual impairments and the learning disabled community.

Mima are aware that some talking bus stops have been implemented across York. It is recommended that these are continued to be installed consistently across the city.

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The findings from the online transport consultation highlighted the need for better live information at bus stops. In our workshops we learned that talking bus stops benefited blind and partially sighted users as well as participants from the learning disabled community. It is not clear to what extent this has been implemented across York to date.

It is recommended that the Council audit the design of existing bus stops, including where seating is provided. Bus stop shelters should provide accessible seating and sufficient space for wheelchair users and people using other mobility aids.

Disability awareness training should be provided for all bus drivers, so they can better support disabled passengers.

One way of achieving this could be by making disability awareness training a mandatory condition for contracting bus operators. This should include training on how best to support customers with non-visible disabilities, and improve awareness of the Sunflower Lanyard scheme. Further information on this is available on the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#) website.

It is recognised that many of these recommendations require the Council to liaise and collaborate with different stakeholders including bus operators and the Enhanced Bus Partnerships.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Cycle Infrastructure

Cycle Infrastructure

Many disabled people rely on cycles as a mobility aid, and as a mode of transport into and around the city centre. Barriers to access for disabled cyclists are described on pages 45-47 of this report. To address these barriers the following is recommended:

The Council should review current policies and restrictions to allow people who use a cycle as a mobility aid to access the footstreets (noting that security and safety measures will need to be upheld). One way to do this would be to introduce an adapted cycle as mobility aid 'entrance' scheme, or similar. In certain circumstances, access for key workers (e.g. carers, emergency deliveries) could also be considered under a similar eligibility and approval system.

The Council should work to improve and upgrade existing cycle infrastructure to make this more accessible for people who use a cycle as a mobility aid, and for people who use adapted cycles. This should include frequent access to adapted cycle parking, and considerations relating to the visibility and/or surveillance of parking infrastructure to encourage cyclist and equipment safety and security.

To achieve this, it is recommended that the Council review the accessibility of existing cycle infrastructure around the city centre.

Cycle infrastructure should be reviewed against the following accessibility standards and guidance:

DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021 sets out the how accessible cycle parking can be achieved and the dimensions required for different types of accessible parking spaces. It also provides guidance on inclusive design principles for cycle infrastructure.

Isolated stands for larger cycles including tandems, cargo bikes and adapted cycles should have a length of 3000mm (minimum 2500mm), with an access aisle width of 3000mm. Detailed recommendations on the design of cycle parking are provided in LTN 1/20.

5% of non-standard cycle parking for larger cycles should be provided where there is cycle parking.

It is recommended that cycle parking is clearly marked out, examples of how this might be achieved is shown on the following page. These examples were provided by participants in this study.

Additional good practice examples and guidance can be found in '**A Guide to Inclusive Cycling (2020)**'.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Cycle Infrastructure

Cycle Infrastructure

Allowing cycles into the footstreets would need to be carefully planned and considered to ensure this could be implemented in an accessible way, by providing clearly marked out, accessible cycle routes, and accessible parking within the footstreets. This should be designed in a way that ensures that the pedestrian space remains accessible for different users including disabled people. One potential route that could be explored further is the North-South Cycle route shown on page 48 of this report. Participants suggested that alternative North-South routes could also be explored which provided better access to Parliament Street.

Where accessibility improvements are proposed to existing cycle infrastructure or new infrastructure is proposed, it is recommended that cycle groups in York are consulted, including people who use a cycle as a mobility aid, and/or as a means of transport. This should be in addition to consultation with other disabled groups such as the York Access Forum.



Left Image: Adapted cycle parking in Queen Margarets, Edinburgh. Right Image: Cycle stand for larger and adapted cycles in Acomb, York.

Short and Longer Term Recommendations: Transport

Shopmobility Service

The Shopmobility service should be relocated to a convenient, safe location on ground level.

The Shopmobility service is located in Coppergate car park, on the second floor. Whilst some people benefited from the Shopmobility service, many disabled residents we spoke to were not in favour of the current Shopmobility location; the location was considered by most users to be unsafe and difficult to get to as this is located in a dark space with access via a lift, which has the potential to break down.

The relocation of the Shopmobility service is something that has been discussed in previous studies including the Martin Higgitt Report in 2021, which recommended an expanded Shopmobility service and providing satellite Shopmobility services. We understand that there has been no change to the location of the service since this report was carried out.

It is recommended that the Council continue to work with Shopmobility to find potential new, more accessible spaces which could accommodate this service. Participants were in favour of the service being operated from a more accessible ground floor space. An alternative business model with 'pick up' locations may also work, but would require further research and consultation.

A new shopmobility location could also help support a future accessibility hub (discussed on page 69).

Taxis and Taxi Ranks

It is recommended that the Council increase the visibility of the existing accessible taxi directory, and ensure it is written in accessible formats and updated regularly. This directory should be made available on the city centre disabled access webpage.

The Council should continue to work with taxi operators to improve the availability and number of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

A list currently exists on the CYC website, however there is no clear link to this directory from the 'city centre Disabled Access' page.

A review of taxi ranks should be undertaken to provide accessible seating nearby where appropriate, promoting those ranks that have seating. Any seating installed should meet the guidance set out in the 'seating' recommendation on page 64.

Taxi ranks should clearly signed. A dropped kerb should be provided close to the rank if passengers need to cross a street to get to or from the taxis.

Reference: DfT Inclusive Mobility, 2021.

Conclusions and Next Steps

07

Conclusions and Next Steps

This findings and recommendations report is designed to help inform the Council's strategy for making access improvements, primarily in York city centre, the report has however also touched on issues that exist outside of the centre of York. This project was partly commissioned to rebuild trust after the change in local government in May 2023. Blue badge holder access to the footstreets is not in of itself a reversal of the previous administration's transport decisions. Furthermore, access can and should improve from 2019 standards; we believe this report will help inform the Council's next steps.

Mima has carried out a total of 12 workshops, which exceeded the original 8 workshops briefed by the Council. Our workshops and surveys were designed to ensure that we have consulted with different groups in York, a full list of these groups is provided on pages 15 and 16 of this report. We recognise consultation fatigue and the frustration of some participants in being asked about their access needs again. We are grateful to all of the individuals who participated in the workshops and our recommendations have taken into consideration different and sometimes conflicting views. We have ensured that our final recommendations reflect participants' input and suggestions whilst also aligning with current access legislation and good practice guidance.

Throughout this project, we have consulted with the CAHR to make sure we are aware of the implications of our work on people's human rights. However, a full Human Rights analysis will appear in the commentary supporting the Human Rights and Equalities Impact Assessment Report (HREIA). This will follow the respect, protect and fulfil framework.

Conclusions and Next Steps

We are conscious of the overlap between this report and the Martin Higgitt Associates Report 2021. Several participants referred to the MHA report during the workshops and questioned the Council's failure to implement those recommendations. Ongoing conversations with Make it York, York BID, the station, the Chamber of Commerce, local business groups and disability groups are needed to improve the city centre. The Council will only benefit from working collaboratively with these groups and greater transparency would go a long way to opening up meaningful dialogue in the city.

Recommendations set out in this report reflect the scope of this project and may require more detailed technical reviews to address specific issues, for example, an audit of dropped kerbs and tactile paving across the city centre. Regardless of the Council's policy decisions in the future, **good consultation depends on voices being heard**. The Council officers and elected members both have a responsibility to prove their decision-making has been influenced by consultation. This report is publicly available on the 10th of July and will be discussed at the Executive on the 18th of July. Taking all of the above into account, we feel our recommendations provide considered and actionable solutions that can offer 'quick wins' as well as recommendations that fit into longer-term strategies to improve accessibility in York.

We hope the Council take this opportunity to invest in a more accessible city for all.



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