

## Have Your Say – Riverside Path Consultation, submitted by York Disability Rights Forum Access group on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

YDRF is pleased to see that some of our previous feedback has been incorporated, but disheartened that our contribution has been condensed into the one bullet point of ‘accessibility’.

Regarding the on-line survey, we have received comments that the questions on the survey form are too prescriptive, and not easy to answer in such a definitive way, because of lack of information. For example, you cannot answer yes, no or don’t know if the plans are not clear enough and there is no way to explain your response.

For future reference, could you expand on your definition of a mobility aid to include a white cane and a guide dog? Many disabled people in York use these mobility aids and their needs need to be taken account of.

Comments on the scheme. The comments below mirror the sequence of questions on the on-line survey.

1. We welcome the introduction of formalised blue badge parking bays.

2. Shared space leading to separated cycle and pedestrian paths

2.1 From the plans, it looks as though the approach to the separate paths is a shared space, which is not appropriate as it does not give protection to pedestrians. Can this be changed into a segregated space with a tactile delineator between cyclists and pedestrians allowing pedestrians to follow the wall/building line?

2.2 Review of chicane barriers. What will be the subject of the review? For example, will the review prioritise access for disabled pedestrians including people who use mobility aids, and other pedestrians in line with the transport hierarchy? A balance needs to be struck in deterring motor cyclists, and allowing safe access for pedestrians.

How clear will it be that pedestrians have priority when entering this area? How will cyclists be advised to give way to pedestrians?

3. We support the separation of cyclists and pedestrians and the separation being a strip of land.
4. We assume that the cycle path is two-way, which further reinforces the need to segregate the initial section that looks to be a shared space.
4. It is good to see new benches indicated on the plan. These need to be accessible so that they can be used as rest points. The plans use an icon of picnic benches, which are great for many people, but cannot be used by some disabled and older people, unless specifically designed so. A mixture of seating would be required to cater for all needs with level access points such as paving stones or concrete surfaces.
5. Improved lighting is absolutely essential. This path, which is the shortest pedestrian route from Leeman Road into the city centre due to the closure of Leeman Road by the Railway Museum, needs to be made as safe as possible. For many disabled people and women, this may feel an unsafe route into and out of the city. The previous route was through a populated area, on a footpath with vehicles using the road. This gave added practical security and engendered a feeling of safety. This footpath is out of the way, and on one side is the railway line, on the other a vast expanse of grass and the river. This is a route that might feel unsafe for disabled people, and women of all ages, particularly in the dark (which in winter is from 4pm to 8am), so can it be made safer by introducing cctv cameras for example?
6. Cycle parking – will this allow for adapted cycles to be parked safely?
7. The last third of the path, towards the city centre, will bring cyclists alongside pedestrians. The same questions arise as in points 2.1 and 3 above. How wide is the path and how are cyclists segregated from pedestrians? Is it a difference in level, or is it a tactile delineator strip?
8. The next section on the plan, sees the cycle and pedestrian route becomes a shared space. As said above, shared spaces are difficult for pedestrians to navigate safely, having to rely on the goodwill of cyclists. Shared spaces are not encouraged, and indeed should not be used according to government guidance. We have serious concerns in this bottleneck area where space is extremely tight and cyclists may be travelling at speed. The only safe thing to do would be to instruct

cyclists to dismount, if they are able to, in order to give priority to disabled pedestrians, those using mobility aids and other pedestrians. If two cyclists approach from different directions to go underneath the bridge, then they will need to stop to ensure they can pass each other. So therefore, there would appear to be no reason why they cannot stop and give priority to pedestrians.

7. Public realm space. What measures will be in place to ensure this is accessible to disabled people?

Finally, we are aware of some suggestions that pedestrians take the outer path, rather than the one that follows the wall. This may seem like a nice idea, but for some people the wall will allow for a greater sense of security and an orientation aid.

Much of the scheme enhances the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and fulfils the requirement of Active Travel, improving what will become a much busier path in future. If our comments/suggestions are incorporated, it will improve access and safety for disabled people and all pedestrians without detracting in any way from the benefit to cyclists.