



Response from York Disability Rights Forum to the Rougier Route proposals, January 2026

We are a disabled people's led organisation, working to promote equal access to human rights for all disabled people who live, work, or study in York. Our strap line is 'Disability rights are human rights'.

We were pleased to participate in the dedicated consultation event on 5th January. Our comments below are intended to summarise much of what we said at that event and they draw substantially on the views and experiences of our members gathered since our establishment:

Overall comments

- It is our firm view that vehicles being used by a Blue Badge holder should be categorised as 'essential' in relation to the council's transport policy. We strongly believe that they should be exempt from exclusion from the proposed bus gate as a matter of principle and for us to have our human rights respected. It would therefore be unnecessary for there to be any data collection about the potential impact on BB holders of the changes; data which would anyway be almost impossible to collect in any meaningful way (and see our reference below to 'consultation fatigue').
- Any reductions in traffic congestion and improvements in bus performances will benefit disabled people more generally. This does not affect the importance of acknowledging the essential use of 'BB' vehicles. Strategies need instead to target vehicles used by non-disabled people.

Process

- We were encouraged to hear in the meeting that consideration might still be given to exempting 'BB holders'. The literature accompanying the consultation said this was NOT under consideration!

- We believe that an HREIA should have been completed as part of the council's internal discussions about the pros and cons of progressing the Rougier St proposals. Without this, any disproportionate impact on disabled people cannot readily have been identified. In other words, even if one had been done by the consultation stages, we believe this is too late in the process. HREIAs also need to be completed at regular intervals or strategic points. We understand that CYC is shortly to move towards such a process.
- We have concerns about the council's approach to, or understanding of, its *anticipatory* duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Not providing exemptions for BB holders will, for example, lead to some having longer journey times, more expensive taxi rides (if they can even access taxis – see elsewhere in this report) and an inability to reach some places currently accessible. As such we believe that this will result in the council failing to meet its PSED General Duty.
- It is unfortunate that the council issued its [very short] consultation on the proposals so close to Christmas, gave only a week's notice of its drop in events (making it impossible for us to notify our members) and failed to mention that it would be running a dedicated consultation event for disabled people until afterwards, thereby giving the impression that the latter was an afterthought.
- We were angered and dismayed by the animation video that accompanied the consultation in which builders' and carers' vehicles were referred to as essential but there was no mention at all of vehicles using a Blue Badge.
- We were concerned that the only apparent exemption being considered was that of taxis.
- We were concerned that there was little or no data available about taxi movements that differentiated between locally registered taxis and those from out of York. The Access Officer's informally collected recent data was very interesting, suggesting such disaggregation is crucial. As is his informal feedback from taxi drivers that they would avoid taking up a request from a wheelchair user if this involved a longer journey as a result of these proposals.
- We were concerned that consideration had not been given to how to manage the new CYC trial of enabling taxi rides for wheelchair users refused access to a bus, within the bus gate.

General comments on intended improvements to bus travel and bus use

- Disabled people, like many non-disabled people, would welcome less traffic congestion in the city – not least as the health of many disabled people is disproportionately affected by pollution and they would also benefit from reduced journey times.
- We do not feel in a position to comment with confidence on whether these particular proposals will achieve significant improvements rather than simply displacing vehicles to other locations and generally causing longer car journey times.
- We are concerned about the danger of the council overclaiming the possible benefits of these changes resulting in a reduction in current and future public engagement. We are aware of many parts of the city that experience significant congestion. We are also aware of the huge challenges in changing car drivers' behaviour.
- Those disabled people who are able to use buses would welcome them becoming more reliable and frequent. However, it is disappointing that the work done to identify the many barriers to bus use that are faced by disabled people has achieved little progress to date.
- Further, it is disappointing that little progress has been made on reinstating the Dial & Ride service.
- FINALLY we are aware that many disabled people are suffering from 'consultation fatigue'. Disabled people's lives are such that many have little time or energy to provide to consultations. Experiences in recent years have exacerbated this as many have come to feel that their views are too often put aside. Lack of response to this consultation from individual disabled people should not be interpreted as meaning that measures such as those proposed will have no impact. Lack of engagement also needs to be considered in the context of the impact of recent damaging national proposals, including the disability benefits cuts and the Assisted Dying Bill, the associated hostile rhetoric and the rise in disability hate crime and incidents.