

26 May 2021

Open Letter: Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy

Dear Andrew,

I am writing to you again on behalf of the Lancaster BID Management Board as a follow up to our letter in December 2020.

We are pleased to see recognition given to the high levels of congestion around the city centre and that you are actively seeking a long-term solution to this. As detailed in our previous letter, we would support options which will improve footfall in the city centre, improve accessibility across the city centre and have positive economic viability for local businesses.

However, we do have significant concerns regarding the low levels of awareness about these plans amongst businesses in the city centre. There is a strong feeling amongst businesses that they have not yet been adequately consulted and had the opportunity to have their voice heard on proposals which will have major short- and long-term impacts on the city centre. The timing of the most recent consultation during lockdown meant many businesses remained unaware.

Access into the city centre is critical for businesses to be viable. If deliveries and access for customers is restricted there is a high chance that shoppers will change to other nearby towns and that there would be resulting closures of businesses in Lancaster City Centre.

The proposal to create a sustainable travel corridor to the East of the current gyratory has the potential to have a positive impact and to create stronger links between Dalton Square and the city centre. However, there is concern that this would increase traffic levels on the western arm of the gyratory to unsustainable levels with congestion levels higher than those already experienced. Accurate detailed traffic flow projections are essential to ensure the inevitable increased volume of traffic on this route will be manageable.

We call on you to commit to a thorough consultation with city centre businesses before any final decision is made regarding which proposals will be taken forward.

The work to deliver any scheme will result in inevitable significant disruption to city centre businesses for the duration of the works. This makes it essential that the correct solution is implemented to ensure the disruption is a one-off event which leads to significant long term positive improvement to traffic flow and air quality across the city centre.

Lancaster businesses have already suffered more than their fair share of disruption over the past 10 years. United Utilities sewerage system upgrades caused major disruption for two years from 2013 followed by major flooding from Storm Desmond in 2015. The closure of Greyhound Bridge led to further disruption during 2018. Combined with the recent impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, many city centre businesses have suffered almost ten years of on and off disruption which has had an inevitable negative impact on profitability. It is critical that genuine business engagement is a key priority in finalising the City Centre Movement Strategy to ensure any further disruption will be limited and will result in sustainable solutions with long-term benefits to all.

Lancaster BID is committed to working with you to ensure businesses are fully engaged in final decisions around implementing this strategy. We look forward to engaging positively with you to bring everyone together to ensure the best solution is found for the whole city centre.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Wilkinson

Chair- Lancaster BID

Signed on behalf of the Lancaster BID Company Directors:

- Nick Wilkinson, Lune Properties
- Mark Diggie, Diggles & Marcos
- Phil Simpson, C2 Investments
- Adam Parton, MHA Moore & Smalley
- Sarah Harrison, Marketgate Shopping Centre