



KING'S LYNN CIVIC SOCIETY

Member of Civic Voice

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Attn Duncan Hall – Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place
Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
King's Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn
PE30 1EX

Dear Mr Hall

Re: Plans for South Gate Regeneration

King's Lynn Civic Society wish to contribute to the current discussion of plans and opportunities for London Road and South Gate. We have reviewed the plan and CGI that has been made public by BCKLWN and that appear to indicate design development by consultants WSP and Wynne Williams. We have also seen the 'Alternative Vision' publicised by Simon Thurley and colleagues.

We understand that BCKLWN have included the plan to bypass South Gate with a new road in their ***Future High Streets*** bid. We are not clear that this is a project that we would have selected to include in the bid for this fund – which we understand is aimed at *renewing and reshaping town centres and high streets*.

However, we are in no doubt that South Gate is an important but undervalued heritage asset in King's Lynn and that its current setting leaves much to be desired. It is certainly an area that requires regeneration – within a carefully considered masterplan.

Our committee has some reservations about restricting the historic use of the gate as the entrance to the town – but it was never designed for the current volume of modern vehicular traffic. If vehicular traffic is diverted, we think it is essential that South Gate continues to be utilised as a main cycle and pedestrian thoroughfare into the town. At present, hundreds of children have to pick their way through heavy traffic every day on their way to and from school – which is simply unacceptable. This area could be a key project within the current proposed cycle/pedestrian access strategy.

We believe any plan here must have public realm enhancement at the heart of the scheme. Simply building a big new section of road because funding has become available will not be acceptable. We have great concerns about aspects of the WSP plan – which we have annotated on the attached plans. The significant loss of green space and the large areas of apparently superfluous pavement in the WSP plan are not supported.

Any plan to enhance South Gate must consider and facilitate sustainable re-development of the adjoining sites. This includes retention and enhancement of existing heritage assets – not just the Gate itself, but the Town Wall, Buckingham and Guanock Terraces, the former Honest Lawyer and Prince of Wales public houses and other features and spaces (see our 'Heritage Assets' plan). It would be essential that any new development enhances and complements the heritage setting with high quality buildings and civic space.

The proposals offer the potential to create a space that traffic is allowed to pass through – rather than the present situation, where pedestrians and cyclists are squeezed to the side of a busy highway. The emphasis must be reversed – here and along the length of London Road.

Therefore, we feel strongly that any proposals for this area must be accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Strategy for the whole town – with the key goal of reducing all vehicular traffic entering the town – especially HGVs. It must not be the case that other roads in the town are constructed or altered to bring more traffic into the town along other routes. This would clearly be moving the problem – not resolving it.

We attach a sketch plan showing our key aspirations for the South Gate area. We would be very pleased to discuss these plans further. Whether the *Future High Street* funding is forthcoming or not, we do believe this area deserves urgent attention and that carefully considered design could deliver many benefits.

Yours sincerely

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