

Report title: Consider Objections Received in Relation to Proposed Pedestrian Zone and Associated Waiting Restrictions in Market Place Area, Wisbech

To: Delegated Decision Meeting

Meeting Date: 11th November 2020

From: Executive Director Place & Economy

Electoral division(s): Wisbech West

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To determine objections and other representations received in response to proposals to introduce a Pedestrian Zone and associated Waiting Restrictions in the Market Place area of Wisbech. These are required to regulate traffic and parking as part of Wisbech Town Council's enhancement scheme.

Recommendation: a) Introduce the published Pedestrian Zone and Waiting Restrictions Orders as detailed in this report.
b) Inform the objectors and other who submitted representations of the decision of this meeting.

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Member contacts:

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1. Background

- 1.1 The proposed Orders are related to the planned Market Place enhancement scheme being promoted by Wisbech Town Council. The project involves the pedestrianisation of Market Place, part of Market Street, Little Church Street and part of Church Terrace between 7am and 4pm on all days of the week. The scheme will create a safer environment for all users of the Market Place area of Wisbech and allow the space to be used for more community focused events.
- 1.2 The pedestrian zone will be physically closed between 7am and 4pm by gates that will allow pedestrians and unriden cycles to pass through. Loading and unloading will be permitted within the zone between 7am and 10am. Parking will be permitted in the pedestrian zone outside of those times, i.e. from 4pm to 7am.
- 1.3 The scheme will include changes to the parking restrictions which will reduce street clutter and make them easier for drivers to understand. The planned changes in Hill Street, Union Street and High Street are outside of the pedestrian zone, but it is considered that the existing parking controls need to be simplified and would assist with any future pedestrianisation plans.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The introduction of traffic and parking controls, such as those proposed, requires the County Council to publish a notice and undertake a consultation to inform statutory bodies, members of the public and other interested parties of the proposal.
- 2.2 The proposal was advertised in the Fenland Citizen on 26th August 2020 and the statutory consultation period ran until 30th September 2020. Statutory bodies, such as the emergency services, and relevant County and District Councillors were consulted. In addition, a consultation letter was sent to all businesses and households in the vicinity to explain the proposal and give them an opportunity to comment.
- 2.3 The statutory publication and consultation generated a total of 14 unresolved representations, including several opposing certain elements of the scheme. The letter was sent to a total of 249 addresses, so the level of response was quite low. Three of the replies received refer solely to non-highway issues, such as toilet provision, the planned tidal clock and retail issues. The comments contained in them have been passed to Wisbech Town Council. The written representations submitted, excluding the aforementioned three non-highway ones, are included in Appendix 3 and officer responses are also given in the table.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone.
The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:-
 - The Market Place enhancement scheme is intended to create a safer space in the centre of Wisbech, which should encourage more local people and visitors to use it and shop there. The exclusion of traffic and revised parking controls will allow the space to be used for more community focused events. The published Orders are

required to manage traffic and parking, so are an integral and critical element of the scheme.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live.

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:-

- The improved Market Place environment should encourage greater levels of pedestrian activity, thereby improving town centre trade. To encourage that, traffic and parking must be better managed than it is at present.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children.

There are no significant implications within this category.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050.

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:-

- The proposed traffic restrictions will reduce the use and dominance of motor vehicles in the Market Place area, thereby reducing harmful emissions.
- The scheme should also encourage cleaner modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, although cyclists would be required to dismount and walk through the pedestrian zone.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The scheme is being promoted and entirely funded by Wisbech Town Council. Any costs to the County Council will be met from existing budgets.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The required statutory process for this proposal has been followed. The design and implementation, if approved, would comply with all relevant regulations, standards and other accepted practises.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The only protected characteristic groups affected would be Age and Disability.

The proposal would have a positive impact on younger and older people by providing a safer space within the Market Place area.

In respect of disabled people; a number of existing blue badge holder parking spaces are planned to be removed in Hill Street, Union Street and High Street and replaced with double yellow lines prohibiting waiting at all times. It should be noted that the existing spaces are restricted to a 3 hour stay (8am-6pm), but it is legally permissible for blue badge holders to park on double yellow lines for up to 3 hours, so the change will be minimal. The existing disabled spaces on the east side of Union Street, abutting the Market Place, will be retained and some new spaces will be provided in Blackfriars Road.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The statutory consultees have been engaged, including County and District Councillors, the Police and the other emergency services. Notices were placed in the local press. Businesses and residents living in the vicinity were individually consulted by letter. The documents associated with the proposal were available to view online. Some months prior to the statutory publication of the traffic Orders, Wisbech Town Council carried out its own consultation exercise on the enhancement scheme.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

County Councillor Steven Tierney and the relevant the District Council Members were consulted on the proposed traffic Orders. No adverse comments were received.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5. Source documents

5.1 Source documents

Redacted copies of all representations received.

5.2 Location

These can be viewed online here -

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/30/Default.aspx (select 11 November 2020 meeting)

Appendix 1 Public Notice



PUBLIC NOTICE

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (MARKET PLACE, MARKET STREET,
LITTLE CHURCH STREET AND CHURCH TERRACE, WISBECH)**
(PEDESTRIAN ZONE) ORDER 2020

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS STREETS, WISBECH)
(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES)
(CONSOLIDATION) ORDER 2020

Cambridgeshire County Council proposes to make Orders under Sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 4 and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers and after consulting with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act the effect of which will be to introduce a Pedestrian Zone and associated Waiting Restrictions in the Market Place area of Wisbech, as follows:-

- A Pedestrian Zone, prohibiting use by all vehicles from 7am to 4pm on all days, covering Market Place, part of Market Street, part of Church Terrace and Little Church Street, with loading/unloading permitted between 7am and 10am.
- The installation of gates at the closure points in Market Place, Market Street and Church Terrace to physically prevent motor vehicles entering the pedestrian zone during the restricted hours.
- The removal of existing disabled parking spaces and loading bays in Hill Street, Union Street and High Street to be replaced with double yellow lines prohibiting waiting at all times.
- The provision of additional disabled parking spaces in Blackfriars Road.

These restrictions are part of the Market Place enhancement scheme and will create a safer environment for all road users and simplify the parking controls.

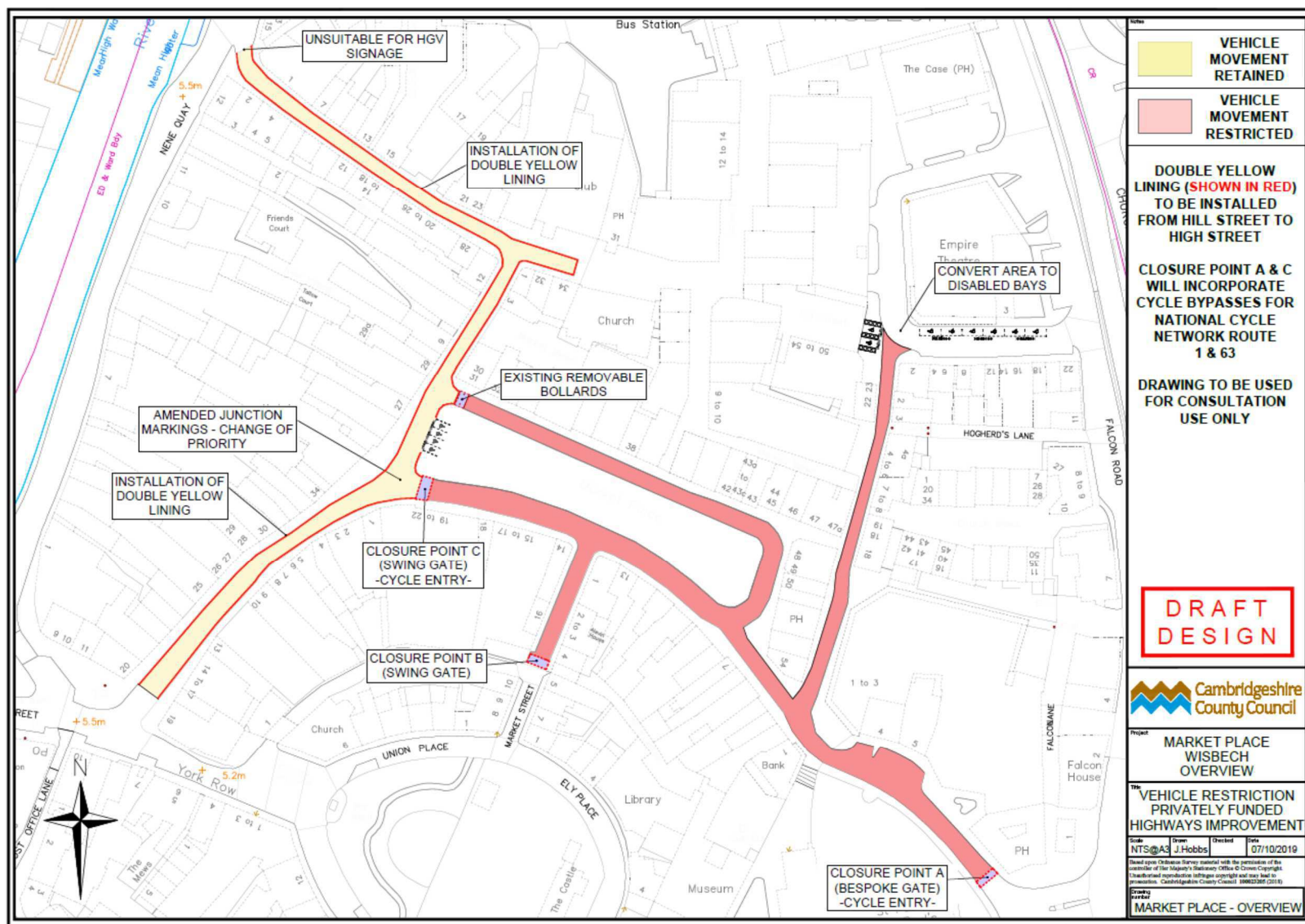
Further details of the above proposals, including a plan, may be examined on the Council's website <http://bit.ly/cambridgeshiretro> or e-mail policyandregulation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or telephone 0345 045 5212 for further advice. Our reference PR0631.

Objections to the proposal, together with the grounds on which they are made or any additional comments, must be sent in writing to the undersigned or by email to policyandregulation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk by 30th September 2020 quoting reference PR0631. Comments received will be used as part of our consultation process and may be published, but will be anonymised, in any reports.

*Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place and Economy, c/o Policy and Regulation, Shire Hall,
Castle Street, Cambridge CB3 0AP*

26th August 2020

Appendix 2 Drawing



Appendix 3 Representations Received and Comments

No.	Summary of Objections/ Representations received (no. of responses mentioning this issue)	Officer's Response
1	<p><u>Concerns about deliveries and collections in Hill Street and High Street (4 responses)</u></p> <p>Businesses in these roads are concerned that the removal of loading bays and installation of double yellow lines will make it difficult for the delivery and collection of goods, particularly bulky items, from shops and other businesses.</p>	<p>At present there are a number of designated loading/unloading bays (8am-7pm) in Hill Street, Union Street and High Street. It is proposed to remove these and replace them with No Waiting at any time (double yellow lines). It is permissible to park on double yellow lines for the purposes of loading and unloading, so businesses should not be significantly inconvenienced. It is accepted that the existing designated loading bays give drivers a little more scope as regards to duration of their wait. These roads are outside of the proposed pedestrian zone, so access to these businesses will be unaffected.</p>
2	<p><u>Concerns about disabled parking provision (2 responses)</u></p> <p>The removal of disabled parking spaces in High Street and Hill Street will seriously inconvenience blue badge holders. This action discriminates against disabled people.</p> <p>The proposed replacement spaces in Blackfriars Road/Little Church Street are inconvenient and too distant for people with mobility issues. Patrons of the bingo use the parking available on Blackfriars Road and if this is to be taken up by disabled bays, these people may park in the taxi area, which will cause issues for the taxi trade.</p>	<p>As with the loading/unloading bays, these will also be removed and replaced with double yellow lines. At present the disabled parking spaces are limited to a maximum stay of 3 hours (8am-7pm). Blue badge concessions allow badge holders to park for up to 3 hours on double yellow lines, so the change will not have a significant effect on disabled drivers. Admittedly, the current disabled spaces are specifically reserved for blue badge holders and so should not be taken by others. The existing 4 disabled spaces on the east side of Union Street, abutting the Market Place, will be retained. At present, there are no disabled parking spaces within the planned pedestrianised zone, so the proposals will not deny disabled drivers access to spaces that they can currently use.</p> <p>An additional 2 disabled spaces will be installed at the north end of Little Church Street and 6 in Blackfriars Road. It is accepted that they are not convenient for those wishing to visit shops in High Street, but are intended to serve Little Church Street and the western end of Market Place. It felt that the priority is to provide improved parking provision for blue badge holders in that area and there are other spaces available for taxi drivers.</p>

	Is it possible to obtain a permit to allow disabled drivers to access the pedestrianised zone and, if so, how can they get through the gates?	The Head of Highways may, at his/her discretion, grant a permit to allow a driver with severe mobility impairments to enter the pedestrianised zone during its operational hours. This is intended to be a concession for a specific reason and not to permit regular access. There are no disabled parking spaces within the pedestrian zone that blue badge holders need to reach. If a person wishes to apply, they can do so when, and if, the Orders are implemented. Should such a permit be granted, we would need to discuss access arrangements with Wisbech Town Council.
3	<p><u>Vehicular access and convenient parking/ loading for the pharmacy in Church Terrace (1 response)</u></p> <p>The pharmacy provides an important function and it is critical that access for delivery vehicles is maintained. Their vehicles deliver medication from 9am to 7pm daily and receive medication from suppliers all day up to 6pm. It will be impossible for drivers, including those with disabilities, to reach the parking spaces to the front of the pharmacy. Vulnerable, elderly and unwell patients will not be able to reach the pharmacy by car. The suggestion is that the closure point should be further along Church Terrace, for example, near to NatWest bank.</p>	<p>At present there are parking spaces outside of the pharmacy in Church Terrace and these will remain. If vehicles are left there beyond 10am they will be able to 'escape' via Little Church Street and that would equally apply to a vehicle serving the pharmacy or any other business in that road.</p> <p>The idea of moving the closure point back from its proposed location (near The Duke's Head ph) to where the paved area starts (near NatWest bank) was considered and discussed with Wisbech Town Council. That would effectively remove that part of Church Terrace from the pedestrian zone, thereby resolving the pharmacy's concerns. However, it would result in more traffic being present in that road. It would also mean that vehicles would have to turn around at the revised closure point, including those using the aforementioned parking spaces outside the pharmacy. There is space to turn around at that point, but manoeuvring/ reversing vehicles would have implications for pedestrian safety, particularly if larger and/or multiple vehicles were turning. A further option would be to move the closure point back to the junction of Church Terrace, Market Place and Little Church Street, but that would encroach further into an area of high pedestrian footfall. There were also concerns around traffic speeds on that part of Church Terrace and Little Church Street should they be removed from the pedestrian zone. For these reasons, this option could not be recommended. The three options are shown in Appendix 4</p>
4	<u>Fenland District Council concerns about the impact on the Conservation Area</u>	The proposed pedestrian zone and parking restrictions will involve the installation of new street furniture, including significant lengths of new

	<p><u>(1 response)</u></p> <p>The District Council has been working closely with property owners to assist with the protecting the character of the area. The double yellow lines in High Street and Hill Street will detract from the historic character of the street. Historic England guidance recommends the use of alternatives, such as bollards and kerbs, which would be more in keeping with the character of the conservation area. FDC officers would welcome collaborative working to avoid negatives impacts.</p>	<p>double yellow lines. However, it is possible to lay narrower lines of a paler colour, which reduces their visual impact. Also, the changes will result in the removal of existing white box markings, traffic signs and posts. Parking restrictions require either signs or road markings and sometimes both to ensure that they are enforceable and readily understood by drivers. Other items, such as bollards would not satisfy that requirement. The gates used to close Market Place have been sensitively designed to minimise their visual impact.</p>
5	<p><u>Overnight parking, particularly for the hotel, should be permitted</u></p> <p><u>(1 response)</u></p> <p>Parking could be allowed on Market Place overnight, particularly to assist the hotel, and a drop-off area at front for their use would help.</p>	<p>The pedestrian zone will operate from 7am to 4pm, with loading/unloading permitted from 7am to 10am. Hence, access and parking will be available outside of those hours. It is possible for drivers to stop on double yellow lines to load/unload and pick-up/set down passengers. If accessing the hotel, they would need to off-load luggage and then find somewhere else to park.</p>
6	<p><u>Use of limited funds</u></p> <p><u>(1 response)</u></p> <p>The money should be used to improve the condition of the footways in the town.</p>	<p>The scheme is being funded by Wisbech Town Council, so that money would not be spent on footway maintenance. General maintenance of the highway is a County Council responsibility and is carried out in accordance with accepted procedures and as budgets allow.</p>
7	<p><u>Overall negative impacts of scheme (2 responses)</u></p> <p>Concerns about business viability, financial implications, social effects, employment and that it will support market traders at the expense of shop owners.</p>	<p>These are issues for Wisbech Town Council, as promoter of the enhancement scheme, to consider rather than the County Council, as highway authority. Feedback not directly related to the proposed traffic and parking restrictions will be passed to the Town Council. The general view is that the scheme will make the Market Place a more appealing and safer place to visit, so should benefit town centre businesses, local people and visitors. The County Council wishes to support this objective by promoting the required traffic restrictions.</p>

Appendix 4 Church Terrace Closure Point Options

1. Near The Duke's Head (as proposed)



2. Near NatWest bank (start of paved area and showing turning head)



3. At entry to Market Place beyond Church Terrace/Little Church Street junction

