



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 & 2 - Civic Offices **MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.00 PM**

*Heather Thwaites*

Heather Thwaites  
Interim Chief Executive  
Published on 4 January 2019

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Our Vision**

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

## **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

## **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### Councillors

Guy Grandison (Chairman)	Mike Haines (Vice-Chairman)	Rachel Burgess
Clive Jones	Dianne King	David Sleight
Bill Soane	Shahid Younis	

### Substitutes

Andy Croy	Carl Doran	Graham Howe
Malcolm Richards	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
36.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
37.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018.	5 - 10
38.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
39.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any public questions  A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.  The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee.  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
39.1	Emmbrook; Ewendons; Norreys; Wescott	Jacob Chennells has asked the Chairman of the Community and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee the following question:  <b>Question</b> How has safety been considered with the regeneration, the low curbs make it too easy for a vehicle to enter the pedestrianised area at the Centre of the town, especially as attacks using lorries are becoming more common, the	

design leaves pedestrians vulnerable?

- 40. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**  
To answer any member questions.
- 41. Wescott WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE** **11 - 16**  
To consider an update on the town centre regeneration projects including Peach Place, Elms Field and Carnival Phase 1 and 2.
- 42. Wescott MARKET PLACE HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT** **17 - 150**  
To receive a briefing on the Market Place highways improvement project, including feedback from stakeholders, businesses and residents.
- 43. None Specific WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19** **151 - 156**  
To consider the Committee's work programme for 2018-19 and to prioritise items for future meetings.

**Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent**

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.30 PM**

### **Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Mike Haines (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Burgess, Clive Jones, Dianne King and David Sleight

### **Other Councillors Present**

Councillors: Malcolm Richards

### **Officers Present**

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Mark Cupit (Assistant Director, Delivery and Infrastructure), Geoff Hislop (Car Park Manager) and Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director - Place)

### **28. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Bill Soane and Shahid Younis.

### **29. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 September 2018 and the Extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 1 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **30. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **32. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **33. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 17 to 28, which provided an update on the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) strategy after its first year of enactment.

Clare Lawrence, Assistant Director – Place, stated that the business case for the CPE was based on a cost neutral arrangement and that the operation had met this assumption after its first year. She added that there had been a number of problems in recruiting Civil Enforcement Officers and that there was currently one vacant post which was actively being recruited for. Clare added that once the posts were fully recruited that hopefully this would allow for the cost neutral operation to continue. Clare stated that the patrols of the Civil Enforcement Officers were updated monthly on the Councils websites should Members or members of the public wish to view where the patrols had been.

Malcolm Richards asked as to the number of Civil Enforcement Officer posts. Geoff Hislop, Car Park Manager, stated that there were 8 posts in total, with 7 currently filled and one post being actively recruited for. He added that there were 6 posts at the 6 month stage of the operation and it was decided to increase this number to 8 posts to have a greater capacity.

Rachel Burgess asked whether the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been achieved by the contractor (NSL). Geoff Hislop stated that there had been 5 instances where the KPIs had been missed, and in each case this had been related to correspondence letters being issued. He added that this had resulted in a reduction of payments to NSL. Geoff stated that after liaison with NSL by himself and his team there had been recent improvements in this area.

In response to a Member question about incentives for NSL with regards to the quantity of issued tickets, Geoff Hislop replied that there were no incentives for NSL to issue more tickets than were required.

Rachel Burgess referred to page 27 of the agenda, and asked the Officers opinions on Borough residents not being able to have visitors parking for over 30 minutes under the new electronic permit system. Clare Lawrence stated that the permit system had become electronic under CPE and had replaced a paper permit system. She added that there was still a visitor and carer provision under the new electronic system. Clare stated that there had been a consultation for Rose Street residents in which there was a 51/49 percent split from residents in favour of the electronic system. Clare added that she had liaised with the Executive Member for Highways and Transport regarding the issue and that Members were invited to give their views on the permit system. Clare stated that reverting to paper permits would be a step backwards, and that this system was at a greater cost to the Council and was open to abuse (for example, permits being sold online).

In response to a Member question regarding the Parking Strategy item due to go through Executive, Clare Lawrence stated that the item had been taken off of a previous Executive forward programme due to a capacity issue with the volume of work that Highways were undertaking and that she hoped that the item would go through Executive in the New Year.

In response to Member questions regarding the volume of penalties issued at Dinton Pastures, Geoff Hislop stated that Dinton Pastures was in between Wokingham and the outer Borough and was en route between various other locations that the patrols went through, and as a result the Civil Enforcement Officers would check the car park on their journeys.

Clive Jones asked what the criteria was for deciding where the Civil Enforcement Officers would patrol. Geoff Hislop stated that the Officers worked shift patterns, and that there was always a patrol (between 7am and 10pm) occurring within Wokingham. He added that another Officer would be on patrol on foot within the Borough and another on Patrol in a vehicle.

Clive Jones asked whether Officers were aware of a petition from Earley residents for a permanent Civil Enforcement Officers patrolling in the area. Clare Lawrence stated that they were aware of the petition and that they had been working with local schools and the My Journey team to identify and resolve issues. She added that if Earley Town Council (or any other Town or Parish Council within the Borough) wanted more support with CPE that they were encouraged to contact the team and see whether more support could be available should they want to buy in to it. Clare stated that Earley had not been identified as an area which needed more support than other similar areas within the Borough.

Mike Haines asked as to the vast difference in penalties issued at Dinton Pastures compared to California Country Park. Geoff Hislop clarified that the car park at California

Country Park had been undergoing refurbishment and as a result many of the enforcement regulations had been suspended during this time.

Malcolm Richards asked as to the timeframe between ordering a new car parking ticket machine and it then being deployed. Geoff Hislop stated that it was a 12 week period between ordering the machine and it being received, and that the machine would then be installed alongside any others that had been ordered (in order to replace existing damaged and malfunctioning machines) on a rolling deployment plan.

Guy Grandison asked how many complaints regarding the process of enforcement were received regularly. Geoff Hislop stated that approximately 4 to 6 complaints were received per month, and that these usually focussed on the restrictions that were in place (or conversely, where people believed more restrictions should be put in place).

Clive Jones asked at which times of the day that the most penalties had been generally issued. Geoff Hislop stated that he would gather the data and circulate it to the Committee.

In response to a Member question regarding the number of cars compared to lorries that had received penalties, Geoff Hislop stated that he could gather a definitive list of issued penalties and would circulate it to the Committee.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Clare Lawrence and Geoff Hislop be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) the update on Civil Parking Enforcement be noted;
- 3) information and data requested by the Committee be sent to Democratic Services and circulated to Committee Members.

#### **34. MARKET PLACE REGENERATION INTERIM UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 29 to 32, which gave an interim update on the Market Place Regeneration Project. The update detailed the timetable for the upcoming lessons learned report and the road safety audit.

Mark Cupit, Assistant Director, Delivery and Infrastructure, stated that there had been a delay in completing the lessons learned report and the road safety audit due to difficulty in procuring a contractor to undertake the work. He added that a suitable contractor had now been found and that the work had been commissioned, which should result in the reports being available for the January Committee. Mark added that the road safety audit could not be completed until the Peach Place parking restrictions were removed.

Rachel Burgess asked whether any additional safety measures had been considered for the pedestrian road crossing in the town centre. Mark Cupit stated that the safety issues were taken very seriously and that the square of Market Place had been designed with all users in mind. He added that there had been a substantial change in the behaviour of traffic in the square who were taking more time and were allowing people to cross even in areas without a designated crossing. Mark stated that there was also a duty on parents and all users of the square to take care and to familiarise themselves with the new layout.

In response to a Member question regarding safety concerns with shared spaces, Mark Cupit clarified that the Market Place square was not a shared space and that there were defined roadways and pavements.

In response to a Member question regarding any plans for a 20 miles per hour speed limit being introduced in the square, Mark Cupit stated that he felt there was no need to do so currently as many cars had been slowing down and driving responsibly during the 'settling in' period.

Clive Jones asked whether disability groups were consulted during the design stage of the project and if so what they were shown. Mark Cupit stated that several disability groups were invited into the consultation stage and that Guide Dogs for the Blind were amongst one of the groups that had attended sessions. He added that their views and opinions would have been used to shape the design of the public space. Mark stated that he did not have the information on hand as to exactly what these groups were shown, but that records of the meetings would have been kept. Mark informed Members that a workshop with the same disability groups was scheduled to take place on 16 November 2018 to discuss their impressions of the newly opened Market Place.

Clive Jones asked whether it was appropriate for the Executive Member for Regeneration to meet with the contractors with responsibility for completing the road safety audit and the lessons learned report. Mark Cupit stated that himself and Andrew Moulton (Assistant Director – Governance) had taken the lead on procurement of the contractor, and that they felt it appropriate to involve the Lead Member at a later stage in the procurement process.

In response to Member questions regarding delays to the completion of the Market Place Regeneration Project, Mark Cupit stated that work was asked to be halted during the festive period of 2017 and that this was not a planned break. He added that the biggest delays were due to unforeseen underground issues such as old tree roots, old foundations and cellars.

Rachel Burgess asked how many complaints had been received recently with regards to the Market Place. Mark Cupit stated that there had been no recent complaints and that the complaints that were received after the Market Place was re-opened were primarily focussed on safety concerns.

Guy Grandison stated that there was a need to focus the upcoming Town Centre Regeneration item at January's Committee on the Market Place and Peach Place Regeneration Projects, using the lessons learned report and the road safety audit to aid in formulating key lines of inquiry.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Mark Cupit be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) the lessons learned report and the road safety audit be circulated to the Committee as soon as they are completed;
- 3) the Town Centre Regeneration item at January's Committee be focussed on the Market Place and Peach Place Regeneration Projects, using the lessons learned report and the road safety audit to aid in formulating key lines of inquiry;

- 4) Democratic Services contact various stakeholders and interested parties to engage at the January Committee meeting.

### **35. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 33 to 38, which gave details of its proposed work programme for 2018/19.

Members discussed undertaking an in depth review of the 2020/21 budget during the 2019/20 Committee programme. Clive Jones felt that WBC had been doing insufficient budget scrutiny in previous years and applauded the Chairman for wanting to change this for the 2019/20 municipal year with an in depth review of the budget process.

David Sleight stated that the Coppid Beech Park and Ride item should focus on whether there was a need for it to be developed and stated that there was no business case for it.

Guy Grandison requested that a draft of the Parking Strategy Policy be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Members discussed how best to fit the remaining items from the work programme in to the 2 scheduled meetings of the 2018/19 municipal year. Members felt that an Extraordinary meeting in February was required to allow for the remaining items to be reviewed in detail.

#### **RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the Committee aim to undertake a review of the budget setting process in the 2019/20 municipal year and that Democratic Services organise budget scrutiny training for Members;
- 2) an Extraordinary meeting be organised for February 2019 to include an item reviewing the proposed Coppid Beech park and ride and an item investigating the impact of changes to train services;
- 3) a draft of the Parking Strategy Policy be requested and circulated to Members of the Committee.

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# Agenda Item 41.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2019
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Chief Executive - Interim Heather Thwaites

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Regeneration of the boroughs towns is a key part of the Council Vision and of the Local Plan. The regeneration will provide:

- Improved public spaces
- A better retail experience
- An improved entertainment offer
- Better sports and leisure facilities
- Improved access and transport
- Improved sustainable community
- A rental income which can be used unencumbered for provision of services across the Borough

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To provide an update on Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration

## **Scope of Regeneration report and update**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration projects.

It should be noted that, whilst there are a range of works that have occurred or may be planned across the town centre, the Regeneration projects encompass the following areas only

- Peach Place
- Elms Field
- Carnival Phase 1 & 2

### **Update on progress – Peach Place**

Dawnus Construction Limited started work on site at Peach Place in January 2017. The scheme was due to complete in November 2018 but has been subject to some delays which has meant that only some of the units along Peach St have been completed, with Gails and Waterstones now trading.

The planned completion is now for the Plaza to complete at end January/ early February to allow fitting out of the Plaza and Rose St units, leading to further tenants trading and opening of the central square from end February/ March.

Further detail on tenants and lettings is explored later in the paper

In September 2017 the Executive also approved the In principle agreement for the 22 completed apartments to be leased to a Council owned housing company for the provision of Key Worker housing. In addition to the benefit of providing local affordable housing this move will also help the Council with the recruitment and retention of staff delivering essential public services, such as teachers, care workers and social workers.

We are in discussion with WHL on the detail, with handover of units planned for March 2019

The project remains within the budget identified within the MTFP which is incorporated within the wider programme finances, explored later in the paper.

It should be noted that, since starting on site, the Council has purchased the former M&S unit adjacent to the Peach Place site in December 2017. This opportunity arose once M&S announced they were to close in summer 2017.

The purchase sits outside the main Peach Place development although, as it is adjacent to it, options for the site are being carefully considered to ensure that any proposals work smoothly with what is proposed for Peach Place and can be coordinated effectively.

Temporary use of the site has been instigated with the Charity Forces Support operating on a short term lease whilst options for the site are investigated. This has enabled the reopening of a pedestrian route between the Rose Street car park and Peach Street with the aim to encourage footfall to this end of the town centre.



The project remains within the budget identified within the MTFP. It is not expected that the short delay in completion will impact upon construction costs due to the fixed price nature of the terms agreed with the contractor

### **Update on progress – Elms Field**

McLaughlin and Harvey were appointed as contractors for the construction of the Elms (commercial) development and commenced on site in March 2018 following a range of pre-construction preparation works and surveys which ran from summer 2017.

Progress to date has been swift with the sub-structure works complete together with the majority of the buildings frame (Premier Inn continues). Road construction is well advanced with the Shute End car park and access road open (December 2018) and the new road (Earle Crescent) set to open at the end of January. This will allow David Wilson Homes (our Joint Venture partner) to commence construction of the residential units to the west and north of the scheme

The project is on programme to complete in accordance with a series of phased completions, as set out below:

Shute End car park	Completed 17/12/2018
New road around park	Early 2019
Aldi	Handover to tenant for fitout spring 2019
DWH site	Early 2019
Wellington Rd/Denmark St highways works	Spring 2019
Premier Inn	Summer 2019
Park	Summer 2019
Aldi 'wrap'	Late summer 2019
Cinema access	Handover to tenant for fitout autumn 2019
Retail units	Winter 2019
Hard landscaping	Winter 2019
WBC Residential	Spring 2020

The project remains within the budget identified within the MTFP.

### **Update on progress – Carnival Phase 2**

Following in-depth studies of the existing leisure centre in autumn/winter 2016 it was established that significant work would be required to refurbish the swimming pool to a suitable standard. Given the significant costs involved in refurbishment, and the fact it would take over a year to complete, the Council decided to review their options for the site and carried out further feasibility studies for Carnival Phase 2.

Following assessment of the options the Council decided to move forward with a revised approach which would see the existing leisure centre demolished and rebuilt completely. This approach provides a significantly improved layout for the site and better value for money.

The revised layout for the site has also allowed the Council to agree the relocation of the Library facility to the site on completion of the new centre. The relocation will provide the library with an improved facility all located on one floor, and allow them to extend the range of additional services they offer residents such as events and activities which are proving increasingly important in encouraging use and generating revenue. The approach will also allow for reduced operating costs (more effective systems shared with the leisure operator) and lower man power required to keep the library open during the day and evening.

A detailed planning application was submitted in July 2017 with Planning Committee resolving to grant consent on November 8 2017. The next phase of the design has now commenced up to detail stage at which point we can prepare tender documentation for the build contractor. Tendering is planned to commence at the end of 2019 to enable a start on site in mid to late 2020

In order to redevelop the site the existing leisure centre will need to be closed and demolished. This is planned to take place in mid to late 2020, being constrained by the works to Elms Field which need to be substantially complete so as not to overly load the highways network with construction traffic and the completion of the Bulmershe Leisure Centre redevelopment to ensure that sufficient alternative leisure facilities remain available to residents during the works.

Following the relocation of Wokingham Superbowl into a new state-of-the-art facility in Carnival Phase 1, the former Superbowl building has been demolished and the site is being used by McLaughlin and Harvey, our Elms Field contractors, for their site compound. This assists them to complete and reopen the Elms Field park earlier in the programme than originally discussed

Alongside the planning works the Council continues with the process of assembling the sites necessary to deliver the plans. It is hoped this can be achieved through negotiation, however the council are committed to delivering this scheme, and a process continues to run in parallel to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers should they be required as a final resort.

The project remains within the budget identified within the MTFP.

## **Retail Conditions**

Nationally the retail outlook is divided with the situation in the south east being significantly better than that in the north and other areas of the UK.

Whilst the 2018 national average vacancy rate (empty shops) sits at around 9% for smaller town centres and up to 12% for larger towns, Wokingham continues to buck national trends with very few empty units and a vacancy rate of circa 2% (based on 182 commercial units). At the time of writing this report there were three vacant units (former Cara, Prezzo and Wokingham Superstore units) and two other units (former Wokingham Convenience and Grape Escape units). The latter two are owned by the council and have been left deliberately unlet whilst refurbishment works are carried out and legal matters resolved. Interest has already been received from prospective

tenants interested in the units when they become available and we expect to announce more once leases are signed.

In addition to this low vacancy rate the outlook for Wokingham is very positive. Despite units coming to the market at a relatively poor time nationally, we have seen a good level of interest in Wokingham, which has increased further with the opening of Waterstones and Gails in Peach St. We were keen to lead our marketing message with these two very high quality names which set the tone for the rest of the scheme. It is anticipated that many further names will be advised in early 2019 in addition to those already identified, with a mix of national retailers and local independents

Whilst there have been concerns raised about the impact of developments such as Bracknell which opened at the end of 2017 and Oxford, it should be noted that these projects differ significantly from Wokingham. In terms of identity both Bracknell and Oxford are positioning themselves as major 'day out' destinations with an emphasis on large multinational retail businesses similar to Reading and the Oracle.

Wokingham's vision differs greatly from this and the intent is to establish a distinct identity for the town centre by offering something different from these larger neighbours with a more intimate boutique and independent feel. Given this, whilst there is some cross over of brands, in general different groups of businesses are being targeted for the developments reducing the amount of conflict and competition between the schemes.

In regards to Wokingham the council has already secured strong pre-lets with Aldi, Everyman Cinemas and Premier Inn. These pre-lets represent c65% of the projected Elms Field income and place the council in a strong position moving forward. Conversations continue to be held with other operators and the council is encouraged by the levels of continuing interest, units under offer and those committed at Peach Place. Further enquiries continue for Elms Field which is not due to be released until end 2019

## **Finance**

The cost to the council of delivering the regeneration proposals sits at £117.6m. In addition there is a further £17.5m allowed for interest payments on borrowing up to Financial Year 24/25.

This cost includes delivering everything from the new commercial elements such as the shops, cinema, hotel and residential properties; to the non-commercial elements such as the play area, park improvements, new road and leisure centre.

As this programme is being run as a commercial development the residential elements are then sold with the income being used to offset the costs of delivery. This leaves the Council with a completed scheme debt of £49m for assets which will be worth £96m should they be sold on the open market as an investment.

If the Council retain the commercial assets we will continue to benefit from the retail income generated each year. After using a proportion of the commercial rental income to service the debt the council would receive a further annual income of c £2.8m annually, rising over the years.

Considering Wokingham’s rapidly decreasing funding from central government, projects like the Regeneration that will secure avenues of additional, non tax payer or central government dependent, income for the council are increasingly critical. It is hoped that the commercially viable model used for the Town Centre regeneration can be rolled out elsewhere within the borough to further support income generation and help fund services

Whilst there is an element of risk in investment the Council has taken a careful approach to mitigating risks on the project. Costs continue to be actively managed by the project team and the council has already secured c65% of the income for Elms Field through existing pre-lets and with the lettings exchanged already, those under offer and the level of interest being shown in Peach Place, Wokingham is in a very solid position.

Comments have been made about the council having to pay retailers ‘above the odds’ to come to Wokingham but this is not the case. Set up incentives, such as rent free periods, are standard industry practice to recognise factors such as fitout periods and establishing an initial customer base. Such incentives were factored into the appraisal figures from the outset and awards remain in line with agreed budgets.

The summary of costs, values and income is shown in the table below.

**Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration – Indicative WBC Position November 18, to FY24/25**

	24/25 Total £m
Costs (Excluding Interest)	117.60
Commercial Investment Value	95.90
Residential Receipts	52.00
Total Interest Paid including 24/25	17.50
<b>Completed scheme Debt 24/25</b>	<b>49.50</b>
Income 24/25	4.53
Interest on debt 24/25	1.74
Headroom in 24/25	2.79

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Market Place Highways Improvement Project</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2019
<b>WARD</b>	Wescott
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Overview and Scrutiny is one of the checks and balances which ensure that the Council and its partners make and implement effective decisions. It is a key element in the decision making process which ensures transparency and accountability.

The Market Place highways improvement project is part of the overall programme to regenerate Wokingham town centre.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) consider the background evidence, Lessons Learnt report and the public comments submitted in relation to the Market Place Improvement Project;
- b) consider the oral evidence submitted at the meeting in relation to the Committee's Key Lines of Enquiry;
- c) note that the final Stage 3 Safety Report has been commissioned and will be submitted to the Committee at a future meeting;
- d) note that the Committee will receive an Audit report on the Market Place Project at a future meeting.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

At its meeting on 5 November 2018, the Committee received an interim update on the Market Place highways improvement project whilst awaiting the completion of the 'Lessons Learnt' report and the Stage 3 safety audit.

In order to provide additional evidence for the Committee, Officers published a Call for Questions via print and social media in December 2018.

The report sets out background information on the delivery of the Market Place project together with the Committee's Key Lines of Enquiry and public responses to the Call for Questions.

## **Background**

As part of the Committee's 2018/19 work programme, the Market Place Highways Improvement Project was identified as a key issue by Committee Members to scrutinise during the 2018/19 municipal year. These items were originally due to come to the Committee in November 2018. However an interim update was provided whilst the Stage 3 safety audit and 'Lessons Learnt' report were being finalised.

## **Origins**

Approval for the Market Place project was given by the Executive at its meeting on 24 September 2015. A copy of the Executive report is attached at **Annex A**.

## **Supporting Information**

A range of documents providing background information on the Market Place project are attached as follows:

Wokingham Public Realm Design and Delivery Strategy (Extract) – **Annex B**

Business Engagement – **Annex C**

Disability and Access Engagement - **Annex D**

General Engagement – **Annex E**

Issues Raised Post-completion of the project – **Annex F**

Stage 3 Interim Safety Audit – **Annex G**

Market Place Project Newsletter (example) – **Annex H**

## **Call for Questions**

In order to understand the views of residents, community groups, shops and businesses, the Committee published a Call for Questions via print and social media in December 2018. The Call for Questions stated:

"WBC Overview and Scrutiny – Call for Questions

The Council's Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing progress on the Wokingham Town Centre regeneration projects at its meeting on 14 January 2019.

The Committee will receive updates on Peach Place and Elms Field but will focus mainly on the Market Place Highways Project.

In order to inform its discussions the Committee would like to hear views and questions from residents, community groups, businesses and disability groups about the Market Place project. This could include views and questions on consultation and communication and any impacts as a result of the project.

Businesses and shops within the town centre also received a letter inviting them to submit comments and evidence.

A number of responses were received from residents, businesses and representative bodies. These are attached at **Annex I**.

### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

The Chairman of the Committee also agreed a set of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) which will act as a framework for Member questions at the meeting. The KLOE are set out at **Appendix J**.

### **Lessons Learnt Report**

The Borough and Town Councils commissioned a “Lessons Learnt” report to be delivered by an external consultant. It is expected that the report will be available for circulation to members of the Committee after the Agenda despatch.

### **Council Motion**

At its meeting on 14 December 2018 the Council approved a Motion relating to reporting on the Wokingham town centre regeneration project. The Motion stated that, on completion, each element of the overall regeneration programme (including the Market Place project) would be subject to a full audit report to be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The audit report to provide details on:

- Total income and expenditure from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2018;
- The original budget and timetable;
- An explanation of any variances between the original budget and actual income and expenditure and original timetable and actual progress;
- The sources of funding, with the amounts obtained from each separate source.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	NA

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

To be considered as part of the discussions.

### Cross-Council Implications

Overview and Scrutiny impacts on all Council services and the work of key partners.

### List of Background Papers

None

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<b>Date</b> 4 January 2019	<b>Version No.</b> 1



<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Town Centre Environmental Improvement Programme – Phase One</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 24 September 2015
<b>WARD</b>	Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	John Kaiser – Executive Member for Planning and Transport

#### **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Phase one of an Environmental Improvement Programme for Wokingham town centre.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Executive is asked to agree:

- 1) the release of s106 funding and funding from the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Project up to a maximum of £1.5m and subject to the receipt of at least an equivalent match funding sum from Wokingham Town Council; and
- 2) that all decisions necessary to implement the scheme are delegated to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and the Executive Member for Regeneration.

#### **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Town and Borough Councils are working together to develop a proposal for environmental improvements to Wokingham town centre; phase one of a wider programme would be commenced focussing on the main public space around the market place/Old Town Hall.

Funding is required to progress the project through feasibility, consultation and implementation.

This project is being developed by a joint officer working group comprising representatives of both Councils. From this Council's perspective the project will be overseen by the Wokingham Town Centre Coordination Board.

## **Background**

In June 2010 the Council adopted the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (The SPD) and this envisioned certain development opportunity sites as well as establishing the concept of a more welcoming and friendly destination for people by creating an environment of streets and spaces that are great to shop in or visit. Section 8 of the SPD pictures a quality town centre environment and set the basis for further work which was initiated at the time though paused until now to enable the allocation of resource to the proposals.

There has long been a desire to improve the environment of Wokingham town's market place and it is sensible as this is the main public space in the town to identify this as phase 1 so as to set the scene for future environmental improvement projects in the town. As other elements of the town centre regeneration proceed it is also timely to try to deliver this first phase of the environmental improvements.

## **Analysis of Issues**

Wokingham town centre is currently undergoing considerable regeneration through private investment and the Borough's own proposals. To capitalise on these improvements and to ensure a quality refurbishment of the environment befitting of the town, it is appropriate to consider a concurrent environmental improvement programme. This would provide a focus for future similar works elsewhere in the town.

Joint working between the Borough and Town Councils has highlighted the Market Place as an appropriate area for the phase 1 of the works. There is scope to significantly change the area and make it an improved facility opening up opportunity for greater use of the public spaces in the future.

Primarily the project will look at surfacing materials and street furniture along with access arrangements.

The feasibility work will look at options for the area, materials, services and access arrangements. Options for removing the bus lane around the town hall will be investigated but no other major changes to traffic or parking are envisaged. Access to properties on the market place will be maintained in line with occupiers' needs.

As this would be a highway scheme, the works would be permitted development not requiring planning permission and accordingly, a suitable level of consultation will be carried out for any proposals in partnership with the Town Council.

Whilst phase 1 will be the Market Place and this will be worked up in detail, the further phases will be identified so that they can be programmed in the future as and when resource becomes available.

## **Funding**

The town council has committed to funding at least half of the cost of the work. The Borough's contribution will be funded from the town centre regeneration project and existing s106 funds. S106 funds utilised will be those collected for town centre projects, including contributions towards leisure facilities.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£250,000	Yes	Capital / s106
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£1,250,000	Yes	Capital / s106
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	N/A	Revenue

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### Cross-Council Implications

None

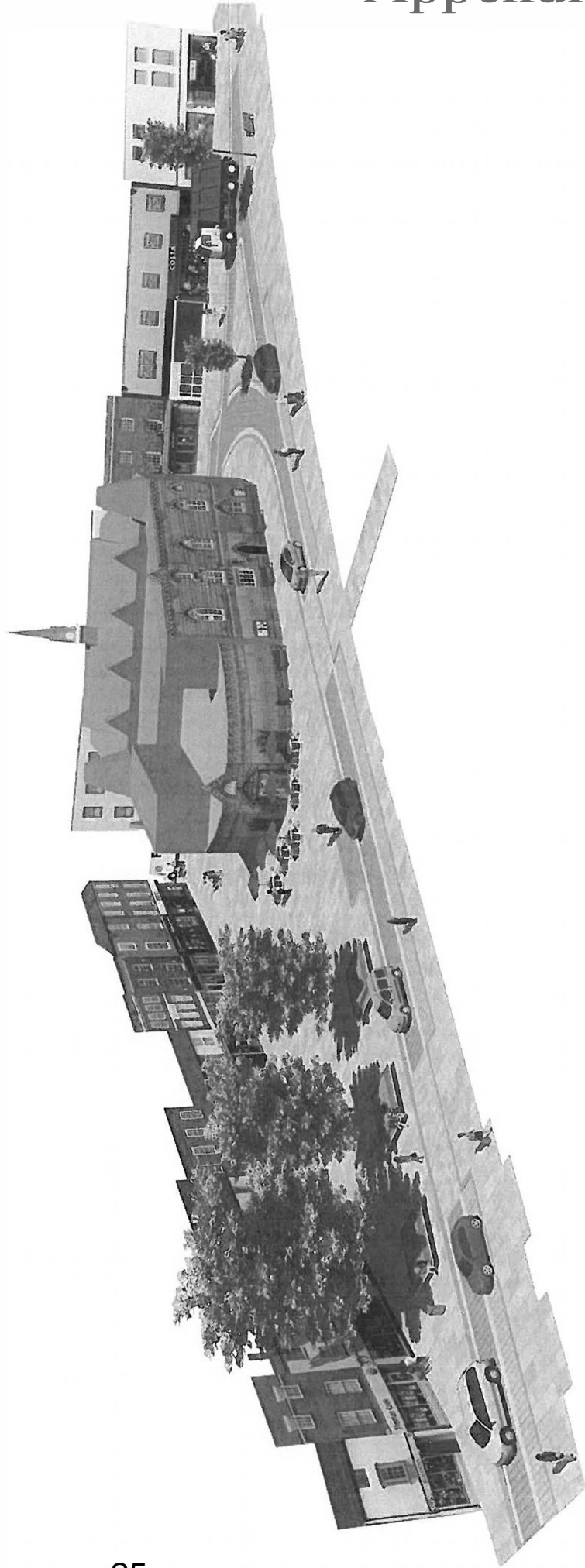
### List of Background Papers

None

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<b>Date</b> 15 September 2015	<b>Version No.</b> 1

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# WOKINGHAM PUBLIC REALM DESIGN & DELIVERY STRATEGY



# 1.3 CONSULTATION

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## OVERVIEW

Stakeholder, technical and public Consultation has been an integral part in all stage of developing the Public Realm Strategy for Wokingham Town Centre. This consultation builds on the workshop carried out as part of the Town Centre Masterplan SPD and the Public Realm issues and opportunities workshop held on 15th June 2011. It has included the following:

## TECHNICAL MEETINGS WITH WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICERS

A number of focused meetings were held on 28th November 2012 to provide an open forum for Wokingham Borough Council Officers to share their technical knowledge. The purpose of the sessions was to introduce the project and then listen to the officers to understand the specific strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities of the public realm in Wokingham in the context of the early Public Realm Strategy work. The topic areas that were covered are listed below and a full record of these meetings is included in Appendix B.

- Heritage and Conservation
- Town Events
- Traffic and Safety/ Maintenance and Management
- Regeneration
- Development Management: Planning and Highways
- Planning
- Landscape, Trees and Open Space

## MEETING WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL

A useful meeting was held on 18th December with the Town Council to share knowledge pertinent to the study. A record of this meeting is included in Appendix C.

## OPEN WORKSHOP

The consultation exercises have been undertaken at the earliest possible

opportunity to ensure ideas raised at the events could be integrated into the vision, framework and guidance. The open workshop was arranged on 16th February during the preparation of the public realm framework and guidance; invitations were extended to all local members of the public. The workshop was planned in the context of the public realm issues and opportunities workshop undertaken in June 2011, after an introduction from the design team the group was set tasks which were structured to gain feedback on the vision and initial design ideas for the town centre public realm. A detailed summary of this event is provided in the appendices.

## MEETING WITH MARKET TRADERS

An informal meeting was arranged with representatives of from market traders and retailers to understand their thoughts on the issues and opportunities and receive feedback on initial design ideas.

## PUBLIC EXHIBITION

An informal manned public exhibition was held in Wokingham Town Hall over two days at the beginning of May, the exhibition was also available to view on the council website for one month. The exhibition comprised a series of presentation boards which described all aspects of the work and was supplemented by video footage to support the highway feasibility work. Members of the consultant team and Wokingham Borough Council were available to discuss the proposals and answer any questions. Feedback was gathered from the event through a questionnaire. Overall there was a positive response from the exhibition, a full breakdown of the responses and the issues raised is provided in the appendices of this report.

The next stages of this work will involve turning this work into SPD, this will include a formal consultation period, feedback from this informal event will inform the preparation of the SPD.

## MARKET PLACE

### HISTORY

The Market Place and the Grade II\* listed Victorian Town Hall are at the very heart of Wokingham. They remain the social centre of the town and historically are where the growth of Wokingham began. A market was granted charter here by Henry III in 1227 and early records suggest there has been a Clock-house or Guildhall here since well before 1583 when Queen Elizabeth I granted the town a Charter. The old Guildhall in the Market Place, with its pillared undercroft, was built in 1612 and was replaced with the current Town Hall in 1858 after falling into disrepair.

It originally housed a police court and prison and beneath the Town Hall are the old police cells and Police Constable's quarters. Built in Victorian gothic style, the Town Hall is a tribute to the skilled craftsmanship of the Reading builders, Wheeler & Woodroffe. From the outside it looks much the same as it did in the 1860s but the courtyard has been covered and a number of changes made to the internal structure.

Public events and gatherings have been well documented in Market Place over the years. These have been diverse as annual bull baiting, ox roasting, fox hunting meets, election announcements, a wartime assembly point for troops, the Peace Day celebrations on 22nd July 1919 and The Proclamation of Kings and Queens.

### ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Market Place lies at the point where the principal streets converge, it functions as a flexible multi-purpose space for markets, events (such as the May Fayre), carnivals, remembrance parades and street performance. It also provides an opportunity for informal seating and a pedestrian through route. The Town Hall houses an information centre, main hall and meeting rooms. Dinners, concerts, lectures, displays, meetings, bazaars, sales and civil ceremonies are held in the main hall, with the smaller rooms being used for meetings and other functions.



## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The Town Hall is an attractive landmark building built in Victorian gothic style.
- The Market Place provides a flexible space for informal seating, events, larger markets and outdoor cafes, however its full potential is constrained by limited space and a disjointed layout.
- Peach Street to the east of Market Place comprises two lanes of one way traffic, on street parking (principally disabled) and a shared bus route. During peak hours there are often 3 lanes of traffic to this boundary which has a profound impact on the pedestrian quality of the space in terms of noise, air pollution, safety and visual clutter.
- Regulatory road signs and street clutter proliferate at the pedestrian crossing at Peach Street and detract from the distinctive architecture of the Town Hall and the built environment.
- The paving materials comprise red and blue clay brick pavers. The quality of paving is poor, they are slippery when wet and the red colour clashes with the adjacent buildings. A chamfered upstand kerb delineating the access road in the space has been cited as a trip hazard.
- A road is un-necessarily delineated to the north, north east and west of the Town Hall in blue pavers.
- 28 ■ Three large mature trees are located in the Market Square. They provide an attractive green foil and counter to the busy road. The existing tree roots however have caused pavement heave, causing a considerable trip hazard.
- The street furniture is un-co-ordinated in appearance and is located in a haphazard cluttered arrangement. A number of timber benches have been donated by private individuals.
- Unsightly large refuse bins are located to the east of the Town Hall and detract from its appearance
- There is no high quality architectural feature lighting to the Town Hall.
- In general the combination of poor quality paving, street furniture and traffic dominance do not provide a high quality setting for the town hall or reflect the importance of this central town space.



## Market Place

The area is currently lit using facade mounted floodlights. These are out of date and glary creating a flat, uninviting environment. The lighting contributes to that area feeling as if the cars own the space rather than the pedestrian.

The aim is to create a welcoming destination space that will encourage people to gather and settle at night. This will help to increase the night time economy and reinforce the role of Market Place as the towns' Central Core. To ensure that people feel safe when walking through from Peach Place to the Market Place.

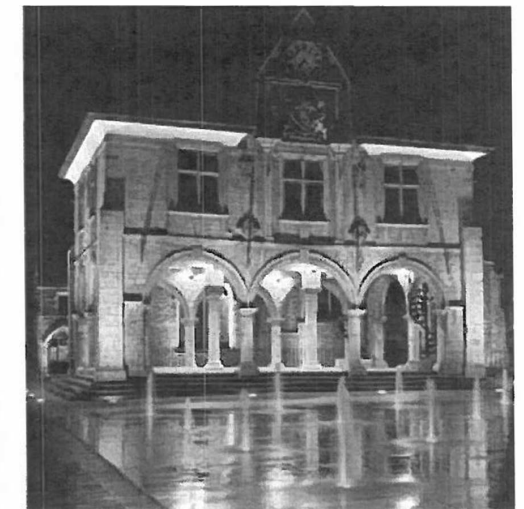
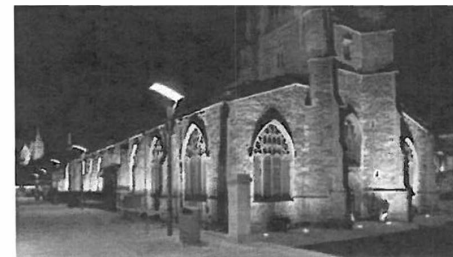
The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:

29 Uplight surrounding facades to create a bright exciting central space where people are aware of their surroundings. Create a focal point for the town by uplighting the Town Hall. This building acts as a wayfinding aid to draw people into the central core area. It would need to be illuminated from both inground and facade mounted uplights to ensure the full extent of the facade and the spire is illuminated. The detail and texture of the building should be highlighted. It would be preferable for the highway light level requirements to be relaxed for highway surrounding the Market Place to ensure that the pedestrian remains key and the contrast of the lit buildings is higher, however this would need to be discussed further.

Light the alleyway and Bush Walk in an innovative and exciting way to ensure people are happy to use them and they do not get used for antisocial behaviour. e.g. Coloured light, projections, inset linear lights etc.



TOWN HALL EXISTING LIGHTING



EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING DESIGN THAT COULD BE APPLIED HERE

# ACCESSIBILITY

The quality of the buildings, streets and spaces of Wokingham affects the quality of life for all groups in society. Therefore, the design of any development must be sensitive to the needs of users with disabilities, parents with young children, people with temporary impairment and the elderly. The public realm of Wokingham needs to be developed to ensure clarity and safety of movements between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The design requirements of the public realm throughout the town are as follows:

- The use of tactile and hazard warning paving will be proposed in compliance with British standards. The document 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' published by the Department for Transport in 2007 should be referred to for details of the appropriate use and layout of tactile paving. Part of this guidance covers materials and colours for tactile paving and states that in conservation areas and in proximity to listed buildings, relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable. Detailed design should therefore explore the opportunity for using matching material for the tactile paving, subject to further consultation with local groups representing visually impaired, rehabilitation and mobility impaired user groups.
- In a traditional street arrangement with a raised kerb, pedestrian walkways must provide a dropped/sloping kerb to ensure easy and safe crossing points or form courtesy crossing as defined below
- Courtesy crossing as suggested in the public realm framework in order to redress the balance between pedestrians and vehicles. Integration of these will require further detailed design to ensure they are implemented in an appropriate environment where drivers and pedestrians are both made aware of other users. They must also be tested and designed to meet the needs of all pedestrian user groups.
- Pedestrian pavements will take into account roughness of material and adequate slip resistance to ensure comfortable and safe walking experience. However, the finish must be smooth cut and workmanship polished to ensure an even surface for walking.
- Street furniture should not reduce the width of the pavement to a degree that the movement of wheelchair users and pushchairs is impeded.
- Street furniture should be strategically placed at regular intervals in order to provide a degree of legibility for the visually impaired. Street furniture should

also be clearly visible and contrast surrounding surfaces.

- Vehicle trafficked parts of the street should be clearly identifiable.
- Nosings of all steps should be highlighted using a contrasting band.
- A range of seating should be offered throughout the town centre, including seating with back and arm rests.
- Signs should consist of clear text and pictograms which contrast with the background to ensure clarity and legibility.
- Stepped areas must ensure that a suitable alternative is provided for disadvantaged users in the form of a ramp.
- Lighting should ensure Visual Acuity and provide security for all users. (VA is acuteness of vision, it is a quantitative measure of the ability to identify black symbols on a white background at a standardized distance as the size of the symbols is varied).
- Any manhole covers should be flush with adjoining surfaces.
- Disabled car parking spaces should always be provided. Parking spaces should be on level ground as close to facilities and amenities as possible.
- Access to new buildings should comply with building regulations 'Part M'. This sets down certain minimum standards for disabled access for such items as steps and ramps, door widths, accessible toilets etc.,
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) requires building owners/occupiers to provide dignified access for disabled users. It is essential that new developments integrate such access at the design stages.

## 3.2 MARKET PLACE



1. Market Place will remain the main civic space within the town, continuing to host markets and important civic events. The following changes are proposed to maximise the quality and flexibility of the space.
2. Carriageway to the A329 and A321 reconfigured to maximise pavement space while maintaining capacity for vehicles, to reduce the dominance of traffic in the space.
3. Carriageway to remain clearly defined and kerb upstands retained.
4. Consistent paving material shown from building edge to building edge so Market Place appears as a unified space and in turn makes drivers more aware

of their surroundings encouraging them to slow down and to be aware of pedestrians.

5. Dedicated loading/parking/taxi bays provided adjacent to carriageways.
6. Signalised crossings and associated furniture removed (e.g. traffic lights) in favour of more frequent courtesy crossings for improved pedestrian accessibility.
7. Seating positioned around the base of mature trees in the space to provide a sheltered place to sit and look into the space without obstructing pedestrian desire lines or limiting the flexibility of the space.
8. Unnecessary street furniture removed from the space to provide more flexible space for the operation of markets and events.
9. Functional highways lighting provided from adjacent buildings (as per the current arrangement) additional feature lighting provided to key buildings and within the public realm (e.g. uplighting to trees) to reinforce the historic identity of the town and the importance of Market Place as the heart of the town centre.
10. Opportunities to reduce the pavement height in the area to help resolve issues with the damp proof course in the Town Hall building to be explored at detail design stage.
11. Existing cafe spill out space retained.
12. Existing bus lane retained to the north east of the Town Hall building.
13. Existing trees retained with the exception of the existing tree in the main body of the space which could be replaced with a new semi-mature tree adjacent to the A321. This would make more space available for events and market stalls.
14. Vehicle access to main body of space provided via a drop kerb.
15. Pop up power supply to be provided to the space to enable events.



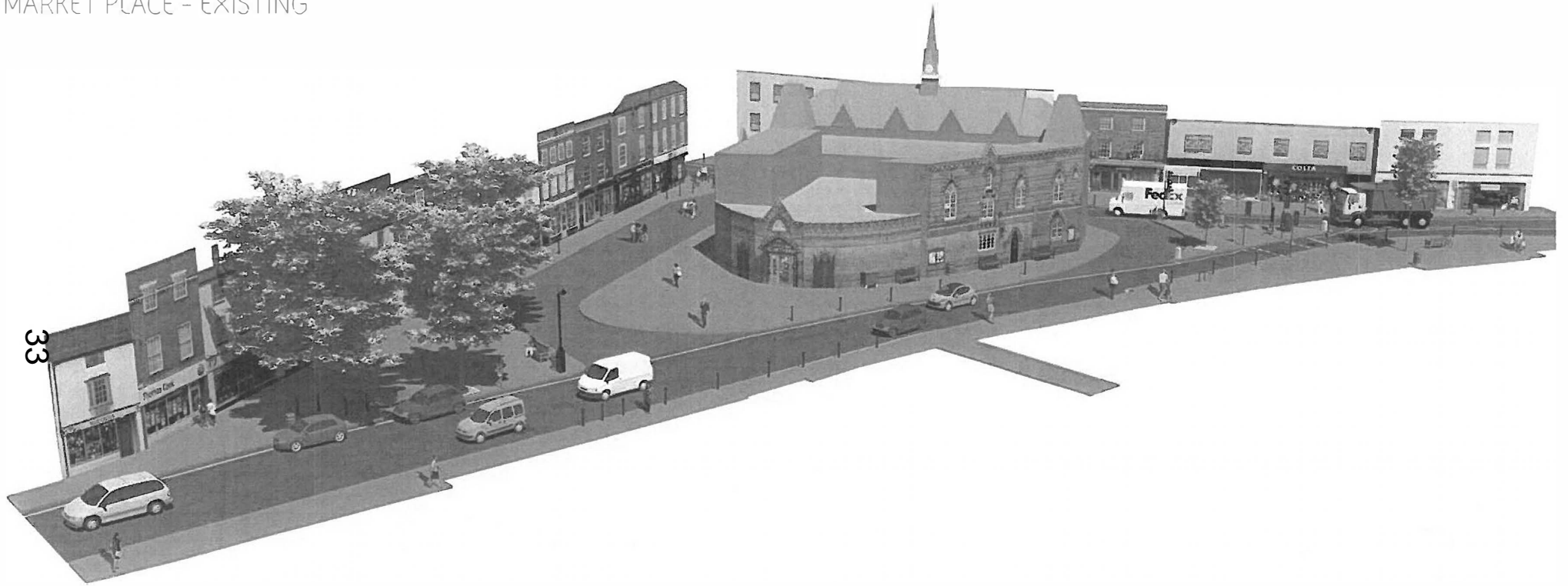
PROPOSED SEATING TO BASE OF EXISTING TREES



MARKET STALL INSET PLAN



MARKET PLACE - EXISTING



# MARKET PLACE - PROPOSED

34





## Market Place

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sits at the historic heart of the town and at the centre of the town centre regeneration projects</li> <li>• Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision</li> <li>• Central to life of the town hosting events and market days and containing Town Hall</li> <li>• Improves one of the key commercial spaces in the town</li> <li>• Provides the opportunity to achieve the vision to balance pedestrians and traffic. E.g. Offers the opportunity to apply principles such as dedicated loading bays, courtesy crossings and change of surfacing to encourage safety.</li> <li>• Can fundamentally alter perceptions of the town and improve the identity of the whole town centre</li> <li>• Sequentially is most appropriate</li> <li>• Implements measures intended to remove obstructions for the highway and facilitating potential improvements to Peach Street</li> <li>• Potential to reduce long term maintenance needs through the introduction of the new materials and furniture palette.</li> <li>• Opportunity to interpret Wokingham's historic identity through integrated artwork.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major project with high outline cost</li> <li>• Potentially disrupts the A329 and A321 routes through the town centre during construction although there may be space for temporary routes through the space to minimise disruption</li> <li>• Alternative location for events and market days required during construction</li> <li>• Reliant on more thorough parking/loading enforcement</li> <li>• Further work required to test options for removing the bus contraflow lane</li> <li>• Potential disruption to businesses during construction including access for both customers and servicing</li> <li>• Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers.</li> </ul>

## The Plaza

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will form a crucial link between the Elm's Field development and the town centre area</li> <li>• Improvements to one of the key commercial spaces in the town</li> <li>• Could potentially be completed as part of the Elm's Field regeneration scheme</li> <li>• Tackles one of the more underused and uninviting parts of the town centre public realm</li> <li>• Does not disrupt strategic highways routes</li> <li>• Opportunity to incorporate artwork to provide a new identity.</li> <li>• Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land is owned by third party</li> <li>• Potential disruption to businesses which 'spill out' into this space during construction</li> <li>• If delivered after the Elm's Field scheme construction works in The Plaza could significantly disconnect the Elm's Field development from Denmark Street and Market Place</li> <li>• Major project with high outline cost</li> <li>• Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers.</li> </ul>

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**Wokingham Town Centre Workshop: 25 October 2017****Marketing Discussion**

<b>Feel of town</b>	<b>Wokingham USP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Family Oriented</li> <li>• Character</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• Happy (happy people spend more)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique/Niche retailers</li> <li>• Independent shops</li> <li>• Choice and variety</li> <li>• Evening economy</li> <li>• Café culture and pub culture</li> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Events</li> </ul>

**Marketing Ideas**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
Co-ordinated approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint a professional marketing company to manage across town</li> <li>• Single marketing plan for all to feed into</li> </ul>
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a primary feed for promoting Wokingham (too many different feeds dilute messages)</li> <li>• Increased use of social media in a co-ordinated manner (e.g. use a specific # to link it all together regardless of business)</li> </ul>
Co-ordinated offers (with as many retailers as possible involved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target specific days e.g. Wonderful Wednesdays (all retailers offer some sort of offer/discount and free parking etc)</li> <li>• Double parking ticket where one half is torn off to get a discount in certain shops e.g. spend over £X get X% off</li> <li>• 24/7 Free parking</li> <li>• Treasure hunts / competitions</li> <li>• Balloon burst voucher/prize offer</li> </ul>
Loyalty Schemes (free gifts or special offers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swipii points card</li> <li>• Shop local stamp card</li> <li>• Pub Crawl challenge</li> </ul>
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend opening hours to harness late night economy</li> <li>• Twilight Markets</li> <li>• Christmas Shopping evening</li> <li>• Digger day / works open day</li> <li>• Father Christmas / Santas grotto</li> <li>• Pop up shops / Markets</li> <li>• Window dressing for special occasions</li> </ul>
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend Sunny Saturdays with free entertainment across year</li> <li>• Buskers</li> </ul>
Advertising and signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear signage across town</li> <li>• Advertising signs on approach to town centre (not just once there) with the opportunity to be sponsored by businesses</li> <li>• Interactive signs around town centre</li> <li>• Town map showing where retailers are located</li> <li>• Improved car park signage and awareness of where they are located coming into the town</li> <li>• Advertising of individual businesses not just 'Wokingham'</li> </ul>

## Project Discussion

Issues	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise levels</li> <li>• Dust into businesses [Dawnus site]</li> <li>• Dawnus site is clean but Rose Street is not</li> <li>• Traffic flows in Peach Street</li> <li>• Reading Road : roadworks unfinished</li> <li>• Deliveries into Market Place</li> <li>• Pedestrian routes on Rose Street very narrow adjacent to traffic</li> <li>• Pedestrian signage needs improving</li> <li>• Cannot see Bush Walk clearly</li> <li>• Signs can often point the wrong way</li> <li>• Temporary tarmac already breaking up</li> <li>• Uniformity/consistency of size/height of fencing</li> <li>• Issues regarding clarity of loading areas etc when complete [do not want return to old practices]</li> <li>• Lack of signage for main car parks</li> <li>• Unhappy with £1 evening parking</li> <li>• How quickly can WBC complete the 'infill' areas between the current projects? What should the level of quality be for these areas?</li> <li>• The Crispin's back gate – what will the position be when Elms Field completed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuse collections Market Place better comms. Possibility of aligning collections</li> <li>• Traffic – calming on Rose Street?</li> <li>• Better communication about detail of future work : clearer plan</li> <li>• Signage – arrows at eye level/ Colour-coded 'footprints'</li> <li>• Communicate signage [zones] for loading/unloading</li> <li>• Reassure pedestrians that the outcome is not a 'shared surface' [approach]</li> <li>• Maps with shops/toilets etc for regenerated town, 'You are here' – shops allocated on map</li> <li>• More 30 minute parking</li> <li>• Need to look to extending free [parking] offer beyond 3pm if not brought in</li> <li>• Car parks all need 'pay on exit'</li> <li>• Support to keep Luckley Path closed permanently</li> <li>• Banners</li> <li>• Delivery Bay at top of Peach Street</li> <li>• Driver information signs – indicate other car parks</li> <li>• Temporary Rose Street traffic lights - pedestrian control requested</li> </ul>

## Communication Discussion

Topic	Ideas / Suggestions / Comments
<b>Market Place Project newsletter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informative</li> <li>• Frequency is right. Issue it at the same time of the month so people know when to expect it</li> <li>• Wokingham Business Association to act as a conduit</li> <li>• Short &amp; individual newsletters (Rather than focus on whole town) are better – don't want update all in one as would be too long</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retailers requested extra copies so they can hand out to customers / residents</li> <li>• Content: include information on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parking</li> <li>○ Buses and bus stops</li> <li>○ Progress chart / timeline / information on programme delay (if applicable and tell retailers why if there is any slippage)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Key information want to know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifics on support available from Wokingham Borough Council</li> <li>• More details on localised changes for example need to know in good time if access to businesses is going to be affected</li> <li>• A big map showing which roads are closed / when they open would be beneficial for visitors / residents</li> </ul>
<b>Messaging and communication tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep communication and facts simple – manage the rumour of what’s happening in town, by when and how it affects retailers</li> <li>• Schedule of works – Produce a fortnightly newsletter outlining what’s happening / when in the next few weeks</li> <li>• Weekly video also suggested with a talking head from Balfour Beatty to talk about timescales, what’s happening in the next week, and any delays explained</li> <li>• Engage with other business / community groups who can share the messages for you e.g Wokingham Positive Difference. They can help with two-way communication</li> <li>• Simple messaging – similar to In Focus (Liberal Democrat newsletter)</li> <li>• Use Community boards in Tescos and/or Waitrose</li> <li>• Advertising local business events including an online directory</li> <li>• Question raised around what the Council’s do to promote the town to wider Borough</li> <li>• Request to see a health and safety person around the area</li> <li>• Increase awareness of roadworks.org</li> <li>• Use Hyper-local magazines including Wokingham Word &amp; Round and About. Use for messaging and advertise events.</li> </ul>
<b>Timing on car park proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3pm is not the right time</li> <li>• All day would be a better proposal</li> <li>• A few hours in the morning would also be better as can be more footfall in the morning after school runs and before lunchtime</li> </ul>
<b>Signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs improving</li> <li>• Better signposting to car park and availability of spaces</li> <li>• Big screen with key messages such as new layout ahead</li> <li>• Apps</li> <li>• Newsletter on windows in shop – or something they can put in the window to update customers on current work</li> </ul>
<b>Regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good idea but concerned about the present disruption and impact on the town</li> <li>• Need to get shop offer right in the future</li> <li>• Communicate the Unique Selling Point (USP) / the destination town offer and engage businesses with this</li> <li>• Link communications such as opening Peach Place with The Bradbury Centre, keep them informed. Question raised whether all shops will open at once at Peach Place, or will it be a phased approach. Will it be big bang or not?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information about what the Council’s strategic plan is to fill the units. More information about what shops are coming in the future</li><li>• Retailers expressed a need to feel that’s its worth putting up with the pain for the end result</li><li>• Rose Street taking too long – could be done quicker but the Council chooses not to</li></ul>
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**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**Wokingham  
Town Council**

1 December 2017

Dear Colleague

It's been just over a month since we updated you on the actions we took after our positive session in October.

We wanted to say a big thank you to those who supported the recent Love Wokingham People and Personalities Campaign, which has been positively received. In the first week alone, we had 15,000 impacts across all social media channels; the Love Wokingham Facebook page generated the most volumes of shares and likes. Following the success of this campaign, we'll be looking to develop a longer-term and wider marketing strategy with the Wokingham Business Association, which we'll tell you more about in due course.

Since our meeting in October, we've been reviewing all the suggestions raised to see what we else we can implement.

Here's a quick update on our progress:

### **Communication**

We recognise communication is such a critical issue and we're committed to doing our very best to get this right. We're pleased to be working directly with the Wokingham Business Association, which is sharing information directly with its members. Thank you also to everyone for forwarding to your own relevant organisations.

You said you preferred separate updates about individual projects rather than a single town-wide newsletter. So we'll carry on producing information in this way. You want to receive things at a regular point, and this is already in place for the Market Place newsletter so we'll continue with this approach.

A few of you requested hard copies of these to have available for your customers and we're happy to arrange this – please email: [jnowecki@wokingham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:jnowecki@wokingham-tc.gov.uk) It's also not too late to sign up for the e-newsletters for regular updates. To sign up, please contact Jan Nowecki (as above for Market Place) and [towncentre.regeneration@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:towncentre.regeneration@wokingham.gov.uk) (for details on Peach Place, Elms Field and Carnival Phase 2 redevelopment)

You also requested more frequent information about what is happening on the ground at Market Place, so we've now introduced a weekly schedule update sent to you on Fridays, ready for the

coming week. We hope you're finding this helpful. Balfour Beatty continues to talk directly with businesses if something in particular is likely to affect them.

As suggested, a dedicated phone number has now been introduced to help deliveries if they are a problem. The number is XXXXXXX.

### **Advertising your events**

The Borough Council has an events section on its website – visit [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk) and search for 'news and events'. Once in this section, you can add your event by visiting the 'What's on' area.

### **Positive marketing campaign: short-term**

In addition to the Love Wokingham People and Personalities campaign, we continue to work together on a range of actions to promote the town in the lead up to Christmas. Here are some of the things happening during the next few weeks:

- 'Keep it local this Christmas' campaign – free family events, including site open days at Peach Place, in the town centre on Saturday 2 December
- Living Advent Calendar
- #wokypresents social media campaign
- Continue to work with the Wokingham Paper to help promote the town
- On behalf of The Wokingham Business Association, Specsavers is organising a Christmas 'Scavenger Hunt' to attract families into local retailers and businesses with plenty of prizes available

In the longer-term we'll further develop the Love Wokingham brand. This will be key to developing our wider-marketing strategy for the town and we will continue to work with the Wokingham Business Association. This will look at the feasibility of pop-up shops, events such as Twilight markets, and a visitor App.

### **Car parking**

The Borough Council has announced free car parking in its car parks across the whole Borough, including Wokingham town centre, on the Saturdays and Sundays leading up to Christmas (9, 10, 16, 17, 23 and 24 December).

A number of you also requested free parking 24/7 but unfortunately this isn't possible at this time. Wokingham Borough Council is the lowest funded unitary authority, and such schemes would have a massive impact on the frontline services on which our residents rely.

However, we've been able to offer an alternative parking scheme to help the important pre-Christmas and New Year sales period. 'Free after Three' in Wokingham town centre car parks (from 3pm to 8am the next day,) runs until the end of January.

We're also currently exploring printed shopping discounts or promotions, on car parking tickets. If it is technically possible to do this, we'll talk to the Business Association to ascertain interest from retailers.

We're also reviewing car park signage in the town centre to see what's in place, and if any additional signs are needed.

In October, Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced, which helps us ensure safe and legal parking throughout the Wokingham Borough. We're pleased to report this is already freeing up existing 30 minute car parking spaces in the town centre.

Other suggestions from the meeting in October include driver information signs and 'pay on exit' at our car parks – all of which would require significant investment. But we'll look at these as part of our new Parking Strategy, currently being drafted.

### **Roadworks**

You also talked about us having a roadworks map in the town centre. Sadly this isn't feasible, as information changes too quickly and the maps would instantly be out of date. However, all the information is available on **www.roadworks.org**. This is the best place to keep up-to-date about road closures, temporary lights, incidents and traffic. From your smart phone, tablet or computer you can find it via our website ([www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)) in the 'current roadworks' section. You can see why work is being done, and by whom. You can also get current information, as well as future dates set by you in the search box. We'll soon be relaunching our campaign to promote this site.

### **Traffic management**

We received a few suggestions concerning roads in the town. The first was about traffic calming measures on Rose Street, and we are in the process of drawing up plans to move the existing traffic island, which will be considered by councillors soon. We also know there is some support for keeping Luckley Path closed on a permanent basis. For legal reasons, we must consult with local residents so we're currently investigating if this is possible.

### **Wayfinding Strategy**

Signing and Wayfinding helps people to navigate and orientate themselves more easily around the built environment. Orientation is not just about signage; it includes other factors, such as landmark buildings, architecture and historical references. Our concept for the town will involve new signs, heads up displays with landmark references and interactive mapping that will be available on the My Journey Wokingham website at: <http://www.myjourneywokingham.com/>

Many of the comments you raised was around improving signage, interactive maps and advertising signs – all things we'll look at as part of the Wayfinding Strategy.

### **Thank you**

Thank you again for your valuable support and patience during this particularly difficult time. We continue to recognise the disruption, and how it affects businesses and residents alike. Please continue to talk to us and let us know ideas, suggestions or concerns, and we'll do all we can to look into them and act upon them if it's possible.

With best wishes

**Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor**

**Leader, Wokingham Borough Council**

**Cllr Peter Lucey**

**Mayor & Chairman of Market Place Working Party,  
Wokingham Town Council**

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## Response to those who attended Wokingham retailer workshop



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**Wokingham  
Town Council**

31 October 2017

Dear Colleague

Thank you for attending Wednesday's meeting. It was a really positive session and great to hear not only concerns being discussed but your good ideas and suggestions about what we can do to make things easier during this particularly disruptive time.

We're very grateful to you for giving up your time in the evening. Whilst we've been communicating with you through various channels, it's very important that we do this face-to-face to hear from you at first hand. And, your messages came over loud and clear. We're now looking at all the suggestions raised to see what we can implement, working with you all, and if so, when. We hope you will agree that it was time well spent and found it as valuable as we did.

It was also very clear you all see the benefits that are coming to the town and are excited about the future, but you're concerned, quite understandably, about the present. We must continue to work together during this time and keep the conversation going. We are committed to this.

We will be holding regular surgeries on Fridays at the Town Hall from 10am to Midday starting this Friday (3 November) so please come down and talk to us. These will complement regular visits to individual shops already being made by contractors Balfour Beatty and the Town Council.

Following your ideas and suggestions made on Wednesday, here are some of the immediate actions that we have either already taken or will have completed by the end of the week (3 November).

### **Listening and working together**

All the suggestions and comments made at the Workshop are attached. On Wednesday, we will also publish them on our website at: <http://news.wokingham.gov.uk/projects/market-place-improvements/> for the wider community to see.

### **Signage**

You told us to improve the signage to make it easier for pedestrians to navigate around the town centre. On Thursday (26 October) we started to install new signs around Market Place that are simple, and at eye level. They include information on pedestrian routes around the town and signs to individual shops. All new signs will be installed by the end of this week.

## **Help with deliveries**

You said you needed more support regarding deliveries to your stores. Balfour Beatty is now setting up a dedicated phone number for deliveries which you will be able to use to secure help if necessary. We will circulate the number shortly.

## **Car parking**

At its meeting on Thursday (26 October), Wokingham Borough Council's decision-making Executive agreed proposals for 'Free After Three' parking in its Wokingham town centre car parks from 3pm to 8am the next day, during the important pre-Christmas and New Year sales period.

The car parks included in the 'Free after Three' parking scheme are: Carnival Multi-Storey, Cockpit Path, Shute End Council Offices, Denmark Street, Easthampstead Road (east and west), The Paddocks and Wellington House.

Please let your customers know. Details of where all our car parks are can be found on our website: [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk) (and search 'car parking')

## **Noise**

In response to concerns about noise, we're installing a new acoustic barrier in Market Place, which will be attached to the Heras fencing. This will help reduce the amount of noise from the work, making visiting the town a better experience. This will be in place by the end of this week (3 November).

## **Help with dust and litter**

Road sweepers will continue to operate in Rose Street early in the morning to avoid the rush hour and prevent further congestion. However, we will increase the schedule, at other less busy times of the day, to tackle any areas that need particular attention.

## **Communication**

You told us you liked the Market Place Improvement Project newsletter and were happy for it to be published monthly, at the same time. You also said you are particularly interested to know more practical information such as work schedules, details of what is happening when and for how long, and more information about any delays, should they happen. Therefore, as well as the monthly newsletter, we will now also send a weekly email, from Friday 3 November, to provide you with information about what is happening over the next week.

We've also arranged with Jonathan Holley from the Wokingham Business Association to provide more information on road works that have the potential to disrupt routes to and from the town. He has kindly agreed to circulate amongst the Wokingham Business Association.

## **Positive marketing campaign: short-term**

We're working together on a range of actions to promote the town in the lead up to Christmas. Here are some of the things that are happening over the next few weeks:

- Online video, funded by the Borough Council, Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Business Association to promote businesses and the town. This will be available on the Councils' website and social media channels. Once launched, we will send you the links to the video. Please help promote it

- Working with the Wokingham Paper to help promote the town
- On behalf of The Wokingham Business Association, Specsavers is organising a Christmas 'Scavenger Hunt' to attract families into local retailers and businesses with plenty of prizes available

Please continue to help promote the town and what is on offer.

**What's next**

As mentioned earlier, we're looking at all the excellent suggestions and ideas raised on Wednesday and see what we can implement and if so, when. We will also discuss how we might take forward a longer-term marketing strategy for the town. We'll tell you more about this shortly.

Thank you again for your valuable time. Let's continue to work together.

With best wishes

**Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor**  
**Leader, Wokingham Borough Council**

**Cllr Peter Lucey**  
**Mayor & Chairman of Market Place Working Party,  
Wokingham Town Council**

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## Support for Businesses

Working in partnership with the Town Council and alongside groups such as the local Business Association the Councils continue to implement a range of support for the town centre and businesses.

This includes offers and initiatives such as –

- **Free after Three parking**
  - This approach was introduced following suggestions by the businesses and campaigns by the Wokingham Paper.
  - Aim was to encourage footfall in the town centre and help reduce the pressure on peak time traffic by getting people to come into town later in the day when quieter or stay after work.
  - FA3 ran from November 2017 until end March 2018, and free parking was also introduced at December weekends in the run up to Christmas.
  - FA3 cost the Borough Council around £81k (in lost revenue and set up costs) plus additional spend on December parking
  
- **Improved Communications**
  - New drop in sessions organised at the Town Hall to give businesses immediate access to officers and members from Regeneration and Market Place team. Sessions originally ran once a week but were moved to monthly due to very low attendance figures.
  - Monthly newsletters for each of the projects. Whilst there were discussions around combining these into one the business preference was to keep them as separate newsletters.
  - Weekly Market Place bulletins with information about what has happened that week and what will be happening in the following period. Decision made to not take the same weekly approach for Peach Place / Elms Field as work is behind closed hoardings and has less impact on those walking round town.
  - Retailer update meetings. Working with the Business Association to run sessions on topics of interest to local businesses including a large brainstorming evening in October 2017. Whilst offers were made to run follow up events or meetings there has been limited interest as the Business Association is currently in a state of flux with limited activity.
  
- **Initial promotion of the town and its businesses.**
  - Including funding a range of adverts in the press and online, social media, banners, posters and flyers to promote the town remaining open as usual
  - Further adverts and flyers were also funded to raise awareness of the Business Association and encourage businesses to join up
  
- **Ongoing promotion of the town and its businesses.**
  - Joint funding of marketing activities with current budget spend circa £60k (to take to Christmas 2018) and agreement to continue reviewing moving forward.
  - Increased hours funded for Love Wokingham marketing support and appointment of a new social media support post to promote town and advise businesses.
  - Including supporting the creation of further marketing collateral to promote the town through social media and advertising campaigns such as 'Business as Usual', 'Keep it local', 'Keep it local this Christmas', 'Woky Presents', 'People and Personalities' etc.

- Love Wokingham Videos. Produced with local businesses to help promote the town and its businesses and encourage people to come into Wokingham Local Events. In addition to setting up events in the town centre, such as the Keep it local this Christmas shopping event and open day on December 2 2017, the Council is also offering additional support to other large events in the town centre such as the Winter Carnival to ensure they can be a success.
  - Marketing Strategy. Initial discussions have been held with the Town Council and Business Associations to reaffirm the vision for destination Wokingham and meetings are being arranged with the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) to identify potential resources and methods for developing the marketing strategy further.
- **Business Improvement District support.**
    - A Business Improvement District is a geographically identified area where all businesses within the area pay a small levy on top of their base Business Rates, although the BID can agree to set a minimum size / income level below which businesses don't have to pay the levy to avoid impact on the towns smallest businesses.
    - This levy goes into a pot for the BID to spend on agreed programmes that benefit their members e.g. marketing and entertainment, reduced waste collection costs, training and development.
    - The BID is made up of the individual businesses within the zone who are required to come up with an annual businesses plan on how the levy will be spent and what their priorities are to give every businesses a greater voice locally.
    - BID's must be established and agreed by the businesses within the area and are required to go out to formal vote. The council has offered to pre-fund the process of local businesses establishing a BID for Wokingham town centre e.g. funding the cost of consultants to help make an application and the cost / logistics of running a formal vote.
- **Business Rates support – local S47 Rates Relief and national Rateable Value scheme**
    - A range of business rates support has been made available to local businesses with the focus on local S47 Rates Relief (discretionary % reduction on rates paid) and national VOA Rates Relief scheme (reduction in assessed rateable value of property)
    - The level of relief granted (both national and local) reflects the disruption felt by an individual businesses and there is not generally a one size fits all allocation. As such businesses will be required to share financial information demonstrating a downturn in rates.
    - Local S47 Relief is assessed internally and the Business Rates team are prioritising town centre applications to process quickly and using whatever information is available rather than waiting for end of year accounts.
    - The national scheme offers the highest level of 'relief' however it is a complicated three stage process (Check, Challenge, Appeal) which could take several years to work through. Under the new national rates system the individual business MUST apply themselves and this is monitored (e.g. checking IP addresses).
    - Due to the complexity of applying nationally, the Council appointed Vail Williams in August 2017 to offer free support to all town centre businesses in understanding and preparing a claim. The timing was to encourage retailers to start the process sooner so they were well underway before the impact of Market Place was felt
    - This initial free support is being funded by the council but, if businesses wish VW to follow through and represent them during the entire process VW will charge around 25% of the relief granted as this can be a substantial amount of work. The 25% is

significantly lower than other consultants would charge as reflects the preparation work funded by WBC. Businesses can also apply themselves should they prefer not to pay VW or other consultants.

- To date limited numbers of businesses have applied for either local or national rate relief. Whilst not a factor for local S47 assessments, this lack of national applications is having a detrimental effect on those who have applied for a review of their rateable value. It leaves the VOA with the impression that the impact of works is being overstated as, if there was such a large issue in the town, more businesses would be applying for relief.

## Business Rate Relief statistics

- The Business Rates team have provided some initial information on those making S47 Relief applications and, where granted, national relief. This list identified 87 town centre businesses, however several names are missing so figures should only be taken as indicative.
- Figures for national VOA relief only include those actually granted relief (business rates are informed by the VOA of an adjustment in the rateable value) or being taken forward via Vail Williams. The VOI would not notify the council of any direct claims made by individual businesses which have either been refused or are still being assessed.
- Some headline figures based on available data
  - 30 Businesses have applied for Local Section 47 relief
    - 58 businesses have not applied
    - 2 businesses have been refused
    - 11 businesses have been granted relief
    - 5 have submitted additional info requested and are being assessed
    - 10 have yet to submit additional info requested
    - 2 have no information on the spreadsheet other than application dates.
  - 15 Businesses have been granted national VOA Relief
    - 2 of these have also applied for Section 47 relief and ratings team are assessing one claim and awaiting more information from the other
    - 9 of successful reviews were through the Vail Williams consultancy support however it is unknown if other 6 were done independently or through another ratings consultancy
    - Vail Williams support
      - 21 businesses have requested support
      - 9 have already been successful
      - 12 are currently being processed
- 44 Businesses on the Business Rates list don't appear to have received or requested any support at all (although may have made / be making independent national claims)

In regards to timing there were the following

- 3 Applications in 2017
  - 1 in May
  - 1 in October
  - 1 in November
- 23 Applications in 2018
  - 3 in January
  - 1 in February
  - 3 in May
  - 3 in June
  - 8 in July
  - 3 in August
  - 2 in September



Of the 43 businesses who signed the letter complaining about a lack of support

- 11 Businesses have applied for local S47 Relief
  - 6 have been granted relief
  - 2 have submitted additional info requested and are being assessed
  - 3 have yet to submit additional info requested
- 4 Businesses have been granted national VOA Relief
- 7 Businesses don't appear to have received or requested any support at all
- 22 are unclear (name not on sheet of businesses but may trade under different identity or owner)

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# Wokingham Town Council

Annex D

Market Place Access Group

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

## **WOKINGHAM MARKET PLACE**

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for the contribution you made last year as we were working through the design for the improvements to Market Place. We have found all the input very useful and the information has been informing the detailed design of the space.

We are now in a position to offer a further update to the project as part of our commitment to keeping you well informed:

- The overall plan remains the same in terms of levelling and decluttering the area to deliver greater flexibility for all users, community events and to accommodate the market itself; together with opportunities for cafes and restaurants to spill out into the space
- Natural stone paving, offering improved slip resistance, will be used for the main surface to enhance the neighbouring buildings and ensure that Market Place appears as a single unified, flexible space and new seating with arm and back rests will also be provided
- To reduce the dominance of traffic and increase the space for pedestrians the highway width will be reduced, whilst retaining vehicle capacity
- Parking will be simplified taking it out of the main highway with dedicated disabled parking and loading bays provided
- The signalised crossing will remain and some additional courtesy crossings will be introduced, which will also help to regulate the speed of traffic and reduce its dominance
- The trees that have outgrown the space, have a limited lifespan and are causing significant trip hazards will be removed. New native species will be planted, suitable in size for the space, planted in appropriately designed tree pits to allow for future growth and they will benefit from feature lighting
- The infrastructure will be improved to provide power and water for market traders and events, drainage will be upgraded and the bus lane will be removed to protect the integrity of the space and simplify traffic movements

You will recall from our sessions that views differed on a number of points and, whilst not being able to accommodate all suggestions, many of the above were cited at both your sessions and those open to the general public. The clear message about levelling the space and improving its flexibility was a central point, together with a use of high quality materials, all of which are now secured within the design.

Some specific points that arose from your dedicated sessions which we have taken on board include:

- The retention of the signalised crossing
- Footways and pedestrian areas will have a level surface for inclusive mobility and ease of access around the whole space, paving will be well textured to improve slip resistance

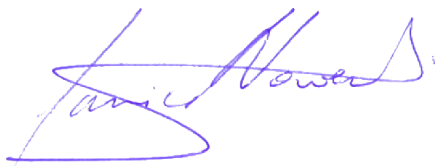
- All pedestrian areas and crossing points will be at the same level; contrasting tactile paving 'studs' will be provided at all crossing points whilst traffic signal controlled crossing points will also have 'rotating tactile units' to assist visually impaired users
- The proposed layout of the market will be a simplified linear arrangement, with appropriate access between small blocks of stalls
- New wooden street furniture will be provided. To offer choice there will be a variety of styles and locations with some positioned against the Town Hall and others in the open or beneath the trees, but outside the main circulation areas.
- Street furniture will be grouped wherever possible and signage will offer greater clarity and contrast in terms of lettering
- Kerb heights of approximately 50-60mm will be used to distinguish between pedestrian areas and the traffic lanes, which will be a contrasting colour and material for ease of identification.

You may have already seen some of the investigative surveying which has taken place and there will be further enabling work at the end of 2016. The main construction work will now take place in early 2017 and, given the timing, there will be full coordination between this project and the coinciding Peach Place development works. A temporary central location will be identified to accommodate the market during the works.

Information is available on the Councils' websites which includes visuals and feedback from the sessions in the autumn last year <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/regeneration/wokingham-town-centre-regeneration/> and [www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

We will continue to keep you updated with more detailed timescales once they become available later this year but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me. Once again the project team would like to thank you for your contribution and ongoing interest in what we believe will be a fantastic improvement to the town centre and one which will ensure that Market Place is a safe inclusive space for everyone.

Yours sincerely



Jan Nowecki

Town Clerk  
Telephone: 0118 978 3185  
Email: [jnowecki@wokingham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:jnowecki@wokingham-tc.gov.uk)



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



## Wokingham Market Place Improvements Disability Groups Workshop 7<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015

7<sup>th</sup> September the Market Place was not in use on 25<sup>th</sup> Market was trading but to be noted that it was a quiet trading day and town itself also appeared quiet.

### Feedback

#### **What Works Well**

7<sup>th</sup>:

- Traffic lights – give confidence/stress free experience
- Shop access – on whole this is good
- Wide pavement
- Designated parking OK
- Dull metal bollards very positive

25<sup>th</sup>:

- Consistency of stall placement
- Café Rouge barriers
- Benches that fit alongside the building (CLASP)
- Maintain good seating provision
- Was sufficient space
- Pedestrianized area considered very positive

#### **What Does Not Work**

7<sup>th</sup>:

- Angles of slopes etc need careful thought eg Bookends has incorporated slope inside premises boundaries offering ease of access
- Dry cleaners & butchers Denmark Street problematical
- Red brick paving – very slippery even when weather fine √√√
- Café furniture
- Current surface and usage does not enable the easy following of any building lines for visually impaired
- Bollards – positioning
- Road in Market Place not good with kerbs etc
- Crossing by triangle not good experience
- Grey on parts of surface
- Chamfered kerbs
- Loose block work
- Parking – unofficial



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



- On some of street pavements missing drain covers for guttering run-off
- Insufficient dropped kerbs – distance between too far eg Specsavers to Argos
- Gradient/age of dropped kerbs mean ineffective – Millets Peach Street particularly poor
- Insufficient guidance routes
- Cobbled areas difficult for all
- Size of trees & canopies too big and produces too much shade/dark areas
- Rose Street – parking too near the crossing at Broad Street end
- Narrow pavements Denmark Street
- Traditional black fingerpost signs not helpful for visually impaired (lack of contrast)
- Bollarded & gravel area from former tree

25<sup>th</sup>:

- Rubber cable strip covers not working, moved as went across. Need fixing and greater level of marking such as yellow stripes
- Benches 'fade' into the background – need contrast
  - Any metal should be contrasting colour not black eg gold/silver (c/f other comment that positive to have against Town Hall walls)
- Plant stall very difficult to navigate, narrows marked access to Market Place
  - Dementia sufferers welcome plants etc but does need to offer consistency of layout
- Concern that not true representation of normal conditions as seemed 'very tidy' with no boxes etc visible
- Some signage such as 'A' Boards manageable for those with guide dogs but very problematical for cane users. Significant problem when these are also put over bollards (possible link to Town Team to speak to retailers)
- Stalls serving from both directions creates challenges – people just stop resulting in potential accidents
  - Could the stalls all face one way?
- Outside Boots and contra-flow bus lane – dangerous
- Very difficult if no dropped kerb (chamfered does not help wheelchair users and offers insufficient definition for guide dogs)
- Fruit stall best kept on triangle
- Single palette on surface could prove difficult. Dementia sufferers find contrasting colours (ideally primary) most helpful
- Lack of parking for dementia sufferers as they do not always qualify for a blue badge
- Barclays Bank crossing very challenging

## **Future Suggestions**

7<sup>th</sup>:

- Any bollards could have contrasting colour considered (yellow)
- Any café furniture should be confined within barriers, commonly used outside cafes etc, with a tap row
- Consider moving benches
- Minimum kerb height – 6cm



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



- Need to consider scooter users (seat at back of vehicle and do not usually pull right up to kerb which creates very different sight line)
- Need to control speed
- Signage
  - Very clear
  - Good directional
  - Contrasting colour
- Guidance pavements/tactile to include route to crossings/into cafes/Town Hall
- Market Place very big open space if does not have some support re directions/textured markings etc
- Crossings must be identified clearly – contrasting colours
- Consider additional crossings Boots, Denmark Street (Pelican?)
- Invite strangers to offer feedback (Sovereign Group Housing?)
- Consider wood for bins and benches not shiny/stainless steel

25<sup>th</sup>:

- Consensus across all present that natural stone could offer appropriate texture and difference in shading. Also bigger paving blocks is helpful for everyone
- Could a 'test bed' for any proposed surface be provided for the access group?
- New surface should be textured to offer best grip

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**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**Wokingham Market Place Improvements**  
**Disability Groups Workshop**  
**7<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Feedback**

<b>What Works Well</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traffic lights – give confidence/stress free experience</li><li>• Shop access – on whole this is good</li><li>• Wide pavement</li><li>• Designated parking OK</li><li>• Dull metal bollards very positive</li></ul>
<b>What Does Not Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Angles of slopes etc need careful thought eg Bookends has incorporated slope inside premises boundaries offering ease of access</li><li>• Dry cleaners &amp; butchers Denmark Street problematical</li><li>• Red brick paving – very slippery even when weather fine √√</li><li>• Café furniture</li><li>• Current surface and usage does not enable the easy following of any building lines for visually impaired</li><li>• Bollards – positioning</li><li>• Road in Market Place not good with kerbs etc</li><li>• Crossing by triangle not good experience</li><li>• Grey on parts of surface</li><li>• Chamfered kerbs</li><li>• Loose block work</li><li>• Parking – unofficial</li><li>• On some of street pavements missing drain covers for guttering run-off</li><li>• Insufficient dropped kerbs – distance between too far eg Specsavers to Argos</li><li>• Gradient/age of dropped kerbs mean ineffective – Millets Peach Street particularly poor</li><li>• Insufficient guidance routes</li><li>• Cobbled areas difficult for all</li><li>• Size of trees &amp; canopies too big and produces too much shade/dark areas</li><li>• Rose Street – parking too near the crossing at Broad Street end</li><li>• Narrow pavements Denmark Street</li><li>• Traditional black fingerpost signs not helpful for visually impaired (lack of contrast)</li><li>• Bollarded &amp; gravel area from former tree</li></ul>
<b>Future Suggestions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any bollards could have contrasting colour considered (yellow)</li></ul>



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



- Any café furniture should be confined within barriers, commonly used outside cafes etc, with a tap row
- Consider moving benches
- Minimum kerb height – 6cm
- Need to consider scooter users (seat at back of vehicle and do not usually pull right up to kerb which creates very different sight line)
- Need to control speed#
- Signage
  - Very clear
  - Good directional
  - Contrasting colour
- Guidance pavements/tactile to include route to crossings/into cafes/Town Hall
- Market Place very big open space if does not have some support re directions/textured markings etc
- Crossings must be identified clearly – contrasting colours
- Consider additional crossings Boots, Denmark Street (Pelican?)
- Invite strangers to offer feedback (Sovereign Group Housing?)
- Consider wood for bins and benches not shiny/stainless steel

## Feedback from accessibility engagement session Wokingham Town Hall

Friday November 16

### Positives / What went well:

- Decluttering – signs and benches
- Market layout
- Traffic speed reduced
- Signal controlled crossings
- Bus lane removal
- Paving – single colour/light
- Removal of large ‘shadowy’ trees
- Consultation process (make sure explain properly)
- Raised (courtesy) crossings
- Less slippery surface and fewer trip hazards
- Balfour Beatty – very positive support to the community
- More interesting market stalls
- Appearance of street furniture – good contrasts
- Large market space

### Issues/ Even Better If:

- Understanding how courtesy crossing work / new concept
- Studs – inability to feel in some shoes, lack of colour definition
- Placement of courtesy crossings (sight line at Red Lion)
- Colour contrast not strong enough – trip hazard and encouraged to cross as lower kerbs
- ‘Size’ of disabled bays – traffic passing
- Not sufficient definition for disabled / loading bays
- A-Boards
- Vehicles encroaching on to pavement
- Speed still an issue – could limit be reduced to 20mph
- Visibility at crossings (position of loading bays)



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## **Feedback from accessibility engagement session Wokingham Town Hall**

### **Friday November 16**

#### Positives / What went well:

- Decluttering – signs and benches
- Market layout – easier to navigate
- Traffic speed reduced
- Controlled crossings – vehicular stop point good distance from pedestrians
- Bus lane removal
- Paving – single colour/light
- Removal of large 'shadowy' trees
- Consultation process (very full but should make sure explain properly at any opportunity)
- Raised (courtesy) crossings – good for those with wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs
- Less slippery surface and fewer trip hazards
- Balfour Beatty – very positive support to the community
- More interesting market stalls
- Appearance of street furniture – good contrasts
- Large market space

### **CLASP Feedback – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

- Less slippery surface and fewer trip hazards
- Overall the look and feel is very positive and welcoming
- Level surfacing much easier to navigate
- Benches very good both style and colour contrast

#### Issues/ Even Better If:

- Understanding how courtesy crossing work / new concept
- Studs – inability to feel in some shoes, lack of colour definition
- Placement of courtesy crossings (sight line at Red Lion)
- Colour contrast not strong enough – trip hazard and encouraged to cross as lower kerbs
- 'Size' of disabled bays – traffic passing
- Not sufficient definition for disabled / loading bays
- A-Boards
- Potential for vehicles to encroach on to pavement as bays at same level
- Speed still an issue – could limit be formally reduced to 20mph
- Visibility at crossings (position of loading bays)

### **CLASP Feedback – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

- Transition from new Market Place to old public realm at Greggs & Specsavers should be improved
- Unclear for traffic at junction of Rose Street & Broad Street who has right of way
- Pedestrian crossing point still needs to be resolved in Rose Street



- Courtesy crossings – unclear to both drivers & pedestrians as to who has right of way. Also there is a 'lip' as the kerb rises to the platform. Could more information be generally publicised about how these 'work'
- Studs – are there sufficient to clearly indicate where the road is
- Disabled bays need to be better marked and differentiated from loading bays



# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: December 4, 2015  
Issued by: Louise Page (0118) 908 8469

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## **Annex E**

### **THUMBS UP FOR MARKET PLACE IMPROVEMENTS**

It's a thumbs-up so far for plans by Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Town Council to improve Market Place.

At two public events officers from both councils talked through emerging ideas for Market Place based on comments received so far, set within the context of the site's constraints.

People attending were overwhelmingly positive about the plans, and happy this area is being maintained and safeguarded as the heart of the town. They were also very supportive about proposals to include high quality natural paving stones.

More than 35 people also attended a workshop to discuss things including materials, street furniture, and signage – for both Market Place and the new public square in Peach Place - which will be created when the latter is redeveloped in 2017.

The main feedback from both the workshop and two events was the desire to ensure the public spaces are flexible, both at Market Place and Peach Place, so they can be used for a variety of events and different types of markets.

There was also interest in creating public art to reflect the town itself and the key events from its history.

While Market Place and Peach Place are separate projects they would complement each other and it is envisaged common themes would flow through the town.

**-MORE-**

“Public sessions such as these are crucial because we have to make sure we are creating the right environments for people, said Cllr John Kaiser, executive member for planning and highways at Wokingham Borough Council.

“So thank you to everyone who took the time to come along.”

Cllr Mark Ashwell, chairman of the amenities committee, at Wokingham Town Council, said: “I was delighted to see the community’s enthusiasm to offer their thoughts and ideas about the improvements to Market Place, and what this area and Peach Place should look like.

“Their comments and ideas were overwhelmingly positive and both project teams are now working through them to make sure they consider everything so that both these spaces are great areas for us all to enjoy.”

The public comments from the two events will be published soon on the borough council’s website at [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk) and also the town council’s [www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk).

Detailed plans for Market Place will now be drawn up and shared publically early next year.

In the meantime, the display material is available in the Town Hall foyer and on the borough council’s website for anyone who was unable to get to the events or workshops:

[www.wokingham.gov.uk/town-centre](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/town-centre).

- ENDS -

**Further information:**

1. More from Cllr John Kaiser, executive member for planning and highways Wokingham Borough Council, on (0771) 419 2352 or email [john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk)
2. Alternatively contact Cllr Mark Ashwell, chairman of the amenities committee, at Wokingham Town Council, on (07976) 641 687 or email him on the contacts section at [www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

# Wokingham Town Centre

## Environmental Improvements:

feedback from the Market Place & Peach Place workshop held on 16 November 2015

### Market Place

#### What is the role of this space?

- Market stalls
- Christmas tree - ideally at the road entrance corner
- Food spaces - for others as well as the Courtyard
- Transportation - lorries as well -both through and unloading
- Entertainment
- Walking (and space for mobility scooters to share pedestrian areas)
- Entertainment / Social / Market / Hub / Heart
- Evening events - user friendly - help Purple Flag initiative
- Enabling retailers to function including servicing (business ratepayers)
- Focal point for town
- Space for community to meet / socialise
- Market stalls
- A road traffic
- Create a setting for the Town Hall
- Pedestrian through route
- Major purpose is a Market Place (trading 50% of the time)
- "Courtyard" location and convenient social location
- Centre for major events
- Thoroughly Victorian - dominated by the Town Hall
- Multifunctional, adaptable, versatile
- Host variety of markets (night time, Christmas, food)

#### Does the proposed layout respond to the way the space is used?

- Very happy with it - definitely will use and market better
- Christmas tree and poppy corner very good
- Prefer planting and seating vs bollards
- Consider using bollards for security against ram raids (e.g. banks)
- Food traders downwind from market please

- Signalised crossing in wrong place (signalled mid-way, courtesy at the top)
- Signals need to be linked across town centre
- Top tree (closest to Courtyard) will prevent putting in the big stage for Carnival and concerts. Would be good to mark off an area for a stage and on site power supply
- Like the level area for stalls either side of road
- Needs to be completely flat at the top in front of Costa
- Start with a courtesy crossing to introduce people to the town
- Real issues with drainage - needs addressing
- No kerbs
- Pedestrianise out of hours e.g. 10am
- Exclude A-boards
- Is there an economic alternative to York Stone? Do we use it only in significant areas?
- Not enough thought given to servicing of retail units
- Not enough trees being proposed
- Good to lose the dropped level roadway through the Market Place
- Can offloading bays be located on the western side of Denmark Street? Rear access is better to units on the eastern side
- Concerned about proposed colour of material for paving around the Town Hall. Grey is dull and will not wear well if Yorkshire stone. Red would be much nicer for a market town.
- Materials - York stone but not too bland
- Declutter - keep to the edges / open
- Remove bollards
- Market stalls back to back and facing shops
- Outdoor café seating needs line to follow - could be contrasting paving
- Van blocks view of Sunny Saturdays
- Should events be more central? Need space between Courtyard and entertainment
- Needs to be attractively laid out with trees, benches, flowers and planters
- Need options for locating an illuminated Christmas tree
- Needs to be suitably illuminated as a Town Hall and town centre in the evenings
- CCTV in all spaces - for safety
- 20mph zone required
- Flexibility - need level surfaces and minimum physical objects
- Legibility of town and routes - match crossings with routes (e.g. Peach Street to new square)
- Back to back market stalls
- Trees clutter and obscure the focal point of the Town Hall. Placement is crucial - need to maximise view from all directions
- Seating round the base of the trees
- Public WiFi
- Discourage right hand turn into Rose Street

## **Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?**

- Yes
- Need more power points
- Servicing of existing retailers needs to be further considered
- Need to allow for parking for weddings
- Distributed utility/power/lighting
- Parking for Mayor, weddings etc.
- Privileged parking immediately adjacent to Town Hall for weddings and special occasions
- Power points all round
- Yes if you realign the trees (not on Clintons Corner, in the way of the Town Hall)
- Consider additional controlled crossing on Denmark Street

## **Other**

- Concern about utilities - programme of replacement. Can we coordinate works at the same time (offer incentives)?
- August 16 start - will it be finished in time for the Winter Carnival? Should Winter Carnival 2016 be cancelled?

# **Peach Place**

## **What is the role of this space?**

- Christmas market and events
- Themed days
- Quieter, much more planting
- Café with seating - somewhere to meet friends but what about impact on residents in the evening?
- Looks nice for walking through
- Opportunity for plaza-type approach: a place to socialise
- Hub for cafes and restaurants
- Communal space
- Specialist markets to complement those in the Market Place
- Focus on food and socialising
- Major centre for café society (evening meals and socialising)
- Retail concentration area
- Secondary events location (after the Market Place)
- Location for public art displays, statues etc.
- Good for eating
- Craft shops (e.g. Holme Grange)
- Children's entertainment
- Not a destination
- Social function / meeting place, spilling out of restaurants
- Child friendly throughout the day
- Social and Community events
- Christmas / specialist markets
- Ice rink
- Configurable, as unrestricted as possible
- Alfresco - tables and chairs
- Upmarket boutique area
- Street entertainment, Christmas market, ice skating rink, bespoke events

## **Does the proposed layout respond to the way the space is used?**

- How will people know the square is there (can't see from the road)?
- Prevent vehicle access out of hours
- Locate stage against M&S car park
- Need active usage to see things are happening in the square
- Address the levels, there is a distinct height difference between Peach Street and Rose Street
- Needs a feature to relieve dead space and create interest
- Boundary between shops and square is good
- Locate seating on sunny side
- Softer curves, not angular - diagonal is wrong line to encourage shop use

- Avoid permanent seating and structures to allow for youth activities and events
- A raised fountain would be nice
- Concerns about darkness and safety - height of buildings
- Increase utility by avoiding fixed objects, but need something to act as a feature
- Need awnings to offer protection from the elements
- Facility for temporary art installations (plinth)
- Benches and greenery, but not too strict and regimented
- Should be traffic free for most of the day
- Lighting should be appropriate to the area (tasteful, not too dark or bright, safe and relaxing)
- Paving should be tasteful and interesting (possibly textured)
- Could we have a water feature?
- Need to consider impact of noise on residents
- Don't obscure the Town Hall from Peach Street
- Trees are OK, position benches in front
- Like the indicative lighting
- Concerns about emergency access
- Public WiFi

### **Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?**

- How wide is the pedestrian link between the square and Peach Street? Too narrow for stalls? Add 1 metre
- Need at least 3 metres between doorways for a stall
- Can you run paid events by closing off the space at the entrances?
- Need power and water

# Unique to Wokingham

## What unique qualities make Wokingham special?

- Market
- Heritage
- Car accessible
- Flexibility of streets (can be closed on occasions)

## Can these be reflected in public art, materials & street furniture?

- Benches and detailing. Integrate with paving materials
- Don't fill the whole area with art, spread it around the town
- Multifunction approach, e.g. a sculpture which includes a light
- No modern art (no-one agrees with what's good). Better located in the entertainment zone at Carnival Pool
- Like the quirky cycle-shaped bike racks
- Need softer curves, not big blocks
- Like the wayfinder mosaic idea
- Art should be fun/lighthearted/quirky but in keeping with a market town
- War memorial near the Town Hall?
- Like the wayfinding features in the paving but mustn't be confusing to the visually impaired. Need careful placement
- Can we have a war memorial?
- Blue bricks in Town Hall edging for roads
- Signage to indoor war memorial
- Traditional art (not modern)
- Yes, reflect the town's unique qualities

## Can historic & cultural references be integrated into the spaces?

- Old Windsor forest, oak leaves & acorns
- Silk and weaving
- Walter family
- Horse trough (should be moved to its original position facing Peach Street)
- Fire engine stores to be retained
- Founded by Saxons
- Tudor - silk production
- Elizabethan - town charter
- Roundheads vs Cavalier battles
- Bishop of Salisbury
- Bell foundry
- Bull and bear baiting



## **Public art or large permanent object integrated into design of the space?**

- Avoid standalone sculpture, unless at the top where the road divides, as it gets in the way
- A water feature, something to gather round (but concerned about maintenance)
- Public art
- Prefer large permanent object
- Lots throughout the town rather than one dominant piece
- Integrate public art into design of the space
- Integrate public art into design of the space

# Materials

## Are the materials suitable for the role of the space?

- Needs to be non-slip
- Needs to be flat
- Don't like the clash of patterns (bottom left of materials sheet). Either properly regular and matched, clear contrast or intentionally softer.
- Keep track of fire station
- Metal studs are OK
- Keep paving simple - York stone all over rather than a mixture
- Not fond of the shiny silver granite
- Recover as many red pavers as possible for repair elsewhere
- Bland like any town
- We do not favour silver granite, prefer Yorkshire paving
- Materials must be safe - not slippery

## Should materials be the same across Wokingham?

- Use materials on the ground to show routes and highlight links through the town centre
- Use coloured paving to differentiate areas. No kerbs! Small kerbs are a trip hazard
- Different surfacing for the highway (cobble, granite setts) so you know you're entering a different zone
- Asphalt is not appropriate in the Market Place. It's cheap to install and replace but doesn't look good in between
- Granite setts are more expensive but durable. Concerns about maintenance.
- Market Place should reflect a market town
- Peach Place should reflect piazza & café culture
- Keep the York stone pattern of mixed shapes throughout the public places
- Desirable to have a clear perimeter (different material) around the Market Place

## Size of paving units

- Smaller blocks are preferred
- Mid-size blocks (not street size paving slabs or cobble stones)
- Larger blocks with integral mosaics

## Metal or stone for tactile paving & drain covers?

- Drainage is a real issue. Needs to be integrated to avoid big grilles
- If the drainage system is to be replaced can surface water be reused?
- Prefer metal
- Tactile and colour identification needed for crossings. Prefer matching stone rather than metal

## **Do proposed colours complement surrounding buildings?**

- Red brick detracts from the red of the Town Hall
- Greys and beiges work well with red brick
- Red preferably or another colour for variety - was black (blue) originally
- Split view - contrast or consistent with Town Hall?
- Contrasting paving around the Town Hall (blue stone)
- Samples of York stone required in three shades

## **Does quality of proposed materials match that of surrounding buildings?**

- Like York stone - will make buildings stand out
- The proposed extent of York Stone is overpowering and out of keeping with the Market Place. Historically bricks were made locally and red brick would be more appropriate.

# Street furniture

## Views on current street furniture

- Need sufficient waste bins (attractive ones)
- There is too much clutter. Get rid of bollards and signs
- Confusing - where's the map?
- Too much clutter
- Too many street signs and street furniture around the town centre - please remove
- Need more cycle racks around the town
- Too many "A" frames - remove from footways
- No recycling bins are available - very important to influence people's behaviour
- Current bins are all different
- Dislike bollards (unless rising) existing ones are in the way
- Cycle racks get in the way of events and encourage people to cycle in pedestrian areas - put them in the car parks
- "A" boards are untidy and hazardous and should be banned from the town centre

## Is current pedestrian signage adequate?

- Use a mosaic link to intrigue
- No (railway station not signed)
- Signage needed around the town like the upstanding maps but balanced with the need to reduce furniture

## Which materials are most appropriate?

- Traditional materials - iron and timber (hardwood)
- Wood and traditional materials
- Link to the past - oak
- More traditional materials
- Wooden benches preferred as a nod to the heritage/traditional
- Need to be consistent in furniture materials
- Oak (Oakingham)

## Which bench styles are appropriate?

- Contemporary forms
- Contemporary style
- Use top quality timber, place Diamond Jubilee plaques on new benches, relocate old benches
- Provide a variety of styles
- Black ends, not modern, not too low
- Style to match the cycle racks
- Wood, not stone, wrought iron style

- Modern and trendy for Carnival Pool
- Traditional for Market Place
- Integrated seat/planter, but hedge behind will be used as a bin!
- Market Place - wrought iron and wood - modern Victorian style
- Peach Place - wavy bench to help soften with water feature

### **Should benches have arm and back rests?**

- A mixture
- Some with arms (to prevent rough sleeping) others without for groups
- Backs preferred, some with arms and some without
- Dividers to prevent overnight sleeping

### **Should furniture be bespoke and unique to Wokingham?**

- Yes, with the old Borough acorn carved into the back
- Yes
- Really like the bike-shaped cycle racks

### **Which style of furniture do you prefer?**

- Traditional fingerpost signs
- Where possible try to match the existing fingerposts
- Contrast needed in signage, but not too modern
- Black signs with gold edging
- Wrought iron lighting to match iron and wood benches in Market Place
- Place lighting in the ground - flexible
- Signage should be consistent
- Downlighters not uplighters
- Put street lighting on buildings, not free standing
- More lighting in the market area
- Non reflective materials that colour contrast with surrounding area

### **Should furniture be same throughout the town or have subtle variations for individual spaces?**

- Benches in Market Place should be against Town Hall, not freestanding as they waste space

# Planting

## Are there the right number of trees?

- Too many trees decrease the flexibility of the space
- One nice tree is better than more small ones, but it shouldn't be dark
- Need more

## Are they appropriate for role and function of the square?

- Must be at least one oak in the Market Place!
- One central large oak with planters around
- In the correct places

## Upright, ornamental or more natural shape?

- Smaller trees, but need to be robust against vandalism
- Natural
- Oaks (palm & sessile are nice)
- Silver birch (pale bark)
- Dwarf conifers in planters
- Not too heavy looking but a good size for Christmas lights
- Not fruit trees (wasps!)
- Consistent with space
- Small growing
- Upright & natural

## Are planting beds appropriate for role of the space?

- Yes
- Raised beds provide delineation and ram raid protection
- Maybe troughs in the triangle, but scope for vandalism
- Green and flower planting is desirable but needs to be done tastefully
- Yes
- Peach Place, not Market Place
- Yes

## What forms of planting would you like to see?

- Planting that can be moved elsewhere during events
- Not too regimented - soft & flowing not straight harsh lines & boxes
- Lots of it
- "Green walls" instead of big bland walls

### **Update on issues relating to Wokingham Town Market Place Improvement Project:**

As the Wokingham Town Market Place Improvement Project comes to completion, members of the public are regularly raising a number of common, key issues.

#### **General safety issues:**

The new road layout and the 'open-plan' look of Market Place were designed following consultation with a wide range of groups including : Guide Dogs for the Blind, learning disabilities group (CLASP), Wokingham Healthwatch and the Alzheimer's Society. During the design development phase disability group workshops were held and a number of key issues were raised, including confusing signage, poor kerbs, poor paving (red tiles too slippery and cobbles that caused problems for many people).

The design of the scheme has undergone Road safety audits; these are normal practice for any highway improvement scheme.

A Road Safety Audit aims to identify potential road safety hazards arising from possible changes to the existing road layout; it is not a technical check against design standards or any amended traffic regulations but is an evaluation of any changes made during design, upon opening the road to traffic and, post-construction during everyday use.. Its purpose is to identify any potential road safety problems and to suggest measures which may help to eliminate or mitigate any concerns.

Road Safety Audits are undertaken by teams of specialists trained in the road safety engineering and accident prevention.

#### **Vehicle Behaviour**

There have been a number of incidences of cars and other vehicles driving on to or parking on the pedestrian area of Market Place. This is obviously extremely dangerous as well as being illegal and we are calling on drivers to respect the new road layout and not put people's safety at risk. There are clear no entry signs on Denmark Street but we will have to consider further measures if drivers continue to act irresponsibly.

#### **Trip hazards**

We are aware that some people have tripped on the new kerb layout and have a great deal of sympathy for anybody who has been injured. Safety for all pedestrians is of paramount importance, which is why the project was designed with the input of representatives from accessibility and disability groups. Despite this pre-consultation, we are however not complacent on this issue; if changes are necessary to ensure all people can safely access the town centre, we will make them.

Although the new kerb height is in the main as the original, there have been negative comments and questions about not only this but also its appearance and these are being looked at as part of the safety audit.

We do understand that it naturally takes a little while for people to become accustomed to any new road layout and so we need to allow some time for this and not make spontaneous knee-jerk reactions.

No design can please everybody and change takes a while to get used to but the feedback we received during the design stage was generally a dislike for the old red brick and support for use of more natural material that would provide a neutral backdrop for the town hall and other historic buildings. There was support for a high quality, natural product befitting the local historic buildings.

Another reason for choosing the York Stone is that is not slippery even when wet, unlike the old red brick that had a polished finish and could be treacherous under foot during inclement weather.

### **Costs and Project over-run**

WBC has apologised, and continues to apologise for the delays to the project. It has taken longer than anybody could have foreseen and has caused more disruption than was originally envisaged.

The delays to completion are largely resultant from the magnitude of the problems found beneath the pavement surface. Notwithstanding the normal pre-commencement ground surveys, the sheer volume of works affected by uncharted old carriageway, building foundations and shallow utilities apparatus could simply not have been reasonably anticipated.

Although we believe the underground conditions were a significant cause of delay, we have commissioned an independent enquiry into the project in order to fully understand the issues.

The original budget for the project was 3.8million plus contingency. We are now in discussion with costs and charges with Balfour Beatty and a final budget will be settled after these discussions.

### **Cycle tracks**

There are no cycle tracks in the new Market Place. One of the key objectives, as was supported during the consultation phase, was to declutter the space and make it more useable for events and maximise pedestrian circulation space. Separate cycle lanes would take up a significant proportion of the space and with a low through-traffic speed (a slow steady flow rather than stop start) these were not considered necessary. Further, with no cycle paths tying into in the local road network the routes would be discontinuous and only serve very short lengths of highway.

We have increased the number of cycle stands in the market place, These are strategically placed such that people can stop and conveniently walk to a chosen local destination. Additional cycle stands will be placed within the adjacent Peach Place and Elms Fields developments.

### **Blue Badge spaces**

There are seven disabled parking bays in the new Market Place; three are in Broad Street outside Boots and four in Denmark Street. They will be clearly signed.

### **Cleaning and sealing**

Irresponsible drivers continue to leave after-hours tyre marks on the York Stone; these will be removed and the whole area cleaned and sealed before Balfour Beatty hand the site over the WBC. Thereafter the areas will be regularly cleaned by WBC.

### **Trees**



Four new trees have been planted in Market Place as part of the project. These have been planted in tree pits that will allow them to grow healthily without their roots causing damage to the paving or roads.

It had been hoped to plant two more trees to the east of the town hall, however when the ground was excavated there were this was numerous utility pipes in the ground that were not picked up from the original survey.

Many of the utilities were quite near the surface and so caused additional problems regarding preparing the sub-base for the paving. Alternative locations were investigated but it did not prove possible to find a workable location.

Hornbeams were selected for the Market Place because they are large trees that grow well in town centres: they are tolerant of pollution and have good resistance to disease. Hornbeams are deciduous but have small leaves so will not cause as much disruption, through leaf-fall, in the autumn.

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**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ACORNS  
PROJECTS  
LIMITED**



**Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire  
Environmental Improvements  
Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit**

**For Wokingham Borough Council  
Prepared by Acorns Projects Limited  
Safety Traffic Project Management & Highway Engineering Consultants**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Acorns Projects Limited**  
Safety Traffic Project Management & Highway Engineering Consultants  
Redwood House  
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**Version No: 1.0**

## Document Location

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This is a controlled document. The source of the document can be found on the file server at location:

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## Revision History

This document has the following history:

Version No.	Version Date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
1.0	01/09/2018	N/A	N/A

## Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Title
Adriano B. Cappella	Audit Team Leader
Lisa Allen	Audit Team Member

## Distribution

This document has also been distributed to:

Name	Title & Organisation
Ian Haller	Service Manager - Highway Delivery - Wokingham Borough Council
Paul Miller	Market Place NEC Contract Project Manager - Wokingham Borough Council
Chris Easton	Wokingham Borough Council
Stephen Reed	Technical Director - WSP
Richard Brommell	Principal Engineer - WSP
Graham Lee	Associate (Traffic Signals) - WSP
Tony Jackman	CDM Advisor - WSP
David Edmond	Hampshire & Thames Valley Joint Operations Road Policing

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report results from an Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit carried out on the Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire, Environmental Improvements Project, at the request of Wokingham Borough Council, Highways and Transport, PO Box 153, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1WL. The Design Organisation is the WSP Wokingham Highway Alliance, who are based within the Highways and Transport offices in Wokingham.

1.2 The scheme currently under construction comprises of Environmental Improvements to Broad Street, Denmark Street and the area surrounding the historic Town Hall building. A new junction arrangement at Broad Street and Rose Street has been constructed. The existing vehicular carriageways have been narrowed and two new traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossing facilities have been provided on raised platforms in Broad Street and Market Place respectively. In addition, three new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities have been constructed, one of which is in Broad Street and two of which are in Market Place, again on raised platforms.

New loading and disabled parking bays have been provided and the whole area has been repaved and resurfaced. New traffic signs and street lighting complete the currently under construction Environmental Improvements project.

1.3 The Audit Team membership was as follows:

Adriano B. Cappella IEng, FIHE, MCIHT, MSoRSA, HA RSA Certificate of Competency  
(Audit Team Leader) Director, Acorns Projects Limited

Lisa Allen MSc, BEng (Hons), MCIHT, MSoRSA, HA RSA Certificate of Competency  
(Audit Team Member) Associate Consultant, Acorns Projects Limited

1.4 Also in attendance during the daytime Audit were:

Graham Lee WSP

Tony Jackman WSP

David Edmond Hampshire & Thames Valley Joint Operations Road Policing

1.5 Also invited to attend but had to decline due to other commitments were:

Ian Haller Wokingham Borough Council

Paul Miller                      Wokingham Borough Council

- 1.6**      The Audit took place at the Eaton Bray office of Acorns Projects Limited during August and September 2018. The Audit was undertaken in accordance with the Audit Brief contained in the WSP Wokingham Highway Alliance E-Mail to Acorns Projects Limited dated the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The Audit comprised an examination of the drawings and documents provided by the Design Organisation for review at this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit and, are listed in Annex A.
- 1.7**      The drawings and document consisted of a copy of the general arrangements, longitudinal sections, contours, isopachyte contour layouts, site clearance, surface water drainage, slot drain arrangements, surface water drainage longitudinal sections, external works, carriageway construction, typical cross sections, signs and road markings, utility arrangements, horizontal setting out, string labels, proposed electrical layout, dual puffin crossing refurbishment details, utilities & topographical details, landscaping details and, a feasibility lighting study document. Copies of the scheme drawings at both A3 and A4 size were provided for the Audit Team's use. Road traffic collision data, vehicular traffic flow data, pedestrian and pedal cycle accessibility information and, public transport information has not been provided for the purposes of this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.
- 1.8**      A visit to the site was undertaken during the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 by both Audit Team Members together. Also in attendance were the parties identified in Paragraph 1.4. During the afternoon site visit, the weather was hot and sunny and, the existing carriageway surface was dry. Vehicular traffic conditions at the time of the afternoon site visit were observed to be moderate to heavy on occasions, in part due to the on-going construction works in Broad Street, Peach Street and Market Place. This restricted and limited the Audit Team's ability to fully assess any potential road safety issues of these currently under construction areas of the project. A significant number of pedestrians and a reasonable number of pedal cyclists were observed during the afternoon site visit.
- 1.9**      The terms of reference of the Audit are as described in HD 19/15. The Audit Team has examined and reported only on the road safety implications of the scheme as presented and, has not examined or verified the compliance of the designs to any other criteria. However, to clearly explain a safety problem or the recommendation made to resolve the identified problem, the Audit Team may, on occasion, have referred to a Design Standard without touching on technical audit.
- 1.10**     No Departures from Design Standards have been reported by the Design Organisation.

- 1.11** All Problems and Recommendations are referenced to the design drawings and the locations have been indicated on the A4 plan supplied for use by the Audit Team in Annex B.
- 1.12** Issues identified and observations made during this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit and site inspection which the Terms of Reference exclude from this report, but which the Audit Team wishes to draw to the attention of the Audit Project Sponsor, i.e. the Local Highway Authority, Wokingham Borough Council, will be set out in a separate letter. These issues could include maintenance items and operational issues. In this regard, the Audit Team have made reference to six issues identified and observations made as referred to in a Covering Letter to the Client Organisation, Wokingham Borough Council, dated the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018. This Covering Letter should be supplied to the Design Organisation, WSP Wokingham Highway Alliance, and be considered in conjunction with this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit Report.

## **2.0 ITEMS RAISED AT THE COMBINED STAGE 1 AND 2 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

- 2.1** The safety aspects of the Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire, Proposed Environmental Improvements Project were the subject of comment in the October 2016 Combined Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audit undertaken by Acorns Projects Limited.
- 2.2** The Design Organisation, WSP Wokingham Highway Alliance, responded to the Combined Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audit Report in November 2016, whereby the safety aspects raised were discussed and mitigating measures proposed.
- 2.3** All of issues raised in the October 2016 Combined Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audit undertaken by Acorns Projects Limited have been resolved.



### **3.0 ITEMS RAISED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

#### **3.1 GENERAL**

**3.1.1** No Problems identified in this category at this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.

#### **3.2 LOCAL ALIGNMENT**

**3.2.1** No Problems identified in this category at this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.

#### **3.3 JUNCTIONS**

**3.3.1** No Problems identified in this category at this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.

#### **3.4 NON MOTORISED USER PROVISION**

##### **3.4.1 PROBLEM**

Locations 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 - The traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities (Drawing No. MP/100/100 Rev A).

Summary - Lack of conspicuity of the brass tactile paving studs at the traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities could result in a detriment to the operational safety for pedestrians, particularly those pedestrians who are visually impaired (i.e. not blind pedestrians).

The currently under construction scheme includes the use of brass tactile paving studs inserted into the Yorkstone paving instead of traditional tactile paving slabs. Ordinarily, red coloured tactile paving would be installed at Locations 1 and 2 and, buff coloured tactile paving slabs would be installed at Locations 3, 4 and 5.

Whilst the Audit Team acknowledge the design objectives of the Environmental Improvements project, the site visit has established that the brass tactile paving studs are not currently particularly conspicuous against the background of the new Yorkstone paving.

Contrasts in colour and tone are normally used to accentuate the presence of both traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities, which, following many years of use on the public highway network, blind, visually impaired and fully sighted pedestrians fully and clearly understand. Because the brass tactile paving studs are not particularly conspicuous due to the lack of colour contrast, the operational road safety benefits for pedestrians resulting from the installation of both the traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities may not be fully derived in the future scenario.

Concern arises that instead of a pedestrians' mindset being to focus upon and utilise the easily recognisable traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities, pedestrians are likely to cross on an ad-hoc basis within the overall area of the Environmental Improvements project. This could result in a slight increased risk of vehicular/pedestrian conflicts and subsequent vehicular/pedestrians collisions occurring, whereby pedestrians could potentially sustain personal injury.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is Recommended that upon completion of the construction stage of the project and once a "settling in" period has elapsed, this matter should be reviewed during the final Stage 3 Road Safety Audit process.

#### **3.4.2 PROBLEM**

Locations - General, within the lengths/areas of the Environmental Improvements Project (Drawing No. MP/100/100 Rev A).

Summary - Lack of conspicuity of the kerb upstand could result in potential trip hazards for pedestrians, whereby personal injury could be sustained.

The currently under construction scheme includes a cross section comprising a stone mastic asphalt surface course, a granite sett channel line and adjacent granite kerbs. The kerb upstand adjacent to the channel line is 50 mm.

During the site visit, the Audit Team were approached by pedestrians who raised an issue regarding the similarity of the silver grey granite sett channel line and the adjacent silver grey granite kerb upstand. This anecdotal evidence suggests the granite sett channel line and the adjacent granite kerb upstand are not clearly distinguishable or particularly conspicuous, based on their respective silver grey colours.

Ordinarily, a black asphalt surface extending across the full width of a vehicular carriageway would make a grey kerbline distinguishable and conspicuous to any pedestrians crossing. Similarly, in terms of easy recognition, a regular 125mm kerb upstand will be clearly seen by pedestrians when crossing a vehicular carriageway.

However, the silver grey granite sett channel line and the adjacent silver grey granite kerb upstand, combined with a relatively low 50 mm upstand, appears to result in a potential trip hazard now being present. Concern arises that should pedestrians trip and consequently fall, personal injury could be sustained.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is Recommended that upon completion of the construction stage of the project and once a “settling in” period has elapsed, this matter should be reviewed during the final Stage 3 Road Safety Audit process, with a view to potentially highlighting in some suitable and appropriate manner, the presence of the silver grey granite sett channel line directly adjacent to the silver grey granite kerb upstand.

## **3.5 ROAD SIGNS, CARRIAGEWAY MARKINGS & STREET LIGHTING**

**3.5.1** No Problems identified in this category at this Interim Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.

### **END OF PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDATIONS OFFERED IN THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

#### 4.0 AUDIT TEAM STATEMENT

We certify that this Audit has been carried out in accordance with HD 19/15.

##### AUDIT TEAM LEADER

Adriano B. Cappella IEng, FIHE, MCIHT, MSoRSA, HA RSA Certificate of Competency  
Director  
Acorns Projects Limited  
Safety Traffic Project Management & Highway Engineering Consultants  
Redwood House  
3 Eaton Park  
Eaton Bray  
Bedfordshire  
LU6 2SP

Signed :



Date : 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018

##### AUDIT TEAM MEMBER

Lisa Allen MSc, BEng (Hons), MCIHT, MSoRSA, HA RSA Certificate of Competency  
Associate Consultant  
Acorns Projects Limited  
Safety Traffic Project Management & Highway Engineering Consultants  
Redwood House  
3 Eaton Park  
Eaton Bray  
Bedfordshire  
LU6 2SP

Signed :



Date : 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018

# **ANNEX A**

## ANNEX A

### MARKET PLACE, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

#### INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

#### LIST OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

DRAWING NO.	TITLE
5049-MP/100/100 Rev A	General Arrangement Overview
5049-MP/100/101 Rev A	North Side General Arrangement
5049-MP/100/102 Rev A	East Side General Arrangement
5049-MP/100/103 Rev A	Town Hall General Arrangement
5049-MP/100/104 Rev A	Market Place General Arrangement
5049-MP/100/110 Rev A	North Side Longitudinal Sections
5049-MP/100/111 Rev A	East Side Longitudinal Sections
5049-MP/100/120 Rev A	North Side Contour Arrangement
5049-MP/100/121 Rev A	North Side Isopachyte Contour Layout
5049-MP/100/122 Rev A	East Side Contour Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/100/123 Rev A	East Side Contour Arrangement Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/100/124 Rev A	East Side Isopachyte Contour Layout Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/100/125 Rev A	East Side Isopachyte Contour Layout Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/100/126 Rev A	Town Hall Contour Arrangement
5049-MP/100/127 Rev A	Town Hall Isopachyte Contour Arrangement
5049-MP/100/128 Rev A	Market Place Contour Arrangement
5049-MP/100/129 Rev A	Market Place Isopachyte Contour Arrangement
5049-MP/200/101 Rev A	North Side Clearance
5049-MP/200/102 Rev A	East Side Site Clearance Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/200/103 Rev A	East Side Site Clearance Sheet 2 of 2

**LIST OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT (CONTINUED)**

<b>DRAWING NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
5049-MP/200/104 Rev A	Town Hall Site Clearance
5049-MP/200/105 Rev A	Market Place Site Clearance
5049-MP/500/101 Rev A	North Side Surface Water Drainage
5049-MP/500/102 Rev A	East Side Surface Water Drainage Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/500/103 Rev A	East Side Surface Water Drainage Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/500/104 Rev A	Market Place Surface Water Drainage
5049-MP/500/110 Rev A	North Side Drainage Slot Drain Arrangement
5049-MP/500/111 Rev A	East Side Drainage Slot Drain Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/500/112 Rev A	East Side Drainage Slot Drain Arrangement Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/500/113 Rev A	Town Hall Slot Drain Arrangement
5049-MP/500/115 Rev A	Market Place Slot Drain Arrangement
5049-MP/500/120 Rev A	Proposed Surface Water Drainage Longitudinal Section
As Shown MP_500_121 Rev A	Proposed Surface Water Drainage Longitudinal Section East Side
5049-MP/700/101 Rev A	North Side External Works
5049-MP/700/102 Rev A	North Side Carriageway Construction
5049-MP/700/103 Rev A	East Side External Works
5049-MP/700/104 Rev A	East Side Carriageway Construction Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/700/105 Rev A	East Side Carriageway Construction Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/700/106 Rev A	Town Hall External Works
5049-MP/700/107 Rev A	Market Place External Works
5049-MP/700/110 Rev A	Platform Arrangement External Works
5049-MP/700/111 Rev A	Platform Arrangement Typical Cross Section
5049-MP/700/112 Rev A	Loading/Disabled Bay Arrangement External Works
5049-MP/700/113 Rev A	Loading/Disabled Bay Arrangement & Pedestrian Area Typical Cross Section
5049-MP/700/114 Rev A	Town Hall Arrangement External Works

**LIST OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT (CONTINUED)**

<b>DRAWING NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
5049-MP/1200/101 Rev A	North Side Signs And Road Markings
5049-MP/1200/102 Rev A	Sign Design Details
5049-MP/1200/103 Rev A	East Side Signs And Road Markings
5049-MP/1200/104 Rev A	Town Hall Signs And Road Markings
5049-MP/1200/105 Rev A	Market Place Signs And Road Markings
5049-MP/1400/101 Rev A	North Side Utility Arrangement
5049-MP/1400/102 Rev A	East Side Utility Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2
5049-MP/1400/103 Rev A	East Side Utility Arrangement Sheet 2 of 2
5049-MP/1400/104 Rev A	Town Hall Utility Arrangement
5049-MP/1400/105 Rev A	Market Place Utility Arrangement
5049-MP/SO/101 Rev A	North Side Horizontal Setting Out
5049-MP/SO/102 Rev A	North Side String Labels
5049-MP/SO/103 Rev A	East Side Horizontal Setting Out
5049-MP/SO/104 Rev A	East Side String Labels
5049-MP/SO/105 Rev A	Town Hall Horizontal Setting Out
5049-MP/SO/110 Rev A	Town Hall Setting Out
5049-MP/SO/111 Rev A	Demarcation Markers Setting Out
MPLACE_Electrical Rev A	Proposed Electrical Layout
PW131/TS/001 Rev B	Market Place Dual Puffin Crossing Refurbishment

**LIST OF SUMO SERVICES LIMITED DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

<b>DRAWING NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
8903_01 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_02 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_03 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details



**LIST OF SUMO SERVICES LIMITED DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT (CONTINUED)**

<b>DRAWING NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
8903_04 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_05 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_06 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_07 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_08 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_09 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_10 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_11 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_12 Utility	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_03	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_04	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_05	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_06	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_07	Utilities & Topographical Details
8903_Topo_08	Utilities & Topographical Details

**LIST OF GREEN BLU URBAN DRAWINGS REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

<b>DRAWING NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
001 - Rev A	Tree Pit Installation System = Tree Pit Plan View - Rootspace Locations
002 - Rev A	Tree Pit Installation System - Typical Tree Pit Design - Rootspace 4.0m x 4.0m

**LIST OF DOCUMENT REVIEWED AT THIS INTERIM STAGE 3 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT**

<b>WSP   Parsons Brinckerhoff - Feasibility Lighting Study - May 2016</b>
---

# **ANNEX B**



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# Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 02  
21/07/17

We are very pleased to confirm that construction to refurbish the Market Place will now begin week commencing 31<sup>st</sup> July.

As you know the work will transform the heart of Wokingham into a continental-style space of café tables, market stalls, attractive trees and stylish paving designed for all.

The town centre is still very much open for business and our contractor Balfour Beatty will be working closely with all of you to ensure access is maintained at all times.

We will work with you during the construction keeping you informed about what is happening and when. We know there will be disruption but the new Market Place will be a fantastic space for both businesses and residents; a place where people can relax and where community events and entertainment can easily take place.



## Working with Balfour Beatty

Balfour Beatty is delighted to have been awarded this project for the Improvements works at the Market Place through the Scape National Civil Engineering and Infrastructure Framework, by Wokingham Borough and Wokingham Town Councils.

Balfour Beatty has extensive experience in delivering projects of this calibre, with social infrastructure and public spaces one of its core areas of expertise, having recently completed works to the local Carnival town centre car park in Wokingham and the ongoing refurbishment of Swaffham War Memorial in Norfolk.

As part of the works, Balfour Beatty will strive not only to provide exceptional service for Wokingham but attract new investment to the area through the improved infrastructure and nearby facilities. On completion, the scheme will create



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# Improving our Market Place

a newly renovated space, levelled to be more inclusive and offering greater flexibility for public, community events.

Jon Winter, Managing Director for Balfour Beatty's Regional construction business in the South, said: "We're delighted to have been awarded another contract by Wokingham Borough Council through the Scape Civil Engineering and Infrastructure Framework. The initial phase of works, which follows from the recent completion of the Carnival multi-storey car park in the town centre, will support the council's ongoing regeneration scheme and significantly improve local amenities for both residents and businesses alike."

## Planning, Preparation and Phasing

During our pre-construction works a great deal of planning has taken place on how to build the project in the safest and most efficient manner whilst causing minimal disruption to the general public and local businesses. This will be achieved through careful phasing.

Utility works will begin with the closure of Denmark Street from 31<sup>st</sup> July through to late September.

Once Denmark Street is complete and reopened the utility work on Market Place/Broad Street/Rose Street junction will follow.

The main construction works will begin after the utilities are finished.

Early notification will be given as traffic enters the town and we will update you via this newsletter and on both Councils' websites and social media.

## Market makes a move

The market will be open for business throughout the construction and will be just a step away in The Plaza area outside Argos and Brown Bag.

All our regular traders have new pitches and will be pleased to welcome both regular and new customers. Do continue to support our traders in the next few months.

We look forward to working together to deliver our new Market Place.



## Want to keep up to date?

The following will be regularly updated:

Wokingham Town Council website

[www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

Wokingham Borough Council website

[www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Information Centre & Notice Boards at the Town Hall

Wokingham Town Council social media:

 /wokinghamtowncouncil  @wokingham\_TC

Wokingham Borough Council social media:

 /wokinghamboroughcouncil  @wokinghamBC

For queries:

[wokingham.environmental.improvements](mailto:wokingham.environmental.improvements)

[@wokingham.gov.uk](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Town Council: Jan Nowecki, Town Clerk,  
0118 978 3185



Wokingham  
Town  
Council

Balfour Beatty



WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 04  
29/09/17

As you receive this the work on the project has moved to the Boots side of Market Place and Denmark Street has re-opened. We appreciate that there were higher than anticipated delays during the first few days, exacerbated by issues on the M4. The traffic is settling, particularly as drivers find alternative routes if they are not using the Town Centre directly. Please be assured that the position is being closely monitored to judge whether changes need to be made and indeed the phasing of the traffic lights at the station has already been changed to allow greater priority from Wellington Road through to Station Approach. Up to date traffic information can be found at [www.roadworks.org](http://www.roadworks.org) and you can plan your journey at [www.myjourneywokingham.com](http://www.myjourneywokingham.com)

Utilities work will now be undertaken on the remainder of the site and this will be followed by the start of the construction and laying of the new York Stone surface. The utilities continue to be difficult with historic work poorly executed which needs to be addressed to ensure the high quality finish we are all looking forward to. Balfour Beatty are managing to deal with these issues and keep the programme on schedule.

We do recognise the disruption that is being caused and would like to thank businesses and residents who are working with us to ensure that the town is very much open for business. The refurbished Market Place is at the heart of the long-term vision for the future of Wokingham town centre, as set out in the 2010 Town Centre Masterplan, and improvements to Market Place have always been widely supported. The overall aim is to co-ordinate the vision for the town, reinforcing its quality whilst encouraging its viability for the future. The development at Peach Place, the forthcoming work at Elms Field and plans to tackle Carnival Pool, together with



Market Place will deliver that for everyone associated with the town whether as a business, resident or visitor.

We have been asked why Denmark Street has not had the finished surfacing laid at this point. In order to ensure a high quality finish, with all joints appropriately aligned, the York Stone has to be laid out from the building line of the Town Hall at the centre of Market Place. By so doing this will ensure that, visually and structurally, the surface flows from building line to building line across the space. As indicated in the last newsletter Denmark Street will be laid after Christmas once the main area is completed.

We continue to welcome feedback and comments and have valued discussions to date. Contact details are available at the end of the newsletter.



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# Improving our Market Place

## Of Interest

- Throughout the project we will be welcoming work experience students from our local schools and it will be a pleasure to give them such an opportunity at the heart of their own town.

At the beginning of September Balfour Beatty hosted their first student from St Crispin's. Mwamba Phiri spent 5 days as part of the employment and skills plan in place for the project. She spent her time working alongside the project team and learnt about the construction of the new Wokingham Market Place, assisted with procurement of materials for the project and also assisted with quality management.

Mwamba was an absolute pleasure to mentor for the week and we look forward to welcoming more work experience candidates.

Mwamba said: "I enjoyed spending the week with everyone at the Balfour Beatty offices within the Wokingham Market Place Scheme. Everyone was so helpful and my mentors gave me lots of insight I needed into my interests to work within design and architecture, as well as equipping me with plenty of practical skills. All I can say is thank you for having me."



- A number of market traders are now back from their holidays and I am sure you will be pleased to see Darren with his flowers and Rose and Charles with their plants and garden supplies. Please continue to support all the traders and share the site of their temporary home near Argos.

## Works update

### This month has seen:

- Continuation and completion of utilities works on Denmark Street which was reopened on 25th September 2017.
- The works included the installation of new ducts, replacement of steel gas mains and supplies into the buildings as well as adding protection measures for electricity.
- Difficulties arose due to uncharted services and problematic ground conditions.

### Next month will see:

- Diversion works on the main area of Market Place which were started on 18th September 2017
- During these works, we are planning to carry out the permanent construction of the substructure as the diversion works proceed, which will allow us to save some time on the programme going forwards.
- Main construction is planned to start mid-October 2017.
- Broad Street diversion works will continue into the main construction period and up to Christmas.

## Want to keep up to date?

### The following will be regularly updated:

Wokingham Town Council website

[www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

Wokingham Borough Council website

[www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Information Centre & Notice Boards at the Town Hall

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Wokingham Borough Council social media:

 /wokinghamboroughcouncil  @wokinghamBC

### For queries:

[wokingham.environmental.improvements](http://wokingham.environmental.improvements)

[@wokingham.gov.uk](https://twitter.com/wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Town Council: Jan Nowecki, Town Clerk, 0118 978 3185



Wokingham  
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Balfour Beatty



WOKINGHAM  
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# Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 08  
23/02/18

Thank you to those who have been interacting to say how pleased you are to see the quality of the surfacing that is emerging along the Boots side of the site. We are now able to get a sense of what will be achieved; the area on the corner in front of Clarks is considerably more spacious than before and the footpath in front of Piccolo Arco and Timpsons is much wider which will help pedestrians better navigate the town and also allow the restaurant to flow out onto this area. The carriageway itself, whilst wide enough for all traffic, will have the effect of slowing down vehicles as they approach the area, this is being achieved by the tarmac being narrower but lined with granite setts. The granite sett loading bays and disabled spaces are also near to completion on the Boots side.



The installation of the main tree pits is now complete, this has been a huge engineering challenge; each pit is 16m<sup>3</sup> and is then constructed with purpose designed structural cells to ensure that each tree has sufficient space and nutrients to thrive, whilst also ensuring that the surfacing is well protected from any future root damage. In addition



these systems also ensure the right level of structural support is given to each tree and root barriers are in place, where necessary, to protect any surrounding buildings. As previously indicated the trees are varieties of Hornbeam and all will be semi-mature at a planting height of approximately 5m, guards and grilles will be in place to offer protection in the first few years of growth. You will see trees arriving on site next week.



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# Improving our Market Place

The access to Broad Street will be open on March 23rd with Denmark Street re-closed the same day. This is a key milestone and we know that everyone will be very pleased and relieved; we would like to once again thank everyone for their support and forbearance as the difficulties underground have been resolved.

From this date everyone will be able to enjoy better access on the north side of the site, the pavement immediately in front of Piccolo Arco and Timpsons will be complete though the additional space adjacent to the road will still need to be laid with Yorkstone, the latter needs to follow from the main area in order for the pattern to align. Access to and around the Rose Street corner will be much easier with the temporary traffic management and barriers cleared. At this point there will still be work to complete the footways directly in front of the shops on the Boots side and the bridges will have to return; pedestrians will walk from the new paving adjacent to the road over the bridges into the shops. This area will be returned to for completion in early May.



Understandably we have been receiving questions about the overall completion date. At the moment Balfour Beatty's planned completion is July. Whilst this is later than envisaged and we know will be disappointing news it has proved impossible to recoup the delays that have been experienced in terms of the issues underground. It is the aim to claw some time back but we feel it is better to be open and honest with everyone about the current position. You will appreciate that the further into the construction the less problems are left to uncover but Denmark Street still has to be excavated and further problems may be revealed. We will keep you updated through our regular weekly updates and these newsletters.

This end date does not however mean that the whole site will remain closed off, there will be large areas completed between now and July and these will come back into pedestrian and business use as soon as they can be handed over. It is the intention to bring the market back as soon as possible, even if the project is not completely finished and we will be working with Balfour Beatty and our traders to make this happen.

Balfour Beatty are well underway with the final preparation on the west side in front of the Coop etc and the Yorkstone will start to go down in mid-March. Bridges will also need to return to the front of the shops on this side whilst surfacing is laid down the length of the walkway and Balfour Beatty will work with individual shops at that point.

## Timeline:

- March 23rd - Access to Broad Street re-opened
- March 23rd - Denmark Street re-closed
- Main area of Market Place (where Market is usually sited) completed - Early April
- Broad Street shop fronts completed - Early May
- Denmark Street carriageway realignment - Mid June
- Denmark Street shop fronts completed - Mid-July
- Market Place shop fronts completed - Early July
- The use of the new benches and street furniture - Early April.

Throughout this period WBC Highways and Balfour Beatty will be continually assessing opportunities to recoup time and open up the site as soon as is feasible.

Upcoming events such as the May Fayre and International Street Concert will still be taking place.

## Of Interest

### The Wokingham Mosaics

As the Market Place opens up you will see a number of circular mosaics embedded in the surface. These have been commissioned to add cultural interest and colour and others will be sited in the newly regenerated spaces over the coming years.

Working with mosaic artist, Rosalind Wates, they will highlight historical connections and events in Wokingham.



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# Improving our Market Place

The first to be laid will be one in front of Boots commemorating the Heelas family and their original department store with others closely following to mark the annual firework display, the Market Charter of 1219 and a poppy for Remembrance. More information about them will be supported on an app.

Within Peach Place the Methodist Church is funding a larger wall mounted display of mosaic fish. All of the mosaics are being privately sponsored by local groups and individuals and we are delighted that they have embraced the vision and joined the project. We are sure that everyone will enjoy these additions to our town and find the background to them very interesting.



## Publicity on the Hoardings

Working with The Wokingham Business Association Balfour Beatty has produced hoardings to promote local businesses within the town. We are delighted to be working with those businesses who responded to the invitation and continue to encourage everyone to “Shop Local”.

## Elms Field

You will have seen that enabling works have begun on Elms Field this month, with the main construction works starting mid March. Both the Elms Field and Market Place project teams are working together to ensure that construction activities are coordinated, especially on the highway, to minimise impact on residents and businesses. This includes undertaking highway works in off-peak hours when there is less traffic and where works are closely located undertaking these in parallel to minimise the need for additional highway closures and restrictions.

## Works update

### This month has seen:

- 300m<sup>2</sup> of the new natural stone paving laid to the northern footpath along Broad Street
- Asphalt laid in the newly realigned road in Broad Street.
- In the Market Place the new tree pit systems have been installed ready for the new trees to be planted next week
- Progress has been made with the foundations for the new pavement in the main area of the Market Place.

### In March:

- Completion of the works on Broad Street with the opening of the road on the 23rd March
- Completion of the foundations and starting to lay the new paving in the main area of the Market Place.



**Registered site**  
[www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

## Next drop in session:

**Town Hall**

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 10am - 12pm**

## Want to keep up to date?

### The following will be regularly updated:

Wokingham Town Council website

[www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

Wokingham Borough Council website

[www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Information Centre & Notice Boards at the Town Hall

Wokingham Town Council social media:

 /wokinghamtowncouncil  @wokingham\_TC

Wokingham Borough Council social media:

 /wokinghamboroughcouncil  @wokinghamBC

### For queries:

[wokingham.environmental.improvements](mailto:wokingham.environmental.improvements)

[@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:@wokingham.gov.uk)

Wokingham Town Council: Jan Nowecki, Town Clerk,  
0118 978 3185



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# Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 11  
25/05/18

This month has seen further areas of stone laid with the space in front of Boots gradually opening up and, whilst still constrained, The Courtyard Restaurant is able to use some outside space on the new Market Place which is very pleasing to see. This week the old fire station stones have been re-laid in front of Piccolo Arco, these are an important part of the town's heritage as the now restaurant and Timpsons were originally used as a fire station with specially sized engines to fit through the archways.

Difficulties have been encountered along the Boots side in terms of ensuring that the levels are correct to manage drainage but also to ensure that existing thresholds are well aligned with the new surfacing. It is clear on the Clarks Corner how well the stonemasons have achieved this and are continuing to do so along that whole side. The thresholds across the rest of the site will require careful management and expert stone laying to ensure the quality finish we are all expecting and this will take time between now and the completion of the project.

Denmark Street itself is now well underway but again difficulties have arisen from previous carriageways and much old material and debris has had to be carefully removed from the site before the main construction could be started.

Those of you who have been in town this week will have seen that the main benches around the trees have arrived. We have received a number of positive comments that they are really bringing the site to life and enabling the final finish to start to emerge. Please do take a look; the easiest viewing point is from in front of the Coop.



To make you aware there will need to be some further night work in the coming weeks to build the 'nose' in front of Costas which faces down into Peach Street. In July this area will need to be completed and at this point both Broad Street and Peach Street will need to be closed but this will be a full overnight closure and we will keep you informed via our updates.

## Completion

We are still hopeful that, as previously indicated, the project will be completed in mid July. However, if we encounter significant problems tying in the thresholds on Denmark Street this may stretch to the end of the month. Again we will keep you updated via the weekly schedules.

## Wokingham International Street Concert

You will be aware that the annual International Street Concert is taking place on June 2nd in Broad Street. We hope that many of you will join us for this free event



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# Improving our Market Place

from 6pm to enjoy a great evening of music and entertainment.

It has been agreed that Balfour Beatty take the opportunity of this planned road closure to carry out some works to the kerbline outside HSBC.

This will minimise further disruption and so the road closure will run from 8pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June to 6am on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. This work will not affect the Street Concert arrangements.

Traffic diversions on this day will follow the Winter Carnival routing down Easthampstead Road. Full details in advance on [www.roadworks.org](http://www.roadworks.org).

## Regeneration Projects

To keep up to date with the wider Regeneration works; Peach Place, Elms Field and Carnival visit: [www.regenerationcompany.co.uk](http://www.regenerationcompany.co.uk)

## Of Interest

### Forget Me Not Walk

A wonderful family day was held and over £22K was raised for Sue Ryder which is an amazing achievement



and undoubtedly some of our Wokingham Families will benefit at the Sue Ryder Centre at Wokingham Hospital.

## Time Capsule

A lovely event was held earlier in May when the capsule was filled ready for sealing and burying in front of the Town Hall. Students and pupils from some of our local schools have written letters describing what life is like for them in 2018.

Other items of interest included this year's Suffragette stamps, a set of 2018 coins, a local and national newspaper, town guide and various photographs and items that will really help those who open it gain a 'peek into the past'. We are indicating that the capsule should not be opened until 2068.

It was lovely to be able to welcome the young people to place their own items into the casket and also to work out how old they will be in 50 years time and wonder whether they will still be living in Wokingham as the capsule is opened.



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# Improving our Market Place

## Works update

### This month has seen:

- Installation of 180m<sup>2</sup> Yorkstone paving in front of the shops on Broad Street north footpath
- Installation of 42m<sup>2</sup> of Yorkstone paving in the Market Place and grouted 890m<sup>2</sup> which accompanied the opening of the entrance into Courtyard Restaurant on the 1st May
- Commenced Yorkstone paving in front of Piccolo Arco entrance and the laying of the Fire Station heritage flag stones
- Completion of the new surface water drainage and foul water manholes on Denmark Street
- Completion of the new surface water drainage gulleys on Denmark Street
- Removed 151m of existing asphalt road in Denmark Street and commencement of the excavation for the new road alignment and loading bays
- Installed 30m<sup>2</sup> of Yorkstone paving to the shop fronts in the Market Place
- Installation of tree guards in the Market Place

### Work Planned for June:

- Completion of the granite kerbs to the new road alignment in Denmark Street
- Laying of base course asphalt material to the new road alignment in Denmark Street
- Installation of granite setts along the kerblines in Denmark Street
- Completion of the remaining Yorkstone paving to the Market Place shop fronts
- Completion of the Yorkstone paving and opening up of the Broad Street shop fronts
- Installation of street furniture to site
- Completion of the Yorkstone paving in front of Piccolo Arco and Timpsons

- Excavation of the new footpaths areas to formation level on the east side of the Town Hall



**Registered site**  
[www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

**Next drop in session:**

**Town Hall**

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 10am-12pm**

## Want to keep up to date?

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# Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 14  
31/08/18

I am sure that everyone is pleased to see the Market Place being used once again, with people able to freely walk across the space and enjoy watching the world go by from the new seating. The mosaics are now emerging into view, offering colour and interest to the space, and in the evening the up-lighting is displaying the Town Hall architecture at its best.



minimising the domination of motor vehicles. Taking into consideration good practice and the feedback received from consultation - in particular from disability groups - we have maintained defined carriageways with both controlled and courtesy crossings, which are level with the pavement, to provide a choice of safe places to cross the roads.

Thank you for the feedback we have received in the last two weeks, all your comments are appreciated and where you have queried some features of the design these are being considered by WBC.

It will take us all a while to readjust to the newly refurbished area with many of you commenting on how much bigger it all appears, much of this is because the area to the west of the Town Hall has been levelled. This will allow for greater flexibility of use, whilst still maintaining access when necessary for servicing.

In response to some of your queries the Market Place has been designed to provide a safe and attractive space for both day-to-day use and special events, maximising the space available for people to circulate on foot whilst

A shallow kerb has been maintained to help define the edge of the carriageway (this is particularly important for people with visual impairment) but kept low to minimise the obstacle for people who are less mobile, including wheelchair and buggy users, if they choose to cross elsewhere (for example when the road is closed for special events). While the design is somewhat different to what we have been used to in Wokingham, similar schemes have been successful in many other locations and the design has been subject to the usual road safety audit process.

The controlled crossing has been retained between Barclays and Costa with a number of courtesy crossings, the approach to which are clearly marked by brass studs.



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# Improving our Market Place



A number of us have been appalled at the very poor driver behaviour where vehicles have been entering through the no-entry sign on Denmark Street onto the central market place itself. We are working with both the police and Civil Parking Enforcement Team to ensure that this behaviour stops. The experimental Traffic Regulation Order indicates that any access to the central area should be from the Boots side, exiting into the traffic flow on Denmark Street; loading is between 7-10am and 4-6pm with some limited permit entry for market traders and the Town Hall. Disabled parking and loading bays are positioned in front of Boots or on Denmark Street and we are encouraging these loading bays to be used wherever possible to limit activity on the central area.

## Market Returns

Next week we are delighted that the market will be returning home. We offer our thanks to those traders



who have continued to work from the temporary location and to those residents and visitors who have also continued to shop with them. This has been a difficult period and it will be great to see a return to the new space which offers better facilities and more flexibility for trading. Thursday 6th sees the Farmers' Market and in the coming months the Town Council will be working hard encouraging and welcoming existing and new traders as we start to develop the market once more. Please come and support your local market.

## Market Celebration

On September 15th the Town Council would like to welcome everyone to a celebration on Market Place where traders and a number of our local retailers and restaurants will be offering tastings and promoting their businesses. Come and join us for a day filled with entertainment and activities for all the family, we are combining this with our annual Heritage Day with the Town Hall open showcasing Extraordinary Women.



## Finally

This will be the last newsletter as the Market Place refurbishment draws to a close. Thank you to everyone who has shown an interest in the project; it has been a difficult and challenging experience for our town but the refurbished space will last for many, many years. Whether you have raised queries or complaints, phoned to find out more information or sent comments to help the project every interaction has been appreciated.

We will be in touch separately to see if you would like to keep in touch about other projects or on-going events etc in the town.

Wokingham Town Council: Jan Nowecki, Town Clerk,  
0118 978 3185



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## **Wokingham Town Centre Market Place Highways Project**

### **Responses to the Committee's Call for Questions**

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**Response for and on behalf of Autistic Pride Reading**, Registered Charity No. 1180805

We note the above-mentioned call for questions and would like to raise our formal concerns about elements of the Wokingham Town Centre regeneration project.

It is our understanding that various disability groups were consulted originally, but none of these appears to be a group able to give the perspectives of autistic residents. As you must be aware, one in 30 of the general population is believed to be autistic, a figure that will not be lower for Wokingham. The vast majority are not being guided round the streets by a carer, but are the business people, shoppers, parents, retired residents and other individuals who have to navigate the streets regularly on foot and by other means of transport. There are of course also a good number of autistic children and younger people who may at risk from the new scheme.

One of our team visited the town centre to find out how navigable and safe the new scheme is for them, as an autistic person with a fairly typical visual processing difficulty when in confusing and overwhelming situations - which presumably you know is a common feature of autism. (A sensory processing and social difference, not a 'mental health condition' nor a 'learning disability').

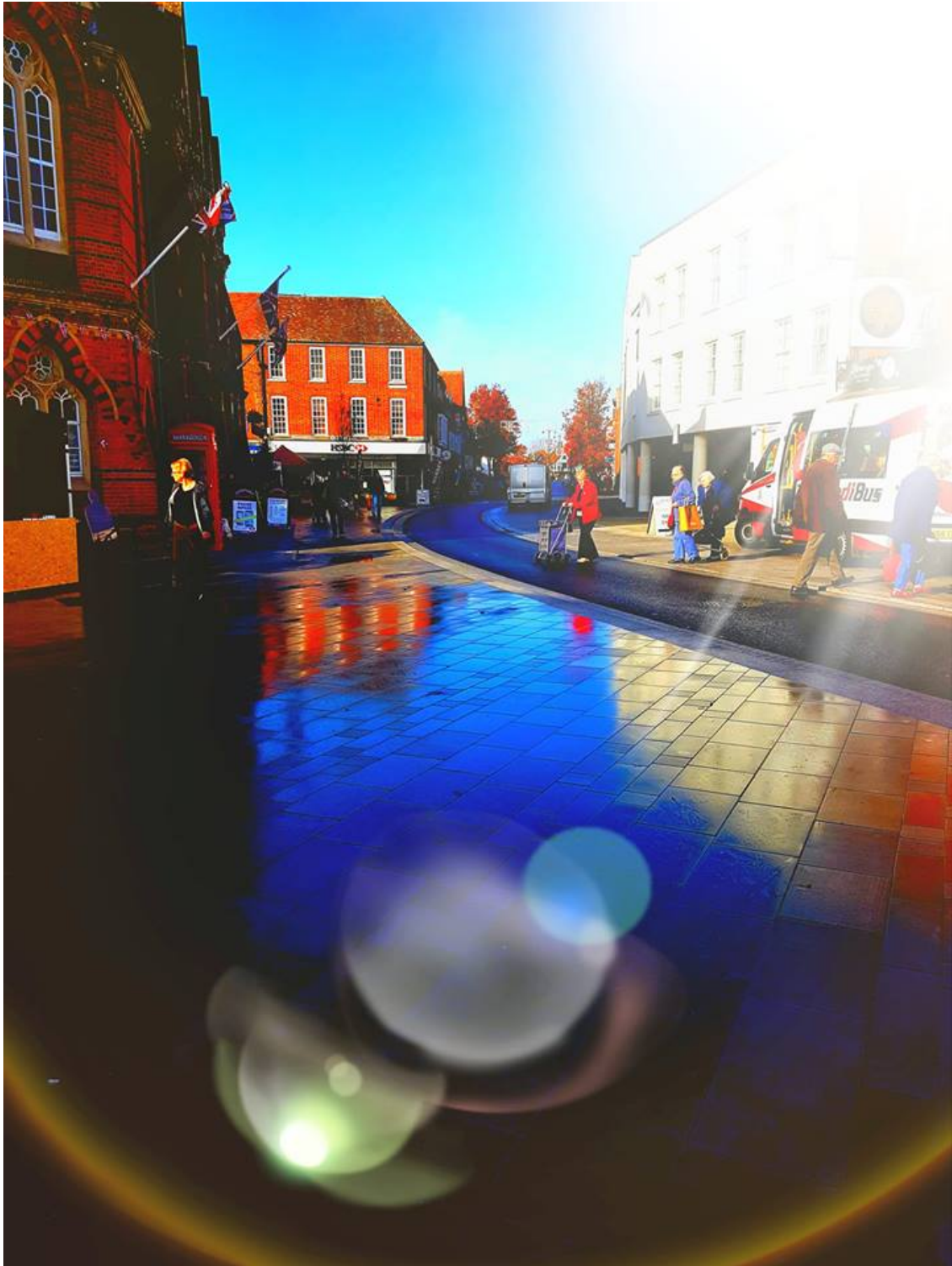
The attached photographs show the extraordinary findings. When wet, a dazzling paving scene with baffling layout. In terms of the disabled parking spaces, absolutely no way to distinguish those from pavement, for their visual processing. A near miss with a car was a result, along with nearly falling flat on their face over a seemingly invisible kerb.

This is a dangerous scheme, and the correct consultations were not done.

We would strongly urge the Council to consult properly, and to work with the correct list of groups to remedy the situation, before there are serious accidents that would have been preventable.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Autistic Pride Reading.







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## Response from a resident

### What Works Well

There are a number of elements to the market place regeneration that are much improved from what was there before. There is substantially less clutter making it easier to navigate the space, particularly for the disabled, and the removal of the large shadowy trees has made a positive difference for those with visual impairment. The market is much better laid out though with more attractive and interesting market stalls coming to town.

Keeping the controlled crossings is a good idea, making it safer for pedestrians to cross, and the fact that these and the uncontrolled crossings are raised makes it easier for wheelchair and pushchair users. The removal of the bus lane has also made the area safer, and the intention to reduce traffic speed is good (although not enough has been done regarding the latter).

The paving blocks being a single light colour makes it easier for vulnerable people to navigate and they are not as slippery as the red bricks making them safer.

The fact that there has been and continues to be a consultation process is good.

### **What Could Be Better**

Despite there being less clutter, A boards still remain a problem, particularly for those with visual impairments, as there is no consistency as to where they are placed.

Many users are struggling to understand the courtesy crossings being unsure on who has right of way. Whilst the courtesy crossings are vehicle rights of way, they are made with pavement material looking like a continuation of the pavement. Many pedestrians are walking out into the road not realising they should be giving way.

The loading bay outside WHSmith makes the courtesy crossing dangerous for pedestrians as you can't see if cars are coming as you cross towards the town hall if a large vehicle is parked there. This was a point raised in the safety audit in 2016.

Whilst there has been an increase in accessible parking bays, they are next to a 30mph road making it dangerous to open doors onto the carriageway. We have been told that the design was to reduce driver speed, which initially it did, but now vehicle users are used to it, the speed has increased again. Given the pedestrianised nature of the area, a lower speed of 20 mph would be much safer. Whilst the bays outside Boots have the carriageway on the opposite side of the car to the bays on Denmark Street, this then reduces the number of genuinely accessible bays.

The accessible bays are also not signed very well, and the fact that they are the same height as the pavement is confusing. The accessible bays also need to be marked out further with hatchings. Many disabled users need access to the rear of the car and it's been a problem when people come back to their car to find another car too close behind it.

Visually impaired users will struggle with the lack of colour contrast. Given that 96% of people with visual impairment have some form of vision, colour contrast is important to maintain independence. The granite sets on the side of the carriageway are therefore very dangerous as users cannot distinguish the pavement edge and edge of the carriageway resulting in a trip hazard. Several users have already tripped because of this. The kerb height is also too low for white cane users. Initially, the idea was to have no kerbs at all to ensure pedestrians had free flow movement. Kerbs were re-introduced due to accessibility concerns, but the compromise was reduced height kerbs to provide some definition, but low enough that people could still cross easily.

A senior officer stated that "to achieve the aim of creating a flexible space that can be closed to traffic for special events and allow people to move around the space more freely, it was decided to use a reduced kerb height that would allow visually impaired

people to identify the carriageway edge whilst maintaining some delineation for drivers.” Users though have now been criticised for crossing the carriageway not at the designated crossing points, so there is a contradiction. If pedestrians are to cross the carriageway at any point, there needs to be colour contrast of the pavement edge. If pedestrians were not supposed to be crossing here, why do we have a low kerb height? The colour of the granite sets has also been raised by the interim safety audit.

Tactile surfaces have not been implemented as per the guidelines. It should be red tactile paving at controlled crossings and yellow at uncontrolled crossings. The studs do not provide enough colour contrast and are not laid out correctly. This has also been raised by the interim safety audit.

### **Further Comments**

The Stage 1 and 2 safety audit report discussed the importance of colour contrast for visually impaired users of the market place area, and this is something that was also raised at the disability workshops, yet these recommendations were ignored. That same safety audit also picked up on the issues surrounding sight lines at the crossing near WHSmith which is still a problem for users.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not done for this scheme because (according to a senior officer) “it is not a requirement of every project.” However, Wokingham Borough Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty report clearly states the importance of EqIA in upholding the Equalities Act 2010. The reason for an EqIA not being required (according to the same senior officer), is because the disability workshops and government guidance was deemed adequate. However, this same officer also stated that some guidance wasn’t followed (such as *Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces*) because it’s not policy, and some of the feedback from the disability workshops was ignored.

The same senior officer as above also stated that “many guidelines advocate the use of colour / tonal contrasted marking to identify street furniture, railings, tactile paving surfaces and so on, however, in conservation areas, such as the Market Place, it may not be appropriate to use such treatments to help maintain the historic value.” How to treat a conservation area is subjective. Many would argue that the yorkstone slabs in the grey colour do not complement the red brick town hall. I would in fact argue, that the red tactile paving that should be used at controlled crossings would complement the town hall much better. To have put aesthetics over safety, particularly when aesthetics are subjective is unacceptable.

Wokingham Borough Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty states that “equality of opportunity and to the delivery of high quality services which meet the needs of **all** our residents.” This is clearly not the case with the market place. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are huge improvements to the space, the development has not gone far enough to ensure it is safely accessible to all our residents. Further still, this could have been avoided if WBC listened to all the feedback given in consultation (colour contrast has been mentioned on numerous occasions), guidelines were adhered to (they are not there to pick and choose from) and an Equality Impact Assessment was done.

Moving forward, I would like to know when and how the market place will be made safe, why WBC has gone against a lot of the guidance in front of them and not done an EqlA, and how future projects are going to be different.

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### **Response from a resident**

In my view Market Place is extremely dangerous.

The courtesy crossings are confusing, dangerous and have no legal status in the Highway Code.

The loading and parking pays are at the wrong level and seem like pavement not road and this makes them very dangerous when compared with the way Rose Street is set out.

HSBC bank is open to a ram raid and needs bollards around it. We have had ram raids at Wokingham Waitrose and Wokingham station in the recent past.

Market Place should have bollards to protect pedestrians from vehicles.

The kerbs are too low and vehicles can easily mount the pavement.

Cars speed from Broad Street into Rose Street because the bend has been made faster.

The fire escape outside HSBC bank is blocked by people and their belongings who sit there some days but not nights. You cannot allow fire escapes to be blocked.

I have studied safety in my career and I am horrified at the lack of safety in Market Place. I have raised these issues before and nobody in power seemed interested enough to take action. With safety you have to be proactive rather than wait for the first accident.

---

### **Response from a resident**

Please consider the following:

#### **Pedestrian safety**

Pedestrians and motorists are unsure about use of crossings. Where there are studs but no traffic lights, it is not clear who has priority. At light controlled crossings, the absence of countdown found, e.g. in London, results in pedestrians risking to cross in the period with 2 reds.



There are no barriers to vehicles entering the central paved area, making pedestrians vulnerable to unauthorised crossing (I have witnessed this with a white van taking a short cut). Also, in the extreme, terrorist activity.

### **CCTV**

This is required, both for safety, as above, and control of vandalism. The damage of every string of lights on the Christmas tree on the night of Christmas day is a case in point. It seems incredible that within a £4m project there was not provision for CCTV.

### **Choice of stone paving**

The paving is already becoming badly marked, both by traders' vehicles entering the paved area and oil leaks from vintage wedding cars outside the Town Hall. The former should be restricted and the latter banned. What provision has been made for cleaning and protecting the paving and will this be permanent or having to be repeated every few months?

### **Drainage**

Since rough-cast concrete rather than glazed pipes were used under the surface water drains, what provision has been made for regular rodding of these culverts to clear build-up of detritus?

### **Electrical supply**

No provision seems to have been made for electric points on the NW side of the Town Hall and SW side of the paved area, resulting in the use of above-paving cable channels for market stalls and certain events. Will the need for supply in these areas continue and, if so, will the paving be taken up to provide a safer and permanent provision?

### **Parking bays**

How will the conflict between previously parked cars and arriving delivery vehicles be handled?

### **Footfall**

Has the Council invested in footfall data, historical and planned, to judge the success of regeneration as a whole and in relation to retail growth or demise elsewhere. What is the marketing strategy to ensure Wokingham achieves more than elsewhere?

### **Congestion**

If potential visitors to the market place are discouraged from coming to Wokingham by difficulty of access with congestion, the much-awaited regeneration of interest in our town may not happen. With the easier access to Bracknell, it may be preferable to go there, although reports are that the Lexicon is not doing too well. What is being done to divert the traffic which does not want to stop in the town away from it, through distributor or relief roads, and to improve flow, but not maximum speed, through the town until these roads are completed? In this contest, please see my contribution to the **Transport Discussion Group** (below).

**Transport Discussion Group** – input 3 December 2018 following first meeting on 27 November 2018.

The following expands on suggestions raised last Tuesday. For reference, it includes ideas raised in November 2012, following a walk around the town with Officers, “Suggestions on Congestion and Parking”. It focuses only on the area where I live, close to Wokingham’s town centre, and looks at both short-term, up to 5 years, and the longer-term strategic needs.

### **Short-term**

In the period up to NWDR and SWDR being completed, congestion in the town centre will increase, at a time when we need to be attracting and retaining new retailers. To mitigate congestion, flow needs to increase but not at the expense of safety. Congestion and parking issues are closely linked and key themes are expanded upon here:

- Create a one-way circulatory road system within Wokingham Town Centre, removing all traffic lights from junctions and Pelican crossings;
- Prevent access to the circulatory system from minor roads which have become rat-runs and disrupt flow;
- Remove on-street parking from all major access roads and other pinch points;
- Create adequate long-term parking facilities at each access point and expand short-term parking facilities within the town centre;
- Remove “traffic calming” measures from major access roads and the circulatory system, whilst controlling average and maximum speeds.

### **One-way system**

Two major issues with this would be the routes and stops for buses and, with the new layout of the Broad Street and Rose Street junction, access to Rose Street.

### **Removal of traffic lights**

Except for the disruption of traffic accessing the Cross Street rat-run from Peach Street, traffic flows relatively freely at the Ship Inn junction. Such a layout should also be considered at Tudor House, Glebelands and Wiltshire Roads.

The traffic lights for pedestrian crossings by the Town Hall present an indirect hazard in that neither pedestrians nor drivers are sure who has right of way at the other new “studded” crossing points. Consideration should be given to Zebra crossings.

### **Blocking of access from minor roads to the circulatory system**

Elsewhere, comment has been made on the Luckley Path vehicle access and some residents asked for its reinstatement with access problems at the Easthampstead Road junction. The latter could be overcome with making the left-hand lane of the section of Peach Street between the Ship and Easthampstead Road being made “turn left only”. This would permit easy egress of traffic from Easthampstead Road. Rose Street, besides providing access to properties and retail, has become a rat-run in both directions.

By making Rose and Cross Streets both cul-de-sacs, traffic flow in Broad and Peach Streets and Wiltshire Road could be increased. However, the need for redundancy in the Town Centre road system is understood and hydraulically-operated bollards could be provided at the southern end of Cross Street and one end of Rose Street.

The original idea of making Rose Street one-way eastbound, if Broad Street were also to become one-way, is now hampered by the new layout of the junction by Clarks. It seems unthinkable to dig up the newly-laid pavement there but perhaps this would be the lesser evil.

Goatley Way is already one-way but I have seen vehicles using the road in the wrong direction to avoid the Luckley Path barrier. This is a less frequent issue but in the interests of safety, it might be better to make Goatley Way a cul-de-sac, too, accessible only from Luckley Path.

### **Removal of on-street parking from certain roads**

On-street parking is already a problem on Eathampstead, Wiltshire and Rectory Roads, restricting flow. On many other Town Centre roads, cars trying to find free parking for the day contribute to congestion, particularly in the morning rush hour.

There should be greater use of double yellow lines on major access roads, extending out, for example, to Star Lane crossing, Molly Millars Lane, Holt Lane, Matthewsgreen Road, Warren House Road and Priest Avenue.

Maidenhead seems to have come to a similar conclusion, with its extended use of double yellow lines; perhaps it would be worth contacting WAM Officers for comment.

On Rectory Road, double yellow lines from Tudor House to Waitrose would allow cars queuing for Waitrose to use the 3<sup>rd</sup> lane, leaving 2 lanes free, the left lane only turning left into Glebelands Road, the middle lane going straight on or, for Waitrose deliveries, turning right.

On residential roads within the town centre, consideration needs to be given to limited time restrictions around schools, to enable school run parking off major roads such as Easthampstead Road, and to greater use of resident permits. In this way, greater usage of official carparks should enable increase in revenues for WBC.

### **Long-term and short-term parking facilities**

With the restriction of on-street parking, above, increased legitimate town centre parking will be needed. The location of the new multi-storey carpark, with its location on the periphery of the town centre, reduces congestion as well as providing much-needed parking. Similar facilities should be considered at each major access point. Easthampstead East carpark could accommodate a multi-storey facility and would require improved access, perhaps from London Road, opposite the churchyard. It could provide a much-needed fillip to the eastern end of the town.

When approaching the town centre from the West, the provision of a better facility is not so clear-cut. What land is available, or capable of being purchased, around the station or Shute End?

Whilst it may be financially attractive to provide better, long-term, paid facilities around the town centre periphery, the need for good, affordable or even better, free parking, within the town centre is paramount. The next 5 years will be critical to attracting and retaining retail outlets. Consideration should be given to funding more free short-term parking in the centre of the town with increased revenues from the peripheral carparks.

### **Safe increase of traffic flow**

If increased traffic flow is enabled during peak hours, there is an inherent risk with maximum speeds at other times increasing to dangerous levels. There is a need to control both average speeds between points and maximum speeds. The technology is already here to achieve this, namely GPS monitoring and exposure of defaulting motorists. However, this might be insensitive from a privacy standpoint and difficult to enforce, legally. If these problems can be overcome, fine, but if not, traditional radar control of average speed between points and maximum speeds, with police enforcement may be required.

If the speed question can be resolved, investigate removal of existing so-called traffic calming measures, which seem to result more in frustration and greater speed between humps or strategically permitted parking for example, rather than overall control of speed.

### **Longer term**

Even when the NWDR and SWDR are completed, whether congestion in the town centre will fall to an acceptable level is moot point. With no major link from Molly Millars Lane to Reading Road, traffic will undoubtedly continue to use the Meadow Road rat-run.

Completing the ring around Wokingham through Smith's Walk has been discussed on a number of occasions but perhaps now is the time to consider its formal study and the possibility of a CPO or the one or two houses which may at present preclude its completion.

If Smith's Walk proves to be undeliverable, perhaps completion of the ring road further south, through Woodcraze, which I believed was discussed at a meeting of this group, should be considered.

Officers conducted a hot-spot analysis some years ago and this suggested the planned junctions by Tesco on the Finchampstead Road might not be able to cope with intersecting flows on the SWDR and Finchampstead Road. There were other hotspots so would it be worth updating this analysis and publishing it to the TDG members, who could then focus their attention on specific, known problem areas and suggest further ideas?

### **Suggestions on Congestion and Parking, Wokingham Town**

Whilst the following may be seen as being solely in the interest of Wokingham Town Wards, the resolution of congestion and parking issues here is material for the wider Borough, with its need for successful town regeneration and parking provision elsewhere. Comments are welcomed.

### **Congestion - premise:**

We may not have an effective relief road to North and South of Wokingham even after 2026, we need to improve traffic flow within the town now and plan for the longer term.

### **Observations:**

- 2-way traffic in Broad Street and need for traffic lights causes congestion for traffic approaching junction at Tudor House from Broad Street and Shute End;
- Parking on right-hand side of Rectory Road prevents filtering of cars waiting to enter Waitrose;
- Sharp corner at left turn from Rectory Road into Glebelands Road forces traffic to cross centre of Glebelands Road, preventing use of a left filter;
- Junction by the Ship Inn, with parallel then merging flows works well, bar the next point, below;
- Traffic from London Road wanting to access Cross Street, interrupts flow in Peach Street;
- Stationery traffic in Peach Street heading for the Town Hall ignores the turn left only arrow in the left lane at the Easthampstead Road junction, obstructing traffic wanting to turn left there;
- Traffic is using Goatley Way as a rat-run to Sturges Road, ignoring no left turn and a safety risk;
- There is a risk of injury to pedestrians with cars emerging from Luckley Path into Peach Street, owing to the former's narrowness and poor visibility;
- There is a risk of injury to cyclists and pedestrians with the unexpected contra-flow past the Town Hall and Boots for buses entering Denmark Street;
- Rose Street is used as a rat-run, from Broad Street to Wiltshire Road and from Peach Street to Broad Street, disrupting traffic flow at each junction;
- Broad Street is wide enough to allow a considerable amount of parking if it became one-way;
- Pelican crossings interrupt traffic flow more than Zebra crossings and the latter can be effective and safe, as demonstrated at the Hope and Anchor.

### **Suggestions:**

- Create a one-way circulatory road system within Wokingham Town Centre by making Broad Street one-way for all vehicles;
- Remove all traffic lights from junctions and Pelican crossings;
- Replicate the Ship Inn junction layout at Tudor House, Glebelands Road, Wiltshire Road and Easthampstead Road (at Glebelands Road, this might require a CPO for junction improvements);
- Close off Cross Street, Luckley Path and Goatley Way to traffic where they join or leave Peach Street and legitimise left turn for delivery vehicles leaving Goatley Way into Luckley Path;

- At junctions use islands and between these junctions employ use of raised kerbs between lanes to achieve “no merge”, “merge” then “must turn left” stretches (see sketch to explain this);
- Do away with all parking in Rectory Road by the old police station enabling 3 lanes: for traffic from Shute End, from Broad Street and waiting to enter Waitrose.

**Issues:**

- Positioning of bus stops and bus routing;
- Adequacy of parking (see below);
- Control of speed, especially outside rush hours.

**Longer Term**

- Assess impact of relief road via Smiths Walk and full Northern relief road on traffic;
- Estimate additional unfunded cost of these improvements in order to review priorities.

**Parking - premise:**

Free, limited parking has been requested by residents and may increase retail trade. However, particularly in times of restraint, we want to obtain the maximum revenue from car parks, consistent with their full utilisation.

**Observations:**

- Town centre car parks generally have less than 50% occupation on weekdays but little spare capacity on Saturdays. Over the week, this represents a significant loss of revenue;
- There is abuse of short-term on-street free parking and no provision for off-street free parking;
- Parking in residential town centre roads creates problems for residents (I have an interest here), increases congestion and potential revenue is lost;
- Parking on main roads into town centre causes congestion and frustration and is a safety issue;
- Signage to car parks is poor and uncertainty of where space is available causes unnecessary circulation of traffic if car parks are up to capacity;
- The WSP off-street parking study does not expand on the inter-relation with on-street parking and any decision on one without the other presents a risk;
- Increase in parking charges may impact retail trade or increase on-street parking in residential roads without the anticipated revenue gain;
- There is no all-day provision close to the market for market traders.

**Suggestions:**

- Carry out detailed off-street car park utilisation study before changing any parking charges;
- Structure parking charges, recognising price sensitivity, and consider dedicated areas closest to town centre for shoppers with first 30 minutes free;
- Have dedicated short-term areas, say up to 4 hours, closest to town centre;

- If Broad Street were to become one-way, introduce angled parking along the length of one side;
- Split the existing 6-hour area into 4 hours for shoppers and all day for businesses;
- Have areas which change from long- to short-stay from weekdays to Saturdays respectively, so that business users can pay for and take up unused car park space during the week, yet weekend surge for retail can still be accommodated;
- Introduce barriers with charge on exit to allow shoppers to stay longer to buy more;
- Introduce signage at entry points to town centre showing where capacity is available;
- Improve car park signage within the town centre;
- Endeavour to have easier access to parking at each entry point to town centre;
- Have limited-time only parking adjacent to schools;
- Change the rules so residents' permits can be used on some if not all roads within walking distance of the town;
- Extend double yellow lines on all main roads into and around the town, to the limit of walking distance, e.g. on Wiltshire and Easthampstead Roads as has already been done on Milton Road.

**Issues:**

- What is current utilisation of car parks and would taking up available weekday capacity raise sufficient revenue to offset loss through offering 30 minutes free?
- What is the distribution of periods of stay and how would this vary with changes proposed?
- What mix of free, 4 hour and all day parking provision would be required?
- Can sufficient free, on-street parking be provided, including the possible additions on Broad Street, above, without giving up part of the chargeable area?
- Will the business community accept the concept of being charged for all parking within walking distance of the town centre?
- Is their sufficient respect for double yellow lines for them to be effective?

- How do we enforce parking, in particular 30 minutes free and residents only?



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### **Response from the Wokingham Society:**

1. The 'call for questions' was given totally inadequate publicity in respect of local residents and organisations. The stakeholders list used by the Regeneration Team to arrange meetings and notify the local community in the past should have been used in this instance and we feel the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee should do so now and postpone their discussion until they have allowed time for additional responses.

2. As a Society we have been one of the stakeholder consultees from the outset and have taken part in discussions on the Public Realm and the Market Place, through exhibitions, meetings, forums and questionnaires since 2011. It would seem to me



very important that we and others like us should now be able to comment on the current situation and, indeed, be informed about further outcomes.

3. Our concerns, together with many others, about the lack of delineation of parking areas, the need for parking signage and the importance of deterring or preventing vehicles trespassing on the pedestrian apron were passed on to the Regeneration Team and we still wait to see solutions being offered.

4. We also wait to hear what is happening about the independent review of the Market Place Project announced by the Executive Member for Regeneration.

5. There is a 2013 WBC Wokingham Town Centre Design and Delivery Strategy, which includes proposals for the Market Place. Performance ought to be measured against policy expectation. Indeed, with the Strategy now five years old, it ought to be revised and updated, particularly in respect of the public realm radiating outwards from the Market Place, to ensure that the intended holistic approach does not become a series of piecemeal decisions.

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### **Response from a resident**

All very pretty, but what a horrific waste of Council taxpayers' money and as for the yearlong mess and disruption together with total incompetence of many of the workforce, I despair.

The lack of proper kerbing and little height difference between pavement and road is causing accidents and I sure hope the new paving is non-slip in snow and ice.

What Wokingham so desperately needs is relief from the mass housing estates and all the traffic and pollution that has been generated. It now takes forever to get anywhere and so much time is spent stopped at endless Traffic Lights the pollution level across the area is beginning to equal London.

Instead of the desperately needed truly affordable homes for the young we have ever more high end detached houses and now a huge hotel and the loss of more Green Space.

Instead of a joined up transport system we have a 'mishmash' with timetable for 4 and X4 just 5 minutes apart on the exact same route. What idiot thought that up? The Park and Ride is now far too small and a nightmare to exit from. Car Park charges are extortionate and then the country wonders why the High Street is dying.

Until the combined efforts of Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Borough Council get together and find a way to stop all the house building and the total lack of infrastructure, doctors, and a decent hospital instead of the disaster zone that RBH is.

There will be more and more totally fed up residents. As for all the parking restrictions and meters around the hospital Reading Council needs a total rethink

....its parking charges that drives everyone away from everywhere and that includes Wokingham and Woodley and Bracknell too.

After 42 years living in WBC the situation that's now been created is utterly intolerable.

There's not even a bus route that goes to RBH ... A town the size Wokingham now is needs a Hospital of its own not more and more Charity shops and a Piazza outside the Town Hall that most people have absolutely no use for.

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### **Response from a resident**

Prior to the regeneration plans being approved I wrote to the Council and Councillors expressing concerns about the general tone that was being used with regards to the "domination of cars" specifically in relationship to photographs of essential disabled parking bays. I was assured that the needs of the disabled community would not be forgotten.

Fast forward to just a few weeks ago and a much anticipated trip to the town centre which die to my disability and the unavailability of town centre parking and I was quite frankly furious.

1) Disabled parking bays on the market side of Denmark Street appear to have gone meaning disabled people have to cross the road to the other side ...not a big deal you say.... but there is a silly little kerb of about 4cm high, not easily visible, very easily fallen over;

2) The parking is not easily identified...so much so that if I hadn't seen another vehicle already parked I would have missed it all together;

3) It already looks horrible because parked cars have dripped oil or something similar onto the new parking spaces...;

4) The oil on the stones is a slip hazard as I discovered when I inadvertently stuck my crutch in one oil spill;

5) The lack of contrast between the pavement and the road gutter area makes telling where the edge actually is difficult. My eyesight is good enough to drive legally but as a pedestrian with the sun shining on the stones it's easy to think the kerb is a gutter width further away than it actually is;

6) The metal studs which I presume are there for the benefit of the visually impaired are slippery when wet.

All told, I can't help but wonder if the disabled community was consulted at all and if so were they listened as it appears that initial aesthetics have been given priority over long term practicality not just for the disabled but for everyone. Quite frankly, as bad as it was before with lumpy pavements and all the other issues at least the council hadn't wasted all that money.

Sorry if this isn't what you wanted to hear but the reality is I am unlikely to return often even though as a Woodley resident I used to visit Wokingham a couple of times a week.

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### Response from a resident

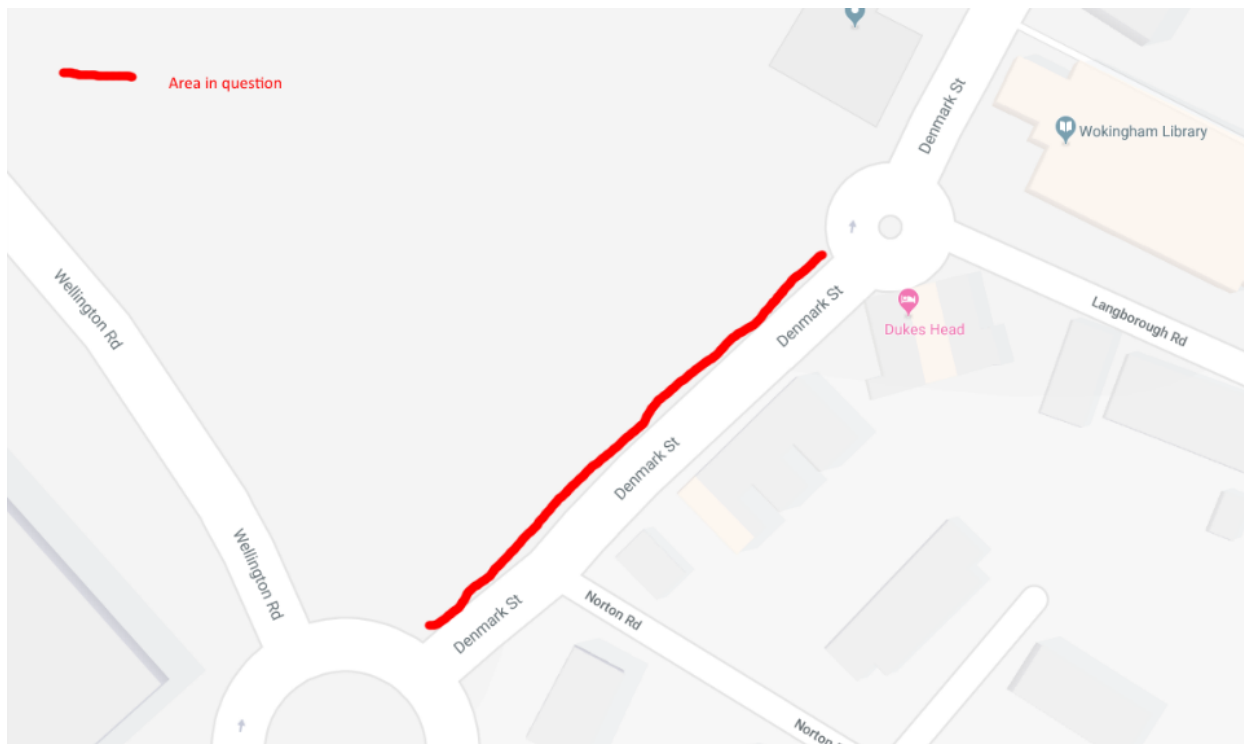
Can you please seek an answer to (during the meeting) and provide feedback on what on earth is happening with Denmark Street.

As you will be aware, a very high degree of vehicles use Denmark Street to either come out of town onto the Finchampstead Road, or use Denmark Street to go towards town and then along Langborough Road.

The stretch of Denmark Street from the roundabout to the Library is not at all wide. Why on earth, when taking down the trees in the park, along Denmark Street, did the Council believe it necessary to 'butt' the new buildings up against the very edge of the road rather than take the perfect opportunity to widen this part of the road.

It now seems as if a perfect opportunity to take a road that is both narrow and a pedestrian path that is also narrow and make both better. Would it really hurt having the new buildings being built just a few more feet in?

Why wasn't this considered, and if it was actually considered, why was it turned down. On what grounds was it not seen as advantageous?



I visited the Town Centre on Sunday with my niece who is a visitor to the area. When we were walking about I approached the crossing stage and she just carried on walking as she did not realise the pavement had stopped and the road began. There is no kerb to highlight the difference, or a yellow line to indicate awareness needed. She is a perfectly healthy person with no sight problems, she was looking around at the other shops across the road. I had to grab her arm to pull her back. She felt it was a very poor way of dealing with a road and pavement interchange.

Also there is very little distinction between the short parking area and the disabled parking in the road by Smiths and Boots. Also I have seen people getting out of cars that have parked there and opening the doors in front of cars coming along the roadway.

There was also a child of about 12 who was going home from school, I think St Crispin's, who shot out of the roadway by M and Co and only because I stopped he didn't hit me. He was travelling very fast and straight out of the road onto the pavement.

The distinction between the road and pavement is so slight fear older and young children will not notice it and fall over.

All these things are very dangerous

I do hope notice is being taken of our comments before an accident occurs it really is only a matter of time. Who really thought this was a good idea with heavy traffic coming through the town all day long.

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### **Response from a resident**

I've been told you're looking for feedback about the impact of the Wokingham town centre regeneration on us as disabled people. I am working age, a church minister, mum of a teenager and live in Lower Earley. I lost most of my eyesight (registered severely sight impaired) and mobility just over 3 years ago and use a wheelchair full time.

Before I comment on the accessibility of the regeneration of Wokingham I want to say that once I became disabled I could not access the town centre without someone to help me; the ground was uneven, the pavements uneven, the traffic too fast and the shops often inaccessible. The regeneration is definitely an improvement in terms of pavement quality, space, width of pavements and excellent crossing points; but it is not as accessible as I had hoped it would be and I still need someone to help me access the town. Below are the issues I've encountered:

1. Low kerb heights: I use the 4 or X4 bus to come into Wokingham and get off opposite the post office. The kerb heights are lower than those found elsewhere in the borough or in Reading town centre and this means that the ramp is much steeper than elsewhere - something which increases the risk of the wheelchair slipping - I've had a few bus drivers say they're concerned about this;

2. Lack of colour differentiation between pavement and road: I can see contrasting colours and use these, to ensure I don't fall into the road from the pavement; I understand that there is a colour difference between the road and the pavement in the town centre but I can't see that and, therefore, have to rely on someone else to keep me safe;

3. Disabled parking: the disabled parking bays are not accessible for me as a wheelchair user. Either I have to have my door opened onto the road, or onto a busy pavement. To transfer into my wheelchair the door must be fully open and my chair brought round from the boot of the car; this is obviously not possible in the road or on the pavement. However, this is no different than the issues before the regeneration, just a disappointment.

I hope this is useful; I'm happy to answer any questions this might raise.

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### **Response from a resident**

I don't like what has happened/is happening to Wokingham. This so called regeneration has ruined our lovely town.

The town centre is a disaster. Who ever thought of having the edge of the road the same colour as the footpath making the low kerb blend in and a trip hazard? It also leads to "jaywalking" where people just cross anywhere rather than the proper crossing places. The unloading/disabled bays are not clearly enough defined and cause problems with pedestrians.

The new buildings don't fit in with our town's character. What's happened to the trees we were promised? More lies by our Council, as with all the other lies they've told us (won't be removing the hedging at Elms Field, won't be removing the trees and hedging along Mathews Green Road, there will be no access to the estate there from Mathews Green Road, being just three).

The areas given to the people of Wokingham taken away by the Council to be used for things the people don't want. The roads are a disgrace, can't handle the increased traffic from the masses of houses built on our green fields. Houses, not for the people of Wokingham. My son and nieces, born, bred and working in Wokingham, can't afford to live here. Lots of retirement homes but not for the old of Wokingham.

Journeys that used to take an easy 10 minutes now take half hour or more. A trip to hospital in Reading took over an hour and Wokingham to Ascot on a Friday afternoon took just on 2 hours, unheard of a few years ago. Disgusting. Who on earth thought of the stupid cycle lanes? One minute on the road, the next on the pathway and in the case of by the St. Pauls parish rooms. Dotted lines allowing vehicles to park over the cycle lane. Of course it doesn't make any difference to the lycra-clad who ignore them anyway and do as they please.

And what do we get for this? Unacceptably high levels of air pollution from the increased traffic and stop/start driving, caused in part by all the new traffic and

pedestrian lights. High levels of light pollution, vehicle lights, street lights and building lights. Take a look at the station and its car park, the multi storey car park, etc. High levels of noise pollution, early in the morning to late at night. Hardly any respite on a Sunday when I used to be able to sit in my garden and listen to the birds sing. Not any more, there's a constant hum of traffic.

The excessive amount of building has caused problems with our wildlife, we now have problems with rats, never had before, but their natural habitat has been built over so they move on. The pollution causes health problems. Air pollution causes breathing difficulties and light pollution causes insomnia to name just two. Then there's the increase in criminality, never been this high before. We have vagrancy, people sleeping in doorways, a criminal offence, begging, "Nottingham knockers" running riot and more.

I can see why. Wokingham used to be such a nice place to live. Not anymore, it's a nightmare.

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### **Response from a resident**

My main concern is around the disabled parking spaces around the Market Place.

1. They are not very obvious to pedestrians as they blend into the pavement.

2. I was under the impression that the purpose of a kerb is to separate the road from the pavement and to protect pedestrians from road vehicles. However in the Market Place pedestrians step up off the road over the kerb on to the disabled bays. There is no discernible difference between the pavement and the bays except for a difference in surface texture. Pedestrians are continually walking on to the bays from the pavement as there is no kerb there. I myself have inadvertently walked on to the bays to make way for a pushchair and nearly been knocked over by a car coming up over the kerb on to the bays.

It's an accident waiting to happen as the kerb is in the wrong place. Many residents share this view.

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### **Response from a resident**

I assume there was a Business Case for such an expensive project and the works should be reviewed against it. It is difficult to see what functional improvement the community has gained from the investment. I have lived here long enough to remember when we lost the town centre parking around the town hall in exchange for the short stay Rose Street Car Park. The Council have, with this development, reneged on that deal without providing an alternative near the shops.

By running the project for such a long time the town centre has been permanently impaired as Bracknell has developed a much larger and more pleasant shopping and entertainment facility. Traders have been lost and without shops such as M&S, and Clintons the draw has gone.

The design has been poorly done with limited or ill-conceived consultation.

- The colour schemes and boundaries between pedestrian and traffic are dangerous.
- By choosing a pale pavement scheme the town has lost its traditional mellow appearance and now looks dirty and unloved.

Wokingham as a retail centre will never be a destination shopping experience. It can only ever be a local quick and handy place for immediate needs. Unfortunately people are unlikely to pay more for parking than they would intend to pay for goods. The design has not provided daytime short stay free parking for under an hour this will restrict the ability of the town to recover its trade.

As an example if I need a Birthday Card I am likely to head to Bracknell for Clintons where I can park for free at Skimped Hill and then wander round a larger mall than pay at a Wokingham Car Park.

I believe the Scrutiny Committee should consider the performance of the Council in developing a strategy for drawing people into the town centre to replace the losses brought about by the works.

It looks as if we have invested a lot of money without any gain - less safe, less pleasing to the eye, less traders, lengthy project changing behaviour so that people have got used to going elsewhere.

It also seems that no thought has been given to making the environment safe with CCTV which is expected of a modern town centre.

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### **Response from a carer registered with the Wokingham Outreach Service**

Please see below concerns and difficulties raised by one of our registered unpaid carers registered with us at the Wokingham Outreach Service.

I would like to raise, once again, the lack of toilets. Went on Sunday to see the Nativity...two buses as no No3 to Wokingham on Sundays...desperate for loo...could not see any signs on windows. Asked Round Table who did not know, said one in Old Town Hall where they were based, but it was locked. Asked four shopkeepers who hadn't a clue. Left early and crossed my legs.

Also the pavement/road/disabled parking, particularly by Robert Dyas, has only minimal separating sections in height so hard to see level changes and how blind

persons and assistance dogs manage heaven knows...in heavy rain or snow you would not see rise and fall.

Lastly, car parking. Had early meet for choir this Tuesday and tried 3 car parks before just caught somebody leaving. Others did the same and finished going down to multi and then walking back to Rose Street. It seems Wokingham is for the commuter, who park their cars early in the morning for the railway station... Wokingham is now non user friendly with lack of signed toilets, seek and search for parking and take your chance with the pavements.

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### **Response from Southern Co-op**

Thank you for your letter on 21 December inviting us to feedback on the recent Market Place town centre highways project in relation to our retail store in Market Place, Wokingham.

We appreciate this opportunity as there was, unfortunately, a large number of areas which we felt could have been significantly improved – many of which could have been resolved by a better level of consultation, communication and support both before and (perhaps more importantly in this instance) during the works as timescales and project details changed.

The lack of communication during the project led to some very serious issues including concerns over customer and colleague safety. Incidents included loss of one of our fire evacuation points, dangerous parking issues, increased crime including from workers on site and inappropriate comments. This is just a brief summary as the full list of incidents is much more extensive.

However, we realise a lot of this feedback may not be relevant to the upcoming Council meeting. If your councillors and/or officers would like to go through them in detail then we would be happy to meet them on site to discuss it in more detail.

We hope that you find our feedback useful for other projects in the future. We can clearly see that the final results of the overall project will improve our customers' experience of the area. For this we are grateful.

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### **Response from a resident**

I write as a blue badge motorist, who knows several visually impaired people.

I would like the on-street disabled parking bays to be more clearly marked, and, in particular, to have individual bays marked out to prevent cars parking too close to my boot and preventing me being able to get my scooter back in the boot when I return. That is the only comment from my personal viewpoint.



A cyclist friend says that the road past Boots is so narrow that it's dangerous to ride her cycle there for fear of being hit by a car whose driver decides to overtake. A widening of the road to incorporate a cycle path would be helpful, and there is plenty of space to do this.

Of the 3 visually impaired people I know, 2 have fallen or stumbled while crossing the road near Clarks shoe shop. This is because they cannot see the different shades of colour which differentiate the raised level at which to cross, and the two slopes for car drivers to get over the raised crossing. This means that if they cross at the edge of the level section, they meet an unexpected small change in level at one end of the crossing, and trip. I realise that experience will teach them to use the centre of the crossing, but visitors might well fall.

Finally, I think the period for comments should be extended, as many people were otherwise engaged over the long break, and the consultation was not widely publicised.

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## **Response from Winnersh Parish Council**

### **1. Reasons for the improvement of Market Place**

The Wokingham Borough Council web site <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments/wokingham-town-centre-regeneration/> states that under "**Public Spaces** We are looking to improve the streets and other public spaces in the town centre, to reduce the dominance of traffic and make them more 'people friendly'.

We're working with Wokingham Town Council to carry out improvements to the Market Place. Following a series of meetings and workshops with local residents during 2015 we have been working on the detailed design."

Whilst Winnersh Parish Council supports the reasons for planning these improvements, it has some serious concerns over the outcomes of the project that have been set out below.

### **2. What appears to be working well**

There are several elements of the Market Place project that have much improved the area from what was there originally. The removal of the clutter has enabled the market to be better laid out with a more attractive setting and a variety of market stalls now appearing in the town, making it of interest for visitors. In addition, the reduction in clutter has helped people move about the area more freely, especially when it is busy. The retention of the controlled crossings points was a positive decision, making it safer for pedestrians to cross, and the fact that these and the uncontrolled crossings are raised makes it easier for all people to use including mobility impaired and people with a pushchair/pram.

The removal of the original red pavements that were slippery in the wet is also a positive decision. In addition, the removal of the bus lane around the 'eastern side' of the Town Hall has also made the area safer, and more pleasant.

It is also a positive decision to consult on the completed Market Place project, although the timing over the Christmas/New Year period is questionable. However, hopefully the feedback, including any negative comments will be considered to enable corrective measures to be carried out.

### **3. What appear to be issues**

The loading bay outside WH Smiths makes the uncontrolled raised crossing a potential unsafe point for pedestrians as they have difficulty seeing if vehicles are approaching as they cross towards the Town Hall if a large vehicle is parked there. This was a point raised in the Road Safety audit in 2016.

It was understood that part of this project was to reduce traffic speed through the area. However, there appears to be little evidence that this has been achieved and as the Borough Council has retained a 30mph limit throughout this area, drivers can still legally travel at speeds that do not make the area "people friendly". The Borough Council should consider making this area including its approaches into a 20mph zone. Coupled with the above traffic issue, it is still the dominance / volume of traffic that is a cause for concern and whilst it is understood that for example the Northern Perimeter Road by-passing the town centre has not yet been constructed it would be helpful to know what plans are in place to reduce the volume and therefore dominance of traffic through the town centre.

The signing and marking out of the Disabled Bays and Loading Bays is poor and causes confusion for the public. It is difficult to see where the boundary of the different bays are located making the space inefficient at times as users can park incorrectly taking up either too much space, whereby another driver is unable to access the remaining bay, or park too close, whereby the 'front' vehicle not being parked correctly in the bay, does not have enough space to access the rear of their vehicle, as the rear vehicle has parked too close, by squeezing into the remaining space.

There appears to be a major issue with the colour contrast at the pedestrian crossing points, and Department for Transport guidance has **not** been followed. They should be red tactile paving at controlled crossings and buff at uncontrolled crossings. The brass studs do not provide enough colour contrast on their own and are not laid out correctly. This issue has also been raised by the interim Road Safety Audit.

Visually impaired users will struggle with the lack of colour contrast. Statistics indicate that 96% of people with visual impairment have some form of vision, colour contrast is therefore very important to maintain an independence for these people.

Away from the pedestrian crossing points the decision to retain a 'low but raised kerb' has been made with a black bitumen carriageway. However, the introduction of granite sets adjacent to the low granite kerb of a similar colour to act as a channel has created an issue for many users who cannot distinguish the pavement edge and edge of the carriageway/channel resulting in a trip hazard. It is understood that several people

have already tripped/fallen because of this feature. In addition, the kerb height is also too low for white cane users.

Reading some of the history on this project, it is understood that initially, the idea was to have no kerbs at all to ensure pedestrians had free flow movement. However, kerbs were included due to accessibility concerns, but the compromise was the 'low raised height' kerbs to provide some definition, but low enough that people could still cross easily.

Whilst some people will use the designated crossing points, the 'openness' of the area allows for people to cross at any point and therefore the lack of colour contrast adjacent to the low raised kerbs needs to be resolved. The colour of the granite sets has also been raised by the interim Road Safety Audit.

Whilst there is less clutter, temporary 'A boards' still remain a problem for everyone but especially for those with visual impairments. The Borough Council has the powers to act on the removal of these signs.

#### **4. Summary**

Whilst the Market Place project has provided some improvements to the area there are many key issues with the usability of the project.

The Independent Road Safety Audit (stages 1 and 2) highlighted the importance of colour contrast for users of the Market Place area, and it is understood that this is something that was also raised at the disability workshops. However, these recommendations were ignored. The same Road Safety audit also picked up on the issues surrounding sight lines at the crossing point near WH. Smiths which is still a problem for users.

Wokingham Borough Council's Public Sector Equality Duty states that "equality of opportunity and to the delivery of high-quality services which meet the needs of **all** our residents." This is clearly not the case with the Market Place project. It would also appear that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not done for this project. However, Wokingham Borough Council's Public Sector Equality Duty report clearly states the importance of EqIA in upholding the Equalities Act 2010. Why did Wokingham Borough Council not comply with its own policy?

The Borough Council clearly underestimated the length of time that the project would take to complete and provided the public with several false completion dates. This clearly had a damaging impact on businesses at a very difficult time for the retail sector and the opening of Bracknell's new town centre together with the draw of Reading as a Regional centre as 'local shopping areas' to go may make it difficult to attract shoppers back into Wokingham.

Whilst the Parish Council acknowledges that there are some improvements to the space that has been made available for pedestrians and the Market, the project has not gone far enough in the safety aspects for users and the layout of parking/loading bays and addressing the dominance and speed of traffic.

## **Response from a resident**

My comments on the Wokingham Town Regeneration scheme. These are my personal views as a Winnersh Resident:

1. Constant delays with little or no explanation as to why.
2. Disruption to pedestrians. A maze of metal mesh barriers that changed constantly with little signage of how to navigate them. In early November 2017 I had an appointment at Boots Opticians opposite the Town Hall. I could not find my way in. In the end I had to get a workman to show me the way. When I mentioned this to the Boots receptionist she said that people were missing their appointments altogether as they could not find their way. After my visit I spoke to a foreman and told him the problem, he said he would see what he could do. When I went back a few days later the signage was better. This needs to be done as a matter of fact not when somebody complains.
3. Disruption to traffic. I go into Wokingham about once a week on the 4/4X bus. During the work the buses could not run to the timetable with long delays and then two sometimes three coming together. This was not the fault of Reading Buses but poor planning by WBC.
4. Who agreed to replace the surface surrounding our lovely Victorian redbrick town hall with light coloured tiles? It stands out like a sore thumb now whereas before it blended in better with the original surface. This surface is already looking dirty with tyre marks still visible.
5. The kerbs between the town hall and the row of shops opposite is too low. They are off a similar colour and I have seen people, mainly elderly, misjudge them and trip or stumble.
6. WBC has turned a traditional market town into a soulless copy of many other market towns where the local authorities have not taken into account the original character and tried to retain it, or at least some of it.

The regeneration scheme has cost an awful lot of money, taxpayer money, my money as a Wokingham resident. I do not feel we have got value for money.

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## **Response from a resident**

To whom it concerns:

1. Was the area that was repaved cleaned at all after completion? Marks on the light coloured paving from the work being done can still be seen?
2. Is there a programme for cleaning the pavement on a regular basis to maintain a clean free surface?

3. Was any advice given (from any parties contractor, paving supplier, contractors, QS, etc) on the road that was laid and the materials to be used, given that the tarmac and car tyres have completely blacken the paved humps that form part of the road. So rendering them a waste of money.
  4. When will Elms Field play area be completed? Has this area been prioritised in any way given the lack of play facilities currently in the centre of Wokingham and that the previous play park was extensively used?
  5. Given the current level of antisocial behaviour and seemingly increasing levels of, along with a non-existing police presence, are there any plans to install CCTV in the centre of Wokingham or/and peach street plaza and /or Elms field development?
  6. Have any of the town centre regeneration plans incorporated or taken into account the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and the prevention of this behaviour?
- 

### **Response from Inspirations, Hair and Beauty**

As far as we are concerned the project has been a disaster from start to current stage. It is obvious that the, so called, planning team gave no thought or plans to cover the repercussions on existing businesses over the build period.

I should have thought that the Council would realise with the upheaval of the work that local businesses would suffer. The constant work, the road closures, the lack of signs, the fact that people were unable to access Wokingham and difficulty to get to car parks, all lead to us being approximately 20% down on our takings during that time. We know that many other businesses have suffered in the same way, many, including us, having to use private savings to keep our business going, some having to close for good and more planning to!

We have learnt that other towns had a compensation fund built into the regeneration budget. There was no such thing for Wokingham. You say in your letter how were we supported during the work, the answer being we were not supported. For example, when Denmark Street was closed there was no signs neither end to inform the public Denmark Street was open for business. We got a sign half way down Denmark Street that no one could see. We were given notices to put in our windows to say the shops were still open. It would be obvious that we were open by the time they read the notice.

Who ever thought up the idea for the music festival during this time must be crazy. Wokingham was already in chaos, yet someone decided it would encourage people to visit. You chose to close an additional road, making it almost impossible to access Wokingham easily. On that day we lost so much of our trade with clients phoning in telling us they had attempted to get to us but given up, or clients were arriving so late due to the road closure, it was chaotic.

The new tiled pavement stops half way down Denmark Street, leaving our end uneven and dangerous. Why was our pavement not refurbished? We have two people brought into our salon who were injured after a fall caused by the uneven pavement. In the midst of all these problems our rates have been put up. What sort of Council does that to businesses already suffering, plus the compensation offered, which we had to fight for, was insulting.

With work continuing in the New Year, what is the future for Wokingham and Denmark Street two new centres either end, has any one thought how to bring life back to Denmark Street and connect the two? A thought – make Denmark Street pedestrian only! Making the town one again.

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### **Response from a resident**

1. Regeneration of the Towns and Villages has been a priority of the Council. Is that still the case?
2. If it is the case will Wokingham Town's experience be used as a template for other areas?
3. When, and by whom, was it agreed that the Market Place Highway Project and the Town Centre Regeneration works would happen at the same time, with the subsequent traffic problems and issues for local businesses?
4. In an article in the Wokingham Paper (6th September 2018) headlines "Final cost of the Market Place project still up in the air", Cllr Stuart Munro is quoted as saying "the overall cost to the local taxpayer for the improvement project is zero because this investment in the future.....is funded entirely by developer contributions" Is this quote correct? Does it take into account any Town and Borough Council time in the project? What alternative projects could this money have been used for?
5. In the latest Wokingham Borough News Philip Mirfin is quoted as saying "...not only a fantastic town centre with far better facilities... but also a town centre generating new income for you..." What better facilities will there be for the town? When will the flow of new income start and how will it be reported? How much will be in late generated in 2018/19 and will any of this income be given to the Town Council?
6. Are you happy about the way that information about completion dates for regeneration projects has been provided? I ask this question now and here at Shute End as the WBC website reported that the works at the Shute End car park would have been completed by October, and it was only in late November that was removed from the website. Despite asking at reception and customer services several times for a completion date it was only on the 14th of December that I asked Bernie Pich in Waitrose and he told me that it would open on the 18th, which indeed it did.

7. The Market Place scheme completed some three months ago. Since then concern has been expressed about risks of pedestrians tripping and uncertainty of where vehicles can park as evidenced by the number of parking tickets issued. What reviews have been undertaken on these issues?

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## **Response from Manager of Cancer Research UK, Market Place**

### **1. Consultation with Businesses**

1. When running a business like a charity shop, we have deliveries of new goods, people bringing in donations and a significant waste stream of materials that have no value (in terms of sale through the shop) plus transfers via large van to other shops in the chain. There was no consultation prior to the works as to how these various good movements were to be maintained through the periods of extreme access limitation. There was an erroneous assumption that large lorries could access the rear of the shop. As a consequence of the restricted access, we incurred increased costs of waste disposal and a significant drop off of donated goods in the region of 25%.
2. There was no consultation as far as I was aware of how emergency services such as ambulances were to gain access to the main shop entrance.
3. There was no consultation regarding potential and in reality, massive delays to completion and the mitigation of those delays – for example, my shop takings were reduce by at least 40% for a period of nine months.

### **2. Support for businesses during works**

1. There was no support for loss of takings other than information about applying for rates rebates. Proactive activities like free parking could have been introduced much earlier and, the “free after 3” made little or no difference and nobody asked the retailers if it worked or what would work.
2. During the works, the noise was horrendous, especially when concrete was poured in frosty weather which had to be dug up using pneumatic drills and repoured – offering ear plugs is not an acceptable mitigation strategy and noise level probably exceeded legal limits. Not helped by concreting over my water meter for which they then had to install a new water supply and meter. If they had asked, I could have indicated the approximate location.
3. I attended all the open meetings and almost every comment by retailers was met by responses to the effect “...it will be wonderful when finished...”. This was unhelpful.

### **3. How issues and complaints were dealt with?**

1. Almost every issue I raised were not resolved satisfactorily without costs incurred by the Charity; the main one being having to make extraordinary and expensive arrangements for waste collection.

2. The Council staff (both Town and Borough) were helpful and understanding but ultimately were often unable to achieve any resolution to issues raised like noise, access, mess, loss of trade, delays, lack of action to incentivise potential customer to visit Wokingham.

#### Observations

- No thinking or initial action was taken regarding cyclists mounting and riding in the restricted walkways
- Lack of marketing of the opening event and subsequent efforts to attract people back to the town centre (unlike the Lexicon).
- The piecemeal approach to doing a bit here and a bit there appeared very wasteful and inefficient.



### Town Centre Market Place Highways Project - Key Lines of Enquiry

- Please provide the original project timetable and confirm the original and any revised deadlines and the reasons for these revisions;
- Please explain the overall process for consultation relating to the project;
- Please explain the detailed consultation process relating to the following issues i.e. the issue consulted upon, the feedback received, consideration given to the feedback and the response provided to the consultees:
  - Speed limit through the town centre;
  - Disabled parking bays – location and marking;
  - Kerb heights;
  - Pedestrian crossing points;
  - Use of tactile/coloured surfaces for people with visual impairments.
- Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of key decisions on people with protected characteristics. Please explain how the Council's statutory duties were discharged and the process followed to monitor and report on the impact of the project;
- Please provide details of the key risks relating to the project and the steps taken to mitigate the risks;
- Please explain how the underground conditions in the Market Square were assessed, how the assessments were carried out, who carried out the work and any payments made for the work;
- With regards to the temporary footpath arrangements in the town centre, please explain the consultation process regarding this and how any complaints were handled;
- Please explain any specific measures provided to support shops and businesses within the town centre during the ongoing works;
- Please provide details of the final costs for the project and the comparison between these figures and the original business case cost estimates;
- Please explain which budgets were used to cover any cost overruns;

- Following the Motion passed by the Council at its meeting on 14 December 2018, please confirm when the audit report on the Market Place project will be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Work Programme 2018/19</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 14 January 2019
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to improve services, holds decision makers to account and engages with local communities. In so doing it helps to demonstrate that the Council and other public service providers are open and transparent and are delivering high quality, value for money services.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) review its Work Programme for 2018/19 (Annex A);
- 2) prioritise the items in the work programme and allocate items to forthcoming meetings;
- 3) consider any other potential Scrutiny items for consideration during 2018/19.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Effective work programming is a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Council Plan and major policy or service changes. It aims to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee approves work programmes for itself and the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

As this is the Committee's first meeting of the new Municipal Year the work programme is set out at Annex A for Members to consider and to prioritise items for future meetings.

## Background

An effective Overview and Scrutiny function is underpinned by robust work programming. Effective work programming lays the foundations for targeted scrutiny of issues of local importance. It helps to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference. Effective work programming helps to:

- prioritise issues for in-depth work where Overview and Scrutiny can make an impact and add value;
- reduce the need for “information only” reports;
- achieve a balance between pre-decision scrutiny, policy development and performance/budget monitoring;
- contribute at an earlier stage in the decision making process;
- increase public and stakeholder involvement in Overview and Scrutiny;
- retain flexibility in order to respond to urgent issues arising during the year.

The issues identified for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny should be of interest or concern for local residents and generate public interest and involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

In order to generate ideas and involvement from local residents, community groups and stakeholders the Council's website and social media are used to publicise the development of the work programme and to invite suggestions for items to be included.

Annex A to the report sets out items to be included in the Committee's work programme for 2018/19. The Committee is requested to consider the list of items and to discuss its priorities for consideration at meetings in 2018/19.

Members may also wish to add further items to the work programme and consider how each item will be addressed, e.g. through reports to the Committee or the establishment of time limited Task and Finish groups.

As part of the work programming process, residents, community groups and Town and parish Councils were invited to identify issues to be considered in 2018/19.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0		

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### List of Background Papers

None

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<b>Date</b> 4 January 2019	<b>Version No.</b> 1.0

## Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Work Programme 2018/19

1.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services
2.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with towns and parishes
3.	Monitoring the Council's Capital and Revenue expenditure
4.	Monitoring the Wokingham Town Centre regeneration project (including car park provision) including an evidence session with the Federation of Small Businesses
5.	Reviewing the Council's partnerships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
6.	Reviewing service developments relating to waste and recycling services
7.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including the new highways contracts, customer service, car parking and cycling facilities
8.	Reviewing the proposed development of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride site
9.	Monitoring the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement
10.	Reviewing the condition of footways, kerbsides and road signs – request from Finchampstead Parish Council
11.	Monitoring the impact of changes to train services
12.	Reviewing the process for setting fees and charges in the Public Protection service
13.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals
14.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

**Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Current draft Work Programme items for next two meetings**

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>
<b>11 February 2019</b>	<b>Monitoring the Council's Capital and Revenue Expenditure</b>	To consider an update on the Council's Capital and Revenue Expenditure.
	<b>Reviewing the proposed development of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride</b>	To consider a report reviewing the proposed development of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride.
	<b>Investigating the impact of changes to train services</b>	To consider a report on the impact of changes to train services.
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2018/19

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>
<b>14 March 2019</b>	<b>Reviewing the Community Safety Partnership</b>	To consider an update on the Community Safety Partnership.
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2018/19

**Items on Hold**

<b>Monitoring WBC's parking strategy policy</b>	To consider an update on WBC's parking strategy policy.
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