



Wokingham Town Council

Annex D

Market Place Access Group

23rd 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

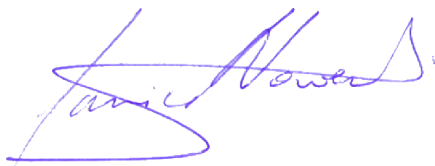
- All pedestrian areas and crossing points will be at the same level; contrasting tactile paving 'studs' will be provided at all crossing points whilst traffic signal controlled crossing points will also have 'rotating tactile units' to assist visually impaired users
- The proposed layout of the market 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

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



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