

CMDT7

Kidlington High Street Pedestrianisation Scheme

Public Consultation Summary

November 2010

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1 Introduction

In November 2010 Cherwell District Council, on behalf of Kidlington Parish Council, undertook consultation on the pedestrianisation of a section of Kidlington High Street

The proposed pedestrianisation is for the section between Watts Way to Oxford Road between the hours of 10am-4:30pm.

The consultation ran for six weeks from Friday 23 September and Friday 5 November 2010.

1.1 Distribution

A map of the proposed pedestrianisation area, the public exhibition material and a questionnaire were available to view and make comments on at www.cherwell.gov.uk throughout the consultation period. A copy of this material can be currently viewed at: www.cherwell.gov.uk/regeneration

The consultation was widely publicised. A press release was issued and published in the local paper (Oxford Mail) and representatives of the press either came to the open public exhibition held in the High Street or interviewed the Parish Council for the radio, which all further publicised the consultation.

Cherwell District Council placed an article in its quarterly newsletter, Cherwell Link, which gets delivered to every household in the District.

The library and shops in the High Street were encouraged to put posters in their windows. Posters highlighting the consultation were also placed in Health Centres around the village.

We also notified the following of the consultation and invited them to a preview evening.

- Thames Valley Police
- Fire Service
- Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS
- Road Haulage Association Ltd
- Freight Transport Association

Kidlington Parish Council also publicised the consultation on the front page of its website, as well as placing an advert in the local Kidlington newsletter.

Two letters in regard to the consultation were provided to all traders in the High Street, the east side of Oxford Road (12 to 33), the Kidlington Centre and market traders. The first was hand delivered, the second posted (except the Market traders who had both letters posted). A summary of the traders' response to the consultation is discussed later in the report

1.2 Meetings

A number of meetings were held with external key stakeholders during the consultation period to discuss the pedestrianisation.

Date	Meeting
16 th September	Presentation to Kidlington Parish Council
23 rd September	Key Stakeholder preview evening including local businesses, local residents, Councillors and key organisations.

Figure 1: Timetable of meetings

1.3 Exhibitions

An exhibition was held in Kidlington High Street on Friday 23 and Saturday 24 September between 10am and 3pm. This provided the public the opportunity to view the plans and ask officers and Councillors from Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Kidlington Parish Council questions about the proposal. The exhibition was very successful and well attended with approximately 400 attendees.

After this time the exhibition material was then available to view in Exeter Hall; at the Parish Council office; Bodicote House; as well as online.

2 Responses

Questionnaires were available to complete at the exhibitions. Alternatively hard copies could be completed and deposited at Exeter Hall, returned to Bodicote House or completed online.

All responses made during the consultation period are on-line and available to view at <http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal>

2.1 Breakdown of Responses

There were 361 responses submitted as part of the public consultation. 268 were received via a paper copy of the questionnaire, 93 were directly filled in on-line.

In comparing the response rate to other public consultations undertaken by Cherwell District Council, this is a high and positive figure.

2.2 Summary of Responses

This report summarises the responses.

Question 1-6 were quantitative responses only. Question 7 and 8 required a qualitative response. A full set of comments received for question 7 and 8 on the feedback questionnaire, can therefore be viewed online at www.cherwell.gov.uk/regeneration in document entitled 'Consultation – Supporting Information Document.

2.3 Question 1

Are you a

- **Worker**
- **High Street Trader**
- **Shopper**
- **Kidlington Resident**

The majority of respondents to this question were either a resident, a shopper or both. Fourteen respondents were traders and seventeen were workers in the area.

Officers Response

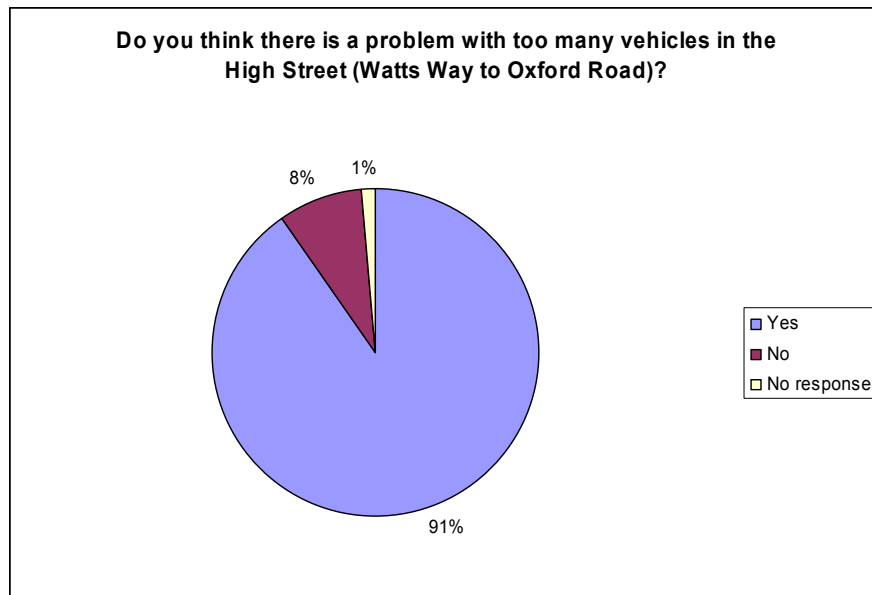
The consultation resulted in feedback from a good cross section of people who would be affected by the pedestrianisation.

However, not as many traders responded as was anticipated but they were notified twice of the consultation so had adequate opportunity.

2.4 Question 2

Do you think there is a problem with too many vehicles in the High Street (Watts Way to Oxford Road)?

Out of the 361 respondents, 326 said yes, 30 said no and 5 gave no response.



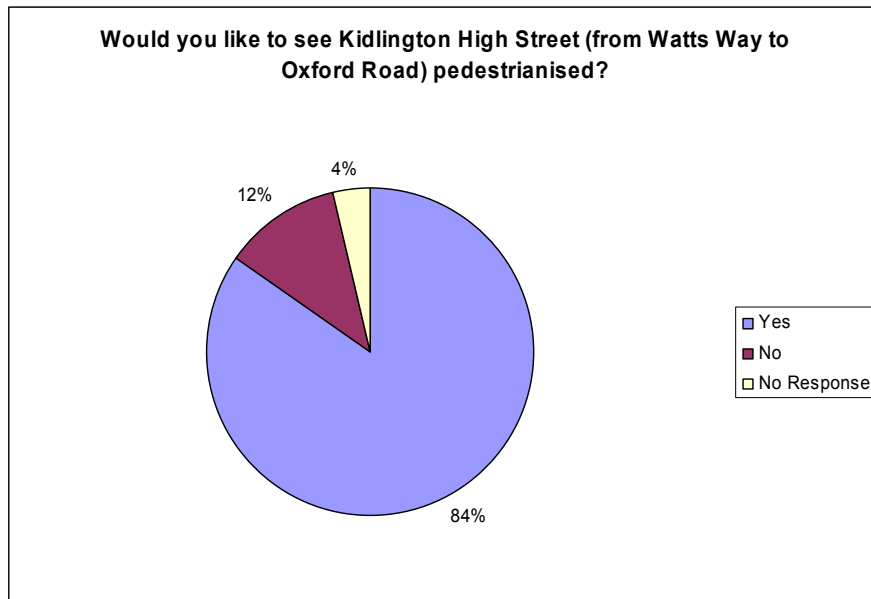
Officers Response

91% of those who completed the survey believe there is a problem with too many vehicles in the High Street

2.5 Question 3

Would you like to see Kidlington High Street (from Watts Way to Oxford Road) pedestrianised?

Out of the 361 responses, 306 said yes, 42 said no and 13 gave no response.



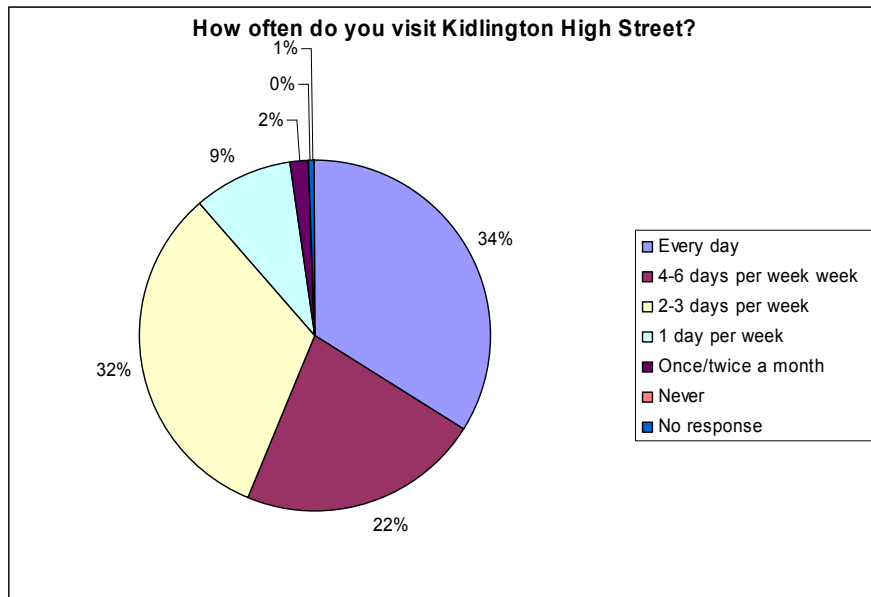
Officers Response

The majority of respondents said that they would like to see Kidlington High Street pedestrianised. The reasons that people did not support the pedestrianisation were given in response to Question 8, and set out later in this report.

2.6 Question 4

How often do you visit the High Street?

Number of Responses:						
Every day	4-6 days per week	2-3 days per week	1 day per week	Once/twice a month	Never	No Response
122	81	117	33	6	0	2



Officers Response

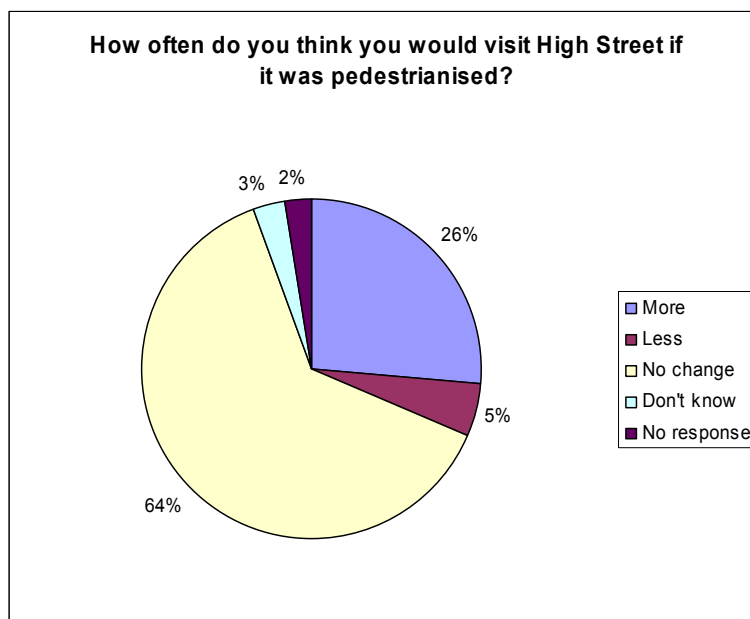
This shows that the majority of respondents to the consultation are regular visitors to Kidlington with 34% of people surveyed visiting every day.

The regularity of these visits shows the importance of views from Kidlington shoppers, workers and residents.

2.7 Question 5

How often do you think you would visit High Street if it was pedestrianised?

Number of Responses:				
More	Less	No change	Don't know	No Response
95	18	228	11	9



Officers Response

Whilst 64% of respondents said that the pedestrianisation of Kidlington High Street would not change the amount of times they visited the High Street, 26% said that they would visit more. This shows that over a quarter of respondents would increase their visits to the High Street if it was pedestrianised, which is deemed to be very positive and as a direct result of the pedestrianisation scheme.

Only 5% commented that they would visit the High Street less and from the comments received to this question it appears this is due to concerns on blue badge parking and the impact on trade.

2.8 Question 6

Would you like to see:

a) Kidlington High Street (from Watts Way to Oxford Road), being made one way for vehicular traffic, exiting onto Oxford Road?

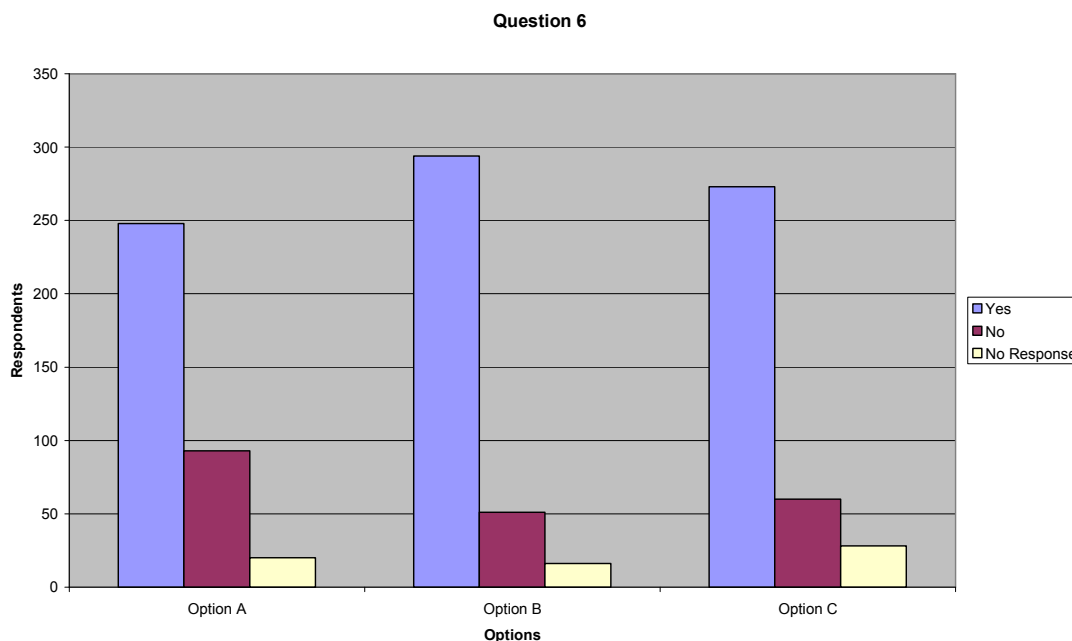
Out of the 361 responses, 248 said yes, 93 said no and 20 gave no response

b) A better physical barrier in place to prevent parking on the footpath area adjacent to numbers 27-35 High Street (the area in front of the Red Cross shop)?

Out of the 361 responses, 294 said yes, 51 said no and 16 gave no response.

c) A Rising bollard installed (at the junction of Watts Way and the High Street, adjacent to Barclays Bank) as a phase 2 of the project?

Out of the 361 responses, 273 said yes, 60 said no and 28 had no response.



Officers Response

This question was not an either/or question so all three options have the potential to be included within Kidlington High Street.

As the chart shows, all three proposals received similar levels of support and objections. All three proposals received significantly more support than they did objection. The most popular proposal was Option B “A better physical barrier in place to prevent parking on the footpath area adjacent to numbers 27-35 High Street (the area in front of the Red Cross shop)?”

Option A” Kidlington High Street (from Watts Way to Oxford Road), being made one way for vehicular traffic, exiting onto Oxford Road” received the most objections. This may be due to some comments received in regard to the closing off the exit onto Oxford Road which is explored later in this report.

2.9 Question 7

On a rating of 1-5 (1 being the most important and 5 being the least important) how would you rate the following features to include in the proposed pedestrianisation scheme of Kidlington High Street?

Local events and galas
More seating places
Improved security
Increase of floral displays
Increase of cycle provision
Improved street lighting

Sculptures and public art

Respondents were also offered the choice to tick 'other' and specify their thoughts. These responses in full are included in the supporting document and grouped into relevant categories for ease of analysis. (therefore some responses from one respondent have been split between the various categories). The most popular comments were in relation to:

- Improved security
- Improved markets
- Street scene concerns
- Parking
- Shops
- Cleanliness.

Officers Response

This question saw the local events and galas the highest consideration to be included in the pedestrianisation scheme of Kidlington High Street, followed by seating places. Sculptures and public art and street lighting were considered the least important.

It must be noted with this question respondents that completed the paper questionnaire were able to rate their responses 1 through to 5. However those that completed the online survey were only able to highlight what they considered to be most important option. The majority of respondents used the paper questionnaire, so were able to list their preferred options, however due to this difference it may have affected the results. Therefore the results to this question will be used as a consideration only and we may need to revisit this question in future work if we are looking to include features in the pedestrianisation scheme.

2.10 Question 8

If you support the pedestrianisation but would suggest changes to the proposals, please outline below:

A full breakdown of all the comments received in response to this question can be found in the Supporting Document. All will be considered as we move forward with this scheme.

However the most popular themes are discussed.

Paving of the High Street

The current surface finish can be too dangerous and uneven, especially in bad weather for wheelchairs, pushchairs and those users unsteady on their feet

Officers Response

This scheme unfortunately does not have the budget to repave any of the High Street. The money available for this project covers the legal expenses associated with a new Order and any new signage required too. However the comments in regard to the surface treatment have been noted for future reference should anything be considered in time.

Safety

That it is currently a dangerous area where cars and people are mixing especially those that are parking illegally on the double yellow lines and something does need to be done.

Officers Response

This is one of the reasons we are looking at pedestrianisation of Kidlington High Street in order to make it a safer and more pleasant area to shop in.

Times of Access

Many comments were received commenting that the High Street should be totally pedestrianised with no core period.

Officers Response

Unfortunately this is not possible due to access for deliveries and collections from shops. Regard is also given to blue badge holders so they can access a shop or bank directly before 10am and after 4:30pm.

Change of Access

That the street should not be one way but that the exit onto Oxford Road should be blocked off.

Officers Response

Although 68% of the public favoured a one way system, the project board will revisit this, in light of public comments in regard to closing the exit onto Oxford Road. The reason this was not part of the proposals was because a large turning area would need to be provided near the bandstand, which would have to cater for delivery lorries and would make the less attractive to view than the current street scene. It may also not be possible due to access being maintained for 1a High Street.

However the access onto Oxford Road would continue to be a left hand turn only.

Impact on Traders

Concern of the impact of pedestrianisation on traders within the area. People should still be able to access the bike shop, butchers and the builders' merchants for collections and deliveries

Officers Response

The majority of traders who responded to this consultation were in support of the pedestrianisation. Those that need to access the shops directly can still do so before 10 and after 4.30.

Policing

Concern over how effectively the new restrictions would be policed.

Officers Response

If the scheme was progressed with or without the addition of a physical barrier at the junction of Watts Way and High Street a police presence would be required to monitor and enforce the situation. If a physical barrier was introduced this would reduce the demand on the police time and make the process easier. However with some pedestrianisation schemes they do police themselves once the public are aware of the restrictions. Large clear signage and press releases would make it very clear the new restriction operating in the area.

The police do support this pedestrianisation scheme and would put whatever available resources they had to help implement the scheme. However the project board are recommended to speak to Thames Valley Police to understand, in light of recent budget cuts, the amount of policing that they will be able to provide for the proposed scheme.

Market

That with the pedestrianisation there should be an increase in the size and type of Markets available that could utilise a greater area.

Officers Response

The improvement to the market provision within Kidlington was a very popular theme throughout the consultation questionnaire. This matter has therefore been raised with the team responsible for the markets and they have reported that work is ongoing to extend the market into Watts Way and that consideration can be given to the High Street if it is pedestrianised.

Blue Badge Users

That further consideration should be given to disabled access and parking.

Officers Response

Under the proposals blue badge holders can still access the shops and banks along High Street before 10am and after 4:30pm. The decision to propose excluding blue badge holders during the core period was not taken lightly. Regard was given to the availability of other close by parking in the village centre, and the requirements of what a pedestrianisation scheme should entail. Taking these considerations into account, the project board decided to propose that the new TRO would not give any special dispensation to blue badge holders. If blue badge holders were allowed into the area during the core period it was felt it would defeat the purpose of an area being pedestrianised.

Indeed, less traffic movement in this core period would also help less able bodied people to move around more safely and easily.

This matter will however be revisited in light of comments received, to see if any alternative solutions can be found.

Buses outside Tesco

That's consideration should also be given to the issue of buses outside Tesco's

Officers Response

The long standing issues of the buses outside Tesco's are noted. However in order to provide significant improvements in this area considerable expenditure would need to be made. In light of recent budget cuts none of the three Councils involved in this project have suitable funds available to undertake the necessary works needed. The bus operators have been written to, to make them aware of the operating restrictions in this area but at present little more can be done. Should funds become available in the future the matter will be revisited.

Rising Bollard/physical barrier at the junction of Watts Way/High Street

Mixed comments were received in regard to this proposal ranging from; we must definitely have one in place, to queries over location, cost and in regard to emergency access.

Officers Response

To clarify the reason for the proposed bollard location, should it be implemented as part of a phase 2, it was to allow access to Watts Way and to the rear of the properties on both the North and South of the High Street for parking and deliveries. If the bollard was placed further towards Sterling Approach, the access could not be maintained for those that would not be eligible for a permit to enter the restricted area.

Whilst installing a bollard has not been fully costed and therefore no decision has been made on whether one will be installed, it has been the most practical physical barrier used elsewhere in the pedestrianised zones of Cherwell (Sheep Street, Bicester and soon to be Bridge Street in Banbury). The system can be easily managed and monitored and is less likely to be open to abuse or vandalism compared to other forms of a physical barrier.

The barrier would be activated to rise at 10am and drop at 4:30pm. Anyone wishing to enter the pedestrian area in the core period (10am-4:30pm) would either have an access 'swipe' card (those with private off street parking) to activate the lowering of the bollard or would simply press a button and an officer operating the CCTV in the High Street would view the camera and drop the bollard for a licensed postal operator or an emergency vehicle.

Cost of proposal

A few comments were received that this proposed scheme is a waste of council tax payer money.

Officers Response

This proposed scheme is being paid for out of Cherwell District Council's capital money with all the research being undertaken by the project partners to minimise cost. Therefore there is no impact on the level of Council Tax.

2.11 Specific Trader Response

This section focuses on the responses from traders within Kidlington that we need to consider.

From the responses gathered in Q1 it could be seen there were 14 specific responses from traders within the locality (this included High Street, Kidlington Centre, Oxford Road and the market). Of these:

- 13 (93%) said they thought there was a problem with too many vehicles in the High Street (Q2)

(Of the next four questions, one respondent did not give a response)

- 11 (79%) would like to see Kidlington High Street (from Watts Way to Oxford Road) pedestrianised.
- 11 (79%) said they would like to see Kidlington High Street (from Watts Way to Oxford Road) being made one way for vehicular traffic, exiting onto Oxford Road.
- 12 (85%) said they would like to see a better physical barrier in place to prevent parking on the footpath area adjacent to numbers 27-35 High Street (the area in front of the red cross shop)
- 12 (85%) said they would like to see a rising bollard installed (at the junction of Watts Way and the High Street, adjacent to Barclays Bank) as a phase 2 of the project.

It is worthy of note that only two traders were not in favour of the scheme and one of these was located outside the pedestrianised area.

In response to Q7 on a rating of 1-5....., local events and galas came out on top with 5 votes, followed by increase on floral displays with 3. More seating places, increase of cycle parking provision and improved security did not feature. The response for 'other' included comments on provision of disabled bays, an improved market and traffic congestion.

In response to Q8 on proposed changes these included comments in regard to an improved market, improved policing, better provision for blue badge holders, regard to views of shop keepers for the proposals, removable bollards outside 27-35 High Street, as well as a bollard opposite Rainbow and Martins to prevent buses mounting the kerb and provision of electricity in the High Street for the use of markets and local events.

It has to be assumed from these results that although only 14 responses were received (after adequate notification) those not responding had no comment or opinion either way. Therefore it is viewed as a positive outcome that 11 traders would like to see the High Street pedestrianised, with only 2 saying no (one gave no comment).

It is perceived that the majority of traders will see the benefits to the pedestrianisation of this section of High Street.

From the traders identified it could be seen one response was a shop located outside the proposed pedestrianised area whilst the rest were either a shop or market traders that would be located within the pedestrianised area. One response could not be determined either way.

3 Conclusion

The results of the public consultation identify that the majority of respondents support the proposals of pedestrianisation of High Street.

The recommendation will therefore be made to the project board that they should progress forward to formally making a revised Traffic Regulation Order for High Street, Kidlington

Whilst the public supported a physical barrier at the junction of Watts Way and High Street, a decision on how and if this can be funded is still being considered.

However, in the meantime, it is proposed that a better physical barrier be put in place to prevent parking on the footpath area adjacent to numbers 27-35 High Street (the area in front of the Red Cross shop). It is still being considered if these can effectively be removable bollards but their provision would not prevent the market being active in this area on market days.

Before drafting and publicising a new Order, further consideration will be given to:

- Blue badge holder provision within the scheme.
- Policing
- One Way System

4 Next Stage

Once the project board consider the additional matters highlighted above and if the recommendation for a revised Traffic Regulation Order is approved the Order will be drafted which will go to a formal public consultation. It is hoped if approved for consultation this can be completed prior to the 2011 school summer holiday