

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 14 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **WANTAGE: MARKET PLACE & NEWBURY STREET – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BUS STOPS AND DISABLED PERSONS PARKING PLACES**

#### **Report by Director for Community Operations (Interim)**

#### **Recommendation**

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is **RECOMMENDED** to approve proposed amendments to bus stops and disabled parking places at Market Square and Newbury Street, Wantage as advertised.

#### **Executive summary**

2. Waiting restrictions are reviewed when there are changes to the road layout or usage as a result of development and when requested by the local member or local councils due to concerns over parking obstructing traffic and/or being detrimental to road safety.

#### **Introduction**

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on proposed amendments to bus stop provision at Market Square and Newbury Street and consequent changes to disabled persons parking place provision in these roads.

#### **Background**

4. The above proposals as shown at Annex 1 have been put forward as a result of congestion of buses in Market Place combined with the parking of vehicles on the 'zig-zag' line markings approaching the pedestrian crossing on the south side of Market Place, also taking account of the change in bus services resulting in the bus stop in Newbury Street now being redundant.

#### **Consultation**

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 10 October and 8 November 2019. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Vale of White Horse District Council, Cumnor Parish Council and the local County Councillor. Street notices were placed on site and letters sent to 130 properties in the immediate vicinity adjacent to the proposals.

6. Ten responses were received. 2 objections, 4 in support, 2 (including the local Fire Station) raising concerns and 2 neither supporting nor objecting.
7. The responses are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

### **Response to objections and other comments**

8. Thames Valley Police did not object noting that the proposals reflected a number of site meetings they had attended to review bus stop provision at Market Square.
9. County Councillor Hannaby, the local member, expressed support for the proposals, although also requested a further review of the siting and number of places provided for disabled persons. In response to that, while not ruling out a further review, it would seem appropriate to progress the current proposals which have been the outcome of a considerable amount of investigation and then to monitor their operation closely ahead of considering further changes.
10. Wantage Town Council expressed support with no further comment.
11. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service, while not making any comments about the specific proposals, raised strong concerns over the current very low level of enforcement of parking restrictions in the town, leading to their being frequently abused, with illegal and obstructive parking causing significant delays to general traffic particularly the passage of emergency service vehicles.
12. Concerns over the lack of enforcement were also raised by two other respondents (one a local business and the other a local resident) and it is accepted that this is a significant issue not only in Wantage but in other towns within the three Oxfordshire district council areas (Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse District) where civil parking enforcement is not currently in place. While the introduction of civil enforcement in these districts is being actively investigated, the timescales for its introduction are still to be confirmed and, in the meantime, due to the severe pressure on police resources there is regrettably little prospect of this problem being addressed in the short term. However, the current proposals do not materially impact on the current enforcement difficulties.
13. The local business referred to above also requested a review of taxi rank provision, noting that their customers, when their evening entertainment premises shuts at the close of business, find the existing provision in the town centre inadequate.
14. An objection was received from a member of the public over the reduction in disabled persons parking place provision in Market Square as, although the new provision in Newbury Street compensated for the loss in the number of

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such spaces near the town centre, the additional distance would cause difficulties for users who need to access premises in Market Square.

15. Noting the above requests options for providing a new bus stop in Market Square are very limited and have been the subject of much investigation. The current proposals are judged to provide the best option given the constraints, but, if approved, will be monitored closely. The request for an additional taxi rank is also noted and will be reviewed by officers in conjunction with the Vale of the White Horse District Council as the relevant taxi licencing authority with responsibility for introducing new or amended ranks.

### **How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives**

16. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

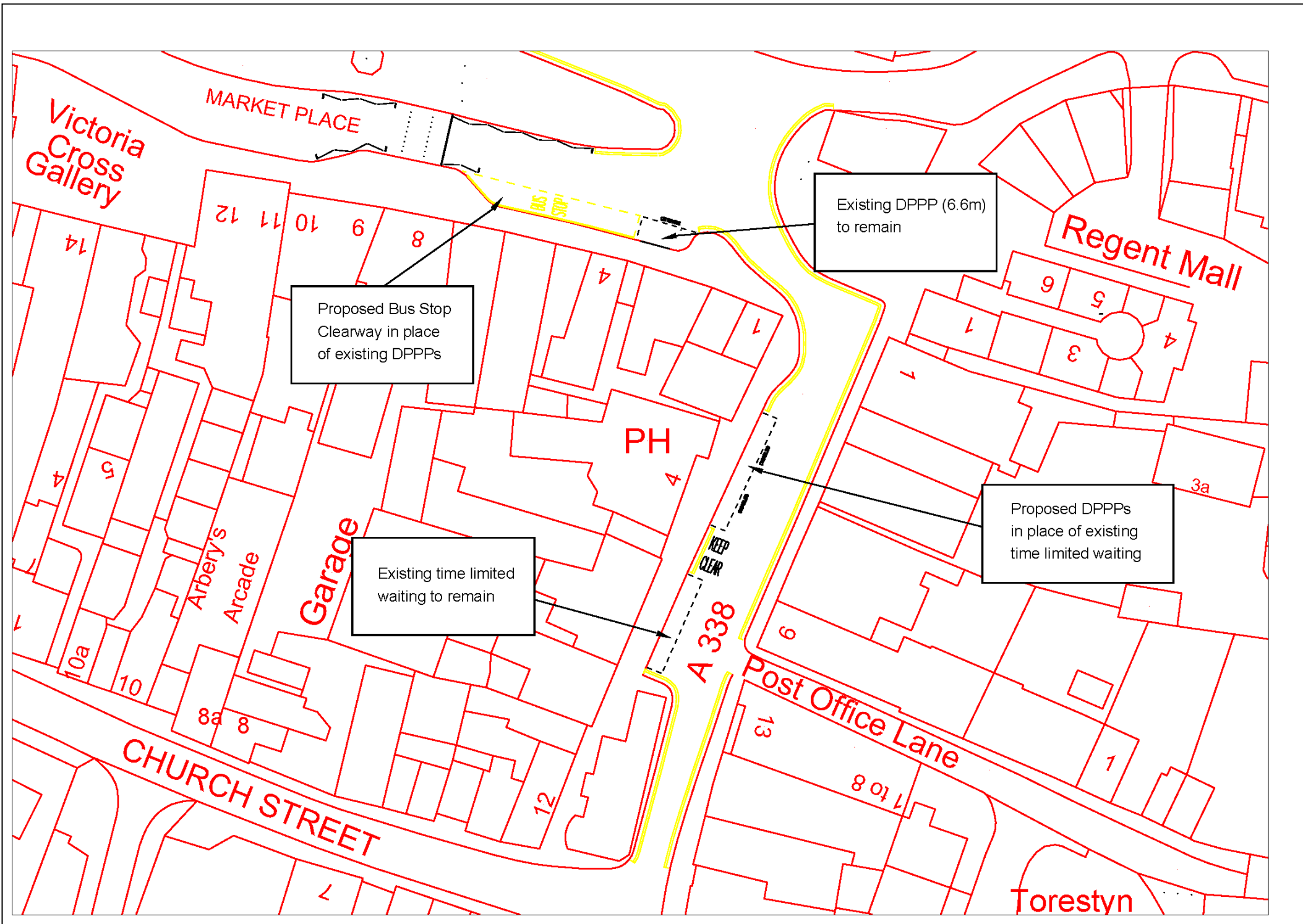
17. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by the Councillor Priority Fund.

JASON RUSSELL  
Director for Community Operations (Interim)

Background papers:           Plans of proposed waiting restrictions  
  Consultation responses

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November 2019



Victoria Cross Gallery

MARKET PLACE

Regent Mall

Existing DPPP (6.6m) to remain

Proposed Bus Stop Clearway in place of existing DPPPs

PH

Proposed DPPPs in place of existing time limited waiting

Existing time limited waiting to remain

Garage

A 338

Post Office Lane

CHURCH STREET

Torestyn

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<b>No Objection</b> - These proposals have been subject to many previous discussions and site meetings.
(2) Local County Councillor, (Grove & Wantage Division)	<b>Support</b> - Need these changes to reduce congestion in the Market place caused mainly by buses behaviour. A dedicated drop off point will help if the buses stick to the new layout. I am not convinced the retained disabled parking space is useful and could be used by non-disabled as is the trend due to no enforcement of unauthorised parking. Could the permitted waiting area be used for disabled or put the remaining disabled parking space there.
(3) Wantage Town Council	<b>Support</b> – no other comment
(4) Vale of White Horse District Council	<b>No comments.</b>
(5) Fire & Rescue Service, (Wantage Watch Manager)	<p><b>Concerns</b> - There is no doubt that the changes proposed, would be of benefit to the residents of Wantage but I am very concerned about the increase of parking positions without any form of parking enforcement within our area.</p> <p>Wantage Fire Appliance and crew are called out to a variety of incidents on almost a daily basis and are increasingly finding our route through and around Town, delayed due to illegal parking which includes double parking, yellow line parking and pedestrian zig-zag line parking. There is currently no enforcement within the Wantage area as TVP are unable to spare any resources.</p> <p>The Council are aware but say that nothing can be done for at least two years.</p> <p>The public are very aware of this situation (and are commenting on it on social media nearly daily with photos etc.) and are therefore confident when parking illegally that they will not be prosecuted.</p>

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	<p>We have increasingly been in situations where we are unable to proceed in our appliance due to illegally parked cars and it is only a matter of time before this happens when we are proceeding to a life risk incident (for example, RTC or property fire).</p> <p>We are usually unable to reverse or turn around due to the small streets (and traffic behind) and the officer in charge would be then forced to consider the moving of the illegally parked vehicle, which I am sure you would appreciate, involves a great deal of time and explanation after the incident, not to mention the possible repercussions of such a delay in attending the incident itself.</p> <p>This is something that I would wish to avoid.</p>
<p>(6) Local Business, (Wantage)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> - I own a business on Newbury Street and is one of the busiest night time entertainment venues in south Oxfordshire and has been for the last 8 years. During this time we have witnessed the uncontrolled parking which has caused no end of frustration to a lot of people.</p> <p>On occasions we can have up to 450 people vacate our building in the early hours of the morning. Dispersal is always a consideration, for example some clients wish to go home as quick as possible, others prefer to find food leaving the remaining to stay around and chat.</p> <p>Those wishing to go home have to walk to the other end of the town to join the queue for the taxi rank, sadly this has caused issues in the past as another venue closes at similar times to us, so in effect you get an influx of people trying to get into a few cabs. We have for sometime considered that the bus stop opposite which you propose to turn into disabled parking should be used as a taxi rank/facility during the hours of 10:30 pm through to 6:00am.</p> <p>This would enable our clients to leave our venue and jump straight into a waiting cab (I have suggested this to taxi drivers but they will not deviate from the existing rank). I believe the police have records for disturbances at the taxi rank.</p> <p>With regards to the parking, there are businesses which rely on the fact that customers can park and collect. I would suggest that the proposed new DPPPS is relocated to the corner of the A338. Again, it is my experience that during the night time hours these spaces are not used, but in the day the location of this new bay is located by drop kerbs and due to traffic flow is in my opinion safer than the one in your document.</p> <p>Whilst we all welcome that the parking is being reviewed please do not miss the opportunity to consider the impact on all businesses, clearly the cars being parked relate to the businesses in this area.</p>

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<p>(7) Local Resident, (Wantage)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – Parking and congestion can only be improved in Wantage with parking regulations being enforced. It's a free for all with no consequences. Vans park in disabled spaces with no badge, people park on double yellow lines with no consequences at all. Moving spaces will not help congestion if buses without enforcing parking regulations. Reducing disabled spaces in the market place is not good.</p> <p>Unless there is enforcement, any vehicle will park along that road and in disabled spaces. It's already crazy parking down that road, with people parked illegally and no enforcement.</p>
<p>(8) Local Employee (Wantage)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> - I am a blue badge holder and work on Market Place. I have read your letter but have to say I am very much AGAINST this change.</p> <p>Surely it would make more sense for the bus companies to look at their timetable s to stop the build-up of traffic in the square. Newbury Street is already horrendous for parked cars and people park anyway they like they would not take notice of disabled bays. Parking is at a premium and not having the bays in the square will affect people like myself tremendously, both as an employee and for our Members that need to park in disabled bays close to the branch. I really feel this needs further looking into.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Wantage)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Sounds like a sensible and practical reorganisation of parking spaces in Wantage. Will assist with public transport provision.</p> <p>Bus stop was redundant. This is a sensible use of parking space.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Abingdon)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – No comments.</p>