

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 8 FEBRUARY 2018

WITNEY: MARKET SQUARE – PROPOSED EXTENSION OF BUS STOPS AND RELOCATION OF TRAFFIC CALMING BUILD OUT AND FLAT TOP ROAD HUMP

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to extend bus stop provision on the west side of Market Square in Witney and, to accommodate this, move the existing traffic calming feature (a flat top road hump with a kerb build out) northwards and also to amend the current parking restrictions on the west side of the road by introducing 'No Waiting at Any Time' (double-yellow lines) in place of the existing time limited restrictions.

Background

2. The above proposals have been put forward as part of a scheme within the National Productivity Investment Fund. A plan showing the proposals is provided at Annex 1.

Consultation

3. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 14 December 2017 and 19 January 2018. A public notice was placed in the Witney Gazette and sent to statutory consultees including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney Town Council and the local County Councillor. Street notices were also placed in the vicinity of the proposed crossing location. Letters were sent directly to approximately 40 properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposals.
4. Five responses were received. Thames Valley Police did not object and Witney Town Council have supported. Three objections were received from members of the public citing concerns over loss of parking, blocking of a vehicle access from the Blue Boar, an adverse impact on the street market and broader concerns on the adverse impact on the visual amenity of the historic centre of Witney. A technical issue was also raised in respect of the kerb heights on the west side of the road in the vicinity of the relocated build-out and raised informal crossing point. One response cited concerns over the safety of the latter and expressed a strong preference for the provision of a formal pedestrian crossing.

5. The responses are summarised at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

6. The responses from Thames Valley Police and Witney Town Council are noted.
7. In respect of the objections, it is accepted that there will be a small loss of short term parking (two spaces) but this is not considered to materially impact on the overall parking availability here. It is also accepted that when buses are occupying the extended bus stop, vehicles will be unable to use the access to the Blue Boar – the bus operator is, however, aware of this issue and in practice there should still be good opportunity for vehicles to use this access.
8. The objection citing concerns over the safety of the current informal pedestrian crossing is noted, along with the more general comment (although not expressed specifically as an objection) that a zebra crossing would be preferable, in particular, to assist traffic movements. Monitoring of the existing informal crossing which has been in place since 1991 shows that it has operated with very good levels of safety, and constructing a zebra crossing – although likely to be technically feasible – would lead to a further loss of parking due to the need for ‘zig zag’ markings and would also add to street clutter. It is also possible – although a more detailed assessment would be needed to confirm this – that a zebra crossing would add to, rather than reduce traffic delays here. The design of the new build out and informal crossing takes account of the levels of the footway and carriageway as referred to in one of the responses.
9. The wider concerns expressed over the visual impact of the scheme, its impact on the street market and on deliveries etc. in this area are similarly noted. It is, however, not considered that the scheme will have any material adverse effects with respect to these concerns.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

10. The proposals would help facilitate the safe and convenient movement of traffic and, in particular, the bus services serving this part of Witney.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

11. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by National Productivity Investment Fund.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve proposals to extend the bus stop provision on the west side of Market Square in Witney and, to accommodate this, to move the existing traffic calming feature (a flat top road hump with a kerb build out) northwards**

and also to amend the current parking restrictions on the west side of the road by introducing 'No Waiting at Any Time' (double-yellow lines) in place of the existing time limited restrictions as advertised.

OWEN JENKINS

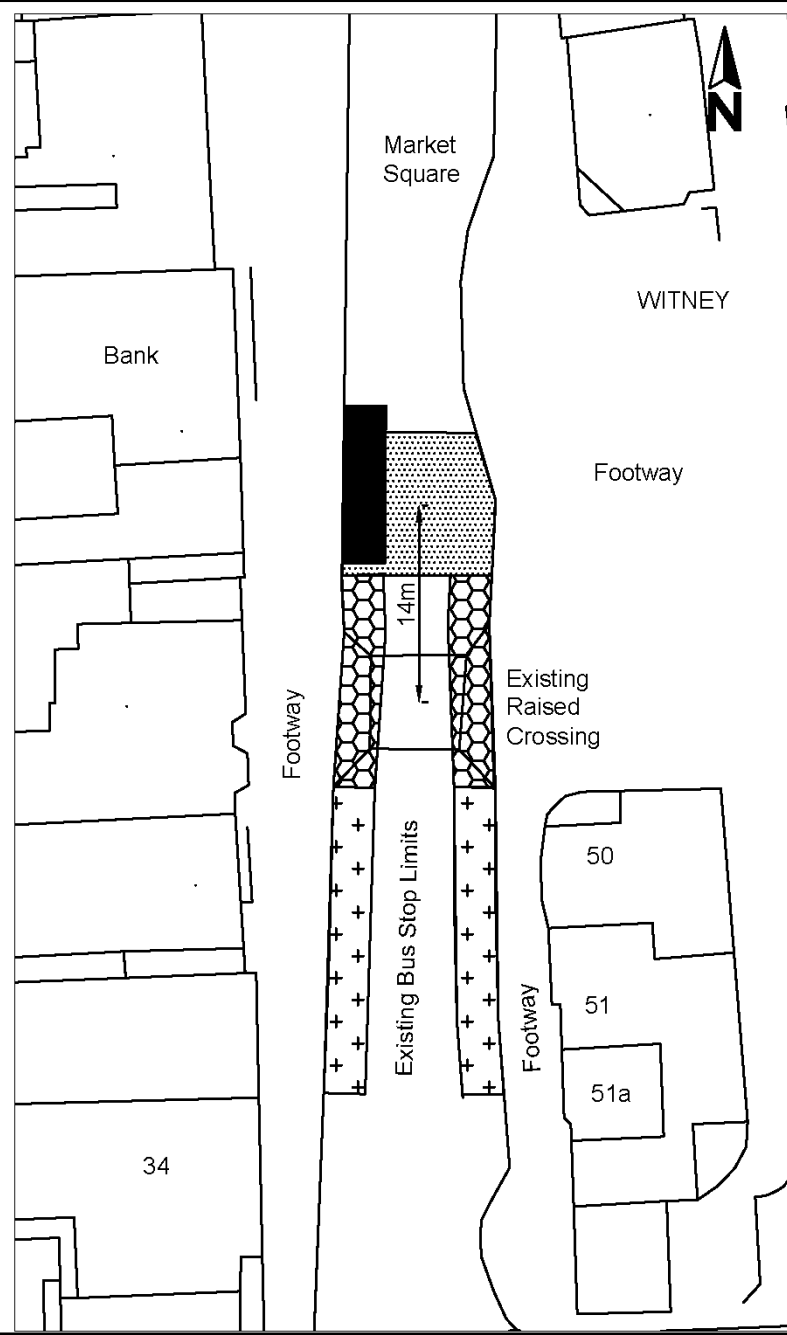
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed amended bus stop, waiting restrictions
and revised traffic calming feature
Consultation responses




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KEY

-  Proposed Raised Crossing as existing dimensions.
-  Proposed Bus Stop Extension Length = 15m
-  Length of existing 30min. waiting parking lost = 11m

Distance from the center of the Proposed Raised Crossing to the center of the junction with Butter Cross is 68m.

Drawing No. 000000/IF/6000/001 Rev

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Cl

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 Proposed Bus Stop Extens

Drawing title
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n.t.s	Date drawn	Date checked	Date app

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref. 12.6.410
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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection.
(2) Witney Town Council	Support - Witney Town Council supports the proposal to move the hump forwards and extend the bus stop.
(3) Local Resident, (Witney Road, Finstock)	<p><u>Traffic Calming</u> – Object – 1) Both these proposals don't appear to make any reference to the current problem of congestion and double-parking on the opposite side of the road, particularly where the market square flares out into the road, opposite the black rectangle in the diagram. Many deliveries are made throughout the day in this area, and when the space in front of the taxi rank is full, delivery drivers pull up partially onto the paving; also the public park illegally to pick up takeaway food etc. I believe these changes will cause further obstruction and a bottle neck particularly where the new space for buses will be located, causing more single file traffic.</p> <p>2)The loss of permissible parking spaces will exacerbate this and could adversely affect businesses trading in the market square</p> <p>3) I believe vehicular access is needed through the arch by The Blue Boar so this would be impossible whenever a bus is occupying the new extended bus stop immediately in front</p> <p>4) Would a change of bus timetables be a more pragmatic and cost-effective solution, to ensure multiple buses aren't fighting for the same stop?</p> <p><u>Parking Restrictions</u> – Object – As above.</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Highworth Place, Witney)	<p><u>Traffic Calming</u> – Object – I would support this measure if the calming feature became a pedestrian crossing, both calming features on high street give pedestrians the impression they have right of way leading to potential accidents as vehicles also don't know whether to stop and give way or carry own. It would be safer all round if the hump became a formal pedestrian crossing as part of the project.</p> <p><u>Parking Restrictions</u> – Support – <i>No comment.</i></p>
(5) Local Resident, (Corn Street, Witney)	Object – 1. The proposed alterations are sited by two of the best known and prominent buildings in Witney. the Blue Boar, and the Corn Exchange. The Blue Boar is a key building in Witney and the last example of the traditional old coaching inn, still surviving in the heart of the town; it enhances the ambience of the Market Place, as does the newly restored Corn Exchange. The proposed extension to the bus stops will destroy the visual environment

	<p>by placing one bus stop immediately outside the Blue Boar, and the corresponding extension on the other side of the road positioned opposite the Corn Exchange. On the basis of the damage to the visual environment alone, I think the proposed plans should be withdrawn.</p> <p>2. The proposed extension blocks the approach to the vehicle access to the Blue Boar, which extends from the Market Place under the archway at the side of the Blue Boar and into Marlborough Lane. It would be very difficult if not impossible for delivery vehicles to make their drop with the new bus stop extension in place.</p> <p>3. The proposed plan also shows that the present pedestrian crossing will be removed and a new one laid further north down Market Street, but due to the level difference between the footway and carriageway it would not be possible to install a crossing here.</p> <p>4. The removal of eleven metres of existing short term parking spaces would represent a real loss of an amenity as all the parking spaces along this side of the road are in constant use.</p> <p>5. The buses will spoil the general atmosphere and visual dimensions of the market, and will curtail deliveries which take place in the precise area of the proposed bus stop extension. The proposed plan to extend the bus stops could well prove to be a serious threat to the continuance of the market.</p> <p>5. Usually when bus stops are created bus shelters follow: none are marked on the Council plan, but their introduction with the new bus stops would further destroy the immediate visual environment of this vital part of central Witney.</p> <p>If the pinch points were to be removed and replaced with Zebra crossings, I believe there would be a much improved traffic flow with a more even distribution of buses; pedestrians would gain from the introduction of Zebra crossings, resulting in benefits all round.</p>
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