

Information Note for BoA Town Councillors on the Historic Core Zone

25th February 2014

What consultation has taken place on the scheme?

In 2010, transport consultants, Colin Buchanan held two workshops with key stakeholders in the town to enable them to develop a preferred design solution for the HCZ. The first workshop looked at issues, ideas and suggestions for the HCZ. The second 'Design Options' workshop considered a number of potential solutions and allowed the consultant to identify the technical design options and urban design elements favoured by stakeholders.

Colin Buchanan were able to draw on a number of previous consultations that have taken place in the town e.g. the Taming the Traffic workshop and the Priority for People initiative, as well as a wide variety of statistical data made available to them such as traffic count and speed data. All households in BoA were sent a leaflet showing the proposals drawn up by Colin Buchanan. Both the Area Board and Bradford on Avon Town Council gave their support for the proposals in the summer of 2010.

Wiltshire Council later commissioned consultants, Mouchel, to progress with the design of Phase 1 of the HCZ project at the Market Street/Church Street junction. In September 2012, a targeted consultation was undertaken to gather the views of vulnerable and disabled groups so that their comments could be incorporated into the scheme design process. As a result of this consultation exercise, the plans were amended to take into account the comments received.

In January 2013, further consultation with the wider public was undertaken and three public exhibitions were held. In March 2013, both the Area Board and Town Council gave their support for progression of the scheme with amendments to include making the pedestrian crossings more prominent in the scheme with the use of striping and including more informal crossings at the top of Market Street.

Wiltshire Council's transport consultants, Atkins, are now progressing with the detailed design of Phase 1 and the Traffic Regulation Orders for the proposed Restricted Parking Zone, which forms part of the HCZ proposals, will be advertised for consultation in early March 2014.

What will be the impact of the scheme on traffic and congestion?

The traffic modelling tool VISSIM has been used to assess the proposed HCZ scheme. The proposals are not expected to create an unacceptable impact on the capacity of the road network as the scheme can accommodate the current levels of traffic demand. It is expected however, that the reduced carriageway widths, change in surface treatments and additional pedestrian crossing points will result in some longer journey times for vehicular traffic. However, it should be borne in mind that the volume of pedestrians is not overwhelming, so the impact of drivers allowing pedestrians more time and courtesy is not expected to have too great an impact on journey times.

Shifting priority from vehicles to pedestrians will also act to calm the traffic and make it less desirable to drive through the town. This may lead to some natural reduction in traffic flows either through migration to other routes or alternative modes of transport.

Explain the safety implications of removing the zebra crossing and replacing with informal crossings

The informal crossing points are designed to provide greater connectivity and meeting existing and potential future pedestrian desire lines. It has been identified that pedestrians presently cross the road where it suits them, rather than detouring to a designated pedestrian crossing.

The informal courtesy crossings are expected to work in the same fashion as a zebra crossing, with drivers expected to give way to pedestrians. This is the same approach to that used successfully in the HCZ in Shrewsbury and in shared space schemes elsewhere in the country. The idea is that by removing the more familiar and formal elements of highway infrastructure, such as a zebra crossing, drivers proceed more carefully and cautiously.

The use of high quality visually distinct materials, gateway features and signage will ensure drivers are aware they are entering a special environment and encourage awareness of their surroundings and other road users, especially pedestrians. This approach, coupled with a reduction in carriageway widths, raised tables and informal crossing points will help to ensure vehicles are travelling at a low speed.