

**SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL****SPECIAL DELEGATION PROCEDURE**COMMITTEE CONCERNED: **Cabinet**FROM: **Eric Teagle**SERVICE UNIT: **Forward Planning and Transportation**

DATE: 6 October 2008

**Proposed Enhancement of Wilton Market Place - Responses to Public Consultation****1. Background**

- 1.1 On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 Cabinet considered a proposal to carry out a scheme to enhance the Wilton Market Place. It was resolved:

*provided that the outcome of the consultation exercise is generally supportive of the proposed scheme, with the paving material changed to Yorkstone, and a satisfactory temporary relocation of the weekly market is achieved, the scheme for the enhancement of Wilton Market Place shown on the previously circulated plan be approved, for implementation between January and March 2009.*

- 1.2 Following the Cabinet meeting, a limited consultation exercise was conducted. A letter and plan outlining the proposed scheme were delivered to all the business and residential premises overlooking the Market Place. Copies of the letter and plan were also given to the traders attending the weekly market and a copy of each was erected in the Market Place itself. A deadline for comments of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2008 was given. A second set of the letters and plans was delivered to nearby premises over the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> September 2008. A deadline for comments of 3<sup>rd</sup> October was given.
- 1.3 The scheme set out for consultation involved the relaying and partial widening of the paved area around the Market Place in Yorkstone and the resurfacing of the car park in bitumen macadam. Improvements were also to be made to street furniture. Critically, it was proposed to close the car park and give the contractor possession of the site for the duration of the 12 week, January – March 2009, construction period. The market was proposed to be temporarily relocated to the Wilton Shopping Village, but no proposals were put forward to create replacement car parking spaces during the work.

**2. Consultation responses**

- 2.1 By 6<sup>th</sup> October, 15 comments had been received. These comments are summarised at Annex 1 to this report.

**2.2 The loss of car parking**

The majority of the letters received express concern about the loss of car parking during the work. Local businesses are stated to rely to a significant extent upon the proximity of the Market Place car park and the convenience it offers to customers, particularly the elderly, mothers and children and the disabled. The downturn in trade experienced during the annual carnival and fair is cited as an indication of the potentially dire loss of business that is likely to occur over a three month period. Concern is expressed about the ability of some businesses to survive, leading to the loss of yet more shops.

**2.2 The relocation of the market**

It is suggested that moving the market to make way for the proposed work would disadvantage the customers who use it, many of whom are elderly and frail. Some have chosen to live within walking distance of the market and shops and the Shopping Village would be too far to go. Others come by bus to use the market. There is a convenient bus stop in the Market Place, but this is not the case at the Shopping Village and crossing the busy A30 would be hazardous for an elderly person carrying shopping. Using the market also gives the opportunity to use local shops and the post office, which may be under threat. A relocation to the area outside the Health Centre is suggested.

- 2.3 As part of the consultation, the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation wrote to the Wilton Health Centre, seeking comments on the possibility of moving the market temporarily to the area immediately outside the Health Centre building. The Practice Manager responded objecting to the idea, citing the loss of car parking (including disabled parking), problems associated with a road closure, noise and smells from the market and the availability of alternative locations.

2.4 The scheme and alternatives to it  
 One respondent suggested that the proposed scheme would not prevent larger cars overhanging the paving by the bus stop, limiting the space for bus passengers. Another claimed that the proposed scheme was too grandiose and the market place would continue to be dominated by parked cars; the new paving would hardly be seen. Relaying the tarmac would be sufficient. The existing trees are appreciated, but receive no care from the Council. If enhancement of the area is required, grants could be given to improving surrounding buildings. A list of other areas in Wilton that would benefit from investment is suggested. The greatest need is for the resurfacing of local roads.

2.5 The lack of communication  
 It will be recalled that the distribution of letters was limited to premises overlooking the Market Place and many respondents commented upon the lack of direct notification of a proposal that would have a huge impact on all businesses in Wilton.

3. **Conclusions and recommendations**

3.1 The number of responses received to the consultation exercise is relatively small, but all but two (one comments just on one detail of the scheme, the other is supportive) are broadly hostile to it. The primary concerns are the loss of car parking and the relocation of the market and the impact both of these temporary changes would have on customers, market traders and local businesses. Given the terms of the Cabinet resolution of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 and the legal requirements surrounding consultation, it would not be possible to proceed with the scheme as currently proposed, without running the risk of challenge. On this basis, it is recommended that:

- a) The enhancement work to the Market Place should be carried out in two consecutive stages, allowing approximately half the car park to continue in operation during each phase;
- b) The possibility of providing additional limited waiting car parking on North Street and elsewhere should be investigated and, if appropriate, a temporary change to the relevant Traffic Order should be advertised;
- c) The proposal should be amended to include the relocation of the market to the area outside the Wilton Heath Centre. This arrangement to be subject to a temporary road closure being affected and the associated Road Traffic Order being advertised. The Head of Forward Planning and Transportation should write to the Practice Manager setting out the anticipated details of this arrangement and seeking her further views;
- d) The Head of Forward Planning and Transportation should write again to all those people who responded to the consultation, seeking their further views on the amended proposals. A copy of the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation's letter should be sent also to the Wilton Town Council and erected in a prominent position in the Market Place and a period of two weeks allowed for comments;
- e) a further report should be prepared when the investigations have been completed and the results of the consultation are known.

(Please tick relevant box)

IMPLICATIONS	OFFICE R	COMMENTS (incl)	NONE	NOT APPLICABLE
Legal	Jane Ferguson	No comments. The Cabinet decision does not allow the work to go ahead with these sort of objections.		
Financial			None	
Personnel			None	
Environmental	ET		None at this stage	

**APPROVED :**

Leader : ..... Portfolio Holder : .....

Copy to: Chair & Vice Chairman of relevant Scrutiny Panel

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED**

**Annex**

	<b>From</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1.	Mr Daw (by telephone)	Concerned that the proposed design does not prevent long vehicles overhanging the pavement by the bus stop, giving little space for people waiting there.
2.	Cllr Ian Tomes	Observes that Wilton market is much loved by traders and local people alike. Research suggests that markets benefit towns and cities in terms of inclusiveness and social cohesion. Small markets are not robust and need to be looked after. A three-month relocation could reduce trade by a third to a half and would be hard to recover. Customers could lose the habit of shopping in Wilton market and some traders could move elsewhere. Councillor Tomes states that the traders would prefer to move only slightly, to a position outside the Health Centre, which he understands to have been the original location of the Wilton market. The needs of the Health Centre would need to be addressed, but he believes that this could be achieved through discussion.
3.	Mrs Marion Powell	<p>Pleased to see SDC investing in Wilton, but scheme inappropriate and will cause disruption that outweighs benefits. Local businesses rely on free car parking in Market Place for much of their trade. 3 month closure would lead to loss of more shops. 2 day closure for fun fair brought complaints about loss of trade. Without car park customers will go elsewhere. Over 17 years several shops have closed. Recently 3 new businesses have opened and need all the support they can get – loss of car park is sure to have adverse impact.</p> <p>Moving the market to make way for the proposed work would disadvantage the customers who use it, many of whom are elderly and frail. Some have chosen to live within walking distance of the market and shops and the Shopping Village would be too far to go. Others come by bus to use the market. There is a convenient bus stop in the Market Place, but this is not the case at the Shopping Village and crossing the busy A30 would be hazardous for an elderly person carrying shopping. Using the market also gives the opportunity to use local shops and the post office, which may be under threat.</p> <p>The proposed scheme is too grandiose and the market place would continue to be dominated by parked cars; the new paving would hardly be seen. Relaying the tarmac would be sufficient. The existing trees are appreciated, but receive no care from the Council. If enhancement of the area is required, grants could be given to improving surrounding buildings. A list of other areas in Wilton that would benefit from investment is given. The greatest need is for the resurfacing of local roads.</p>
4.	Mrs Debbie Brewster, Peppers Café	In favour of cheering up the area, but concerned about loss of car parking on newly opened café. Huge reliance on free car parking – main reason for choosing premises. Had been warned about impact of loss of car parking during carnival and business was bleak. Dreads the prospect of losing car parking for three months. Café may not sustain loss of income. Although there are other car parks in Wilton, elderly, mothers and babies and disabled customers won't or won't be able to make the extra effort to walk the distance. Is there any contingency for loss of earnings?
5.	Helen Curtis, Pets Pantry	No objection, but are SDC going to reimburse for 3 months loss of business? Where do customers park? Businesses already suffering in current economic climate and this will certainly not help.
6.	Barbara Slack, Sub-Postmistress, Wilton Post Office	Complains about lack of direct notification/consultation, particularly proposed 3 month closure of car park. Car park closure will have a huge impact on all businesses in Wilton – depend on it remaining open. A way needs to be found to carry out the work and leave more than half the parking spaces in use. Once customers cannot park in Wilton they go to Salisbury or elsewhere – loses 75% of trade during fair week. Businesses are struggling to keep their heads above water – please don't make it any harder than it is already.

7.	Colin and Brenda Jones	<p>Consultation period does not allow time for meaningful discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of vehicles parking in the Market Place should ideally be none or at least kept to a minimum to leave centre open for floral display etc.;</li> <li>• Wall surrounding churchyard should be rebuilt and the bench removed so the area is no longer a gathering point for abuse, drinking and litter;</li> <li>• Market Cross and Strike Stone should be re-sited with a plaque provided to explain their history;</li> <li>• If possible, re-position the bus stop to avoid traffic blockage and user problems;</li> <li>• Wilton needs to become more appealing and reflect better its history. If possible, develop a town theme/emblem/colour scheme to be adopted by local shops and buildings;</li> <li>• Make the square a non-drinking zone;</li> <li>• When work starts ensure Police control parking to avoid blockages in Kingsbury Square, Greyhound Lane, North Street etc.</li> </ul>
8.	Mr and Mrs Crowe, Market Traders for the last 13 years.	<p>A lot of market customers come by bus, which stops in the Market Place. Several customers also have mobility scooters. The best place to move the market would be outside the Health Centre. The traders have worked hard to make the market successful for the local community, advertising it at their own expense. Taking the market away from the centre would be unfair to customers and it has been proven that once a market is moved it takes a long time to recover, if at all.</p>
9.	Ron and Jackie Lewis, The Greyhound Public House.	<p>Object strongly to the closure of car park, which would be crippling to all local businesses. Aghast that only businesses overlooking the car park received notification. All surrounding businesses depend on car park for their customers. Have been approached by local businesses owners expressing dissatisfaction that they were not notified. Have worked extremely hard over last 13 months to improve pub and make it more welcoming. All pubs are struggling to retain customers, particularly at a time when cash is tight and costs have increased. It will be particularly galling to have good work undone through the notoriously difficult months of the year. Any benefit will be undone as customers will have no where to park. All businesses in Wilton are served by the car park and its removal will impact on us all financially. That would be the responsibility of the committee [Cabinet] and we will be seeking a reduction in our business rates.</p>
10.	Alan Best, Best Bros Greengrocers	<p>Why does the whole of the Market Place need to be closed between January and March? The closure will have a great impact on trading and lose business as customers will no longer be able to pull up in their cars. Why can the enhancement not be done in sections? We incur an extensive loss of business during the annual fair and that is only for 3 days. The last time the Market Square was enhanced it was neglected soon afterwards and not regularly maintained. What plans are there for maintenance this time? Market traders and fair lorries drive across the paved around the square. Are you planning to prevent that continuing? It appears that first consideration has been given to the market stall holders. What provision do you intend to make the businesses that are present 365 days/year? How are we to be compensated for loss of earnings for 3 months? In the present economic situation it is crucial that we do not lose 3 month's trade. If no parking is allowed the future of Best Brothers will be in jeopardy. Finally, it seems a great waste of taxpayers' money as nothing will be changing significantly to benefit Wilton. There are plenty of other areas that need attention. We have been trading in the town since 1957, we hope you are not putting the final nail in our coffin!</p>
11.	Marie Narang, Practice Manager, Wilton Health Centre	<p><i>Note: this response was received in reply to a letter specifically inviting comments on the possibility of moving the market temporarily to the area immediately outside the Health Centre.</i></p> <p>No objection to the planned work, but major concerns about possible relocation of market to the car parking area immediately outside the Health Centre:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of car parking – proposal would see the loss of 19 spaces (including 2 disabled). It is not feasible to offer no parking for patients, including the very young and very old. A long walk from the other free car park would not be practicable in terms of distance and poor weather conditions. Car parking spaces also used for dropping off and by ambulance crews. Proposal may delay vital care;</li> <li>• Loss of disabled parking spaces – spaces always occupied regardless of time or day of the week;</li> <li>• Road closure – could cause delays for ambulances and doctors on call. A reduction in parking spaces would also encourage drivers to park on back roads or in the Health Centre staff car park, perhaps blocking in a doctor;</li> <li>• The noise and smell of the market – patients and staff would not want to be subjected to this, which could affect concentration levels. The waiting area, treatment room, Health Visitor’s room and doctor’s consulting room all look on to this section of the market and would be most affected by the increase in pedestrians and noise and smells;</li> <li>• There are suitable alternatives – the Wilton Shopping Village or the free car park down the road. This option would provide the invaluable parking spaces for our patients as well as customers to the local shops and cafes who would suffer tremendously on a Thursday if all parking facilities were to be lost in the Market Place.</li> </ul>
12.	H R Swanton, Reeves Racing	Pleased that money going to be spent of Wilton, but sure that a better way of spending it could be found. It is unfortunate to be told so late. In business in Wilton for nearly 40 years. The decline in shopping is very serious and closing the car park for 3 months could be disastrous for some shopkeepers. Very few businesses and people will benefit from this project. Wilton needs help in many ways, but to cut of the main asset – the car park – for three months seems madness. It will drive people away, some never to return.
13.	William Cole, B Cole and Sons Fairgrounds	Would like to ensure that the continuation of the fair and carnival fair in Wilton Market Place.
14.	Iain and Sally Hemming, West Street Deli	<p>The improvements will be a very positive step for Wilton. Confident that in the long term residents and traders will benefit, however there is a very real danger that the trading environment will be drastically reduced at a time when economic pressures have already had a negative impact on trading. Wilton’s traders employ local people and use local tradespersons. Need assurance that every possible step will be taken to fast track the improvements within four weeks, and not as proposed 12 weeks. We would also like the Council to consider a reduction of council tax for traders and a compensation plan for lost revenue.</p> <p>During the process of re-development will the authority please ensure that adequate yellow signage will highlight free car parking in South Street from both the Salisbury and Shaftesbury directions on the A30? With help from the Council, the writer would be happy to spearhead a more pro-active marketing campaign from traders targeting the local population.</p>
15.	Spectrum design and print	Very much in favour of the area being upgraded and smartened – can only benefit Wilton. For the duration of the work high profile large signs should be erected to tell people where to park and the location of the market. Surprised the market being relocated to the Shopping Village. Assumed it would be moved to the Michael Herbert Hall car park. Local people would be more supportive of this.