

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 10 JULY 2012

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

PEDESTRIANISED / SHARED SPACE PROPOSALS FOR
AN AREA OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All Bishop's Stortford Wards

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To seek support for exploration of a combined scheme for time limited pedestrianisation of South Street/Potter Street and creation of Shared Space focused around the South Street/ Station Approach as one of the mechanisms that will help direct improvement in the town in the short, medium and longer term.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> that:	
(A)	exploration of a combined scheme for time limited pedestrianisation of South Street/Potter Street and creation of Shared Space focused around the South Street/ Station Approach, be endorsed;
(B)	Hertfordshire Highways be requested to prepare a programme which sets out the options for a time limited pedestrianisation scheme by carrying out a technical assessment of through traffic, servicing requirements for local traders, public transport facilities and access arrangements from the surrounding catchment area; and
(C)	Hertfordshire Highways be requested to prepare design details of Shared Space for the area around the junction of South Street and Station Road they as part of their current work programme of traffic improvements schemes for Bishop's Stortford.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Elsewhere on this agenda, the Committee has received a report seeking support for the adoption of a town centre boundary for Bishop's Stortford as one of the mechanisms which could promote better outcomes for the town. That proposal was developed through the work of the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 group which published "A Vision for Bishop's Stortford" which sets out a number of agreed aims and ambitions for the town.
- 1.2 As part of seeking ways in which improvements for the town might be encouraged and supported, the 20 20 Group considered options to support the mixed uses, retail led / services and activities which are key to the well being of the town's local economy.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Bishop's Stortford Transport Study Sept 2006, prepared by Steer Davies Gleeve, for East Herts District Council considered a number of transportation issues including the establishment of a pedestrianised area in the northern reaches of South Street to provide a focus for the town as a well improve the general town centre environment for residents and businesses. The study developed three options, all of which involved different degrees of pedestrianisation along North Street/Potter Street/South Street. The concept of pedestrianisation was subsequently incorporated in the East Hertfordshire Transport Plan 2007 and is also featured in the East Herts Local Plan. The debate has also been informed by current work being undertaken elsewhere.
- 2.2 Hertfordshire County Council has commissioned Steer Davies Gleeve to prepare a Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Urban Transport Plan. Its purpose is to define local transport issues, including pedestrianisation options for North Street /Potter Street and South Street. That study arises from the Local Transport White Paper 2011 which sets out the Government's approach to local transport in the context of its wider goal of promoting economic growth while reducing transport-related carbon emissions.
- 2.3 A document on 'Shared Space' (20 October 2011 – Dept. for Transport) was published by the Department of Transport and circulated at the February 2012 meeting of the 2020 Group. Shared space is a design approach that seeks to change the way

streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians. In the UK, shared space is usually applied to links and minor junctions with the aim of allowing pedestrians to move more freely within the space. This Local Transport Note (LTN) focuses on High Street environments, but many of its principles will apply to other types of shared space. The document is available at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/ltn-01-11/> The section which introduces Shared Space is provided at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

- 2.4 In the context of considering pedestrianisation of the area marked by in the south, the junction of South Street and Station Road and the corn exchange in the north, the 20 20 Group welcomed in principle the Shared Space concept for this area. They agreed that this option and / or the proposal of creating a Shared Space for parts of South Street is worthy of further examination and assessment.
- 2.5 A 20 20 Group workshop subsequently took place in February 2012 which considered and debated the options for pedestrianisation for the town centre as well as application of Shared Space principles for parts or whole of the area described in 2.4 above. The workshop concluded that full scale pedestrianisation of South Street from its junction with Station Approach and Potter Street to its junction with North Road would not be a practical option due to potential problems with access to existing businesses for loading and services. However the creation of a Shared Space for parts of South Street was considered a positive option to be pursued with the potential of limited pedestrianisation focused for certain times of the day / week.
- 2.6 The group agreed that a combined scheme of time limited pedestrianisation for the section of South Street/Potter Street together with Shared Space creation near the junction of Station Approach/South Street could provide a number of benefits to this part of the town centre including :
 - The removal of the majority of private vehicles to improve the pedestrian environment; Retain access for bus services, cycling and local access; Improve access and substantially increase space for pedestrians; encourage retail shoppers

- Improved streetscape and walking opportunities;
- Opportunities for extending the town market and holding public and cultural events;
- Regeneration of the area, particularly focusing on further improving retail/commercial facilities

2.7 The Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Group endorsed a combined scheme for time limited pedestrianisation of South Street/Potter Street and creation of Shared Space focused around the South Street/ Station Approach junction area and proposed promoting the following:-

- Proposals for a time limited pedestrianisation scheme for the stretch of South Street from its junction with Station Approach and Potter Street to its junction with North Street are developed and local consultation with businesses/occupiers undertaken
- That a scheme is formulated and the worked up option is recommended for its incorporation within the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Urban Transport Study

2.8 Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Group request of East Herts District Council and Herts County Council that these measures are considered priorities specifically for delivery under the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Urban Transport study.

2.9 The group suggested East Herts District Council request of Hertfordshire County Highways Department that their officers prepare the design details of the Shared Space as described. This as part of their current work programme of traffic improvement schemes for Bishop's Stortford so that subject to the availability of funding, an agreed Shared Space can be implemented as soon as practicable.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

A Vision for Bishop's Stortford – BS 20 20 Group

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