

## SALISBURY CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

### SALISBURY MARKET SQUARE TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS OF "THE VISION"

#### 1. BACKGROUND

The Preliminary Briefing Paper for the recent Design Competition for Salisbury Market Square told entrants to assume that Blue Boar Row and Minster Street would "in the near future, be traffic free apart from buses". This proposal is not new – the same idea formed part of the Salisbury Transport Strategy (STS) in 2000, when it was suggested that these two streets would be pedestrianised along with Catherine Street, New Canal, the Eastern End of Fisherton Street, Bridge Street and Silver Street.<sup>1</sup> However none of these STS proposals have yet been implemented and the current situation is that both Blue Boar Row and Minster Street still carry significant volumes of traffic - indeed the canyon like nature of Minster Street means that it is of particular concern in terms of air quality.

Changes in traffic routing and management will clearly be required to gain the full benefits from the "Vision" project in the Market Square. Indeed, it is imperative that the Vision's Traffic and Movement Strategy, of which Traffic Management and Public Transport are key components, is developed as a precursor to the individual 'Vision' projects. It is understood that the Salisbury and Wilton Traffic Model will shortly become available, which will allow the traffic impacts of Salisbury Vision projects and changes in traffic management to be assessed. We believe that the measures proposed in **3** are in urgent need of evaluation.

This paper has been circulated in draft form around 38 members of Salisbury Campaign for Better Transport and has been discussed and finalised in meetings of the group held in March/April 2009. It can therefore be taken that this reflects the consensus view of a number of individuals with an interest in transport issues in Salisbury and we hope that Wiltshire Council and the Salisbury Vision steering group will take this into account when considering these suggestions.

#### 2. DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

"**The Market Square**" is assumed to include the same area as the design competition, namely the Market Place, Guildhall Square, the Cheese Market, the Poultry Cross, Butcher Row, Fish Row, Queen Street, Blue Boar Row and Minster Street.

"**Pedestrianised**" means unavailable to any motorised vehicle except in an emergency. Delivery/service vehicles may be acceptable within prescribed time periods. Cyclists should be allowed in all pedestrianised areas unless excluded on grounds of pedestrian safety. Pedestrians have priority in these areas and cyclists should be reminded of their responsibility to give way.

"**Buses and taxis only**" would normally include cyclists. Use by delivery vehicles may be restricted.

#### 3. TRANSPORT MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED

**We believe the direct and knock-on effects on Salisbury city centre traffic movements of the following measures need to be evaluated:**

##### **3.1 Remove all car parking from the Market Place and Guildhall Square Issues**

The removal of car parking has widespread support. However the needs of the disabled and those requiring access to the Guildhall (e.g. for weddings) need to be considered. Market stall holders will continue to require access on market days.

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<sup>1</sup> See Salisbury Transport Study, Summary of Preferred Strategy, Atkins, August 2000 para 2.33. Pedestrianisation was defined as the closure of various streets to traffic, though permitting access for buses, taxis, deliveries (at restricted times), and access to premises located on the roads affected.

## **Discussion**

Currently Blue Badge holders have access to 8 disabled parking spaces in the Guildhall Square as well as other concessions including free parking in Pay & Display spaces and resident's parking bays. The needs of those who genuinely require these facilities should be respected, although there is concern that the current system is abused.

The following options might be considered for disabled parking:

### **Option1**

Parking in the southern end of Endless Street (which with the change proposed in 3.7 would no longer be used by buses) and the western end of Winchester Street. Entry would be via Endless Street and exit via Winchester Street.

### **Option 2**

There could be some disabled parking spaces in Queen Street (which it is suggested would then need to become one way northbound with limited access for disabled parking & Guildhall access only), and the western end of Winchester St. Entrance to Queen Street would be via the western end of Milford Street (see 3.10) and exit would be via Winchester Street.

There could be a drop-off point/parking bays for the Guildhall on Queen Street on the eastern side of the Guildhall.

There needs to be appropriate provision for taxis to pick up and drop off. The pick-up outside Tesco Metro in Castle St is very popular but may need to be relocated further north along Castle St or to Avon Approach since the southern end of Castle St would no longer be a thoroughfare. The route to be taken by taxis through the Maltings area (see 3.5) will be of relevance to the siting of taxi ranks in the Castle St/Maltings area.

Cycle parking should be provided at each corner of the Market Square.

## **3.2 Pedestrianise Blue Boar Row**

### **Issues**

Good bus access to Salisbury City Centre is an important part of the Vision's Public Transport Strategy. However, buses waiting in Blue Boar Row and their associated bus shelters are a visual intrusion into this area which, with its wide pavement and south facing aspect, is the most attractive side of the square for outdoor café tables and the like.

### **Discussion**

The full potential of the Vision for the Market Square as "a high quality public space in the centre of the city, which is designed for pedestrians and where people can congregate for social, leisure and community activities" can be best realised if Blue Boar is fully pedestrianised.

Bus stops from Blue Boar Row and from the southern ends of Castle St and Endless St will need to be relocated to somewhere which is equally convenient and accessible for bus users. This is linked with the whole issue of bus routes through Salisbury – discussed further below, see 3.5 – 3.11.

## **3.3 Pedestrianise Minster Street**

### **Issues**

The Salisbury Vision identifies the Cheesemarket as a "simple, direct and obvious pedestrian link" between the Market Place and the Maltings area now and Fisherton Square in the future. This linkage will be the most obvious if Minster Street is fully pedestrianised.

### **Discussion**

If vehicles are allowed to continue to pass from Minster Street into Blue Boar Row and Castle Street (or even into Castle Street only), they would remain a major disincentive for pedestrians to use this "link", which is vital for the success of the "major retail-led scheme" proposed for the Maltings and Central car park.

However, if Minster Street is to be pedestrianised, it will be necessary to provide an alternative link (for buses and taxis only) through the Maltings/Central car park, to link Fisherton Street and Castle Street (see 3.5 below).

There is likely to be a temptation to put the pedestrianisation of Minster Street into the "too difficult" category and to allow cars and/or buses to continue to pass from Minster Street into Castle Street. This must be resisted.

## **3.4 Pedestrianise Queen Street**

### **Issues**

At present, Queen Street is "semi-pedestrianised" to the extent that it is closed to buses and taxis only between 10.00 and 16.00.

## **Discussion**

There is little justification for the continued limited use of Queen Street by buses and taxis and ideally this street should become fully pedestrianised since any traffic on this street can put unsuspecting pedestrians (particularly visitors) at risk. However in order to allow for access to the Guildhall and to provide adequate access to the city centre for those disabled who really need it, this street may need to become one-way northbound as discussed in 3.1 above.

### **3.5 Construct a new one-way road for buses and taxis only through the Maltings/Central car park, linking Fisherton Street to Castle Street, to form part of a clockwise "inner ring road" which links New Canal with the existing bus station area.**

#### **Issues**

A new link for buses and taxis through the Maltings will be required if Minster Street is to be pedestrianised.

#### **Discussion**

There are likely to be requests to make this new section of road available also to cars. This should be resisted. It is a cornerstone of the Vision's traffic management strategy that every opportunity should be taken to reduce the opportunities for "rat-running" by cars through the city centre.

Possible starting points for the inner ring road, from Fisherton Street, using existing roads, are via Malthouse Lane or Summerlock Approach. The former would minimise the distance which buses have to travel on the inner ring road, but might pass between the Playhouse/City Hall and a relocated library. It would certainly weaken the "connection" of these facilities to the Market Square. The latter would add distance but would avoid bisecting the "cultural area" planned for Fisherton Square. It would also allow the inner ring road to pass much more closely to a possible site for a relocated bus station (see 3.8).

Possible existing road links to Castle Street are via Avon Approach or Millstream Approach. The former has the merit of shortening the length of the inner ring road by virtue of being closer to the Castle Street/Chipper Lane junction, while remaining largely clear of the area of planned landscape enhancement of the River Avon and Millstream edges. The latter would add considerable distance but might prove to have compensating advantages, depending on what redevelopment takes place on the bus depot site.

There might be other alternatives depending on the extent of the redevelopment of the Maltings and its surrounding area.

Whatever route the inner ring road takes through the Maltings it will enclose an area which is better regarded as an extension of the existing Chequers, rather than an intrusion into the Central car park commercial redevelopment site

Whatever its precise route within the Maltings, the inner ring road would then continue via Chipper Lane (see 3.6). The route would then continue via Salt Lane, Rolleston Street, Brown Street, the bus contra-flow lane on Milford Street (see 3.10), New Canal (see 3.9), High Street, Bridge Street and Fisherton Street.

### **3.6 Chipper Lane to become one-way eastbound.**

#### **Issues**

The closure of Blue Boar Row (see 3.2 ) will require an alternative access route to the bus station.

#### **Discussion**

Chipper Lane would need to become one-way eastbound as part of a clockwise inner ring road.

Bus stops might need to be located here as an alternative to Blue Boar Row (see 3.2).

### **3.7 Turn the Endless Street bus station through 180 degrees so that buses enter from Endless Street & exit onto Rolleston Street**

#### **Issues**

To minimise bus movements through the narrow Chequers streets, it would make more sense in the context of a clockwise inner ring road if the entrance was on Endless Street and the exit on Rolleston Street

#### **Discussion**

If the bus station buildings are to stay on the southern side of the site then it would be necessary to build angled bays out into the bus forecourt to allow for safe ingress and egress of passengers on the left hand side of the bus.

As an alternative, and to minimise bus traffic through the Chequers area, it is proposed to relocate the bus station to the north-west corner of Central car park – (see 3.8).

### **3.8 Relocate the bus station to the north-west corner of Central car park.**

#### **Issues**

The present location of the bus station, surrounded by the narrow streets of the Eastern Chequers, is far from ideal. Relocation to Central car park would have the benefit of enhancing public transport provision for any Maltings redevelopment and could also facilitate a better bus-train interchange.

#### **Discussion**

If a new road is built through the Maltings for buses and taxis only, linking Summerlock Approach to Castle Street and forming part of an inner ring road (see 3.5), the case for this suggested relocation of the bus station is considerably strengthened.

Platform 6 at the railway station offers a safe crossing of Fisherton Street for pedestrians and this could be linked, via a new entrance into/exit from the railway station, to a relocated bus station, which would considerably improve public transport interchange facilities.

The existing coach park on Mill Stream Approach could be combined with this new bus station to offer much improved facilities for both bus and coach passengers.

### **3.9 Convert New Canal into a major bus interchange.**

#### **Issues**

The primary purpose of this proposal is to ensure that there is adequate City Centre provision for an increased number of buses, including the P&R services.

#### **Discussion**

Capacity could be increased by the introduction of bus passenger "islands" (as outside Victoria Railway station) along its wider part. This interchange could include kiosks and left luggage facilities for shoppers and tourists. There would still be room for a taxi rank. The whole area would be for buses and taxis only.

The coaches from the countryside which use New Canal on Market days may need to be moved – perhaps to Milford Street. There may be insufficient space for all the rural buses & mini-buses in this location, and alternative coach parking – perhaps at the Park & Ride sites – may be necessary with Milford Street/New Canal being used for drop off and pick up.

### **3.10 Restrict the western end of Milford Street to buses and taxis + Guildhall access/disabled parking access only.**

#### **Issues**

Milford Street between Brown Street and New Canal could become westbound only, and purely for use by buses and taxis, and by those vehicles which need to access the Guildhall and disabled parking in Queen Street.

#### **Discussion**

This section of Milford Street already has a westbound bus and taxi contra-flow lane, which should be extended to occupy the full width of the street. Additional bus/coach interchange capacity could then be introduced by replacing on-street parking bays by bus stops.

### **3.11 Restrict Catherine Street to buses and taxis only**

#### **Issues**

As a result of the proposals of 3.9 and 3.10 above, this street offers a through route only for buses and taxis.

With nowhere for cars to turn around, on-street car parking becomes impractical (Culver Street car stack is nearby), allowing the narrow pavements of this major shopping street to be widened.

#### **Discussion**

The narrow pavements of this busy street are a hazard especially with the current levels of through traffic. The closure of this street to other than buses and taxis would make a major contribution to the Vision's traffic management strategy, which is "to minimise the number of traffic movements .... through the city centre, to help provide a safe environment free from the negative effects of traffic and pollution."

### **3.12 Ensure the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are fully considered**

#### **Issues**

The needs of cyclists and pedestrians who wish to get into the city centre need to be considered at the outset, as do the need of those who wish to traverse the city centre.

## Discussion

For pedestrians this implies the provision of pavements of sufficient width for wheelchairs, buggies, shopping trolleys etc and dropped kerbs and crossing points to allow safe crossing. An alternative approach, which might be particularly appropriate in the historic heart of Salisbury, would be the removal of traffic signs and markings and a 'shared space' approach, as promoted by Ben Hamilton-Baillie and others<sup>2</sup>.

For cyclists thought needs to be given to the routes which need to be taken to get across town and to destinations which are outside the immediate city centre – including schools, railway station, hospital, Wiltshire College. One way streets can be a major impediment to cyclists wishing to traverse the city centre and consideration needs to be given to features such as cycle contra-flow lanes. Cycle parking at each corner of the Market Square (see 3.1) will minimise the need for cyclists to cross the Market Square itself, and covered cycle parking should also be provided within the city centre.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The changes proposed for Salisbury's Market Square offer the opportunity finally to implement some radical traffic reduction measures in the City Centre. The proposals mentioned above are only part of the overall picture, since other measures, such as the long-awaited removal of many city centre parking spaces, both on-street and off-street, once Park & Ride is fully operational, should also be implemented in the near future. Accessibility for the disabled and those arriving by public transport (including Park & Ride buses) and by foot or on bicycle needs to be enhanced and prioritised and the detailed design of the various "Vision" projects will need to ensure this is the case. Overall Salisbury's City Centre will receive much benefit from traffic reduction measures and the improvement in air quality, ambiance and economic vitality in the City Centre which this will bring.

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The **Campaign for Better Transport** (formerly Transport 2000) has been helping to create transport policies and programmes that improve everyone's quality of life whilst reducing the impact on the environment since 1973. The organisation works nationally and locally, collectively and as individuals, through high-level lobbying and strong public campaigning, to make good transport ideas a reality and stop bad ones from happening.

**Salisbury Campaign for Better Transport** (formerly Salisbury Transport 2000) are affiliated to the national organisation and have been an active local campaign group in Salisbury since 1998.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example <http://www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk/>