

**TO: EXECUTIVE – 14 JUNE 2004**

**SUBJECT: WARWICK TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME –  
PREFERRED OPTION CONSULTATION**

**FROM: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING / LEISURE AND AMENITIES**

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**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Warwickshire County Council is informed that:

- 1.1 The preferred option for Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management be generally supported.
- 1.2 That implementation of the revised bus terminus arrangements on District Council owned land at Westgate would be dependant on an appropriate agreement for a variable message sign system to the satisfaction of this Council being in place before any alterations are undertaken to the Westgate and Butts car parks.
- 1.3 That the further comments set out in Appendix B of this report form the Councils detailed response to the consultation.

**2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Executive considered a report at its 7<sup>th</sup> April 2003 meeting and agreed a range of common themes / criteria that any preferred traffic management option should seek to address. It also itemised specific comments on each of the three options that were being considered by the County Council at that time.
- 2.2 The County Council has since taken many of the comments that were forwarded into consideration in the formulation of its preferred traffic management proposal. As such, this Council intends to express its general support to the preferred option that is currently the subject of public consultation.
- 2.3 Appendix B of this report contains specific comments that set out areas of detail that it is felt should require particular attention. Further consultation with officers of the District Council will be necessary to enable the scheme to progress to implementation. There are financial consequences in relation to car parks which are addressed in this appendix

**3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

None.

**4. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

The Community Plan provides a broad strategic framework for the district. It identifies 10 key priorities and of these, Transport, Environment and the Economy

are particularly relevant. The Preferred Traffic Management Option is likely to impact on all 3 issues. There is a clear policy need to:

### **Transport**

- promote green travel and reduce car journeys
- extend cycle networks
- improve public transport
- reduce and enforce traffic speeds

### **Environment**

- improve the urban environment
- reduce pollution

### **Economy**

- regenerate town centres and deprived areas

The proposed traffic management scheme also impacts on the District Council's Corporate Strategy Targets in that it relates to the following objectives:

- promote a safer environment
- improve accessibility to the town centre of Warwick
- improve the vitality of the town centre
- support Tourism

John Archer  
Head of Planning and Engineering

Ian Coker  
Amenities Manager

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Report to Executive 7 April 2003**

**Report to Executive 13 January 2003**

**Letter to WCC dated 14 November 2002**

**Issues Paper – Warwick Town Centre traffic Management Study**

**Issues Paper- Warwick, Leamington, Whitnash and Kenilworth Transport Study**

<b>Areas in District Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Executive Portfolio Area and Holder:</b>	<b>Economic Services – Councillor Tamlin Environmental Services – Councillor Mrs Begg.</b>
<b>Over view and Scrutiny Committee(s):</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	<b>No</b>

**For further information about this report please contact:**

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>John Archer</b>
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>(01926) 456500</b>
<b>E-Mail</b>	<b>john.archer@wartwickdc.gov.uk</b>

## **Appendix A –**

### **Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management – The Preferred Option**

As previously reported at the April 2003 Executive, Warwickshire County Council has been looking at three different options to improve the traffic management and access into Warwick town centre. Two of these options have now been discounted for the reasons outlined below:-

- **One proposal offered few physical changes to traffic flows and focused on encouraging alternative ways of traveling**  
This proposal was not taken forward as it had a limited positive effect on traffic impact within Warwick Town Centre.
- **One Proposal sought to prevent all through traffic movement In the town centre**  
Whilst this appeared the best approach in terms of environmental improvements, it did not prove to be possible to implement due to severe effects on the wider road network.

#### **THE PREFERRED OPTION.**

**The preferred option that is the subject of this latest consultation has the following objectives:**

- To reduce the impact of traffic in Warwick town centre
- Reduce the amount of traffic and improve the environment in Jury Street and High Street. This will minimise the existing 'barrier' to easy movement between Warwick Castle and the rest of the Town Centre.
- Improve the ability of pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town with confidence.
- Improve the links to key areas to such as the railway station, schools and residential areas.
- Widen footways where it is difficult for pedestrians to pass each other.
- Improve the ability of buses to move through the town and make them more accessible.
- Limit the impact of major new housing developments on the town centre.

The above objectives that are proposed by the preferred traffic management scheme for Warwick Town Centre are consistent with a number of key principles that were previously adopted by the District Council through the production of the current Local Plan and involvement in the former Traffic Management Study.

The key components of the scheme are as follows:-

- New traffic light arrangements to control traffic are to be located at Westgate/ West Street, The Butts /Saltisford, and at the bottom of Smith Street / St Nicholas Church Street, (buses will be detected at traffic signals and given special priority).

- Smith Street to be made one-way (west), The Butts to be made one-way (north).
- Jury Street and High Street to be made access only.
- A new bus interchange is to be located on the site of the Norwich Union Car Park.
- Bus lanes are to be introduced.
- Car park management with interactive signing will be provided for the main off-road car parks.
- The scheme will involve the introduction of widened footways and easier crossing points
- Improved access into and through the town centre for walking, cycling and public transport.

Members can refer to the plans attached to this report for more details of the scheme or to the larger scale diagrams and supporting material that is available for inspection at the Town Hall, or on the County Councils Website at: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix B –

### Specific comments regarding detailed arrangements.

#### **Impact on the Setting of Historic Buildings / Streetscape.**

The preferred option will involve the introduction of new linked traffic signals that will enable the precise control of traffic and the ability to regulate the amount of traffic entering the town. The exact positioning and design of signalling and any additional traffic signs / driver information in the streetscape will have to be carefully integrated to ensure that the overall impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of significant Listed buildings is minimised. This will be particularly relevant at the most sensitive locations such as in the proximity of Grade 1 Listed Buildings. Warwickshire County Council should agree to consult closely with Conservation Officers of the District Council before such matters are finalised / implemented.

The details of any physical alterations to footways, surface materials and the introduction of new street furniture in the town centre should also be referred to the District Councils Conservation team for consideration.

#### **Air Quality**

The Environmental Health Department has recently concluded its statutory 'Review and Assessment' of Air Quality in Warwick District. The study has highlighted the need to give careful consideration to air quality when planning traffic management schemes.

#### **Car Parking.**

Overall the Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme being planned is parking neutral. However for the scheme as devised to be achieved Warwick District Council would need to agree to offer up two portions of land to Warwickshire County Council. These portions of land are located in two of our current off-street car parks at West Gate (Norwich Union) and The Butts. See Plan 1

#### **Off-street parking.**

As a result some 14 off-street car parking spaces would be lost, ten (10) of which are located at West Gate and four (4) on the Butts. There will be a loss of off-street car parking income to Warwick District Council as a result of offering up these spaces. This has been calculated as being in the region of £15,300 an annum excluding vat. See belo

Location	Income £	Spaces	Income per space. £	Loss of spaces.	Loss of income. Gross.
West Gate	£65,000	49	£1326	10	£13200
The Butts	£10,000	19	£526	4	£2100
Total	£75,000	68		14	£15,300

These two portions of land are vital for the delivery of the Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme they allow for:

- a) A dedicated bus terminus in the West Gate car park which also includes the relocation of the taxi rank. As a result the buses would not be routed through the central areas of the town where congestion adversely impacts on the ability of Stagecoach to operate to their timetable.

Some concern has been received from taxi drivers about the relocation of their taxi rank as it moves it away from the Market Place where business is generated particularly in the evening. It is the view of Officers that the overall impact of the relocation of the taxi rank on the scheme is not fundamental to the scheme and the comments of taxi drivers should be considered.

- b) A drop-off point on the Butts for school busses. This is important given the need to provide a safe area for dropping off and picking up with The Butts is operating one way.

Warwickshire County Council has indicated that as part of the Warwick Town Centre Traffic Scheme it will introduce Variable Message Signs (VMS) to help direct vehicles to the following car parks, Linen Street, Barrack Street, St Nicholas Park and Myton Fields. As a result clear information should be available to visitors on parking availability and location, helping to reduce unnecessary traffic circulation.

Given the spare capacity in these car parks that currently exists and the impact that the Castle has on car parking on certain days of the week and at various times of the year, the advantage of highlighting via VMS our spare car park capacity to "visitors" is clear.

A 5% increase in car park usage as a result of the introduction of VMS would generate over £20,000 a year to the car park account.

On the basis that the overall impact of the Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme on car parking is likely to be at the worst neutral and considering the clear benefits to public transport, the improvements to pedestrian safety and the provision of VMS which the scheme should deliver, Officers consider that Warwick District Council should be prepared to offer the land required by the County Council on the express condition that the VMS scheme is introduced by the County Council and operating prior to any alterations to the two car parks taking place. The VMS should encompass existing car parks serving Warwick Town Centre. The District Council will also require assurances that the County Council will have the flexibility / capability to enable it to be adjusted to incorporate any future car park provision that may occur.

In addition, to aid traffic management and enhance general levels of safety and security in the town centre, an additional CCTV camera linked to the WDC system, should be located so as to provide the best possible coverage of the junction of the Saltisford and Theatre Street. This camera should be funded by the Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme.

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