

BUS ROUTE VIEWS

For whatever reason our planners have got cold feet

YOUR correspondent (*Echo* 8th November) is right to draw attention to the unbalanced nature of the Leicestershire County Council Consultation Paper related to bus routes through Loughborough.

There is one element that is misleading if not downright dishonest. The impact assessment for Option A (Buses allowed through Market place in both directions) includes this statement, "Local bus services would be attractive to passengers by offering close access to the town centre". The critical bus stops are those in Swan Street for Southbound buses and at the head of Market Place for Northbound buses.

"The truth is that, it is proposed to move these bus stops, which ever option is chosen. That at the head of Market Place for northbound buses back into High Street and that in Swan Street for southbound buses much further back into the Rushes, north of Derby Square.

I have been wrestling with this problem of bus routes for several months and have reached the conclusion that none of the proposed solutions are satisfactory, what Loughborough needs is a bus station in the vicinity of Baxter Gate. Not something that could be achieved overnight, however as Coun Max Hunt has already pointed out, David Walker's suggestion that a hub for both North and Southbound buses be created in High St and Baxter Gate (the circuit complete by a section of the inner ring road), would be a foundational step in that direction. That is a variation of Option C.

It is my perception that the proposed changes to Swan Street, Market Place and High Street are not ideal for any of the proposed solutions. I think the redevelopment of these areas should be suspended until the result of the present consultation is known:

If Option A. Buses allowed through Market Place in both directions, is chosen; The bus stop at the head of Market Place should be retained and that in Swan Street moved forward to the head of Biggin Street. I also think there is a need to retain traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings, but with the logic reversed. The default would be Go to Pedestrians, but an approach- ing bus would trigger the change.

If Option B. Southbound buses only allowed through Market Place, is chosen; The bus stop in Swan Street should be moved forward to the head of Biggin Street. Again the need for traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing should be considered.

If Option C. No buses allowed through Market Place, is chosen; The retained single carriage way should be ramped at either end such that the height of the kerb in the pedestrianized area is minimal.

The change proposed under Option C is minimal. It is my perception the present scheme was intended as a truly pedestrianized zone, but for whatever reason our planners have got cold feet. If such is the case there is a need to pause and modify the plans.

Lawrence Emmitt
Leconfield
Loughborough

ANNEX D3
From the
editor's chair

Town Team supports pedestrian Option C+

LOUGHBOROUGH Bus Trial Consultation

I refer to your correspondent "A Far From Stupid Bus User" (*Echo* Letters, November 8).

As chair of the Loughborough Town Team I commend his support for a genuinely pedestrianised town centre as represented by Option C in the County Council's current consultation.

Indeed the Town Team is unanimous in its support for the variant proposed by David Walker which would see all buses, north bound and south bound, redirected through a one way High Street and Baxter Gate.

Designated Option C+, that solution would bring all bus stops close to the town centre and closer to one another delivering easy access and easy transfer between services; effectively a bus station using road space freed up by the Inner Relief Road. It is most disappointing that the bus companies appear to oppose this approach. The attempt by Kinchbus to persuade its customers to argue for the retention of the Market Place bus stop is misleading.

It has already been decided that buses are not to stop in the Market Place, even if the consultation should conclude that the trial must allow them to pass through as envisaged in Options A and B.

More importantly this is a once in a generation opportunity to test the viability of delivering a new public space at the heart of our town; a space where pedestrians can browse at leisure and in safety; and where events can take place providing additional attractions encouraging greater footfall for businesses.

What is good for business will be good for buses too with increasing numbers of customers drawn to our thriving town centre.

The Loughborough Town Team is a consortium of local councillors, business, community and amenity group representatives.

We are charged with overseeing the implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan.

A vital component of that plan is the delivery of the Inner Relief Road in order to enable improvements in the quality and character of the town centre.

If you share our vision for a genuinely pedestrian friendly town, can you please register your support with the County Council for Option C, as amended by David Walker's proposal, by 8 December 2013

Don Wix
Chair of the Loughborough Town Team

Accidents more likely

AFTER several decades in recent working away from Loughborough it has been great for me to enjoy the life of our town and play a small part in it.

Perhaps I have come to see the proposed extension of pedestrianisation - so long planned as I have learned from our Town team - as consistent with our Loughborough in Bloom campaigns.

Loughborough is the vibrant place it is attractive to young and old alike, because it works for its citizens, their ambitions and activities enlarging into the future.

As they must be its first concern and empowered in any decision to be made, it seems odd that their preference with respect to bus routes as I have heard it expressed in recent meetings, seems to be ignored by County officers for me to enjoy the life of our town and play a small part in it.

Tax and representatives of the bus companies whom we pay to travel.

Common sense it seems to me, suggest that a bus travelling on the relief road, instead of stopping for so many traffic lights must have the advantage?

Also buses travelling through what is perceived as a pedestrian area, together with cyclists moving in both directions; may prove more likely to be involved in accidents than now.

In 2005-6 full pedestrianisation was Option A. It is now C or C+.

Diana Brass,
Chair of the Friends of Queen's Park.

Let us have two-way bus travel

BUS travel through Market Place Leicestershire County Council are massively distorting the truth, then a visit to their website www.lincs.gov.uk/ibothustrial gives access to a video of a scheme in Exeter where buses have two way travel at walking pace, with pedestrian priority on a single track 60 metre road through their town centre.

The video clearly shows no problems between pedestrians and buses.

The Loughborough scheme for two way bus travel through Market Place is a mirror image of the Exeter scheme except that Exeter has 85 buses per hour passing through their town centre.

Let us have two way bus travel through Market Place and easy access and encouragement to use our town centre.

Arthur Shaw,
Loughborough

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