



Cabinet – 01st April 2014

**Comments from the Liberal Democrat Group
On Loughborough Town Centre – Bus Trial Consultation**

On this issue, the people of Loughborough have made their voices very clear. The coalition in favour of Option C; including Charnwood Borough Council, all local business and resident organisations, and the MP for Loughborough; have demonstrated the near-unanimity of opinion in favour of full pedestrianisation, with the economic and environmental benefits this would bring. This has been further bolstered by the support from a clear majority of the residents who participated in the recent consultation.

The only opposing voices have been the bus companies with the concerns on how re-routing could affect their service users and business.

We believe that the risk of Option C to bus companies has been over-stated. The claims that Option C would lead to significant increases in journey times for buses have not been accompanied by evidence, let alone independently tested, and we remain sceptical of their accuracy.

The claims that moving bus stops away from the town centre will reduce visitor numbers does not seem to match the experience of similar towns across the country that have adopted pedestrianisation and are now thriving. While we accept that there will be a slight inconvenience to bus companies and bus users, this would not outweigh the benefits that pedestrianisation will bring to the town.

We therefore believe that the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the correct decision in recommending a trial of Option C and urge Cabinet to follow its recommendations.

Comments by David Bill CC on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group