

TEAM ABERGAVENNY

BETTER, TOGETHER

Report of Team Abergavenny to the North Monmouthshire Area Committee on Wednesday 30 January 2019.

1. Public Realm Progress.

Given that Christmas holidays have intervened there is less to report than usual. The one project where significant progress is being made is the Phase 3 Town Centre Redevelopment project. A Consultation Meeting was held recently and several key issues were raised.

- The impact of stopping through traffic on some businesses in that end of town was emphasised strongly by a group of Traders. This was linked with the lack of control over parking and the excessive number of taxis in parking bays.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that a trial period would be introduced straight away to allow vehicles through the barrier at Wetherspoons after 4pm until 10am the next day. This would be in place during the street works of phase 3 whenever possible and it would be reviewed at the end of phase 3 before a decision is taken about its continuation. There were significant reservations about pedestrian safety but it was also recognised that the success of the town relies on businesses being able to trade successfully.

The concern about taxis was that there were often more than 4 taxis in the street taking up bays that were not allocated for them. There was no control of parking at present, and with the need for loading bays and disabled parking as well, this needed better control. A suggestion that a taxi rank should be located in Queen Street was discounted as the lighting is poor so it could be dangerous at night. (Taxi operators resisted this idea as well)

Control of parking was also a significant concern. It is understood that MCC will be taking over control of street parking in April but it cannot come soon enough in most people's view as at present it is being abused on a regular basis. Anything that could be done to bring it forward would be welcomed.

- The Bus Stop alongside Tesco was another key issue. The present temporary stop outside Robert Price's on Park Road was illegal and did nothing to attract people to the northern end of Frogmore Street. The meeting was told that Welsh Government had not signed off safety issues with the area to be used, and officers were urged to do all in their power to bring the work forward. The declared intention to start the work at the end of February was seen as far too late.

- Traffic in Princes Street and the No Left Turn sign at the end in Baker Street was also discussed. The sign was seen as unenforceable as most drivers ignored it. It would also impact on access to Frogmore Street in a negative way if enforced. The possibility of reversing the traffic flow in Princes Street was criticised for the same reason. While the concerns of residents in Princes Street were acknowledged, it was pointed out that it is a public road and there are many other roads in Abergavenny that have similar traffic concerns.

- This was the last consultation meeting on this scheme. There were a number of other issues discussed and concerns raised and these are with the Engineers to consider.

Members of the Consultation Group were very appreciative of the opportunity it gave for them to raise their concerns in the formative stages of the scheme. And it presents a good model for the County Council to use in other service areas.

2. The new Parking increases.

We are aware that further alterations to the parking charges regime in Public Car Parks are expected shortly, and there is concern that unless all towns face the same regime that is grossly unfair. It is also considered that charging on Sundays would be counterproductive for tourism. The fact that the County Council chose not to follow their original intention to make charges in the Morrison's Car Park the same as other parks has created the reduction in income and it is unreasonable to expect the

public to pay again for a short-sighted decision taken by the County Council against its original intentions.

3. The Town Hall Hub development.

We are not aware of any further consultation with stakeholders about this development. We made strong observations about the apparent new kiosks within the entrance area to the Market Hall but have not heard whether those concerns will be taken on board. Given the negative effect they would have on the view into the Hall, this is an important issue.

We are also not aware of any further proposals that will set out how the new spaces on the first floor will be designated and furnished. We hope that this will become public knowledge soon.