

Abergavenny Public Realm Improvements Phase 3

1. Introduction

This report provides information to Members to update on the proposed works for Phase 3 of the Abergavenny Public Realm Improvements

Phase 2 of the works is now complete but there are overlapping issues particularly in respect of the changes to the bus routes

Phase 3 has been developed along the same lines as phases 1 and 2 with similar material pallets used throughout

2. Proposals

The final design has been agreed following extensive consultations with the community and particularly the Abergavenny Town Team and is shown on the attached drawing.

The general layout has not been substantially changed since the previous report with the exception of the area in the vicinity of the War Memorial. (**see paragraph 7 below**)

The section between Whitehorse Lane and the Baker Street junction is now traffic free and provides a substantial open space which is being developed in a similar style to St. John's Square. This will provide opportunities for businesses such as cafes restaurants and pubs to develop 'al fresco' activities. It will also provide a significantly improved open space for the cultural and sporting events held in the town

The Baker Street / Frogmore Street junction will be a transitional area between the public open space (pedestrianised) and a conventional footway /carriageway split in Upper Frogmore Street.

Upper Frogmore will be reconstructed with a traditional footway / carriageway arrangement with kerbed edges. The reason for this arrangement is that this section will be trafficked although the volume of traffic will be significantly reduced following the closure of Lower Frogmore Street.

The width of the carriageway will be reduced to the minimum possible allowing the footways to be extended. The material pallet for this section is proposed as permeable block pavements for the carriageway with the footways being styled in the fashion of St John's Square with a mixture of penant slabs and 'suresett' bound gravel. The change to the permeable blocks pavements for the carriageway element is to comply with the latest regulations on 'Sustainable Urban Drainage'

It is proposed to make a 'no left turn' for motor vehicles into Baker Street from Frogmore Street, allowing cyclists to continue to use this route.

This will allow the provision of some disabled parking spaces to be located at the end of Baker Street to compensate for lost spaces elsewhere.

It is proposed to introduce a contraflow cycle lane along Lion Street from the shared space at the junction of Market Street to allow a safe cycle access from the A40. This will be subject to detail survey and design as Lion Street is quite narrow in places when taking into account current parking arrangements.

3. Consultation.

The whole project has been developed in consultation with the Abergavenny Town Team which has made a tremendous contribution to the delivery of the project.

Any permanent changes to statutory traffic orders will also be the subject of formal statutory consultation procedures.

4. Programme.

Works to Phase 3 are scheduled to commence in early February and be completed in July 2019

5. Funding.

Phases 2 and 3 of the project have been funded by a combination of Section 106 and Welsh Government Local Transport Fund.

The estimated cost of Phase 3 of the works is £775,000 and this is being entirely funded by the Welsh Government Local Transport Fund.

6. Contractor.

Alun Griffiths (Contractors) has been appointed to complete the works in accordance with the existing Contract for which an extension has been approved, the terms of the contract are the SE Wales Framework.

7. The War Memorial

Some members of the Abergavenny Town Team have expressed a desire to relocate the War Memorial either to a new site adjacent to Tesco or to the public open space in Baker Street.

This idea has been considered within the scope of Phase 3 of the Abergavenny Public Realm Improvements.

The location of War Memorials has historically been in a high profile position with the intention of it becoming a focal point for Remembrance Services. The requirement for road closures reinforces the impact of the Services and allows the area in the vicinity of the Memorial to become tranquil for the period of the Service. This is replicated all around the country. The Cenotaph in London is located in Parliament Street which comes to a standstill for the Services. If the Memorial was to be moved this particular aspect of its significance would be lost.

The funding for Phase 3 is entirely WG Local Transport Fund which is specifically allocated to improve transport, travel, air quality and road safety issues. In terms of these issues the current position of the Memorial is ideal in that it provides the splitter island to efficiently and safely disperse traffic from Frogmore Street onto the A40 with minimum queueing times (reducing emissions and air pollution) There is no justification for moving the Memorial in achieving the objectives of the LTF grant funding.

The physical movement of the Memorial is high risk as it may be quite fragile. There are no available records of its foundations and plinth and how these are connected. It is difficult to quantify this risk and the associated remedies and costs to repair any damage that occurs.

There is no compelling evidence that the ideas of the ATT are shared by the wider community and in particular those bodies with a particular interest in the Memorial.

At the last meeting of the Abergavenny Town Team it was carried by a very large majority to leave the War Memorial in its existing position and to design the carriageway around it as shown on the final layout drawing.

We believe this provides the Memorial with the dignity and prominence it deserves within the revised streetscape.

8. Traffic Management

At the last meeting of the Abergavenny Town Team a small but vociferous number of Business representatives expressed the view that the bollards should be removed from the Coliseum at 4:00pm allowing traffic into Frogmore Street from Lion Street. At the moment Frogmore Street is pedestrianised except for deliveries between 4:00pm and 10:00am. It was agreed to allow the bollards to be removed for a trial period, however, on reflection officers have determined that this action should not take place until an independent Road Safety Audit has been completed.

Since the meeting the Council has also received a number of considered representations objecting to the removal of the bollards and these will also be taken into account before reaching a decision.