

WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM

Stakeholder consultation report

June 2011

Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

Issue

Elms Road/
Alex's Court

Remove car parking,
buildings,

green
share space

PEACH
SHOP FACIAS
OPPOSITE TOWN HALL
NEED IMPROVING
PLUS OPPORTUNITY TO CHANG
PAVING SLABS TO

1960
Peach
is awful

build
to the
Street

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For further information, please contact

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Opposite page

Comments received during the consultation workshop



1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines a stakeholder consultation workshop organised by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners for Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Town Council. The workshop was held in Wokingham Town Hall from 5.15pm to 8pm on 15 June 2011.

Wokingham Borough Council adopted the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD in June 2010 to identify a clear, distinctive and deliverable vision for the town centre until 2026. It was adopted following significant public consultation. Two of the key sites within the masterplan are within Council ownership and the Council has appointed a development partner, Wilson Bowden, to bring these forward. The development of these sites will represent substantial investment in the town centre expanding its retail offer.

The new development will also generate funds to make improvements to key areas of the town centre's public realm through Section 106 contributions. The workshop considered the potential approach for these spaces, but attendees were also invited to consider the wider issue of the streetscape for the whole town to ensure a coordinated approach to any future works.

The workshop took the form of a walking audit organised as follows:

- A short presentation introduced the workshop and gave some background to the Town Centre Masterplan SPD. This presentation also provided a clear outline for the remit of the workshop, noting that it was not the purpose of the meeting to re-visit the content of the Town Centre SPD, but rather to provide further detail on the manner in which the public realm should be improved. It was noted

that some areas of town, such as Elms Field will receive direct funding from development projects and will be improved and although other areas may not have funding earmarked for improvement at this stage, it is important to establish a clear vision and set of principles which can be applied to create a cohesive sense of place.

- Attendees were then split into three groups, two of which took a guided walk around the town centre on routes chosen to include the main public spaces and streets. A third group took a photographic 'virtual walk' through the town centre within the Town Hall. During the walks attendees were asked to record any issues and opportunities regarding the public realm on sticky notes.
- After the walks and following a refreshment break, the issues and opportunities notes were collected and read back to the attendees so that everyone had a chance to share their comments with the group on an equal and unattributable basis. The sticky notes were pinned up on a display wall for the rest of the meeting to allow people to review them in more detail.
- Attendees were then split into seven groups for round table workshops where comments were recorded on large printouts of the SPD masterplan. The workshops were invited to consider the key themes and priorities which they felt should be applied to the public realm in Wokingham and a detailed record of this discussion is included in this report.

The workshop was attended by 72 people, including eight facilitators. The full attendance list and event agenda are on the following pages.

Following the meeting The Wokingham Society provided the Council with a note of points that the group wish to see considered as part of any proposals. The note is included with this document as an appendix.

Opposite page

Group discussions during the workshop



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wokingham
Town Council



WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM

Stakeholder Workshop

Wokingham Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham RG40 1AS
5.30pm - 8.00pm on Wednesday 15 June 2011

5.15pm **Arrival and registration**

5.30pm **Welcome and introduction**

Councillor Angus Ross, Executive Member for Strategic Highways and
Planning, Wokingham Borough Council
Steve Walker, Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners

5.45pm **Walking tours**

Refreshments

6.45pm **Issues and opportunities workshop**

7.00pm **Priorities workshop**

Feedback

8.00pm **Close**

Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

Workshop agenda

Keith Abnett, Town Clerk
Patrick Arthurs, Wilson Bowden
Barbara Bench, Town Cllr
Martin Bishop, Town Cllr
Cllr Chris Bowring
Sarah Boys, Arborfield Garrison Residents Action Group
David Bray
Nick Campbell-White, Town Cllr
Emy Circuit
Andrew Clint
Gary Cranford
Wendy Crosson-Smith, Town Centre Forum
Roland Cundy, Town Cllr Finchampstead PC
Matt Davey
Ann Davis, Wokingham Evening Towns Woman's Guild
Mike Dunstan, Wokingham Town Clerk
John Edwards, St Nicholas School Governor
Keith Eversden
Lesley Flower
Laurence Heath, Barkham PC, Town Centre Forum
Stan Hetherington, Town Cllr & Town Centre Forum
Alice Herbert
Nigel Herbert
Gwynneth Hewetson, Town Cllr & Town Centre Forum
Philip Houldsworth, Town Cllr
Jim Garthwaite
Sandra Garthwaite
John Hayes
Jonathan Jarman, Bell Cornwall
James Johnstone
Michael Johnstone
Caroline Kaye, Town Centre Forum
Roger Kemp, Town Centre Forum
Cllr Dianne King
Kevin Mayne, Town Cllr Finchampstead PC
Robert Millen, Emmbrook Residents Association
Peter Must, Chair of the Wokingham Society
Jan Nowecki, Wokingham Town Clerk Designate
John Piasecki, Town Centre Forum
Bernie Pich
Fran Pickering, Savills
Malcolm Richards, Town Cllr
Les Roland, Town Centre Forum
Cllr Angus Ross
Mrs Chris Rooke-Matthews

Harry Row
Lewis Rudd, Wokingham Times
Alan Sadler
Jo Sadler
Dr Ian Severn, Wokingham Methodist Church
Cllr Chris Singleton
Pat Smith, Greater Langborough Residents Association
Cllr Rob Stanton
Trish Steinhardt, The Cultural Partnership
Pam Stubbs
David Tinker, Town Centre Forum
Nick Thomas
Seona Turtle, Chairman WWPC
Mark Walton, RPS
Janet Wilkinson, Joel Park Residents Association
Barbara Young
John Young, Wokingham Borough Council

TEAM

Keith Binnie, AM:UP
Chris Howard
Jenifer Jackson
Cris Lancaster, Masterplanner
Adam Mills, AM:UP
Sam Pullar, Masterplanner
Giles Stephens
Steve Walker, AM:UP

Workshop attendance list



2. WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Issues and opportunities workshop

Workshop attendees were asked to record their issues and opportunities whilst on the walking audits. All the responses are included within the Appendix at the rear of the report, but can be summarised as follows:

Issues summary:

Elms Field

Elms Field is the town's principal central open space and concern was expressed that part of the park is to be lost to development. However, some approaches to the park were viewed as being of poor quality and that the park is in need of more equipment. Retaining the mature trees should be a priority.

Peach Street / Rose Street

Rose Street was seen to contain attractive buildings and have a strong character, although concern was expressed about unsympathetic paving and some street furniture. Peach Street was viewed as having fewer attractive buildings with a tired look to some facades and to be lacking 'harmonious' paving. Conflict between pedestrians and vehicles was a major issue for both roads, particularly in areas of narrow pavement.

Market Place

Market Place was viewed to be a positive public space that forms the main centre of the town. The main issue was conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, including buses, using the shared surface section of the square.

Broad Street

The footpath of Broad Street was highlighted as being narrow, in need of better lighting at night and to have bad paving on the post office side. Some shop fronts were viewed as being out of character for the town.

Opposite page

Workshop attendees on the walking audit

The Plaza

The Plaza was viewed as an area that is not very inviting and in need of improvement. There was also concern that it is a hidden space which people do not know is there.

General public realm issues

A number of general issues were raised, these included:

- Lots of mismatching lamp posts;
- Need for public toilets;
- A-boards clutter the street;
- Garish signage within town;
- Inconsistent paving and street furniture;
- Red brick paving is slippery when wet; and
- There are shop fronts in need of improvement.

Traffic/transport

Traffic was viewed to significantly impact the public realm with a bypass needed 'sooner rather than later'.

Opportunities summary:

Elms Field

Opportunities put forward for Elms Field included:

- Keep as many trees as possible / plant more trees;
- A flower garden;
- A performance space;
- A better play area; and
- Improved linkages and signage.

Peach Street / Rose Street

Ideas for the roads included:

- Widen pavements;
- Introduce traffic calming;
- Improved paving;
- Remove pillars and covering outside Peach Street shops;
- Two lanes not needed for right turn out of Rose Street – reduce to one and widen pavements;
- Enhance shop fronts on Peach Street; and
- Remove or lower brick wall on Rose Street.

Market Place

Opportunity to raise the roadway within Market Place to allow for an extended market area was expressed. This could be linked to the suggestion of closing Market Place/Denmark Street to traffic on Saturdays and Sundays (if Sunday becomes a trading day). Market Place was also viewed as an opportunity area for a band stand and public toilets.

Broad Street

Broad Street was viewed as having the opportunity for improved (wider) pavements and street furniture, upgraded facades and more street trees.

The Plaza

Opportunities raised for The Plaza included:

- Improved floral environment;
- De-cluttered and smarter alleyways;
- Cleaned and painted in short term;
- Glass cover and seating in long term; and
- Removal of centre buildings to give wide, tree lined boulevard.

General public realm opportunities

These included:

- Less street clutter;
- Reduced vehicle dominance;
- Enhanced alleyways and back squares;
- New lighting more in-keeping with the town;
- Sympathetic signage;
- Unified street furniture;
- More natural, harmonious paving;
- Improved public seating areas; and
- 'Wrap' bins with artwork.

Traffic / transport

Ideas focused on reducing the impact of traffic, this included through shared surface, 20mph speed limits, narrower roads, and alternative traffic routes. Improved cycling facilities were also promoted including more cycle racks, a 'Boris' bike scheme and decent sized cycle ways.



Top Issues and opportunities being read out during consultation

Bottom Collected issues and opportunities at end of workshop



Priorities workshop

During this workshop attendees were split into seven groups and asked to record their key priorities/themes on and beside a print out of the adopted town centre masterplan.

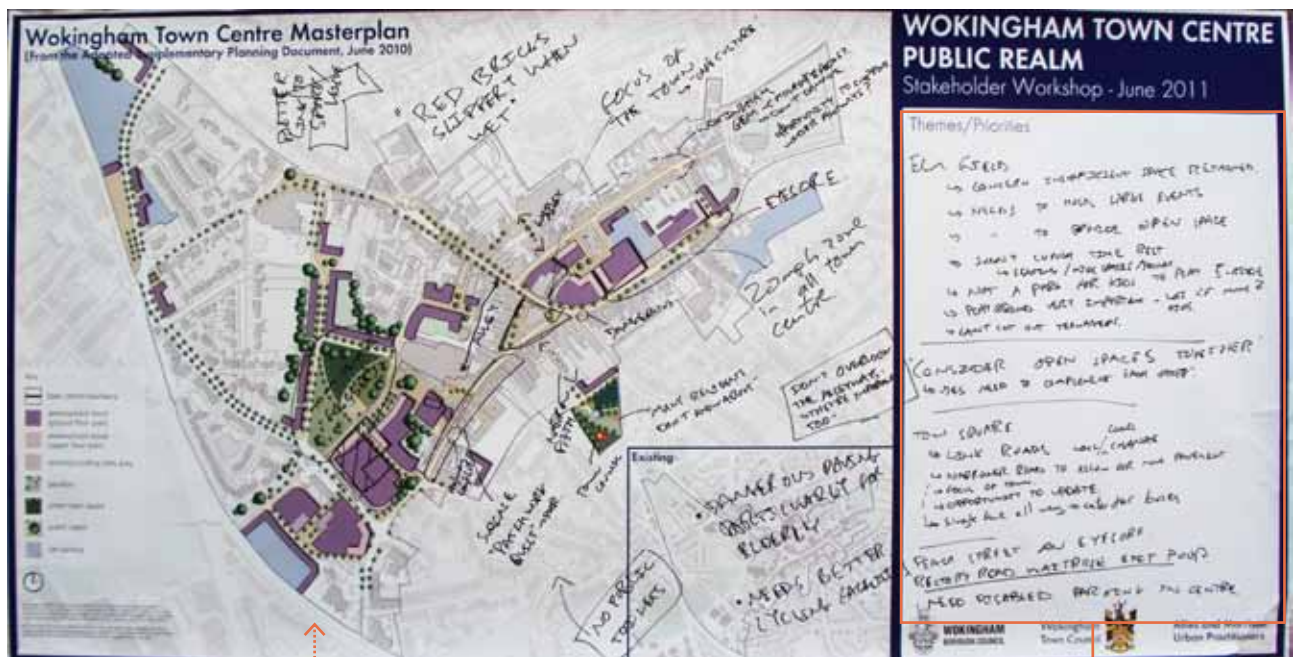
A photograph and synopsis of comments is included for each group on the following pages.



Pictures above

Three groups during the priorities workshop

Group one



- Red bricks slippery when wet
- Better links (north) to sports/leisure
- Market Place the focus of the town - "cafe culture"
- Rose Street - A Wokingham gem - don't damage - opportunity for wider footways?
- Peach Street - Eyesore
- Introduce 20mph zone in all town centre
- Denmark Street - surface a "patchwork quilt" - poor
- Elms Field - needs to be town centre focused
- Don't overlook the alleyways they're important too
- Dangerous paving in parts for the elderly
- Needs better cycling facilities
- No public toilets

Elm Field

- Concern insufficient space retained
- Needs to hold large events
- Needs to provide open space
- Sunny lunchtime rest - seating/wide spaces/picnic
- Not a park for kids to play 5-a-side
- Playground very important - lots of mums and kids
- Can't cut out teenagers

Consider open spaces together - uses need to complement each other

Town Square

- Link roads will/could change
- Narrower road to allow for more pavement
- Focus of town
- Opportunity to update
- Single lane all way - cater for buses

Peach Street is an eyesore. Rectory Road Waitrose exit poor. Need disabled parking in centre.

Group two



- Design standards
- De-clutter
- Period features
- Get people to look up / first floor roof line
- Cycle storage and safer environment for pedestrians
- Safer and more direct crossings from surrounding residential areas
- Lack of coherence/entry points into town and signage needs to help - Station Road too narrow for pedestrians
- Prioritise public realm in core retail areas
- Clear and consistent signage for car parks
- Water features as part of landscape design
- Appearance and quality sets us apart
- Uniqueness in public realm
- Public art - sculpture and also in paving, etc.

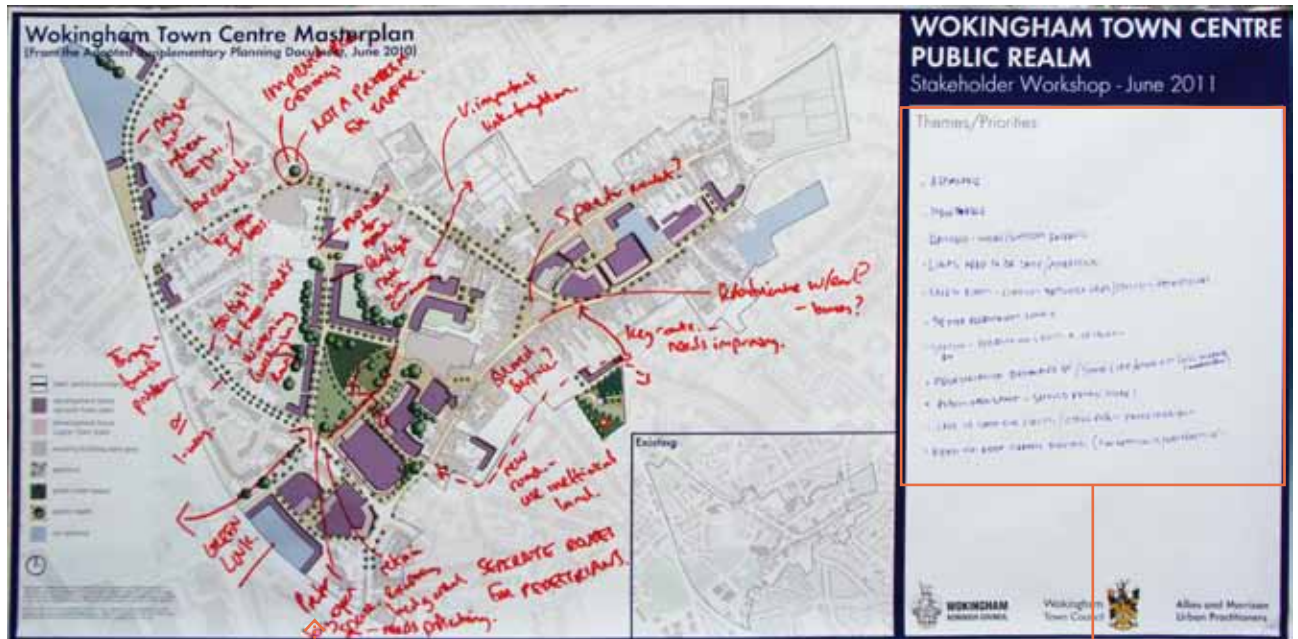
Group three



- New buildings on corner of Wellington Road and Denmark Street:
 - Don't want a hotel
 - Keep scale to a market town
 - Really important gateway
- Link from Denmark Street to Elms Field:
 - Make this a real through route
 - No steps
 - Cafes in space to side
- Need to promote smaller park to south east of Market Place - office workers do use it during the day
- Car park at eastern end of town promotes that end and aids retail vitality
- Can Rose Street be made one way?

- Elms Field - Clear, uncluttered space - seating
- Opportunities for use of the back courts
- Tackle dead frontages - too many blank buildings
- Keep it simple, discreet, tasteful (look at Beaconsfield and Marlow)
- Wider pavements - discourage through traffic - promote accessibility
- Cycle access
- Street furniture:
 - Traditional feel and quality
 - Wooden
 - In keeping with town character
- Plan for traffic - needs a total plan for traffic movements in and around town - i.e. from station into town centre

Group four



Ideas sketched on the plan included:

- A new road link behind buildings facing Denmark Street on the south side
- Providing a green link to connect to land west of the railway line
- More open space within Elms Field
- Wellington Road to tight for trees - needs widening
- Road through Elms Field should be pedestrian/cycle with car access
- Shared surface to Denmark Street
- Pedestrianise Denmark Street at weekends
- Luckley Path a key route that needs improving

- Affordable
- Maintainable
- Elms Field - Wider softened entrance
- Links need to be safe/attractive
- Narrow roads - conflict between cars/cyclists/pedestrians
- Better pedestrian links
- Station - pedestrian lights a problem
- Pedestrianise Denmark Street - some like/some not (will increase congestion)
- Public open space - should retain more!
- Lack of space for circus / other public entertainment
- Need to keep traffic moving (congestion is unattractive)

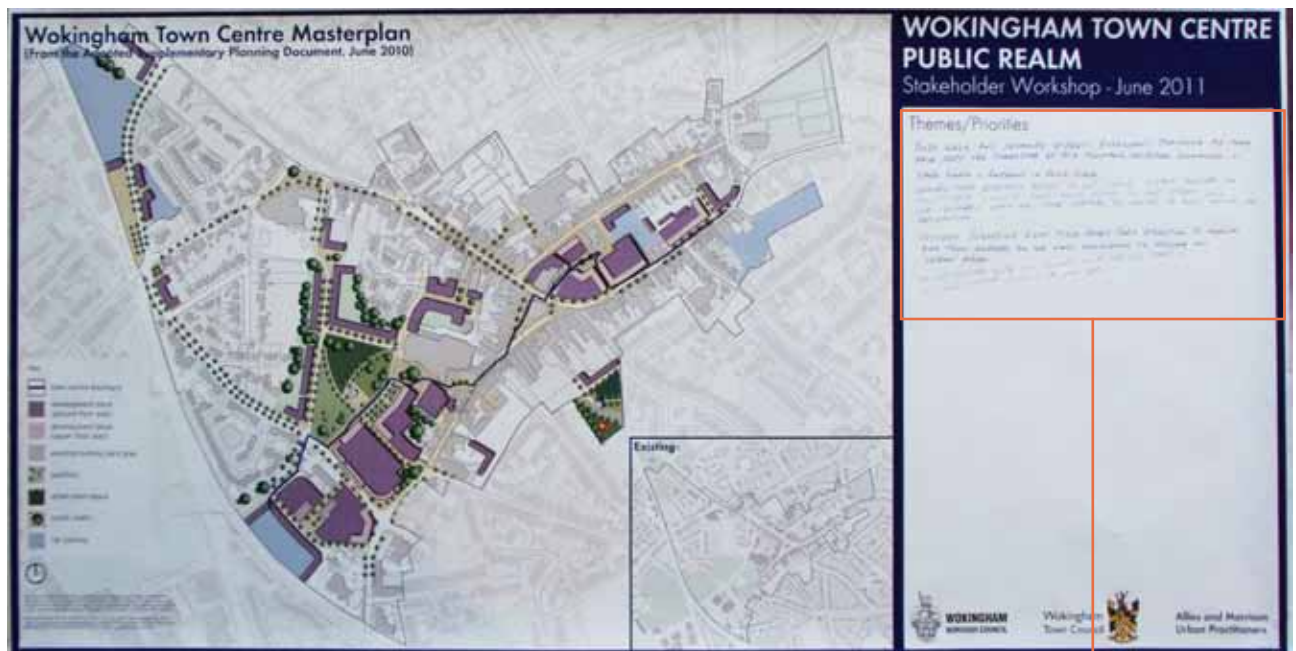
Group five



- Car park at eastern end of Peach Street - "not well used?"
- Pedestrian access to town centre to be improved along Wellington Road from the train station

Agreed?	Priorities
×	Market Place/Denmark St - pedestrianise on Sat/Sun - why? - Biggest trading day - Create family environment. [Concern about alternative vehicular routes and impact of that]
×	'A' boards - disagreement about removal due to fact they advertise businesses
✓	Lack of management and coordination by WBC/WTC eg. different street treatments of paving/tarmac/setts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial different approach • different standards used over time • process to minimise lack of coordination - i.e. develop common approach - complete harmony would sterilise, need consistency but variety
✓	Retain 'kerb line' to delineate carriageway and footway
✓	Town Hall should be focus of the town <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to proposed retail units on Elms Field, good retail circuits • How do you facilitate people using the rest of the town.
✓	How to draw new people in? Discussion. Barrier between station and town - i.e. no obvious pedestrian route
✓	Standardised signage, consistent street furniture
✓	Wellington Road needs to be more pedestrian friendly. Make the railway a 'hub' - shuttle service to town centre?
✓	Need to keep children's play area at Elms Field and as much green public space as possible rather than making existing open space private.

Group six



- Bush Walk and Denmark Street - Excellent planning as they have kept the character of the town and, therefore, enhanced it.
- Care farm and gardens in Elms Field.
- Concern that expanded retail is not viable. Surely better to concentrate in limited zone around Market Square, Rose Street and use southern area for other purposes e.g. leisure or even offices or residential.
- Concern regarding Elms Field, green park essential to health and town workers, do we want Wokingham to become an 'urban' area.
- We have elongated centre from Wellington Road to Ship, but there is no single walkway connecting the whole area.



IMP COOR

NOT A PROBLEM FOR TRAFFIC

V. important link - freight and

no new road to Park Light Park main entrance

too high for trees - widening existing

SHARED driveway?

new road - UK incl low

SEPARATE FROM PEDEST

retain existing road

3. COMMON THEMES / CONCLUSION

A number of key themes emerged over both workshops:

- **General public realm** – The existing public realm in Wokingham is viewed to be unnecessarily cluttered with a range of mismatching street furniture and paving, much of which is of poor quality or in a poor state of repair. The need to improve the public realm and enhance the town's image was identified. In general, groups expressed a preference for a quiet, traditional approach to any public realm proposals, citing use of natural materials and a respectful approach to the character of the historic buildings as being of primary concern.
- **Elms Field** – There is a desire for the park to remain a green open space which is as large as possible and can host a range of outdoor uses with the retention of mature trees a priority. Opportunities for better play areas and improved linkages to the town centre were also expressed. A mixture of opinions were expressed about the potential form of the space - some participants said they would prefer to see a clear, open, single space which can be flexibly used and which emphasises the size of the area; others noted that they felt they would prefer to see elements such as play equipment, cafe kiosk and such like included.
- **Market Place** – This was seen as the focal point of the town and generally viewed as a positive space. There was a predominant view that the area should focus more on the needs of pedestrians, although there was no definitive agreement as to whether this should involve total pedestrianisation. Opportunities include extending the market and it was also seen as an appropriate location for 'cafe culture'. There were also mixed views as to whether any pedestrianisation/shared surface approach should extend along Denmark Street.
- **Rose Street** – This road was viewed as being attractive and in need of preservation. However, much of the public realm, including paving and street lamps, was described as out of character for the historic buildings.
- **Peach Street** – This road was viewed as being unattractive in parts and in need of improvement. This was also seen as a particular location that would benefit from shop front improvements and the removal of the pillars and covering near to Market Place.
- **The Plaza** – The Plaza was viewed as in need of improvement and to be an uninviting space. The links through to Denmark Street are noted as being unclear, and uninviting but are very significant if the new development proposed in Elms Field is to be properly integrated with the town centre. Ideas for improvement ranged from cleaning and painting to the removal of the central building. The barrier created by the steps down from Denmark Street into the Plaza was also identified as an issue which needs to be addressed in any proposals
- **Pavements** – Several pavements are viewed as being too narrow for pedestrian safety and in need of widening where possible. This is exacerbated by street clutter, including A-boards and street furniture which further reduces the usable width. The red brick pavements were also highlighted as being slippery when wet. Uneven paving surfaces were also viewed as being unsafe.

Opposite page
Closing words by Cllr Angus Ross

- **Vehicle/pedestrian conflict** – Traffic was viewed to negatively impact the town and a number of suggestions were made to reduce its impact. These included the use of shared surface, 20mph speed limits, narrower roads, pedestrianisation and alternative traffic routes. Proposals to reduce the impact of traffic were often balanced against the perceived need to keep vehicles moving.
- **Shop fronts** – Some shop fronts were viewed as negatively impacting the streetscape and in need of improvement.
- **Street lighting** – Some areas, including Broad Street, were identified as in need of better lighting at night. Mismatching street lamps were viewed to negatively impact parts of the town including Rose Street.
- **Street furniture** - It was recommended that street furniture should be rationalised and attempts made to move towards a more limited selection of styles to create a cohesive appearance. A clear preference was expressed for furniture which was more predominantly traditional in appearance, using wood as a principal material.
- **Signage** – The opportunity was identified for street signs to be more sympathetic to the town's character and less dominating on the centre.
- **Cycling** – Cycling was viewed as being poorly catered for in the town.
- **Routes into the centre** – These were viewed as being in need of improvement with the link to the train station particularly mentioned.



**WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE
PUBLIC REALM**
Stakeholder Workshop - June 2011

Issues

Opportunities

Two large boards covered in yellow and orange sticky notes, representing the 'Issues' and 'Opportunities' sections of the workshop. The sticky notes are organized into columns and rows, with some notes having additional text or drawings.

Workshop materials on a table, including a clipboard with a checklist, a pen, and several orange sticky notes. The checklist has a header with a logo and a list of items with checkboxes.

Workshop materials on a table, including a clipboard with a checklist, a pen, and several orange sticky notes. The checklist has a header with a logo and a list of items with checkboxes.

WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM

Stakeholder Workshop - June 2011

Issues

Op



APPENDIX

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP RESPONSES

Issues

The Park / Elms Field

- Elms Park play area needs more equipment, and more space with attractions /activities for varied age groups.
- Elms Field new retail space, delivery drivers access from where?
- Elms Field - Area to be retained too small to provide all the uses required of it.
- How could we do away with Elm Road to ensure the size and impact of the green space of Elms Field?
- Elms Road/ Alex's Court. Remove car parking screen buildings, share space.
- Elms Field – willow trees must be kept – for centuries they were on the edge of a natural pool which drained the meadow land.
- Elms Road multi-storey car park is unattractive and underused – this could be re –developed.
- Elms Field, more open space the better. No building clutter, hedging and trees imperative. Public performance facility, no extra road.
- I'm glad the trees are staying. Elms Road, piece of land.
- Elms Road car park – Unattractive entrance.
- Walk missed out WATERFORD WAY where a public realm seated area is planned by Argos delivery area and unhygienic refuse bins, very thoughtless.
- Toilets (disabled facilities) on elm field. - Retain Elms Field name. -Low maintenance installations. -Lost effective installations. -Enhance children's play area (Elms field) see e.g. Jodes lane.
- Will view from downhill from Virgin Active be obscured? This is one of the most attractive features in Wokingham.
- Built farm along Elms Corridor will help the footfall into town centre. Linear public realm could help direct footfall with boulevard type design including new trees.

- Ugly, unwelcoming approach on foot from station, car park and Elms field.
- Green – ghastly spaces near old Tesco site.
- Green- Elm Field retain green space. Standardise street furniture. WBC must control maintenance.
- Green – WBC must control repaint and development and drain coves, tarmac regains. Remove A-boards and clear adverts. Demolish telephone exchange.

Peach street / Rose Street

- How do we enable large vehicle to drive to and unload for larger stores in Peach Street /Rose Street? Cross Street is not really suitable for large vehicles to go to Roses.
- Peach street – difficult to cross, safety ped/vehicle conflict/
- Vehicular access (small vehicles only) is essential in the actual town centre (around town Hall etc) i.e. Peach Street, Broad Street, Rose Street and Denmark Street.
- Rose Street – ratio of carriageway to railway. Is carriageway too wide?
- Rose street – avoid dangerous curving with broad street by making it entry only (not exit) at that junction.
- Rose Street, lovely buildings, hanging baskets and lamp posts – ugly, out of place.
- Peach Street – Lack of flower arrangements. Top end building of bad design not in keeping with old building design. Rose Street car park loss to development. Peach Street Shop fascias opposite Town Hall need improving.
- Rose Street – narrow pavements.
- Rose Street – road surfaces poor.
- Peach Street – police surveillance camera.

Opposite page

Collected responses from issues and opportunities workshop

car park entrance – garden feature. 12. Rose street car park is an eyesore especially pedestrian entrance from beside Travellers. 13. Alleyway between boots and Clarkes is disgusting. 14. Building facing Boots, an eyesore.

- Signage at junction of Wilshire Road and Rose Street is inharmonious. Out of character.
- “Attention to” top end of Peach Street. Danger of being lost in scheme of things. Retain traditional buildings for heritage.
- Connectivity between the different areas – retail circuit improvements, including signage e.g. Waitrose and M&S.
- Narrow footway at end of Rose Street joining one-way system and round to The Ship Inn.
- Rose Street – poor linkage to Old Row Court. Poor access to Car park via Jewellers.
- The Ship Inn – Narrow footpath, Bury road and narrow road.
- Rose Street – yard walls and open vistas of rear of supermarket, needs softening.
- Hideous frontage of shops in Peach Street. Particularly Boots overhang and Clinton overhang.
- Blockbuster Parade – poor quality surface material, poor architecture.
- Peach Street – shop facilities opposite town Hall need improving.
- Encourage / enforce private building owners (e.g.) BT to maintain land. No ‘A’ boards but provides alternative signage. Rose Street – protect this historic street, one way traffic, central planning for loading/ services.
- “Tired look” improve facades on Peach Street opposite Easthampstead Road.
- Rose Street, no active frontage from Church down to Ash Court.
- Is expansion of retail realistic? Could be merit in concentrating retail in more limited zone and turning e.g. East side of Peach Street to housing or offices?
- “Tired look” improve facades on Peach Street opposite

Easthampstead Road.

- Rose Street, no active frontage from Church down to Ash Court.
- Red – seating dirty, clean up. Waste bins inappropriate.
- Red – Retain old buildings. Repair paving sympathetically. Improve, motion top of Wittshire Road. Clean shutters. Too many bollards.
- Rose Street, retain old buildings. Reduce business values to area. Small retailers can survive in Peach Street. Standardise paving on pavement. Remove most bollards.
- Red – wide pavements in many places. Remove A-boards. Remove boxed advertisement from bollards. Too many signs. Red pavements.

Market Place

- Market place – Road creating difficult for pedestrians, Bury rod, Wide Road and
- Cars use the pedestrianised section of Market place.
- Market place, cannot see need to change, except stop illegal parking.
- Appearance of 1960s infill facing Town Hall is out of keeping.
- Public realm around the Town Hall to be kept and is a positive contribution to the Town centre.
- Bus route through pedestrianised Market Place is the issue, look at routing.
- (1 & 15) 1. Alleyway – Market Place to Rose Street car park by Costa Coffee. 15. Cycle store for Market Place.
- The centre of the town is around the Town Hall, why try to stretch it to the bottom of Denmark Street? Will the PO out in a sub – post office and the bands etc develop branches? L.D. Roland Frogh.
- Town square – Must not detract from Market Place as centre of town.
- Town Centre square, visibility and focus for community centre. Not to over look centre adjacent,

- Entrance to Peach Street has some beautiful old buildings hidden behind and amongst grimy 60s and 70s boarded up and in need of development businesses.
- Rose Street – windows, signage / advertisements.
- Rose Street, Peach Street and Market Place – traffic!
- Rose Street – paving unsympathetic to character of street. Carriageway resurfacing.
- Peach Street - Lack of flower arrangements
- Rose Street pedestrian and traffic slow area. Paved to enhance, remove Bollards and railings.
- Inconsistent street furniture on Peach Street.
- Naff 1960s parade on Peach Street looks awful.
- Disjointed built form. Much is tired and needs improving across the Town centre. E.g. on Rose Street / Building above boots.
- Compulsory purchase of Ash Court Park to gain access to M/S for deliveries.
- Cross Street is rat-run.
- Peach Street, pavement is not harmonious, with age of building.
- Junction of Wiltshire road and Rose Street is dangerous. Pavement is too narrow.
- Inconsistent lighting, lamps by Rose street car park and Peach Street.
- Peach place, Colonnade Columns. Very poor pull it down.
- Traffic – market square very heavy 6pm. Rose Street and Cross Street London Road – both directions.
- Rose Street, one way towards All Saints, but no right turn from Market place. Restrict delivery mechanisms to Peach Street by opening entrance from Cross Street.
- Traffic issue – rush hour in particular on way to Rose Street.
- Traffic management in town centre and access to shops traffic on Rose Street.
- Signage in Rose Street not suitable for character of the street.
- Most of the time Peach Street gridlocked when it's not traffic speed through town. Pavements too narrow.
- Need deregulated parking enforcement. Rose Street on street parking remains an issue particularly for disability groups.
- Keep the Redan.
- Pavement at Ship Inn too narrow.
- Entrance to Wokingham – needs updating (Sorrento's, Acorn House) Blockbuster and buildings need above very bad walking underneath.
- I assume eyesore building used by Clarke will be replaced. Ditto adjacent Parade including Boots etc.
- Junction of Peach Street and East Hampstead Road is dangerous shops opposite could be made more harmonious.
- Junction by ship inn on Peach Street is dangerous.
- Rose Street car park development will result in loss of parking spaces in town centre, new parking area?
- Rose Street – dominated by parked cars opportunities to enhance?
- Building at gateway to town on Peach Street are horrible, poorly maintained, Sorrento's and no. 63.
- Red route - Market place, 60's building should go. Much quaintness already good. The Bull, the Rose spoiled.
- Service road back of Peach Street. Parade Tamarind Tree to and serve.
- Ship Inn Junction – Traffic, narrow carriageway, narrow pavement, unattractive for pedestrians.
- Ship Inn Corner is dangerous, pedestrianise (!!!) Try to turn.
- Merging traffic at the Ship Inn.
- (2-14)2. Rose Street car park rear of shops. 3. Arcade to car park from Peach Street. 4. Alleyway by Redan. 5. Alleyside beside Oxfam. 6. Alleyway behind Tamarind Tree.
- 8. Cross Street – Untidy. 9. Car park 32 spaces, Ash Court. 10. Loo disused and an eyesore. 11. RH side

next to Bradbury centre.

- Better recreational facilities near Town Centre.
- Town Hall area. Totally closed down Market Street. Pedestrianised only!
- Market town (i.e. Wokingham) needs a selling point or individual character or they'll become clone towns and die. People buy things on the internet more these days.

Broad Street

- Pave, plant around trees in Board Street, light at night.
- NB narrow pavement in Broad Street.
- Very unhappy with so much of the park being lost. Bad pavement in Broad Street (post office side)
- Footpath from Broad Street through to Elm Field past Michel Hardy's could be improved and upgraded to provide an attractive pedestrian route.
- Old Town Hall shop fronts are unsympathetic and out of character (except Sultan Balti) and square.
- Do not pedestrianise the centre of town; it will ruin the whole character of the town.
- John Wood building an eyesore.

The Plaza

- The Plaza is not very inviting with little public realm to entice walkers by – change in paving and improving public realm.
- Issue – Ertstadt Court entrance facing blank wall.
- Wokingham town has many areas that look scruffy and uninviting. The Gig House area is not attractive. Too many high walls tend to dominate route to centre brickwork dirty.
- More signage saying what shops are in the Plaza from Denmark Street. (Direction of traffic flow).
- Virgin Active Health club – Poor link through so proposed link a positive.
- The Plaza – Legibility -do people know it's there?

- Plaza, never as tidy as today! Owners should be required to make sure the area is kept neat and attractive.
- Plaza – Dreary and too much parks and landscaping, needs lightening up. Plaza, coming from Elms Field, where do you go three possible directions.

Shute End

- Shute end – is there any intention to change, since council is not moving?

Station square

- Station area – signage link to town important, re-think proposed one way Wellington Road.

Natural environment

- Once green space is eroded by “essential” buildings, all character and usefulness are permanently lost.
- With discrepancies between SPD and Wilson Bowden, what mature trees are under threat?
- Erosion of parkland, once it is gone we cannot get it back. We will become Urban.

Public Realm

- All lamp posts mismatching and mostly ugly – the tall black ones with hanging baskets and embellishments, defiantly prettiest.
- Brown bag tables and chairs can extend out too far and become obstacles. Twice as many as originally.
- Larger trees in large plants, able to be moved easy to soften hard lines of shops buildings (etc)
- Must have adequate and properly serviced public toilets.
- Where will public toilets be built?
- A-boards, are they clutter or do they bring to the vibrancy of the street?
- Affordability and maintenance – Don't be over ambitious. Important that what is done can be

maintained.

- Public toilets

Signs

- Signs – modern, large, too many gig house area signs and building signs. Lack of litter bins.
- Garnish signs give a ‘mish mash’ feel – standard hanging signs outside shops?

Paving / street furniture

- Pavements – Slip – and trip free but not standardised.
- Paving differs and is slippery.
- Different designs of street furniture, obstructive street signs.
- How do you avoid the featureless building such as the new tin station?
- ‘A’ boards and the paraphernalia on street.
- Pavements – uniform width. Clutter free. Restrict “free” enterprise.
- Clutter on narrow pavements, “A” boards and large waste bins. Difficult to negotiate for families, prams, disabled etc. Aging population need to be taken into consideration.
- Slippery surface of brick pavements. Also difficult to walk on high heels.
- Red brick paved avenue slippery in the wet.
- Street clutter, lamp posts, sign posts, bollards, bins, signage. Restricted pedestrian access.
- Inconsistent paving and street furniture.

Traffic / transport

- Don’t reduce road capacity until you can replace it elsewhere.
- Large vehicles (for larger sales outlets deliveries) need very controlled access – but a complete ban may limit many businesses sitting in the centre of town.
- Buses are essential to the Town Centre! – and later in the evening than at present.

- Visitors and residents (real opportunist shoppers and eaters) need to be able to drive thru the TC.
- Would traffic run more smoothly and better pedestrian access if reduced to a single lane?
- Traffic not moving at 6pm (but hardly any pedestrians – except us!)
- Traffic in the TC – needs bypasses sooner rather than later.
- No effective cycle access from any direction.
- Traffic Jam.
- Is a park and ride planned – is it to take people to Reading?
- Links between old and new retail areas?

Parking

- Parking, losing or gaining total spaces?
- Don’t like industrial cycle racks. Keep bikes in car park.
- Parking signs should indicate cost rather than spaces available (costly).

New development

- How many residential properties are planned for the regeneration of the town – and the consequent parking requirements?
- Is there a loss of parking spaces? This will be critical to the viability of the town centre. Expand retail, surgery requires more parking.
- This shouldn’t be about just mending broken pavements.

Existing buildings / Shop fronts

- House of vacant shops – upgrading and repainting of some shop fronts.
- So many beautiful old buildings that are hidden behind tacky signs and haphazard ‘infill’ buildings, alleys and small nooks that just collect rubbish. So much opportunity to regenerate and clean up

existing old buildings and improve the eyesore smaller buildings e.g. new front, hanging baskets, sympathetic signage.

- Lots of existing buildings. Need a strategy to bring them back into use.
- Wokingham Décor and pet shop we could not be without – really needed.

Architecture

- Overall – beautiful in places, let down by hideous infill properties of all ages. So much opportunity to improve.
- Limit the heights of buildings; four and storeys mooted at gateways is a concern.
- Very poor architecture, too many shop-fronts. Opportunity - could be enhanced along with pavement.
- How do we best mask ugly, modern building, e.g. Telephone exchange?
- Object quality of much of the post war architecture.
- Building mounted lighting is good!
- Caution on architecture, avoid uniformity and aim for a traditional blend of styles, compatible with existing.

Miscellaneous

- Changes to protect shoppers.
- Social safety, antisocial behaviour and crime. Too many in prison, very costly, need to act and build on existing voluntary work. Agencies needed to work together as advised by lord Laming.
- Do we emphasise history of Wokingham enough?
- Pigeons!

Opportunities

The Park / Elms Field

- Flower garden, performance space, play area (ask parents and children).
- Park – keep as many trees and open spaces as possible.
- Elms Field – retain beech hedges.
- Plant new trees, mature trees of the future.
- Existing mature trees should be TPO'd and a strategy of replacement trees (as old die) should be in place.
- Elms Field building/ Town market place/ Shute end. Provision of adequate community centre (to cater for quantity) and Heritage centre (to include info centre, museum etc.).
- Elms Field three trees L/M size from Plaza. Eliminate first one, plant a mature one, nearer to Plaza in line with other 2.
- An opportunity to develop Elms field into a superb Park, rather like the Forbury Gardens in Reading, do we want Wokingham to become urban like Maidenhead?
- Elm Field.
- Important to retain all mature trees and hedgerows on Elm Field.
- Green, Elms Park, more sports facilities (tennis courts and mini golf pitch and putt), Swings and slides for small children.
- Outside alley from Denmark Street to Elms Field, we must retain A – boards; they are vital for businesses and prevent the old town looking sanitised.
- Better way finders Around the Town Centre – signage from Elms Road through the Plaza.
- Denmark Street opportunity to widen pavements (traffic signal lane does not use full width of carriage way).
- Land use – green spaces not to build on – have enough supermarkets. Space on Elms Field could be used for a HUB for carte farms, allotments and gardens. Learning by young people for food local

growing. Barbara Ellord

- Route between Denmark Street to Elms, must retain tables for community and encourage trade. More seating if anything.
- Moving into town from Elms Field/Broad Street is a pedestrian/ physical/psychological barrier.
- Keep retail in the proper T centre and put leisure and entertainment down by the Swimming pool and Wellington road.
- Knock down building down in Elms Road, flatten area behind Elms Road and back of Post Office, make it retail.

Peach street / Rose Street

- Old Row court – perfect Rose Street to stay as it is apart from car park a building opposite Row Court.
- Rose Street, car park, frontage at M&S.
- Entry to town. Cross Street junction Peach Street. Unattractive paving.
- Widen pavements, narrow driving width to discourage traffic on Peach Street and Denmark Street.
- Remove pillars and covering outside Peach Street shops.
- Opportunity, to put in traffic calming measures in Peach Street between East Hampstead Road and Rose Street.
- Peach Street – kerb build out for jetted houses.
- Wiltshire Road and Rose Street – could create a t-junction and improve pavements.
- Rose Street junction to Rose Street – unnecessary for two lanes both turning right – single track and widen foot path?
- Red – Entrance the historic building to characterise the look (painting etc.)
- North-west of the red area - Use part of Broad Street for Market extension (pedestrian). Make narrower at

certain times, encourage traffic around Rectory Road.

- Some provision for lorries to unload in Peach Street and allow traffic flow- having reduced to single lane.
- Public Toilets. Peach Street, top end enhance shop fronts. New car park areas. Market place – raise roadway. Extend Market area, more seating, Peach Street – replace paving New Band Stand.
- Peach street top end opportunity to enhance shop frontage to be in keeping with towns older building design.
- Peach Street, opportunity to change paving slabs to brick.
- Remove or lower brick wall on Rose Street separating road from car park. Open up space opportunity for shrubbery or trees, better access to bush walk.
- Red – provide rear access for shop delivery vans / lorry, mess.
- Ugly brick wall on RHS of Peach Street, opportunity.
- Blockbusters – Tamarind True, space/finish, pigeons and pavement.
- Car parking to replace T.C. car park and M/S parking.

Station square

- New Park, Range of spaces for all ages not just under 10! Must allow for equity and New Town events. Strong link from Station.

Market Place

- Market place – raise roadway allowing extending market area, more seating.
- Close Market Place /Denmark Street to traffic on Saturdays and Sundays (if it becomes a trading day.
- Howard Palmer Park? Public toilets and like the paving the way it is in the Piazza, also the trees that are maturing. Broad Street / Market place – Pavement material, maintenance, footpath width outside WHSmith. Red lion – widening footpath, remove car

park, market place.

- Market place – Opportunity for a Band stand.
- Must have toilets in the centre of town, Market Place or car park behind Cafe Rouge.
- Uplifting of Town Hall.

Broad Street

- Broad street – opportunity to improve (widen) pavements, street furniture.
- Change / upgrade facades over Clinton Cards down to the alley way.
- More street trees.

The Plaza

- More general attention to floral environments e.g. Plaza area. At present dull and boring, no attention given by property owners or by councils.
- Uniform, anti-slip paving. Re-generation of the Plaza car park. De-clutter and smarten up alleys (council should interfere, owners to maintain). Re-generation of Plaza/Broad Street.
- Plaza, manhole covers, eliminates concrete.
- Plaza – Dead flank walls, no view to Elms Field. Pavement materials, manholes, concrete, poor plant maintenance in Reyed Beech. Serve route block adjacent to Kevin Roberts
- Plaza area – short-term, clean and paint. Long-term, glass cover and use for outdoor seating and events.
- How can we make the cuts through / around Argos, Kevin Roberts, Erftstadt Court (?name) more attractive.
- GIG House Area – Possibility to redefine circulation and cafe areas by defining thru route with distinct paving.
- Plaza to Denmark Street HAS to be improved. Eliminate centre buildings to give wide tree line boulevards.

Natural environment

- Retain mature trees and planting.
- Protect trees – especially o/s the brown bag.
- Existing mature beech hedgerow should be retained.
- Maintain village quality of town centre, trees, hedges, greens, paths, village green feed.

Public realm

- Public realm improvements. Street clutter to be reduced, vehicle dominance, signage, trees.
- Greater landscaping across the town centre to ensure that the harsh built form is softened.
- Enhance alleyways, back squares properly used. At present often rubbish tips, graffiti accumulators and hidden (not known by the public).
- Upgrade lighting to be more in keeping with market town.
- Signage should be sympathetic, traffic light reduced or removed.
- Unify street furniture. WBC contrast repaint and maintenance of road patterns and flower beds. Planners only allow one thing which can be maintained, e.g. Flowerbed.

Signs

- Uniform theme would be helpful, signage for example.
- Reduce signage significantly. Tidy up wiring around premises. Remove "A" boards. Provide stylish traditional street furniture and public art.

Paving / street furniture

- Street furniture should be comfortable and standardised.
- Paving to add interest and activity – art interventions not standard.

- Formal garden, tasteful seating.
- Paving all inconsistent – perhaps one harmonious solution using more ‘natural’ paving, cobbles or stone etc. More unassuming and blending
- Opportunity to improve public seating area perhaps include as part of the planting area. Add more greenery to soften high red brick building.
- Level, change colour uniform, paving with mosaics (or other pavement art) making Town Heritage, centre for concerts and a sculpture?
- Remove unsightly street furniture. “Wrap” bins with art work (Ala Vans/taxis).
- Overall – Unify street furniture, WBC contract, repairs and maintenance of roads patterns and flower beds. Planner only to allow which can be maintained, e.g. flowerbed.

Traffic / transport/ Connections

- All roads to be 20mph or shared space.
- The overhangs opportunity to improve frontage (and stop building being ‘clocked’ by HGVs)
- Transportation spaces; green spaces, open spaces, road spaces and integrate not separate.
- Acquisition of sub-station adjacent to Bradbury Centre/church.
- Alternative traffic routes through town centre.
- The quality of spaces in Wokingham is good – traffic needs to be calmed down and toughened through shared surfaces.
- Remove traffic lights, make people drive more carefully
- Narrow roads, shared surfaces.
- Borrow a Boris bike scheme.
- Promote existing pedestrian links into the town centre, through the existing network of public open spaces (Rather than along busy road)
- Create a preferred attractive walking route suitable

for all ages from the station to the zone centre.

- Put cycle rack nearer to the shopping centres on the outskirts.
- Maintain existing pedestrian links.
- To include and encourage cyclist racks and decent sized cycle ways.

Parking

- Car parking to replace T.C. car park and M/S parking.
- Town Centre car parks, flats garages after 6pm and offset day time garages.

New development

- Litter bins should be empathetic to the area – all the same? Easily negotiable?
- Totally traffic free bus routes changed. Must be focal point as now. Add map/info centre.
- Include spaces for public activities, festivals, May Fayre, parades, Christmas tree lighting etc.
- Section 106 conditions, more recreational facilities near to the Town centre.
- Renovate multi storey car park and sign post effectively. Art work and music would help feel safe factor.
- Community centre incorporating medical centre urgently required.
- Boots – Clarkes, redevelopment opportunity

Existing buildings / Shop fronts

- Opportunity to bring shops into line with Old Market Town appearance and atmosphere.

Miscellaneous

- Please consider public cuts and maintaining unique aspects that make Wokingham recognisable and distinct!



The Wokingham Society

Registered with the Civic Voice & the Open Spaces Society
Registered as a Charity (No. 274988)

Website; www.wokinghamsociety.org.uk

NOTES OF MEETING OF WOKINGHAM SOCIETY COMMITTEE MONDAY 13 JUNE, 7.30 PM

POINTS TO RAISE AT TOWN CENTRE WORKSHOP ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE

1. Masterplan

Masterplan has been changed since publication - eg Town Square in Peach Place; Council not to move from Shute End so no Community Centre – so is there a new or updated Masterplan or at least what has changed?

2. Developers' provision and contribution

What will developers provide from own costs, and what sum is available for streets and public spaces from Section 106 contribution?

3. Keep it simple, affordable and maintainable

Need to start with improvements to existing fabric, especially dirty alleys and back areas, some of which are Council owned. Only introduce new provision that can be afforded and maintained. This means enough staff to carry out and enforce upkeep, eg by ensuring compliance by landlords and occupants.

4. Roads and Traffic

Narrowing roads to provide wider footpaths is fine but resultant reduced road capacity cannot be 'rebalanced' until North and South Distributor Roads are completed, so delay implementation until then.

Most traffic is passing through and should be helped to do so until alternative routes are available.

'Traffic calming' not needed in town centre streets. Speeding is not an issue. Do not use planned mobile electronic speed displays. Do not penalise or put off the motorists. We need them to come to visit and shop.

Rose Street should not be through traffic route – it is residential along half its length and the old buildings are endangered by traffic vibration, especially from lorries. Best if entry one way north from Broad Street, ie vehicles can't get out onto Broad Street or (illegally) into Peach Street.

In what way is Easthampstead Road/Peach Street junction a 'gateway'? Should not encourage but seek to minimise entry to town at that point, which proposals for 'extended footways and enhanced pedestrian crossings' would need.

5. Parking

Need updated plans for car parks with loss of Rose Street car park. Is Coppid Beech Park & Ride still on? In any case, won't help congestion

Agree idea of car park indicators at entry points, but is electronic 'Urban Traffic Management Control' to identify spaces needed/affordable? Long-term/short term parking is less helpful as a concept (eg not appropriate for disabled drivers, and most people aren't coming for long stays)); better for display boards to indicate parking fees (increasing sharply after first hour in town centre parking) so drivers can choose.

Any parking policy can only work with enforcement, so need Traffic Wardens.

6. Cyclists

Council 'reviewing cycling strategy'. Any news?

Essential to provide safe cycle racks.

Stop dual use of pavements by pedestrians and cyclists (eg along narrow Wellington Road footpaths).

7. Pedestrians

Provide slip- and trip-free paving (eg root-lifting in Market place).

Penalise use of A boards.

Will 'informal crossings' rather than zebra or light-controlled crossings be safe (eg traffic turning from Broad Street into Rose Street)?

Getting from station to town centre is currently a nightmare, and threatens to worsen. Need clear pedestrian priority arrangements along 'desire lines' rather than current circuitous route.

8. Trees and Planting

Vital to conserve historic treescapes. Consult Wokingham District Veteran Trees Association, which will have completed tree re-survey of town centre by this Autumn.

Do **not** plant trees along streets where they would damage properties, especially Rose Street.

9. Toilets

Developers have promised public toilet/toilets. Please bring them back.

10. Bins

Plenty of waste bins, but dog litter disposal only where dogs welcome (eg not in parks with children).

11. Signage, lighting and public art

Agree need to rationalise signage, with far fewer individual signs. But do not use 'stainless steel' finger posts. Better to use existing signs provided by Town Council.

Happy with strategic lighting to enliven street scenes and historic buildings (but avoid light pollution). And with public art (but use Cultural Partnership/More Arts as partners).

12. Street cleaning

Current contracts appear to exclude many unkempt locations (eg alleys and Library area). Ensure comprehensive coverage, with achievable rotas, to keep our town smart and attractive.

13. Rents and Town Centre Manager

Probably not on agenda but town can only thrive if owners and tenants have affordable rates and rents.

Bring back the Town Centre Manager (talk to ones in Hitchin or Woodley to find successful formula).

14. Public spaces

(a) Elms Field

Keep the name (not 'Town Park'). Past workshops asked for single, not fragmented, open space. Suspicious of architect's concept of open space divided into 'rooms'.

Is there really enough space for fairs, carnivals etc without encroaching on other uses?

Retain/enhance children's play area. Ask children and parents what they want.

Provide refreshments kiosk for seasonal use but invite local café owners to bid to run it.

Provide covered performance area (bandstand may be costly and limiting to provide and maintain).

Provide formal flower garden and maintain it.

Provide safe boundaries (ie for children and ball games) that allow visibility for pedestrians from the roads.

(b) Town Square at Peach Place

Should not be ambitious. Mainly route between shops. Should not compete with Market Place as town focus.

What plans for deliveries and service vehicles to avoid conflict with pedestrians and road users?

(c) Howard Palmer Park

Is looking sad. Used for relaxation so smarten it up, with flower beds and benches. Ask users what they want.

(d) Station Square

Do not use Section 106 money for this. Expect enhancement to be paid for within station/link road budget.

(e) Shute End

Is this still intended, ie what are plans now for relocating Borough Council offices?

How will 'community hub' be delivered? Need community/heritage centre/museum. Talk to Town Council which has set up 'Culture and Arts Committee' with a view to using Town Hall for this purpose.

In what way would this location be a 'transition from the station to the town centre'.

(f) The Plaza

Dull and dispiriting. Needs livelier planting, and tidying up round the edges.

(g) Urban Courtyards

Fine in concept to make active use of alleys etc, but some current passages are uncared for and dirty. Need to ensure we aren't building new eyesores and that existing ones are spruced up.

15. What next?

This is not enough consultation. We need an ongoing forum (existing one?) to keep planning these issues.





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