

Stroud Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan Shaping the heart of Stroud

Report of Transport and Movement seminar held on 4 March 2015 at Yhe Exchange

Present

Leonora Rozee Chair of Shaping the heart of Stroud Steering Group.
Hugh Barton member of Steering Group
Jenny Powell and Kevin Sharp Stagecoach Bus Company
Ben Spencer Stroud Town Council and Sustrans
Daniel Tiffney Gloucestershire County Council Highways
Sarah Lunnon GCC Councillor

Purpose

To consider what the Neighbourhood Development Plan might need to say about transport and movement issues and what the options might be.

Process

A round table discussion was held using the base map of the designated area to identify key locations/issues.

Discussion Congestion

The discussion considered congestion on Merrywalks which causes serious delays to the bus services. GCC have identified Merrywalks as a pinch point in the context of government money which has been made available for addressing such issues but Merrywalks is not identified in the draft Local Transport Plan as a focus for action. Although delays are an issue with the Stagecoach they have not raised this as a problem with GCC. Consideration might be given to putting a yellow box at the Bath roundabout although this is not favoured by Sarah Lunnon.

Bus station

The relocation of the bus station is not considered practical by the bus company as Merrywalks is the best location from operational viewpoint, but it is agreed that it is a poor location for bus users. However, the railway station is too inaccessible and nowhere else in town is suitable. Bus shelters are poor – these are put up by GCC and maintained by SDC.

Pedestrian/cycle access

Need to improve pedestrian/cycle infrastructure to make it easier to access the town centre other than by car.

A new pedestrian/cycle link from Stratford Park/Tescos to the town centre via Beeches Green (avoiding the main road) was broadly supported. This could either lead into the top of the multi story car park or into Rowcroft Retreat.

Making the town centre a pedestrian priority zone with shared surfaces and limited parking was thought to be likely to lead to conflict with retailers who

believe that more parking is needed in the centre. There is some evidence from elsewhere to show that where parking is removed from centres and people are free to move around easily there is higher not lower spend. It would be useful to find information about how many people walk/cycle to the centre and how much spend they generate compared to car driving shoppers – it may be much higher than thought by the retailers.

Gloucester Street ought to be included in an extended pedestrian priority area.

Most important is to make the centre more permeable for pedestrians and cyclists

Cycle parking

More cycle parking is needed and there is a scheme under consideration by GCC.

Parking for electric bikes also needed with secure charging points.

Car parking

The routes to the car parks on the edge of the centre should be improved and made more attractive. Real time signage and pay on exit for the car parks is under consideration by SDC.

Other

HB noted that consideration was being given to how the station approach might be made more attractive; how to open up the Good Shed with possible access from the bottom of Parliament Street; provision of new access across the railway, canal and river funded by intensification of development at Fromeside.

Next steps

The information gathered will inform the preparation of the draft plan with options for consideration at a major public consultation event between 7th and 14th March 2015.

LJR 10.3.15