

Proposed A6 / Railway Road Junction Changes – Consultation Report

Report of the Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration

1. Introduction

Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings from a consultation on proposed changes to the A6 / Railway Road Junction.
- 1.2. This report also provides Officer responses to comments received and seeks approval to implement amended proposals.

Background and Proposals

- 1.3. The Town Centre Access Plan (TCAP) is a package of measures transforming the accessibility and connectivity to and around Stockport. It is making it easier for everyone to travel and specifically aims to ease congestion and encourage walking and cycling.
- 1.4. A key element of TCAP is improving access to public transport facilities and developments, this has included the delivery of:
 - Public realm works adjacent to the railway station and towards the A6 with high quality paving and landscaping; and
 - a new, enlarged taxi rank on Station Road, turning and servicing areas on Station Road and Railway Road, and a short stay car park on Railway Road.
- 1.5. Further proposals have been developed for the A6 / Railway Road junction. As shown by Drawing 307C_CONS_001 at Appendix A, these include:
 - An extended two-lane approach to the junction on Railway Road including an island at the junction to allow left turning traffic to exit whilst southbound traffic on the A6 is running and to better position the cycle crossing point on the A6.
 - A loading bay on Railway Road for further Exchange (north) side and amended vehicular access to the rear of Spring Bank Place (for use until such time as it is re-developed);
 - Segregated 2-way cycle route along the north side of Railway Road, across the A6 and along Loonies Court. Shared footway / cycleway for the remainder of Railway Road connecting to a proposed parallel zebra crossing (pedestrians and cyclists segregated);
 - John Street to become one-way eastbound (away from the A6), and Loonies Court one-way northbound towards Norbury Street. Loonies

Court is to be realigned with a new exit to Norbury Street. Vehicle access to the rear of properties fronting the A6 will be maintained;

- Parking / loading bay to facilitate Town Hall activities and 14no. parking bays retained in Loonies Court;
- Provision of new cycle parking close to the ramp to the Registry Office;
- Retention of pedestrian crossings over Railway Road and the A6 (south side of the junction).

1.6. The proposed facilities for cycling connect the key parallel route east of the A6 with the railway station and Exchange development on the west side, as well as proposed routes to Edgeley via a ramp to Thomson Street and via a new bridge to Stockport Interchange on the bus station site. All these proposals are being developed as part of the Greater Manchester Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund (MCF) project.

1.7. The proposals have been developed in liaison with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

2. Consultation Methodology

Aims and Objectives

2.1. The consultation has been undertaken with the purpose of informing the local community and stakeholders of the proposals and capturing their views.

2.2. Specifically, the aims were to:

- inform the local community and stakeholders of the proposals;
- ensure that those with an interest in or who may be affected by the developing proposals have an opportunity to provide their comments and as such input to the development of the scheme; and
- ensure that community engagement activities were fully accessible, informative and relevant to the participants.

2.3. The consultation has been undertaken during a period when the proposals are at a formative stage, and has presented comprehensive information about the proposals to allow those consulted to provide intelligent considerations and an informed response.

Timescales, audience and support

2.4. The consultation was held between 22nd July and 7th August 2020, this allowed adequate time for responses to be submitted.

2.5. The main consultation audience was:

- residents and businesses in the local area;
- those who may be affected by or use the proposed infrastructure; and

- key local stakeholders including statutory consultees, business organisations, special interest groups and politicians.

2.6. A dedicated telephone helpline (0161 474 2299, 9am-5pm Monday-Friday) and email address (towncentreaccess@stockport.gov.uk) was active throughout the consultation period to respond to scheme/consultation queries and take associated comments.

Methods of Consultation

2.7. Several methods of consultation were applied:

- The letter included at Appendix B was distributed to residential and business properties adjacent to the proposals. It was also emailed to Stockport Exchange businesses, NCP and the railway station operator (Avanti West Coast). The letter invited feedback using the online survey.
- Signs were placed on street, on the A6 and Railway Road, to make through traffic aware of the consultation. The signage directed potential respondents to the consultation web pages.
- Scheme consultation web pages were set up at www.stockport.gov.uk/haveyoursay to provide details of the proposals (including the drawing), an online response form, the telephone helpline and email address.
- The online response form sought feedback on the extent to which the respondent agreed or disagreed with the proposals and invited general comments.

2.8. Engagement with stakeholders has been an important method of gathering feedback on the developing proposals.

2.9. Local businesses have been written to and Council representatives met with Stockport Exchange tenants (virtually) to discuss the proposals and answer any queries.

2.10. The project team has sought the views of interest groups including Stockport Owner Drivers Association, Walk Ride groups, the Walking and Cycling Forum, the Local Access Forum, Public Rights of Way Forum and Stockport Disability Forum.

Approach to Analysis

2.11. A comprehensive log of responses has been collated to record all comments in a single database.

2.12. The completed response forms have been used to determine the overall levels of support reported.

- 2.13. Given the level of detail of some of the comments received, this report presents an overview of the feedback. The verbatim responses will be used by the project team to enable consideration of the greater detail contained therein.

3. Consultation Response

3.1. A total of 38 online and six email responses were received, comments were also taken from one phone call.

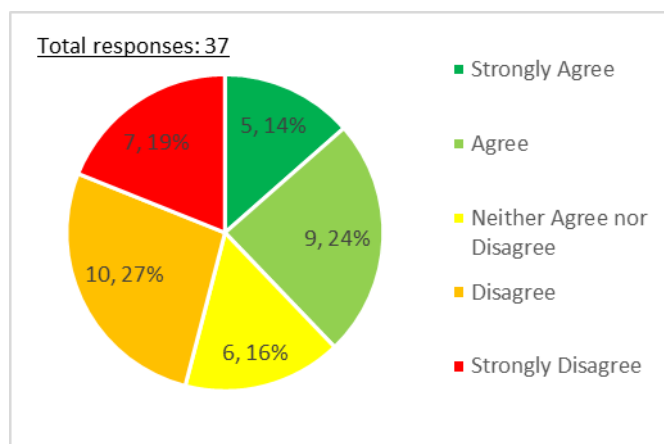
3.2. The responses received are summarised by Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below, specifically to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposals. This is followed by a summary of comments made and specific stakeholder comments.

A6 / Railway Road Junction

3.3. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposals for the A6 / Railway Road junction.

3.4. As shown by Figure 3.1 below, 37 respondents answered this question – 38% (14) strongly agreed or agreed and 46% (17) strongly disagreed or disagreed, 16% (6) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 3.1 – Respondent Agree / Disagreement: A6 / Railway Road Junction



3.5. Comments made in response to this question are summarised at Appendix C, they generally included:

- Suggestions for installing a CYCLOPS and queries about the operation of the junction;
- Comments and concerns about indirect and incoherent walking and cycling routes, and the lack of cycle-connection to and facility on the A6;
- Comments and concerns about the use of shared footway / cycleways;
- Queries about the need for Loading Bays on Railway Road; and

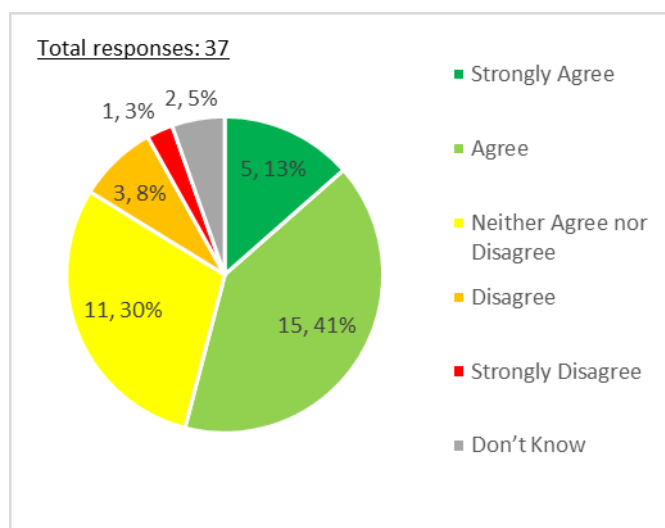
- Comments and concerns about the proposed 2-way cycle track on Loonies Court, cycle parking on John Street and exit to Norbury Street.

John Street and Loonies Court (One-Way)

3.6. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to make John Street one-way away from the junction, and Loonies Court one-way towards Norbury Street.

3.7. As shown by Figure 3.2 below, 37 respondents answered this question – 54% (20) strongly agreed or agreed and 11% (4) strongly disagreed or disagreed, 35% (13) neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't know.

Figure 3.2 – Respondent Agree / Disagreement: John Street and Loonies Court (One-Way)



3.8. No comments were made specific to making John Street one-way away from the junction, and Loonies Court one-way towards Norbury Street.

Other Comments (Response Forms)

3.9. Other comments received include:

- Comments that a new pedestrian bridge / link is important as getting from Edgeley to Stockport town centre is difficult for pedestrians and cyclists.

Stakeholder Comments

3.10. Response emails on behalf of key stakeholders including businesses, interest / community groups, forums or organisations are summarised below.

- One **Local Councillor** response was received with concerns about the level of shared paths in the scheme and the narrow footway adjacent to Stockport Exchange, suggesting the Loading Bays be removed and the facility provided elsewhere. It was also suggested

there may be an opportunity to do more along the A6 following recent TCAP works to redistribute motor vehicles. It was queried why a CYCLOPS isn't being considered, whether the cobbles on John Street are to remain and what the proposed onward route to Edgeley is to be.

- A representative of **Walk Ride Heatons** responded in strong disagreement with the proposals in their current form, as summarised at Appendix D.
- **The National Trans Pennine Trail Office (TPT)** responded with comments, as summarised at Appendix D.
- **Highways England** responded that they do not have any comment on the proposals at this time given the distance from the Strategic Road Network.
- **Historic England** responded that they have no comment to make on the proposals at this stage.
- **Natural England** responded that they have no comments.

3.11. A phone call was received from the **Town Hall Tavern** wanting to ensure that articulated vehicles would be able to continue servicing the premises from John Street.

3.12. The following comments were made by Stockport Exchange tenant-representatives at the meeting arranged to discuss the proposals:

- **Avanti West Cost** were broadly supportive of proposals and any improvements for customers accessing the railway station, however, would be keen to understand any potential phasing and steps to mitigate disruption for users during delivery.
- **MusicMagpie** were supportive of the proposals, in particular the extension of the two-lane approach to the junction on Railway Road. It was requested that consideration be given to further this extension (with reduction to existing lay-by if necessary), this was reiterated using an online response form. It was also requested that this be part of any first phase of delivery.
- **Stagecoach** welcomed proposals to improve vehicular capacity and supported the request that the extension of the two-lane approach to the junction on Railway Road be part of any first phase of delivery.

3.13. An online response was received to say it is not understood how the scheme would be developed without the necessary land.

3.14. Other than noted above, no further responders attributed their comments in an official capacity on behalf of a business, interest / community group, forum or organisation.

4. Scheme Funding

- 4.1. The scheme would partially be funded by the Town Centre Access Plan.
- 4.2. Additional funding would be sought from MCF, specifically the aforementioned Thomson Street scheme subject to Business Case approval. The scheme currently has MCF programme entry status.

5. Officer Response and Updated Proposals

- 5.1. The feedback from the consultation has been carefully considered and the following Officer response is made with regard to scheme specific comments.

- Since the consultation began LTN 1/20 guidance has been published by DfT in respect of cycle facilities. This has been considered and the recommendations followed where possible, respondent comments have also been considered and incorporated by updated proposals where possible and appropriate, as outlined below. Subject to Cabinet Member approval the detailed design will continue in liaison with TfGM.
- This scheme involves changes to the A6 / Railway Road Junction including Railway Road, John Street and Loonies Court. Changes to the A6 and its junction with Edward Street are not part of this scheme, these are shown on the drawing as existing for local context (including shared footway in front of the Town Hall).
- A key element of the proposals is to increase capacity at the junction, through the introduction of the extended two-lane approach on Railway Road and triangular island at the junction. The latter would facilitate an efficient operation of the junction which would benefit all movements. Even if the left turn out is blocked by stationary, northbound traffic on the A6, the proposals would facilitate the free movement of right turning traffic from Railway Road. The lack of this facility can currently cause queues back down Railway Road preventing vehicles from leaving the NCP car park.
- In respect of CYCLOPS junctions, these may be useful where two routes meet that have cycle lanes down both sides of them. Where 2-way cycle routes are on one side of the carriageway, or there are no cycle routes on one or more arms, they are not as efficient a solution as a more standard layout.
- With regard to comments about the pedestrian route at the junction for crossing north of Railway Road being indirect, it should be noted that there is an alternative pedestrian crossing over the A6 less than 100m north of this junction for pedestrians wanting to cross and walk north.
- The Loading Bays are needed on Railway Road to facilitate the servicing of adjacent developments, existing and forthcoming. The loading requirements for further phases of Stockport Exchange need to

be examined in more detail and the extent of the servicing requirements will be reviewed. Indications are, however, that the proposed uses will include the option of retail use at ground floor level and this has a relatively high servicing requirement as is demonstrated at 1 Stockport Exchange. Loading Bays are an efficient use of space allowing servicing in forward gear for a number of buildings, using the turning area near the railway station.

- The scheme would be delivered in phases in co-ordination with adjacent developments, with delivery phased in such a way as to maximise its benefits and minimise disruption.
- The introduction of new, shared pedestrian and cycle facilities has been minimised. Officers are exploring the potential to further reduce the length of shared footway on Railway Road and extend the 2-way cycle track, the detail of this section will continue to be developed in liaison with the adjacent developer. Extension of the shared use route on the A6 to John Street has been dropped with the only shared use on John Street being to provide access to the cycle parking.
- The proposals have also been updated to give priority to cyclists at Spring Bank Place.
- Comment has been made about joining / leaving the route on Railway Road from / to the A6. The movements are dealt with as follows:
 - Right turn A6 to Railway Road: left turn to Norbury St, right to Loonies Court, right to John St and straight across the A6, the avoids having to move into the right turn lane on the A6;
 - Left turn A6 to Railway Road: From the A6 carriageway onto the left turn splitter island at the junction;
 - Right turn from Railway Road to A6: From the cycle crossing of the A6 to the A6 SB carriageway or by use of the ASL provided on Railway Road;
 - Left turn from Railway Road to the A6: Cyclists on Railway Road are able to join the A6 northbound carriageway from the cycleway via the left turn traffic lane (downstream from the stop line and pedestrian crossing).
- The surfacing on John Street is to be reviewed as part of the detailed design, including maintenance issues.
- An articulated vehicle is able to manoeuvre from the A6 to Norbury Street via John Street and Loonies Court.
- The 2-way cycle track has been removed from Loonies Court in the updated proposals, cycling is proposed to be in the carriageway

(including contra-flow, with suitable markings) in recognition of the few vehicle movements.

- The cycle parking shown meets standards, however, details of the facility will be further considered at detailed design noting the comments received about access.
- Loonies Court connects to Norbury Street which itself is recognised as a quiet road, suitable for on-carriageway cycling. Details will be reviewed as part of the detailed design such as the location of vegetation and street furniture which may impede visibility.
- The proposed facilities for cycling connect the key parallel route east of the A6 with the railway station and Exchange development on the west side, as well as proposed routes to Edgeley and via a new bridge to Stockport Interchange on the bus station site. These schemes are being developed in liaison with TfGM and will be consulted at the appropriate time.
- Discussions are ongoing with affected land owners.

5.2. With reference to the above changes, the updated proposals are shown by Drawing 307C_CONS_002 Rev A at Appendix E.

6. Recommendation

6.1. The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration requests the comments on the proposals from the Central Stockport Area Committee and recommends that the Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration approves the implementation of the updated proposals in accordance with the drawing at Appendix E. This includes any necessary acquisition of land by agreement, or preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order in line with the democratic process if negotiations to acquire such land by agreement fail.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Nick Whelan on 0161 474 4907 or at nick.whelan@stockport.gov.uk.