



Haverhill Area Working Party 12 July 2012

Haverhill High Street Improvement Scheme: Progress Update

1. Background

- 1.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council has commissioned Suffolk County Council Highways Team to design an improvement scheme for the High Street in Haverhill.
- 1.2 A level block paved surface had been proposed for the area between Swan Lane and Quakers Lane, with an associated Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which would build upon the current access restrictions to provide a totally traffic free pedestrian environment during the core hours of the day.
- 1.3 The current TRO has a number of omissions and errors and as a result the regulations are very difficult for the Police to enforce.
- 1.4 The statutory consultation on the proposed TRO during February 2012 resulted in a large volume of objections, primarily on the grounds that the restrictions would prevent Blue Badge Holders from parking within walking distance of the High Street shops, and from the business community who had concerns about business deliveries during the restricted hours.
- 1.5 When the level of concern was shown to the Haverhill Area Working Party (HAWP), Members supported taking the concerns into account and attempting to re-draft the TRO to avoid the most contentious issues. Therefore, the TRO as proposed and consulted on has effectively been abandoned and will not proceed to the Suffolk County Council Rights of Way (RoW) Committee and Public Inquiry. However, it was acknowledged that the existing TRO's are not fit for purpose and will need to be rewritten to enable effective Police enforcement.
- 1.6 The 20 mph zone covering the High Street did not receive any objections, and could be implemented as a stand alone measure.
- 1.7 As the current design could not be completed until the TRO issues were fully resolved, it was decided to revisit the design, while progressing a revised TRO. There was concern that an expensive paving scheme that still allowed for relatively widespread traffic use throughout the day would be seen by the general public as not offering good value for money, given the expectations raised previously of a traffic free environment.
- 1.8 At the same time the Peas Market Square was raised as a potential area of additional improvement.

- 1.9 An assessment has been made of the cost of the scheme design to date and the likely costs of making the proposed changes to the TRO and design for the High Street and new design for the Market Square.

2. Scheme Finance

- 2.1 The total budget for the High Street scheme controlled by HAWP is £750,000. An additional £183,000 has been provisionally allocated from the Suffolk County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding to enhance the section of the High Street between Quakers Lane and Eden Road.
- 2.2 Of these sums, HAWP has allocated a maximum of £10,000 to PATCH to commission and produce a piece of public art and this work is progressing separately.
- 2.3 To date approximately £54,000 has been spent of pre-construction costs, including the TRO process, scheme design and surveys. This can be split pro-rata over the two funding sources to give a total deduction of £43,000 from the HAWP controlled funding.
- 2.4 The design team have come up with an alternative design, less complex than the previous proposals with would cost approximately £498,000. This would leave approximately £8,000 to complete a revised TRO and the remaining £191,000 to enhance the Peas Market Hill area.

3. High Street (Swan Lane to Quakers Lane) Revised Design

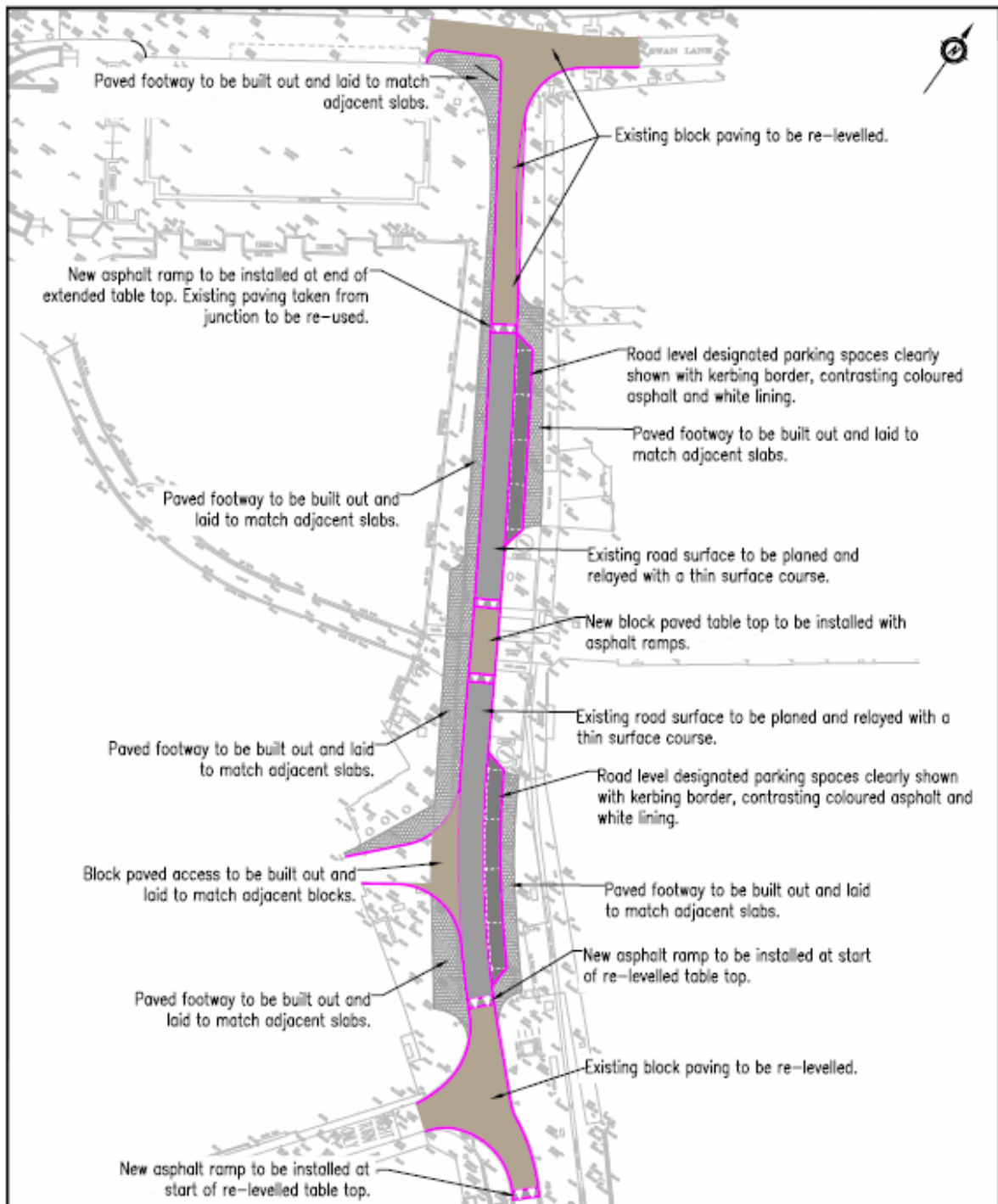
- 3.1 The revised design for the High Street retains a footway / carriageway relationship, and uses conventional flat top humps to control traffic speeds. Following criticism of the previous designs lack of loading bays and parking places, an additional 8 car sized spaces have been included in two bays. The western kerb line has been moved in to provide a wider footway adjacent to the Church, the eastern kerb line has been locally moved in to provide a wider footway past the shops as the parking has been changed from 'echelon' to 'in-line' to take up less road width.

4. High Street Revised TRO

- 4.1 It is important to strike a balance between restricting access to produce a pedestrian friendly environment, especially during the busier times of the day and maintaining deliveries, access to off street private car parks and providing some parking for blue badge holders. As mentioned above the current TRO does not assist the Police in effective enforcement of the regulations. The new TRO (subject to further investigation) could initially be introduced as an Experimental TRO (lasting a maximum of 18 months) to increase the public acceptance of the scheme; this approach also allows for minor changes to be incorporated before the TRO is made permanent. There is no objection period before the TRO goes in, although the public can make objections during the period and these would follow the standard TRO process at the time the Order is made permanent or abandoned.

- 4.2 We would look to including as much of the previous work carried out on the scheme as possible in the new TRO, either permanent or experimental, this would include closing the road between 06:00 and 18:00 on market days. It was planned that Fridays would be additional market days and the TRO proposals include for this option, while leaving flexibility for the future. We would need to work with the business community, including the original objectors to ensure that this can be accommodated without leading to further objections.

4.3 High Street Plan



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	DESCRIPTION			REV.	DATE	BYL.
PROJECT TITLE Town Centre Improvements Haverhill	ORIGINATOR	CHECKER	DESIGNER	REVIEWER		
	JS		JS			
DRAWING TITLE Market Hill Concept Design	SCALES(S)	ORIGINAL SIZE A4	DATE			
	N.T.S.		May 2012			
	DRAWING NUMBER			REVISION		
	ET04602/20					

5. High Street (Quakers Lane to Eden Road) Revised Design

- 5.1 The LTP funding for the section of High Street between Quakers Lane and Eden Road is relatively modest considering the length of road to be treated. It is likely that these changes will be primarily making the loading / waiting areas align with the revised TRO and making them more obvious to the motorist so that a zone can be introduced on the whole High Street. Waiting and loading would be in marked bays only. The current regulations are confusing to the motorist and frequently abused and a zone would allow for the removal of all of the yellow lines from the High Street.

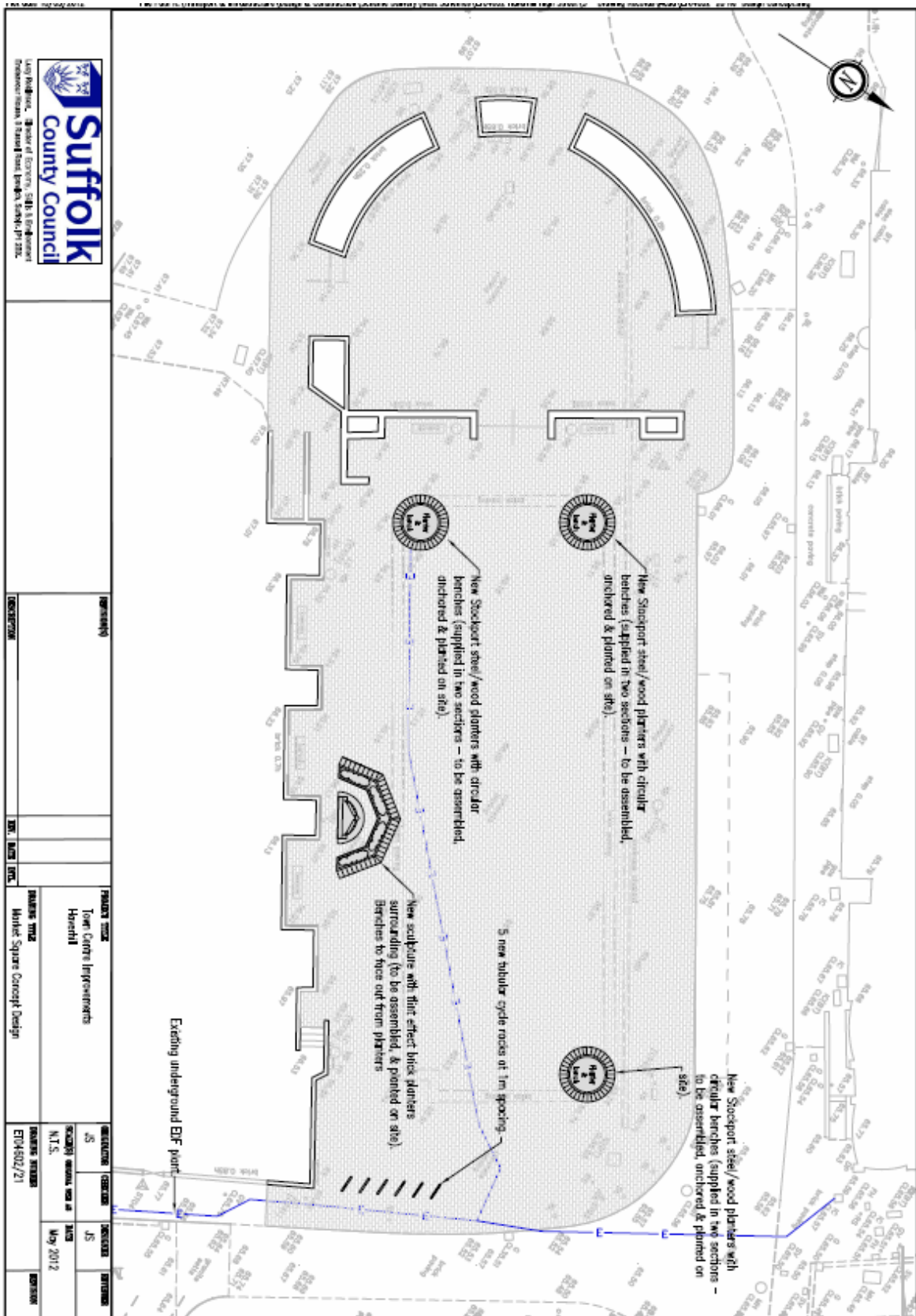
6. Peas Market Square Enhancement options

- 6.1 As detailed above, potentially £191,000 could be available to enhance the Market Square area to provide a more aesthetically appealing location in the centre of the town, especially for the majority of the time when the market or other events are not being held in this space.
- 6.2 Work on similar areas has shown that a simple enhancement scheme with additional benches, bins and cycle parking and a central focal point feature could be delivered for this value. This figure would also allow for some localised maintenance / improvement of the block paved surface and some enhancements to the electrical facilities for the market. However, it would not be sufficient to totally repave the area or re-profile the changes in level between the main section and the raised area of the space at the western end.
- 6.3 The church and associated wall are constructed using flint infill and picking up on this as a design feature on the planters could be effective.
- 6.4 These proposals would be developed in conjunction with the Borough Council's Car Park and Markets Manager.

7. Public Art - PATCH

- 7.1 The public art feature was initially proposed for a paving area in High Street close to Lloyds TSB. However, based on the initial sketches produced showing indicative dimensions it would be potentially very difficult to find a large enough location in the High Street, given the need to avoid utilities equipment in the footway areas and also potential concerns about a feature of this size restricting access and visibility of some of the shops in this area.
- 7.2 It would be a more viable option to locate this sculpture in the Market Square area as a striking and visually arresting focal point for this space. The Market Hill area is relatively free from utilities equipment so there are far more options for locating features here than in the congested High Street footways areas. Given the requirement for an electrical supply and the orientation of the piece it could be located in the area indicated in the plan below, close to the market electricity feeder pillars and facing away from the church wall.

7.3 Market Square Plan



8. Recommendations

8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (1) a 20 mph zone covering the High Street, Haverhill as outlined in Paragraph 1.6 of Report D65, be implemented as a first stage of the High Street Improvement Scheme, ensuring clear and concise signage;
- (2) (i) the revised waiting and loading Traffic Regulation Order for the Improvement Scheme, be delivered through an experimental Order, as detailed in Section 4 of Report D65, and lasting a maximum of 18 months; and

(ii) the current proposals be withdrawn;
- (3) during the delivery of (2) above, a period of statutory consultation be undertaken with a public exhibition, as appropriate; and
- (4) the preliminary design of High Street and Peas Market Square, as detailed in Sections 4.3 and 7.3 of Report D65, be approved.

For further information, please contact:-

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