

**Proposed Decision to be taken by the
Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
on or after 26 July 2013**

**Nuneaton and Bedworth Town Centres – Pedestrian Zones
Proposed New Access Arrangements**

Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves that the advertised proposals for changes to the access arrangements in Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres be abandoned and that no further action be taken.

1.0 Key Issue

- 1.1. Proposals for changes to the motor vehicle access arrangements in Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres have been advertised and a number of objections and comments have been received. These are discussed in the report which recommends that the proposals be abandoned and that no further action be taken.
- 1.2. The statutory criteria for decisions on making Traffic Regulation Orders is attached as **Appendix A**

2.0 Background

- 2.1. With some exceptions the current restrictions in Nuneaton Town Centre prohibit access by motor vehicles between 10am and 4pm (the “prescribed hours” and prohibit parking at all times. The exceptions include:-
 - (i) Blue Badge holders can park between 4pm and 10am the next day.
 - (ii) Loading/unloading can take place between 4pm and 10am the next day.
 - (iii) Access by taxis is permitted between 4pm and 10am the next day.
- 2.2. With some exceptions the current restrictions in High Street and King Street, Bedworth prohibit access by motor vehicles and prohibit parking and loading at all times. The exceptions include:-
 - (i) Blue Badge holders who can park in the disabled persons parking place on King Street between 4pm and 10am and on a Sunday.
 - (ii) Loading/unloading which is permitted between 7.30am and 10.00am and between 4pm and 6pm, Monday to Saturday but only in the loading bay on King Street.

- (iii) Access is permitted for taxis between 4pm and 10am the next day.
 - (iv) Access is allowed to proceed to or from All Saints Church, by doctors, nurses or midwives when visiting patients and for wedding or funeral purposes.
- 2.3. There is an automatic rising bollard system at the entry and exit points in both town centres which operate between the hours of 10am and 4pm (i.e. they rise at 10am and are lowered at 4pm) daily in Nuneaton and Monday to Saturday in Bedworth.
- 2.4. Concerns have been raised that very often, prior to the bollards being lowered, queues of vehicles form on the access roads to both town centres. As soon as the bollards are lowered these vehicles enter the town centres at a time when there are still significant numbers of pedestrians in the area. It has been suggested that this presents a hazardous situation and that changes to the access arrangements are needed to improve pedestrian safety. Following discussions with local County Councillors and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council the following proposals have been advertised.

3. Proposals

- 3.1. In Nuneaton Town Centre the advertised proposal was to amend the definition in the Traffic Regulation Order of "Prescribed hours" (i.e. the period in which the rising bollards remain up) to 10am to 6pm daily. This would mean that access for vehicles to load/unload, for Blue Badge Holders, and for taxis would only be possible between 6pm and 10am the next day.
- 3.2. In Bedworth Town Centre the advertised proposal was that the Traffic Regulation Order be varied such that:-
- (i) Disabled persons parking be allowed in the Blue Badge Holder only parking bay in King Street between 6pm and 10am and all day Sunday
 - (ii) Loading or unloading in the King Street loading bay be permitted between 7.30am and 10.00am, Monday to Saturday only.
 - (iii) Access for taxis be allowed between 6pm and 10am.

4.0 Objections and Comments

- 4.1. The proposals were formally advertised in the Nuneaton Tribune on 14 March 2013. Formal consultations were carried out including letters detailing the proposals being hand delivered to all shops and businesses in both town centres and public notices were displayed in every town centre street.
- 4.2. One email in support of the proposals was received which included the following comments:-

"I totally agree with the proposal having personally witnessed inconsiderate and dangerous driving from both able bodied and Blue Badge holders after

4pm . This will inevitable result in a serious incident. There should be no exceptions other than emergency and service vehicles”.

- 4.3. The following objections and comments were received. The number received is shown in brackets [] .

Objection

Many customers have disabilities or are Blue Badge Holders and can only access the business and other town centre amenities after the bollards have been lowered at 4pm [6] As a Blue Badge Holder I can't walk very far and have difficulty using a mobility scooter. I go into town once a week after 4pm to my bank. There is not enough time before 10am to conduct my business. [1]. As a Blue Badge holder walking is extremely painful and the convenience of being able to park close by is a blessing [1]. Peak trade for the Pharmacy in High Street, Bedworth is between 4pm and 6pm. The Health Centre is opposite and many elderly patients and those with mobility issues make arrangements to have appointments during this period. We tend to receive our medical supplies during this time [1].

Objection

Most businesses close between 5pm and 5.30pm and will not wish to stay open until after 6pm to receive deliveries. This will add extra costs in wages, lighting, heating etc in an already difficult time.[14]. 6 shops in Harefield Road have car parking facilities at the rear. The only exit is via the barriers in Newdegate Street so they would not be able to leave until 6pm [4]. Market stallholders will have to stay for an extra 2 hours [2]

Objection

There is no conflict between pedestrians and vehicles after the shops close [2]. Drivers are careful. There has never been an accident [2]. There is never a significant number of pedestrians on Harefield Road after 4pm [1]. Restaurant customers park in Abbey Street in the evenings after 5.30pm and there has never been any conflict between traffic and pedestrians [1]

Objection

If the bollards remain up until 6pm after all banks, shops and cafes are closed then a great many people will choose not to use the town centre at all which will lead to the closure of shops and pubs and obvious job losses [5].

General Comments

The public should be allowed to come in and park responsibly. The “queues” are our potential customers [2]. The one-way systems needs marking more clearly [1]. Better enforcement of parking and entry into the town centre needed [2]

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1. Since 2005 there have been no recorded injury accidents in the Bedworth pedestrian zone. In the Nuneaton pedestrian zone the only recorded injury accidents involving pedestrians were in Coventry Street in June 2007 when a mobility scooter collided with a man withdrawing money from a cash machine and in Newdegate Street in September 2011 when a car was reversing and collided with a taxi and three drunken pedestrians in the road. The only injury accident occurring between 4pm and 6pm was in Abbey Street in March 2006. This was a slight injury accident involving a car and a pedal cycle. It would therefore also appear that the concerns about road safety are more perceived than actual.
- 5.2. Many of the objections received are considered to be valid. It does appear that if implemented the proposals would have a serious adverse effect on many town centre businesses and on people with disabilities. In view of this and the relatively good safety record in the pedestrian zones it is recommended that the proposals be withdrawn and that no further action be taken.

6.0 Background Papers

- 6.1. Various letters and emails.

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