

SWINDON CIVIC TRUST - Ref: 108

Swindon Central Area Action Plan 2008

Written Statement – Session 2

Strategic Policy Issues (2)

Traffic Management. It has been difficult to do justice to the Action Plan without knowledge of the proposed traffic management for the Area. We understand that this may only be available in December. The mapping is bound to show radical solutions, which themselves may be controversial and prompt even more consultation. When referring to the evidence in the Halcrow Canal study as suggested by the officers, we find it rather less than reassuring. It seems to predict even more peak hour congestion at nodal points outside the perimeter of the Central Area. The lack of a plan and the evidence it would provide, throws into doubt the soundness of many of the policies in the Plan.

Maintenance. Life-cycle maintenance of building, services, equipment, etc. is essential for environmental sustainability. However well a town is designed it can soon become shabby and inefficient if not adequately maintained. Whilst it is possible that these matters are covered in separate planning guidance documents, mention of it within applicable policies such as Public Realm and the Sustainable Strategy would enhance their soundness.

“Pg 26, Policy 2

Ongoing maintenance of the measures stated in the policy is also an important management issue. It needs to be stressed in the policy.”

Sustainable Strategy, page 26, Policy 2

All of the items under this policy require service installations, plant and equipment, all of which require regular maintenance to ensure efficiency. It is not clear from either the Policy or the Implementation Plan how ongoing maintenance will be implemented or monitored.

The policy fails both parts of parts of test 7. A policy statement on maintenance implementation and monitoring is required to correct the situation.

“Pg 55, Transport - Busses and Coaches

Already on routes served by busses running at 10 minute intervals, there are problems with capacity at peak periods. If more people are to be encouraged to travel by bus, then a higher frequency of busses will be needed at peak periods. This higher demand needs to be built into any transport equation.”

Public Transport Strategy, page 55, Public Transport, Policy 7

Can offer no evidence other than as a bus user who notes that at peak periods, waiting passengers are often left standing because the busses are already full.

“Provision for Coaches has not apparently been considered in the plan:

Two types: Long Distance - short stopover to pick up passengers

Touring and Day Trips - stays up to several hours or overnight.

Provision for both - possibly close to the station. Many day trip passengers are elderly, and if they wish to visit the town, the walk from the Kemble Drive Parking is a bit far. Having to catch another bus to get into town would be a complication too many.”

Again as a coach visitor to other towns, it is observed that day trip passengers form an immediate good impression of a town if the coach can park close to the town centre and clean toilets are readily available. Surely this must be good for the retail business.

The policy is unsound as it has not considered all the alternatives. Propose that the policy takes into account higher frequency of service at peak periods and the provision for parking for touring and day trip coaches close to the Town Centre and its attractions.

“Pg 58, Policy 8

Policy should stress the need for safe cycling conditions at all times. Cyclists having to share a road with a constant stream of busses and heavy commercial vehicles are courting a death wish, even if it is only a short distance between protected routes.

New housing development, especially affordable housing requires secure and convenient storage provision for bicycles, if this mode of transport is to become a well patronised. This could influence other planning documents.”

Pedestrian and Cycle Movement Strategy, page 58, Policy 8

The policy is unsound as it is not the most appropriate. The policy needs to be strengthened by more references to the safety issues outlined in its supporting text. It should also include that new housing within the Central Area requires secure and convenient storage for bicycles, motorised chairs, trolleys and buggies.