

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Sir Bill Wiggin
Member for Parliament North
Herefordshire
8 Corn Square
Leominster
HR6 8LR

Dear Sir Bill

Ref: BW146891

In response to your letter to you of the 14 August 2023, Herefordshire Council is committed to delivering the HSHAZ public realm improvements to Leominster.

The delivery timeline was initially delayed by one year due to Covid 19, and more recently has been delayed further due to Department for Transport (DfT) shared space guidance and accessibility safety issues, notably for visually impaired users. The original design proposals had included a level surface on the High Street, and for Corn Square to be fully pedestrianised with car parking removed. This ambition could only be realised should motor vehicle traffic in these areas be greatly reduced or removed in order that the design be compliant with DfT guidance on shared spaces. In order to reduce/remove the traffic three Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) had been proposed, namely:

- 1) Restrict traffic on the High Street between 10am and 4pm
- 2) Remove parking from Corn Square
- 3) Fully pedestrianise Corn Square

Early informal consultation on the above TROs indicated that there would be challenge to the proposals which would likely result in the TROs taking a considerable time to approve.

Alongside the shared space issue, the estimated costs for the pedestrianised Corn Square scheme and an amended (to be compliant with shared space guidance) High Street design came in £500k over budget so the scope has now been reduced in order that improvements can be achieved on budget. This reduced scope design is not reliant on the proposed TROs and the TROs have now been temporarily paused so that focus and communications can be clear around what is actually happening in Leominster rather than a future vision. Under this new design, motor vehicle traffic and parking will continue as existing but the new design will work equally well should traffic or parking be removed in the future.

Cabinet Members have now approved the new design which mitigates as far as possible for the current issues of narrow sloping pavements, uneven surfaces and high kerbs, albeit within the constraints of the historic layout of Leominster and the necessary road safety audits.

The procurement process, which was slightly delayed due to the redesigns as mentioned above, has now progressed well and we are hopeful that there is interest in tendering for this work. Once successfully procured, construction is due to commence in January (so there will be no impact on Christmas trading) and finish in summer 2024. This will extend the delivery timeline beyond the

end date of the Historic England (HE) HSHAZ scheme plan of March 2024 and currently the project team are in conversation with HE about this. The funding for the public realm works is coming from Herefordshire Council match and not from HE funding.

You may also find the attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) useful.

We held an open meeting in Leominster on Tuesday 14th November and invited all local residents to attend to find out more about the public realm programme. We will continue to communicate timescales for taking forward the different elements of the proposed works once the contractor is in place.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Allonby', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Roger Allonby
SERVICE DIRECTOR ECONOMY & GROWTH

Enc. Leominster HSHAZ Public Realm FAQs