



SUDBURY SOCIETY RESPONSE TO MARKET HILL PROPOSALS

BACKGROUND

We have Emailed our members and encouraged them to respond to the recent consultation directly. Subsequently we have approached a randomly selected number of our members to ensure that our response is representative of the Society's members.

We all realize that it is an extremely complex matter to respect all aspects that need to be taken into account. Sudbury is a market town that has to maintain its vitality and appeal to retain this function, and any proposals need to reflect all aspects to ensure the town retains its successful role as a market town.

Members were questioned on their views on 4 principal Issues, which were.

1: Parking

2: Events

3: Planting and seating

4: Traffic

The conclusions from that consultation are set out below.

PARKING: Acceptance that removal of cars would improve the appearance of the Market Hill , but an understanding that for businesses around the Hill this could have a negative effect. The present levels of car park usage should not be considered the norm although we understand that on Market days there is no parking on the Hill. Concern about the number of disabled parking spaces to be provided and previous parking arrangements on the Hill were not policed but with new warden garrangements any parking could provide a more satisfactory short stay use of any spaces to encourage people wanting to visit town centre businesses

EVENTS: Everyone liked the idea of more events using the Market Hill but concern that these will not occur every day and we have to be careful we do not create an empty windswept place for many days of the year when there are no events taking place. On these days the only function will be the road through the Hill, smaller scale events should be encouraged, and the space should be flexible to cope with all size of events.

PLANTING and SEATING: people seemed to like the idea of softening the appearance of the Market Hill and the provision of more seating. The present proposals talk about extensive tree planting and the majority felt this would defeat the object of improving views and visibility across the Hill and cause ongoing maintenance problems. The future maintenance of any planting has to be carefully considered and to be a strict responsibility of some organization.

TRAFFIC: An almost unanimous response to try and slow vehicles down through the town centre to reduce danger to pedestrians and to improve the environment as the proposed reduction in parking

movements will tend to speed traffic. Several respondents wanted to see a widening of pavements to reduce road widths, to slow traffic.

OTHER COMMENTS: The proposals make no specific mention of taxi rank, Bus stops and any work to replan the Market Hill should be in conjunction with all other town centre proposals. A suggestion that we encourage electric vehicles by car charging provision and provision of cycle storage. Some thought of speed cameras to try and slow traffic.

SUDBURY SOCIETY CONCLUSIONS

PARKING: We are opposed to the total loss of parking on The Market Hill, but we accept reduced capacity of say 20-30 spaces. This retains flexibility for large events and Market days as at present. The provision of time restricted parking will help town centre businesses and provide scope for extra disabled parking provision.

EVENTS: We believe that events that would fill the whole Market Hill are extremely rare and therefore we believe that it is inappropriate to set this whole area aside every day but could as at present be used occasionally for events like the food festival and Plant fair. We believe a better solution would be to extend the area around Thomas Gainsborough statue would be adequate for most events, and the retention of some of the parking would be better for the vitality of the town. We would encourage the use of this area at the Eastern end of Market Hill for events.

PLANTING & SEATING: We support planting & seating to soften the appearance of the area and to try and segregate through traffic from the pedestrianized areas of the Market Hill. We oppose tree planting as it will obstruct views to and from the Market Hill and reduce the visibility of the remarkable collection of buildings that we are trying to enhance.

TRAFFIC: The trunk route through the Market Hill will undoubtedly see increases in traffic flows and everything should be done to reduce the impact of this on the town centre. We would therefore support no vehicular access to the Market Hill from the South side. The main route could then be reduced in width to a single carriageway which would help to reduce traffic speed and this should be augmented by a 20 MPH speed limit throughout the main central area of the town. We would support introduction of speed camera enforcement or some other physical work to reduce speed of vehicles through the town centre.

OTHER MATTERS: We consider the Market Hill to be the heart of our market town and we are concerned that these proposals make no mention of matters such as the Taxi Rank and there is no mention of the Bus station or of the redevelopment of the Hamilton Road quarter and all of these issues would seem to interact with the present proposals for the Market Hill.