

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

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| TO: | TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 25 th JUNE 2014 | AGENDA ITEM: | 13 |
| TITLE: | VALPY STREET - ALTERATIONS TO BUS STANDS AND PARKING BAYS | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | TONY PAGE | PORTFOLIO: | STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT |
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The owners of Minerva House, Valpy Street have secured consent for planning application 130736, to refurbish and remodel the existing office building. The proposals will replace the existing blank ground floor with a new entrance facing onto Valpy Street and a new café creating an active frontage (open air seating area) which will improve the urban realm and is supported in principle by planning officers.
- 1.2 The application was granted at Planning Application Committee on the 4th September 2013 following an officers' recommendation to approve the proposals.
- 1.3 As a result of creating an active frontage the applicant has requested that the current bus stands and parking along Valpy Street be reconfigured so that the current bus stands would no longer be located outside the new active frontage to the Minerva House.
- 1.4 This report seeks approval to commence the statutory process to amend the existing parking layout as detailed in Appendix 1, following consent for application of 130736 .
- 1.5 In September 2013, the applicant previously submitted an application for amending the bus bays, parking and motorcycle, which was passed through the Traffic Management Sub Committee and went to formal TRO process, but due to objections that scheme was refused by the Council. This revised scheme seeks to address and overcome the previous reasons for refusal with a modified scheme.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Members of the Sub Committee note the report.
- 2.2 That the changes to the parking and bus stands in Valpy Street are approved by Members.
- 2.3 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub Committee, that the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport and Ward Councillors the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out statutory consultation in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to advertise the proposal and subject to no objections being received to implement the proposal.
- 2.4 If objections are received to the statutory consultations, those objections will be reported back to a future meeting of the Sub Committee.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport and Planning Policy.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The existing owners of Minerva House, Valpy Street have secured planning consent (130736) to refurbish and remodel the existing building which will create a new street scene by creating an active frontage on the ground floor along Valpy Street. This will be undertaken by removing the existing blank wall façade and constructing a new entrance and foyer and a restaurant / café use. The proposals will improve the townscape merit of the building and reduces the propensity for Valpy Street to appear rather empty and unused.
- 4.2 To complement these changes to the building and street scene the applicant has requested that the parking layout be reconfigured so the bus lay over stands are not located immediately adjacent to the new ground floor uses.
- 4.3 The applicant's proposals are shown on drawings 28802/001/SK007A in Appendix 1 and have been drawn up following additional consultation with Transport Officers following the previous September 2013 submission. The proposals result in the bus stands being relocated to a single location on the northern kerb line of Valpy Street, directly oppose the current location. The existing "Pay and Display bays which are currently on the northern kerb line are moved to the southern kerb line opposite.
- 4.4 The alterations will also provide an increase in the Permit parking bay on the northern kerb to 20m.
- 4.5 To facilitate these works will entail the extension of the parking bay on the northern kerb line to the east and relocation of the cycle stands outside North Gate House.
- 4.6 As a result of the changes there will be no reduction in the current level of provision for bus stops / lay over points, motorcycle parking, cycle parking,

loading, pay and display parking and a possible extension of the permit parking bay.

4.7 The applicant has also cited a number of benefits from this reorientation of the area to support the proposals.

- Commercial services which utilise the bus loading bays for visitor services to the town and town hall will have a safer entry and egress on the correct side of the vehicle onto a public footpath, rather than the current access which is carried out via a live traffic lane.
- Increased benefit to permit bay users with increased bay length.
- All P&D drivers have a safer entry and egress onto the public footpath and not into a live traffic lane.
- Vehicles travelling from The Forbury towards the station would benefit from improved visibility when seeking to cross the traffic flow on Valpy Street as they would be obstructed by cars and not buses/HGV's.
- Benefit to Minerva House with improved visibility leaving their new access and café facility with buses on opposite side.
- No alterations to the western section of Valpy Street, as such all previous objections from Town Hall and Motorcycle Group are removed and addressed
- Provision of a continuous bay, where drivers move to the front of the bay as it is vacated limits the need for buses to reverse into bays as with the current split operation.
- Vehicles exiting Minerva House have improved visibility splays as they would be obstructed by cars and not buses/HGV's (high vehicles).

4.8 The officers can state that the points raised above by the applicant are factually correct and therefore the defined benefits are achievable with the scheme as defined in Appendix 1.

4.9 The applicant has stated they will undertake these works through a legal agreement and will fund all construction costs and legal costs associated with undertaking the changes. These would include any operational changes that the Council considered relevant for the bus loading bay management such as additional signage promoting "engine turn off" and waiting time limits.

4.10 However before any changes take place a statutory consultation process has to be undertaken and it is recommended that this is proceeded with given the urban realm benefits the proposals will produce.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Additional local consultation will be carried out as required.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any proposals for waiting/ movement restrictions are advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The works and legal costs will be wholly funded by the Developer.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Report to Traffic Management Sub-Committee - September 2013

