

Consultation on Phase 2 of Public Realm Scheme, Dungannon

Wednesday 20th May 2015

10.30 – 12noon

In attendance

Marie Patton, Taggart Consultants, Johnny McNeill, MUC, Christy Quinn, Shopmobility, Tom McGrath, Michael Hughes, Brian Heron, S McKenna, Victor Kerr, Orla McCann, Disability Action, Paul McCreedy, MUC

Catherine gave brief introduction and handed over to Marie who asked group to give an overview of the difficulties faced in phase 1.

- Severity of dropped kerbs
- Surfaces
 - cobblestone causing difficulty for people with any mobility difficulties – using wheelchairs or
 - walking sticks
 - smooth surfaces causing some concerns around how slippery they can become – Michael
 - noted difficulties he was experiencing
- Crossing lights – discussion around absence of audio and J McNeill explained that the proximity of the lights at bottom of market square and top of scotch street meant audio wasn't safe as people may not know which lights are safe to cross at. Johnny will look into this and we suggested an awareness raising event to assist people who are visually impaired how to understand how to use these crossings. Paul interested in this suggestion – ***Catherine to follow up with Paul re this***
- Lack of a crossing at Thomas Street beside library – acknowledged this as an issue and there are discussions for phase 2 to include a crossing.
- Lack of colour contrast – discussion around the difficulty with contract which required natural stone and there are only so many shades of grey which can be used. We highlighted that the aesthetics should not get in the way of accessibility for people who are visually impaired as Dungannon has been cited as a No Go area for people who are visually impaired.

Proposed plans for Phase 2

Marie took the group through the proposals which will include Scotch Street (upper and lower), Georges St, William St, Ann Street, Thomas Street and Northland Row.

Upper Scotch Street

It was confirmed that there are no plans to make Scotch Street 2 way – this is only a rumour.

The Bus stop will remain where it is.

One accessible parking space to be retained outside Horace McMullans.

Discussed the need for dropped kerbs to have a corresponding dropped kerb at other side of street and the need to keep this free from any parking space.

Crossing point coming out from path to narrow the road at Pattersons Shoes.

Dropped kerb corresponding crossings at Shamble Lane, across Scotch Street centre and at top of Lower Scotch Street

Lower Scotch Street

Accessible Parking space to be retained on lower Scotch Street on left.

Georges Street

Tidying up of unofficial car parking spaces on left as you drive into Georges Street from Scotch Street.

Retain accessible parking space outside Disability Action

Dropped kerbs at either end of Georges Street and suggestion that an additional crossing should be made in middle of the street.

William Street

Dropped kerbs at either end of the street

Seamus noted difficulty at present not being able to get onto footpath due to cars parking and blocking the dropped kerb.

Ann Street

Retain accessible parking space

Questioned what ratio of accessible parking spaces should be offered alongside non-accessible parking – 1 in 20 was suggested but this is to be followed up as another space at top of Ann street was suggested as Miniarden housing is particularly for older people some of whom have mobility difficulties.

A crossing point/dropped kerbs were suggested mid-way along Ann Street.

Thomas Street

Phase 2 will concentrate on Thomas Street from Market Square to the Greers Rd Link road. Crossing needed however still some concern around siting of this – if its too close to the library/market square it will cause traffic difficulties due to the 2 way traffic and the turning lane which is there. Suggestions that this will be moved into Thomas Street a bit and include a raised level crossing point. The other difficulty is the minimum width of the road needed to keep clear for 2 way traffic limits the options for this.

We mentioned the narrow footpath at the bus stop on Thomas Street making it impossible for a person in an electric wheelchair to exit the bus currently so requested that this be looked at.

Northland Row

The proposal for Northland Row as a conservation area includes the removal of overhead electric/telephone cables to have these sited underground, inclusion of new street lighting and some trees.

Northland Row does not have a wheelchair accessible parking space and we queried this. Marie pointed out that this was requested but Transport NI suggested that due to lack of disability related businesses this wasn't needed. We challenged this to note that disabled people access the same businesses as anyone else.

Marie has since come back to see if we have any preference over where an accessible parking place would be located (Perry Street side, Church side or middle of Northland Row).

– ***consultation with LARG 27.5.15***

Orla McCann noted that if Transport NI could look at raising the level of the road on Scotch street this would reduce the difficulties which we are now facing with Irish Street and bring footpaths up to allow level access for businesses thus improving accessibility greatly. We also discussed the addition of crossing points mid-way in all of the streets as this can cause a real difficulty for people using wheelchairs who have to traverse to the end of a street to get across.

Marie suggested that it might be good if we, as disabled people/organisations could lobby Transport NI on these changes including the inclusion of double yellow lines at dropped kerbs.