STATEMENT OF REASONS

Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders in Cirencester Market Place and Town Centre

The Proposal

Gloucestershire County Council, working in partnership with Cirencester Town Council, is proposing a number of changes to the highway network in and around the Market Place. The proposals include alterations to parking arrangements, one way traffic restrictions, prohibition of right turn movements, the introduction of zebra crossings and raised highway surfaces. The proposed changes support the revised layout of the Market Place and town centre traffic management scheme.

The proposed parking alterations are being proposed under section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984) which allows the County Council to take action to ‘preserve or improve the amenities of the area through which the road runs’. The proposals (as referenced by ‘Cirencester Market Place RPZ Traffic Regulation Order Proposal 001.2’) are as follows:

- Restricted Parking Zone (No Loading): - Covering Park Street, Park Lane, Old Tetbury Road, Castle Street, Silver Street, Black Jack Street, Gosditch Street, West Market Place, Market Place, Dyer Street

A Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) is an area wide restriction, to control parking without the need for yellow line markings. The zone entry and exit signs indicate the start and end of the restrictions. Signed bays are marked out within the RPZ that indicate the areas that allow parking, loading and taxis. Parking and loading is not allowed outside these bays.

The signed and marked parking bays within the RPZ are as follows:

- Pay & Display Maximum Stay 2hrs, 8.00am – 6.00pm. – Castle Street, Market Place (existing bays in Market Place will be remarked with a new layout)
- Disabled badge holders only: - Park Street
- Limited Waiting 1 hour No Return 1 hour 8.00am - 6.00pm: - Park Lane
- Loading Only 8.00am - 6.00pm: - Castle Street, Park Street, Black Jack Street, Market Place
- Loading Only (at any time): - Castle Street
- Taxi’s Only: - Market Place

The restrictions on traffic movements are proposed under Section 1 of the RTRA 1984 which allows the County Council to implement measures to ‘facilitate the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians)’ and to ‘avoid danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising’. This should encourage through traffic to avoid the Town Centre whilst supporting highway safety by reducing traffic speeds and volumes. In order to support this, the following orders are proposed (as per Cirencester Market Place Moving Traffic Regulation Order Proposal 001.1):
• **One Way traffic restriction in Castle Street in an easterly direction between its junctions with Silver Street and West Market Place**

• **No right turn traffic restriction into Castle Street from West Market Place**

• **No Entry in to Castle Street from Market Place direction (due to one way Order)**

In addition to this it is also proposed to install two zebra crossings, as allowed under section 23 of the RTRA 1984, on West Market Place and Castle Street to facilitate safer pedestrian movements.

The central Market Place area will also be on a raised area, with ramps proposed in Gosditch Street and Dyer Street. In addition there will also be road humps at the point of the zebra crossings and extended road humps (tables) along sections of Market Place. These ramps are being proposed under Section 90A of the Highways Act 1980. It is hoped that the introduction of traffic calming measures will reduce speeds further and discourage through traffic from using the centre of Cirencester.

**The Reasons**

There has been a desire in Cirencester, over a number years, to reduce the dominance of cars and through traffic in the Market Place. This desire has been expressed in town centre policy documents produced by Cotswold District and in the County Council Local Transport Plan as well as by local pressure groups, The Civic Society and Action Cirencester. In recent years Cirencester Town Council have taken the lead role on the matter and are currently the promoters of the Market Place Regeneration Scheme. In 2013 a questionnaire was sent to all households in the GL7 area asking for views upon the proposals and seventy per cent of respondents were in favour.

The overall project involves landscaping and engineering works associated with the revised layout of the Market Place and town centre traffic management scheme. Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council and Cirencester Town Council have been working together so that the TRO consultation aligns with the Market Place and Town Centre Scheme.

Planning consent was provided for the works at Cirencester Market Place on the 10th December 2014 confirming that the development was fully considered and assessed in accordance with the Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010.

Gloucestershire County Council, working in partnership with Cirencester Town Council, hopes that the proposals will help to improve accessibility for non motorised users, redistribute motorised users passing through the town away from the Town Centre, encourage greater parking provision and improve overall road safety in light of the redevelopment.

Average traffic speeds on Market Place were measured in 2008 at between 14.2 and 16.2 mph supporting the 20mph limit that was previously implemented. The proposed introduction of raised surfaces and road humps to act as traffic calming features should provide a continued benefit to pedestrians.
Traffic flows were recorded at the Castle Street/Market Place/Cricklade Street junction in 2011, with flows of 404 recorded in the Morning Peak hour and flows of 327 recorded in the evening peak hour. The traffic studies undertaken as part of the planning process between 2012 and 2014 for the scheme demonstrated that the change of Castle Street to one way traffic in an easterly direction should eliminate through traffic from the north going west through the town whilst preserving local activity in the Market Place.

It is hoped that the realignment and redistribution of on street car parking will also prevent traffic circulating in the Market Place with drivers searching for a car parking space. The entry points to the Market Place are proposed to be narrowed and the creation of raised tables and introduction of zebra crossings instead of traffic signals will all contribute to reduce the speed and volume of traffic in the Market Place. The realignment of kerb lines and widening of pedestrian areas will also help to tip the balance in favour of pedestrian use of the Market Place and lessen the dominance of cars. The reduction of car and lorry traffic and the reduction of speed of vehicles will reduce the likelihood of collisions and dangers to pedestrians.

The proposals for the Market Place represent a significant change to the design of this key public space within Cirencester’s town centre. The scheme is based on a set of principles, focusing on reducing the impact of vehicular traffic, maximising the space for pedestrians and creating a dedicated space for markets and public events at the heart of the town.

In terms of the operation of the highway network, the key proposed changes are the removal of traffic signal operation at the Market Place / Castle Street junction and the associated change to Castle Street, restricting all westbound traffic movements. As a result of the one way restriction, there also needs to be a no entry restriction to allow for the ‘no entry’ signs to be erected. This is so that we can warn drivers travelling from the Market Place not to go straight ahead along Castle Street.

The realignment of kerb lines and the reduction to 50mm or less steps at kerbs, the renewal of surface water drainage channels to a pattern of gullies will enable the Market Place to be considered as a single surface area for occasions when the Market Place is closed to traffic for cultural and civic events in the Market Place. The Market Place is the single largest space for large gatherings in the Town and from a safety perspective a single surface space will be a significant improvement in the amenity and facility for the benefit of the Town and its residents. The relocation of bus stops out of the Market Place to a nearby emerging transport interchange will also improve the environmental conditions reducing pollution affecting pedestrians and heritage buildings alike.

The parking proposals reflect the changes in traffic movements, and propose parking and loading spaces in the area by adding new parking bays where possible. In order to support local businesses and residents, it is important that parking in the Market Place is convenient and easily accessible. Access for visitors and deliveries is maintained through the provision of loading and taxi bays within the Market Place.

The imposition of no parking and no loading in any area other than the limited designated spaces will enhance the environmental impact upon the area and are required to prevent obstruction of the narrowed carriageways. All the buildings in the Market Place have high heritage value all being Listed either Grade 1 or Grade 2, the reduction of traffic volumes and speed will have a positive impact upon the preservation of this fine collection of buildings. Parking bays have been provided throughout the
proposed restricted parking zone to maintain adequate access for servicing to local businesses and disabled users.

**Further Information**

The County Council has a duty under section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 when making TROs to consider the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and other traffic. This has been a key part of this scheme as it is trying to promote the best use of the best routes for motorised traffic and pedestrians.

Thorough consideration was given to the equalities duty of the County Council under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (also see ‘Statement of Due Regard’).

All signing and lining will be in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2016.

**Consultation**

Extensive informal consultation was undertaken as part of the planning process by Cirencester Town Council. Concerns were addressed and no objections were received to the proposal from the following statutory bodies:

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Cirencester Town Council
- Councillors representing the ward and adjoining wards from each of these Councils
- Police
- All other emergency services
- The Freight Transport Association
- Road Haulage Association
- English Heritage
- Cirencester Chamber of Commerce

In addition a wide range of groups, organisations and charities representing disabled mobility, partially sighted, blind and other vulnerable users of the highways were also consulted.