

## Salisbury Vision: Market Place



The historic Market Place. Where vehicles have the best seats.

.....

Plans for the renaissance of the Market Place as part of the Salisbury Vision – your questions answered

***Q. What's wrong with the Market Place as it is?***

**A. This centuries-old public space - the focal point of our medieval city for nearly 800 years - is shabby and under used. It is failing to fulfil its true potential as a magnet for residents, businesses and visitors. The Market Place - arguably the city's most important public space - is an English gem in dire need of a shine to outsparkle other regional cities and towns.**

***Q. What's at stake?***

**A. If we don't take action, the city will decline. A long-term view is vital if Salisbury is to maintain and improve its appeal to locals and visitors in the face of increasing competition from other towns and cities.**

***Q. Is there any research to back up the need for high quality improvements?***

**A. Yes, recent research shows that public realm improvements can lead to a significant and measureable positive impact on the local economy. It should increase visitor numbers and spend, as well as attracting private sector investment that would create new jobs. Civic pride would be boosted.**

***Q. What do you mean by 'public realm'?***

**A. Public realm is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible. Improvements would create a 'sense of place', with friendly open spaces, and prioritise the needs of people and those with disabilities over vehicles through atmospheric lighting, greener landscaping and places for performance art and fixed art.**

***Q. What is shabby about the Market Place?***

**A. The piecemeal scattering of street furniture, as well as the eyesore asphalt, parking bollards and painted parking bay lines, hardly do justice to one of the largest medieval public open spaces of its kind in Western Europe. The square inherited poor urban design which placed the needs of the motor vehicle above that of pedestrians.**

***Q. What do you mean the Market Place is 'under used'?***

**A. Virtually one half of the Market Place is given over to 69 car parking spaces – a visual and physical intrusion does not do justice to this historic heart of public life in Salisbury. The thriving Charter Market is held twice a week, but it would be wonderful to recreate the hustle and bustle for the other five days through a European café culture and open air entertainments.**

***Q. What do you mean the Market Place is 'failing to fulfil its potential'?***

**A. The aim is to create a grand square to rival any in Europe, a beautiful cosmopolitan space within the core of our historic city. A place to linger with family and friends. It would ideally become a major attraction in its own right, increasing vibrancy and prosperity.**

***Q. Will the Charter Market be affected?***

**A. No. The Charter Market will continue to be held every Tuesday and Saturday, as it has done since 1227 when King Henry II granted a market charter for the young city of New Sarum.**

***Q. Will the 103 traders with their 144 pitches be affected?***

**A. No. They will remain as a valued part of Salisbury life. Plans for the renaissance of the Market Place would need to accommodate this**

cherished market activity. What's more, the idea is to attract even more people to the markets to make them even more popular and successful.

*Q. What do you mean by renaissance?*

A. The key aim is to make the Market Place greener and cleaner through pedestrianisation. The emphasis is on the use of high quality materials – not asphalt and second-rate seats, signs and other street furniture – to create a European café culture and outdoor entertainments area. In short, putting people first, not cars.

*Q. As a motorist, surely I have the right to park where I please, including the short-stay car park at Market Place?*

A. There is car parking provision a short walk away or through the use of park-and-ride from four edge-of-city sites. The convenience of parking right in the Market Place has to be weighed up against the aim of making the location a jewel in the South West's crown.

*Q. What else can you tell me about car usage?*

A. The renaissance of the Market Place is not an excuse to drive motorists out of the inner city. It is an opportunity for them to leave their cars behind to enjoy a public space of beauty and delight. Man-made climate change also means we should all be actively shrinking our individual carbon footprints.

*Q. So you're going to close off adjacent roads, such as Blue Boar Row?*

A. One of the key objectives of the Salisbury Vision is to remove unnecessary traffic from the streets in the centre of the city, to make these streets more pedestrian friendly and safer, and to make it easier for public transport to be improved. This will also improve the city's air quality. This will not happen immediately, however, so we have told the

architects to assume that Blue Boar Row, for example, will, in the near future, be traffic-free apart from buses. The architects have therefore been asked to make sure that their overall design for the Market Place area is able to incorporate this at a later stage. Blue Boar Row and Minster Street should be seen as an integral part of the greater Market Place area.

*Q. What about parking for disabled people?*

A. There is adjacent on-street parking provision for blue-badge holders, with Salt Lane car park nearby in case spaces are taken up. The park and ride buses have low floors and wheelchair access – and stop right outside the Market Place.

*Q. What about the £3m cost? Will our council services be affected to pay for the changes?*

A. No. Absolutely not. This is a long-term investment in Salisbury's future as a major regional centre, with the aim of generating more visitors and more businesses.

*Q. So who's footing the bill – and where's the money coming from?*

A. Salisbury District Council will split the bill with Wiltshire County Council. Half of the money is ring-fenced from the government's budget for the Salisbury Local Transport Plan.

*Q. How do I know the money is being spent wisely?*

A. The spending of public money is rightly subject to public scrutiny through publicly elected councillors at council meetings and council reports. There will be transparency and accountability over expenditure at all times.

***Q. What kind of changes can we expect to see and experience at the Market Place?***

**A. First and foremost, the renaissance must complement the historic nature of the Market Place and city centre. Enhancements could include eye-catching features, such as a water feature, new paving, benches, lighting, information posts and pedestrianisation.**

***Q. Will there be new buildings?***

**A. We don't think it would be right for the designs to include any significant new buildings on what is an important and public historic site. The initial suggestions from the consultants included a kiosk but we will have to wait until we see the designs from the shortlisted architects.**

***Q. Will businesses around the Market Place be affected?***

**A. Yes, in a positive way. With increasing visitor numbers, the chances are that adjacent businesses will see an increase in footfall.**

***Q. What about the War Memorial in front of the Guildhall?***

**A. We have consulted with the local Royal British Legion, which is open to the idea of the memorial being relocated a few metres away towards the already pedestrianised Queen Street. It would symbolically face the Market Place, the heart of civic life in Salisbury.**

***Q. What's wrong with its current position?***

**A. The memorial faces the main road, Blue Boar Row, which means that on Remembrance Day, and other significant military memorial days,**

people paying their respects are in danger of spilling out on to the busy road. Relocation would be better all round.

*Q. What about the right-of-way public footpath that cuts diagonally across Market Place?*

A. The footpath is an anachronism – a historical right of way no longer needed because the public are already free to walk anywhere they wish through the Market Place. However, designers will be made aware of its location.

*Q. Will the underground public conveniences remain?*

A. At this stage we don't know. The architects will need to consider how important it is to have public conveniences in this location and how they can be included in the overall design. There is also a problem with access to the existing public conveniences.

*Q. Can I have a say in the regeneration of the Market Place?*

A. Yes. Your views will be crucial in deciding the final design. A major consultation exercise with residents and businesses alike, which includes public exhibitions, will get underway in January 2009. We also hope to showcase all the designs in the local press.

*Q. What designs will the public have to go on?*

A. We launched a competition in August 2008 to see what architects and landscape artists from across Europe can come up with. A shortlist of the best six suitable designs will be displayed in January 2009, with the public being asked for their thoughts and views.

***Q. What is the cost of the competition to Salisbury?***

**A. £60,000. The competition is being held by the Royal Institute of British Architects, which regularly holds similar competitions up and down the country to improve the look and feel of cities and towns.**

***Q. When would work begin?***

**A. It all depends on the requirements of the winning design. For example, a water feature or work of art, if chosen, might require planning permission. That can take a few months. Also, there may be delays if materials need to be sourced and ordered from around the world. With these constraints, it is likely that work will begin in earnest at the tail end of 2009 or in early 2010.**

***Q. How long would the project take?***

**A. Until we know the winning design, no definite answers can be given. We'll let you know as soon as we are informed of the time frame.**

***Q. What disruption will there be?***

**A. It is inevitable that there will be some disruption, depending on what kind of design is selected. Part of the Market Place might have to be closed off as a part of a rolling programme. The Charter Market may have to be temporarily relocated if the whole area is closed off to ensure that the work is done as safely and efficiently as possible. Consultation would take place with the traders, and shoppers given plenty of advance notice, if temporary relocation was required.**

***Q. Wouldn't that hit traders in the pocket and inconvenience shoppers?***

**A. The point of regenerating the Market Place is to encourage more visitors to Salisbury to spend money, creating jobs and enhancing**

prosperity for the whole of the district. Traders and shoppers will hopefully see the bigger picture, especially if more visitors come to the Charter Market once the Market Place is regenerated.

*Q. Will there be all-night drinking?*

A. Salisbury had successfully objected to the 24-hour licensing laws that other local authorities have brought in elsewhere around the country. Any business wanting to sell alcohol would be subject to the usual strict licensing conditions, which prohibits late-night drinking in public places. The existing restrictions on drinking in the Market Place will remain.

*Q. What about the Charter Fair?*

A. The renaissance of the Market Place might make it difficult to accommodate the fair, which many people think is outgrowing this city centre location. It would be a shame if the £3m investment in Salisbury's future prosperity was jeopardised by an event which runs for only three, or sometimes four, days a year. We've asked the architects to look at the possibility of retaining the fair but we're also looking at other more suitable sites.

*Q. How are you ensuring that residents and businesses are all made aware of the impending changes?*

A. There will be a four-week public consultation period on the shortlisted designs in January 2009. Details will be made available on the internet, with radio and newspaper advertising. There will also be a public and walk-in exhibition so that everyone has the opportunity to provide their input.

***Q. When will the winning design be announced?***

**A. February 26, subject to ratification by Salisbury District Council's Cabinet.**

***Q. Can you define what you mean by the Market Place?***

**A. Yes. The Market Place consists of three areas of ancient public open space in the middle of medieval Salisbury – the Market Place, Guildhall Square and the Cheese Market. The area subject to the high quality improvements is one hectare – equivalent to nearly 2.5 acres.**

***Q. What next after the renaissance of the Market Place?***

**A. The scheme is part of a far-reaching multi-agency Salisbury Vision project aiming to improve the city centre over the next 20 years by making it greener and cleaner for residents, businesses and visitors alike.**

***Q. What will the result be?***

**A. Salisbury would have an enhanced identity, image and economy, with improvements to the well-being of people who live in, work in or visit the city.**