

CAR-BAN PLANNED FOR CENTRE OF HIGHCLIFFE

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A DRAMATIC plan to transform the centre of Highcliffe into a pedestrian-only precinct, with new shops, public offices, gardens, service road, a 700-vehicle car park and coach and bus stops, was placed before Highcliffe Citizens' Association at a special meeting on Monday night.

The chief architect of the Highcliffe report, Lt.-Col. Allan Tarnow, admitted that his proposals would mean some demolition of property and the costs would be "frightening".

As a long-term policy and an alternative to the widening of Lymington-road and Gordon-road, the report proposed the opening up of the area between Gordon-road and Stanley-road from Lymington-road to the new Highcliffe by-pass proposed by the county.

The northern end of the "square" would be a 700-vehicle car park with a garage and bus and coach stops and a service road leading on to the by-pass.

The southern end would be a pedestrian area laid out with gardens. The houses on the east and west sides of the precinct should eventually be replaced by a new post office, library, council sub-office, and shops.

OVERLOOKING COMMON

A larger hall for public use would be needed in any long-term concept.

Stanley-road would act as a service road for the shops facing the precinct, while a service road could be made behind the shops on the east side parallel to Seaton-road with outlets only to the new car park and by-pass.

The precinct would look down the hill to the north, overlooking Chewton Common, which could be given a parkland effect with the proposed Chewton Common sports ground beyond the valley. Trees would serve to hide the car park in the valley.

The middle part of the of the Lymington-road shopping centre should be made a pedestrian precinct, the report suggested.

The shopping areas at either end should be reserved for pedestrians as far as practicable during peak hours agreeable to the traders concerned.

The by-pass gave a last opportunity to open up the centre of Highcliffe in the way that the Christchurch by-pass was opening up the town centre.

Such an opportunity was missed when Bucehayes was available, said the report.

Highcliffe by-pass should be made a very urgent service. It was understood that a dual carriageway was planned which would connect with dual carriageways from Somerford and on towards Lymington.

The by-pass should prevent all traffic going through the Highcliffe shopping area, but it must provide safe and adequate pedestrian crossing points to connect the extensive residential areas lying to the north of the by-pass with the shopping centre and the sea.

A pedestrian subway seemed desirable north of Gordon-road to the prefabricated houses.

Speeds must be definitely restricted to 30 mph as the potentialities for accidents would far exceed those on Christchurch by-pass.

The car park at Wortley-road should be extended to the full size of the ground available. The cliff-top car park should not normally envisage the use of the second field which should remain as a pedestrian area.

Telephone-operated signals on main approach roads should show when the car park was full.

A car park should be provided at the junction of the new by-pass with Lymington-road, adjoining the infants' school, and a small car park was required at Mill-lane for visitors to Chewton Bunny.

THROUGH TRAFFIC

A considerable portion of the traffic through Highcliffe or Walkford was going to or coming from New Milton which had no other access in that direction.

In 1957 Highcliffe citizens proposed a new road leading from the A35 at Hinton following roughly the existing road to Hinton House and then across the fields and Glen to a widened railway bridge at Stem-lane for Gore-road.

The county surveyor who attended a sub-committee could not fault the idea, except on the ground of lack of money. The road would relieve Highcliffe and Walkford of all except vehicles going beyond New Milton which would have a clearer route.

Traffic for New Milton would arrive at the Old Milton-road and Station-road corner by way of Gore-road instead of Old Milton-road, and the proposal would not increase traffic at that point.

Alternatively, the proposed road could cross Stem-lane to Marley-avenue.

'TRICKLE' CONNECTIONS

A connection was required between Ringwood-road and Hinton Wood-avenue to encourage local cross-traffic with using A35 or A337. "Trickle" connections were needed between Hinton Wood-avenue and Chewton Common-road to give access to the new car park on the by-pass.

A one-way traffic system through Highcliffe would use Stuart-road, Wortley-road, and a new road across the recreation ground. This might have been admissible had they been able to acquire an extension to the recreation ground, but the new by-pass should provide a better answer.

Traffic could be directed by notices and difficulties of access rather than by fully-developed one-way schemes which would be difficult to apply locally.

SHORT-TERM PLAN

As a short-term proposal, traffic between east and west, especially commuter traffic, should be encouraged to use the A35 rather than go through Highcliffe.

Traffic going to the cliff car park should be routed through Ringwood-road or Field-place via Stuart-road or Sea Corner to Waterford-road.

Traffic leaving the cliff should use Wharncliffe-road, Castle-avenue and Hinton Wood-avenue. Traffic going towards Lymington could use Wharncliffe-road and the by-pass.

As an experiment, Waterford-road and Wharncliffe-road could be made one-way at peak periods.

Part of Hinton Wood-avenue between Castle-avenue and Lymington-road should be made one-way from the north.

A number of junctions would need improvement, and roundabouts should be erected at Milestone and Mill-lane.

COMPENSATION

The report believed that no building should be approved unless adequate parking space were provided. When private streets were used as main thoroughfares frontages should have some compensation.

Certain roads and pavements should be widened.

A service road should be made immediately from Stanley-road west-wards behind some of the shops on the north side of Lymington-road, coming out at Bucehayes-close. The space was there.

Service roads should be considered from the Wortley-road car park in either direction to serve the Lymington-road shops.

Parked delivery lorries caused more congestion in Highcliffe than any other form of traffic and should be restricted to off-peak periods.

Commenting on the report, Col. Tarnow told the Citizens: "It means demolition, and frankly I hate that part of it. Costs will be tremendous, and frightening.

"We realise the scheme, such as it is, will hurt some people and benefit others."