

Report to	Norwich highways agency committee 27 September 2012	Item
Report of	Head of city development services	9
Subject	Provision of bus layover facilities and coach / Demand Response Transport pick-up and drop-off points in Norwich.	

Purpose

To seek approval to advertise the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders to enable provision of better facilities for bus, coaches and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) vehicles in Norwich City Centre.

Recommendation

To ask the head of city development services to carry out the necessary statutory procedures associated with securing the traffic regulation orders relating to:-

1. proposed bus layovers as detailed below
 - Lower Clarence Road – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-3
 - Rouen Road – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-2
 - Surrey Street - Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-8
 - Wherry Road – Plan No. Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-1
2. proposed alteration of the existing short term coach parking facilities in Norwich City Centre, to change the spaces into coach parking for a maximum stay of 10 minutes, operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and to allow use by vehicles with Section 19 permits:-
 - All Saints Green, 2 spaces – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-11
 - Ber Street, 2 Spaces – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-11
 - Castle Meadow, 2 spaces – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-15
 - Palace Street, 2 spaces – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-16
 - Surrey Street, 1 space – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-8
 - Theatre Street, 3 spaces – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-14
3. Proposed DRT parking place on Castle Meadow as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-15

4. Proposed changes to disabled parking, bus stop, car club, loading, pay and display, and hackney carriage stand restrictions as detailed below

- Bank Plain - Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-12
- Surrey Street - Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-8
- Tombland - Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-13

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority to make Norwich a prosperous city and the service plan priority of delivering the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy Implementation Plan.

Financial implications

£45,000 is allocated in the Better Bus Area budget to cover these works

Ward/s: Mancroft and Thorpe Hamlet

Cabinet member: Councillor Bremner – Environment and development

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. One of the main elements of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) is to encourage modal shift to sustainable transport.
2. Public transport within the city centre is at capacity with a lack of space for expansion of bus movements and bus stops. However, improvement to the bus network and the service delivered to the public is needed to encourage use of public transport and accommodate planned city growth.
3. In July 2012 NHAC members received a report detailing the Better Bus Area Bid funding that the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded Norfolk County Council. One of the projects included in the bid was the delivery of improved facilities for layover for buses in the centre of Norwich and the provision of improved drop-off and pick-up areas for both coaches and demand responsive transport (DRT).
4. Whilst considering the availability of on street kerb space in the city centre for these proposals it was found necessary to consider all forms of restrictions including Pay and Display, loading, disabled parking, taxi ranks and double yellow lines.

Proposals

Bus layover

5. For the efficient use of bus resources and to help consolidate and improve the reliability of bus services, consultation with bus companies that service Norwich has identified that 10 bus layover spaces are required. These are to be used by bus drivers when they have statutory rest periods of between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The spaces are required to be within a seven minute driving distance from the bus station and close to welfare facilities.
6. Currently, due to the limited layover provision, bus drivers are known to use the coach parking areas in the city centre that are designed for coach drop-off and pick-up, park in bus stops or park in residential streets. This causes problems for visiting coaches, bus operations and residents. The coach drop-off and pick-up facility is reviewed later in this report.
7. The following sites have been considered and are acceptable for the above criteria, accessible to buses and will not cause traffic management problems. All details can be seen on the relevant plans listed below and attached as appendices.

Site	No. of spaces	Appendix No.
Lower Clarence Road – west end	2	1
Rouen Road – outside car park near Thorn Lane	2	2
Surrey Street – opposite Nos.63-77	2	3

Wherry Road – opposite swimming pool	4	4
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8. Proposed bus layovers on Lower Clarence Road, Rouen Road and Wherry Road will operate 24 hours, 7 days a week. Proposed bus layovers on Surrey Street will operate Monday to Saturday 8am till 6:30pm, with no restriction at any other time to allow nearby residents on street parking as is available at present.
9. The proposed two spaces on Lower Clarence Road would replace existing single yellow line (no waiting 8am till 6.30pm Monday to Saturday). To facilitate room for two layover spaces it is necessary to reduce the existing limited waiting area by one car length and change some existing single yellow line to double yellow line to ensure free flow of traffic.
10. Consideration was given to installing 7 spaces on Rouen Road. However, Rouen Road is part of the south city centre project which aims to improve the area and encourage development and investment. This is a long term project but may have some shorter term proposals that would not be compatible with numerous bus layovers. The provision of two bus layover spaces on Rouen Road outside the off street car park near Thorn Lane is less likely to impact upon potential short to medium term proposals.
11. The proposal on Surrey Street is to replace the existing pay and display (P&D) parking opposite numbers 63 to 77, with two bus layover spaces. Recently a proposal to install a car club space in this area was advertised and it will be necessary to relocate this proposed car club space to the south, adjacent to the permit parking area. Also, to help mitigate the loss of P&D in Surrey Street it is proposed to increase the existing P&D parking outside Norfolk Towers by two spaces.
12. The four proposed spaces on Wherry Road replacing existing double yellow lines and loading restrictions would be beneficial, but could not be used during football home games. In the past, Norfolk Constabulary has highlighted concerns over parked vehicles on this road due to the large number of people who use this route to the football ground. It is proposed when these bus layover spaces are not in operation, the parking restrictions will revert to no waiting or loading at any time. The coach drop- off point on the opposite side of Wherry Road, outside the swimming pool will remain as maximum stay of 10 minutes operational at any time.
13. The proposed layover bays on Rouen Road and Surrey Street will replace existing P&D short term stay parking. However there are sufficient alternative places for motorists to park if they need to bring their cars to the city centre. The proposals would, nonetheless, reduce the revenue from on street parking in the city. For this reason, the bus companies consulted as part of these proposals have agreed to a form of payment scheme to pay for bus layover parking. This could involve permits, probably priced the same as a CPZ business permit and the issuing of permits will help with enforcement. Further details on how this will operate will be resolved at a later date.
14. The existing coach parking on King Street, south of the junction with Rouen Road is used as a bus layover. There is space here for two vehicles. It is proposed to keep this facility of 7.30 – 6.30pm everyday, maximum stay 60 minutes. This will allow enforceable short stay parking for bus or coach drivers from outside the city.

Coach drop-off and pick-up

15. In the city centre there are 9 existing coach drop off and pick-up points, providing space for 14 coaches. However, feedback from coach and tour operators indicates that there is a need for additional sites to encourage more coach trips to Norwich.
16. Coach drop-off and pick-up points need to be near the heart of the city, easily accessible from major pedestrian routes into the city and easy to locate for tourists and coach drivers.
17. Once the proposed bus layovers are in operation, the existing coach drop-off and pick-up points will be free for visiting coaches. It is felt that if these pick-up points are properly enforced and used effectively, there are sufficient for all coaches visiting Norwich.
18. Some concerns have been expressed about the difficulty to coaches accessing Theatre Street coach parking at the moment. This would be resolved with the proposed Chapelfield North scheme, which is subject to a separate report on this agenda.
19. During consultation with Visit Norwich and Tourist Information, it was claimed there is a problem for coaches visiting Norwich in terms of a lack of long term parking. At the moment coach drivers are advised to use Harford Park and Ride or the car park on Lower Clarence Road. However, this is not felt sufficient as Harford no longer has a parking attendant permanently on site, so spaces cannot be booked, there is often not enough space and the location of the park and ride means the drivers need to travel into Norwich for toilet or café facilities. Lower Clarence Road is difficult to locate and on football home days, becomes full of supporter coaches. The issue of providing better long stay parking for visiting coaches is being considered by county council officers.
20. To ensure a consistent approach to coach drop-off and pick-up points it is necessary to have uniform restrictions. It is proposed to change the existing restriction at each site in the heart of the city centre to maximum stay of 10 minutes, operational for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and for the driver of the vehicle to be actively dropping off or picking up passengers. This will allow for easier enforcement and clearer signage for all road users.
21. The proposal details can be found on the plans listed below:-

Location	Plan No.	Appendix
All Saints Green	PL/TR/3356/127-11	5
Bank Plain	PL/TR/3356/127-12	6
Ber Street	PL/TR/3356/127-11	5
Castle Meadow	PL/TR/3356/127-15	7
Palace Street	PL/TR/3356/127-16	8
Surrey Street	PL/TR/3356/127- 8	3
Theatre Street	PL/TR/3356/127-14	9

22. All Saints Green, Ber Street, Castle Meadow, Palace Street, Surrey Street and Theatre Street are all straight forward changes of the existing restrictions to a maximum stay of 10 minutes, at any time. As the existing 2 bay coach parking on Bank Plain is not used often at the moment and the double length bus stop on the eastern side is little used it is felt the area needs a complete review to make best use of available space. Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-12, attached as appendix 6 gives the proposed details. In combination with these proposals, there are some changes also proposed at Tombland, these will be addressed later in this report.
23. The coach parking spaces on Christchurch Road and Ipswich Road which have a maximum stay of 30 minutes and operate 8am – 6.30pm Monday to Saturday are proposed to remain. These coach parking facilities are mainly used by Norwich High School for Girls and Norwich City College respectively and are fit for purpose.

Demand Responsive Transport

24. Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is a growing service to communities not serviced by regular public transport. One of the main DRT that that come into the centre is Norwich Door to Door, this service is often used by disabled people who need closer access to prime areas in Norwich.
25. Door to Door provided a list of the areas their customers requested to be taken to. Two of the main places were Castle Meadow, just outside the Castle Mall entrance and St Stephens Street.
26. It is proposed to provide a DRT space directly opposite the entrance to Castle Mall on Castle Meadow, replacing a single hackney carriage stand that is rarely used. Details can be seen on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-15 attached as appendix 7.
27. The proposed removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street, which is subject to a separate report on this agenda, aims to remove private cars from St Stephens. It is intended to remove the existing disabled parking outside 18 St Stephens Street and replace it with a DRT stop. This will be taken forward as part of the St Stephens Street scheme.
28. DRT drop off and pick up point needs are similar to coach drop off and pick up needs. Therefore it is proposed DRT have the ability to use the coach 10 minute drop off and pick up points in the city centre. The TRO for these parking places can be amended to allow use by vehicles with Section 19 permits. The number of DRT vehicles in use would not cause a problem for availability of these spaces for coaches, but would give the DRT service a larger number of locations to use in the city centre without disruption to other traffic.

Hackney Carriage Taxi Ranks

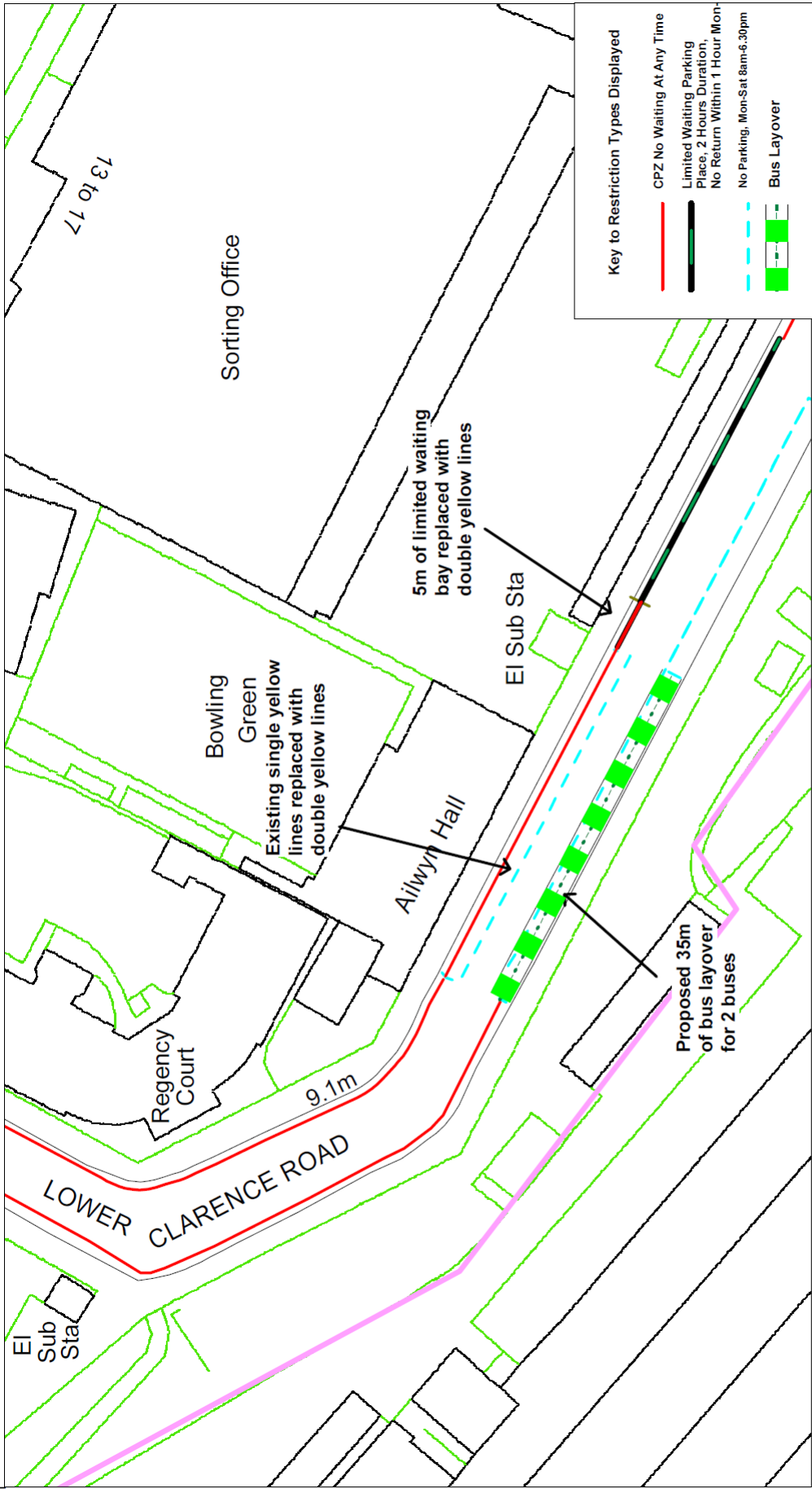
29. A review of the existing hackney carriage stands in Norwich showed that there are some isolated small ranks that are often left empty. The main city rank on Guildhall Hill works well for the taxi drivers and the public because customers know where to find them and there are usually many hackney carriages waiting.
30. As the above proposals will take away some hackney carriage facilities, one rank in Castle Meadow and an area of night time hackney carriage rank in Bank Plain, it is proposed to mitigate the loss of Hackney Carriage ranks by installing a full time taxi rank on Tombland in the area where there are existing day time P&D spaces.


Hackney Carriage drivers have for many years campaigned for a full time rank in this area.

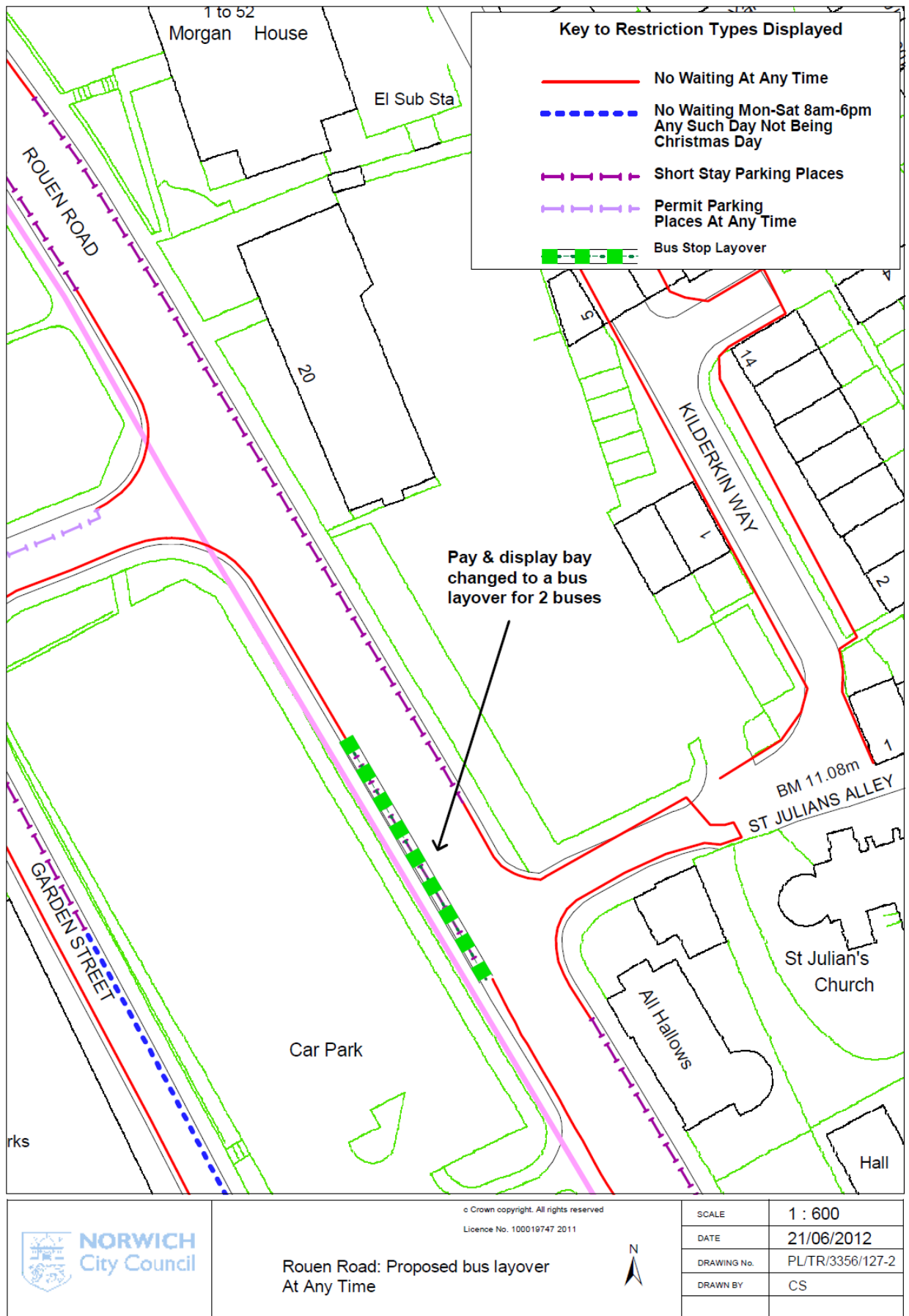
31. The loss of P&D parking in Tombland is compensated by the new area of full time P&D on Bank Plain. The changes to Tombland are shown on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-13 attached as appendix 10. Changes to Bank Plain are shown on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-12 attached as appendix 6.

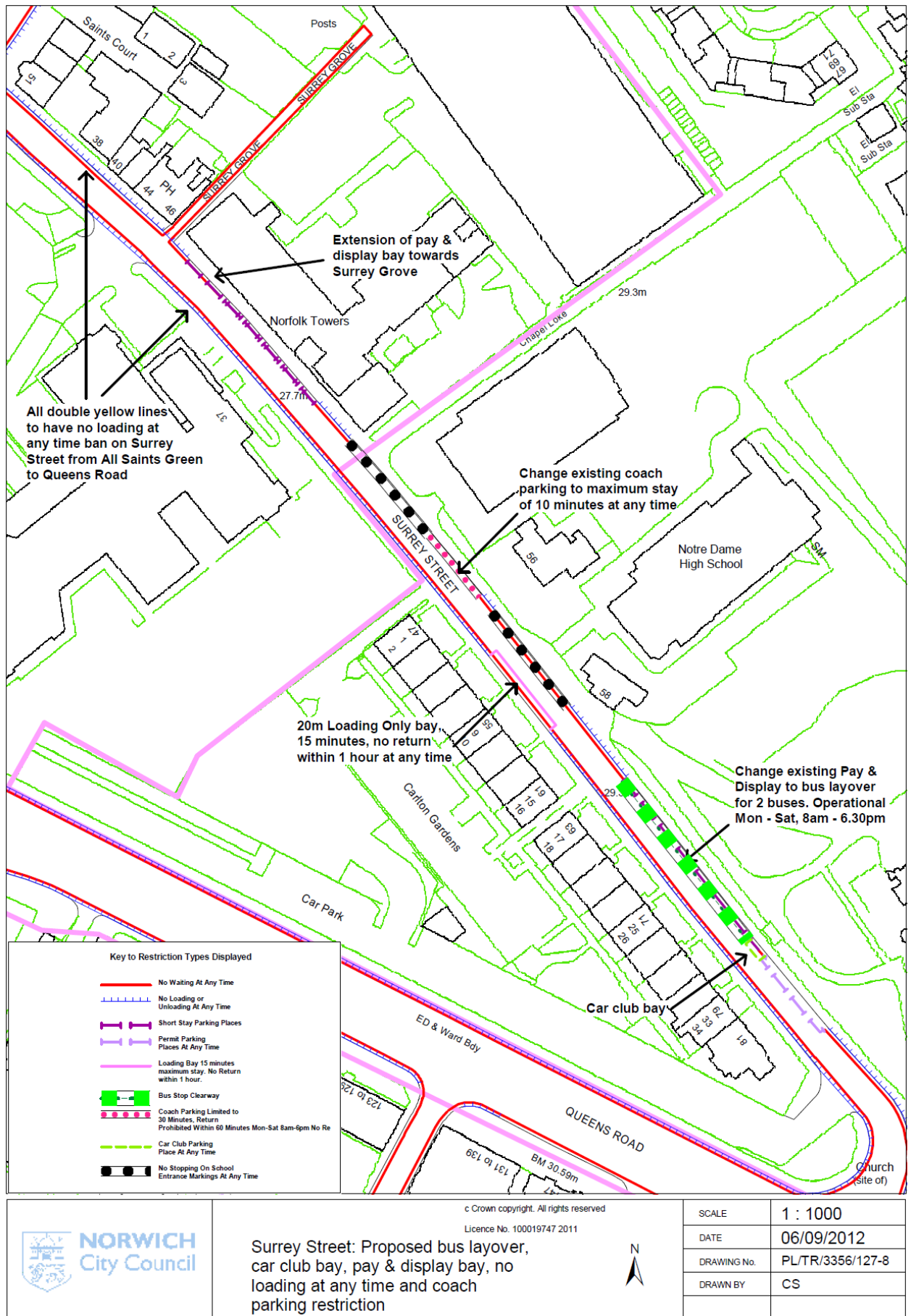
Other considerations

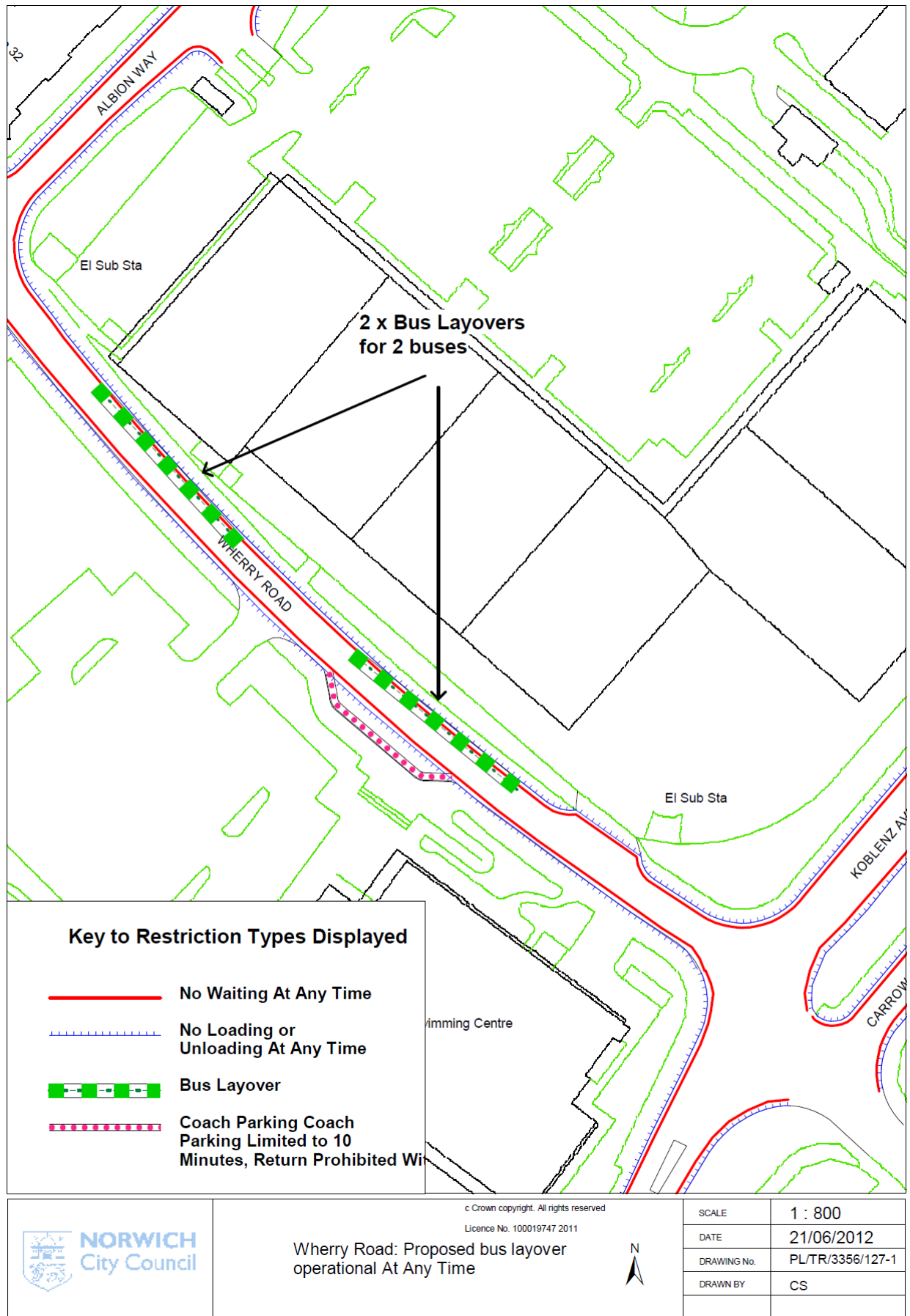
32. Presently the double yellow lines on the southern half of Surrey Street have no loading restriction. The practice of disabled and delivery drivers parking on these yellow lines can obstruction to large vehicles and consequent delays to buses. As one entrance to the bus station is from Surrey Street, it is important to keep this road free from obstructions where possible. Therefore it is proposed to install loading restrictions in the southern section of Surrey Street as indicated on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-8 attached as appendix 3.
33. The northern section of Surrey Street, between St Stephens Street and All Saints Green, will be considered along with the proposals for the St Stephens Street scheme.
34. It is proposed for all bus layovers, coach parking, DRT and hackney carriage ranks in Norwich to require engines be turned off when stationary.

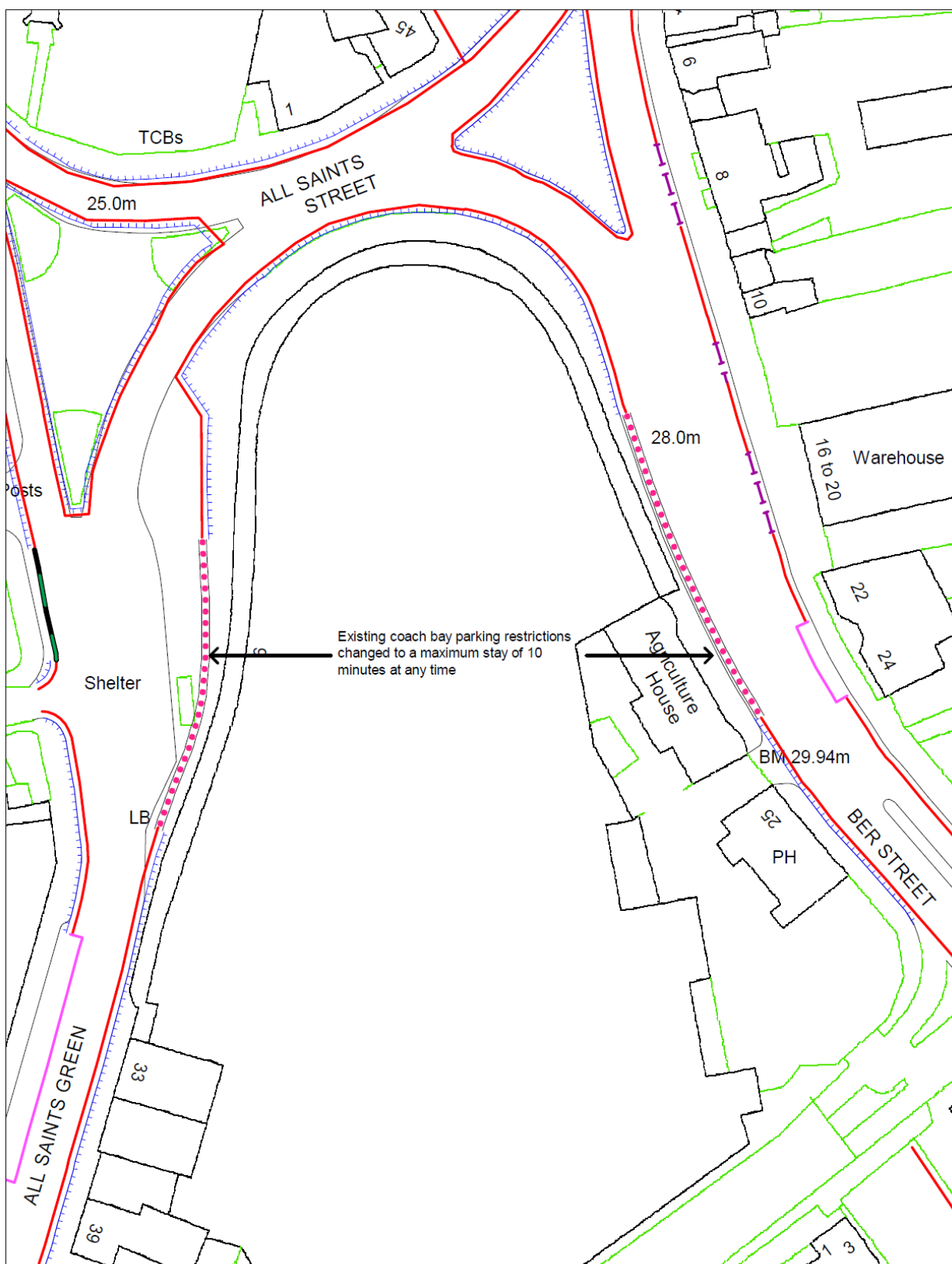


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Lower Clarence Road: Proposed bus layover operational At Any Time		DRAWING No.	PL/TR/3356/127-3
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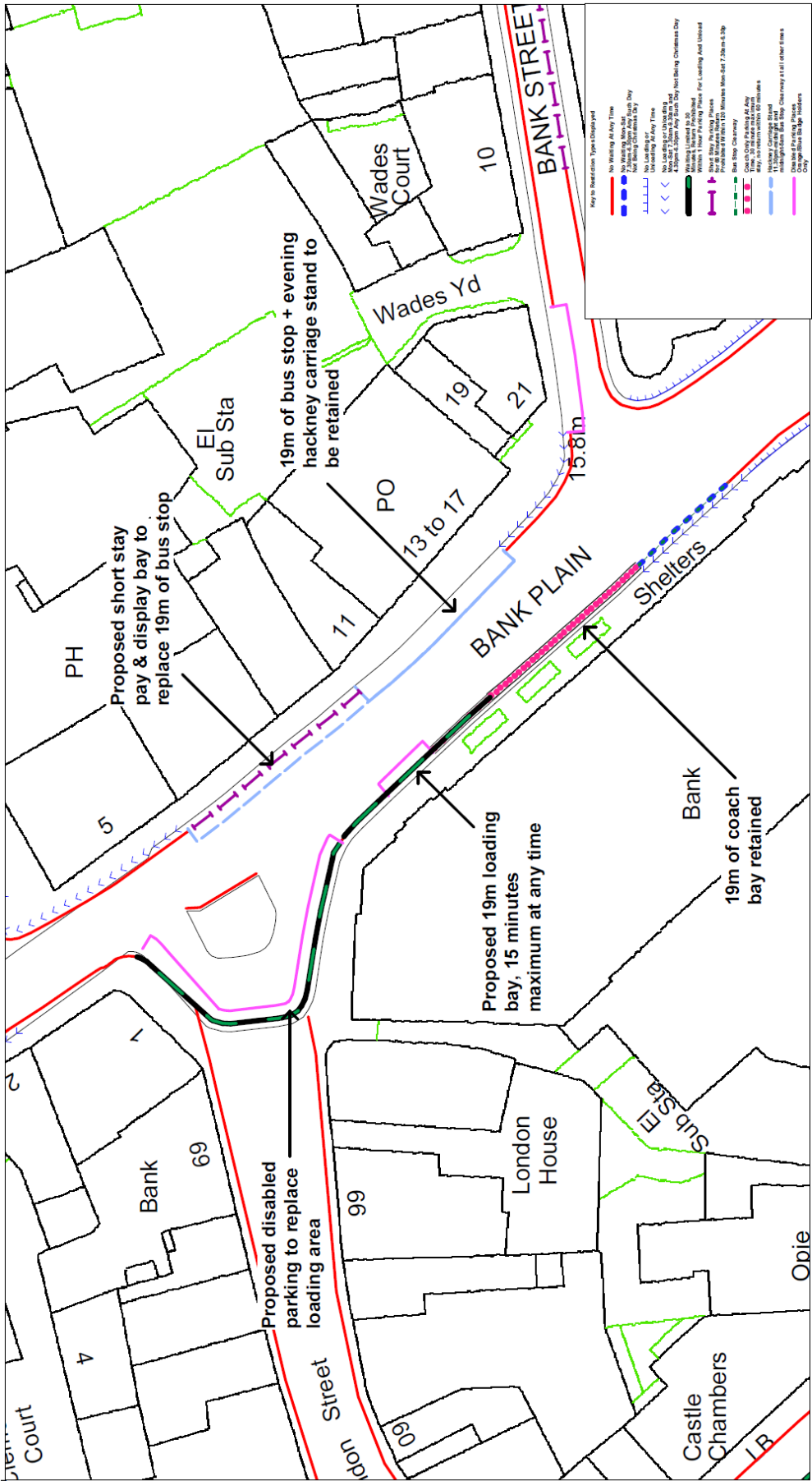
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All Saints Green & Ber Street: Proposed
coach bay time change

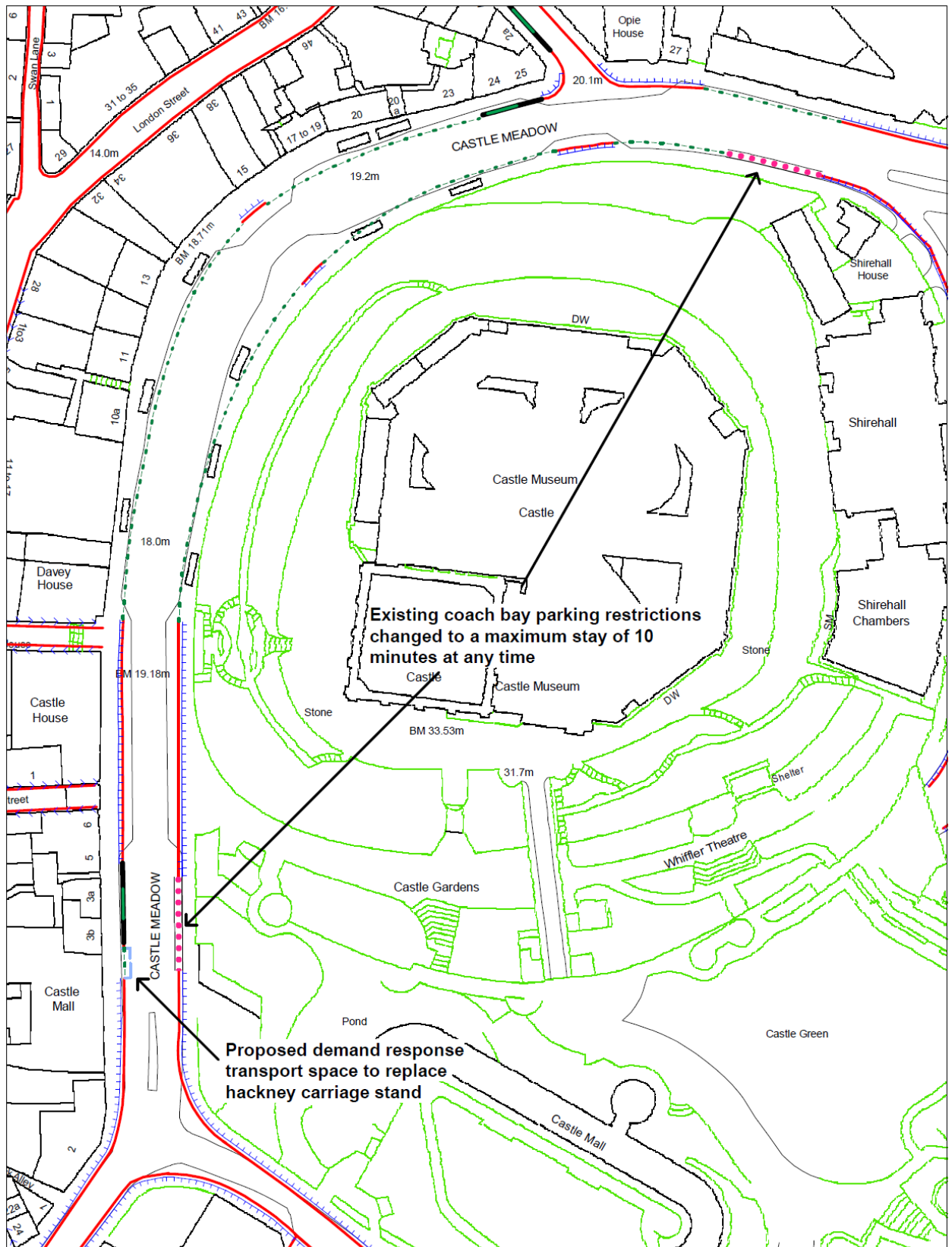
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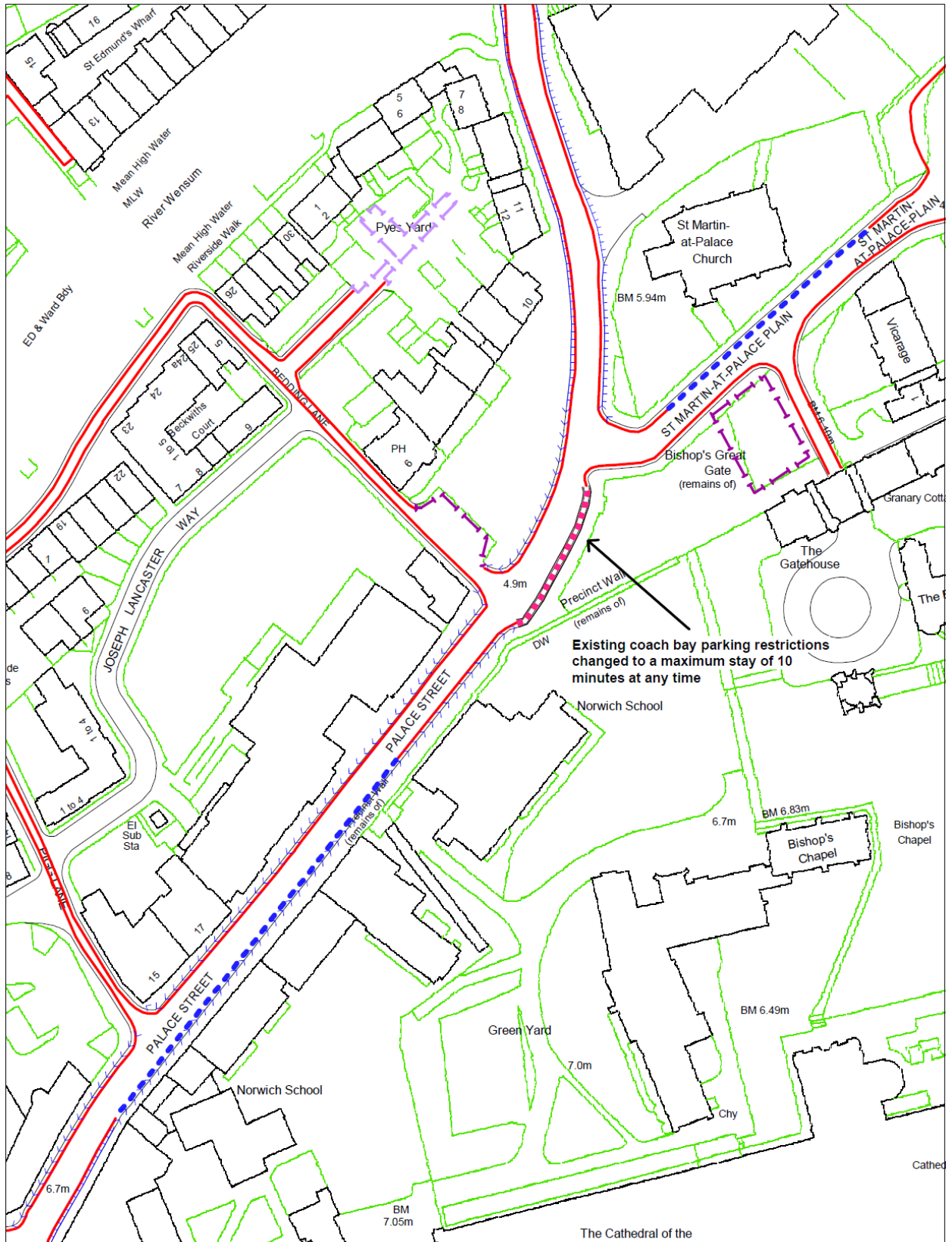
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Castle Meadow: Proposed demand response
transport space (DRT) & changes to coach
bay operating times



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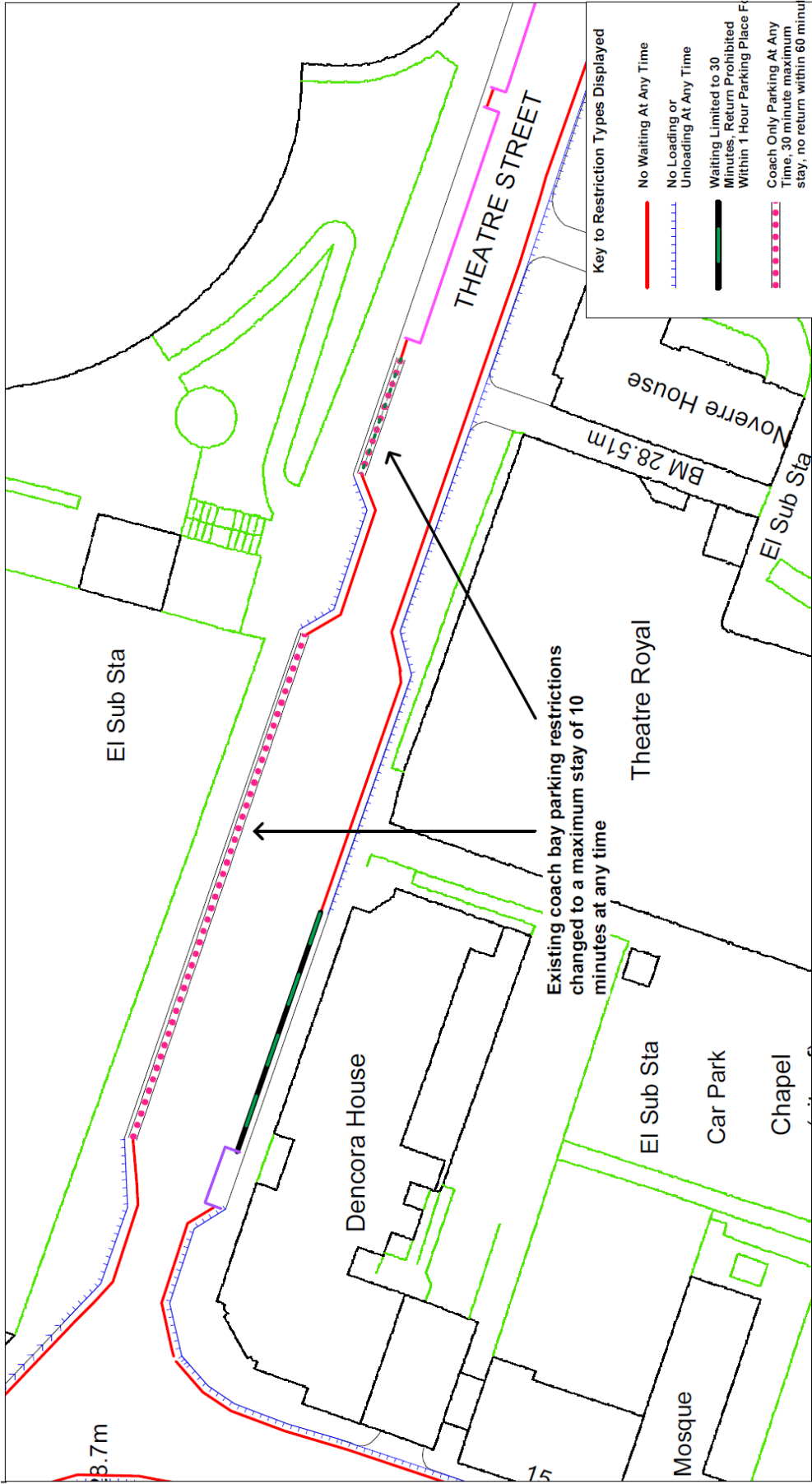
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Palace Street: Proposed coach bay changes

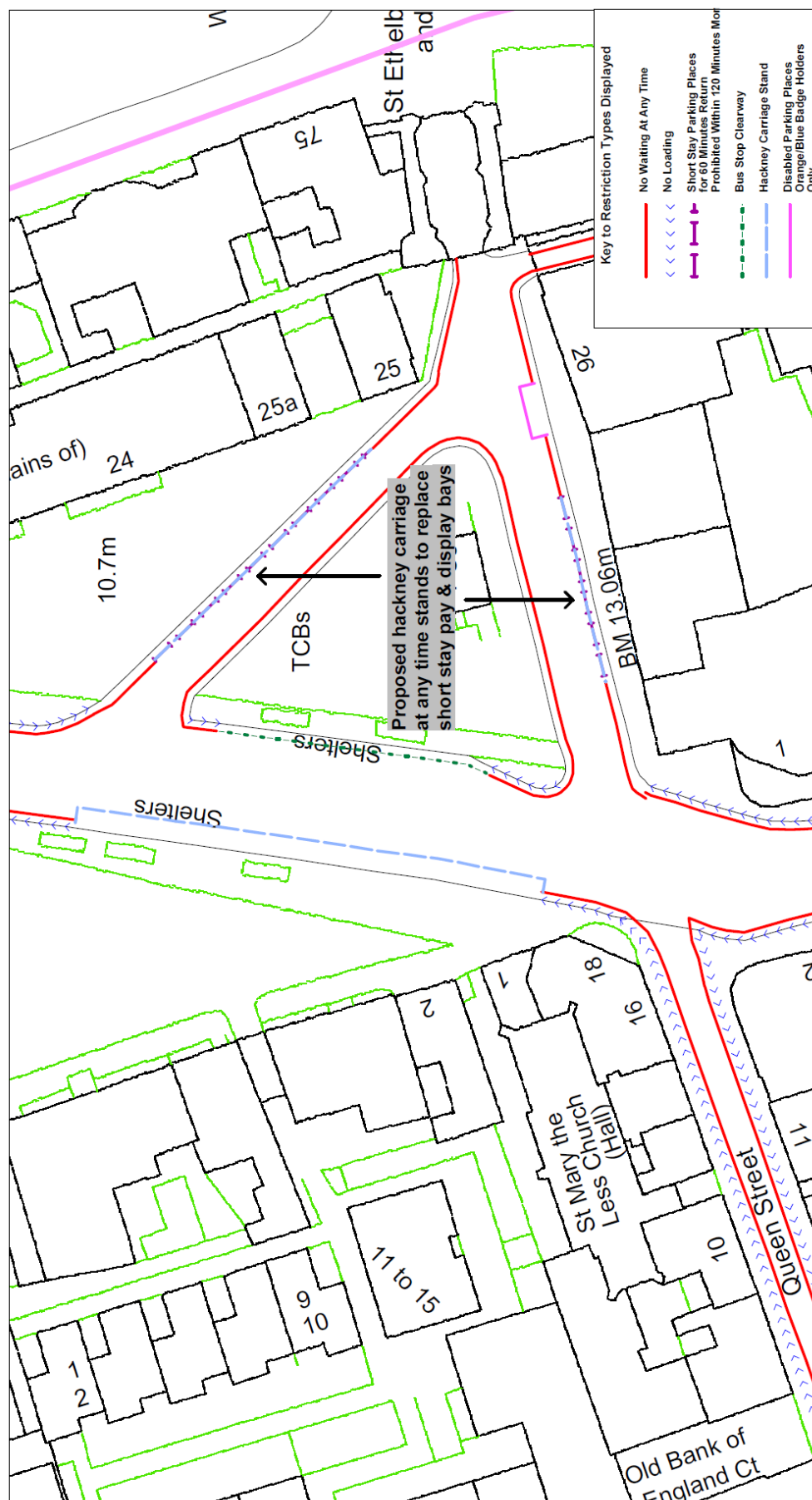
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Theatre Street: Proposed coach bay changes		DATE	06/09/2012
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