

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Greg Chance Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development & Transport/Cllr Debbie Taylor, Housing, Local Environment & Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford Head of Planning & Regeneration/Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services
Ward(s) Affected	Abbey
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides information for members on potential landscape improvements that could be undertaken within the Town Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to RESOLVE that,

having reviewed the information contained within the report and appendix, the proposed spend of a proportion of the agreed budget and the intended timescales for the phasing of the project be endorsed.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 The cost of implementing the recommendations will need to be quantified and appropriate funding allocated.

Legal Implications

3.2 The potential improvements will support the Councils Corporate Priority of "Community Safety" and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

3.3 There are potential implications regarding improvements to assets not within Redditch Borough Council ownership and any such improvements would require the approval and authorisation of the respective owner which in regard to the train station has now been granted

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 The landscape improvements link with all three council priorities of Clean and Green, Safe and Enterprising Community. These improvements will provide a clean, attractive and safe place for residents of the Borough and visitors alike with improved lighting. By ensuring that the Town Centre is a vibrant place to live and work it will also help to attract inward investment and new businesses.
- 3.5 In order to secure the future of Redditch Town Centre, Redditch Borough Council oversaw the production of the Redditch Town Centre Strategy approved by Members in 2009. This document outlines the vision for the future of the Town Centre and the means of delivering this vision.
- 3.6 Successful town centres have at their heart an area of civic space, where shoppers, workers and residents alike can meet and feel safe in a pleasant environment. This space serves not only as a focal point for community activities and events but also defines and identifies the centre itself. Recent improvements have taken place to the public realm around Church Green. However, it is believed more can be done to develop the area as a focal point for the town with improved activities.
- 3.7 One of the recommendations in the Town Centre Strategy is to improve public realm in the Town Centre particularly around the Church Green area. The document also makes reference to the regeneration of St Stephens Church. Working in partnership with St Stephens Church the Town Centre Landscape Proposals would complement regeneration of St Stephen's Church to allow it to act both as a Church and as a focal point for the community, reinforcing the 'sense of place' and image of Redditch, complementing the Kingfisher centre and acting as a 'draw' between the Kingfisher Centre and the rest of the town centre.
- 3.8 The landscape proposals cover a wide section of the town centre including Walter Stranz Square, Alcester Street, Church Green, Unicorn Hill and land at Redditch Train Station although re landscaping at Redditch Train Station has already been completed utilising existing funding.

It is proposed to split the landscape proposals into 5 phases in project order as follows;

- 1) Church Green (North of St Stephens Church)
- 2) Unicorn Hill

- 3) Church Green (South of St Stephens Church)
- 4) Alcester Street
- 5) Walter Stranz Square

3.9 Beginning with Church Green north, this area of land lies to the north of St Stephens Church focused around the bandstand and water fountain. In recent months the decision was taken for the bandstand to remain in its current locations despite the suggestion by the landscape architect to move it in the original proposals. Since then both the community and RBC have worked hard to bring this area back into use with events such as the Bandstand Festival which has lit up the community spirit and sense of ownership.

3.10 In preparation for The Bandstand Festival on 22nd September 2012 Redditch Community Forum researched how this area had been used in the past. Local Redditch historian, Alan Foxall put together a series of pictures which was well received on that sunny Saturday afternoon. Keeping in mind how the people of Redditch used the Bandstand in the past and also how our communities could use this area in the future the following suggestions are put to members to improve the vitality and viability of the area;

- a) New Signage
- b) Remove bedding areas and new landscaping scheme
- c) New benches and bins consistent with those used at the gateways site at Redditch Train Station
- d) Introduction of Cycle racks
- e) Cleaning and repainting of the pole planters and street lights
- f) Introduction of bollards for vehicle prevention

These changes are shown in more detail in appendix 3 – proposed Church Green landscape scheme

In addition to this The Choose How You Move project will be funding the bike racks, improved signage and information kiosk within the town centre.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.11 These proposals will impact on all residents of the Borough and visitors using the Town Centre. The proposals have been advertised in the press and extensive public consultation has taken place where Officers have been available at drop in sessions to answer questions and brief the public on the plans. The public were informed that their details would be included on a database if representations were made to keep them fully up to date of progress on the project. Key issues arising from these consultations have been detailed previously in the report.

3.12 There are equalities and diversity implications

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Proposed landscape scheme

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None listed.

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