

Public Realm Scheme

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 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 | Central |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | Yes |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | Key Decision |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides information for members on a proposed public realm improvement scheme for the Town Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE

- 1. That the plan as set out in Appendix 1 and timescales for the enhancement of Alcester Street and Market place, be approved;**
- 2. That Capital expenditure of £250k towards the estimated total cost for this phase of the public realm scheme be approved.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1** The cost of the Alcester Street scheme is being funded by Worcestershire County Council and Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.2** It is estimated that the total costs for the schemes are:
First Phase: Alcester Street & Market Place £850k
- 3.3** There are a number of funding elements that will pay for the scheme. The current fund of £850K is made up as follows:

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|--------------------|-------|
| WCC Highway funds | £500k |
| RBC Capital Budget | £275k |
| Section 106 monies | £75k |

The RBC Capital money detailed above has been allocated for some time and will not have an impact on current budgets.

Legal Implications

- 3.4 The town centre enhancement scheme is collaboration between the Council and Worcestershire County Council. The works to be carried out by the County Council and / or its contractor/s will be procured by the County Council. The scheme details are set out in **Appendix 1**
- 3.5 In November 2015, the County Council agreed to allocate £500K to the scheme. The Borough Council will contribute to the cost of the scheme up to the sum of £275K, for which expenditure members' approval is sought.
- 3.6 Agreements will be required between the Council and the County Council for the delivery of the scheme by the County Council, the works to be undertaken and the financial contributions to pay for them. These are currently under discussion.
- 3.7 The potential improvements will support the Councils Corporate Priority of "Community Safety" and to discharge the Council's statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1988, - the duty on the authority to exercise functions with due regard to the likely effect on and the need to, prevent crime and disorder in its area.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 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 Strategy outlines the vision for the future of the Town Centre and the means of delivering this vision. The strategy was re assessed approximately one year ago with colleagues from North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration to ensure contents and priority projects are still valid with up to date costings.
- 3.9 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. Improvements have already taken place to the public realm at Redditch Train Station and the north of St Stephens Church around the bandstand area. However' it is believed more can be done to develop the infrastructure of the Town Centre as a whole. This aligns with recommendations in the Redditch Town Centre Strategy to

improve public realm in the town centre reinforcing the sense of place and image of Redditch. These improvements will complement the extensive refurbishment work already carried out inside the Kingfisher Centre and act as a 'draw' between the Kingfisher and the rest of the Town Centre and also as a draw between the town centre and the surrounding areas and districts.

- 3.10 The public realm improvements work across services meeting the following Council strategic purposes;
- Keep my place safe & looking good
 - Help me run a successful business
 - Provide good things for me to see, do & visit
- 3.11 The enhancements will provide a clean, attractive and safe place for residents of the Borough and visitors alike. Alterations to the area will include resurfacing, new street furniture and signage and cleaning and repainting of the pole planters and street lights. By ensuring that the Town Centre is a vibrant place to live and work it will help to attract inward investment and new businesses.
- 3.12 The proposed enhancements cover a wide section of the town centre including Alcester Street, Market Place, South of St Stephens Church, Church Green East & West, Unicorn Hill, Bates Hill & a section of Prospect Hill.
- 3.13 The project will be split into various phases with each phase being presented to committee in due course to show the proposed changes. It is intended to start with Alcester Street and a section of Market Place as phase one. Improvements here will enhance both the day and night time economy and compliment the residential development being implemented at Threadneedle House by providing a clean and pleasant place for residents to live. Increased footfall in the area will result in increased natural surveillance helping to reduce issues of crime and anti-social behaviour. Materials to be used for resurfacing would be similar in nature to those used within Worcester City Centre which provides the following benefits;
- Easy to source
 - Economies of scale
 - Agreement with WCC for like for like repair works
 - Extra stores of materials will be stocked at the Lydiate Ash depot.
 - Ease of maintenance

- 3.14 Implementation works for this first phase are proposed for January 2017. These changes are shown in more detail in appendix 1– Proposed public realm scheme Phase 1.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.15 The upgraded Public Realm uses distinct linear zones which are different in a tactile sense and also visually. This helps the navigation of the Alcester Street/Market Place for those with some visual impairment. Clear lines of sight and unfettered movement along the Alcester Street/Market Place will also be possible on Market Days. A full Impact Assessment Record has been prepared. It should be noted that currently the surface at Alcester Street is very uneven with dips and tree root problems particularly outside Weatherspoon's and The Abbey Pub.

- 3.16 Consultation has begun with relevant public sector stakeholders and internally to ensure the scheme works well across services both from an aesthetic and operational perspective, these departments include;

- WCC Lighting
- WCC Highways
- Redditch Town Centre Partnership
- RBC Landscape
- RBC Asset Maintenance team
- RBC CCTV

- 3.17 Previous consultation has been carried out with the public when the overall vision for the Town Centre was detailed through Askew Nelson Architects in conjunction with St Stephens Church. As the proposals are now in final detail and will impact on all residents of the Borough and visitors using the Town Centre, it is proposed to hold a 4 week information period in mid-May organised by both RBC and WCC. This will include the following means of consultations;

- Local Press
- Social Media
- Information drop in events
- Exhibitions

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Public Realm budget will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis against the agreed costs of the scheme, completed elements, contingency elements and the availability of additional third party and 106 funding. Further reports will be brought to the Executive Committee accordingly.

- 4.2 The project plan aims to cause minimal disruption and loss of trade for Redditch Market and impact to local businesses. This will be achieved by offering alternative locations for traders when works will affect the market area and appropriate screening treatment for businesses to ensure customers are aware they are open.
- 4.3 The Town Centre Coordinator and RBC Engineer will continuously monitor works planning, stakeholder consultation, construction progress and completion certification in order to constantly review and agree the ongoing programme to ensure the works programme is expedited efficiently with no un-necessary delays.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Proposed public realm scheme phase 1

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7. KEY

WCC – Worcestershire County Council
RBC – Redditch Borough Council

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