

Portfolio Holder Decision

Report Title: Macclesfield Town Centre Regeneration - Castle St. Public Realm Enhancement Scheme - Final Design

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Ainsley Arnold - Housing, Planning and Regeneration

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan - Executive Director (Place) and Acting Deputy Chief Executive

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on a planned public realm enhancement scheme in Macclesfield town centre and seeks approval for the final package of works.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Regeneration is recommended to:
- i. Note the reasoning for the final package of works put forward for approval including the stakeholder consultation undertaken to inform the package of works and the responses to that consultation.
 - ii. Approve the package of public realm enhancements for Castle Street.
 - iii. Delegate authority to the Strategic Regeneration Manager (North) to approve non-material amendments to the approved package of works.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. Cabinet has previously agreed to the funding of transformational public realm enhancements in the core of Macclesfield Town Centre.
- 3.2. Following the development of concept designs, which identified Castle Street as a priority area for improvement, detailed designs have now been developed to transform this area.

- 3.3. The recommended design will significantly uplift the appearance of the area, enhance pedestrian priority, and facilitate alfresco activity to encourage both increased dwell time and inward private sector investment on adjacent sites.
- 3.4. The package of works put forward is the result of careful consideration of many factors taking into account the output of concept design work, views expressed by local stakeholders, input from the Local Highway Authority, an Equality Impact Assessment, estimated costs and available budget, alongside various policy, strategy and design documents.
- 3.5. Targeted stakeholder consultation has informed the package of works put forward for approval alongside the advice of expert consultees and advisors.
- 3.6. Delegation to the Strategic Regeneration Manager (North) for approval of minor changes to the final design is sought in order to ensure agility in responding to any unforeseen changes in circumstances through the construction delivery stages.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 A wide variety of optional finishes, landscaping, street furniture, lighting and creative elements have been considered. Having regard to all necessary requirements, available budget, relevant input from stakeholders and the objectives of the brief, the final scheme is considered to represent the best possible option.

5. Background

- 5.1. The regeneration of Macclesfield town centre is a corporate objective set out in many strategy documents.
- 5.2. It is now well recognised that high quality public realm, particularly in urban centres, can both help to increase town centre footfall and can help to sway decisions on business locations and investment. This is reflected in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy which states that the council will look to maximise opportunities for improvement and regeneration in central Macclesfield including through improvements to the public realm.
- 5.3. In 2007 a Public Realm Strategy, commissioned by the former Macclesfield Borough Council, identified a number of aesthetic and practical weaknesses across multiple areas of the public realm in Macclesfield town centre.

- 5.4. On 3 May 2016 Cabinet approved the utilisation of £1M of capital to fund transformational public realm enhancements in the centre, focused on the area around Castle St, Upper Mill Street and Exchange Street. That budget was subsequently increased to £1.4M by Cabinet on 12 September 2017.
- 5.5. Initial work focused on the development of concept designs for the target area. This work identified that given the condition of the existing public realm and the size of the budget, it was preferable to focus on only one of the three streets initially identified.
- 5.6. On 12 October 2017, the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, having regard to the concept design work, determined that detailed designs should be developed for Castle St as the primary area of focus. One of the reasons Castle Street was selected as the focus for this investment related to the desire to provide strong pedestrian link between the cinema previously planned for Churchill Way and the Primary Shopping Area. Whilst the cinema development is no longer proposed there were several other reasons, which mean that Castle Street is still the preferred location for this investment:
- The pedestrian/visitor experience on Castle Street poor particularly in comparison with Mill Street.
 - The width of the adopted highway in this locality offers significant scope to enhance the existing pedestrian/visitor experience.
 - Recent significant investment in the Grosvenor Centre means there is scope to create a step change in perceptions in this area with synergy between the two projects.
 - There is a substantial long term vacancy on Castle St (Craven House) which and Since the intention to invest in the public realm on Castle Street has been made public, proposals have come forward for the repurposing of a long term vacant building in this area (Craven House), indicating that focusing the investment here will bring substantial new regenerative private sector benefits.
- 5.7. Following the decision being taken to develop detailed designs for Castle Street, officers within Highways proceeded to support the Regeneration client team in commissioning the detailed design and preparation of tender documentation. Following approval of the scheme brief by both the Regeneration Service and the Highway team, Cheshire East Highways appointed a design team. That team completed the first draft of detailed designs in July 2018 and the detailed designs were used as the basis for a light touch CEC stakeholder consultation limited to occupiers of properties

on Castle Street, market traders currently trading from Castle Street, and local disability groups.

5.8. Key points raised in representations include:

- Clear support for the scheme in general from a number of parties
- Strong objections from some market traders operating within the carriageway on Castle Street given that one of the key features of the proposed scheme is the substantial reduction in carriageway width to increase the area available to pedestrians which necessitates the permanent relocation of traders to other locations such as Market Place. Related concerns from market traders in relation to loss of pitches adjacent to high footfall areas eg adjacent to the entrance to the Grosvenor Centre.
- Converse representations supporting the relocation of the market traders away from Castle Street, raising inter alia that the traders block views of shop frontages.
- Requests to reposition trees/benches to retain open views of shop frontages and allow clear spaces outside shop units
- Requests to extend the scope of the scheme in area and amending the TRO governing pedestrianisation
- Suggestions for further minor changes to details of the design such as tactile paving at dropped crossing
- Explicit support for amenity lighting
- Concerns regarding timing and level of engagement with market traders and points made regarding the value of street traders in adding vibrancy to the street scene
- Suggestions regarding management of any on street alfresco areas, signage etc.

5.9. The above summary is not comprehensive. A verbatim copy of written representations received in response to the stakeholder consultation is appended for full consideration together with a summary of responses and amendments made as a consequence.

- 5.10. Several suggested amendments have resulted in changes to the design. A key exception are requests relating to the continued accommodation of market traders. All traders will need to be relocated to Market Place during the construction phase and whilst there are limited areas on the widened pavement of sufficient width to potentially accommodate reintroduction of some market stalls this would realistically be limited to an area close to the junction with Mill Street. Thus, the proposed scheme will necessitate the permanent relocation of a number of market traders from Castle Street to an alternative location such as Market Place, where planning permission already exists for a market on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- 5.11. Any reintroduction of market traders would be at the discretion of the commissioning manager for markets and the Local Highway Authority. From a regeneration perspective, depending on the effective management of the market this could make a positive visual contribution and add to the vitality of the improved street scene but careful placement of stalls would be required to ensure the effect enhanced rather than detracted from the scheme to be delivered and was not to the detriment of other occupiers. The CEC commissioning manager for markets is aware of the scheme, the need to relocate all traders during the works, and the need to manage any reintroduction with the utmost care and is supportive of the proposal in the interests of town centre regeneration. Furthermore it has been confirmed that assuming management of the market is retained by CEC the Regeneration service would be consulted before any market traders are relocated in this area.
- 5.12. Cabinet delegated authority on 3 May 2016 to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Regeneration to approve the final package of works in consultation with the Executive Director (Place) and the Chief Operating Officer. Both these officers have authorised this report.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Any procurement of the construction works will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Ongoing legal support will be given to ensure the Council meets requirements in this regard.
- 6.1.2. Relevant consideration will have to be given for each transaction to the level of authority required under the Constitution and the Council's statutory powers to contract as and when decisions fall to be made

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. A budget of up to £1.4m has been approved for this scheme in the 2018/19 capital programme within the Regeneration and Development capital allocation under Economic Growth and Prosperity.
- 6.2.2. The design team has provided estimated costs for the proposed work package which total c.£1,265,380, including c.£210,853 for 'Risk'. These costs do not include for planters on the west end of Castle Street and a public art commission, which would be procured separately.
- 6.2.3. Allowing for additional as yet uncharged time and separately procured public art, planters and potential ancillary items, the estimated scheme costs, including the risk element, fall below the remaining budget for this scheme suggesting it is deliverable within the available funding. Construction projects of this type within an established and evolved town centre environment carry risk of additional costs from uncharted services etc. The construction estimate seeks to make reasonable allowance for these based on Cheshire East Highway experience of the potential issues that could be encountered. More certainty on the estimated construction cost will be achieved when tenders are sought and returned.
- 6.2.4. The detailed design has sought to consider the future maintainability and associated cost while delivering the requirements of the commission brief. The scheme brings many benefits to the town but will also have an impact on the cost of future maintenance. The use of quality materials enhances the public realm and will be durable but does increase the cost of maintenance in the future. This together with the additional amenity items to be incorporated into the public realm, such as lighting and seating, means there will be an associated increase in revenue burden to maintain these going forward. There has conversely been scope for revenue energy cost savings through the introduction of low energy lighting solutions to replace existing street lighting. If revenue costs arise which are not offset by savings these would need to be picked up by the relevant revenue budget dependant on the item affected.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. Outcome 1: Our local communities are strong and supportive

Enhancing the pedestrianised core of Macclesfield Town Centre will help attract people and business to the centre, providing opportunities for the various communities in and around Macclesfield to come together and share common experiences.

6.3.2. Outcome 2: Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy

Improvements to the central pedestrianised core of Macclesfield will help attract inward investment in adjacent retail and business properties.

6.3.3 Outcome 4: Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place

Enhancing the pedestrianised area of the town centre will encourage people to walk through the centre of the town rather than simply drive to their destination. Opportunities for increasing green infrastructure have been explored given the strong policy support. Although underground services have proven challenging it is hoped that 3 no trees will be planted in a street which currently has no permanent soft landscaping.

7.1.4 Outcome 5: People live well and for longer

A more appealing and stimulating public realm that encourages social interaction should enhance quality of life.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. The need for an Equality Impact Assessment was considered early in this project and it was identified that particular consideration needed to be given to people with mobility and disability issues in the design of the proposed scheme. Officers from the Regeneration Team have met with the Macclesfield Eye Society on several occasions to ensure the schemes design seeks to ensure those with visual impairments suffer no discrimination as a result of this scheme. Input from that group has informed a number of aspects of the design including the retention of a 60mm high kerb, contrasting coloured kerbs, tactile paving etc.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. No specific implications have been identified.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. Following the Highways appointment of the design team from Ringway Jacobs, a Design and Risk log has been created to flag and reduce risks wherever possible. A risk workshop was also attended by all relevant officers in June 2018.

6.6.2. One of the most significant risks to the proposal is created by the limitation of funding and prior to seeking tenders for construction, the inability to determine the real likelihood of delivering the scheme within budget. There is however a substantial risk element built into the estimated cost. Once final designs have been approved, the process of tendering for the work can commence and anticipated costs will become clearer.

6.6.3. Even when tenders have been received there will remain a risk to the budget relating to unforeseen circumstances arising during construction. GPR surveys have been undertaken to try to establish clearly the position of services and mitigate this risk but nevertheless on a site of this nature there could be a number of unforeseen issues which could arise.

6.6.4. The Council must also be mindful of how the investment is to be maintained in future years – a risk is that the enhanced quality of the street may be diminished if future maintenance regimes do not allow for necessary upkeep. This is however a borough wide issue relevant to all areas of public realm. Attempts will be made to mitigate this risk by continued dialogue with the Town Council and adjacent owners regarding such items as maintenance of planters, street trees and amenity lighting.

6.6.5. A Highway safety audit has been undertaken to inform the design and mitigate risks to safety relating to the final design.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. No specific implications have been identified.

6.8. Implications for Children and Young People

6.8.1. No specific implications have been identified.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. No specific implications have been identified.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. Macclesfield Central Ward - Cllr Dooley and Cllr. Jackson.

8. Consultation and Engagement

8.1. Consultation and engagement have been undertaken and details of this are set out in background papers.

9. Access to Information

9.1. The following documents contain important associated data to be taken into account in the decision:

- Statement of Consultation on Draft Design
- Final Work Package Drawings (B1832109-3000-08 and B1832109-3000-09)
- Road Safety Audit on proposed design

9.2. The following background documents may also be useful for reference:

- [Cabinet Report 3 May 2016](#)
- [Cabinet Report 12 September 2017](#)
- Officers Decision Report 12 Oct 2017
- Equality Impact Assessment Report
- Project Risk Register

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Jo Wise

Job Title: Strategic Regeneration Manager (North)

Email: jo.wise@cheshireeast.gov.uk