

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	17 July 2018
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal: Romsey Town Centre Improvements Phase 3 – Market Place
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Executive Member for Environment and Transport approves the Project Appraisal for the Phase 3 Market Place, Romsey, accessibility improvement scheme, as outlined in this report.
- 1.2 That approval is given to procure and spend and enter into necessary contractual arrangements to implement the proposed improvements to Market Place, Romsey, as set out in this report, at an estimated cost of £1,594,000 to be funded by developer contributions, Test Valley Borough Council funding, and Hampshire County Council Market Town and public realm improvement funding.
- 1.3 That authority to make the arrangements to implement the scheme, including minor variations to the design or contract, is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval and provide details for the proposed scheme to improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility in Market Place, Romsey. A local plan and general arrangement scheme plan are included in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.2 The main element of the proposed improvements is the large piazza style build out that will encompass the current Lord Palmerston Statue within the middle of Market Place. This large pedestrianised area will allow better access to the town centre for all users including those considered more vulnerable such as elderly persons and the disabled.

- 2.3 The improvements will see the use of Yorkstone paving in the footways, and the carriageway will be resurfaced in buff coloured tarmac and narrowed to help slow vehicles and aid permeability and accessibility for all visitors and residents. The proposed materials are complementary to the historic town centre and similar to those used in Church Street (phase one) and most recently in Bell Street (phase two).
- 2.4 The proposals will also see improved street furniture, including additional bike racks and benches for people to enjoy the surrounding views. Two trees have also been proposed, which will aesthetically improve the area and provide shade.
- 2.5 New designated crossing points will be provided across the junction with Bell Street, The Abbey, Church Street, and The Hundred. The scheme will also provide a flat, level footway/carriageway surface, which will improve accessibility for all, especially those with mobility impairments.
- 2.6 Alternative options considered include “do nothing”, but this was rejected due to the poor pedestrian facilities currently available, and the fact that the existing arrangements precludes access for some visitors to Romsey. Improving the surfaces of the footway, but not providing a level surface, was also considered, but this was rejected as it would not provide the improved accessibility options required to meet the needs of all users.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Market Place represents the final phase of the current town centre enhancement works and follows on from the recently well received works undertaken in Church Street, and those recently completed in Bell Street. Market Place, as the names suggests, is the central area within the town, fronted by shops and businesses, and linking together the streets of Bell Street, Church Street, The Abbey, The Cornmarket and The Hundred.
- 3.2 The majority of the town centre falls within a conservation area with a large majority of the buildings around the Market Place, Bell Street, and the Corn Market having listed buildings status. A number of the historical streets have very narrow footways, and over the years repeated re-surfacing has resulted in significant rises in levels. Additionally, a number of footways are uneven due to provisions for dropped kerbs and drainage channels. This is particularly problematic as there are a number of housing developments within the town providing sheltered accommodation. Furthermore a 2009 visitor survey indicated that 42% of visitors to the town were over the age of 60 and that 16% of visitors had a disabled person as a member of their party.
- 3.3 The original feasibility study undertaken by the County Council in 2015 came up with one option to provide a level surface scheme with a large pedestrian area to the northern side of the Market Place. This scheme was consulted on in February 2016 and received support from the public. However, the Romsey and District Society (RDS) felt that the public should be given more

than one option to consider and asked to work with the County Council and Test Valley Borough Council to come up with an alternative design.

- 3.4 To develop the proposals further, officers held 'Community Street Audits', discussions with local groups (including the RDS), reviewed the outcome of the previous consultation, and undertook technical work to identify a scheme. Through this process the following issues were reported:
- Narrow pavements;
  - Difficulties in crossing the road (the road around the statue is wide where there is a strong desire to cross);
  - Uneven pavements, which change in level (some on a camber, divided by drainage channels);
  - Congestion, which occurs when larger vehicles park in the road and/or on the pavement in order to make deliveries;
  - Cars driving around the statue to wait for a parking space, parking around the statue and double parking;
  - Limited space for pedestrians and events/markets/available outdoor seating for restaurants/bars etc.; and
  - The need to cater for those with a mobility or visual impairment.
- 3.5 The Romsey Town Centre Enhancement - Project Board, made up of the two county councillors for the Romsey area (Cllr Mark Cooper and Cllr Roy Perry) and three Test Valley Borough councillors (Cllr Clive Collier, Cllr Ian Richards, Cllr Ian Hibberd) agreed that officers would liaise with the RDS to consult on another option that could be put to the public vote. Hampshire County Council officers met on numerous occasions with the RDS to discuss other alternative options that could be considered for delivery, if supported by the public, and this resulted in the alternative Option 2, creating the large piazza style build out on the southern side of Market Place while maintaining two way traffic. Cllr Clive Collier (Chair of the Project Board) also asked for a one way (for northbound traffic) version of Option 2, which resulted in Option 3, entailing the same layout but with the introduction of a one way system for the northbound traffic.
- 3.6 These two further options were taken to the Public Consultation in November 2016.
- 3.7 In the centre of the roundabout in the Market Place is a statue of Lord Palmerston which is considered the most prominent piece of public art within the town and an important symbol of Romsey.
- 3.8 There is a clear desire to continue the Town Centre improvements already completed in The Hundred (minor improvements to footways in 2004), Church Street (Phase one 2015/16), Bell Street (Phase two 2017/18), and

the third and final phase will see further enhancement works focussing on Market Place from January 2019. Improving the environmental appeal and increasing accessibility will assist in retaining and improving the vitality of the town. The enhancement works are required to address a number of issues faced by many historical town centres. For instance, narrow and uneven footways, limited facilities for cyclists, and the need to balance the desire to have parking in close proximity to amenities as well as the requirement for convenient locations for delivery vehicles. The 2009 visitor survey results highlight the importance of ensuring that any improvements to enhance the town centre take into account the needs of a variety of potential users.

- 3.9 Over the past five years there have been three slight personal injury accidents, and one serious within the Market Place area. In 2012 a 52 year old pedestrian was hit by a refuse lorry when standing on the footway at the junction with the Corn Market and Bell Street. Another accident involved a 2 year old pedestrian who had their foot run over by a car travelling south east along The Hundred in 2012. The recorded accidents all involved pedestrians being hit by vehicles while walking in the local area of Market Place.

#### 4. Finance

4.1	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design Fee	163	10	Developer Contributions	494
	Client Fee	42	3	District Contribution	150
	Supervision	89	5	Market Town Funds	500
	Construction Land	1,300	82	Public Realm Fund	450
	Total	<u>1,594</u>	<u>100</u>	Total	<u>1,594</u>

4.2	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	4	0.004%
	Capital Charge	153	0.096%

## 5. Programme

	<b>Gateway Stage</b>			
	<b>3 (PA)</b>	<b>Start on site</b>	<b>End on site</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Date (dd/mm/yy)</b>	<b>07/18</b>	<b>01/19</b>	<b>06/19</b>	<b>12/19</b>

## 6. Scheme Details

- 6.1 A location plan and scheme proposal drawings can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 6.2 The whole of Market Place will be a shared level surface to improve accessibility for pedestrians, with uncontrolled crossing points across Bell Street, Church Street, The Abbey, and The Hundred.
- 6.3 The preferred scheme, Option 1, which was supported by members of the public and taken to detailed design, will provide a level surface across Market Place with a large pedestrian area adjoining the footway on the northern side of Market Place. This will link to the Palmerston Statue to create an area for events, markets, and additional outdoor seating, and to encourage other communal uses of the space. The level surface will enable improved accessibility for all, as well as encouraging cycling and slower vehicle speeds. The roundabout will be replaced by a chicane arrangement that slows vehicle speeds whilst also maintaining all accesses from the Market Place.
- 6.4 Additional street furniture will include bike racks, bollards, benches and two new trees are also proposed in the piazza area. There will also be pop up power bollards which can be used during public events as well as providing power points for any additional market stalls.
- 6.5 The existing parking bays on the south and east sides of Market Place will be retained, and the existing disabled bays in The Hundred will also be retained. A loading bay will be provided on the north side of Market Place to allow deliveries for businesses on the north side of the square.
- 6.6 The existing Flambeau pole adjacent to the Lord Palmerston statue will be retained, and it is envisaged this will still be used to accommodate bunting and the annual hanging of Christmas Lights.
- 6.7 Similar materials are proposed to those used in Church Street, and proposed for Bell Street, giving continuity and consistency to the appearance of the town centre. It is proposed to use Yorkstone paving for the pedestrian areas of Market Place, with the remaining surface in buff coloured tarmac to complement the stone. The two will be separated by granite drainage channels as used in Church Street. Minimal street furniture and bollards will also be introduced to help prevent parking in inappropriate locations. These will be similar in appearance to those already in place around the town.

- 6.8 Additional footway drainage will be installed on the north side of Market Place to ensure surface water is dispersed, and to reduce the likelihood of any future flooding in the town centre.
- 6.9 The chicane road layout will encourage low vehicle speeds, whilst not preventing vehicular access. The large pedestrian area that will be the focal point of the Market Place takes advantage of the sunniest part of the square and provides space for the existing shops and cafes to spill out onto the paving as well as public and community events.

## **7. Departures from Standards**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Community Engagement**

- 8.1 Two staffed public exhibitions were held in the Town Hall on the proposal for the Market Place where three proposal options were displayed. These were on Saturday 5 November between 10 and 12 noon and then again on Monday 7 November between 9 – 5pm, after which the plans were shown in the Former Magistrates Court for people to view until the 18 December 2016. Residents, businesses, and the wider community were encouraged to have their say on the proposed options being considered for Market Place. It provided an opportunity to view plans and details of the proposed improvements, and to discuss these with the officers to identify areas for further consideration.
- 8.2 An online public consultation was also launched on Saturday 5 November and closed on Sunday 18 December 2016. A feedback form was made available at the exhibition to complete or drop into the Former Magistrates Court or send back via a freepost envelope. The questionnaire together with the exhibition plans and information was also made available online, providing those who couldn't attend the public consultation with an opportunity to voice their opinions.
- 8.3 Hampshire County Council received paper questionnaires, online forms, and a letter, which have all been recorded and considered. A total of 331 responses for the Market Place consultation have been analysed. Of these, 278 were paper questionnaires, 52 were questionnaires completed online via the scheme's web-site, and one was a letter. The results of the consultation were presented to the Romsey Town Centre Enhancement – Project Board on Tuesday 14th February, where a decision was made on which scheme to progress to detailed design. Of the three options consulted on, Option 1 was the preferred scheme to take forward.
- 8.4 Detailed analysis of the consultation results is shown in a report produced by the County Council, and this can be found on the following web page <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport-consultations/romsey/ConsultationAnalysis-MarketPlace>

- 8.5 The local member Councillor Mark Cooper is also a member of the Romsey Town Centre Enhancement - Project Board and supports the chosen proposal (Option 1).
- 8.6 Key stakeholders, such as the Guide Dogs for the Blind, and local visually impaired road users, were consulted on the proposals and support the improvements.
- 8.7 The Romsey and District Society, Romsey Town Centre Manager, and the Chamber of Commerce have been consulted on the scheme, and further discussions will be held with the Romsey and District Society to consider any other notable concerns for the proposals.

## **9. Statutory Procedures**

- 9.1 Changes to the existing road layout will require the removal of a parking bay on the north side of Market Place and the provision of a new loading bay, and therefore statutory consultation will be required to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order. Due to the change to the road layout, amendments to the existing waiting restrictions in the area will also be advertised as part of the TRO process.

## **10. Land Requirements**

- 10.1 None.

## **11. Maintenance Implications**

- 11.1 A representative from the highways maintenance team has been involved in the Project Board meetings to discuss ongoing maintenance and liability issues. The improvements will have a small impact on the maintenance budget in future years, and this is expected to be approximately £4,184 annually.
- 11.2 Similar to the process used in the Bell Street works, it has been agreed that additional material will be ordered and stored in the Totton highways depot in order to ensure that any required future maintenance intervention can be undertaken to avoid excessive cost, delay, and material lead in times.

## LTP3 Priorities and Policy Objectives

### 3 Priorities

- To support economic growth by ensuring the safety, soundness and efficiency of the transport network in Hampshire
- Provide a safe, well maintained and more resilient road network in Hampshire
- Manage traffic to maximise the efficiency of existing network capacity, improving journey time reliability and reducing emissions, to support the efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods

### 14 Policy Objectives

- Improve road safety (through delivery of casualty reduction and speed management)
- Efficient management of parking provision (on and off street, including servicing)
- Support use of new transport technologies (i.e. Smartcards; RTI; electric vehicle charging points)
- Work with operators to grow bus travel and remove barriers to access
- Support community transport provision to maintain 'safety net' of basic access to services
- Improve access to rail stations, and improve parking and station facilities
- Provide a home to school transport service that meets changing curriculum needs
- Improve co-ordination and integration between travel modes through interchange improvements
- Apply 'Manual for Streets' design principles to support a better balance between traffic and community life
- Improve air quality
- Reduce the need to travel, through technology and Smarter Choices measures



- Promote walking and cycling to provide a healthy alternative to the car for short local journeys to work, local services or school
- Develop Bus Rapid Transit and high quality public transport in South Hampshire, to reduce car dependence and improve journey time reliability
- Outline and implement a long term transport strategy to enable sustainable development in major growth areas

**Other**

Please list any other targets (i.e. National Indicators, non LTP) to which this scheme will contribute.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	no

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Bell Street, Romsey (PA report)  <a href="http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=7732&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=">http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=7732&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=</a>	15/09/2017

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

All impacts are seen to be positive to all users in terms of accessibility, with particular benefits for older people and people with disabilities.

The scheme is designed to provide a level highway surface from building line to building line. This will remove the kerbs, thus allowing all users easy access to the area and the ability to cross the road at any location, and not rely on drop kerbs for access. The level surface will enable the widening of all footway areas on all four areas around Market Place, which will increase accessibility for pedestrians, wheelchair users, and mobility scooter users, as well as removing trip hazards for those with mobility impairments.

All pedestrian movements will be improved, and with wider footways it will remove the need for people to walk in the road to avoid pedestrians from the other direction.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. None.

**3. Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The scheme seeks to provide improved access for all, with slower vehicle speeds and a more pleasant pedestrian experience. This will provide an improved environment for cycling due to the lower vehicle speeds. The scheme will therefore look to increase the opportunities and ability for behavioural change to more sustainable travel choices.