



Report to: Cabinet, 21st March 2017

Report of: Councillor Geoff Williams, Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity and Growth

Subject: THE SHAMBLES PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT– KEY DECISION

1. Recommendation

1.1 That Cabinet approve expenditure of £400,000 (from the 2015-16 New Homes Bonus Allocation for public realm improvements) to carry out public realm improvements to The Shambles in partnership with Worcestershire County Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Improving the public realm is a key objective of the City Centre Master Plan. The delivery of these projects relies on prioritising City Council funding to achieve agreed design objectives in partnership with other organisations including the County Council. Improvements to the High Street, Angel Place and upper Broad Street have already taken place. The 2016 "City Plan" and the draft LTP4 (Local Transport Plan) both support city centre public realm improvements in order to promote city centre investment and improve access.
- 2.2 In 2014, Cabinet approved a City Council contribution of £400,000 towards the Cathedral Square project, comprising "highway re-design and realignment works and the creation of a new flexible space public square with enhanced public realm". Following on from this, the City Council approved £500k from the 2015-16 New Homes Bonus Grant to fund other public realm improvements in the city. In September 2016 Cabinet approved the allocation of up to £100k from this £500k to the Cathedral Square project in view of projects costs being higher than originally projected.
- 2.3 In November 2016 the County Council completed the improvement of upper Broad Street (the area between the Cross and Angel Street) in line with design objectives agreed with the City Council. The total cost of the works was around £600,000, with the work completed in time for the 2016 Victorian Market. The works to Upper Broad Street included the realignment of the road carriageway to delineate the pedestrian and vehicle areas and general enhancement of the public realm through the provision of new paving and street furniture.
- 2.4 Both the City and County Council now see The Shambles as the next priority for public realm improvement, with a provisional estimated total cost of £1.25m, but with detailed design, construction timetable and costs still to be confirmed

2.5 Funding and Public Realm Improvement Progress

From 2014 to date, a total of £3.105m has been invested in public realm improvements across the city centre, of which Worcester City Council has contributed £620,000.

Including the projected costs of The Shambles, the total investment will be £4.355m of which £1.02m will be from the City council, meaning that for every £1 invested by the City council we have levered an additional £3.27 of public/private sector contribution.

A summary of recent and proposed public realm projects is set out in the table below:

Project	What	Due Completion Dates	Costs	Funding Sources
Angel Place	Removal of fixed market stalls and resurfacing of vehicular access and paving of pedestrian public realm.	Completed 2014	£360,000	City Council = £120,000 County Council = £120,00 Crown Estates = £120,000
Cathedral Square	Phase 1 – highways re-design and realignment works (Phase 2 Retail Scheme Wholly and separately funded by Salmon & Harvester) Phase 3 – creation of new public square and enhanced public realm scheme	Completed in Nov 2015 Start: 13 Mar 2017 Completion: 04 Aug 2017	(Total for Phase 1 and Phase 3) £2.145m	The project was jointly funded by: County Council = £845,000 Salmon & Harvester = £300,000 City Council = £500,000 Worcestershire LEP = £500,000 Total cost = £2.145m
Upper Broad Street	Enhanced public realm scheme; Realignment of road carriageway	Start: 30 Aug 2016 Completion: 18 Nov 2016	£600,000	County Council = £600,000 Total cost = £600,000
The Shambles	Enhanced public realm scheme To be confirmed	Target: 2017/18 To be confirmed	Estimated at £1.25m	City Council = £400,000 County Council = £850,000 Total cost = £1.25m

Lower Broad Street	Enhanced public realm scheme; Realignment of road carriageway To be confirmed	Target 2018/19 To be confirmed	To be confirmed on commencement of project in 2018/19	Funding to be confirmed closer to the project
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3. Preferred Options

- 3.1 This is the next phase of a programme of public realm improvements across the City. This funding is required to support the delivery of an improved public realm of similar quality and design of previous improvements made to Angel Place, the High Street and upper Broad Street. The aim of the project is to improve the amenity value of The Shambles and to improve safety by providing improved delineation between pedestrians and vehicles. The style and quality of the works will mirror that of Angel Place, the High Street and upper Broad Street.
- 3.2 City Council officers are also working with colleagues from the County Council to amend the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) currently in place in the city centre to improve safety for pedestrians by reducing the integration period of pedestrians and vehicles. This will be the subject of a public consultation exercise in the next few weeks. The date for this will be confirmed by the County Council. However, it is likely to be during the end of May/early June 2017.
- 3.3 As there are costs associated with developing schemes such as this, the design, final cost projections and timetable for the works will be agreed with the County Council as soon as possible after the funding from the City Council has been agreed however, the City council contribution will be capped at £400,000.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 This is the next phase of a programme of public realm improvements in the city centre that has been proposed the County Council in order to maximise the investment in city centre public realm during 2017-18. Therefore, allocating the City Council funds to an alternative location is not recommended as the City Council will not achieve the continuity of high quality public realm improvements within the city centre and may not secure the proposed £850,000 investment from the County Council.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications: The indicative total cost of the works to The Shambles is £1.25m. The proposed contribution from the City Council of a maximum of £400k is considered to be reasonable to ensure the continued improvement of the city centre public realm, making it an attractive place that people want to visit. This supports the City Council's aspiration of making Worcester a tourist destination.

- 5.2 Legal and Governance Implications: The City Council’s financial contribution to public realm projects will be confirmed in a legal agreement with the funding partners as required. In accordance with the decision made by Cabinet in December 2014, signing of these agreements is delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity and Growth. The legal agreement will require the County to deliver the improvement scheme by a particular date; comply with agreed design objectives and be delivered to an agreed and monitored high quality finish.
- 5.3 Risk Implications – There will be risks of budget overspend, delivery over-runs and concern about design quality and implementation. These will continue to be managed by increasingly close working between the County and the City through a “projects working party”. The City Council contribution will be capped at £400,000.
- 5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications – The 2016 “City Plan” and the draft LTP4 (Local Transport Plan) both support city centre public realm improvements in order to promote city centre investment and improved access.
- 5.5 Equality Implications - The aim of the proposed public realm works is to improve pedestrian access to the city for both abled and disabled people, improve the general safety for all and provide increased opportunities for people from different cultures and backgrounds to meet, interact and enjoy the city. Therefore, it is proposed that the City Council engage with the relevant stakeholders and users of the public realm along The Shambles to enable them to have an input into the design of the improvement works. The final design will then be subject to an independent Equality Impact Assessment.
- 5.6 Human Resources Implications – For all works in the highway the overall project lead, design and implementation rests with the County Council. The County works through joint Project Boards made up of all the funding partners, meets regularly, including City Council officers.
- 5.7 Health and Safety Implications – This is managed by the County Council and the Project Boards.

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Background Papers: None