

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date of Decision:	12 January 2010
Decision Title:	Project Appraisal: Birchett Road - Station Road, Aldershot - Accessibility and Pedestrian Improvements
Decision Reference:	1179
Report From:	Director of Environment

Contact name: Helen Merrills

Tel: 01256 776125

Email: helen.merrills@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to implement works to improve pedestrian facilities and accessibility for all, provide a safer environment for all road users and contribute towards the regeneration of Aldershot, by providing footway, junction and pedestrian crossing improvements in Station Road and the junction of Hippodrome House, Station Road, Birchett Road in Aldershot, utilising available external funding.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MEMBER - ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT
APPRAISAL
(Externally Funded)

12 JANUARY 2010

PROJECT: BIRCHETT ROAD-STATION ROAD, ALDERSHOT -
ACCESSIBILITY AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS.

COMMENCEMENT DATE: March 2010
COMPLETION DATE: June 2010

PLANNED YEAR OF START IN ACCORDANCE WITH CAPITAL
PROGRAMME: 2009/2010

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this project appraisal is to seek approval to implement works in Aldershot Town Centre. To improve pedestrian facilities and accessibility for all, provide a safer environment for all road users and contribute towards the regeneration of Aldershot, by providing footway, junction and pedestrian crossing improvements in Station Road and the junction of Hippodrome House, Station Road, Birchett Road in Aldershot, utilising available external funding.

1.2 The project appraisal:

- (i) provides widening and improvements to footways and improvements to the road surface to provide significant benefits and improve accessibility for all road users. The scheme aims to reduce the risk of accidents and provide a safer place for people to cross the road and access the local shops, rail and bus station and other local facilities in the town, to encourage an increase in footfall to access local facilities and to the town centre;
- (ii) improves existing crossings with provided puffin crossing technology with associated work, including tactile paving, to meet the needs of pedestrians and people with mobility impairment and ensure the signal junction operates efficiently;
- (iii) upgrades some street lighting to improve safety and contribute towards reduction in any crime and disorder; and
- (iv) narrows the junction and resurfaces to improve road conditions and safety for all road users, including cyclists; enhances the area and provides cycle parking facilities.

2. Contextual Information

2.1 This scheme aims to improve accessibility to the town centre and the local facilities, provide a safer environment for all road users, including cyclists, enhance the main pedestrian route between the rail and bus station and residential area to the town centre and improve the highway. The scheme will contribute to the future development plans for improvements within this area of Aldershot and contribute towards improving its vitality and viability to make Aldershot an attractive centre which is safe and accessible to new and existing residents.

3. **Introduction**

- 3.1 Aldershot Town Centre is well known as the home of the British Army. It is situated within the Blackwater Valley, defined by its polycentric nature with a diverse range of trip destinations and competition between a number of centres. Aldershot town centre has a history of initiatives to develop and progress a vision and a strategy for the town centre. Proposals for regeneration were developed as far back as the 1990s but, due to lack of funding, regeneration has not been realised. Parts of Aldershot are within the top 20% of deprived wards in the country, despite there having been economic buoyancy of the surrounding area. Several wards in the area are characterised by low car ownership levels, suggesting this is an area where transport and environmental improvements could be particularly effective in providing services locally to improve accessibility and encourage people to use local services.
- 3.2 This area of Aldershot forms one of the main pedestrian routes from the Bus and Rail Station, which are in the town and residential areas, to the Town Centre. Aldershot is identified in the Local Transport Plan 2 as a major development area and forms part of the long-term strategy identified as an area for regeneration. Aldershot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in January 2009 and this area is identified as an area in much need of infrastructure improvements and is seen as one of the Gateways into Aldershot.
- 3.3 A total of 4,500 dwellings are expected to be built in the area as part of Aldershot Urban Extension (AUE). The volume of people needing to utilise the existing facilities and access the town will increase. Facilities in the town are poor and require upgrading.
- 3.4 Pavements are narrow and uneven and pedestrians, particularly people who are less mobile and the more vulnerable users, incur problems negotiating their way along the route to the town and accessing local facilities. There is a wide junction to cross which also provides advanced cycle lanes; and the existing road surface and pavements are of poor quality. The existing crossing facilities do not operate efficiently and do not meet the new design standards. Traffic dominates the junction which also serves the local bus service to and from the bus station.
- 3.5 Overall the area is unsightly, the facilities are in a poor condition, accessibility is poor and there are levels of disorderly conduct. The improvements proposed will contribute to the efficient running of the service as well as aiding pedestrians and cyclists and particularly the more vulnerable and mobility impaired.

- 3.6 In addition to earlier workshops and wide stakeholder consultations for Aldershot Town Centre improvements, a town centre users' survey was undertaken during three days in March 2008. The public identified that this area was in need of improvements and identified footpaths as a priority, with easier pedestrian movements across the local roads also required. The most frequent request was for improved cleanliness/maintenance of the town centre as it was seen as shabby and neglected overall.
- 3.7 Pedestrian flows undertaken in Aldershot Town Centre in 2002, 2003 and 2005 show an increase in footfall year-on-year, with flows expected to increase further with the future development of the AUE.
- 3.8 The pedestrian counts undertaken along part of Station Road route were as follows:
Weekly footfall over a six hour period:
2002 – 21,000 of which includes 5,007 during a Saturday
2003 – 19700 of which includes 4,590 during a Saturday
2004 – 22,860 of which includes 5,940 during a Saturday
- 3.9 There have been three reported injury accidents at the junction during a three year period from July 2006 to June 2009. The casualties included one cyclist, one pedestrian and one child.

4. **Details**

- 4.1 Localised widening and improvements of the pavements in Station Road, Station Approach and the junction of Hippodrome House/Birchett Road in Aldershot will improve accessibility to shops and businesses and reduce the risk of trips and falls.
- 4.2 Proposed new puffin crossing facilities and upgrade and refurbishment of the existing crossing facilities, provision of tactile paving and associated works at the junction of Hippodrome House/Station Road; to improve accessibility, reliability and safety. The Puffin crossing technology will allow variable times for crossing and aid the more vulnerable user as well as contributing to traffic movement in the area and reducing the risk of delays.
- 4.3 The wide junction of Hippodrome House/Station Road will be narrowed and a raised surface of 45 millimetres will be provided, with associated kerbing and improved surface water drainage. This will reduce the carriageway width to aid pedestrians to cross safely and improve the condition of the roads at the location for all road users and overall provide a safer environment.

- 4.4 The junction and the footpaths on Birchett Road will be resurfaced using black top material. The footpaths on either side of Station Road, which is the route to the town centre, will be laid with new block paving and associated kerbing which will complement the existing surfacing used throughout Aldershot. The materials chosen will be readily available for ease of maintenance and be of good quality.
- 4.5 There will be three new cycle stands and improved surfaces for cyclists.
- 4.6 Street lighting columns will be moved to the back of the footway along the route where required and five of the street lighting heads will be replaced. This area is known to suffer from disorderly conduct so the provision of the lighting will contribute to making people feel safer and improve lighting in the area.
- 4.7 Detailed plans will be provided to accompany this document.

5. **Targets and Outcomes**

- 5.1 The scheme aims to provide improvements to the highway and footways, the crossing facilities at the junction of Hippodrome House/Birchett Road Station Road and to the footways and highway on Station Road and Birchett Road for pedestrians and other road users. The scheme will contribute towards the following Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives:
- (i) increase accessibility to services;
 - (ii) promote safety;
 - (iii) widen travel choice accessibility;
 - (iv) contribute towards improvement in air quality;
 - (v) support wider quality of life objectives; and
 - (vi) encourage value for money and efficient asset management.
- 5.2 The scheme will help contribute towards the following targets:
- (i) LTP 1 Accessibility - percentage of people who consider accessibility is good;
 - (ii) LTP5 Bus punctuality indicator;
 - (iii) BVPI z – Casualties - total slight casualties;
 - (iv) BVPI 187 Footway Condition; and
 - (v) BVPI 224b Road Condition.
- 5.3 The scheme will also contribute towards Hampshire County Council's Local Area Agreement Accessibility and Transport targets as listed below.

5.4 Other:

- NI 47 improve road safety and reduce casualties;
- LI C3 improve accessibility; and
- NI169 improve conditions of roads.

6. **Standards**

6.1 The proposals have been designed to comply with Department for Transport and Hampshire County Council's standards for highway improvement schemes and have been Safety Audited at the appropriate stages in the design process.

7. **Statutory Procedures and Consultation**

7.1 This scheme forms part of Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan objectives and the overall strategy for improvement in Aldershot Town Centre. In partnership with Hampshire County Council, Rushmoor Borough Council produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Aldershot Town Centre. Following publication of the draft Aldershot Town Centre SPD in February 2008 for public consultation, the document was formally adopted in January 2009.

7.2 Extensive consultations, workshops, town centre street audits and town centre questionnaires were undertaken with the public and other stakeholders, who identified where improvements were needed for Aldershot town. Following further consultations, Aldershot Town Centre SPD was adopted in January 2009 and Birchett Road/Station Road was identified as an area of priority for improvement.

7.3 The former Hart and Rushmoor Hampshire Action Team (HAT) was supportive of the scheme which was seen as a priority to provide improvements in Aldershot. Councillor Neal, the former HAT Chairman, supports the proposals.

7.4 The Rushmoor Local Access Group has been consulted and welcomes the improvements, particularly as it is difficult to cross the junction and negotiate the pavements.

7.5 The Town Centre Manager has been consulted and supports the proposals.

7.6 Rushmoor Borough Council supports the proposals and sees this as the first stage in the improvements towards the regeneration of Aldershot.

7.7 There will be some disruption to the public during the work

period. Information will be provided to local businesses and the public about the proposed work well in advance. Information, which will include traffic management information, will be provided and updated on Hampshire County Council's web site. In addition, information will be displayed in the area and local businesses will also be kept informed.

7.8 Consultation documents and information have already been sent to the residents and local business in the immediate area of the junction, Station Road and Birchett Road and the Grove, and the local bus company Stagecoach has been consulted and is working with the County Council regarding any bus routing changes, which will be kept to a minimum.

7.9 Rushmoor Borough Council traffic management officers are also working with the County Council to ensure minimal disruption.

8. **Policy Considerations**

8.1 The proposed improvements support the County Council's Local Transport Plan and road safety and casualty reduction policies and improves pedestrian facilities and access for the more vulnerable.

9. **Land Requirements**

9.1 All works will be within the highway boundary.

10. **Alternative Arrangements**

10.1 Provision of a roundabout was considered and rejected as it would not improve accessibility at this location as pedestrians and cyclists would not be able to cross the road easily. There would also be a higher risk of accidents for cyclists.

10.2 To do nothing was rejected as the improvements to this area are needed to provide a safer and improved environment for residents, commuters and visitors to Aldershot. Aldershot Town is identified as an area for improvement in the Local Transport Plan 2 and is a Major Development Area.

10.3 To improve other areas of the town centre was considered and rejected as extensive utilities work was programmed. Any delay would result in further deterioration of this area, resulting in additional costs and the risk of the loss of the available external funding. This is seen as the first phase of proposed improvements in Aldershot town centre to improve the pedestrian and highway facilities and contribute towards the regeneration of Aldershot.

11. Local Member's View

11.1 The local Member, Councillor Kimber, who is also the Mayor of Aldershot, supports the proposal.

12. Sustainability

12.1 The area for improvement is seen as part of the Gateway to Aldershot. Materials used will be of good quality but will be easily replaced and maintained. The materials used and the design of the scheme is in keeping with the Place – Making Guidelines and Urban Improvement Strategy for Aldershot Town Centre.

12.2 The scheme will offer good improvements for pedestrians and other road users such as cyclists. All road users will benefit by the improvements as the scheme will provide a safer and more attractive place for people who want to use the facilities, particularly in the area of the junction. The area will be enhanced and opened up utilising lighting materials in the construction. Overall, better footpaths and the provision of the puffin crossing facilities will encourage people to walk more, and increase the activity in the area.

13. Financial Arrangements

13.1	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design Fee	71,000	Developer Funding	385,000
	Supervision	17,000		
	Project Works	297,000		
	Land	0.00		
	Total	<u>385,000</u>	Total	<u>385,000</u>

13.2	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	0.02	0.001
	Capital Charge	19.03	0.017
	Total Expenditure	<u>19.05</u>	<u>0.018</u>

14. Maintenance Implications

- 14.1 The new signal equipment will operate at extra low voltage which will provide energy consumption savings. It will also provide increased electrical safety to users in the event of damage to the equipment. The equipment will be more reliable and will extend the life expectancy of the site. With regular maintenance the new signal equipment is expected to operate satisfactorily for 15 years.
- 14.2 The materials used will be of good quality stock that is readily available. A section 58 notice will be issued which will protect the site from utilities work for a minimum of three years. Any street furniture will be maintained by Rushmoor Borough Council.

15. Recommendation

- 15.1 That the Project Appraisal for pedestrian and accessibility improvements in Station Road and the junction of Hippodrome House, Station Road, Birchett Road in Aldershot town centre, at an estimated cost of £385,000 secured through external funding, be approved.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Birchett Road /Station Road	Mott–Gifford, Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. The improved footways will help the more vulnerable user access facilities. The provision of the puffin crossing technology will provide an audible sound to assist the visually impaired cross the road safely.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. The scheme will have no direct impact on the crime and disorder act but is the first stage of proposed improvement for the town which will contribute towards its regeneration for the future. Improvements to the street lighting will make people feel safer.

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?

Any increased walking and cycling will have a positive effect on climate change as it is an alternative to driving.