

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member - Environment
<b>Date:</b>	26 January 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal: Improvements to The Square, Winchester
<b>Reference:</b>	2061
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Environment

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for the improvement of the structure, condition and appearance of The Square, Winchester with re-paving work and new surface water drainage.
- 1.2. The area known as The Square in Winchester has been identified as in need of maintenance due to the failure and movement of the existing highway surfacing and furniture. The deterioration has been exacerbated by ongoing drainage problems and the frequent passage of HGV delivery vehicles. This situation has attracted criticism from 'The Shabby Winchester Group' and there is now a political resolve both from the County Council and Winchester City Council to address the situation by way of continuing the standard of improvements from Winchester High Street through to The Square into Great Minster Street and towards Market Lane.
- 1.3. In addition to a complete overhaul of the highway surface water drainage system, carriageway reconstruction, and maintenance works to existing pavements, the majority of the area known as The Square is to be resurfaced with enhanced and natural materials similar to those used in the adjacent and recently completed High Street.
- 1.4. The proposed scheme also includes new traffic management arrangements, similar to those already in place at the lower end of the High Street, that will restrict vehicle access through the area thereby assisting pedestrians and vulnerable users.
- 1.5. A 20 miles per hour speed limit is also under consideration, to complement the works in The Square and include adjoining roads in this historic core of the City, around the Cathedral.

## 2. Measures of Success

- 2.1. The drainage improvements will become apparent with a decrease in the surface water retention and an associated reduced risk of structural damage. The existing gullies are not working efficiently due to the damaged pipes and blocked soakaways. The surface water is currently drained off through the damaged areas in the failed road surface which is exacerbating the deterioration of the road structure.
- 2.2. The traffic management alterations are to be implemented following a successful traffic regulation order which has a statutory advertising period for comments to be addressed. The final scheme is subject to consultation on the order. The physical works are designed to allow for any possible future traffic management arrangements, allowing flexibility to respond to public demand.
- 2.3. A 20 mph speed limit area, with signing at appropriate entry points, may be introduced following successful processing of a traffic regulation order. This will benefit users of these streets by improving safety and reducing the conflict between pedestrians and motor vehicles.
- 2.4. The new and enhanced surface material proposed is to be similar to that provided in the recently completed High Street, which is a pedestrianised area. A review of the final scheme will take place following a further round of more extensive consultation to determine public opinion on the design and traffic options. A street audit to seek the opinions of both users and frontagers will be conducted to record comments to indicate levels of appreciation as part of the end of scheme review.

## 3. Finance

3.1.	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'00</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
		<u>0</u>			
	Design Fee	152	21		
	Client Fee	8	1		
	Supervision	60	8		
	Construction	492	70		
	Land	0	0		
				HCC Capital Maint.	400
				WCC Cont.	140
				HCC Revenue Maint.	12
				Developer Cont.	160
	Total	<u>712</u>	<u>100</u>	Total	<u>712</u>

3.2. <u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
Net increase in current expenditure	0	0
Capital Charge	14	0.010
Total Expenditure	<u>14</u>	<u>0.010</u>

#### 4. Programme

	<b>Gateway Stage</b>			
	<b>3 - Project Appraisal</b>	<b>Start on site</b>	<b>End on site</b>	<b>4 - Review</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>18 Jan 2011</b>	<b>01 May 2011</b>	<b>01 Nov 2011</b>	<b>01 Nov 2012</b>

#### 5. Scheme Details

- 5.1. A location plan is attached (Appendix 1). Detailed scheme plans and traffic management proposals will be displayed at the meeting.
- 5.2. The area including The Square identified for improvement in this report is from Great Minster Street at its junction with Little Minster Street through to Market Street at its junction with and along Market Lane for approximately 35 metres. This area makes up one of Winchester's most distinctive places. Sited in the heart of the conservation area, the buildings, streets and spaces that make up this location are of significant historical importance. The area is known for its speciality shopping, pavement cafes and as a venue for street events like the annual Hat Fair. Market Street, The Square and Great Minster Street provide the main links between the Museum, Cathedral, Winchester College and the High Street and are a well established part of the tourist circuit.
- 5.3. A necessary and primary consideration for the improvements is for the surface water drainage system to be repaired and replaced so that it adequately drains the highway. Investigations have confirmed that the existing system is in a very poor condition and the network is not of sufficient capacity to deal with the run off. Consequently the carriageway construction is waterlogged and has failed extensively throughout this area.
- 5.4. The existing layout of the carriageway and footway is to be retained with minor alignment improvements to assist pedestrian movement. Tactile surfaces are to be provided at crossing areas to assist the visually impaired. The new surface material is to be of a similar standard to that of the recently completed High Street with the majority of the scheme area laid to York Stone

setts and slabs. However, final decisions on surfacing treatment for the carriageway will be taken in the context of the incorporation of traffic restrictions within the overall scheme.

- 5.5. The existing street furniture is to be reused as far as is practicably possible.
- 5.6. The development of a 20 mph speed limit area is in the early stages of consideration. It has been identified as a potential further enhancement to this area, with several streets adjoining The Square being proposed. A number of recorded injury accidents have occurred, and low traffic flows and speeds are already conducive to this type of measure, which is expected to be relatively self enforcing by either road layout or frontage type and activity. Subject to further consultation, the traffic regulation order process is likely to commence in April 2011. However, the final operational date can be independent of the timing of the improvement works.

## **6. Departures from Standards**

- 6.1. There are no departures from the Department for Transport and Hampshire County Council highway design standards in use.
- 6.2. To reduce the intrusion of signs in the environment, special authorisation by the Department for Transport will be sought for the locations and type of signs, to support a 20 mph speed limit in this area.

## **7. Community Engagement**

- 7.1. The proposals have been jointly developed with Winchester City Council in consultation with members and key stakeholders including local businesses and residents groups, City of Winchester Trust, the Shabby Winchester Group, Access Groups and English Heritage. In addition to specific meetings and workshops for key stakeholders, public exhibitions were held on 16 July and 13 December 2010.
- 7.2. A public exhibition of the proposals, including a range of possible traffic management options and part time closure to motor traffic was held at the Winchester BID offices in Parchment Street on 16 July 2010. The overall response from some 90 visitors indicated strong support for the proposals.
- 7.3. A display to show the draft Winchester Town Access Plan which included the results of the consultation for the proposals in The Square was also held at the BID offices from 5 to 7 October. This was subsequently displayed at The Brooks Centre from 25 to 29 October.
- 7.4. Winchester City Council Members have been fully consulted on the plans and details of the proposals. They are in support of the improvement scheme and undertaking formal consultation on new traffic management arrangements.

- 7.5. A staffed stakeholder workshop with scheme information display boards was held at the Winchester BID offices on 29 November. Details of the scheme layout and the proposed restricted traffic access were discussed and comments recorded.
- 7.6. In order to gain a definitive picture of public opinion a further consultation is proposed to secure greater engagement and wider debate on the design and traffic options under consideration.

### **Local Member's Views**

- 7.7. The local Member, Councillor Collin, supports the proposed scheme. Councillor Dickens, member for the adjacent ward, also supports the scheme.

## **8. Exhibition**

### **Background**

- 8.1. The public exhibition on the enhancement proposals for The Square, including a possible part-time closure to traffic between 10:00 am - 4:00 pm and the 20 mph zone, was held at the Guildhall on 13 December 2010 from 10:00 am - 7:00 pm. The event was well publicised and attended by around 60 people. This followed a separate workshop for key stakeholders hosted at Winchester BID offices on 29 November 2010 which was attended by around 40 representatives of businesses, residents and specialist interest groups.

### **Results**

- 8.2. Overall scheme – there is a very high level of support and enthusiasm for the overall scheme i.e. maintenance and environmental improvements.
- 8.3. Part-time closure (between 10am and 4pm) - of the 57 comments that have been received in response to both events, 29 (51%) are in support and 23 (40%) are against the traffic management option for 10 am - 4 pm part-time closure. Five (9%) respondents have recorded 'not sure'. As well as businesses, the objectors include residents living on Great Minster Street, The Square and Market Lane. There is support from the restaurant trade for this measure but not from the majority of retailers who are vociferous in their objection to this proposal as they feel that it would damage their businesses.
- 8.4. A further issue which has come to light through the consultation is that of Bishop Morley's Cottages on Market Lane. These cottages have a private access for vehicles off Market Street via a private entrance into the Cathedral grounds. The occupiers of the cottages are elderly people with mobility issues and thus require vehicular access. The part-time closure would have serious implications for access to the properties and there is no obvious answer as to how this could be overcome.
- 8.5. As this proposal would affect loading it is covered by a statutory instrument which requires that objections to such proposals have to be heard at a public enquiry. From the responses received, particularly from traders in The

Square, it is very likely that if we press on with the part-time closure that this would have to be decided at a public inquiry.

- 8.6. Should it be decided to continue with the part-time closure, the next stage would be to formally advertise the proposals thereby giving the opportunity for objections to be submitted.
- 8.7. 20 mph zone - The response was overwhelmingly positive to the addition of a 20mph zone, with 34 (84%) agreeing that this was a good idea.
- 8.8. It has been suggested that a lower speed limit may be more appropriate and may act as a disincentive to through traffic. Speed limits have to be set at 10mph increments as many vehicles' speedometers do not show 5mph increments. Additionally, a 5mph limit would be below the threshold that many vehicles would be able to record.

The extract below is taken from the DfT's Traffic Signs Manual, which clarifies the legal position on speed limits on the highway:

Any maximum speed limit below 30 mph (other than a temporary limit made under section 14 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or a 20 mph limit or a 20 mph zone) requires the consent of the Secretary of State (paragraphs 13 and 14 of Schedule 9 to the Act as amended by the Road Traffic Regulation Act (Amendment) Order 1999); such limits are unlikely to be agreed.

It would be possible to apply for special authorisation, but this published guidance suggests that this would not be successful.

## **9. Wider Issues/ Alternatives**

- 9.1. As part of the Winchester Town Access Plan a second stage Traffic Management Study/ Review of the one-way system and road network in Winchester is planned. This will look to see if the one-way system can be adapted to make cross town journeys less onerous thus making short cuts such as the one through The Square less attractive. In the longer term, therefore, this may potentially offer improvements in terms of traffic conditions through The Square. Traffic flow details are set out below. These show a clear imbalance in flows by direction with 1500 vehicles per day passing through The Square from the Southgate Street direction as opposed to only 230 from the other direction. This is a result of the current traffic management arrangements in force and the fact that people choose to short cut through The Square rather than travelling around the one way system if travelling from the Southgate Street area towards the southern part of the City.

### **Traffic Flows**

- 9.2. From Southgate Street there is a steady flow of traffic between 9am and 5pm of between 120 and 150 vehicles per hour (total 12 hour flow 1500 vehicles). From Colebrook Street there is steady but smaller flow of traffic of between 20 and 30 vehicles per hour (total 12 hour flow 230 vehicles).

### **Reversing the one-way in Great Minster Street**

9.3. Consideration has been given to reversing the direction of the one-way along Great Minster Street. However this would have the same effect, and hence consequences on access, as the suggested part time closure between 10am and 4pm due to the current restrictions in place which affect access from the lower High Street end, as these already preclude access between 10am and 4pm. This would therefore not have any benefit unless the one-way in Market Lane were also to be reversed. The effects of this will need careful consideration particularly in relation to HGV access for loading. In effect this would force HGVs to exit the Square via Great Minster Street towards Southgate Street which is unlikely to be achievable due to width restrictions and other existing constraints. At present larger HGV access from the Colebrook Street end and u-turn and then exit in the same direction. During road works a two way working has been achieved on Market Lane. This can only successfully and safely be achieved with the use of traffic signals which facilitate shuttle one way working due to the very narrow nature of the road and junctions in this area.

### **Winchester City Council Contribution**

9.4. Winchester City Council's contribution to the scheme is primarily to provide better quality materials to match those used in The High Street. This has been set at £100,000 or 20% of the scheme costs up to a maximum contribution of £150,000. This contribution may be at risk if the materials are changed from those which were shown at the exhibitions. Further clarification would need to be sought on this matter. The Square is also central to the Heritage area and as such use of higher quality materials would be preferable in this respect.

### **Changes to the Scheme design/use of materials**

9.5. Some concerns have been expressed that the use of York Stone setts in the carriageway areas through The Square would be at risk of damage and may be dislodged over time if the current level of traffic was allowed to continue to pass through The Square. The construction technique to be utilised will ensure, through the use of a good sub base and the insertion of reinforcement, that the setts will be durable and will remain in place with current levels of traffic. The stone setts are also robust, and once sealed will provide an attractive surface which will withstand vehicular movements. The use of the same materials and construction techniques in the lower section of The High Street in similar circumstances is proving to be successful and robust and does not appear to be susceptible to tyre marks or other damage. The high quality scheme proposals for the carriageway area consist of two areas of York Stone setts in the Square (at the corner of Great Minster Street and The Square and at the corner of The Square and Market Street) and in-between these areas the carriageway would be surfaced with a special buff coloured surface (on a bituminous carriageway construction).

- (i) The cost saving, if the two areas of setts were not installed and instead the carriageway areas were surfaced with a normal bituminous construction throughout would be approximately £27,500.
- (ii) The cost saving if the two areas of setts were not installed and instead the carriageway areas were surfaced throughout with special buff coloured surface on a bituminous carriageway construction would be approximately £11,500.
- (iii) The savings are not significant sums if the setts were to be replaced with a flexible surfacing.

## **10. Timescales/Way Forward**

- 10.1. In order to complete the scheme before Christmas 2011 a start would need to be made on site by May 2011. As such it is suggested that the scheme as recently exhibited with the high quality materials is progressed to the procurement stage and in tandem with this that an informal consultation is undertaken on traffic management options. This would include options to restrict access through a prohibition of driving between 10am and 4pm (as included in the recent exhibitions) and possibly a less restrictive option of between 11am and 3pm. Details of the 20mph zone proposal will also be included.
- 10.2. Further consideration will also be given to allowing two-way access into and out of The Square from Colebrook Street during the works period using temporary traffic signal control and a possible turning area at the end of Market Lane. If this is found to be a workable solution this may be a potential permanent traffic management solution which would allow access through The Square to be restricted to certain hours.
- 10.3. Any complementary traffic management proposals would have to be subject to separate formal consultation and approval which would be undertaken independently of the Refurbishment project. This will also give time to brief and discuss such matters with local members of both authorities.
- 10.4. A further report can be submitted to the Executive Members of both authorities setting out the results of further investigations in relation to traffic management and the wider public consultation mentioned in 7.6 above.

## **11. Statutory Procedures**

- 11.1. A temporary road closure will be required to enable the road works to be undertaken safely.
- 11.2. Winchester City Council, under the traffic management agency agreement, is to arrange for the advertisement of a traffic regulation order that would, subject to formal consultation, be placed upon the completed scheme to prohibit vehicle access during the day time hours from Monday to Sunday.

- 11.3. Subject to further details being agreed, Winchester City Council will progress a traffic regulation order to introduce a 20 mph speed limit on a number of streets around the Cathedral, including The Square.

## **12. Land Requirements**

- 12.1. No land acquisition is required. All works are to be confined within existing highway limits.

## **13. Maintenance Implications**

- 13.1. The refurbishment of The Square has a design life of 20 years and no major maintenance works are expected to be necessary within this period. The improved drainage system will significantly enhance the resilience of the network in this location.

## **14. Recommendations**

- 14.1. That the Project Appraisal to improve the structure, condition and appearance of The Square, Winchester with re-paving work and new surface water drainage, at an estimated cost of £712,000, be approved subject to appropriate measures being implemented to reduce traffic impact on the square and a suitable funding contribution being made by Winchester City Council.
- 14.2. That detailed consideration and progression of traffic regulation orders to introduce a 20 miles per hour speed limit and to restrict vehicle access for part of the day be approved and taken forward to formal consultation.
- 14.3. That authority be given for a further consultation with the public to secure wider engagement with the scheme and the traffic options, and to provide a definitive statement of public opinion, following which a final review of scheme options will take place.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u> High Street, Winchester-Maintenance Improvements	<u>Reference</u> 1554Rpt/PST	<u>Date</u> 11/09/08
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u> N/A	<u>Date</u>	

**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> Scheme Files	<u>Location</u> Hampshire Highways East, Winchester
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## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1. The improved footway layout and tactile surfacing together with the traffic management restrictions will assist vulnerable users particularly the visually impaired.

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

- 2.1. The scheme will not impact on the Crime and Disorder Act.

### **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 will provide an attractive environment for pedestrians to help encourage walking as an alternative to motorised transport. The improvements to the surface water drainage system will assist with rainwater run-off.