

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	15 September 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal: Romsey Town Centre Improvements – Phase 2 Bell Street, Romsey Accessibility Improvement Scheme
<b>Reference:</b>	7732
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide details of the proposed Phase 2 Bell Street, Romsey Accessibility Improvement Scheme (“the Scheme”) to introduce a level surface scheme to Bell Street in Romsey, to provide improved pedestrian accessibility.
- 1.2. In order to improve the pedestrian facilities in this part of Romsey and address the long standing issues of substandard footway width, a level surface scheme is proposed from just west of the Banning Street junction on Broadwater Road and will extend up to the Market Place. This will slow vehicle speeds down on the entry to Bell Street (a one way street) by providing a raised crossing point which will also act as a ‘gateway’ to the area.
- 1.3. The footways on Bell Street will be repaved in Yorkstone which is in keeping with the scheme recently completed in Church Street, Romsey. The carriageway will be resurfaced in a buff coloured tarmac and narrowed to help slow vehicle speeds to aid accessibility and permeability for all visitors and residents. The on-street parking will be removed so that the wider footways can be delivered for the full length of the street.
- 1.4. The public realm improvements will be in keeping with the historic nature of Romsey Town Centre and other recent improvements undertaken during the first phase of works delivered in The Hundred, Latimer Street and the Cornmarket, and more recently Church Street in 2016.

- 1.5. Alternative options considered included 'do nothing' but this was rejected due to the poor pedestrian facilities currently available and the fact that the existing situation precludes some visitors to Romsey from being able to access this area due to the very narrow footways and inadequate crossing opportunities. Improving the surfaces of the footways 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.
- 1.6. Retaining the on-street parking (4 spaces) was considered but rejected during the public consultation with the majority of respondents expressing a preference for it to be removed to provide for enhanced pedestrian accessibility.
- 1.7. Removal of the yellow lines denoting parking restrictions in the area was considered as it was felt to be more in keeping with the historical location. This was rejected due to the need to have some parking enforcement and due to the fact that a parking zone approach was not supported or felt appropriate for this town centre location.
- 1.8. The success of the scheme will be based upon future pedestrian surveys that will monitor the increase in use of this area of the town centre by all. Traffic and pedestrian surveys have already been undertaken to provide the 'before' data.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. The historic core of Romsey hosts the Norman Abbey at its centre. The majority of commercial properties are located around the Market Place, Church Street, Latimer Street, the Hundred and Bell Street. Bell Street is a one way road leading directly into the centre of Romsey and is the main route into the town for many drivers.
- 2.2. A number of the historical streets, such as Bell Street, have very narrow footways and over the years repeated re-surfacing has resulted in significant rises in level. The uneven nature of these footways is a problem particularly as in the 2009 visitor survey it indicated that 42% of visitors to the town were aged over 60 and that 16% of visitors had a disabled person as a member of their party.
- 2.3. The enhancement works for Bell Street are required to address a number of issues faced by many historical towns such as narrow and uneven footways, a lack of crossing facilities, limited facilities for cyclists and streets dominated by motor vehicles.
- 2.4. Community Street Audits carried out have identified that Bell Street is an area where many visitors struggle to explore due to the poor pedestrian facilities. It is particularly unsuitable for those with mobility impairment. The narrow footways make it difficult for wheelchair users or those using mobility scooters

to access the shops. When pedestrians cross each others path one group has to enter the carriageway to allow the other group to pass. The kerbs are a trip hazard for the many elderly residents and visitors to Romsey with a number of falls and trips attributed to the narrow footways.

- 2.5. A Project Board consisting of the County Member for Romsey, Mark Cooper, the Romsey Extra County Councillor, Roy Perry, and 3 Borough Councillors from Test Valley (Clive Collier [Chair of the Board], Ian Hibberd & Ian Richards) was set up to steer the Romsey Town Centre Improvement programme. There is also an officer steering group made up of officers from Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council. The group reports to the Project Board and helps to guide the members in their decision making. The officers on the steering group also attend the Project Board to answer questions and provide expert advice. The board has approved the design now being taken forward for implementation.

### 3. Finance

3.1	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design Fee	52.0	7.4	Developer Contributions	210.6
	Client Fee	5.0	0.7	Public Realm improvement Programme	497.0
	Supervision	32.0	4.5		
	Construction Land	618.6	87.4		
	Total	<u>707.6</u>	<u>100.0</u>	Total	<u>707.6</u>

3.2	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	4.8	0.004%
	Capital Charge	68.0	0.041%

#### 4. Programme

	Gateway Stage			
	3- Project Appraisal	Start on Site	End on Site	4- Review
Date (mm/yy)	09/16	02/17	05/17	05/18

#### 5. Scheme Details

- 5.1. Scheme proposal design plans are attached as Appendices.
- 5.2. The scheme proposed is to provide a level surface footway/carriageway in Bell Street, Romsey to provide improved accessibility to all. The scheme will start on Broadwater Road to slow vehicle down before entering Bell Street.
- 5.3. On Broadwater Road the carriageway will be raised to the level of the existing footway. A ramp in silver grey granite kerbs will lead to a table constructed using granite setts. A pedestrian barrier will be installed to dissuade pedestrian from using the very narrow section of footway leading to Middlebridge Street.
- 5.4. On the western corner between the Middlebridge Street and Newton lane junction the cobbles will be removed and the junction altered to allow a smoother exit onto Bell Street. The Saxon paving will be re-laid and the area will include street furniture including pedestrian barrier and a planter.
- 5.5. A ramp of granite kerbs will be used to raise the carriageway from Middlebridge Street at its junction with Bell Street. From Newton Lane a ramp and table will raise the carriageway to the level surface on Bell Street with tactile paving provided to assist crossing for those with a visual impairment at the table.
- 5.6. A 400mm drainage channel in silver grey granite setts with Yorkstone fluted channels to existing downpipes will be installed on each side of the carriageway.
- 5.7. A gateway type effect in the carriageway will be placed at the start to Bell Street to help slow vehicle speeds further.
- 5.8. The zebra crossing near to the Dukes Mill steps will be retained but new red tactile paving will be installed
- 5.9. All footways will be paved in Yorkstone with buff coloured tarmac for the carriageway surface.

- 5.10. The access to Comley Court on the eastern side of Bell Street will be highlighted in light beige granite setts.
- 5.11. At Tee Court a further crossing point will be provided with tactile paving and light beige granite setts.
- 5.12. The crossing at the Cornmarket will be highlighted with granite setts in the carriageway across the Cornmarket and Bell Street together with tactile paving as specifically requested by one of the guide dog users.
- 5.13. The Cornmarket crossing will also include a ramp (granite kerbs) and a table (granite setts) to raise the carriageway to the level surface provided on Bell Street. A ramp in granite kerbs will also be provided for link to Market Place.
- 5.14. The on street parking will be removed to enable the footways to be made wider for the full length of the street.
- 5.15. The Church Street scheme delivered in 2016 requires some post scheme remedial work outside the Former Magistrate Court (FMC) to reduce the inappropriate use of the footway in this location, in terms of using the footway area to avoid giving way to traffic coming from 'The Horsefair' direction and parking.
- 5.16. Therefore, as part of this scheme, additional pedestrian barriers will be provided on Church Street opposite the Post Office to stop the overrunning and illegal parking on this section of footway.

## **6. Departures from Standards**

- 6.1. None

## **7. Community Engagement**

- 7.1. A public consultation was held from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016, with the exhibition boards remaining on display at the Former Magistrates Court in Church Street Romsey for the duration of the consultation period. The exhibition was manned by officers of both Hampshire County and Test Valley Borough Councils on the first day of the consultation, which was a joint exhibition including information about the Market Place feasibility proposals as well as the designs for Bell Street.
- 7.2. The consultation for the Scheme received 96 responses (online and paper copies). Of these, 70% said that they supported the proposed scheme, with 18% saying 'No', 6% 'Don't know' and 6% providing no response to the question. A summary of the consultation responses can be found on the following web page [www.hants.gov.uk/romseytowncentre](http://www.hants.gov.uk/romseytowncentre)

- 7.3. The consultation also sought the views of the public on whether the on-street parking in Bell Street should be retained or removed to allow the footways to be extended for the full length of the street. Of the responses on this issue 59 wanted the on street parking removed and wider footways provided, with 22 wanting the on-street parking retained at the expense of the footway widths with 15 not responding to the question.
- 7.4. The consultation responses and comments received were reviewed by officers and reported to the Project Board. As a result of the consultation, the Project Board agreed to the removal of the on-street parking to allow wider footways.
- 7.5. Key stakeholders that responded to the consultation were; The Romsey & District Society, Bradbeers Department Store, local visually impaired guide dog users, the Romsey Town Centre Manager, the Chamber of Commerce, Guide Dogs for the Blind and local residents.
- 7.6. Site meetings have taken place with Guide Dogs for the Blind representatives and local visually impaired road users to explain the intentions of the scheme. However they understand the need to improve the pedestrian facilities in Romsey and are therefore supportive, but did request that crossing points included tactile paving to help them orientate themselves and to assist them when crossing the road.

## **8. Statutory Procedures**

- 8.1. Not applicable.

## **9. Land Requirements**

- 9.1. Land at Dukes Mill is included in the detailed design for the enhancement of the Scheme. However, the land leading to Dukes Mill is under more than one owner. Contact has been made with two owners, who have provided their consent, with a third unknown at this time. If agreement can be reached in time with all landowners then the land leading to Dukes Mill will be included as part of these works. If not then this small section of off highway land can be removed from the overall scheme and be picked up during the Market Place works in 2018 when the owners have all agreed it.
- 9.2. No dedication or purchase of land is required for this to take place. The remainder of the Scheme is all on the public highway.

## **10. Maintenance Implications**

- 10.1. A representative from the maintenance team has been involved in the Project Board meetings to discuss ongoing maintenance liability and issues. The planters will be maintained by Test Valley Borough Council.

10.2. Ongoing maintenance of the enhanced materials will be funded through the use of commuted sums.

## **11. Recommendations**

- 11.1. That the Executive Member for Environment and Transport approves the Project Appraisal for the proposed Phase 2 Bell Street, Romsey Accessibility Improvement Scheme as outlined in this report.
- 11.2. That approval be given to procure and spend and enter into necessary contractual arrangements to implement the proposed Phase 2 Bell Street, Romsey Accessibility Improvement Scheme, as set out in this report, at an estimated cost of £707,600 to be funded from the Public Realm Improvements Programme and Developer Contributions.
- 11.3. That authority to make the arrangements to implement the proposed Phase 2 Bell Street, Romsey Accessibility Improvement Scheme, including minor variations to the design or contract, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

## **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 Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
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>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Church Street Romsey (PA)	<a href="http://www.3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advancedsearchmeetings/site/documents.htm?sta=10&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=6042&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=">http://www.3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advancedsearchmeetings/site/documents.htm?sta=10&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=6042&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=</a>	16/9/2014
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<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.)

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.

The consultation on the Bell Street proposals provided 96 responses from a range of users. Of these responses 70% supported the scheme with only 18% not supporting the scheme as designed. One guide dog user expressed concerns over the crossing at the junction of the Cornmarket and Bell Street, requesting tactile paving on the two corners between the Butchers and cake shop. This has been added to the design as have other locations now identified for tactile paving.

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 Bell Street which will increase the accessibility of the street for wheelchair users, 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.

The visually impaired have been consulted and whilst they would prefer the same street scene their needs in terms of orientation including tactile paving at key crossing points has been taken into account and will be provided.

The drainage channel adjacent to the carriageway has also been designed to aid the visually impaired to help them recognise the edge of the carriageway/footway.

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

2.1. None

## **3. Climate Change:**

3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

3.2. 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.