



To: South Area Committee  
Report by: Glen Richardson, Head of Joint Urban Design Team  
Relevant scrutiny committee: N/A  
Wards affected: Queen Edith's

## **Wulfstan Way Local Centre – recommended improvements Not a Key Decision**

### **1. Executive summary**

The following report sets out potential improvements to the Wulfstan Way Local Centre based on consultation undertaken during 2009 with local residents and primary school students. The recommended improvements do not represent a final list of recommended improvements, but rather a list of improvements for member discussion. The list of improvements enables members to consider improvement separately or jointly, thereby enabling different cost estimates to be prepared.

### **2. Recommendations**

South Area Committee members are recommended to:

1. consider the recommendations put forward in this report;
2. decide which of the recommendations should be developed further into a final, detailed set of proposals for consideration at a future committee meeting; and
3. provide a steer of the budget amount for environmental improvements for Wulfstan Way Local Centre for consideration as part of the current project and budget planning for environmental improvement projects for South Area Committee.

### **3. Background**

In 2009, officers of the Joint Urban Design Team were requested to review the existing function and condition of the Wulfstan Way Local Centre with a view to recommending possible improvements for member consideration. During June and July of 2009, officers of various services in the Council conducted two consultation exercises in an effort to better understand what was and what wasn't working in the local centre and what improvements might be most effective. Consultation was undertaken with local residents and primary school students at the nearby Queen Edith's Primary School during the months of June and July 2009, respectively.

This report sets out in summary form the results of the consultation and provides proposals for the consideration of South Area Committee members. Subject to the views of members of the South Area Committee, officers will proceed to work up a more detailed work program for final approval at a later date.

This project and the recommendations set out in this report directly support the City Council's Medium Term Objectives to maintain thriving and viable neighbourhoods. Healthy local centres are key part of thriving and viable neighbourhoods.

### **Summary of consultation exercises**

Officers of the Joint Urban Design Team have prepared an "Event Record" (August 2009) which summarized the results of the consultation in 2009. This document may be found at

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/Wulfstan%20Way%20Local%20Centre%20consultation.pdf>, and is also attached as an appendix to Area Committee member copies of this report. A summary of the consultation responses can be found on page 30 of the Event Record, however for the sake of not repeating what is contained therein, the key points of concern to local residents and primary school students include the following:

- Security and lighting
- Signage
- Traffic and parking
- Quality of the green in front of the shops
- Range of shops and opening hours
- Nature of shop fronts

While several other types of improvements were suggested, many were not practical to address. For example, the lack of "connectivity" to the local centre is not something that can be easily improved given the surrounding land ownership, and layout of streets, properties and pedestrian lanes. In addition, the lack of a local post office is a result of a decision taking some time ago by the Post Office itself and not something the City Council can easily reverse. However, where changes can be proposed to the physical nature of the local centre or the management of the shops, these are recommended.

The Wulfstan Way Local Centre has seen shops come and go in the past and the economic "health" of the centre has been variable. However, having analysed what a successful "benchmark" local centre might be, Wulfstan Way Local Centre is already challenged. The density of the surrounding population is relatively low; larger retailers exist in relatively close proximity; Wulfstan Way does not receive high amounts of passing traffic during day time hours; the position of the shops on the west side of the local centre are set too far back to make them inviting; and over the years shopping habits have tended to favour larger retail centres, the town centre and even Addenbrookes Hospital shops. All of these points are either factual or have been made during the course of public consultation.

Therefore in reaching conclusions in respect of the consultation feedback and the work undertaken, it is officer opinion that setting ambitious objectives for creating a very different local centre is not realistic. Instead, the recommendations contained below are intended to provide a modest measure of improvements which would improve the quality

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of the local centre, enable to function more effectively, and most importantly address the comments and suggestions provided through public consultation.

## **Recommendations**

Recommend improvements to the Wulfstan Way Local Centre can be categorized in two key areas: environmental improvements to improve the quality of the physical environment and therefore creating a more inviting place to shop and visit, and improvements to management of the local centre focused around parking management.

Although some consultees cited concern in respect of occasional anti-social behavior, one way of addressing such behavior is to improve the quality of the shop fronts and lighting and the design of the green, thereby improving its use and attraction and so potential for anti-social behaviour.

### *Environmental improvements*

Most consultees cited concerns with the quality of design and security of the shops and open space located on the west side of Wulfstan Way. To address these concerns, the following is recommended:

- Improve the green through introducing more direct footpaths to the shops and across Wulfstan Way to the pharmacy, crown lifting of trees and removal of one tree, provision of additional bins and possibly recycling facilities, creation of a centre green “square” with benches, installation of footpath lighting continuing pavement material across Wulfstan Way to help facilitate speed reduction of passing traffic. Estimated cost £150K - £200K; budget source Environmental Improvements budget for South Area Committee. A more modest cost is clearly possible through implementing fewer measures.
- Provide a glazed canopy in front of the shops in order to provide a more inviting, more proximate to street edge, and weather-protected front to shops and fill in 1m recess for shops in middle of building frontage (estimated cost £50,000, budget approval would be investigated by Property Services)
- Improve balconies to flats above shops in order to provide improved overlooking of green and quality of appearance to the building (estimated cost £5000, budget approval would be investigated by Property Services)
- Provide cycle racks in order to encourage additional cycling use (part of Environmental Improvements budget)
- Create temporary or permanent public art installation in order to enable youth, children and adults a chance to an artistic legacy for local residents; this could include an element for children’s play. Estimated cost £11K, made possible by using commuted public art s106 funding from another development in Queen Edith’s ward
- Provide a community notice board of events, etc. in the green (estimated cost £1000)

- Provide improved signage for the local centre from Queen Edith's Way and at the front of the green (estimated cost £5000)
- Provide 4 additional car parking spaces at south end of green (part of Environmental Improvements budget costing)
- Remove or replace railing at end of pedestrian path to primary school and any other "pinch points" e.g. to Hulat Road (estimated cost £1000)

The attached diagram "Wulfstan Way Local Centre: Environmental Improvement Options - Key Diagram" show all these recommendations in a graphical format (at 1:500 scale on A3-sized print).

**The total estimated cost of all these measures taken together is between £223K and £273K**, which with the exception of the public art funding would have to be found from Environmental Improvements budget and/or capital improvement budgets for Council property improvements. Given the potential costs involved, it would be necessary for the Council to tender a contract for the environmental improvements in accordance with the Council's procurement rules.

The recommendation contained in this report requests a steer from committee members as to which projects should be progressed. A more detailed costing can then be provided later in 2010 to fit with those projects.

#### *Management improvements*

Many residents commented that the current shops do not provide a good range of shops or provide parking that is for the exclusive use of shoppers. While the City Council does not undertake "targeted" letting practices, the Council's Property Services team have advised that it may be possible to provide additional support to existing tenants to ensure they have a wide as possible opportunity for marketing and promotions.

To address these concerns, the following is recommended:

- Provide a restriction of two-hour only parking for shops to avoid others e.g. visitors/employees at Addenbrookes Hospital, using the spaces (estimated cost to be provided in consultation with Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Consider longer opening hours for shops and additional marketing support and advice for existing retail tenants (Property Services to progress)

## **4. Implications**

There are budget implications with the recommendations set out in this report, specifically in respect of the South Area Environmental Improvements budget and also relevant budgets for Council property improvements.

## **5. Background papers**

The "Event Record" described earlier sets out the relevant background to this report.

## **6. Appendices**

Wulfstan Way Local Centre: Environmental Improvement Options – Key Diagram

Sustainable Neighbourhoods Study – Wulfstan Way Local Centre, Event Record August 2009

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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