



To: Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places: Councillor Carina O'Reilly

Report by: Head of Planning Services

Relevant scrutiny committee: Customer and Community Services Committee 8/10/15

Wards affected: All

**CHERRY HINTON HIGH STREET LOCAL CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS –  
REPORT AND OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
Not a Key Decision**

**1. Executive summary**

1.1 This report details proposals to improve Cherry Hinton High Street. The scheme will be jointly developed and funded by Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The scheme will involve upgraded cycleways, soft and hard landscaping, improvements to crossing points and improved public realm on Cherry Hinton High Street between the Robin Hood junction to the south and Teversham Drift to the north. The City Council part of the project has been developed in line with the Local Centres Improvement Programme, for which approval was granted by the Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places in October, 2014, to improve two local centres (Cherry Hinton High Street and Arbury Court) and a third still to be determined.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) Note the results of public consultation on improvements to Cherry Hinton High Street as set out in **Appendix B**.
- b) Note that the scheme is being proposed for funding through the Mid-Year Financial Review (MFR).
- c) Agree the proposed improvements to Cherry Hinton High Street as set out in **Appendix C** which will be finalised for the purposes of procurement in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, and to agree that any final modifications to the detailed

improvements and design will be agreed with the Chair, spokes and city and county members of Cherry Hinton ward.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Consultation on proposed improvements to Cherry Hinton High Street was undertaken in March 2015. The consultation was run by the county council with the city officers providing design advice and support and promoting changes jointly.
- 3.2 The consultation was very well attended and a series of open questions were posed about what physical improvements could be made to Cherry Hinton High Street. A questionnaire was provided and 431 respondents completed this questionnaire. County officers prepared a summary report to show the responses for 'All Respondents'. The following "headline" outcomes are relevant. The Phase 1 proposal consulted upon is shown attached in **Appendix A**.
- 3.3 The consultation noted the potential for a "Phase 2" to the improvements. This was done in order to gauge what level of support existed for more extensive improvements but at the same time being clear that funding would be subject to prioritised project funding managed by the county council. "Phase 1" improvements are being proposed however Phase 2 proposals are not being put forward at this time. Consultation results are outlined in **Appendix B**. These reveal a good level of support for changes to Rectory Terrace, removal of cycle bollard islands and unnecessary signs, railings etc., and introducing cycle lanes along each side of the High Street.
- 3.4 Results were more mixed with relation to the removal of the centre line on the street and with respect to removing mini-roundabouts at four junctions. Both City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council officers continue to recommend removal of the centre line. The mini-roundabouts are all retained, partly given very mixed consultation responses in respect of their removal but also given the cost for removal will likely exceed the overall project budget. The removal of the centre line has been done in many similar schemes and it is now common that there is no centre line in the new neighbourhoods around Cambridge, for example at Great Kneighton and Trumpington Meadows outside Trumpington. An even better known example is of Kensington High Street in London which represents and exemplar nationally in the "de-cluttering" of streets.
- 3.5 The proposals being put forward following consultation are intended to help re-enforce the original principles of the Local Centre Improvements Programme in creating "pride of place" and helping support the local economy through enhancements to the physical environment. The proposals represent "best practice" in urban design,

landscape and the design of streets as promoted via Manual for Streets<sup>1</sup> and other contemporary guidance in the improvements of city streets. The main features of the proposals attached at **Appendix C** therefore include:

- I. Proposals for the area of public realm outside the Post Office, on the corner of the High Street and Mill End Road:
  - a. New planting low level shrubs and tree, replacing function of unattractive guardrail
  - b. New bike stands
  - c. Benches
  - d. High quality surfacing
  - e. Potential to up-grade crossing to controlled/push button crossing
- II. Proposals for the public realm outside the local library and block of flats:
  - a. New options for a rainwater garden to replace amenity grass
  - b. New hedgerow planting
  - c. Resurfacing of the footpath to link with forecourt outside library (to coincide with intended extension to library)
  - d. Additional planting
  - e. Improved planting and surfacing outside small listed thatched cottage on high street, subject to owner approval
  - f. Proposed informal crossings with alternate materials, to be delivered by the county council.
- III. Proposals to the area of public realm on the corner of the High Street and Colville Road:
  - a. Wider footways to compensate for the removal of unattractive guardrail
  - b. Improved surfacing on footways
  - c. Amenity planting to small area of public grass

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), WSP et al. *Manual for Streets*, Thomas Telford, 2007.  
Report Page No: 3

- d. Wider and more improved informal crossing point to link spaces
- e. improved planting on small sections of footway to replace functionality of bollards.

IV. Proposals for Rectory Terrace adjacent to Chelwood Road:

- a. Highly attractive and environmentally beneficial Rainwater Gardens
- b. New surfacing throughout
- c. Seating
- d. New tree planting to improve street scene.

V. Proposals for High Street:

- a. New cycle lanes on both sides including removal of cycle chicanes and various highway features
- b. Widened footway to allow for removal of unattractive guardrail
- c. Amenity planting replaced with low maintenance but attractive shrub planting
- d. New trees to replace existing, proving a longer useful life expectancy.
- e. Upgrading block paving surfaces at bus laybys
- f. Entrance Signage. Relocating (at south end) and possibly one new (at north end) village entrance signage together with (subject to agreement with County Council and funding) raised tables to create entrance “features”

3.6 Officers have had to carefully sift through what represent, in respect of some parts of the consultation, very mixed views from the public. At the same time officers are able to recommend those parts of the “Phase 1” proposals which received the highest level of support. Having to make recommendations from disparate views in respect of parts of the proposals was inevitable given the significant length of the High Street, the sheer number of users and different opinions put forward, and the need to provide improvements within a fixed budget. In addition, some proposals will need to be the subject of final pricing and agreement with the county (controlled push button crossing at post office, raised table parts of entrance features for example). It is hoped however that almost all of the items set out in the Phase 1

consultation drawings in March 2015 will now be progressed. A further public exhibition to report the final planned proposals will be held later in October/early November so residents can appreciate the results of the consultation and what is planned to be taken forward. As a final approval step, County Council officers will be preparing a report on the proposals for approval of their parts of the project to their Environment and Economy Committee meeting this coming December or January. Once that approval is received then final procurement, final detailed design, and construction can commence in 2016.

3.7 The total combined city and county budget represents £507,000 which is made up of the following:

- £200,000 City Council Local Centres Improvements funding to be secured through the Mid-Year Financial Review
- £72,000 City Council Environmental Projects funding earmarked for Rectory Terrace
- £20,000 private funding for Rectory Terrace landowner
- £215,000 capital cycle funding from County Council

3.8 Subject to the necessary approvals, the project will be procured under the County Council's highway services framework contract and overseen by both County and City Council officers working jointly on finalising the detailed design for construction. It should be noted that £20,000 of funding for Rectory Terrace improvements is being secured from the land owner with works taking place on their land. The completion of the works will be the subject of an agreement between the City Council and the landowners to guarantee the long-term maintenance of the works (as has been negotiated for environmental improvements in other parts of the city when works are undertaken on private lands). Similar agreements may be required for other areas of the scheme.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

Total City Council funding of £200,000 (in addition to £92,000 already secured for the Rectory Terrace element of the project) has already been identified and included in the MFR by the City Council's Capital Programme Board. The County Council is providing £215,000 of funding primarily for the creation of improved cycling facilities. The

total overall budget is therefore expected to be £507,000 for the improvements to Cherry Hinton High Street.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

The Cycling Infrastructure Team at the County Council are leading the work with input from colleagues in the Environment Department at Cambridge City Council. Some client team staffing costs will need to be met from the overall project budget for Local Centres Improvements.

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

An EQiA was completed for the project and determined that the impact of the scheme would be positive overall. The improvement of local centres is considered positive in terms of helping promote equal opportunity and economic prosperity through improved quality of environment in selected local centres for all, regardless of economic status, age, ability or orientation.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

The environmental implications of the programme are considered to be positive as they support the quality and continuity of the city's neighbourhoods through the improvement of selected local centres and will be positive for residents, the local economy, businesses and tourism alike.

(e) **Procurement**

Procurement will be undertaken by the County Council and arrangements put in place for cost sharing and payment at key milestones during and after delivery of the project. The arrangements will be in accordance with the County and City Council's procurement rules.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

Significant local public and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform and determine the scope. More detailed consultation will be required as part of finalising the detailed design package. See **Appendix A** and **B** as well as comments included in the main body of this report.

(g) **Community Safety**

The programme is designed to deliver public realm improvements and foster increased pride of place and community cohesion. As such, it is expected to have a positive impact on community safety. A safety audit of the proposed design is being undertaken by the county council to ensure the final design is safe for all users.

## **5. Background papers**

Report and minutes from the Community Services Scrutiny Committee meeting of October 16, 2014 regarding the Local Centres Improvement Programme

## **6. Appendices**

Appendix A – Phase 1 Improvements Plan of consultation proposals (March 2015)

Appendix B – Consultation on the use of Cherry Hinton High Street - results (March 2015)

Appendix C (4x drawing = C1, C2, C3 and C4) – Cherry Hinton High Street and Local Centre proposals

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

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