



To: Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places
(and Deputy Leader): Councillor Carina O'Reilly

Report by: Alistair Wilson
Streets and Open Space Development Manager

Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services 14/01/2016
Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: Coleridge and Market wards

2015/16 S106 PRIORITY-SETTING FOLLOW-UP: PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 As a follow-up to the 2015/16 S106 priority-setting reports to this Committee last October (and as promised), this latest report presents further proposals for a couple of public realm improvements over the next few years so that relevant S106 developer contributions, which are due to expire before 2020, can be used on time.
- 1.2 The Council's Forward Plan has also referred to the inclusion of the business case for the Cherry Hinton Hall grounds improvements – phase 2 project within this January 2016 report. To avoid confusing two issues, this is now presented as a separate item elsewhere within the Committee's agenda papers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places:
 - a. prioritises up to £75,000 of S106 contributions towards public realm improvements along Cherry Hinton Road (between the junction with Hills Road and corner of Rock Road), subject to project appraisal;
 - b. prioritises up to £43,000 of S106 contributions towards a later public realm improvement scheme on Sidney Street, subject to project appraisal.

3. Background

3.1 New development creates extra demands. The council asks developers to pay S106 contributions to mitigate that impact. This helps to provide or improve facilities in the city. To be eligible for S106 funding, project proposals must be:

- specific;
- within the city of Cambridge;
- about providing additional benefit (not for repairs, maintenance, like-for-like replacements or running costs);
- accessible
- affordable and financially viable.

3.2 Over recent years, the council has run an annual priority-setting round in order to identify new projects for S106 funding. Public realm S106 contributions are held in a city-wide fund, for the Executive Councillor to decide which projects to take forward.

3.3 Official regulations governing the use of S106 contributions require councils to show a link between the projects on which they are spent and developments from which they arise. Officers look to fund city-wide projects firstly from contributions from the same area before looking for contributions from nearby developments in other areas.

3.4 The council undertook its 2015/16 priority-setting round last autumn. This included devolved decision-making reports to each of the council's four area committees, as well as reports to this Committee last October. Amongst the priorities allocated S106 public realm funding is a project (up to £42k) to install a Mill Road gateway sign¹.

3.5 The October 2015 report to this Executive Councillor noted that there were two S106 public realm contributions with expiry dates by 2020:

- a. around £70,000 to £75,000 remaining to be contractually committed to project(s) by July 2017;
- b. around £43,000 to be contractually committed to project(s) by May 2019.

Whilst some of the public realm contribution with the July 2017 expiry date could help to fund the Mill Road gateway sign, there is some flexibility here, so that between £33,000 and £75,000 of this contribution could be allocated to a different new project².

1. The projects prioritised (subject to project appraisal and grant/community use agreements) in this 2015/16 round can be found at www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106. Officers are currently developing arrangements for taking these projects forward.

2. There is scope to fund the Mill Road gateway sign from another S106 public realm contribution in East Area, which was received more recently.

- 3.6 The same report highlighted the possibility of developing a public realm improvement project along Cherry Hinton Road, near to The Marque development from which the contribution was received. A commitment was made to report back a proposal in January 2016.
- 3.7 Officers are mindful that it would also be helpful also to put forward proposals for the use of the contribution with the July 2019 expiry date, relating to development at Lion Yard, albeit that this would be on a longer timescale. This is proposed for public realm improvements along Sidney Street.

4. Proposals for consideration

- 4.1 **Cherry Hinton Road public realm improvements:** Officers are developing a proposal likely to encompass improved paving, tree-planting and seating along parts of Cherry Hinton Road. This would complement a previous improvement project along the shop frontages on Cherry Hinton Road around Blinco Grove. If agreed, the project details would be developed further with local consultation and engagement with land-owners. The objective is to bring forward a feasible scheme within the £33k-£75k price range, which could be contractually committed on time by July 2017 and completed by the autumn of that year. See Appendix A.
- 4.2 **Sidney Street public realm improvements:** This proposal would also involve improved surfacing and paving, and seating along Sidney Street between Hobson Street (where it meets St Andrew's Street) and Market Street. It would help to address issues identified in the Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Review, reported to this Committee last July. Given the major works in Holy Trinity churchyard already scheduled for 2016-17, the plan is to work up the details of the public realm improvements from spring 2017 with a view to delivery afterwards by spring 2018. See Appendix B.

5. Implications and next steps

- 5.1 **Financial implications:** The costs of these project proposals would be funded from relevant S106 contributions³ from the same area of the city. Whilst these contributions are subject to expiry dates, the council is planning ahead so that they can be used appropriately (in line with the criteria) and on time.
- 5.2 **Staffing implications:** If approved, the scoping and implementation of the two proposed projects would be managed by staff in the council's Streets & Open Spaces service.

3. Those S106 public realm contributions with expiry dates, mentioned in paragraph 3.5.

5.3 **Other implications:** If approved, the equality & poverty and environmental implications of these projects would be considered at the project appraisal stage. This would also take account of community safety, procurement and consultation & communication considerations. Local residents, community groups and ward councillors would be consulted on the proposals. The project appraisals/business cases would then be considered to the council's (officer-level) Capital Programme Board.

5.4 **Next steps:** Further S106 reports are scheduled for this Committee in March 2016. This will include taking stock of the council's interim approach to seeking S106 contributions for specific projects, in the light of S106 pooling constraints which were introduced last April.

6. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- "S106 priority-setting round: proposals for strategic/city-wide projects (City Centre and Public Places)" report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2015.
- "Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Review Action Plan" report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2015.
- Cambridge City Council's Developer Contributions web page: www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106

7. Appendices

- Appendix A: Outline project proposal: Cherry Hinton Road
- Appendix B: Outline project appraisal: Sidney Street

8. Inspection of papers

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

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Cherry Hinton Road public realm improvements

1. Where would it be?

Along both sides of Cherry Hinton Road between Hills Road and the area of retail orientated forecourts in the vicinity of the Rock Road junction.

2. What sort of improvements do you have in mind?

To develop and deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the public realm in the vicinity. This will help to improve general safety and the setting/environment, improving a sense of community well-being and acting as an incentive for local retail activity. This could involve improved surfacing and paving, tree-planting and seating. The aim would be to complement previous improvements on Cherry Hinton Road around Blinco Grove.

The details need to be developed, following consultation with the local community, ward councillors (ie, both Coleridge and Queen Edith's wards), stakeholders and local groups.

3. Why is this project needed?

Local development has increased the busy-ness of the area. Public realm improvements will help to strengthen the sense of pride in the local community, for both new and existing residents.

4. How would local communities benefit from this project?

It will contribute towards the corporate vision, 'Cambridge - a great place to live, learn and work', by improving the quality of the public realm in the area. It will contribute towards the corporate vision, 'fair for all', by listening to citizens and giving them the opportunity to influence public decision-making.

5. Have any preparations/discussions taken place about this yet?

Clearly, there is more to do in engaging the local community. There are also opportunities to secure further third party funded contributions towards the overall improvement work costs – to be investigated as part of the project.

6. Are there any issues to take into account?

The frontages are included public highway and privately owned land. Some is within the ownership of Cambridge City Council, whilst some is not. The involvement and agreement of other parties will therefore be essential.

Estimated start date (scoping):	Spring 2016
Target completion date:	Autumn 2017

Sidney Street public realm improvements

1. Where would it be?

Both sides of Sidney Street between Hobson Street and Market Street.

2. What sort of improvements do you have in mind?

To develop and deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the public realm in the vicinity. This will help to improve general safety and the setting/environment, improving a sense of community well-being and acting as an incentive for retail activity. This could involve improved surfacing and paving, and seating along parts of Sidney Street. The aim would be to complement previous streetscape improvements in the city centre.

3. Why is this project needed?

Housing growth has led to increased demands on the city centre. The Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Review Action Plan highlighted issues around the need for improved access, investment in public realm and better management of cycle parking.

4. How would local communities benefit from this project?

This project will contribute towards the corporate vision, 'Cambridge - a great place to live, learn and work', by improving the quality of the public realm in the area. It will contribute towards the corporate vision, 'fair for all', by listening to citizens and giving them the opportunity to influence public decision-making.

5. Have any preparations/discussions taken place about this yet?

Initial discussions with county council colleagues. If the proposal is allocated S106 funding, further local consultation will take place in order to develop the detailed improvement project.

6. Are there any issues to take into account?

Sidney Street includes areas of public highway and potentially areas of privately owned land. Some is within the ownership of Cambridge City Council. The involvement & agreement of other parties will be essential. Major works are scheduled to take place in Holy Trinity churchyard (with a compound on part of Sidney Street) for 12-18 months from March 2016.

Estimated start date:	Spring 2017
Target completion date:	Spring 2018