

Part A

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 11 September 2017
Report of: Deputy Managing Director
Title: Public Realm Improvement – High Street – Watford

1.0 Summary

1.1 As part of the major Charter Place development being completed by Intu in the town centre, bringing in the latest entertainment and leisure technology and enhancing the dining and overall shopper experience in the town, the Council has an opportunity to lead in providing a high quality pedestrian friendly environment that will complement the development and enhance the look and feel of the High Street.

1.2 This will tie in with highway improvements in the High Street that form part of the Charter Place redevelopment itself and with the enhancement works in The Parade that have already been carried out by the Council.

1.3 In order to progress and deliver this project within time scales to complement the opening of the new Charter Place in September 2018, it is proposed that the Council funds the proposed works set out in summary below. This report is seeking approval for additional capital funding of £800,000 which is required to enable the scheme to be delivered within the time scales necessary.

1.4 In summary the project consists of the following elements:-

- Re-paving of the footway & carriageway in the High Street from Clarendon Road to St May's Square using high quality natural stone materials that complement the recent Parade enhancement scheme
- Creation of a 'shared space' environment within the project area with reduced vehicles flows & greater pedestrian dominance
- Relocation of existing part time taxi rank to a full time facility in Wellstones
- Relocation of part-time blue badge parking to purpose built full-time facilities in Church Street
- Re-routing of bus services with the agreement of the bus companies to reduce bus flows through this section of the High Street and provision of enhanced bus facilities at other locations in the town centre.
- New street lighting & enhanced CCTV provision

1.5 Should the Council be successful in receiving Hertfordshire Local Enterprise

Partnership (LEP) grant funding of £400,000 the additional overall cost to the Council will be a net £400,000 as the receipt of the grant funding will be re-paid back to the Council.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Cabinet recommends to Council that £800,000 is included in the Capital Programme 2018/19 for the scheme

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Report approved by: Nick Fenwick – Deputy Managing Director – Place Shaping and Corporate Performance

3.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 3.1 The proposed works to enhance the public highway in the High Street as set out in 1.4 above will cost circa £2m. The Council already holds £666,000 within this year's budget with a further £250,000 already secured in 2018/19 from a bid that was agreed in November 2016, in total amounting to £916,000 (see Appendix A).
- 3.2 Officers of the Council have already secured a further £300,000 from Hertfordshire County Council; this will be paid in the 2018/19 financial year.
- 3.3 A preliminary application has been made to the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for £400,000 in the form of a grant . This forms part of a larger bid for funds from the LEP to assist in delivering a wider range of Public Realm enhancements across the wider town centre area over the next 1-8 years to future-proof the town centre as a successful commercial and retail centre. Discussions with the LEP to refine and develop the bid are continuing with a final bid programmed to be submitted in early 2018 for consideration by the LEP for 2018/19. A further application for a grant of £20,000 to the Police and Crime Commissioner to improve CCTV and lighting in the area will be made in late 2017 when the next bidding round opens (date yet to be confirmed by PCC).

3.4 The table below captures the above information for ease of reference.

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|---|-------------|
| Funds already held by the Council | £ 666.000 |
| Council funds already secured in 2016 available in the 2018/19 Financial year | £ 250.000 |
| Herts County Council – Funding Agreed in principle – written commitment received 23/08/17 | £ 300.000 |
| | |
| | |
| Proposed additional Capital Funds (to be provided by the Council) 2018/19 | £ 800.000 |
| Total | £ 2,016,000 |

Additional funds from the LEP (£400,000) and the Police (£20,000) are to be applied for. The initial application is being submitted in September 2017. If the money is received then this will reduce the amount that the Council will need to provide.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the Council is being asked to commit up to £800,000 for this scheme. Some funding has already been secured to finance the scheme and a further £420,000 is to be applied for. If the further funding is secured then this will reduce the Council's funding requirement by a corresponding amount.

The scheme can be added to the Capital programme in 2018/19 as part of the budget setting process. Hopefully at this point the precise amount to be funded by the Council will be clarified with all offers and applications processed and confirmed. It is likely that the Council will have to undertake external borrowing during 2018/19 and this scheme will increase the amount which will be required to be borrowed. Further clarification on this will be provided during the budget setting process.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that as this is not currently within the council's capital programme it will need to be agreed by Council.

4.3 Equalities/Human Rights

4.3.1 None from this report. The enhancement scheme will be subject to an

Environmental Impact Assessment as part of the design process.

4.4 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

4.4.1 Officers of the Council are working continuously with the Police and Crime Commissioners as part of the public realm enhancement to take into account street lighting and CCTV security enhancements.

Appendices

- Appendix A

Background Papers

- No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

- None