

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 18th September 2018
Title of report: Huddersfield Town Centre - Improvement Works

Purpose of report

To highlight the potential for early urban realm and maintenance improvements within Huddersfield town centre as early projects to deliver from the allocated town centre capital allocation. This is likely to span across two financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes - effects two or more wards and cost of works exceed £250k
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Yes - 17th August 2018
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by Strategic Director and name Is it also signed off by the Acting Service Director - Finance, IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Karl Battersby - 6.09.2018 Eamonn Croston - 7.09.2018 Julie Muscroft - 6.09.2018
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Peter McBride - Economy/Cllr N Mather - Communities and Environment

Electoral wards affected: Newsome, Greenhead, Dalton

Ward councillors consulted: None specifically at this stage

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council is preparing a Masterplan for Huddersfield town centre. Work has commenced on this. Officers expect the Masterplan to be completed later this year but need to bring forward some early ideas so that delivery can start as early as possible.
- 1.2 Existing and emerging reports, programmes and schemes have been fed into an analysis and prioritisation of potential early urban realm improvement schemes. This report requests the endorsement to progress to the next stage for a number of projects and programmes and allocate capital funds to delivering these.

2. Information required to take a decision

Public Realm Works

Draft Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework

- 2.1** Over the past 12 months a draft of the Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework (the Framework) has been produced through collaboration of many departments, including planning and design, public health, creative economy, Green Streets®, engineers, construction, maintenance, landscape and cleansing teams. This document aims to provide an overview of the vision, strategies to be addressed, design principles to be met and basic guidance on do's and don'ts for new design or repairs of the public realm in Huddersfield town centre.
- 2.2** It is proving to be a worthwhile internal guide to how the town centre's street scape quality can be improved and it is planned to bring this to a later meeting of Cabinet for endorsement. The schemes identified below will be constructed to the standards set out in that document to ensure standards are increased generally.
- 2.3** To build on this work a masterplan is being prepared for the town centre and as part of this process Officers have been considering early opportunities to deliver a programme of schemes in the short to medium term and ahead, at this stage, of the main Masterplan.
- 2.4** This is driven by three factors. The first is need, the second is to capitalise on known development opportunities and the third is funding opportunity. This has identified three key project locations. These are:
- New Street
 - Cross Church Street/Kings Street Area
 - Queensgate/Queen Street area

New Street

- 2.5** New Street is currently a pedestrianised area. It is a main route through the heart of the town centre serving a core part of the retail offer for the town. However, parts of it are of low quality. The surfacing in parts of the route towards the Southern end of the town has been subject to a series of trip hazard claims that have been upheld in the County Court to the tune of £48,500. The need for basic improvement is therefore of high priority.
- 2.6** However, it is recognised that this route should be the subject of a clear and visible set of improvements which can demonstrate how spaces within the town can be improved in a quality way. With that aim in mind then officers are proposing a three stage approach to making improvements in this area as an exemplar project. These are set out below.
- 2.7**
- New Street - Stage 1 - Options and Vision - As part of the ongoing masterplan additional work will be required to develop a future vision for this area. Early concepts for an improved public realm need to be developed with a view to delivering quickly. It is proposed to commission detailed work which provides a number of solutions to feed into Stage 2 and 3 below.

- 2.8** • New Street - Stage 2 - from Queensgate/103 New Street to Princes Street. Early scheme concentrating on potential short term exemplar design looking at:
- a. Street trees, greenspace and new planters;
 - b. Improved seating and public art; and
 - c. Improved paving and central access way (Standards defined from the draft Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework - Gold Standard recommended).
- 2.9** • New Street - Stage 3 - from Princes Street to Cloth Hall Street. Continuation of Stage 1 and 2 principles incorporating:
- a. Potential for covered areas, seating, public art, greenspace and street trees; and
 - b. Replacement of the dated setts with more sympathetic setts closest to the shops and mixed pallet of floor scape along the central boulevard. (Standards defined from the draft Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework - Gold Standard recommended).
- 2.10** On Stage 2 Officers are mindful of the impending work on 103 New Street as well as the ongoing maintenance hazards in this area. Depending on timing of those works an interim solution will need to be developed at additional cost. This will be designed to both facilitate the redevelopment of 103 New Street as well as tackle immediate hazards for pedestrians.
- 2.11** In tandem with the urban realm work any potential proposals will look to maximise soft landscape proposals.
- 2.12** Officers are seeking up to £1.2m to deliver these elements from the town centre capital allocation. Development of this scheme is likely this year with delivery in a later phase.

Cross Church Street/Kings Street and Queens Street/Queensgate Areas (See Appendix 1)

- 2.13** A Plan of this area is set out in Appendix 1 along with images of how Cross Church Street could look in the future
- 2.14** To emphasise the importance of this section of the town centre officers have highlighted a number of important factors below. These are:
- a. Cross Church Street is at the heart of the main retail offer of the town and is recognised as a busy part of town – it is often a Huddersfield visitor/shopper's overriding impression of the town offer outside the Kingsgate centre;
 - b. the area contains, or connects to, a wide variety of non-retail uses that are designed to attract a variety of users including families e.g. the Lawrence Batley Theatre; family oriented cafes on King Street and the Parish Church as well as being an approach to the University from the town;
 - c. we should recognise that there is a proposal to introduce better leisure uses in Kingsgate – Cross Church Street, King Street and Zetland Street remain the key streets that will access these;
 - d. for some streets the environment is hostile to pedestrians with too great a movement of vehicular traffic; on street parking and relatively little space given over to people moving between this and other parts of the town;

- e. this is a busy area it contrasts starkly, in quality terms, with other similarly popular locations across the town such as St George's Square, St Peter's Gardens and Northumberland Street;
 - f. the street scene is less than fitting for its conservation area status and is part of the low quality environment that is below expected standards; and
 - g. upgrading the street scape as a first step alongside, planned shopfront design guide policies, more rigorous enforcement and controls on hot food takeaways and licensing will ensure that over time the whole area is uplifted.
- 2.15** As part of the Combined Authority City Connect programme Kirklees is in line to receive around £1.3m to deliver enhanced public realm schemes along Cross Church Street, Queensgate and Queen Street from the now extended City Connect Programme.
- 2.16** The Council is preparing detailed designs and business cases. The schemes, which have an early estimated value of £3.5m will provide high quality public realm including the inclusion of green infrastructure, public art, and, importantly sustainable travel improvements running from Kirkgate to Queensgate.
- 2.17** Clearly there is a shortfall of £2.3m to complete the full set of schemes. This shortfall is due to be met from the current West Yorkshire Transport Fund Huddersfield Southern Gateways major project which is due to be delivered in 2020/21 and is currently being developed to outline business case stage.
- 2.18** In addition to this there are planned works to King Street involving a 'like for like' replacement of the precast concrete block paving. This would meet the requirements of the Framework. This would be a 'Gold B' standard for King Street as a principle street in the town centre. This is planned to be completed this year.
- 2.19** Officers are conscious that this is a relatively slow timeframe which has the potential to be fast tracked if the Council were to underwrite the scheme costs from the allocated capital funds. As such Officers are considering a number of funding options. These are:
- a. Continue with current City Connect and WYT Fund bids with a view to delivering in 2020/21
 - b. Utilise allocated capital funding - £3.5m - to deliver the scheme at a quicker pace
 - c. Underwrite the cost of the works, at risk, using Council Capital to deliver the programme in part or in full at a faster pace and continue with current bids with a view to reclaiming at later date.
- 2.20** Both options a. and b. have clear pathways to delivery although option a. will require full scrutiny through external business case processes. In terms of option c. if this route was preferred then further discussion with the Combined Authority on how this can be achieved will need to be undertaken.
- 2.21** At this stage Officers would prefer option c. with a view to returning back Members should this route be unfeasible. Officers have already flagged this possibility with the Combined Authority

Maintenance

- 2.22** It is clear that there a number of maintenance issues within the Town Centre. To complement the two schemes identified above officers will report separately on a

potential program that helps to underline the commitment to the framework identified above and ensures that the impacts are clearly visible.

- 2.23** To generate early activity on key areas of the town an initial £250k is sought from town centre capital to ensure that essential work in priority areas can start as soon as possible.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

None specifically

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

- 3.2.1** Huddersfield town centre is, alongside Dewsbury, one of our two largest centres which has a city region wide significance. It is an important Gateway to the rest of the city region and the UK and is often the first experience of Kirklees that a visitor has of the area. It is therefore important that this very important gateway to our district is a vibrant and attractive place to visit for all.
- 3.2.2** The quality of our town centres and how they function as we move forward is of utmost importance to residents, businesses and our educational establishments. It is important that we recognise that the role of town centres is changing and that as a Council we react to those changes in a positive way. Importantly we need to plan for a new future for the town where retail is less of a focus and we attract new uses and residents to bring the towns alive again.
- 3.2.3** An important part of that process is to create places and spaces which are of high quality and are part of the overall attraction to and activeness of the town centre. Proposals set out in this cabinet report reflect that process and are an early start towards that aim.

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

The aim for any town centre is that they are suitable for all sectors of our community. Making places that are safe and attractive with facilities for children and families should be part of the overall remit.

3.4 Reducing demand of services

Huddersfield Town Centre requires immediate improvement and maintenance. As an important asset to our communities it is likely that resources need to be assigned to keeping the quality of the physical fabric of the town centre as high as possible.

3.5 Legal/Financial or Human Resources

The recommendations set out below highlight the need for allocations to be drawn down from the Capital Plan. Once detailed design work is completed there may be a need for further highway related orders to be put in place so that works can be executed. These will be subject to the normal procedures.

4 Consultees and their opinions

None specifically at this stage. More detailed consultation will be undertaken as part of the town centre masterplan exercise and as part of the development of specific schemes.

5 Next steps

Work on the master plan for Huddersfield town centre is already underway. Should Cabinet agree to the officer recommendations then work to progress the individual schemes will continue in detail.

6 Officer recommendations and reasons

Recommendation 1 - Members are requested to agree to a commission to develop a scheme to improve the public realm in New Street. Should members agree to this then officers seek a release of funding of up to £1.2m from the town centre capital allocation to develop and deliver a first phase of improvements. Any scheme developed will accord with the principles set out in the emerging Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework.

Recommendation 2 - Members are requested to agree to the release of funding (up to £3.5m) to develop, design and deliver the schemes around the Cross Church Street, Queens Street and Queensgate area on the understanding that officers will pursue parallel bids to the Combined Authority to reclaim this at a later date. Should this route not be feasible then officers will return to Members with an alternative funding proposal.

Recommendation 3 - Members are requested to agree to the release of £250,000 of capital from the town centre capital allocation, to deliver essential elements of maintenance in the town centre.

7 Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Cllr Peter McBride has been briefed on the proposals and is supportive of the principles identified to date. Cllr Naheed Mather is supportive of the recommendations.

8 Contact officer

Simon Taylor - Head of Strategic Investment - simon.taylor@kirklees.gov.uk
Will Acornley - Head of Operational Services - will.acornley@kirklees.gov.uk
Keith Bloomfield - Major Projects Lead - keith.bloomfield@kirklees.gov.uk
All contacts - (01484) 221000

9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

- Draft Huddersfield Town Centre Design Framework
- Draft Walking and Cycling Framework

10 Service Director responsible

Joanne Bartholomew - Commercial, Regulatory & Operational Services
joanne.bartholomew@kirklees.gov.uk
(01484) 221000

Appendix 1 - Cross Church Street – Existing and Potential



