



18th October 2012

Agenda Item:8

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS

HUCKNALL TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report on the outcome of public engagement relating to the Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme and confirm endorsement to continue to develop the project.

Information and Advice

2. Following the comprehensive spending review and major scheme reassessment process the Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme was approved for programme entry by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 30th November 2011. This approval allows NCC to commence legal and procurement processes required to develop the scheme (but not enter into formal contractual agreements with a delivery partner) following which a request for Full Approval can be made to the DfT.
3. The scheme includes for the pedestrianisation of the High Street (between Market Place and Watnall Road) and the construction of a new road to carry the displaced High Street traffic. The proposals as approved by Government are shown on the drawing (H/JH/13379/14) on display at the meeting. The scheme as approved by DfT has been interrogated further by NCC officers during 2012 in response to comments received as part of a previous planning application. Consequently subtle changes have been made and discussed with officers at DfT who remain content that the scheme as shown on the displayed drawing continues to be in line with that approved.

Recent Public Engagement

4. A staffed public engagement exercise was undertaken in the town centre over 3 days during September 2012 and an unstaffed exhibition remained on display in Hucknall library for a week afterwards. Public feedback in response to the proposals is important evidence in the planning application which will need to be submitted in respect of the scheme and also to demonstrate to DfT that the scheme has continued local support.
5. A questionnaire was provided and to date there have been 316 responses received, key findings include

- 74% of respondents agreed that the High Street suffers from too much traffic which creates a poor environment for shoppers
 - 69% of respondents agreed that the proposed pedestrian zone on the High Street between Baker Street and Watnall Road will create a more appealing shopping environment
 - 25% of people agreed that buses should have access to the pedestrian zone, and 68% disagreed
6. During the course of the exhibition many comments were recorded which were not necessarily directly within the scope of the scheme, such comments included:
- Car parking in the town centre should be free (at least for the first 1-2 hours) to encourage people to shop
 - More shops are needed in the town
 - A more comprehensive account of the exhibition feedback is included as Appendix A of this report

Next Steps

- The issue of town centre parking charges needs to be raised with Ashfield DC
- Discuss with Ashfield DC their strategies to attract new shops to the town
- Proceed with the scheme as designed including the bus link. A review of the bus link layout is on-going in discussion with affected/ adjacent landowners
- Review the design taking into account the comments received including the impact on residents of Albert Street and Mill Yard
- Submit revised planning application
- Continue to acquire land by negotiation

Other Options Considered

7. As with any such major scheme its development has been quite iterative with different options being considered over a long period of time including options with greater lengths of pedestrianisation and without the inclusion of the bus only link. These have been the subject of significant discussion and consultation and as a result the current scheme has been arrived at.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. It is considered that the current proposed scheme best meets the aims of the project to regenerate the town centre and attract new shops, reduce congestion, improve the environment for all users and enhance the public transport provision.

9. The scheme as proposed continues to have the support of Ashfield District Council which remains committed to its £1.35m contribution and also the support of the major bus operator in the area.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled having given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

11. Nottinghamshire Police has in the past raised no objection to the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the feedback from the public engagement exercise set out in the report and reconfirms its commitment to the current proposals for the improvement scheme.
2. It is also RECOMMENDED that the project as detailed on drawing number H/JH/13379/14, subject to any minor amendments required as a result of detailed design approval, should be progressed by officers to: (i) submit a planning application (ii) acquire any necessary land for the project through negotiation (iii) publish a Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order and hold any associated Public Inquiry (iv) procure the works construction.

Andrew Warrington
Service Director (Highways)

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 3/10/12)

Transport and Highways Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (IC 1/10/12)

The financial implications are set out in the report to Cabinet dated 8th February which is contained as Appendix B of this report.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 8th February 2012.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Hucknall, Cllr Mick Murphy, Cllr Kevin Rostance, Cllr Tom Irvine