

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	22 September 2017
Title:	Market Town Funding Initiative (Bell Street and Market Place, Romsey Town Centre Improvements)
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper seeks approval for contributions from the Market Town Fund to support the current programme of Romsey town centre highway and public realm accessibility improvements.
- 1.2 With the first phase of town centre accessibility improvements to Church Street now complete, funds are sought to support two further phases of improvements at Bell Street and Market Place, as follows:
 1. £180,000 to assist with additional costs including separating the construction of the Bell Street improvements into two stages. Separating the works will mitigate the impact of the works to local businesses by avoiding disruption during the main summer peak-time trading period. This approach will support independent traders sensitive to variances in income and thus help safeguard local businesses and protect the local economy.
 2. Agreement in principle to the allocation of £500,000 as part-funding towards Phase 3 of the Market Place improvements and to ensure the key elements and objectives are delivered with the minimum possible disruption to this important and busy town centre.
- 1.3 This paper sets out the context of the funding request and how the works align with the objectives of the Market Town Fund.

2. Contextual Information

- 2.1 A Market Town Fund was established by Hampshire County Council in February 2017 to support the diverse, complex and crucial role market towns play in driving forward Hampshire's economic growth. The fund aims to support and develop the economic potential and sustainability of these

towns which together with Romsey include Winchester, Alton and Petersfield amongst others and where for example, in the case of Petersfield, work is ongoing with the Town Centre Steering Group to improve the town centre and deliver the vision set out in its Neighbourhood Plan. A separate report, establishing the full scope of the Market Town Fund with a list of recommended locations and enhancement schemes will be presented to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in due course.

2.2 This paper focuses on the Market Town Initiative for Romsey, which as one of Hampshire's distinctive market towns plays an important role in the local and visitor economy, providing cultural and social benefits. The County Council is working with Romsey's Town Centre Project Board, which includes a wide range of local stakeholders, to agree and develop proposals for accessibility enhancements.

2.3 The three phases of the Romsey town centre improvements aim to create an accessible, attractive, cleaner, livelier and safer town centre with an improved street scene to widen the town's appeal. The aim is to increase its economic viability and vitality in line with the County Council's 2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan to:

'Maintain Hampshire's strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity' by improving Hampshire's connectivity; planning and delivering appropriate development and infrastructure; attracting increased inward investment; supporting businesses to start and grow; helping to create more jobs.

'Enable people in Hampshire to enjoy a rich and diverse environment' by protecting and improving Hampshire's environment and quality of life; enabling people to live healthy lifestyles; enhancing and protecting Hampshire's heritage and culture.

'Ensure people in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities' by making it easy for people to find and access support within the community.

2.4 Improvements have recently been made to Church Street, as the first part of this package of works to improve accessibility in Romsey town centre, enhance the public realm and support and develop the local economy.

2.5 The second phase of works to Bell Street requires £180,000 to assist with additional costs including the need to replace a greater extent of the drainage, adjustment for the inflationary increase in the cost of works, additional fees associated with retendering and the need for the works construction to be split into two separate phases of September - November 2017 and January - April 2018, rather than a single phase running from January 2018. As indicated in the executive summary, phasing the improvements in this way will enable the works to avoid the economically important summer trading period and allow the scheme's future benefits to be realised with a minimum of local disruption and cost.

- 2.6 Funding for the third phase in Market Place will help support the extent and quality of the works and allow the key elements and objectives of the scheme to be constructed in a similar staged manner to Bell Street, and help minimise the impact to local businesses, residents and visitors in this vital and busy town centre area.
- 2.7 The Bell Street improvements are currently programmed for completion during 2018, and the outline programme for Market Place has works to commence in autumn 2018, with completion the following year.

3. Finance

- 3.1 Bell Street funding currently comprises of £544,000 Public Realm Improvement Programme funding and £328,000 developer contributions. This funding covers a single phase approach, but is not sufficient to cover the costs associated with the additional works and the important dual phased approach necessary to avoid the economically important summer trading period.
- 3.2 Market Place funding currently comprises a £494,000 developer contribution, £450,000 Public Realm Improvements Programme funding (including £300,000 still to be allocated) and a £150,000 Test Valley Borough Council contribution.

4. Performance

- 4.1 The supporting funding and staged delivery of the improvements will extend the quality and scope of works, support economic activity and reduce congestion and delay for residents and visitors during the busy summer period.

5. Consultation and Equalities

- 5.1 The proposals for both Market Place and Bell Street will enhance the street scene through the town centre for both residents and visitors, and improve accessibility by creating additional pedestrian crossing points and the reduced dominance of motor vehicles.
- 5.2 Public consultation for both schemes was undertaken in February and November 2016 where the draft plans were presented for comment and suggestion.
- 5.3 The Market Place consultation looked at three options for extending the pedestrian area within the town centre with 'do nothing' as a fourth option. 82% of responders supported the need to provide enhancements with Option 1 selected as the preferred choice. This option extends the pedestrian area from the north to encompass the active commercial frontages between Church Street and The Hundred. This option was further

supported by the Romsey Town Centre Project Board as the preferred scheme to progress.

- 5.4 A separate Project Appraisal Report detailing the design, costs and additional funding sources for Market Place will be submitted to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport once these aspects have been further developed.

6. Future direction

- 6.1 Enhancement schemes to support Hampshire's other market towns are being developed by ETE and subsequent contributions from the Market Towns Fund will be requested in due course.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves a contribution of £680,000 from the Market Town Fund to support the economic enhancement works in Romsey Town Centre (Bell Street and Market Place).
- 7.2 That approval is given to transfer this sum of £680,000 to the capital programme of the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to support these works.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Bell Street PA and Church Street PA	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The project will have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics, apart from two groups. It is considered that it will have a positive impact for elderly and disabled pedestrians, as level surfacing and formalised crossing points will assist access.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. No Impact.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? No Impact.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? No Impact.