

Annex 2 – Leatherhead Southern Gateway Bid Application

Mole Valley – Leatherhead southern Gateway (Church Street)

Initial bid application template – Town Centre Revitalisation Fund

Application details

Project Name/Location	Leatherhead Southern Gateway Project
Name of Local Authority	Mole Valley District Council
Contact name/s	Rod Shaw
Contact email/s	rod.shaw@molevalley.gov.uk
Contact telephone/s	01306 879247

Your Project

Please write a short summary of the content & objectives of your project.

The geographical focus is a key section of Church Street, Leatherhead between the junction with The Crescent and High Street (see attached plan). This area forms a gateway into Leatherhead from the south and marks a transition between the conventionally trafficked streets to the shared surfaces of the commercial centre of the town. The aim is significantly to upgrade the public realm alongside the establishment of a new “Little” Waitrose food store. The public realm works will: enable the new store to be adequately serviced; provide an impetus for new private sector investment in Church Street and more widely within Leatherhead; create a significant area of public space that will engender civic pride; provide a better setting to The Theatre; declutter the street and enable it to adapt to a variety of street uses and a range of management scenarios; encourage additional pedestrian foot flow and increase dwell-time; demonstrate the value of joint working between the private and public sectors; set down a marker for the future standards of public realm enhancement in Leatherhead; provide an initial impetus to the *Transform Leatherhead* (Masterplan) agenda. The project will address issues of street surfaces, soft landscaping, lighting, street furniture, signage and access for a variety of transport modes and users. The aim is to create a lively and interesting street with increased footfall where a mix of uses and users can complement one another and produce a vitality currently missing.

This project has the potential to provide the Town Centre Revitalisation Fund with a high-profile ‘early win’. The project has considerable match funding in place, has commissioned design works and an established delivery timeframe linking to a key commercial development. By supporting it, the project will be able to deliver the quality and scope of improvements needed for this to be both the first stage of a significant regeneration of Leatherhead and an important town centre revitalisation zone in its own right.

Your planned investment

Please use the space below to give details of the investment that you are planning, including details of any preliminary feasibility assessments or survey work that has been conducted, including their outcomes.

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The key design proposals for the public realm have arisen out of the master-planning exercise for *Transform Leatherhead* undertaken by Nexus Planning and a more detailed technical note for Church Street produced by Atkins. A copy of the cost schedule from the technical note is attached. The design principles are underpinned by a desire to produce an uncluttered street that is more legible and transparent, offering views to key places: The Theatre, the High Street and the various business that line the street. The following are a list of the main features of the scheme:

- existing planters and trees removed to increase visibility to the Theatre and the street
- introduction of signature lighting and informal seating
- signage rationalisation to remove clutter
- high quality stone paving to unify space
- theatre entrance highlighted
- car parking accommodated within new shared surface space
- widening the eastern footway width by up to 2.7 metres to encourage the use of the space for outdoor seating outside two restaurants thus adding interest, activity and vibrancy to the street
- widening the western footway by up to 0.7 metres to encourage the use of outdoor space adjacent to two additional eating establishments
- Provision of 15 on-street parking spaces, including disabled spaces, (a net loss of 2 spaces more than compensated by the increased capacity of the pay-and-display parking to the rear of Waitrose)
- introduction of new street trees
- rationalisation of street furniture and provision of cycle parking and seating

Rationale

Please provide an explanation of how the project will help to achieve the objectives of this fund as set out in the prospectus – strategic fit/aims, economic prosperity, health and well being. Include any additional strategic aims that are unique to this project and how your rationale for the investment will help to achieve them.

Strategic Fit and Rationale

In strategic terms, the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) notes the steady decline in the retail and leisure offer of Leatherhead, together with the decline in the standards of the public realm. The SEP recognises the importance of place and creating the right conditions for enterprise. It states that a quality environment is necessary to attract and retain visitors and encourage them to spend. This strategic view has been confirmed by an extensive local consultation undertaken as part of the Masterplan process via: paper and on-line surveys; public exhibitions; consultation events with residents, workers, visitors, businesses, major employers and hard-to-reach groups and the creation of cross County/District Member and community reference groups. The town's retail offer and quality of public realm were amongst the highest priorities identified by this consultation process. Leatherhead has the potential to be a local destination town and to develop its visitor economy offer in association with the Surrey Hills AONB and to revive its position as a local shopping, recreational, business and cultural centre serving the north of Mole Valley and beyond. In order to do this it must provide an environment in which businesses will thrive.

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One of the key components of this is the enhancement of the public realm within the town centre. The other main component is attracting quality retailers that will act as attractors; the work to attract and accommodate Waitrose is a significant step forward for Church Street and this part of the town.

The intention behind the public realm enhancements in Church Street is to contribute to and lead on the wider regeneration of the town centre, to improve its physical environment, attract new private sector investment and jobs and underpin both planned and intended investment in the commercial vitality of the town. The Southern Gateway Project is set within the context of *Transform Leatherhead*, providing a strategic context within which a series of individual projects will contribute to the overall revitalisation of the town.

Leatherhead is a small town that is vulnerable to competition from larger centres nearby: Epsom, Kingston, Guildford, Crawley and so on as well as the ever increasing impact of online shopping. Significant investment in the town over the last 30 years has been minimal and there is a negative vibe pervading discussions about the future of the town. However, the work on *Transform Leatherhead* shows that there is potential to strengthen Leatherhead's role as a local centre and that there is a genuine wish on the part of the community to make this objective a reality.

The commitment of Waitrose to opening a store in Church Street provides a new optimism. The works to the public realm necessary to accommodate the store provide an impetus to undertake public realm improvements at this time. The opportunity is right for a combination of private and public investment in the context of the emerging *Transform Leatherhead* strategy.

Church Street is important to a variety of users. Cyclists use the parking facilities there, attracted by a popular cycle retailer and the convenience to the commercial centre. The project will provide opportunities to improve the facilities for cyclists. There is important disabled parking conveniently located to the semi-pedestrianised streets of the town centre. The decluttering of the street and the inclusion of good seating and quality footways will make the street safer and more pleasant to use. The scheme will enable footways to be widened facilitating more activity on the street.

Work undertaken as part of *Transform Leatherhead* shows dissatisfaction with the range of retailing in the town and the need for future investment. At the same time, consultations indicate that residents and visitors see the main assets of the town being its riverside setting and its historic buildings. The basis of an attractive town centre is already there if the town centre retail and business environment can be improved. This project provides an early opportunity to demonstrate the standards of public realm enhancement to which *Transform Leatherhead* aspires and which will underpin the investment by the private sector, including the investment by Hague Investments and Waitrose in Church Street.

The report on the *Transform Leatherhead* consultation identifies Church Street as one of the key places where public spaces could be enhanced or created. Of the five ideas for improving the town centre spaces, one states:

'Revitalising and celebrating Church Street as a place for arts and leisure and as the southern gateway to the heart of the town centre.'

This project will enable the draft vision for *Transform Leatherhead* to be delivered. This reads:

'high quality, people friendly streets and space will combine to link the riverside, railway station, business and residential areas and the wider Mole Valley into the heart of the town'

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centre.'

Funding

Please state the total cost of the project and show evidence match funding of at least 50%. Match can be revenue funding, including a maximum of 10% of total project costs allocated to development costs. Please indicate how much funding is being requested and how this is to be split across the four years

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Funding request (capital) (£)	£200,000			
Match funding secured (capital) (£)	£590,350			
Match funding (revenue) £	£15,000			
Total Cost £	£805,350			

Please provide status of match funding

£297,850 Section 106 funds agreed and available via MVDC

£262,500 LEP Growth Deal funding agreed subject to legal agreement

£30,000 developer funds through Section 278 Agreement – final figure to be agreed between parties in next couple of weeks

£15,000 from SCC Local Committee agreed

Project dependencies

Please indicate any specific dependencies which determine the timescale for delivery and funding requests.

The agreement between Hague Investments and Waitrose is that the food store will be open

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for trading at the end of the summer of 2016. Alterations to the public highway to accommodate delivery vehicles will need to be completed for the opening. The wider works of enhancement will need to follow quickly on to minimise the period of transition.

Funding from the LEP has been allocated for spending in 2016/17

Value for Money

Please provide an explanation of how the project provides value for money.

Value for Money

First, the project provides an opportunity to combine funding from a variety of sources. Without this opportunity to combine the funds, the project would not succeed in a form that would raise standards to the level necessary for a meaningful impact.

The project enables public realm improvements to level and complement private property improvements.

By using quality, robust materials the cost-in-use over a longer time period will be reduced. By undertaking a comprehensive scheme, longstanding issues of maintenance can be tackled and revenue costs in maintaining the street reduced.

Rationalising street furniture, including lighting and signage, can reduce maintenance costs.

Improving the street will raise property values, encourage a range of business activity, make empty premises easier to let and increase income from business rates.

Careful tendering and project management will ensure control over costs.

Consultation

Please give a summary of any consultation undertaken:

Member Engagement

Prior to setting up the project a meeting was held with town centre representatives, including Members, to agree the focus on Church Street. The principle of the project has been agreed with the Council's Executive.

Transform Leatherhead consultations have been extensive and a report produced, on the back of which the current project has emerged.

Project meetings with Hague Investment have included County Councillor Tim Hall, MVDC's Executive Member for Town Centres and a local District Councillor.

Further consultation will be undertaken in early summer with stakeholders to agree the details of the design. An exhibition is planned in April to illustrate the masterplan for Leatherhead and it is intended to include details of the Church Street scheme. A *Transform Leatherhead* Members Steering Group and Stakeholders Group have been consulted on aspects of the master planning and consultation, including the thinking on Church Street.

Wider local consultation

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As above. It should be noted that the decision by Mole Valley District Council to focus available funds on Church Street and treat it as a priority project arose out of a meeting of community representatives in the Leatherhead Theatre two years ago. There was overwhelming support for this course of action.

Risks and Mitigation

Please provide a summary of identified risks for associated with this project and what measures will be put in place to mitigate these risks

<u>Identified Risk</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>
Contractor not available to undertake the work	Discussions underway at an early stage to ensure contractor available. SCC already has a contractual relationship with the preferred contractor.
Delay between completion of Waitrose store and public realm works	Comms planned to minimise reputational risk and close links developed with Hague Investments
Adverse reaction to details of scheme	Early design has taken account of previous consultations and scheme being designed to accommodate future changes in the way the street is used.
Overrun of costs	Atkins estimates have made allowance for possible cost overruns. Further clarification of costs will be made during the detailed design work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Please set out how the impact of investment will be monitored and evaluated.

The following can be used to monitor the health of Church Street:

- Footfall counts (dependent on measurement infrastructure)
- Vacancy rates
- Car park income
- Reference group opinions

Annex 2, Appendix 1

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14. CHURCH STREET - POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS

Church Street is an early opportunity for public realm improvements

1. Existing Planters and Trees removed to increase visibility to the Theatre from High Street.
2. Signature lighting and informal seating
3. Signage rationalised to remove clutter
4. New high quality stone paving to unify space
5. Theatre entrance highlighted
6. Car parking accommodated within new shared surface space
7. Additional parking
8. New "Slim" street trees



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