



WALTON HIGH STREET
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S
LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE AREA)
23 MARCH 2005

KEY ISSUE:

To consider the formal adoption of a locally driven project to improve the street scene and environment in Walton High Street.

SUMMARY:

The Executive has considered the 'Upping the Street' bids and indicated that funding will be made available in future years that should enable the completion of the Walton High Street scheme. Options on how the project might be taken forward in terms of design funding, defining design objectives and community involvement is set out in the report.

ELECTORAL DIVISIONS AND MEMBERS:

Walton on Thames - Mrs Rachael Lake
Walton South and Oatlands – Mr Andrew Crisp

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

1. Welcome the financial support indicated by the Executive;
2. Approve a capital sum of £15,000 to develop the design of the scheme;
3. Endorse the general design principles set out in the report;
4. Establish a community task group to advise the Committee on the project and appoint the Chairman to represent this Committee.

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Elmbridge

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Local Committee Report: 21 Sept 2004
Executive Report: 15 February 2005
Bid Document: ELTS/090 6 October 2004

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee received a report on 21 September 2004, introducing the Executive strategy for 'Upping the Street' and authorising the Local Transportation Director (LTD) to submit a bid for Walton High Street.
- 1.2 Funding from the Prudential borrowing code has been agreed for "Street Scene", which is a programme to enhance residential and business/commercial areas and move the emphasis from 'highways for cars' towards 'streets where people live and work'.
- 1.3 The Elmbridge Local Transportation Service (LTS) bid document was submitted in time for the 6 October deadline, and included a street audit, opportunities for environmental improvements, and an outline of funding proposals. It also incorporated an overview of how the engineering proposals could link to community planning, safety, sustainability and the promotion of self-reliance, along with a number of statements of support from within the community.

The Executive Summary of the bid read:

Executive Summary

Walton High Street is visually tired and cluttered. Traffic dominates the street scene and the environment is wholly unsatisfactory for the modern requirements of a shopping street. The street audit has identified specific problems with the infrastructure, whilst car dominance promotes a culture that is at best, unsympathetic and at worst antisocial.

Our scheme will look to improve the shopping environment and address the key principles of the Surrey Local Transport Plan, particularly with respect to enhancing accessibility for all. The design will be outward focussed, looking not only at Transportation policies but the wider social and community implications of the street as a public space.

2 BID EVALUATION

- 2.1 The Walton High Street bid scored excellently against the assessment criteria for Upping the Street, scoring second highest (76 out of a possible 100) of the twelve submissions. However, the scheme is relatively expensive, and the cost-benefit part of the appraisal pushed the Walton bid down to eighth position in the prioritisation order. The evaluation board recognised the quality and value of the Walton scheme, and gave opportunity for the costs to be revised. Although the estimating process was only based on a feasibility study, the LTD (after consultation with the Chairman) declined, considering that this project needed to be delivered from a position of strength, with all parties confident that the outcome would be both comprehensive and capable of meeting reasonable design expectations. The cost-benefit would have taken into account the contribution agreed by Elmbridge Borough Council. Unfortunately the developers of the Walton Centre could not be contacted, although they have an existing planning commitment to some street improvements.



View of Walton High Street

- 2.2 The Transportation Select Committee and the Executive have now considered the street scene bids and resolved that work on the 'top five' projects can commence in 2005/06. More funding over the next two years should enable the completion of the top seven or eight by the end of 2007/08. This infers a degree of uncertainty for the marginal schemes including Walton, particularly as some are dependent on external factors including funding.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 The decision of the Executive provides an opportunity to move this project forward, albeit with an element of risk attached. At the moment there is no further central funding for the development of the Walton scheme, but it is the LTD's opinion that the Committee may wish to take the initiative and provide funds from its own resources.

- 3.2 County Members have received a report on this agenda to consider the schemes to be funded from the Committee's Local Capital Allocation, which included a provisional allowance of £15,000 for Walton High Street to be ratified under this item. The Borough Council has been requested to contribute £5,000 at this stage as a 25% contribution.
- 3.3 If the Committee approve funding for the further evolution of the project, design will initially develop in line with indicative High Street layout included in the bid (drawing no. 6663/03). This would include consideration of the following actions:
- Widen footways appropriate to a modern town centre;
 - Create a number of new pedestrian crossing points;
 - Regulate parking by the introduction of bays;
 - Improve bus stop facilities;
 - Enhance provision for those with disabilities;
 - Consider facilities for cyclists;
 - Regulate the speed of vehicles, possibly creating a 20mph zone;
 - Use attractive surfacing materials and coordinate street furniture;
 - Review signage and street lighting;
 - Introduce focal areas and public art;
 - Consider traffic movements particularly at the Churchfield Road junction with High Street.
- 3.4 It is reaffirmed that this is NOT a pedestrianisation project.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The bid established a project cost estimate of £400,000. This would be funded between Surrey County Council (£300,000) and Elmbridge Borough Council (£100,000). This report recommends that a sum of £15,000 from this Committee's delegated budget (along with £5,000 from the Borough) be applied to the project; if agreed these sums will improve the cost benefit assessment that is part of the 'Upping the Street' assessment.
- 4.2 The Executive has already provided £10,000 this year to assist the development of the bid, and this has also paid for land, traffic and pedestrian surveys.
- 4.3 Other private contributions will be welcomed either as sponsorship or through development related agreements. This too will improve the cost benefit ratio of the County Council's own investment.
- 4.4 Priority will be given to producing more accurate construction cost estimates, if further scheme development is approved.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 The bid received formal support from a number of partners. It is considered imperative to the success of this project that key stakeholders continue to be engaged in the development of the project.

5.2 The Committee might wish to consider establishing a community based task group to consider and provide feedback on design aspects of the project. The group might include a representative from:

- This Committee;
- Local Transportation Service;
- Borough Officer;
- Surrey Police;
- PCPG/Community Safety Representative;
- Retailers' representative;
- SCC Small Towns Initiative Co-ordinator;
- Developers;
- News & Mail Group;
- General Public.

6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT / CRIME & DISORDER / EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 **Sustainable Development:** Sustainability is a specific key objective within the County Council's Local Transport Plan and all schemes developed will have due regard to that.

6.2 **Crime and Disorder:** Crime and disorder will be given careful consideration at all stages of scheme development, particularly those schemes involving lighting, visibility and measures for vulnerable users.

6.3 **Equalities:** Equalities implications will be given careful consideration at all stages of scheme development, particularly those schemes involving social inclusion and measures for those with mobility and accessibility needs.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Walton High Street project has been included in the Prudential funding strategy, and although not guaranteed, there is clear indication that it will receive some degree of prioritisation. The Committee has to consider how it may wish to pursue the project, whether to allocate locally delegated funding, and how to develop aspirations relating to the design and to community engagement.