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Date	8 th June 2010; 18 th June 2010

Ward (s) affected	Leatherhead North/South	Key Decision	Yes
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Subject	Leatherhead Town Centre Public Realm Enhancements
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Committee:

- That approval be given to Option 1 in this report, including
- That officers prepare, with assistance from District officers, a public consultation on a public realm and infrastructure strategy based on the principles outlined in section 5 of this report;
- That agreement be given in principle to the review of the current TRO and to consult the public on an experimental TRO that would restrict access to part of Church Street and all of High Street Leatherhead for a period of up to 18 months;
- That approval be given to tackling the list of urgent and short term tasks within the High Street and Church Street to be funded from Section 106 payments and that officers work with District officers to implement the list.
- That approval be given to allocate £25,000 of Section 106 funds towards the work outlined in this report.

Mole Valley District Council Executive

- That approval be given to Option 1 of this report, including:
- Collaboration with the County Council in formulating a public realm and infrastructure strategy to be funded from Section 106 contributions;
- Allocation of existing Section 106 contributions towards short term enhancements set out in section 7 of this report, including costs associated with an experimental Traffic Regulation Order;
- The preparation of a public consultation with the County Council to canvass views on the short, medium and long term strategy for public investment in the public realm.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This is a report prepared for both the District Council's Executive and the County Council's Local Committee. It contains recommendations for both bodies.
- Last year the Executive agreed to allocate funds for works that would enhance the semi-pedestrianised street of Church Street and High Street, Leatherhead.
- The way forward suggested in the report is to develop a strategic approach to public realm investment within which individual projects will sit.
- A joint 'Total Place' approach is suggested with the County Council and Mole Valley District Council working closely together in partnership at officer and Member level.
- The vision for High Street and Church Street is to simplify its management and to place greater emphasis on creating a better environment for leisure uses and pedestrians by restricting traffic movements and parking.
- There are immediate measures that are being considered to deal with urgent environmental concerns in High Street and Church Street.
- A consultation is proposed to help with the planning of these measures

The Executive / Council has the authority to determine the Recommendations

1.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND 'TOTAL PLACE'

This report is presented to both the District Council's Executive and the County Council's Local Committee. It looks at the opportunities available to invest in the infrastructure and public realm of Leatherhead Town Centre. It seeks approval for a strategic approach to public infrastructure enhancements that will provide the basis for the identification of a range of practical and well-related projects.

The report also suggests closer working between officers and Members of the County Council and District Council to integrate highway and environmental enhancements and funding mechanisms seamlessly in line with the 'Total Place' approach to the delivery of services.

'Total Place' seeks to deliver work programmes across organisational structures in partnership and in a more seamless way. This approach requires the development of shared objectives, pooling funding and other resources and working to a shared strategy for the delivery of real improvements, in this case to the public realm.

The planning and delivery of public realm enhancements for Leatherhead lends itself to the Total Place approach because both authorities have responsibilities for the care and management of the public realm. It is one of a series of pilot projects in Mole Valley identified by the Surrey Strategic Partnership to test a joint strategic approach. Both the County Council and Mole Valley District Council have responsibilities for the public realm.

2.0 GOVERNANCE AND CONSULTATION

In order to promote closer working, the following arrangements would be put in place to manage public realm enhancements in Leatherhead Town Centre:

- An officer group composed of engineers and planners from both authorities to develop the strategic approach to the planning and management of public realm enhancements and to manage projects that may be funded jointly;
- An Advisory Group composed of stakeholders from business, local residents, District and County Members and interest groups. It is proposed that the Advisory Group would consist of: two Members from the District Council., two County Members and stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Commerce, Mole Valley Access Group, Residents Association and Leatherhead Area Partnership,

This Advisory Group is important to help inform the work of the officer group and decisions made by Members. An advisory group has already been meeting in a semi-formal way led by Councillor Hall. The structure of the group will change, but the basis of a group of stakeholders is already established. One of the objectives of the 'Total Place' pilots is to enhance the involvement of local people in the planning and development of their local area.

These governance arrangements should assist in the development of a shared agenda, efficient working across the two local authorities and decisions informed by local opinion. Officers from both authorities will continue to report back to key Members and Portfolio holders in the normal way about progress on the initiative.

3.0 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Planning tariff payments (Section 106 payments), collected as part of the development process, is a mechanism for ensuring that developers contribute towards the cost of public infrastructure. Funding is normally provided for highway improvements, undertaken by the County Council, and for environmental improvements, often undertaken by the District Council. However, there is considerable scope to combine programmes and funding. Again, this is in line with the 'Total Place' agenda. In the past, what has tended to be missing is the strategic context with shared objectives. The management and governance arrangements being suggested in this report can lead to a better investment strategy for public realm investment.

Providing a strategic context is important because this will make it easier to request Section 106 payments when it is known how the money will be spent. As indicated above, it also highlights occasions when funding can be combined for greater impact.

4.0 THE MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL CONTEXT

Members of Mole Valley's Executive agreed at the August 2009 meeting of the Council's Executive that £259,632 of developer contributions (Section 106 funding) should be allocated towards enhancements to the pedestrianised parts

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of High Street and Church Street in Leatherhead. At that stage, no details of how the money would be spent was provided and the allocation of the funds was subject to further work on design and costing. However, the decision of the Executive did allow officers to enter into discussions with the County Highway's Department to determine how enhancements within Leatherhead town centre could be progressed jointly to meet the priorities of both authorities.

5.0 THE COUNTY COUNCIL CONTEXT

The County Council has been allocating Section 106 funding for a variety of projects including the enhancement of pedestrian safety improvements at the Knoll roundabout, access improvements for people with disabilities within the town centre and improvements to Randalls Road for cycling. The emphasis is on providing infrastructure that will support a sustainable approach to the management of the public highway in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) and Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP 3). PPG 13 places emphasis on the following objectives:

- Promotion of more sustainable transport choices;
- Promotion of accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Reducing the need to travel, especially by car.

LTP 3 places emphasis on the following objectives

- Support national economic competitiveness and growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
- Reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases with the desired outcome of avoiding dangerous climate change;
- Contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy through reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and promoting travel needs that are beneficial to health;
- Improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users and to promote a healthy natural environment;
- Promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens with desired outcome of achieving a fairer society.

These goals will need to form the basis of a strategy for implementing capital schemes and for collecting tariff contributions. It is also sensible to engage with the community in the process of agreeing a strategy.

To date work has been targeted on improving links between Ashted and Leatherhead as far south as the Leisure Centre. There are obvious community needs to get to and from the Leisure Centre and to use the shops and other commercial businesses in the town centre. There are also large centres of population in North Leatherhead, Fetcham and Bookham that could be better linked to Leatherhead town centre. A strategy could be developed based on better linkages, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, between Leatherhead and its hinterland. The strategy would consider the overall environment, not just pure highway infrastructure, to make the experience of

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using links a positive one. There is therefore scope to incorporate environmental enhancements, promoted by Mole Valley District Council, with the County Council's agenda for highways and traffic management.

In terms of immediate priorities, the Local Committee is requested to approve £25,000 of its Section 106 funds for work to enhance the pedestrian facilities in High Street, Leatherhead.

6.0 DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

In discussion with local stakeholders and Members, the focus has been on ways of tackling various issues relating to the appearance and functioning of the semi-pedestrianised streets of Church Street and High Street. The scheme to enhance the centre of the town is now several years old and some of the fabric is in need of attention. There are issues surrounding the condition of some surfaces, the design and location of street furniture, drainage, public art features, the location of the Christmas tree, the barrier entrance and ground level lighting.

In addition, there are management issues associated with the provision of outdoor seating installed by the restaurants, the avoidance of parking prior to the setting out of the market and concerns about the conditions for pedestrians when vehicles are allowed into the area in the evenings.

The advisory group has been keen to have a vision for the commercial centre and to tackle the issues identified in a comprehensive and holistic way. There is also an understanding that investment in the town centre must sit comfortable with and promote the strategy being developed by the County Council. The High Street and Church Street lie at the hub of the axes radiating out towards the peripheral parts of the town and neighbouring communities in Ashted, Fetcham and North Leatherhead. Providing an enhanced environment for pedestrians will underpin other measures to improve linkages and create an appropriate context for a sustainable transport network.

The advisory group is also keen to consult on the infrastructure strategy. Further details of the consultation arrangements are referred to in section 8 of this report. It is proposed, therefore, to undertake a wider consultation based on the discussions with the stakeholder group. Ideally, this would take place in July. Officers from both authorities would design the consultation in a location within or close to the town centre.

7.0 MEASURES FOR SHORT TERM WORK IN HIGH STREET AND CHURCH STREET

The advisory group considers that it is not possible to tackle individual elements of the High Street environment without looking at the overall management of High Street and Church Street. This should be based on a vision for the streets. There is a view that the management of the pedestrianised areas is quite complicated because of the desire to try to satisfy all possible users. The result tends to produce a situation where some of the functions may be compromised by the management arrangements.

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A key issue to be addressed is that of access to the pedestrianised streets for private vehicles and deliveries. There is access to the High Street for delivery vehicles from 4.30 pm to 10.00 am the following morning. Access for private vehicles and for parking can take place from 6.00 pm until 10.00 am the following morning. When the scheme was designed, it was envisaged that parking would be confined to the bays surfaced with the small York stone setts. Road markings were kept to a minimum for aesthetic reasons. In practice, vehicles park where there is space to place a vehicle, often at the expense of the pedestrian and other street activities. Trying to accommodate vehicles and other activities creates complexity and conflict. Parking in the pedestrianised streets can cause difficulties with the setting up of the street market, produces conflicts with pedestrians and make it difficult to provide a positive ambience for alfresco eating and drinking. On the other hand, vehicular access and parking in the High Street is regarded by some as important for the future viability of the town centre.

A suggested way forward is an experimental traffic regulation order (TRO) that would alter the arrangements for vehicular access for a period of up to 18 months. The stakeholder group is supportive of this approach because it provides an opportunity to see how new arrangements would work before deciding whether to make them permanent. The experimental TRO could be brought in relatively quickly, which is another advantage.

The approach being suggested by the consultative group fits well with transport strategy for the County and with the objectives for the Leatherhead Conservation Area. Creating a safer, simplified environment will assist in producing an attractive, easily accessible town centre.

However, there are some fundamental issues to be considered when designing the experimental order. These include deliveries to the business premises, the enforcement of new arrangements and the entry point. Officers are aware that there may be other options. A separate report on the Local Committee agenda deals with these details and Members of that Committee are asked to approve the experimental TRO subject to the views of the public when the consultation referred to elsewhere in this report is undertaken. If the consultation on the TRO is mainly positive and there are no significant changes to its content, arrangements would be made to implement it without further reports to the Local Committee, otherwise it would be referred back to the Committee in September.

Funding for the experimental TRO and associated accommodation works would be taken from the Section 106 funds allocated by the two authorities. Physical measures to accommodate the TRO would be kept to a minimum until the result of the experiment is known and the community has had its opportunity to comment further on its operation.

There is concern that restricting vehicular movement and parking will have an adverse impact on the evening trade of restaurants and cafes. This is despite the fact that free car parking is available within a few minutes walk of the commercial centre. Nevertheless, the advisory group considered that the experimental TRO should be accompanied by positive marketing of the town centre, to present the changes in a positive light and to give any new arrangements the best chance of

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success. It is suggested that some S106 funds should be retained to develop a short term marketing and promotion strategy with the Town Centre Manager.

Whilst the advisory group was supportive of the need to look fundamentally at the way High Street and Church Street function, they also stressed the need to tackle in the short term issues that impact the quality and appearance of the town centre. The following are areas identified for potential spend:

Urgent Works:

Repair to the cable cabinet outside Argos
Repair to the base of the granite bollard at the Dukes Head end

Other Works of Early Repair

Repair/replacement of slate cladding to the walls of the ramp
Repair of damaged stone, tegular paving, especially at the corner of High Street and Church Street, and localised repairs elsewhere, especially around manhole covers and to deal with trip hazards
Removal of the granite bollards and statuettes and reinstatement with matching materials
Refilling of any open joints
Overhaul of the surface water drainage system to avoid further flooding
Repair/replacement of the barrier in Church Street
Resetting of the circular granite seat at the Bridge Street end
Removal of the ground level lighting and reinstatement of the paving as appropriate
Replacement of the york stone setts with Tegular blocks outside the entrance to the Swan Centre
Replacement of a bollard at the Epsom Road end of High Street

Other things to be assessed in the near future but not for immediate action

Relocation of the Christmas tree pit
Consideration of the open gully and whether this could be replaced with a flush surface
The retention or otherwise of the york stone setts
The placement and design of street furniture, including the use of protective bollards

The original scheme for the High Street and part of Church Street was designed to reduce street clutter. Over the intervening years, signs and street furniture have crept in and an opportunity can be taken to rationalise the number of items of street furniture.

Whilst Section 106 money will be used to make the changes listed above, the responsibility for future maintenance of the fabric of the High Street will remain with the County Council and it cannot be assumed that future Section 106 money available to the District Council will be available to make good defects arising over subsequent months and years.

A couple of years ago the Leatherhead Area Partnership led a project to explore enhancements to Church Street, including the front of The Theatre. Issues remain to be resolved and without the funding to progress it, the project has been held in abeyance. The current Section 106 funds are much too limited to resurrect the scheme. However, some aspects of the scheme can be used to determine what might be possible, particularly when designing the gateway entrance into the pedestrianised zone and providing a better setting to the Theatre entrance. This is referred to in a separate report to the Executive on the subject of public art and craft.

8.0 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

In section 6 of this report it was suggested that a public consultation would take place to enable residents and businesses to comment on the proposals contained in this report. The consultation would cover three specific areas:

- The overarching strategy for investment in the highway network and the public realm based on enhancing linkages into and out of the town centre and helping to fulfill the objectives of PPG 13, LTP 3 and PPG 13;
- The measures that could form the vision for the High Street and Church Street, looking particularly at the impact of private vehicular access in the evenings and how this might be managed in the future as outlined in section 7 of this report;
- The priorities for funding the Section 106 contributions already identified by Mole Valley District Council for works in High Street and Church Street (section 7 of this report).

The plan is to undertake the consultation in July. This would take the form of an exhibition with plans and opportunities to express views both at the event and after it. The exhibition would take place on a Friday and Saturday. The District Council can use its 'Viewpoint' software on the Council's web site to allow access to the material on-line and to register their views. County Council and District Council officers would be present.

Comments will be considered and presented to Members and the advisory group following the consultation.

9.0 SUMMARY

The report outlines three strands to investment in the public realm. The first is to set it within a strategic approach to the use of Section 106 funds in Leatherhead that encourages good access into and out of the town centre having regard to the needs of all road users. The second strand is to consider what sort of commercial centre should be created that will produce an environment that will be enjoyed and appreciated by visitors and in turn stimulate trade. Changes to the way vehicular access to the pedestrianised streets is managed could produce a more simplified approach to management of the public realm, reducing conflict and providing opportunities to enhance the physical environment. The third approach is to look at what can be undertaken immediately to deal with issues of enhancements.

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10.0 OPTIONS

Option 1: this option is based on the following elements:

- (i) The adoption of the 'Total Place' approach to project development and service delivery involving closer working between officers and members of the District and County Councils informed by an advisory group of local stakeholders.
- (ii) A public infrastructure strategy developed that improves access to the town centre from its hinterland.
- (iii) A reassessment of the management of vehicular access to the pedestrianised streets using an experimental Traffic Regulation Order to provide better conditions for pedestrians and leisure use of the town centre, especially in the evening.
- (iv) A programme of works to enhance the High Street and Church Street in the shorter term.
- (v) A public consultation to provide an opportunity for comment on the above issues before decisions are made.

Option 2: this option would incorporate all the elements of Option 1 but would exclude the experimental TRO and would assume that the arrangements for vehicular access would remain unchanged.

11.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications – regulations will need to be followed in relation to the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order for example.

Financial Implications – The District Council has up to £259k to spend on these initiatives and these funds have been earmarked from Section 106 funds. The following is suggested as a breakdown of expenditure, although there will need to be flexibility in the allocation of funds as the project proceeds:

- Up to £15k is spend on the implementation of the temporary traffic order (note some may need to be retained in order to reverse or make permanent the changes)
- Up to £50k on urgent improvements to the High Street
- The balance, which will include whatever is not spent in the two items above, on a limited range of improvements at the entrance to Church street / High street

£25,000 has been earmarked from Section 106 funds available to the County Council. This will be used primarily for the more short term and urgent works in the High Street.

Risk Implications – the public consultation may throw up issues and objections to the proposals that will need to be reassessed and brought back to the two authorities, thus delaying the timetable. Agreement can still be given to dealing with urgent works.

Costs may be higher than anticipated. Officers can include within the project the ability to employ additional engineering and QS advice if this is appropriate.

Equalities Implications – the strategy and changes to the town centre are based on improving the arrangements for vulnerable road users, including people with disabilities.

Employment Issues – there are no direct issues.

Sustainability Issues – the report makes clear that the strategy is intended to consider the future viability of the town centre as a whole, balancing economic, social and environmental concerns to provide a set of management arrangements that will be sustainable.

Consultation – There has been consultation with a stakeholder group, including local Members. Further consultation is outlined in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Report Check List

ITEM	ANSWER
Legal Comments # Provided by:	Y / N
Financial Comments # Provided by:	Y / N
Democratic Services (including equalities and risk issues)# Provided by:	Y / N
Human Resources Comments ø Provided by:	Y / N
Sustainability Comments #	Y/N
Number of Appendices to be included	(give number)
Cleared by Corporate Head and/or Director	Y / N
Fleisch score	

- Requirement

ø - Required for reports involving employment issues

To be completed and returned electronically with relevant report to Democratic Services.