

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)****DATE: 2 MARCH 2016****LEAD OFFICER: R.SHAW, PRINCIPAL CONSERVATION OFFICER, MVDC****SUBJECT: PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS, CHURCH STREET, LEATHERHEAD****DIVISION: LEATHERHEAD AND FETCHAM EAST****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Mole Valley District Council and Surrey County Council are promoting a project for urban realm enhancements in Church Street, Leatherhead. The project will be funded jointly by the two Councils, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and a private developer. Work is underway to design the scheme and to integrate it into the development of a food store for Waitrose. The project supports the aims and objectives of the Transform Leatherhead initiative to regenerate Leatherhead town centre and the Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to note the content of the report**

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To update the Local Committee (Mole Valley) on the progress of the scheme to enhance Church Street, Leatherhead

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

1.1 This report is for information

1.2 Mole Valley District Council has funds collected under Section 106 agreements and Planning Infrastructure Contributions (PIC) that are available for projects to enhance the environment of Leatherhead town centre. In consultation with local and County Members and stakeholders it has been decided to focus those funds on Church Street. The area in question is between High Street and The Crescent where the Leatherhead Theatre can be found and there are a number of shops with residential flats above. The area also contains a public car park and lies at the transition between the conventional carriageway network and the semi-pedestrianised town centre.

1.3 The project will involve the public highway and is to be progressed as a joint scheme involving MVDC and SCC. It takes place within the context of the Transform Leatherhead initiative which is looking at the future of the whole of Leatherhead town, supported by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise

Partnership (LEP). Church Street will need to be designed to adapt to any final conclusions reached on the planning of the town centre and, in particular, the future traffic management solutions. The Church Street project should also set a standard for urban design and show the community what can be achieved.

- 1.4 This part of Church Street is undergoing change as a result of planning permission having been granted for a food store on the south side opposite the theatre. As a consequence of the grant of planning permission, alterations will be made to the public realm to accommodate delivery vehicles. Officers have been working with the developer to integrate the works associated with the food store with the wider public realm enhancements.
- 1.5 The estimated cost of the project is £805,000. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources. In addition to the funding from MVDC mentioned above, the project has attracted funding from the LEP and an application has been made to the County Council's Town Centre Revitalisation Fund. The developer of the food store, intended for occupation by Waitrose, will make a contribution to reflect the cost of alterations necessary to meet the terms of the planning permission.
- 1.6 The timetable is constrained by the works to the food store and associated alterations to the public car park and the public highway. The intention is that the Waitrose store will be open for business at the end of the summer this year. Any works to the highway necessary for the immediate operation of the store and any works necessary to make the area safe for use will be undertaken opening by the developer in the run up to the store. Any additional works, including any enhanced surfaces and street furniture, will be undertaken as part of the wider enhancement project from October.

Design work for the project will be undertaken by Atkins. Their work will be undertaken during the spring and summer period with an opportunity for a targeted consultation. That consultation will include discussion with the stakeholder and Members' reference groups set up for Transform Leatherhead.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 Church Street is considered a prime target for immediate investment in the public realm for several reasons. First, the opening of the Waitrose store is likely to increase footfall and provide a stimulus to the commercial vitality of the town. The street enhancements will underpin this private sector investment. The new store also requires alterations to be made to the street and this justifies having a comprehensive look at how these alterations can be integrated better into an enhanced street.
- 2.2 Further, it is recognised that the public realm at this end of the town is outdated and presents a cluttered appearance. Lighting adjacent to the theatre is difficult to maintain, trees have outgrown their positions and a variety of street furniture means that there is a lack of consistency of style.

2.3 The design principles to be followed are those set out in the initial findings of Transform Leatherhead reports. It is not intended fundamentally to alter the layout and functioning of the street, but the following are likely to be included in the final scheme: the removal of existing planters and trees to increase visibility to the Theatre and from High Street. The inclusion of signature lighting and seating. The installation of high quality stone paving to unify the spaces. The highlighting of the theatre entrance to emphasise its presence and importance. Car parking to be accommodated within shared surfaces. New trees accommodated that are more in keeping with the confined spaces of the street. The decluttering of signage and street furniture will allow for a more flexible use of space.

2.4 The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the LEP had a stated aim for Leatherhead which is to '*redevelop and regenerate the commercial areas of the town centre*'. The SEP also 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. Leatherhead has the potential to be a local destination town, but it has to offer a townscape appropriate to this role.

2.5 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.

2.6 The Church Street project also accords with the draft vision for the town as developed by Transform Leatherhead. This includes the following statement: '*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 centre*'. In respect of Church Street, one of the objectives is: '*revitalising and celebrating Church Street as a place for arts and leisure and as the southern gateway to the heart of the town centre*'. The project outlined in this report is an important first piece in the Transform Leatherhead jigsaw.

### **3. OPTIONS:**

3.1 The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is being asked to note the current progress and future plans in respect of the public realm enhancements for Church Street, Leatherhead.

### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 Consultation has already taken place with local Members and community representatives to establish their priorities for town centre investment, a process that led to the focus on Church Street. Subsequently, discussion took place with the Community and Members' Reference Groups attached to the Transform Leatherhead initiative. Extensive consultation has been a feature of the Transform Leatherhead initiative with a variety of consultation techniques undertaken in the summer of last year.

4.2 Consultation arrangements are mentioned in paragraph 1.7. Officers may have an opportunity to include draft proposals within an exhibition on Transform Leatherhead in April. Certain stakeholder groups will be contacted directly including, for example, the theatre, commercial premises in this part of Church Street, residents, the theatre, the Mole Valley Access Group and Chamber of Commerce.

**5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 The total cost of the scheme will be in the region of £800,000. This figure includes an appropriate contingency for this stage in the project's development. County Council funding will consist of £15,000 of funding from the Committee's revenue budget and an application has been made by MVDC to the County Council's Town Centre Revitalisation Fund for a grant of £200,000. MVDC is contributing £300,000 and the private sector contribution is expected to be in the region of £30,000 in addition to investment in the reconfiguration of the public car park to provide an additional 22 spaces and investment in the commercial premises. The project will demonstrate how projects can be delivered through a combination of funding from the different tiers of government and the private sector.

**6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 Church Street is an important one for disabled people. It provides a convenient location for disabled parking, which will be retained. Design of the scheme and the Section 278 works will provide for additional pedestrian facilities, including those to assist mobility for people with disabilities. The Mole Valley Access Group will be consulted before plans are finalised.

**7. LOCALISM:**

7.1 The Church Street project is part of the Transform Leatherhead initiative for the regeneration of the town centre. This initiative has been driven by an intensive and comprehensive process of public consultation to understand how local people view their town centre and to encourage ideas for its regeneration. In terms of Church Street, there is strong support for the theatre and there is a desire to improve the quality of retailing. The street enhancements provide an opportunity to reinforce the role of the theatre and the completion of the new food store will be a step in the right direction, offering additional choice for shoppers.

7.2 The process of construction, both of the food store and the public realm works, will be disruptive to businesses, residents and users of the street for a considerable period. In the longer term, it is intended that the street will look much more appealing and be more vibrant.

**8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising

	from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

## **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

9.1 The new food store and the impending public realm enhancements provide two significant opportunities to contribute towards the regeneration of Church Street and, as part of Transform Leatherhead, benefit the town centre as a whole. The approach will be to produce a scheme that is of high quality, declutters the urban environment and produces a space that can adapt to different uses and management.

9.2 The timetable for delivery of all the different elements will be tight, but officers are working closely with other partners to minimise delays. Local Members will be kept apprised of progress.

## **10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

10.1 Funding agreements will be finalised and signed. Work will begin shortly on the food store and design work will begin on the wider street enhancements with consultation scheduled for April/May. Details of the consultation are contained in the report, but it will consist of direct contact with stakeholder groups and exhibition material. A strategy for the use of social media will also be devised both to consult on the proposals and to communicate before and during the construction phase.

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### **Contact Officer:**

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### **Consulted:**

Consultation arrangements prior to writing the report are set out within the report.

### **Sources/background papers:**

- Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan, March 2014
  - Transform Leatherhead Stage 1 Consultation Report and Stage 2 Draft Masterplan
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