

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**



DATE: 22 March 2017

LEAD OFFICER: Gaurav Choksi, Development Projects Officer

SUBJECT: Tunsgate Public Realm Scheme

DIVISION: Guildford South West

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) are promoting a scheme for public realm enhancements in Tunsgate in Guildford town centre.

The Committee is asked to agree the principles and way forward for the project. Work is underway to design the scheme and to integrate it with the retail development of Tunsgate Quarter and wider town centre.

The project supports the aims and objectives of Guildford Borough Council to regenerate the town centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:

- (i) Agree the following principles for the Tunsgate Public Realm Scheme :
 - a. That Tunsgate becomes a gated pedestrianised road from the junction with Castle Street. Access restrictions for vehicles will be similar to those in the High Street but extend later into the evening.
 - b. That the existing pay & display and disabled parking spaces in Tunsgate are removed, with alternative disabled spaces introduced in the near locality.
- (ii) That decisions regarding details of the scheme are delegated to Area Highways Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee and local councillors.
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Area Highways Manager to take necessary steps to implement the scheme and advertise any formal orders needed to create the changes agreed. Should any objections be received to proposed orders delegate determination of those objections to the Area Highway Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.
- (iv) SCC is asked to work in partnership with GBC on this project and in delivery of the scheme.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

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To request authority to create a scheme to enhance Tunsgate and to delegate the details because of the tight timescales for delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The areas south of High Street around Tunsgate, Castle Street and Quarry Street accommodate a high proportion of Guildford's heritage and cultural assets and institutions. The proximity to the High Street coupled with a developing food and beverage offer make this an important area for leisure activities in the town centre and for Guildford's visitor perception.
- 1.2 This part of the town centre is undergoing change as result of the Tunsgate Quarter redevelopment. A significant increase in new floorspace for shops and restaurants is proposed as part of the development, which is scheduled to complete in October 2017. There are café type businesses planned on ground floor level of Tunsgate Quarter along Tunsgate. Officers have been working with the developer to integrate the development with the wider public realm enhancements. A traffic calmed and pedestrian friendly environment will support café / A3 businesses by providing opportunities for spill out / outdoor dining in a safe environment.
- 1.3 Consultation with local councillors and stakeholders show that there is agreement for the need to deliver public realm improvements in this area. Our plans are to create a more pedestrian friendly environment in this part of the town and to upgrade routes and gateways between High Street and Castle.
- 1.4 This will also improve the historical setting of the Castle and its gardens, enable the Tunsgate redevelopment to be integrated within the exiting fabric of the town and enhance the identity of the emerging Heritage and Cultural Quarter.
- 1.5 Tunsgate will be our pilot public realm enhancement project. It will set a benchmark for future public realm schemes in the town centre.
- 1.6 The high level estimated cost of the project is £770,000. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources. The intention is to seek contributions from the private sector but GBC will fund remaining cost.
- 1.7 The timetable is constrained by the works to the Tunsgate Quarter. The intention is that the Tunsgate Quarter will be open for business in October this year. Any enhancement works to the highway will be undertaken to fit with the timetable of the Tunsgate Quarter.
- 1.8 The project will involve the public highway and is to be progressed as a joint scheme involving GBC and SCC.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 Tunsgate is considered a priority for immediate investment in the public realm for several reasons. First, the opening of the Tunsgate Quarter is likely to increase footfall and provide a stimulus to the commercial vitality in this part of the town and wider town centre. The street enhancements will complement this private sector investment.
- 2.2 Further, it is recognised that the public realm in this part of the town doesn't reflect its importance as a Heritage and Cultural Quarter that contains many of Guildford's prime historic and cultural assets, including Guildford Castle and its grounds, and Guildford Museum. The area is lacking connectivity with the High Street and rest of the town centre to its north. Its views and spaces are dominated by both moving and parked vehicles.
- 2.3 In Tunsgate, there are currently four designated disabled parking spaces and eight parking spaces for pay and display use. Blue badge holders use both the designated bays and pay and display parking bays regularly. Tunsgate offers close access to the High Street.
- 2.4 Tunsgate and Chapel Street offer main pedestrian routes between High Street and Castle and its grounds however the public realm is not very welcoming. This area as result does not attract the same level of footfall and activity as some other parts of the town. Some of the key issues to be addressed in the area are:
- Car dominance
 - Narrow paving
 - Back of shopping centre / car park
 - Wayfinding issue "understatement" of Castle gardens entrance
 - Difficult to find
 - Mix of materials/street furniture
 - State of disrepair of paving and variety of materials
 - Cluttered public realm
 - Level access for all
 - Avert safety risk for pedestrians caused by turning vehicles
- 2.5 The intention is that a scheme will provide enhanced public realm in the area, with improved connections between the Castle and its grounds with the rest of town centre through enhancements of Tunsgate.
- 2.6 The following are likely to be included in the final scheme: pedestrianisation of Tunsgate; loss of pay and display parking and replacement of disabled parking spaces elsewhere, access restriction similar to High Street but possibly extending into the evening time to allow for alfresco dining and other leisure and cultural activities; inclusion of enhanced signage, seating, lighting, and trees if practical; installation of high quality stone paving to extend the continuity of the High Street and to match the quality of the historic streetscape materials.
- 2.7 This will be a key project for the development of Guildford as a visitor attraction with a multi-faceted and well connected sightseeing and landmark circuit. The public realm enhancements in Tunsgate will 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.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The area of Castle Street, Tunsgate and Chapel Street is undergoing major change. The arrival of the redeveloped Tunsgate Quarter, plans for the enhanced Guildford Museum and an improved food and hospitality offer will attract additional pedestrian activity and increased footfall for the area between the High Street and the Castle Grounds. A re-design for Tunsgate needs to respond to these changed conditions. Existing problem areas, like the required three point turn at the bottom end of Tunsgate, have to be re-evaluated considering more pedestrians and the aspiration to create a new destination for Guildford.
- 3.2 The preferred approach has been developed in consultation with local councillors and stakeholders. This is to increase pedestrian priority in Tunsgate and the preferred approach is to make the road traffic free during the majority of the working day. This has benefits for pedestrian flow and particularly partially sighted and disabled but would prevent the use of the road for parking.
- 3.3 Other options considered were to retain pay and display and disabled parking in situ. Any variants of these options would not achieve the level of enhancements that meet the objectives of the project. There will be no or limited space for alfresco dining. Maintaining vehicular access would mean that there will be potential risk of conflict between pedestrian and vehicles. In particular, there will be safety risk from vehicles making three-point turn at northern end of Tunsgate near Tunsgate Arch.
- 3.4 Officers are looking at options for improving access if the disabled spaces in Tunsgate are lost. A Blue Badge holder can park for free in any on-street parking bay (pay and display, resident, dual use) without time restriction and on yellow lines which do not have loading restrictions, where the parked car does not create an obstruction for up to three hours. In addition there are around 30 on-street disabled bays around the town centre. Blue Badge holders can also park in any council operated pay and display car parking free of charge and without time limit. The North Street car park is very popular with Blue Badge holders.
- 3.5 One option for replacing lost parking spaces for Blue Badge holders is to :
- Castle Street
- Convert 2 no. pay and display bays to disabled
 - Consider additional parking bays for disabled closer to bell-mouth of Tunsgate
- North Street
- To designate a number of additional parking bays for disabled (not Fridays and Saturdays / markets)
- 3.5 However officers will consult with the Guildford Access Group and take into account their views before plans are finalised.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Consultation has already taken place between local and County councillors and officers, and some stakeholders to establish their priorities.
- 4.2 The intention is that the design will be developed and materials selected by officers representing the two authorities. The project is being led by GBC with support from SCC to provide technical expertise to design, commission and oversee the work.
- 4.3 Relevant stakeholders are being contacted directly including, for example, the Guildford Access Group and commercial premises in Tunsgate. Their feedback will be taken into account as an integral part of the design process.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The high level estimate for the construction of the planned improvements is approximately £770,000. Officers will be able to provide a better estimate following further design work.
- 5.3 The intention is to seek contributions from the private sector but GBC will fund remaining cost. There will be no funding contribution by the Local Committee or by SCC.
- 5.3 Should the preferred approach be progressed, there will be loss of income from the on-street pay and display car parking spaces in Tunsgate. Parking income from these bays (8 no. spaces) is approximately £17,000 a year. At least a proportion of this income can be expected to be redistributed in other parts of the town centre.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Design of the scheme will provide for enhanced pedestrian facilities, including those to assist mobility for people with disabilities. At-grade design with no kerbs will provide improved accessibility on Tunsgate. The on-street disabled parking bays on Tunsgate provide a convenient location for disabled parking, which is proposed to be relocated in the preferred approach.
- 6.2 The Guildford Access Group will be consulted before plans are finalised.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The regeneration of the Guildford town centre has been driven by comprehensive process of public consultation as part of the Guildford town centre masterplan. There is a strong support and desire to improve the quality of public spaces and streets in the town centre.
- 7.2 The construction of the enhancement works will be disruptive to businesses, residents and users of this part of the town and to some extent the wider town centre. Officers will try to keep everyone informed and the intention will be to keep disruption to the minimum 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)	Set out below
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	Set out below

8.1 Sustainability and Public Health implications

Increased walking and cycling, where it replaces motorised forms of transport such as the car, will improve air quality and reduce carbon emission levels, which is a key objective of the Surrey LTP. Passenger transport and modal shift from the car to buses/rail are a further key objective of the Surrey LTP.

Transport is responsible for one third of carbon emission in Surrey. Surrey's Local Transport Plan has a target to reduce carbon emissions from (non-motorway) transport by 10% (absolute emissions) by 2020, increasing to 25% reduction by 2035 from 2007 baseline of 2,114k tonnes.

Increased walking and cycling has a positive impact on the health of a person. The NHS identifies cycling as an activity which provides significant health benefits. The emerging Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy has identified obesity as one of the priority public health challenges.

It could be that increased levels of walking and cycling to and around the town centre will have a positive effect on the local retail economy as some recent studies suggesting that pedestrians and cyclists actually spend more on a trip into a town than a motorist.

Tree planting (subject to underground services) will provide a positive contribution to improved air quality, biodiversity and the provision of shade.

Use of low energy warm-tone LED street lighting will result in energy reduction.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The proposed public realm enhancements will complement redevelopment of Tunsgate Quarter and together they will provide significant opportunities to contribute towards the regeneration of this part of the town and benefit the town as a whole. The approach is to deliver a scheme that is of high quality, declutters the environment and produce a space and environment that can adapt to different uses and add to the vitality of the town.
- 9.2 The timetable for delivery will be tight, but both GBC and SCC officers are working closely with other partners to bring this scheme forward in a timely fashion. Local and County councillors as well as most affected parties will be kept apprised of progress.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 If the Local Committee approve of the recommendations, GBC and SCC officers will progress decisions made by the Committee.
- 10.2 Officers will consult with stakeholders including the Guildford Access Group and businesses and residents along Tunsgate.
- 10.3 Subject to detailed design, tender costs and a satisfactory resolution for the traffic order and re-provision of disabled parking spaces, work on the scheme is planned to start in July this year. It is estimated that construction programme would be around 16 weeks.

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Consulted:

Local and County councillors and officers.
Developer of Tunsgate Quarter.

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Concept Scheme Presentation

Sources/background papers:

Executive Committee for Guildford:

[27 September 2016: Item EX38: 'Progress on Regeneration Projects Report'](#)

[Guildford Town Centre Masterplan Report, October 2015](#)

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