
REPORT TO:	Environmental and Development Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	13th July 2006	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Marilyn Hallard, Design and Conservation Officer, x5747	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Swadlincote Town Centre Study and Masterplan	REF: 13.3.18.4
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Swadlincote	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS04

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 That the first phase of implementation of the Swadlincote Masterplan should comprise improvements to the east end of the town centre. Subject to cost and relevant approvals these improvements may include: new boundary walls to the Council's Civic Way car park and the Instore car park; planting to Civic Way/Derby Road; repaving, naming and lighting to the three jitties connecting the car parks to the High Street and; the resurfacing of Church Street incorporating granite kerbs and channels.
- 1.2 That the proposals be based on the approved masterplan modified as necessary to ensure that the project is deliverable within the East Midlands Development Agency's time frame, see paragraph 4.4.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider approval of the area and extent of the first phase of implementation of the Swadlincote Masterplan for public realm improvements.

3.0 Executive summary

- 3.1 The masterplan proposals were approved by this committee at its meeting on 1st June 2006.
- 3.2 It had been reported at the meeting that works to the Civic Way approach to the town would give the 'best fit' with the available secured funding (of £361,000) and would produce a good regenerative impact

and that a further report on the this be brought before a future committee.

- 3.3 The initial analysis of optional areas for phase 1 has been developed and the feasibility of implementing improvements has now been assessed more fully. Improvements to the Civic Way end of the town centre are still proving to be the most feasible option.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The masterplan identified areas that can be implemented separately with indicative budget costings attached to them in order to assist the Council to plan for phased implementation. Annexe A sets out the areas.
- 4.2 Each of these areas has been assessed in terms of indicative budget cost, regenerative impact, timescale and any other constraints. This is summarised in the 'Options Appraisal' table at Annexe B.
- 4.3 Given that the funding in this instance was secured before the proposals were developed the options appraisal is heavily weighted towards finding a good fit with the secured funding and the conditions attached to it.
- 4.4 The East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) element of the secured funding, £247,000, must be spent by the end of March 2007. This is a tight deadline that will be difficult to meet. There is no time limit attached to the Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc contribution of £114,000. It is proposed that works should start on site as soon as possible after Jan 1st 2007 and that the EMDA element of the funding should be claimed first.
- 4.5 Works at the east end of the town centre offer the best chance of satisfying the time limit attached to the funding. Delivering a successful first phase will also help establish the Council's credibility and affect the success of future funding bids. This is important as EMDA is our principle source of external public sector funding for the future.
- 4.6 The re-profiling and re-surfacing of the Delph or the re-surfacing of High Street would clearly result in a significant impact and thus have the best regenerative effect but the costs are clearly too high for the first phase. The re-surfacing of West Street whilst being a smaller area would also have a strong regenerative effect being centred in the 'cultural quarter' of the town centre with clear benefits for Sharpe's Pottery Museum and the future of the Methodist Church currently being promoted by the West Street Partnership. However this is also too expensive for the first phase. On the basis of the indicative budget costs the re-surfacing of Midland Road, Market Street, or Belmont Street could be afforded but all of these streets could be affected by development proposals and none works well as a 'stand alone' improvement. Any significant highway works also raise another issue, that of future maintenance.

4.7 The County Council takes the view that repaving which is undertaken for reasons of regeneration and enhancement, rather than highway function and safety, should be maintained by the District Council. This can be done in a number of ways but all would carry a cost for the District Council.

4.8 The maintenance implications for the works at the east end of the town are simpler than elsewhere, are largely in the control of the District Council and are set out below at 4.13 and 4.14.

SCOPE OF THE PHASE 1 WORKS (see Annexe C)

4.9 Subject to cost the recommended phase 1 option could comprise the following (please note this does not include the resurfacing or re-ordering of the car parks:

- Widening the verge to the east end of Civic Way in front of the car parks
- Tree planting along Civic Way to screen car parks and rear of High Street buildings
- Tree planting on Derby Road
- Constructing new locally distinctive retaining walls to the Council's Civic Way car park along Civic Way and East End Drive
- Constructing new locally distinctive retaining wall to the Instore car park along Civic Way
- Resurfacing three jitties leading from the car parks to the High Street in blue clay pavers
- Providing better lighting and signing to the jitties
- Giving each jittie a name, presented on a sign or threshold strip
- Resurfacing Church Street

4.10 The above proposals would be clearly visible as the town is entered from the east, would make a significant visual improvement to this approach, would strengthen links with the Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park, and would signal that regeneration is underway.

4.11 Some of the works would be on private land and thus would be subject to obtaining permission from the owners. Discussions are underway with owners but should permission not be forthcoming these elements could be dropped and improvements carried out only on publicly owned land.

4.12 The erection of the walls would require planning permission but it is not foreseen that this would cause any difficulty. The sketch proposals have been discussed with the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Officer who will also be consulted as the working drawings are developed along with the Derby Community Safety Partnership's Crime Prevention Design Advisor.

MAINTENANCE OF THE PHASE 1 WORKS

4.13 The District Council carries out cutting of the existing grass verges along Civic Way. Enlargement of the verges and tree planting would require additional cutting and attendance on the trees to ensure they successfully establish in the early years and pruning thereafter. The Council is currently responsible for the maintenance of one of the jitties (including any works required to the surface and cleansing) and could take on responsibility for the others. The District Council also currently maintains the majority of the boundary walls out of the District wide maintenance allocation for car parks.

4.14 Provided that 'spare' granite kerbs and gullies are purchased as part of the contract and stored by the District Council, for use in the unlikely event that any early replacement may be required, the County Council will not require any change to the current maintenance regime at this stage.

LONG TERM MAINTENANCE

4.15 The County Highway Authority is currently responsible for maintenance of surfaces on highway land and the District Council is responsible for maintenance of surfaces on other non highway land (e.g. parts of The Delph). Discussions about appropriate future maintenance for the town centre as a whole are being held with the County Council and will have to be agreed between all relevant parties.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 £361,000 of external funding has already been secured for phase 1 and no further capital Council funding is requested for its' implementation. The first phase includes a number of elements that could be implemented separately. The risk of over spending will be managed by reducing the scope of the work if necessary.

5.2 The maintenance of a wider Civic Way verge, trees and the jitties can be taken on within existing staff resources.

5.3 The anticipated additional maintenance cost of verge cutting, tree care and cleansing is estimated at under £500 per annum.

5.4 It is anticipated that any maintenance costs for the paving in the jitties will be minimal in the early years but it is proposed that a nominal sum of £200 pa is allocated.

5.5 Maintenance costs for proposed boundary walls are unlikely to pose any additional burden on current budgets and no additional allocation is required.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The public consultation resulted in a very high level of support for the masterplan proposals. See website.
- 6.2 Early implementation of public realm improvements, following the approval of the masterplan, will signal the fact that regeneration is continuing and create confidence in the town.
- 6.3 The recommended Phase 1 proposals will build on the success of the Swadlincote Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme and further capitalise on the heritage assets of the town. This will promote tourism and improve environmental quality for all.
- 6.4 The ongoing regeneration of the town centre will bolster the local economy, help local businesses to thrive and increase choice for Swadlincote visitors and shoppers.
- 6.5 Failure to invest appropriately in the public realm is likely to lead to economic and environmental decline, which could affect the long term viability of the town centre.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Successful implementation of the first phase of the masterplan will; significantly improve the appearance of the eastern approach to the town; demonstrate the Council's commitment to regeneration; enable the secured funding to be spent within the required deadlines; give us a track record of success and; increase the Council's chances of obtaining external funding in the future.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 Swadlincote Masterplan drawings and report. File Ref 13.3.18.4 and web site
- 8.2 Swadlincote Urban Form Analysis. File Ref 13.3.18.4 and web site
- 8.3 Design concept for Civic Way car park. File Ref: 13.3.18.4