

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Holy Trinity

Report of Director of Community Services

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Rodboro Buildings – Electric Theatre through road and parking

Executive Summary

At its meeting of 23 January 2018, the Executive agreed, subject to Council approving the budget on 7 February 2018, to include the sum of £450,000 in the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list for a scheme to improve the area around the Rodboro Buildings and the northern side of the Electric Theatre. Council approved the budget and this report asks the Executive to approve the transfer of the sum referred to in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2 to this report from the provisional to the approved Capital Programme to enable this scheme to be implemented. The scheme addresses pedestrian safety concerns as well as enhancing the area.

Recommendation to Executive

That the sum referred to in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2 to this report be transferred from the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list to the approved list, subject to the scheme receiving planning permission.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable the Rodboro Buildings- Electric Theatre through road and parking scheme outlined in this report to be implemented.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To ask the Executive to approve the transfer of appropriate funding from the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list to the approved list to enable the scheme described in this report to proceed.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 This scheme supports the Fundamental Theme of Place Making, in particular the strategic priority of regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council owns a parcel of land in the centre of the gyratory system comprising the following buildings:

- Armour Buildings let on a 25 year lease from 1998 to Stonegate Pub Company; trading as Popworld
- Rodboro Buildings let on a 25 year lease from 1998 to J. D. Wetherspoon Ltd. and another 25 year lease to Academy Music Services Ltd. (ACM Commercial Ltd.)
- The Electric Theatre (let to ACM Commercial Ltd.) on a 20 year lease from 2017.

- 3.2 Since the late 1990s when the area was last improved there has been a large increase in pedestrian and vehicle movements. This has led officers to be concerned about the safety of pedestrians using the area. The proposed scheme will provide safer vehicle and pedestrian segregation and generally improve the look of the area, and areas prone to anti-social behaviour will be designed out.

- 3.3 Currently, there are numerous waste bins and storage areas in various places throughout the area which, unshielded from view, makes the area visually unappealing and uncontained resulting in litter on the pavements and road. A central waste and storage area will be created to rationalise bins and stop overspill. This was an area of concern for tenants during consultation.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Officers have consulted with representatives of the organisations set out in paragraph 3.1 and their comments have been noted and incorporated in the proposed scheme.
- 4.2 Officers also consulted with the Council's Design and Conservation Team and Parking Services as well as Surrey County Council Highways on matters such as disabled parking provision, access and egress onto the gyratory, materials and local Conservation Area considerations.

5. Description of scheme

- 5.1 Appendix 1 contains a plan of the proposed scheme, which includes a reduced width roadway encouraging one-way traffic, a repositioned loading bay for deliveries, new bin stores for the Council's tenants, new footways, pedestrianised areas and road crossings. It also retains the outdoor seating area leased to Wetherspoon's and a single disabled parking bay. The existing bollards will be removed and new ones

included only where deemed necessary to keep pedestrians safe from vehicles being driven onto pavements.

- 5.2 For the most part, the scheme retains the existing highway surface. Damaged areas of paving in the vehicle areas will be replaced using the same material we have in stock. Pedestrian and vehicle areas will be delineated by new kerbing.
- 5.3 The footway areas specifically for pedestrians will be re-paved in a material of a contrasting colour to encourage a 'hierarchy' of users, pedestrians over vehicles, to be maintained.
- 5.4 The proposed materials are of durable quality, 'off the shelf' that are easy to source for future maintenance.

6. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Equality Impact Assessment shows there to be a low overall impact on grounds of equality and diversity. It identifies a differential impact on one protected group, persons who have a disability, due to the removal of one of the two disabled parking spaces. The scheme necessitates the loss of one space in order to accommodate segregated vehicular and pedestrian areas plus widened footways. One disabled space is to remain, and there are disabled parking spaces in nearby car parks, and Blue Badge holders can park free in any pay and display car park.
- 6.2 Officers have liaised with the Guildford Access Group. The Group's Access Auditor has confirmed that this arrangement represents a satisfactory compromise, i.e. that there is one accessible space within this scheme, together with two existing accessible spaces nearby in the area demised to the Electric Theatre.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Executive agreed to include a sum of £450,000 in the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list allocated to this project at its meeting of 23 January 2018. This was subsequently agreed by Council on 7 February 2018.
- 7.2 Originally, it was assumed that the project would be designed and managed by consultants and the cost for this was included in the submitted bid. It was also assumed that the majority of the paving would have to be replaced. The project is now being delivered in house as requested by the Corporate Management Team. In addition, officers have concluded that the majority of the existing paving can be retained, hence the reduction in the project cost.
- 7.3 The total estimated cost of the scheme, including a breakdown of the cost of each element of the scheme, is set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2.
- 7.4 Wetherspoon's and Popworld have agreed that they will contribute 50% of the cost of the bin store, (see total estimated construction costs for the bin store in Appendix 2). The Council will receive some uplift in rental income for the bin store.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Some of the areas currently demised will alter slightly. This will have to be reflected in revised leases, but this can be done within existing resources.
- 8.2 Appendix 2 is to be treated as exempt from the Access to Information publication rules as it sets out the detail of the estimated cost of each element of the scheme, disclosure of which may adversely affect the tendering process so that competition is undermined. This is deemed to be information exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, which is "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)".
- 8.3 All councillors will be able to access the information contained in Appendix 2.
- 8.4 The exempt information will be available for public inspection following completion of the procurement process.
- 8.5 The decision to maintain the exemption may be challenged by any person at the point at which the Executive is invited to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting to consider the information in Appendix 2.
- 8.6 In accordance with Regulation 5 (2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council published on 24 September 2019 notice of intention to hold part of this meeting in private to discuss, if necessary, the detail of the estimated cost of each element of the scheme referred to in agenda Item 10 above, disclosure of which may adversely affect the tendering process so that competition is undermined. elements.
- 8.7 The notice included a statement setting out the reasons for these matters to be discussed in private and inviting anyone wishing to make representations in relation to holding part of the meeting in private for this purpose to do so by 12 noon on 14 October 2019. No representations were received.
- 8.8 If councillors wish to discuss the information contained in Appendix 2, the Executive is asked to consider passing the following resolution:

"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting to enable the Executive to discuss the information contained in Appendix 2 to this report on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

9. Human Resource Implications

- 9.1 There are no Human Resources implications as a result of this report. The project is being designed and managed by the Council's Corporate Property and Engineering teams within existing resources.

10. Summary of Options

- 10.1 There are two options; one, do nothing, or two, approve the transfer of funding to proceed with this scheme.
- 10.2 The 'do nothing' option would not address pedestrian safety concerns and would not enhance this area of the town. The second option to approve the transfer of funding to proceed with this scheme is recommended.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 This scheme will address safety concerns over pedestrian/vehicle movement and enhance the public realm in this area of the town.

12. Background Papers

None

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Layout plan

Appendix 2: Estimate of costs (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)