

Place-making and Innovation Executive Advisory Board Report

Ward(s) affected: Holy Trinity

Report of Director of Environment

Author: Paul Bassi, Project Manager

Tel: 01483 444515

Email: [Paul.bassi@Guildford.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.bassi@Guildford.gov.uk)

Lead Councillor responsible: Caroline Reeves

Email: [caroline.reeves@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.reeves@guildford.gov.uk)

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**Guildford Public Realm Improvement Project - Progress Report**

**Executive Summary**

At its meeting on 8 April 2019, the Executive agreed to proceed with a public engagement exercise for Guildford town centre public realm improvements from which high-level feasibility design options would be developed. This report considers the outcome of this work and details the available options.

The scheme focused on delivering public realm improvements to the following:

1. Chapel Street
2. Castle Street
3. Swan Lane
4. Pedestrian safety by upgrading existing facilities and introducing new vehicle restrictions to the High Street
5. Signage and Wayfinding to better connect the historic town centre and promote businesses and the cultural offer of Guildford.

The budget for this work is £1.248 million of capital, £49,300 of revenue and a £10,000 contribution from Experience Guildford. The total budget available is £1.3 million.

It should be noted that Swan Lane was brought within scope due to the offer of a financial contribution from a group of Swan Lane landlords. Also, that architectural lighting, public art and other public realm enhancements did not form part of the original scheme.

AECOM, our design consultants, developed a range of options informed by the consultation with residents, businesses, visitors, councillors and council officers. The options present a broader scope to respond to the consultation exercise and include improvements to street lighting, bespoke public realm enhancements and more complex interventions to address Castle Street traffic issues. These additional elements create budgetary pressures and the need for additional funding if chosen.

The options proposed are as follows:

1. **Option A**, the original scheme (including Chapel Street, Castle Street) plus Swan Lane. This option excludes street lighting and wayfinding enhancements requested but addresses the core elements of road surface treatments, street lighting, traffic control interventions, and pedestrian safety barriers. This can be delivered for **c. £1.34 million. Additional funding would be required.**
2. **Option B**, the original core scheme (as Option A) but excluding Swan Lane. This will cost **£1.14 million and can be delivered within budget.**
3. **Option C**, an enhanced scheme which would improve the 'look and feel' of the public realm through integration of architectural lighting, street furniture, wayfinding, and a major transformation of Tunsgate junction with a large raised table that replicates the lost historic 'square'. This will cost **£1.65 million. Additional funding will be required.**
4. **Option D**, the enhanced scheme (Option C) but excluding Swan Lane. This will cost **£1.4 million. Additional funding will be required.**

**Recommendation:**

That the Executive:

- 1) Consider the options proposed and agrees a preferred option to progress to detailed design and construction.
- 2) If the preferred option requires additional funding, that it approves for officers to proceed with the detailed designs for the preferred option, within in the current budget, and to approve a virement from the Capital Contingency Fund up to £350K.

**Reason for recommendation**

To support the Council's strategic priority of increasing Guildford town centres' economic success, increasing accessibility and improving links between the High Street and Cultural Quarter.

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. This report updates the Executive on the work undertaken to date and seeks executive's view on preferred option for officers to proceed.

**2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 The proposals to improve the public realm supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023 theme of Place-making by:

*“Regenerating and Improving Guildford’s town centre and Urban Area” by:*

“Implement the vision of the town centre Implement the vision of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and

*“Improve the public realm, including surfaces, in key town centre areas”*

- 2.2 The economic strategy for 2013 -2031 aims for Guildford to be a ‘town and borough with: strong infrastructure; world-class businesses with capacity to expand and deliver growth: an evolving and vibrant economy, which creates a progressive and sustainable environment for people today and for future generations living in an ever-improving society.’

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The scheme’s aim is to improve the public realm and pedestrian accessibility in Guildford town centre and to better connect the Castle grounds, museum and other heritage assets with the High Street.
- 3.2 Key areas of focus have been Chapel Street, Castle Street and Swan Lane. Swan Lane was a late addition to the scheme as local businesses offered to contribute to some of the cost of the scheme.
- 3.3 Pedestrian safety measures have been included to manage vehicular traffic in the High Street and adjoining streets and increase pedestrianisation in the town centre.
- 3.4 Although Surrey County Council (SCC) are the Highway Authority for most of the town centre public realm, Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to retaining the quality of its public realm beyond the minimal statutory standard delivered by SCC.
- 3.5 GBC has developed a town centre masterplan and streetscape guide to enable GBC to raise the standard of the public realm that ensures our historic town centre heritage is conserved for future generations.

### **4. Project Progress**

- 4.1 Since the appointment of AECOM as lead consultant, the focus has been on public consultation and developing feasibility design options that address issues raised from the consultation and site analysis.
- 4.2 The consultation process involved three in situ walkabout sessions in May 2019, over 3 days, to meet and discuss matters with the local businesses and residents who live in or around the principal streets of Castle Street, Chapel Street and Swan Lane.
- 4.3 The walkabout sessions were supplemented by an online survey. This generated over 400 responses promoted via social media and targeted letter drops within local town centre area. Results of the both walkabout sessions and online consultation exercise are summarised in Appendix 4.

- 4.4 The stakeholder feedback generated a range of useful views: From the public online consultation exercise, respondents considered the resurfacing of Swan Lane with setts/cobbles to be the highest priority as setts were considered one of the most popular features of Guildford. Other issues identified in the focus group sessions with local residents, accessibility groups, amenity groups (HTAG), councillors and businesses were:
- A. Traffic issues and the need for a pedestrian crossing on Castle Street.
  - B. Accessibility of Chapel Street and more pedestrianisation across the town centre.
  - C. Improving visitors' experiences through creating a welcoming environment with better lighting and crime prevention measures.
- 4.5 AECOM has produced a costed feasibility study that is informed by the consultation, our existing policies with a detailed SWOT analysis of each street. This considered approach has resulted in a range of proposed concept designs for each street. These are shown in Appendix 1.

## 5. Costed Options

- 5.1 The costed options presented by AECOM will need to be further informed by measured surveys, utility and legal searches but each option has considered stakeholder feedback, accessibility, council policies, public highway regulations, planning and heritage issues.
- 5.2 As there are no detailed designs nor decisions made on lighting, furniture and fittings, a provisional sum has been placed against each of these items to enable estimations of full project cost.
- 5.3 The scheme is at an early feasibility stage, AECOM proposed a 5% design contingency and 10% construction contingency to reflect this. However, as GBC risk appetite is lower a further 10% contingency has been added across the full project cost.
- 5.4 Although a further access audit is required it is assumed that a central York stone pathway will be the preference for both Chapel Street and Swan Lane.
- 5.5 The options developed from the feasibility study are as follows:
- 5.6 **Option A – Original scope plus Swan Lane**
- 5.7 This scheme can be delivered at an estimated cost of **£1.34 million. This is which is not within our budget of £1.3 million.** Table 1 sets out the key elements:

Table 1 – Option A

Site	Description	Cost	Comment
<b>Swan Lane</b>	Relay with Cobble setts and central York stone	£186,098	Excludes lighting, shop signs, and gateway features
<b>Chapel Street</b>	Full relay with central York stone from High Street to Castle St. heritage Lighting	£124,820	Excludes architectural and festoon lighting, shop signs, and gateway features
<b>Castle Street East</b>	Castle street minor works to improve layout and introduce a roundabout	£476,096	Excludes lighting, and gateway features
<b>Castle Street West</b>	Pedestrian crossing	£42,368	Raised level crossing using Staffordshire blue pavers
<b>Pedestrian Safety Measures</b>	Upgrade or new bollards and gates to meet PAS 68 standards on Market St, Swan Lane, Tunsgate, Chapel Street and High Street	£167,680	All Townscape furniture including new vehicle gates on west exist end of High Street
Sub Total £997,062			
OTHER COSTS			
GBC project management fees		£25,000	
Measured surveys and Utility notices		£29,000	
SCC -Safety AUDITS		£5,000	
SCC fees /TRO		£40,000	
LEGAL		£10,000	
AECOM fees	Full detailed design and further public consultation	£115,840	
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>£224,840</b>	
<b>Total Fees and Works</b>		<b>£1,221,902</b>	
<b>Total plus extra contingency</b>	<b>GBC risk factor of additional 10%</b>	<b>£1,344,092.2</b>	

5.8 The key **differences** with options C and D are summarised below:

- A. A simpler treatment of traffic issues conflict at Castle Street/Tunsgate junction by introducing a modest raised table crossing on Castle Street.
- B. Omitting architectural lighting, festoon lighting but includes street lighting, shop signage rationalisation and gateway features for all streets.
- C. Excludes works to widen Castle Street pavements between Tunsgate and Chapel Street.

5.9 **Option B – Core scheme excluding Swan Lane**

5.10 This option can be delivered within the existing budget at an estimated cost of **£1.14million**. This option delivers a substantial element of the core aims of connecting the Cultural quarter with the High Street and addresses a number of issues raised via the public consultation exercise.

Table 2 – Option B

Site	Description	Cost	Comment
Swan Lane	excluded		
Chapel Street	Full relay with central York stone from High Street to Castle St. Lighting, wayfinding	£124,820	Excludes lighting, shop signs, and gateway features includes streetlights
Castle Street West	Pedestrian crossing	£42,368	Raised levels between Chapel Street and castle grounds using Staffordshire blue pavers
Castle Street	Castle street works to improve road layout and introduce a raised table crossing	£476,096	A modest raised table, excludes widening of road pavement, architectural lighting, and gateway features but includes streetlights and furniture (seats etc)
Pedestrian Safety Measures	Bollards and Gates to meet PAS standards	£167,680	All Townscape furniture including gates and bollards
sub total of works		£810,964	

OTHER COSTS			
GBC fees		£25,000	
Measured surveys and Utility notices		£29,000	
SCC -Safety AUDITS		£5,000	
SCC fees /TRO		£40,000	
LEGAL		£10,000	
AECOM fees	Full design and consultation	£115,840	
SUB TOTAL	sub total of fees	£224,840	
Total	total of fees and works	£1,035,804	
TOTAL with GBC Risk contingency of extra 10%		£1,139,384.4	

**5.11 Option C – Enhanced Scheme including Swan Lane**

- 5.12 This scheme costed at £1.6million responds fully to the aspirations from public engagement and includes significant public realm enhancements to Chapel Street, Castle Street and Swan Lane. Details are shown in Table 3 below.
- 5.13 This scheme includes integrating better street lighting (reverting modern fixtures to heritage style lamps and columns), CCTV and Architectural lighting for heritage features and for events (seasonal festoon lighting etc) which would provide a more welcoming environment to support night time economy and deter crime.
- 5.14 A more holistic and detailed wayfinding and signage fixtures and furniture that develop strong local identity and promote local heritage, and a rationalisation of shop signage and remove street clutter, particularly A Boards that have proliferated causing access issues.
- 5.15 Of note and contributing to a significant increase in cost is the traffic measure treatment to improve pedestrian crossing over Castle Street and reduce vehicle issues by creating a large raised table. This would also recreate a former historic ‘public square’ at this location that would better link the Castle grounds to the

High Street. This intervention would reduce the number of vehicles travelling incorrectly through the “one way” section of road and would provide a crossing point from Tunsgate and is a popular route to the castle grounds.

Table 3 - Option C

Site	Description	Cost	Comment
Swan Lane	Relay with Cobble setts and central York stone	£221,667	includes architectural lighting, shop signs, and gateway features but includes streetlights
Chapel Street	Full relay with central York stone from High Street to Castle St. Lighting, wayfinding	£168,452	Includes lighting, shop signs, and gateway features includes streetlights
Castle Street East	Castle street works to improve road layout and introduce a raised table crossing	£625,096	A larger raised table, includes widening of road pavement, architectural lighting, and streetlights, street furniture (seats)
Castle Street West	Pedestrian crossing	£42,368 £69,938	raised levels between Chapel Street and castle grounds using staffordshire blue pavers
Pedestrian Safety Measures	Bollards and Gates to meet PAS standards	£167,680	All Townscape furniture including gates and bollards
Sub-total of works		£1,295,2012	
<b>OTHER COSTS</b>			
GBC fees		£25,000	
Measured surveys and Utility notices		£29,000	
SCC -Safety AUDITS		£5,000	
SCC fees /TRO		£40,000	
LEGAL		£10,000	
AECOM fees	Full design and consultation	£119,840	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	Sub-total of fees	£228,840	
<b>Total</b>	total of fees and works	£1,524,041	

<b>TOTAL with GBC extra risk contingency of 10%</b>		<b>£1,676,445.1</b>	
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5.16 **OPTION D – Enhanced scheme excluding Swan Lane**

5.17 This is essentially the same scheme as Option D but without Swan Lane and is costed at £1.43 million which again exceeds our available budget. Full details and costing in Table 4.

Table 4 - Option D

<b>Site</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Swan Lane</b>	no works		further funding required as separate phase
<b>Chapel Street</b>	Full relay with central York stone from High Street to Castle St. Lighting, wayfinding	£168,452	Excludes lighting, shop signs, and gateway features includes streetlights
<b>Castle Street West</b>	Pedestrian crossing	£42,368 £69,938	raised levels between Chapel Street and castle grounds using Staffordshire blue pavers
<b>Castle Street</b>	Castle street works to improve road layout and introduce a raised table crossing	£625,096	A larger raised table, excludes widening of road pavement, architectural lighting, and gateway features but includes streetlights
<b>Pedestrian Safety Measures</b>	Bollards and Gates to meet PAS standards	£167,680	All Townscape furniture including gates and bollards
Sub-total of works		£1,073,596	
<b>OTHER COSTS</b>			
GBC fees		£25,000	
Measured surveys and Utility notices		£29,000	

SCC -Safety AUDITS		£5,000	
SCC fees /TRO		£40,000	
LEGAL		£10,000	
AECOM fees	Full design and consultation	£119,840	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>sub total of fees</b>	<b>£228,840</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>total of fees and works</b>	<b>£1,302,374</b>	
<b>TOTAL with GBC Risk contingency of extra 10%</b>		<b>£1,432,611</b>	

Town centre pedestrian safety measures

- 5.18 AECOM have developed the vehicle restriction options following an assessment by Surrey Police and our own working group (see Appendix 2). The area of focus is the pedestrianised area in and around the High Street and the aim is to ensure that all existing barriers comply with the current standard (PAS68) for protecting pedestrians.
- 5.19 The options proposed will mean upgrading the existing high street barriers and installing new PAS68 compliant gates at both ends of the high street. A visualisation of the east exit of the High Street proposed new gates is shown below and in Appendix 3:



- 5.20 Additional bollards/gates will also be located at Tunsgate, Chapel Street, Market Street and Swan Lane. Further details of location are in Appendix 2.

- 5.21 There are very limited options (in-fact 2 suppliers) for gates and bollards that are PAS68 compliant and the designs are generally utilitarian. To achieve complementary heritage style gates will require a bespoke manufacturing process which is expensive and takes longer to produce than standard gates.
- 5.22 The cost of the barriers is c. £221,293 based on using Townscape furniture which are most in keeping with existing style but this will need to be further developed to reduce the street clutter impact they may present. If more decorative furniture, is desired then the only option is Eagle Gate furniture which will cost approximately £315,000. Details of each design are shown at Appendix 2.

## 6 Contingencies

- 6.1 Although each option has a built in 5% design contingency and 10% construction contingency set by AECOM. There remain several 'unknowns' that have not been fully costed that will need be clarified through detailed design. These include the impact of lighting design, utility services, foundations for pedestrian barriers and conservation area constraints. The level of contingency stated above may still be underestimated so a suggested minimum of additional 10% contingency across project total cost has been included for all options which would mean only Option A and B will fall within our £1.3 million budget.

## 7. **Risk and Issues**

- 7.1 As with any scheme cost certainty is higher as it progresses into detailed designs. This is reflected in AECOM contingency levels and the additional contingency GBC have added to the overall cost estimate. This therefore takes contingency from 10% to 20% for both design and construction risks.
- 7.2 The outstanding land searches need to be undertaken to understand the impact on the undercrofts of adjoining buildings that may exist as this will affect road construction. To reduce this risk, a visual inspection of all properties will also be undertaken as land searches are not always correct.
- 7.3 The proposal will impact on parking management. This will be resolved through any future Traffic Regulation Orders required. There will also be opportunity to look at wider traffic impacts to help issues on Castle Street which can be built into the scheme as detailed designs are developed.
- 7.4 Works that affect any buildings will add further complexity to the project particularly if needing listed building consent and/or planning permission in the conservation area. The reduced scope option reduces this risk and gives more time to develop this area of design and consents as well as providing the opportunity to phase this in at a later stage as part of wider design guide developed for other public realms schemes.

- 7.5 AECOM fees, procured through SCAPE Framework, represent almost 13% of the total cost but exclude professional service-related fees incurred during construction. The additional contingency added to the total cost should cover these elements and some other professional services such as clerk of works can delivered through internal resources. We could retender all professional services to test the open market via open competition, but this will delay the project and lose continuity of knowledge and relationships now developed with stakeholders.
- 7.6 Architectural lighting and wayfinding (as proposed in Option C and D) will have significant impact on look and feel of the scheme. These aspects are what the public generally would appreciate most and creates a sense of place. However, they are the design elements that require consents from landlords as well as planning which may delay delivery of the project.
- 7.7 The proposed financial contribution from a landlord on Swan Lane remains uncertain and unlikely as pressure on retailing continues. Discussions to seek contributions are continuing but we do not envisage the contribution would now be likely due the significant cost of works and unstable retail market.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 There is currently £1.248 million available capital funding supplemented by £49,320 revenue to deliver the Public Realm Scheme. Guildford have also set aside £10,000 contribution towards this scheme. This amounts to a total of £1.307 million to deliver a scheme.
- 8.2 Executive approved provisional budget of £2 million for town centre public realm improvement in Jan 2017. A drawdown of £835,000 to capital programme was approved in July 2017 to fund phase 1 works which related to Tunsgate. A further drawdown of £200,000 was made in February 2019 to complete stage 1 works and progress stage 2 was made under delegated authority.
- 8.3 The £2 million capital budget was further supported by £260,000 approved budget relating to pedestrian safety measures that was transferred to a single public realm capital programme in the April 2019 Executive report.
- 8.4 The £10,000 of contribution from Guildford's BID towards high street barriers as well as potential funding from Swan Lane Landlords will be welcome contribution to the scheme.
- 8.5 Should there be an appetite to continue with the full scheme that includes Swan Lane additional funding will need to be sought, depending on options preferred, as part of GBC capital bid process or through other funding schemes including S106.

**9. Consultation**

- 9.1 The public consultation has been useful to inform the concept plans proposed. Attached is a summary feedback from both the Online Questionnaire and Walkabout sessions.
- 9.2 The walkabout sessions were attended to be focus groups to be able to get more detailed feedback. They were attended by ward councillors, local groups such as Holy Trinity Amenity Group, businesses, Experience Guildford, Guildford Access Group and local residents. Each event was publicised by a letter drop to all properties on each street.
- 9.3 Walkabout feedback from Local businesses were mostly about disruption and timing of any works preferring this to happen after the New Year or other peak seasons, provisions for delivery vehicles, and supporting visitors experience by better lighting and CCTV for both night time economy and early winter nights. Whilst the amenity group emphasis was on pedestrianisation, conserving existing granite setts or replacing setts like for like and dealing with nuisance parking/parking issues.
- 9.4 From both walkabout sessions and the online survey, accessibility was considered to be most significant for Chapel Street due to the uneven surface and the narrow pavement at the High Street End and better street furniture to improve surrounding. Tackling Castle Street's confusing one-way system and inadequate pedestrian crossing was also high on residents' priorities to resolve.
- 9.5 The online questionnaire survey was publicised via a social media campaign and generated 12,000 hits on our Facebook account. This resulted in over 400 responses. Preference was for Swan Lane to be recobbled as this was considered the most unattractive of all the streets being proposed for improvement.
- 9.6 Within the programme going forward there are plans for further public exhibitions to both present the preferred option and then the final option to ensure the public are aware of the programme of works.

**10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 It is open to the Executive to select its preferred option. In exercising this discretion, Members should be mindful of their duty under the Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the "Best Value" duty).

- 10.2 Each of the options outlined in this report require varying legal and procurement actions. Officers from Legal Services and the Procurement team will continue support the progress of this project to ensure best value outcomes.
- 10.3 It is confirmed that AECOM have provided the contracted services in accordance with the budgetary allocation for those services. A decision on a preferred option for this project will assist officers prepare a specification to support the appointment of a designer for the works.
- 10.4 All contracts related to this project must be procured in a manner which complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Guildford Borough Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 11.1 We will continue to review and update the EIA as the project progresses. As accessibility is a key success criteria a full EIA will be completed.

## **12. Human Resource implications**

- 12.1 There are no HR implications.

## **13. Summary of Options**

- 13.1 The outcome of the site analysis and consultation exercises provided AECOM with more informed understanding of the issues than outlined in original scope and hence the range of options now presented. There is a budgetary constraint on all but the option B scheme. However, the opportunity to deliver an enhanced scheme will see a significant step change in the benefits of the scheme and opportunity to really tie in our streetscape so that they are more look and feel more united.
- 13.2 A possible and prudent approach is to continue with developing a detailed design for a preferred option to get more cost certainty as funding is already available for this and approved. The cost for this development phase is expected to be in the region of £230,000, so far feasibility study has cost approximately £40,000. This will counter any delay if we cannot be allocated additional funding in this financial year.
- 13.3 There are modular elements (lighting, furniture etc or even streets) of the scheme that can be omitted or excluded depending on cost outcome and priorities which gives flexibility in delivering a scheme within a defined realistic budget. A more informed decision can then made of which elements should be delivered based on further consultation that will be carried out and also the information we have yet to procure.

13.4 This phased approach will ensure we are being more effective in our programming by continuing with these developmental works whilst further funding is secured if needed.

**14. Next Step**

14.1 To move the project forward, a decision is required on both the preferred option to progress to detailed designs, and procurement of lead designer as AECOM, have completed their contractual services obligations, for detailed design stage works. If an option that required additional capital GBC funding, this will then be sought.

**15 Programme**

15.1 The following programme sets out an estimated timescale for delivery of Option B which is the only option within budget. Construction however could start for all other options in April 2020 as well if all development detail designs, surveys etc. and procurement were completed prior as suggested in Para.13.2.

15.2 There is preference for construction for each street to be sequential as opposed to all at once this would add a possible further 6months to the programme timeline.

Events	Nov2019	Dec	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	March	April	May	June	July
Appoint Lead Designer									
Develop Public Exhibitions of preferred options									
Host Public Event									
Develop Detailed designs									
Planning Permissions (if Required)									
Exhibition of final scheme									
Procure main contractor									
Contract									

Start on Site									
Works completion									

- Appendix 1- Streetscape Feasibility SWOT and Detailed Plan options
- Appendix 2 – Pedestrian Safety measures options
- Appendix 3 – High Street 3D Visuals Pedestrian Safety measures
- Appendix 4 – Consultations – Summary Online Questionnaire and Walkabout sessions