

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 26th April 2007

Report Title Leamington Urban Mixed Priority Project Review

Summary Following the resolution of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the 8th June 2006 meeting, the report describes the current financial situation following completion of both Phases 1 and 2 of the project. The report also includes the current situation regarding implementation of the remaining works.

For further information please contact Max McDonogh
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees Environment Overview and Scrutiny
8th June 2006.

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate) Councillor Mrs S Boad)
Councillor C Davis) for information
Councillor T Naylor)
Councillor M Singh)

Other Elected Members Councillor K Browne)
Councillor Mrs E Goode) for information
Councillor Mrs J Lea)

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Councillor M Heatley – for information

Chief Executive

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Legal

I Marriott - comments incorporated

Finance

O Winters - agreed

Other Chief Officers

.....

District Councils

.....

Health Authority

.....

Police

.....

Other Bodies/Individuals

.....

FINAL DECISION

YES/NO (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

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To Council

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To Cabinet

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To an O & S Committee

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To an Area Committee

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Further Consultation

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**Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
26th April 2007**

Leamington Urban Mixed Priority Project Review

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. If the financial situation outlined in the report changes, a further report will be brought to this Committee.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 12th January 2006 Cabinet approved the outline Capital Programme for Transport for 2006/2007 and this included an increased allocation for Leamington Urban Mixed Priority (LUMP) scheme. In view of the increase in costs, Cabinet requested that Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the funding issues relating to this scheme.
- 1.2 At the 17th January 2006 meeting, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee deferred discussion regarding this item to a future meeting to enable a joint report to be prepared by the Strategic Directors of Environment and Economy and Resources detailing how the costs of the scheme had been estimated, why they had increased, and what measures had been taken to mitigate the escalating costs in Phase 1.
- 1.3 At the meeting held on 8th June 2006 the Committee considered a joint report prepared by the Strategic Directors of Environment and Economy and Resources on the construction problems and consequential overspend on Phase 1 of the LUMP. At the meeting, Committee resolved that a further report be presented if the costs were anticipated to increase above the allocation. It was also resolved that a further report would be brought to Committee once the project was complete and the costs established.

- 1.4 The total allocation for the project was increased to £3.445m by Council in February/March 2006 in order that Phase 2 of the project could be completed.
- 1.5 The original contract period for completing the works was 26 weeks. However, as a result of the problems encountered and associated delays, the works were suspended in October 2005. The works were then split into two phases. Works to October 2005 are known as Phase 1 and extend along the Parade from Clarendon Avenue junction down to Victoria Bridge. The remaining works, known as Phase 2, which extend from Victoria Bridge along Victoria Terrace and include Bath Street to High Street, were completed in Summer 2006.
- 1.6 This report explains the current situation regarding the cost of the project and also outlines the outstanding works to complete the project. The report also explains the situation regarding the problems with the rocking and damaged slabs and what is being done to overcome them.

2. Phase 2

- 2.1 As a consequence of the problems encountered with the shallow cellars and utilities plant during Phase 1, further consultation with property owners and tenants was carried out to identify additional cellars. Additional, non-invasive, investigation of the cellars was carried out using ground radar techniques to try to determine unknown cellars and their depth. This technique also identified other likely obstructions, including utilities equipment, such as electricity cables.
- 2.2 Engineers also visually inspected the cellars, once identified, where access was available. For those cellars found to be in a poor state of repair, agreement was reached with the owner that they would be filled in and made safe.
- 2.3 The ground radar technique of investigating cellars and other obstructions was very effective in identifying the existence of cellars and other buried obstacles. The investigation also provided information regarding depths but these were only of limited value as they were found to give only an indication of the depth because of the of +/- 100mm tolerance. As the indicated depth was to the top of the cellar void, and not to top of cellar arch, and the depth of the cellar roof could not easily be determined, the available depth to the top of the cellar could only be approximated.
- 2.4 The additional investigation and consultation with adjacent property owners in locating the cellars in Phase 2 was worthwhile, as potential problems were foreseen and planned for. However, the high tolerances that need to be applied to the results do reduce its effectiveness as more accuracy is needed in order to accurately determine if the cellars affect the works or not.
- 2.5 The specification for the footway construction was also modified for Phase 2, in the light of the problems on Phase 1. Consequently, the reduced depth of excavation, together with the additional information on the cellars meant that Phase 2 works were completed on time and within the revised funding allocation.

- 2.6 Full road closure of Bath Street enabled the contractor to undertake the works efficiently whilst keeping access available for businesses and pedestrians. This also ensured the safety of the many pedestrians, the workforce and access traffic and generally worked well with little additional congestion.
- 2.7 The Stakeholder meetings, together with weekly public meetings, were continued throughout Phase 2 works. In general there was low attendance but where problems were identified these were generally resolved or mitigated.
- 2.8 In summary, Phase 2 works were progressed on time, within the revised budget, with little congestion and there was general satisfaction with the manner the works were carried out.

3. Current Programme for Completing the Project

- 3.1 There are still a number of outstanding sections of work to be carried out that formed part of the initial scheme. These works include the area in front of All Saints Church, which is waiting for the regeneration work to the Church frontage to be progressed; the pedestrian railings or other street furniture at Dormer Place junction; and the footway area in front of the new River Island shop (formerly Woodwards). These works are programmed to be carried out in the next few months but there are a number of issues that need to be resolved before this can be done.

4. On-going Issues

- 4.1 A number of areas of work involving remedial works to both Phases 1 and 2 have yet to be undertaken, some of which are the responsibility of the Contractor. These works are planned to be carried out as soon as possible in the next few weeks.
- 4.2 To complicate matters, there are problems with rocking slabs, broken slabs and block paving, which are not the responsibility of the contractor, and need to be resolved.
- 4.3 During the design process for the project the illegal footway parking and the existence of cellars were known. Consequently a strong concrete base to the slabs was specified in order to strengthen the pavements so that they would bear the illegal parking better than previously. Unfortunately, this has only been partly successful and a number of slabs have still been damaged. However, there has also been a down side to strengthening the pavement, which is that a significant number of slabs are rocking. The rocking slabs 'click ' and move slightly and are not considered a safety issue, but they are very noticeable to pedestrians. A different method of 'bedding' the rocking slabs will be trialed in the next few weeks to see if we can resolve this particular issue. If the re-bedding trial area is successful, the remaining rocking slabs will be re-laid, subject to budgetary constraints.

- 4.4 The issue of broken slabs and block paving is considered to be due to Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCV) and other vehicles parking on the footway. During the period leading up to Christmas, Fairs are held on the Parade under Sunday/weekend road closures arranged by Warwick District Council. During these closures HCVs and other fairground equipment have been located on the pavements and have contributed to the damage of the pavement. This issue is currently being investigated with a view to stopping or reducing such damage.
- 4.5 The issue of illegal parking on the pavement is proving a difficult one to resolve. The Police have been asked to enforce the matter, and to some extent have increased their presence on the Parade, but they are unable to have a continual presence to ensure that illegal parking does not occur. When decriminalisation of parking is implemented in Leamington in August this year, the expected increased presence of Parking Attendants will be able to reduce the illegal parking on the footway where parking restrictions are in place.
- 4.6 Following an assessment of the problems presented by vehicles parking on the footway, it will be recommended that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be made banning parking on the footways. Currently, existing prohibition of parking TROs in the town centre do not comprehensively cover all the footways, for example adjacent to loading or disabled bays. Should the footway TRO be successfully implemented, Parking Attendants will be authorised to issue parking tickets to any vehicle parked on the pavement. This is expected to reduce this illegal activity.

5. Funding Update

- 5.1 The total cost of the project has still to be finalised but is very unlikely to exceed the current allocation of £3.445m. Discussions are still on-going with the contractor to finalise the works cost and this is expected to be completed by early Summer.
- 5.2 As there are still a number of outstanding works to be completed, as referred to in paragraph 3.1, the estimated cost of these works have been included in the cost of the project, but their final cost will be kept within the current allocation.
- 5.3 Although the costs of the project have not yet been finalised, the costs of Phases 1 and 2 have been identified as approximately £2.8m and £0.65m respectively. The split between the two phases is approximate as a number of the costs involved have to be apportioned between the two phases.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Although there has been a large increase in the cost of the project, as a result of problems encountered in Phase 1, the lessons learnt from the early works and subsequent changes implemented, resulted in Phase 2 construction being delivered on time and budget.

- 6.2 The additional non-invasive ground investigation and further consultation with adjacent property owners was worthwhile such that potential problems were foreseen and planned for.
- 6.3 The final cost of the project has still to be finalised but is very unlikely to exceed the current allocation. However, should costs ultimately rise above the allocation a further report will be brought to the Committee.

JOHN DEEGAN
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4th April 2007