



## Report for Leader Decision (Planning & Regeneration portfolio)

<b>Decision Date:</b>	<b>20 March 2024</b>
<b>Reference number:</b>	<b>PR01.24</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Aylesbury Regeneration Improvement Works – Market Square and Cambridge Street</b>
<b>Relevant councillors:</b>	Cllr Martin Tett (leader), Cllr Peter Strachan Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration, Cllr Rachael Matthews Deputy Portfolio Holder for Town Centre Regeneration, Cllr Steve Broadbent Cabinet Member for Transport
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	Richard Ambrose, Service Director – Economic Growth & Regeneration
<b>Ward affected:</b>	<b>Aylesbury North</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To approve the release of £590,000 for Aylesbury Regeneration Improvement Works to Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street, to come from the remaining Capital Budget of £5.1m;</b> <b>To delegate authority to the Service Director for EG&amp;R to commission the works via the Highways framework contract.</b>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	To commence works as detailed below in this report.

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report requests authority to release the funding for the Aylesbury town centre public realm improvement works in Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street as detailed below and as part of the council's existing capital programme.

- 1.2 The remaining budget will be set aside for an improvement scheme within Aylesbury Town Centre. This will be brought forward for a key decision later this year.

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 In September 2023, the Regeneration Board concluded that Market Square and Cambridge Street would benefit from some essential improvement works. These works are integral to the delivery of the wider public realm improvements in Aylesbury and will improve the environment in these areas.
- 2.2 Officers from the Regeneration and Highways teams have undertaken a deep dive review of the potential improvement works that could be undertaken to Market Square and Cambridge Street; the review was conducted in collaboration with the Highways term contractor.
- 2.3 The review concluded the following works would provide the greatest benefit to the centre of Aylesbury. The total costs of works are £590,000, which is discussed in more detail below. This leaves £4.5m remaining in the capital programme for a further improvement scheme within Aylesbury Town Centre and which will be brought forward later this year.

## **3. Communications & Engagement**

- 3.1 A communications strategy is being developed to ensure that businesses and residents are fully informed of the proposed improvement works to the centre of Aylesbury. It is important that all key stakeholders understand the proposed improvements and how they benefit the town centre. Additionally, engagement of local ward councillors and the Town Council is important at an early stage.
- 3.2 **Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO)**
- 3.3 During the pandemic temporary traffic orders were made to support the economic recovery of businesses in the town centre. This included businesses such as the Rockwood pub in Kingsbury and the businesses on Cambridge Street.
- 3.4 These were temporary measures through the Welcome Back Fund and have been previously extended with great success. Businesses are calling for the traffic orders to be reviewed and ideally made permanent.
- 3.5 Officers in Regeneration & Highways have been working with Highways consultants to review the current traffic orders which, in addition to the successful ones, include some conflicting and unenforceable traffic orders and ongoing issues surrounding the shared use of taxi bays in Kingsbury. A formal consultation process is due to begin in early February. The consultation will run for a period of 21 days and once the consultation has been concluded recommendations will be taken for a Leader Decision with an anticipated implementation from April 2024.

### **3.6 Market Square Improvement Works**

- 3.7 The Regeneration Board gave the steer for a programme of improvement work in Market Square. A review of the existing power supply within Market Square concluded that to enable future development of the historic market and future events it would need to be upgraded to increase its capacity and meet with safety standards.
- 3.8 The electrical design proposes a new incoming 'feeder pillar' cabinet to Market Square bringing an increase in power supply from the existing and insufficient 110v to an upgraded 230v supply. UK Power Networks will provide the increase in power supply. Each of the 6 new 'market pillars' will have 8 sockets (6 x 32A and 2 x 16A) providing a total of 48 sockets.
- 3.9 The design increases the potential power to up to 48 market stalls. With a new layout of the market there is potential to increase the number of stalls further still if power was not required.
- 3.10 The upgraded infrastructure has a minimum 30-year lifespan and meets with current electrical safety regulations. The market pillars (sockets) will be situated within new secure boxes and in existing bollard locations on the east side of Market Square.
- 3.11 The increase in power will also enable a greater range of public and bespoke events; such as twilight and food markets (requiring a 230v power supply) which could boost the nighttime economy and generate more footfall in the evenings.
- 3.12 The design allows for trenching (for the new ducting) through the block paving on the Hale Leys (east) side of Market Square and avoids any need to disrupt the historic cobbles on Market Square itself. Localised works around the new market pillars (containing the sockets) which will impact the cobbles will be replaced with like for like materials. The works will take approximately 8 weeks to complete.

### **3.13 Market Square Lighting scheme**

- 3.14 In addition to the proposed power upgrade, officers have been working with electrical contractors to undertake a survey of the existing provision and investigate the potential for an enhanced lighting scheme in Market Square.
- 3.15 A preliminary lighting design solution has been developed which celebrates the historic statues and monuments in the square, with lighting enhancements and illuminations around the following:
- Linear LED up-lighting around the plinths on the lions (2 no.) at the south end of Market Square;
  - Spot lighting to highlight the Charles Compton Statue at the south end of Market Square;

- Replacement of an erroneous lamp column with a heritage style twin lantern and column to match the others in the vicinity at the south end of Market Square;
- Down-lighting to all four faces to create pools of light around the base of the Clock Tower. Linear LED up-lighting to all four faces and potentially internal illumination/ back-lighting to the clock face on the Clock Tower in the centre of Market Square;
- Restore power to the historic lanterns, upgrade to LED lights and potentially add 'bulkhead' lighting to illuminate the War Memorial at the north end of Market Square and;
- Replacement LED up-lighting incorporated into new benches and seating around the trees in various locations within the square.

3.16 A short length of trenching and ducting will be required across the Market Square cobbles. The cobbles will be re-laid once the installation has been completed.

3.17 The proposed lighting enhancements seek to create an attractive and inviting environment in the town centre that increases public safety particularly after dusk, making the space inclusive for all. The new lighting will also include options to change colours for special occasions such as Remembrance Day.

### 3.18 **Market Square Historic Monuments (Repair & Cleaning)**

3.19 In addition to the proposed lighting enhancements the key historic statues and monuments in Market Square will be given new life through professional cleaning and minor restoration. This includes:

- 2 lions
- Charles Compton Cavendish statue
- Clock tower to first storey
- War Memorial
- John Hampden & Disraeli statues
- Plinths and surrounding/ prominent low-level stonework.

3.20 The Council's Heritage team are fully engaged to advise on matters around planning listed structures consent and appropriate specialist contractors to undertake this type of restorative work.

### 3.21 **Cambridge Street – Proposed Public Realm Scheme**

3.22 A preliminary design for a new public realm scheme on Cambridge Street has been developed between the Harrow public house and No.22 i.e. the area of the current

temporary traffic order to build on the benefits of the closure and create an attractive environment in this section of the street home to a number of independent businesses. The scheme is contingent upon the creation of a permanent Traffic Regulation Order to close this stretch of the street to traffic.

- 3.23 The scheme can be delivered using highways permitted development rights. The scheme will consist of flushed surfaces (asphalt finish) for accessibility, new drainage provisions as well as new commercial bin stores and festoon lighting. Design proposals with local businesses in Cambridge Street together with key stakeholders.
- 3.24 Following a period of engagement with key stakeholders, the detailed design for the scheme will be completed during May 2024 and will be subject to the Project Board approval. It is proposed that a contractor from the Highways Framework will be appointed during June 2024 and the works completed by September 2024.

#### 4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 Endorsement has been provided by the Regeneration Board and CCIB for the improvement works to be undertaken as presented above. These works will form part of the wider Aylesbury Public Realm improvements programme and are in line with the Council’s adopted Regeneration Strategy for Aylesbury.
- 4.2 A budget of £590,000 for the improvement works to Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street is required. These will be commissioned through the Council’s existing Highways contract. The cost plan for the Aylesbury town centre public realm improvement works is presented in the table below.

Item	Description	Cost estimates including contingency
Market Square Power upgrade	Increased power supply and number of a sockets	£118,389
Market Square lighting improvements	Enhanced lighting to improve sense of Place	£134,104
Market Square Historic Monument Cleaning	Restorative cleaning and minor repairs	£ 24,641
Cambridge Street Public Realm Improvements	Traffic-free pedestrian zone	£312,866
<b>Total</b>		<b>£590,000</b>

- 4.3 Revenue Budget implications – none, this project is a Capital Project.



4.4 Capital Budget Implications. The table below sets out the Capital Budget position for this project:

	£
<b>Whole of life Budget</b>	<b>5,694,331</b>
<i>Funded from - External Funding - ALUTS, S.106</i>	<i>(1,186,207)</i>
<i>Funded from - Council Capital Funding</i>	<i>(4,508,124)</i>
<b>Spend to Date &amp; Remaining contractual commitments</b>	<b>567,471</b>
<i>Funded from - s.106 and Aluts</i>	<i>(383,079)</i>
<i>Funded from - Council Capital Funding</i>	<i>(184,393)</i>
<b>Remaining Budget</b>	<b>5,126,859</b>
<i>Funded from - External Funding - ALUTS, S.106</i>	<i>(803,128)</i>
<i>Funded from - Council Capital Funding</i>	<i>(4,323,731)</i>
<b>Funding Requested to be Released</b>	<b>590,000</b>
<i>To be funded from ALUTS and S.106 - use external funding first.</i>	
<b>Remaining Budget for further improvement scheme</b>	<b>4,536,859</b>
<i>Funded from - External Funding - ALUTS, S.106</i>	<i>(213,128)</i>
<i>Funded from Council Capital Funding</i>	<i>(4,323,731)</i>

- This project has a whole life budget of £5.694m included in the Capital MTFP.
- It is funded with £1.186m of s.106 developer contributions and £4.508m of the Council's own Capital funding.
- Spend to date has been £567k, funded £383k from s.106 and £184k from Corporate Capital.
- The remaining budget is £5.126m, programmed into 2024-25. It is currently unreleased.
- The proposed spend of £590k, seeking release in this paper, will be funded from s.106 developer contributions.
- This will leave a remaining budget of £4.537m, funded £213k from developer contributions and £4.323m from the Council's Capital funding.
- No budget changes are required. The budget may be reprofiled once the further improvement scheme comes forward for Cabinet approval.

## 5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 The Aylesbury Public Realm Scheme is in line with the corporate aspirations to deliver successful regeneration within Buckinghamshire and aspirations of the Garden Town masterplan.
- 5.2 **Property** – The Council has significant assets and land ownership in Aylesbury. The project will help set the scene for future regeneration in the town centre.
- 5.3 **HR** - There are no direct implications.
- 5.4 **Climate change and sustainability** – The improvements to Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street will transform the town centre; it will seek to mitigate climate change through elements of the design such as sustainable drainage where possible.
- 5.5 **Equalities** – These improvement works will help create and enable inclusive and diverse spaces. It will not have any disproportionate impact upon people with protected characteristics. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared at the appropriate time as the design progresses and the consultation and engagement activities enable all users to participate.
- 5.6 **Data** – A data protection impact assessment may be required; it will be prepared at the appropriate time.
- 5.7 **Value for money** – These works are considered to offer value for money and support the economic growth of the town centre, creating inclusive spaces that can be enjoyed both in the daytime and evenings; helping to increase footfall and in turn boost the nighttime economy and spend in the town centre.
- 5.8 It is anticipated that the principal designer role will be undertaken by the Highways term contractor using the Highways approved framework. In addition, they will support the procurement of the main works contractor and provide supervision for both Cambridge Street and the proposed works to Market Square.

## 6. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 6.1 Local members have previously had an awareness of the Kingsbury and Market Square review; as discussed above the proposed communications strategy will enable further engagement to take place as it is important to update them on proposed improvement works to Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street as they progress to delivery.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 Economic Growth & Regeneration officers are preparing a communications strategy that will enable the council to announce the new improvement works to Market Square, Kingsbury (TRO) and Cambridge Street. This includes briefing local businesses, residents, portfolio holders and local members of timelines for delivery and set the expectations appropriately.

## **8. Director of Legal & Democratic Services Comments**

- 8.1 Nothing further to add to the report.

## **9. S.151 Officer Comments**

- 9.1 This budget is within the Council's published Capital MTFP as unreleased and requires this key decision for the £590k of expenditure to be able to be committed. A further Key Decision will be required to commit further budget.

## **10. Next steps and review**

- 10.1 Once approval has been given to release the budget of £590,000, officers will commence the detail design stage for both Cambridge Street and Market Square improvement works. It is to be noted that given the historic nature of Market Square, historic building consent is required for the both the lighting and power supply upgrade and officers will be engaging with both the planning & heritage departments to ensure that works are in accordance with planning regulations.
- 10.2 Once planning has been consented, officers will commence the procurement process for a contractor to start the works; businesses and residents will be kept fully informed as the schemes progress.

## **11. Background papers**

- 11.1 None

## **12. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) by 5pm on 18 March 2024.