

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2017

Title of report	BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN COALVILLE – PROPOSALS AND FUNDING
Key Decision	<p>a) Financial Yes</p> <p>b) Community Yes</p>
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Purpose of report	To request Cabinet approval for the development of three proposals, including funding, as part of the Building Confidence in Coalville priority.
Reason for Decision	Cabinet approval needed to develop the proposals and to allocate funding.
Council Priorities	<p>Building Confidence in Coalville</p> <p>Homes and Communities</p> <p>Businesses and Jobs</p>
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial/Staff</p> <p>Link to relevant CAT</p> <p>Risk Management</p> <p>Equalities Impact Screening</p> <p>Human Rights</p>	<p>As set out in the report.</p> <p>As set out in the report.</p> <p>Not applicable.</p> <p>There are no Human Rights implications.</p>

Transformational Government	Working with other public and private partners to deliver a better deal for Coalville and maximising investment to build confidence in the town and community.
Comments of Deputy Chief Executive	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	Marlborough Square Group Memorial Square Group Leicestershire County Council
Background papers	The Prince's Foundation's Regeneration Strategy for Coalville (2009). Four Squares and Streets Investment Plan (2010). Report to Cabinet (26 July 2016) Extending the Coalville shop front improvement grant scheme and update on the Coalville Project.
Recommendations	<p>IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS FOR MEMORIAL SQUARE, MARLBOROUGH SQUARE AND ASHBY ROAD, COALVILLE AS SET OUT IN THIS REPORT. 2. APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF £577,000 FROM THE 2016/17 AND PROJECTED 2017/18 BUDGET SURPLUSES TOWARDS THE COST OF POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO MARLBOROUGH SQUARE, COALVILLE. 3. APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF £25,000 FROM THE 2016/17 AND PROJECTED 2017/18 BUDGET SURPLUSES TOWARDS THE COST OF POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO MEMORIAL SQUARE, COALVILLE. 4. APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF £175,000 FROM THE 2016/17 AND PROJECTED 2017/18 BUDGET SURPLUSES TOWARDS THE COST OF POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ASHBY ROAD, COALVILLE. 5. DELEGATES AUTHORITY FOR COMMITMENT OF THE AMOUNTS MENTIONED IN RECOMMENDATIONS 2., 3. AND 4. TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the Council's commitment to Building Confidence in Coalville this report sets out proposals to make improvements to Marlborough Square, Memorial Square and Ashby Road.
- 1.2 The Prince's Foundation's Regeneration Strategy for Coalville (2009) and the subsequent Four Squares and Streets Investment Plan (2010) highlighted the requirement for improvements to Marlborough Square and Memorial Square.
- 1.3 Ashby Road is a key gateway into Coalville, and the existing traffic calming is not universally popular. Talks are ongoing with the Highway Authority, to secure agreement to de-clutter and re-align the road.
- 1.4 Other work under the banner of Building Confidence in Coalville includes:
 - Phases 1 and 2 of the frontages improvement scheme
 - Delivery of the Enterprising Town Centres grant scheme
 - Free after 3 car parking initiative
 - Improvements to the Emporium and former Arriva bus depot
 - Improvements to the former Litten Tree frontage.

2. MARLBOROUGH SQUARE

- 2.1 In July 2016 Cabinet allocated £523,000 towards the cost of creating a design plan for Marlborough Square and the potential cost of implementation of that design.
- 2.2 In addition officers have engaged with the businesses and property owners in Marlborough Square to seek their views on the future of this part of Coalville, with the aspiration of increasing footfall and customer spend.
- 2.3 The Marlborough Square Group (businesses and property owners in and around the square) has met on three occasions and has agreed the following brief for public realm works:
 - To reduce the vehicle domination of the square, reduce vehicle speeds and remove street clutter
 - To make the square more flexible for events
 - To create a square that is easier for pedestrians (shoppers) to move around
 - To create a better waiting area for public transport users
 - To introduce new hard landscaping and trees to improve the visual appeal of this part of the town centre
 - To increase the amount of turnover in parking spaces, to allow more shoppers per hour to park in the square and get to businesses within the square more easily.
- 2.4 Using the above brief the Council's Urban Designer has drafted an indicative public realm improvement scheme. This has been discussed with LCC Highways engineers. LCC Highways is, in principle, supportive of the proposed scheme, which can be found at Appendix 1.

2.5 Outputs and outcomes for the project include:

- Increased footfall to the Marlborough Square area
- Increased spend in the businesses in and around Marlborough Square and possibly Coalville as a whole
- Pleasant public realm that gives people a reason to walk and explore
- Programme of events and activity to generate interest (organised both by NWLDC and Marlborough Square businesses) including Coalville by the Sea and an extended Christmas event
- Increased interest in vacant properties
- Increased engagement from Marlborough Square businesses.

2.6 Initial estimates from LCC Highways estimate the costs associated with detailed design and project management at £1.1m. Officers will seek to manage-down these estimates and it is important to note that costs are indicative and subject to detailed surveys, technical and construction designs.

2.7 Cabinet has already allocated £523,000 towards the project and it is proposed that a further £577,000 is allocated from the 2016/17 and the projected 2017/18 budget surpluses to enable the Marlborough Square improvements to be developed further with a detailed design specification and project plan.

2.8 The requested allocation is to provide a financial frame to progress the works. It is planned that these costs will be managed effectively and efficiently to ensure that the actual cost is well within the budget allocation. Any underspends will be ring fenced to promote activities and events in the new square once it is completed.

2.9 There are a number of reasons for allocating further funds to ensure the completion of the Marlborough Square improvements:

- The economic benefits of undertaking public realm works have been well documented. For example “Public realm improvements, like pedestrianisation or adding seating and greenery, can increase retail footfall by about 30% and retail turnover by an average of 17 per cent” (according to Tim Whitehead, David Simmonds, and John Preston (2006) “The Effect of Urban Quality Improvements on Economic Activity.” Journal of Environmental Management 80 (1) (July): 1–12. doi:10.1016/j.jenvman.2005.01.029). The Association of Town Centre Management state that ‘sustainable shopping’ comes from local people who are encouraged to visit a town centre more regularly’ in their “Living Streets - An Introduction to Managing Great Places” Report.
- The onus is on the public sector to undertake public realm improvements for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. If the Council does not perform this stewardship role then it does not get done.
- It is estimated that public realm improvements have not been carried out in Marlborough Square since the late 1990s. Any investment made in 2017/18 would have a likely lifespan of 25-30 years meaning that the capital investment looked at on a per year basis is significantly reduced.
- There is an appetite from the Marlborough Square businesses to see improvements being made to the Square and a willingness to bear with the disruption whilst works are undertaken.

- Public sector investment will result in private sector investment. For example the Frontage Improvement scheme has already generated the prospect of increased private sector investment with over 40% of eligible businesses in the Marlborough Square area expressing an interest in the scheme.
- There is a cumulative benefit for Coalville if both Marlborough and Memorial Squares are improved.

2.10 It is also the intention to develop a communications and event plan alongside the public realm improvements, which will set out attractions and activities for the following two years. The Business Focus / Planning Team would also provide a development / investment brief to seek to attract new businesses to further invest in the square.

2.11 It is anticipated that works to Marlborough Square will take at least six months to complete although at this stage this is an initial estimate only.

2.12 The lead in time for works to commence will depend on the availability of LCC Highways, which will be engaged to project manage the improvements as well as ensure, if needed, that these improvements fit into any developments linked to the County's plans for Snibston. The lead in time may be 12 months or more. Planning permission will also be required before works can commence.

2.13 There are a number of risks associated with improvements to Marlborough Square:

Potential risk	Suggested mitigation measure
Short term impact of loss of footfall and trade whilst works are undertaken resulting in negative publicity in local press	Development of a "we support the improvements" charter for local businesses to sign to guard against complaints to the media Contractor to develop plan of works to minimise disruption to businesses e.g. avoid Christmas
Public realm works overrun in terms of time and costs	Contingency fund built into project costs. Contractor liable for compensation to businesses in the event of works overrunning Penalties for late delivery incorporated into contract
Negative publicity and loss of confidence if project not undertaken following consultation	Ensure improvement works are deliverable before consultation
Public perception that the improvement works are a waste of money	Communications strategy explains what costs are involved i.e. not just materials

3. MEMORIAL SQUARE

3.1 Memorial Square holds great significance for the people of Coalville as not only is it at the crossroads around which the town grew but it is also the site of the Memorial Clock Tower and so serves as a focal point for the town.

- 3.2 Officers have engaged with organisations that have an interest in Memorial Square and a Memorial Square Group has met on three occasions and in the short term has addressed anti-social behaviour and litter issues.
- 3.3 In the longer term the group is committed to enhancing the square for the benefit of Coalville residents and as part of the wider town centre regeneration plans which are intended to drive footfall and spend to various sites around Coalville.
- 3.4 The Memorial Square Group has agreed the following project aim:
“To enhance the setting of the Grade II listed War Memorial upgrading the quality of the public realm through resurfacing works and the installation of new street furniture.”
- 3.5 A number of operating principles have been agreed with the involvement of the Council’s Urban Designer as follows:
- The project must respect and enhance the Memorial Clock Tower and its setting to reflect the importance of the site to Coalville and its people
 - The project must create a space to accommodate larger public gatherings for Remembrance and other suitable public events and activities
 - Any enhancements must stand the test of time regardless of other developments that may happen in future
 - The project must have regard to the long term maintenance costs.
- 3.6 Using the above brief the Council’s Urban Designer has drafted an indicative public realm improvement scheme. This has been discussed with LCC Highways engineers. LCC Highways is, in principle, supportive of the proposed scheme, which can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Anticipated outputs for the project include:
- Key contribution to the delivery of the wider Building Confidence in Coalville project
 - Acts as a catalyst for leveraging private sector spend e.g. improvements to the Red House
 - Programme of events and activity to generate interest (organised both by NWLDC and Memorial Square businesses) including Remembrance activity
 - Featured as a key site in proposed Heritage Trail
 - More accessible space for events
 - Secure structural future for Memorial Clock Tower
 - Commemorative artwork located in Memorial Square
 - Pleasant public realm that gives people a reason to walk and explore.
- 3.8 LCC Highways has provided an initial cost estimate of £500,000. Officers will seek to manage-down these estimates and it is important to note that costs are indicative and subject to detailed surveys, technical and construction designs.
- 3.9 In addition the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party has allocated £2,000 towards the creation of a commemorative artwork (mosaic) in the raised flowerbed at the Mantle Lane end of Memorial Square.

- 3.10 It is proposed that NWL allocates £25,000 from the 2016/17 and the projected 2017/18 budget surpluses to this project as:
- The onus is on the public sector to undertake public realm improvements for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. If the Council does not perform this stewardship role then it does not get done
 - There is a cumulative benefit for Coalville if both Marlborough and Memorial Squares are improved.
- 3.11 It is intended that a scheme of public subscription, local businesses, public campaigns, potential S106 and applications for specific local community schemes source the remaining £475,000. A funding strategy will need to be delivered by the Memorial Square Group with leadership from the Business Focus Team. Contributions towards the project could be in the form of goods and services as well as money. It may be necessary to establish a separately constituted group to seek and co-ordinate these funds.
- 3.12 As November 2018 will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War the next 18 months will be an opportune moment to seek sponsorship for the project. Partners such as the Royal British Legion will become ambassadors for the project and will seek funding on behalf of the group.
- 3.13 The lead in time for works to commence will depend on the availability of LCC Highways, which will be engaged to project manage the improvements. However the lead in time to specify, contract and start the works may well be 9-12 months with an estimated implementation programme of 3-5 months. Timescales will be identified as the project gets underway and will need to be sensitive to the key remembrance dates and events plus the success and timescale of accessing funds. Planning permission will also be required before works can commence.
- 3.14 There are a number of risks associated with improvements to Memorial Square:

Potential risk	Suggested mitigation measure
Short term impact of loss of footfall and trade whilst works are undertaken resulting in negative publicity in local press	Development of a “we support the improvements” charter for local businesses to sign to guard against complaints to the media Contractor to develop plan of works to minimise disruption to businesses e.g. avoid Christmas
Public realm works overrun in terms of time and costs	Contingency fund built into project costs. Contractor liable for compensation to businesses in the event of works overrunning Penalties for late delivery incorporated into contract
Negative publicity and loss of confidence if project not undertaken following consultation	Ensure improvement works are deliverable before consultation
Public perception that the improvement works are a waste of money	Communications strategy explains what costs are involved i.e. not just materials

4. ASHBY ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

- 4.1 The traffic calming along Ashby Road, between Ravenstone Road and Memorial Square, does not meet current highway standards and is no longer considered to be fit for purpose. The route has seen significant change since the traffic calming was installed, including new housing developments. The County Council's decision to close the Snibston Discovery Centre also represents a substantial change in terms of attractors for traffic along Ashby Road.
- 4.2 The County Council, as landowner of the wider Snibston estate, has indicated that substantial land holdings are likely to come forward for redevelopment within the medium term. This has been through inclusion of land within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELAA). In the event that a planning application were to be submitted, works would be required to improve the existing access onto Ashby Road. That would present an opportunity to implement a wider scheme, by pooling money from Section 38 contributions with other pots of money, including money that the District Council has already committed to a scheme.
- 4.3 Progress so far has been good. The Senior Urban Designer has drawn up an indicative proposal, and a number of meetings have been held with officials from the county Highway Authority. While the finer details have not yet been finalised, some important principles have been agreed. The key principle is to straighten the carriageway, by removing the existing build outs and vegetation which currently introduce horizontal 'friction' and act to slow vehicles down.
- 4.4 In addition to the build outs and planting, there is an excessive amount of street furniture which gives it a cluttered feel. This includes non-standard and excessive signage, and in particular crash barriers. The tension between urban design aspirations and highway design standards that was identified by the Council's Design Guide SPD, which has now been formally adopted, is of relevance in this case. That tension remains unresolved but good progress has been made.
- 4.5 The challenge to be met is to straighten the road, and remove street clutter such as signage, barriers and build outs, while at the same time encouraging vehicles to slow down. The details of how this will be achieved are currently being designed. These will need to be agreed by the county council, which as highway authority is the owner of the road itself.
- 4.6 The timescale for the works is intertwined with other proposed works in the wider area, and as such it will be important to ensure that particular attention is paid to scheduling. It is not possible to carry out substantial works to Ashby Road and Belvoir Road at the same time, and as a result the timing of works to Ashby Road improvements cannot be accurately programmed. In addition, the funding profile of the works is such that the County Council's contribution is dependent on the redevelopment of the Snibston estate, which adds further difficulty to scheduling the project.

- 4.7 The District Council is to contribute £175,000, including £50,000 to boost the quality of the works, and this sum is in addition to the £125,000 that the County Council has agreed to make available. A standard resurfacing and de-cluttering project would cost in the region of £250,000, and the extra £50,000 is intended to introduce higher quality materials at specific 'gateway' locations. The detail of this is currently being negotiated between the two Councils.
- 4.8 There are a number of risks associated with works to Ashby Road

Potential risk	Suggested mitigation measure
Short term impact of road closures at the same time along Ashby Road and Belvoir Road (associated with works to Marlborough Square)	County Council as highway authority to to develop plan of works to minimise disruption and avoid multiple road closures in close proximity to each other
Public realm works overrun in terms of time and costs	Contingency fund built into project costs.
Negative publicity and loss of confidence if project not undertaken following consultation	Ensure improvement works are deliverable before consultation
Public perception that the improvement works are a waste of money	Communications strategy will explain what costs are involved i.e. not just materials, as well as the fact that some significant works would have to be done anyway, so the additional spend is added value to the long term quality of the local environment

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The forecast budget surplus for 2016/17 is currently £1,606,306. Cabinet has previously allocated expenditure of £1,058,616 leaving a balance of £547,690.
- 5.2 The projected budget surplus for 2017/18 is £934,465.
- 5.3 The financial impact of the proposals is shown below:

	£
Balance of 2016/17 surplus	547,690
Projected 2017/18 surplus	934,465
TOTAL SURPLUS	1,482,155
Marlborough Square	(577,000)
Memorial Square	(25,000)
Ashby Road – traffic calming	(175,000)
Ashby Canal Infrastructure Investment *	(20,000)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(797,000)
REMAINING SURPLUS	685,155

* Item considered in separate report: 'Ashby Canal Investment in Infrastructure