

Title of Report	MARLBOROUGH SQUARE FUNDING	
Presented by	Councillor Richard Blunt Leader of the Council	
Background Papers	Building Confidence in Coalville – Cabinet Paper 13 June 2017 Marlborough Square Refurbishment - Cabinet Paper 16 January 2018 Marlborough Square Refreshment Costs – Cabinet Paper 15 January 2019 (Confidential)	Public Report: Yes Key Decision: Yes
Financial Implications	Sufficient funding to meet the estimated cost of the project will be provided by reallocating an existing reserve to the project and by accepting the LLEP grant.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Legal advice was sought in the preparation of the report.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are none.	
	Signed off by the Deputy Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	This report seeks authority to accept a grant of £360,000 from the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership for public realm work at Marlborough Square and to reallocate an earmarked reserve to the project.	
Reason for Decision	Approval is required to reallocate an earmarked reserve and to accept the grant of £360,000 as there is a requirement to enter into a contract with the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership.	
Recommendations	IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT: I) AUTHORITY BE GIVEN TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLACE TO ENTER INTO THE GRANT AGREEMENT TO RECIEVE £360,000 FROM THE LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC REALM WORK AT MARLBOROUGH SQUARE II) PROGRESS ON THE REDESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT IS NOTED. III) THE EARMARKED RESERVE FOR THE ACQUISITION AND REDEVLOPMENT OF PROPERTY IN COALVILLE IS RETAINED IN FULL AS SET OUT IN THE REPORT FOR THE MARLBOROUGH SQUARE PROJECT	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Marlborough Square project forms part of a wider scheme of public realm works proposed across Coalville to improve the appearance of the town and encourage inward investment. Other related projects include works to the Belvoir Centre recently proposed by the owners, Gylo, and the programme of projects that will form the Council's bid to the Future High Streets Fund.
- 1.2 The project has previously been reported to Cabinet on 13 June 2017, 16 January 2018 and 15 January 2019. These Cabinet reports are included in the background papers to this report. This report sets out progress made since January 2019 and seeks approval to accept a grant of £360,000 which has been offered by the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP) from the business rates pooled funds. This funding has resulted from a bid submitted by the Business Focus team into competitive process and will make a significant contribution to the project's costs.

2.0 PROJECT PROGRESS AND UPDATE

- 2.1 Following work by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) the Council took on the role of leading the delivery of the scheme the internal project management was strengthened in 2019 with work including a detailed risk register, weekly meetings and monthly monitoring reports to highlight any changes to the design, cost or programme. The LCC proposals were reviewed in early 2019. On the basis of consultation with local businesses and other stakeholders, consultants HBS revised proposals and then developed detailed proposals to satisfy the requirements of the project brief and the day to day operational needs in summer 2019 to resolve the significant issues which had been identified. Following feedback, the proposals were further refined and submitted to LCC for initial highway authority approval at the end of 2019. At that point the anticipated start date for the work was May 2020 however this has not been possible, as outlined in sections 2.5 to 2.7.
- 2.2 The fundamental principle used in developing the design are ensuring that the highest quality scheme is delivered in order to make a difference to the town. This includes the choice of appropriate trees, natural materials and lighting and it has required significantly more design input to realise this and resolve all the practical issues. In addition, the space is very tight so that it has been challenging to deliver these objectives and also maintain the functioning of the highway network in this part of the town centre. This was the key reason for the Council taking responsibility for delivery. Given all of this, obtaining approval from the highway authority (s278) is complex and this has affected the programme but the attached plan (Appendix 1) shows how trees, market stalls, natural materials in the most important central space can be delivered.
- 2.3 The second reason for the Council taking on responsibility for delivery was the need for a fixed tender price in order to ensure certainty on quality and cost. The design seeks to focus the budget on the placemaking and maximising the quality possible. The appointed team from HBS include civil engineers, quantity surveyors and other consultants as necessary and the scheme has been refined to allow natural and high quality materials in the central area. HBS have been fully costing the design as it develops so that works remain within the previously approved parameters. The quantity surveyor has considered various options for delivery and is recommending the approach as set out within the programme.
- 2.4 The redesign process has been extensive due to the complexity of balancing the requirements of different users and the revised proposals will create a high quality area of public space (one of the town's four squares) with:
 - Outdoor seating areas – with revised specification to ensure an appropriate level of comfort.
 - New tree planting – with changed choice of species to reflect the limited space available, root barriers to prevent damage to paving and tree grilles which co-ordinate with the overall palette of materials.

- A more pedestrian friendly environment with priority afforded to pedestrians and with vehicles encouraged to drive through the square at lower speeds through changes in carriageway level and surfacing.
- Improved bus passenger waiting areas with a significantly improved public realm and with the highest quality paving in the key central area designed to have varied colour with warm hues.
- New taxi rank - with an improved layout to eliminate space used as roadway unnecessarily.
- New Christmas tree pit.
- New short stay parking spaces - the existing free parking has been relocated equally to Jackson and Margaret Street car parks.
- Maximised space for events that can take place without closing the square to vehicles and which can also be used for an outdoor market.
- Underground power cabling for the market stalls.
- Public art in a focal position in the square.

2.5 Approval by LCC to carry out the work on the highway (Section 278 approval) was initially requested in 2019 with the aim of commencing the work in May 2020 however a considerable amount of additional information was requested such that this process has taken significantly longer than originally allocated in the programme resulting in a delay of approximately 6 months. Following approval, which is expected imminently, an application for planning permission will be submitted and a fixed tender price will be sought for the work. The final design proposal will be submitted to Cabinet for approval at the same time as the tendered price.

2.6 Previous public consultation showed that there is support for the scheme from the majority of businesses and the public. Liaison with buses companies and taxis is continuing to maximise functionality whilst retaining the quality aspects of the scheme. Further consultation will be carried out prior to applying for planning permission for a change of use to public realm and the public art.

2.7 The proposed programme, shown in Appendix 2, includes starting work on 1.12.20 and completing on 31.5.21. However the current Corvid 19 pandemic has already caused delays and further delays are anticipated. A reasonable worst case programme is provided in Appendix 3 and indicates a start on site in 15.2.21 and completion on 28.8.21. This programme takes into account the risks and mitigation proposals identified in the risk assessment.

2.8 The programme aligns with the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) programme and the funding for the scheme will be identified in the FHSF bid which will enable the amount sought in the bid to be increased which, if successful, can then fund further public realm work in Coalville.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Changes to the project as outlined above have resulted in the requirement to make alterations to the funding in combination with the successful application for LLEP funding. Since the Council has taken over control of the project there has been on-going monitoring to ensure that the estimated cost does not exceed £2 million as previously reported.

3.2 A budget of £1.82 million is available for the project provided that the LLEP funding is accepted. In July 2018, Cabinet agreed to retain £486k from a reserve established to acquire and redevelop assets reserve only on the basis that the LLEP funding bid was unsuccessful. Assuming the bid was successful, the value of the LLEP funding would be returned to this original reserve however the Council currently does not have any other plans for this reserve.

3.3 This funding for the project is therefore made up from a number of sources and net of expenditure incurred on the project in 2018/19 as follows:

£1,100,605.49	Approved by Cabinet in January 2018
-£346,269.07	Expenditure incurred in 2018/19
£517,000	Funding agreed from participation in the Leicestershire Business Rates Pilot (Cabinet June 2019)
£360,000	LLEP funding, subject to approval
£60,000	Contribution from Local Business Fund reserve
£486,000	Contribution from Acquiring and Developing Assets reserve
-£360,000	Return of part contribution from Acquiring and Developing assets reserve on basis of successful LLEP bid, as agreed by Cabinet previously in July 2018
£1,817,336.42	Total Project Funding

3.4 However current cost estimates indicate that this will not be sufficient to enhance the quality and functionality of the square to the required level, with the estimated scheme cost likely to be in the region of £2m. It is therefore proposed to both accept the LLEP grant offer and also retain the full contribution from the acquiring and developing assets reserve in full for the Marlborough Square project until a final figure can be reported to Cabinet for approval. This would mean the project will have funding in place of £2.17m. Not all of this funding is expected to be needed however it is common for construction costs to be inaccurate by 5 – 10% and, especially in view of the current unusual circumstances, it is considered prudent to make an appropriate budget allowance.

3.5 The grant offer of £360,000 by the LLEP is subject to terms and conditions and authority is requested for the Strategic Director of Place to enter into a contract for the funding.

3.6 The maintenance arrangements will be captured in a maintenance agreement that sets out the division of maintenance responsibilities between LCC and the District Council and the uplift in costs arising from the high-quality, non-standard items that form part of the design. Cabinet's approval for any additional costs will be sought alongside seeking approval for the tender for the work.

3.7 Planning for the events programme at Marlborough Square has commenced and will be brought forward for approval once a completion date for the work has been confirmed.

3.8 In the short term, it may be necessary for the council to use existing budgets pay for additional enforcement to ensure that the new parking arrangements within the square operate effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Officers have worked closely with the Leader, Ward Members, local businesses and stakeholders to identify a concept proposal that meets collective aspirations for the square. Public consultation has shown strong overall support for the proposal and further consultation will be carried out with regard to the final proposals. The programme has been delayed due to the need for design revisions to achieve the high level of quality and functionality required from limited space, the additional information required as part of the LCC approval process and COVID V19, as outlined above, however the process will result in cost certainty and the opportunity taken to provide quality public realm that lasts decades.

4.2 Cabinet are requested to approve the recommendations made to reallocate the earmarked reserve and delegate authority to accept the LLEP grant offer which make a significant contribution to the project budget and enable the project to progress further.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting Coalville to be a more vibrant, family-friendly town - Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs - Developing a clean and green district - Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	The scheme aligns with the existing policies for public space in Coalville.
Safeguarding:	Not applicable
Equalities/Diversity:	The proposals meet current guidance for people with disabilities and include raised paving at bus stops to make buses more accessible and tactile paving at road crossings to assist people with sight impairment.
Customer Impact:	The scheme will create a greatly improved public space in the centre of Coalville which will benefit all users.
Economic and Social Impact:	The project seeks to create an attractive and functional space for markets and events. In conjunction with the Newmarket, this will create a destination so that additional people will be attracted to Marlborough Square and the increased footfall will benefit the nearby shops and the town centre generally.
Environment and Climate Change:	The project proposals include a larger number of trees, an improved space for pedestrians and cycle facilities. Sustainable materials will be used wherever possible.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Community consultation has been carried out with regard to the project proposals and is detailed in the report and further consultation is proposed.
Risks:	A full risk assessment has been carried out and the risks are being mitigated. Any remaining risks will be reported when Cabinet approval is sought to accept the tender for the works.
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