

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR
TO THE EXECUTIVE
13 JULY 2007

Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy: Environmental Implementation

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite Members to consider committing funding from the capital budget to enhance the highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon being carried out by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the town centre Phase 2 implementation of the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 The Contact Officers for this report is Grant Audley-Miller, Section Head (Environmental Planning & Conservation) on (01235) 540343.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 *Members are asked to:*

- (a) *Commit £72,500 from the Capital Budget towards enhancing the ABITS highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon during the current financial year.*
- (b) *Suspend Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement for the works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon.*
- (c) *Enter into formal contracts with Oxfordshire County Council and Isis Accord for the works in Stert Street and Bath Street, Abingdon.*
- (d) *Agree that further commitments to contribute to the environmental enhancement of Phase 2 of the ABITS strategy await the outcome of the review of the proposed highway works.*
- (e) *Ask the County Council to confirm that in the event of High street works not being implemented that the funds would be earmarked for highway schemes in and around Abingdon.*
- (f) *Welcome the intention to continue a Members Working Group for ABITS open to the public but seek assurances from the County Council on how this will be achieved.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- 3.1 This report supports the Council's Vision and Priorities. It also supports the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 Following the Executive on the 1 June the Leader, Deputy Leader and Councillor Richard

Farrell met with the Cabinet Members for Transportation of Oxfordshire County Council to discuss the review and implementation of Phase 2 of the town centre works.

- 4.2 On the 28th June the ABITS Members Steering Group recommended the County Council to implement the construction of the Stert Street element of Phase Two of the town centre works. The works involve widening of the footpaths, installing loading and disabled drivers parking areas, relocating the 2 pedestrian crossings and narrowing carriageway running lane using the 'no waiting' lines. This work is to commence in July 2007. In the light of the narrowing trials using white lining and concerns raised by the public, the Steering Group also recommended review of the implementation of the High Street element of Phase 2.
- 4.3 In the current financial year Oxfordshire County Council has allowed £690,000 for the Phase 2 town centre works. Members were also informed that this would be their last meeting as a Steering Group but were assured that they would continue as a Working Group open to the public.
- 4.4 In addition to the town centre works the County Council had proposed to carry out design work for Marcham Road in the current financial year and fund implementation in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years.
- 4.5 The County Council had previously agreed to phase the town centre works over two consecutive financial years, the Stert Street element to be carried out during the current financial year and the High Street in 2008/09. The Steering Group recommended that that the High Street element be carried out during 2009/2010, and only after a review the proposed works during 2008/2009. This would be achieved by swapping funding that had previously been agreed for the Marcham Road Phase 2 works and the town centre funding for the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years. This would allow a longer settling in period for phase one and the Stert Street element of phase two, with a commitment to review the extent of the High Street works during the 2008/09 financial year. It will be important to ensure that in the event of reduced costs for the High Street improvements that the County Council will continue to make any surplus funds available for highway works in Abingdon.
- 4.6 Being a highway traffic management scheme, Oxfordshire County Council intend to use their standard highway materials throughout the town centre. These will be:
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| Roads: | Tarmac |
| Kerbs: | Concrete kerbs |
| Loading Bays: | Tarmac |
| Footpaths: | 200x100 concrete block pavers (as in Stratton Way) |
| Crossings: | Buff tactile paving |
- 4.7 The County Council had originally indicated that the road design in Stert Street and High Street would include a gutter/running strip detail consisting of two strips, each 750mm wide. These would provide the illusion of narrowing the road to a single carriageway, but provide sufficient width for two vehicles to pass each other (in the event of a breakdown or emergency). The material originally proposed, 'Tegula' block paving, would have provided a high quality material in these sensitive streets in the conservation area. Regretfully, for reasons of buildability and ease of maintenance, the County Council no longer wish to use 'Tegula' block paving in Stert Street and proposed an alternative called 'Inprint' (a coloured macadam with a rolled in pattern). This alternative your Officers considered totally inappropriate in Abingdon Town Centre. As a result the County Council are now

proposing to simply delineate the carriageway narrowing with the no waiting lines. The carriageway would remain as a tarmac finish.

- 4.8 Clearly, there are numerous options that could be pursued but your Officers consider that in deciding on how best to make most effective use of the budget then there are 5 main objectives should be taken account of; these are to:
- enhance the key elements of the historic streetscape and the setting of historic buildings;
 - enhance the main shopping/visitor streets/spaces;
 - complement the Town Council works already underway in the Market Place;
 - wherever practical use high quality, durable and appropriate materials where they will have the greatest impact on the environment of the town centre;
 - identify works that complement but are also achievable within the period of the Stage 2 works and achieve best value by incorporating the works into the County Council's contract.
- 4.9 Officers have been working with OCC and their consultants to consider the options available for enhancing the highway works. In the narrow streets of the town centre the potential for carrying out environmental improvements is limited to up-grading the quality of the materials to be used on the pavements but this would greatly improve the environment of the town centre. It may be possible to include a specimen tree on, for example, the widened Broad Street pavement.
- 4.10 OCC have provided the Vale with provisional construction rates from their annual contract with Isis Accord, in order that the cost of the various options can be estimated and Isis Accord, and clearly the Vale will also need to be satisfied that these rates represent best value.
- 4.11 The most practical way forward would be to replace the standard materials proposed by the County Council with materials more appropriate to the historic context. In Stert Street and Broad Street the proposal is to re-use the granite kerbs that exist in parts of Stert Street and supplementing them with new granite kerbs, and use larger and more traditionally proportioned paving slabs 400 x 400 rather than the 200 x 100 blocks currently used in the town centre. In addition, rather than using standard tactile paving on the crossings these are proposed for upgrading.
- 4.12 OCC will be undertaking the works using their direct services contractor, Isis Accord. Accordingly, it is intended that to enhance the County Council scheme, the Vale will pay to OCC to cost difference between using "standard" and the "enhanced" materials. As a result it will be necessary to suspend Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement; and enter into formal contracts with OCC and Isis Accord.
- 4.13 To achieve these objectives as well as providing flexibility to meet changes to the overall scheme, your Officers recommend that from the available budget of £250,000, £72,500 should be provisionally committed for the financial year 2007/08. (Any variation in this figure will be reported at the meeting). This is made up of the following items:

Broad Street south side	14,000
Stert Street south (Stert Street from Station Yard junction to the High Street)	46,000
Street furniture & landscaping	2,500
Fees (County Hall design)	<u>10,000</u>
Total	72,500

- 4.14 £10,000 has been allowed for design fees for the area around the County Hall because this will require detailed design. Whatever scheme is ultimately implemented in the High Street the enhancement of the area around the County Hall should remain a key objective to complement the current Market Place improvements.
- 4.14 This would leave a total of £177,500 uncommitted. How the remainder of the budget is spent can be considered at a later stage after further monitoring of the Phase One works and the Stert Street element of Phase Two and after the review of the High Street works.

RODGER HOOD
Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy)

TIM SADLER
Strategic Director

Background Papers: