

Cabinet

DATE	04 November 2020
REPORT OF	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader of the Council
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Clive Tritton, Interim Director of Economy and Growth
SUBJECT	Town Centre Regeneration - Riverhead Square Public Realm Improvement Scheme
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 11/20/06

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Riverhead Square public realm improvement scheme directly supports the Council's priority of a 'Stronger Economy' by delivering new public realm works that will encourage private and public sector investment in Grimsby town centre.

It also contributes to the Council's 'Stronger Communities' objective by providing a high-quality public space and facilities for residents and visitors within the town and strengthens connections to the waterfront.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the final concept design for the Riverhead Square public realm improvement scheme, including the introduction of a space suitable for events, enhanced water quality with a better connection to the waterside, a potential new footbridge over the Riverhead together with new seating and lighting.

The works are supported initially by funding from the Accelerated Towns Fund from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), an initiative by Government to kickstart town centre infrastructure projects as part of Covid-19 recovery. The Town Investment Plan, which has been submitted to the Government, includes further funding for Phase Two of this scheme. A small allocation of funding has also been allocated from the Humber High Streets Challenge Fund (Humber LEP) specifically for the purchase of items to support Covid-19 recovery, such as seating, tables, and equipment to enable pop-up outdoor retail.

Public and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken during the development of the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan 2020 and this has helped to shape the scheme, which also aligns with the Greater Grimsby Town Deal prospectus, the Heritage Action Zone, and the Grimsby Creates programme. Additional stakeholder engagement has taken place specifically for this concept design.

Cabinet is requested to consider the final concept design in order that the works for Phase One can commence in 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1 Approves the final concept design for the Riverhead Square public realm improvement scheme;
- 2 Authorises the Interim Director of Economy & Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to:
 - 2.1 undertake the procurement and award of capital activities required to deliver the programme activity;
 - 2.2 take all actions necessary to secure the continued implementation and ultimate completion of the scheme including detailed design, bridge design, planning applications and all ancillary issues arising;
- 3 Authorises the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to execute all documentation arising.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To approve the concept design and ensure that works can commence in a timely manner and adhere to funding requirements.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council's strategic priorities are for a 'Stronger Economy' and 'Stronger Communities', with a focus on creating opportunities for people, including job creation and the development of new homes. The North East Lincolnshire Local Plan sets out the Council's ambition to maximise the current opportunities for economic growth.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the importance of investing in place-making to realise the economic potential of the Borough as a whole. Grimsby has a key role to play in providing an attractive and quality place to live, work, visit and invest. The Council is taking the lead in terms of creating an enabling environment to de-risk and stimulate private sector investment that will help in addressing the challenges faced by many coastal towns.
- 1.3 The Town Deal prospectus highlights the importance of improving North East Lincolnshire's 'quality of place', with a particular focus on developing the role of the town centre and reconnecting it with the town's waterfront to support the attraction of investment and jobs to the area.
- 1.4 The approved Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan (2020) and the Town Investment Plan (2020) detail the regeneration vision and aspirations for Grimsby and the role that the town plays in shaping the area's economic, social and cultural future. It contains a range of regeneration projects, highlighting the importance of investing in the town's heritage, waterfront, and public realm to attract new investment and create an enhanced visitor experience.

- 1.5 Ahead of the Masterplan and Town Investment Plan being finalised, and as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government announced in June it was offering some additional Accelerated Towns Funding to help kick-start town centre interventions. Grimsby has been awarded £1m, which is in addition to the ring-fenced potential £25m on offer through the Towns Fund programme. This funding comes with a very short development and delivery window, as MHCLG expect the £1m grant to be spent by the end of this financial year.
- 1.6 As part of a cohesive strategy to connect Grimsby's historic and iconic sites, a Heritage Action Zone was established in 2018 and the historically important Riverhead site sits within this and forms a key location on the Grimsby Heritage Trail which is currently in development.

2. RIVERHEAD SQUARE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

- 2.1 The Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan and Town Investment Plan 2020 outlines the potential for a major new public square in Riverhead which will help pivot the town centre towards the water, provide a new space for events and connect with the improvements already underway on Frederick Ward Way and Garth Lane.
- 2.2 The Concept Design proposals are outlined at Appendix One and comprise the following: -
 - Public realm improvements including new streetscape works (landscaping, lighting, signage, street furniture) and better connectivity to the waterfront.
 - The installation of infrastructure and amenities suitable for event use, as well as landscape design features which provide a safe and welcoming environment for more every day uses.
 - Subject to demand, the potential for small kiosks to host both long term and 'pop-up' type uses.
 - The installation of a feature canopy within the square and the potential for a new pedestrian bridge across the Riverhead.

In addition, water enhancement works are planned to the River Freshney.

Enhanced facilities for public transport users will be considered during Phase Two.

- 2.3 Public and Stakeholder Engagement has taken place during the development of the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan with overwhelming support for the redevelopment of Riverhead Square. A detailed report on stakeholder and public engagement, including responses is appended to this Cabinet report (Appendix 2).

- 2.4 Further engagement has also taken place with key stakeholders during the development of the concept designs, with suggestions being considered as part of the final proposed scheme.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Officers will progress all necessary consents and any remaining technical detailed design work to allow procurement of materials and commencement of works.
- 3.2 Phase Two of Riverhead Square is included within the Town Investment Plan. Subject to approval, this project is likely to be the first project to come forward following approval of the Town Investment Plan.

4 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 Opportunities – the proposals provide an opportunity to make significant investment in the quality of the built environment and public realm and create a vibrant public square, linking the town centre to both Victoria Street South and St James Square; and the Garth Lane development sites, Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, Corporation Bridge and beyond.

The site will help pivot the town centre towards the water, it will create a focal point for events and promote engagement with our local heritage. Investment in public spaces is an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy and will contribute to an enhanced local and visitor experience.

- 4.2 Risks – Whilst Accelerated Towns Fund funding has been approved, the Stronger Towns Fund funding is at the latter stages of assessment and has not yet been approved. Not securing all the funding would result in Phase Two of the scheme not being progressed if alternative funding could not be secured.

The works will be carried out at a key location within the centre of the town that is likely to lead to disruption and in turn could result in criticism from the community and other stakeholders. A communications plan will be put in place to ensure that clear and consistent information is provided throughout the delivery phase and disruption will be minimised wherever possible. A full risk assessment will be undertaken and managed by the Grimsby Town Centre Improvement Board and relevant mitigating actions will be undertaken. Any delays to the scheduled start dates could impact on the delivery of the programme within the funding deadlines.

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Do nothing – this would not accord with the regeneration aspirations for Grimsby and would limit opportunities for investment in the public realm. This would also result in the Council having to abandon funding proposals associated with the Towns Fund and return funds to MHCLG, with associated negative reputational consequences.
- 5.2 The final concept design presented in this report has been developed in

accordance with the vision contained within the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan and Town Investment Plan 2020 and updated following feedback from stakeholder and public engagement. Therefore, it is not considered that there are any other realistic options for delivering this project.

6 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Successful delivery of the proposed scheme will generate positive reputational and communications impacts for the Council in terms of the significant visible investment that will be made in Grimsby town centre and the associated benefits for local residents, investors, businesses and visitors.
- 6.2 There is a potential negative reputational risk for the Council if agreement is not reached on the final concept design to enable delivery of works within the timescales set by the funding body.
- 6.3 The proposed scheme will result in disruption during the works. Businesses and local residents will be fully engaged and updated on scheduling to minimise any adverse impact. Local media will be used to inform the wider public. The project team will continue to work closely with the communications teams to ensure that clear and consistent information is delivered in a timely manner. The communications plan for the programme will continue to be updated to cover issues, including any further public engagement requirements.
- 6.4 In addition to proactive communications, the contractor will be advised that disruption must be minimised as much as possible.

7 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Phase One of the scheme is planned to be financed from the £1m of Accelerated Towns Fund from MHCLG. In addition, the Humber LEP, via the Humber High Streets Challenge Fund, has awarded £50k for capital works to this scheme which will help local businesses to recover from the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. Funding for Phase Two is expected to be provided from the Stronger Towns Fund, as set out in the Town Investment Plan.
- 7.2 Given the timescales within which the Council has had to respond to this opportunity, discussions are ongoing regarding the management of the new space. The brief to the landscape architect specifically requested that a strong emphasis be placed on mitigating revenue consequences and this will be carried through as the detailed designs are developed for both phases. Should there be any additional costs, these will be managed within existing budgets.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. This proposal will make an overall positive contribution to the Councils published commitments on climate change and the environment. The design of the improvements to Riverhead Square has been undertaken with consideration to environmentally friendly construction features and low carbon technologies. The square will be developed to create an attractive open civic

space which contributes positively to the natural environment. Additionally, improvements to the river Freshney will be carried out, which will improve the water quality and thus also improve biodiversity and the conditions for wildlife.

9. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

The proposals were considered by an informal meeting of the Economy Scrutiny panel on 13th October 2020 and at a formal meeting on 3rd November 2020.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The cost of Phase One will be funded through external grant and there is no requirement for the Council to undertake any further external borrowing. The funding and scheme have been incorporated within the Council's approved Capital Investment Programme.
- 10.2 Any revenue costs arising from the development are expected to be managed from within existing budgets.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The procurement of the capital activities underpinning the programme outlined is consistent with the stated aims and objectives of the Council of Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities.
- 11.2 The procurement exercise will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and supported by relevant officers.
- 11.3 The delegations sought are consistent with an exercise of this nature.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications arising from the content of this report.

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 This scheme is situated in the West Marsh ward. The economic benefits of the project will be distributed across North East Lincolnshire reflecting the continued economic importance of the town.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 Scrutiny Report – 13th October 2020 - Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan 2020
- 14.2 Scrutiny Report – 13th October 2020 – Town Investment Plan

14.3 Cabinet Report – 14th October 2020 – Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan 2020

14.4 Cabinet Report – 14th October 2020 – Town Investment Plan

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COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Landscape Masterplan



Proposed tree line to buffer road and vehicular access

Feature lighting connecting E-W

Flexible central events space

Feature canopy

Mini kiosks/ concessions

Aquatic planting

Feature lighting connecting N-S

Waterfront terraces

Existing trees retained

Proposed footbridge

Cafes/ restaurants/ bars ground floor use with waterside seating area

Pontoon and enhanced seating area

Existing bus stop area and layout TBC following stakeholder engagement

Appendix 2

Riverhead Square Public Realm Improvement Scheme: Concept Designs

Statement of Public Engagement

1 Introduction

This statement summarises the engagement that has taken place in relation to the proposals and concept design for a public realm improvement scheme in Riverhead Square, Grimsby town centre.

2 Masterplan Public Consultation

Public consultation was undertaken in July 2020 for the emerging Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan Framework (the Masterplan), which included the Riverhead area. Consultation included focus groups and virtual engagement with an online survey, from which 438 responses were received.

Consultation respondents expressed clear support for the ideas presented for the Riverhead within the Masterplan. Key additional ideas that were suggested include:

- *Safety* – focus on an environment safe for families, provision of better lighting, encourage community ownership of the square.
- *Local business space* – provision for business and skills growth, small business spaces.
- *Heritage* – preserve the ‘Barge’, better promote the history of the area.
- *Housing* – potential for residential development in this area.
- *Cultural facilities* – provision of gallery space, craft centres.
- *Public realm / outdoor spaces* – provision of outdoor seating, public art.
- *Transport* – restore the bus station to provide a transport hub, park and ride provision, car parking.
- *Nature and climate change* – soft landscaping, climate change adaptation, plant trees, nature walk.

Focus group participants were generally in support of the ideas set out for the Riverhead. Other ideas put forward focussed on community and cultural linkages plus provision of better links across Fredrick Ward Way to break down the barrier it poses to Alexandra Dock.

Overall, consultees supported the ideas for the Riverhead (fig.1), particularly ‘A place for people to meet and spend time’ and ‘Introduce new uses to create activity’. The range of additional ideas have been considered in the development of the Concept Designs, and within the Town Investment Plan.

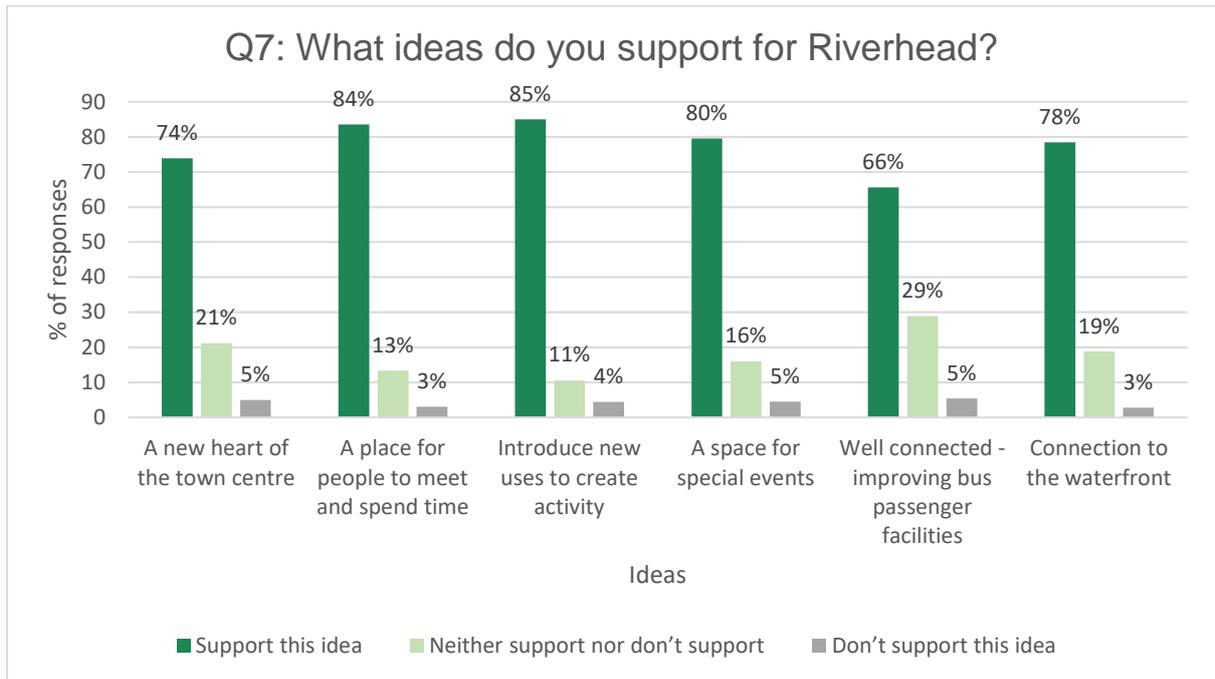


Figure 1 Responses to which ideas respondents supported for Riverhead

In addition to the specific Riverhead question, a more general question in the survey asked for the three things that respondents would most like to see prioritised (fig. 2). Responses to this highlighted cultural facilities including events, leisure and restaurants/cafes. This has also influenced the development of the concept designs for Riverhead Square.

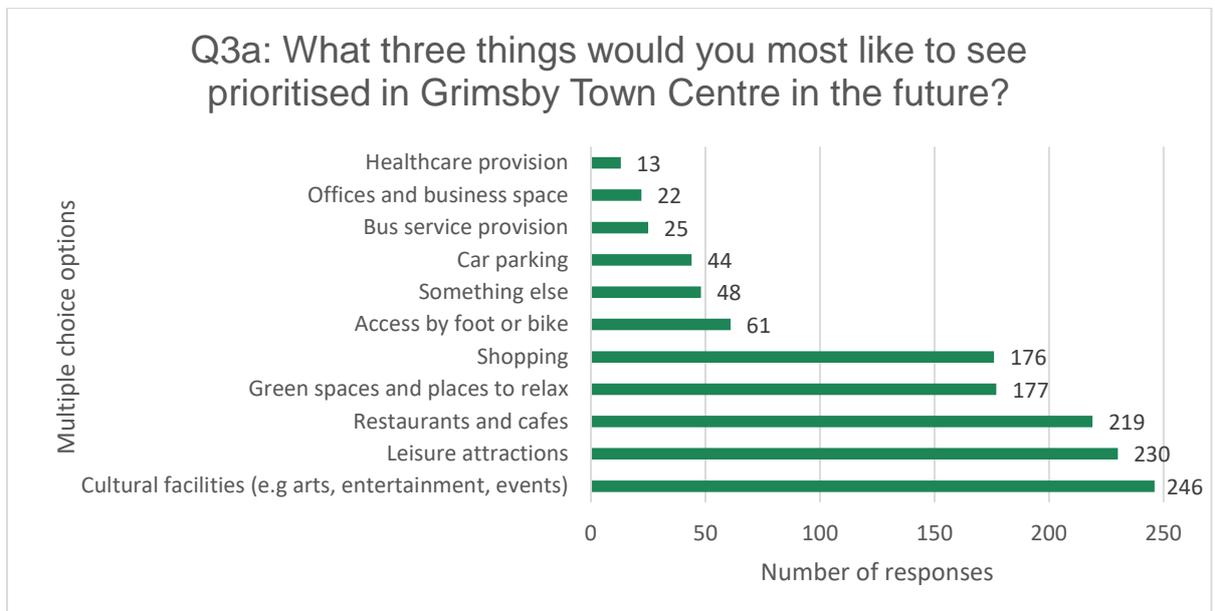


Figure 2 Things that respondents would most like to see prioritised in the Town Centre

3 Riverhead Square Stakeholder Engagement

Given the timescales placed upon the Council for implementation, engagement has focussed on key stakeholders only, and an engagement plan was drawn up to identify those who will be directly impacted by the proposed scheme.

A programme of engagement was developed and has taken the following approach:

- The Designs were presented to informal Economic Scrutiny panel on 13th October.
- Council Officers, including Neighbourhood Services, the Highways Assets Team and those responsible for events, street cleansing and public safety, were all invited to provide their thoughts and advise of any constraints or opportunities that they identified.
- Businesses and Organisations who would be directly impacted by the scheme were invited to view the Concept Design via booked appointment at the Town Hall
- A number of local and national organisations were also asked to consider the concept designs and provide their feedback, including the Environment Agency, Historic England, Humberside Police, and the Civic Society. National organisations were provided with the design also. The Civic Society were invited to make an appointment to view the designs at the Town Hall.
- Ward Councillors were sent the Concept Design via email and asked for their comments; and were also invited to attend the engagement days at the Town Hall should they wish to discuss the designs with the Project Team.

More regular engagement with stakeholders is planned as the scheme progresses, as it will be critical to the success of the development to have their continued support.

4 Engagement Response

Overall, the response was very positive with strong support for the proposals from nearby businesses including The Barge, PureGym, Freshney Place and Hawkstone Properties who own the block along the Eastern bank of the Riverhead. Freshney Place, for example, observed that while a bus station here may help to increase footfall within the shopping centre, on balance they support this scheme as it provides much needed event space and would bring wider benefits to the town centre as a whole, which in turn could also increase footfall.

The majority of those who responded also noted the current prevalence of anti-social behaviour in this area, and the potential for the proposals to help reduce it. Opportunities to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour here will form a key element of the scheme. All stakeholders also advised that good design and choice of

materials will be key - it needs to be very high quality and long lasting, with limited maintenance requirements.

A number of areas for further consideration were identified by stakeholders, as well as opportunities and suggestions for enhancement. These will be taken forward to the detailed design stage and are outlined below.

4.1 Areas for further consideration

- Freshney Place advised that an assessment of the space required for articulated lorries to turn should be undertaken before the four new trees proposed as a buffer to Frederick Ward Way are planted.
- The potential for groups of young people to congregate under the proposed canopy needs to be fully considered and measures taken to reduce this.
- Those who deliver events in the town centre have advised that while the canopy could provide a unique focal point, it may not be practical for larger events. Maintenance was also noted as a key issue. Full expert and technical consideration of the requirements for large events will therefore be undertaken prior to design of the canopy to ensure that it is as flexible as possible. A design which is as low maintenance as possible will also be a key specification within the design brief.
- Lighting, power, and CCTV were also cited as essential items for inclusion.
- Stagecoach's long-standing position is that they would prefer a new bus station in the location of the square. In terms of the proposals, whilst they felt the scheme was well-designed, additional dialogue is required around considerations for bus services. They felt that without enhanced bus facilities within the town centre, the space may not be used to the extent envisioned. This dialogue has begun, and the Council will continue to work with Stagecoach on this.
- While not an element of the design process necessarily, several stakeholders advised that we need to make sure that events held here do not replicate those that will held in St James Square - this needs to be a different offer.
- Cycle connectivity across the square should be considered within the detailed designs as the proposed "waterfront" cycle/pedestrian route in the Masterplan will come to an abrupt halt at the Frederick Ward Way crossing, unless appropriate measures are introduced to allow cycle movements through this square.
- Cycle parking provision should be under cover, be covered by CCTV and be of a suitable design to allow cycles to be properly locked to the stand.

4.2 Other comments / suggestions

A number of other suggestions and ideas for inclusion included:

- Historic England submitted a fulsome reply to the consultation. In summary, they advised that they welcome the Council's decision to enable the square to be used as public space. However, they suggested that the Council ensure the connectivity challenge posed by Frederick Ward Way is considered, as suggested by the Historic Places Panel.
- The Civic Society noted that Doncaster and Castleford have really good street art that is very robust and suggested that something like that would be great in this square. Others also suggested that the scheme should include public art.
- Those from an events background suggested that spend should be focussed on flexible infrastructure that can be brought out for events and taken back in, e.g. marquees as used very successfully in York for food festivals or Made in Grimsby markets, staging, portable PA system, pop-up shops etc. This makes the space as flexible as possible and will mean it is used more regularly.
- Add a fountain to the River Freshney between the proposed bridge and Frederick Ward Way, to enable water circulation to help keep it clean
- Try and incorporate some green energy features such as solar charging stations, a living air purifying wall close to the bus stops, or a couple of 'wind trees'.
- Can the proposed kiosks be used to provide transport information?
- Could the canopy include solar panels to support green electricity generation for the lighting?

5 Engagement with Humberside Police

During development of the Concept Design, the Crime Reduction Officer with Humberside Police was informed of the proposals and provided a number of recommendations to the design team, including opportunities for reducing anti-social behaviour, having consideration of the OnSide facility which will generate more young people in the area, as well as CCTV/lighting and good surveillance.

The design was also sent to the Counter Terrorism Security Advisor, who has provided the following advice: 'CTSA advice is essential in ensuring members of the public are adequately protected from attack by the use of a vehicle as a weapon and their advice should be sought to ensure this can be achieved'.