

## **CABINET**

<b>DATE</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Cllr. Philip Jackson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Economy, Net Zero, Skills, and Housing
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Sharon Wroot, Executive Director Environment, Economy & Resources
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Regeneration of Riverhead Square Phase 2
<b>STATUS</b>	Open
<b>FORWARD PLAN REF NO.</b>	CB 11/22/04

### **CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS**

Providing an attractive public realm in the heart of Grimsby Town Centre will contribute to the overall look and feel of our town centre, contributing to both the Council's "Stronger Economy" and "Stronger Communities" priorities. The scheme aligns with the ambitions of the Local Plan, the Town Deal, and the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan 2020. All acknowledge the importance of developing the town centre to enhance, protect and diversify its current offer, to ensure it is more resilient and can adapt to the structural change taking place in the High Street economy by increasing footfall and boosting both day and evening town centre economies.

The proposals will transform an underutilised space in the heart of the town centre into an attractive, safe, and inclusive place bringing many social, environmental, and economic benefits. A place where people can meet, socialise relax, participate in events. Arup Landscape Design have prepared the proposals.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents proposals for the second phase of the regeneration of Riverhead Square to create an attractive public realm that provides a setting in the town centre that becomes a source of pride for the town.

The report seeks Cabinet approval to spend £3.3m of Towns Deal funding to implement the proposals and to apply for planning for lighting provision and tree planting as part of the proposals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the proposals for the regeneration of Riverhead Square and the creation of public realm.
2. Delegates to the Executive Director Environment, Economy, and Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council authority to progress the technical designs for the landscaping of Riverhead Square and the procurement of a main contractor to deliver the scheme using the existing North East Lincolnshire Council procurement frameworks, and to deal with all matters to award, implement, and mobilise.

3. Authorises the Executive Director for Environment, Economy, and Resources to submit a planning application in support of the Riverhead Square proposals.
4. Authorises the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) to execute and complete all requisite legal documentation in relation to the matters outlined above.
5. Notes the option (paragraph 1.17 - 1.18) regarding a major sculptural structure/canopy that was originally proposed and agrees to defer progressing this in the current financial circumstances.

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

To enable the Council to undertake the scheme and enable progression of the next phase of works related to the project.

### **1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

- 1.1 Riverhead Square is one of six projects included in Grimsby's Towns Fund programme. The project has been allocated £3.3m of the £20.9m Towns Funding awarded to Grimsby. All six projects have been identified as catalytic regeneration projects in the Grimsby Town Centre (GTC) Masterplan 2020 and the Town Investment Plan and have been prioritised for delivery over the next five years.
- 1.2 Phase One of the scheme (using £1m of Accelerated Towns Fund) improved facilities for bus passengers on Victoria Street West, providing surfacing on the eastern side of the square and new balustrade railings along the dock edge. This work alongside implementation of the new Garth Lane public realm improvements, including the new footbridge, has strengthened the connection between the town centre and the waterfront. These works were completed in 2021.
- 1.3 The remainder of Riverhead Square retains elements of the former bus station, with few facilities to encourage people to spend time within it. It attracts substantial levels of antisocial behaviour such that 77% of respondents to a recent Council survey stated that they feel unsafe in the town centre at night. As such it fails to attract greater footfall, longer dwell times, and increased spend in the town centre. In addition, the square lacks the infrastructure to easily host events such as concerts, festival, markets, etc.
- 1.4 Reversing this will create a stronger and more attractive town centre for the private sector to invest in, will add further strength to the region as a whole and be catalytic in helping to make Grimsby an attractive place to invest

#### *Project Objectives*

- 1.5 The objectives of the Riverhead Square project align with those within the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan, as outlined below.
  - Introduce more diverse uses into the town centre.

- Reconnect the town centre with the waterfront.
- Promote and support community ownership and participation.
- Improve permeability of the town centre.
- Prioritise health and wellbeing.

- 1.6 The project will achieve these objectives by creating improved public realm, including new green space into the square, and new infrastructure that will enable a wider range of activities within the square e.g., events, and festivals.

### *Design Principles*

- 1.7 Arup was appointed in November 2021 to develop the design proposals for the second phase of Riverhead Square leading to a public realm that delivered the scheme's objectives. Specialist input has come from lighting, access and inclusion, environmental and structural engineering teams.
- 1.8 EQUANS Highways Design Team have been engaged from the outset, with specialist input from across NELC and EQUANS disciplines as the project has developed. This is to ensure the proposals are deliverable, maintainable, and sustainable in the long term. The designers have also collaborated with LDA Design, the consultancy delivering the Connectivity project, and Exterior Architecture who are developing the public realm for the Freshney Place Leisure scheme, to ensure the proposals integrate and complement each other.
- 1.9 Several scenarios have been considered for the delivery of activities within the space, including the staging of weekly and larger periodic markets e.g., Christmas Markets; large screening of films and broadcasts; events, concerts, and festivals, in addition to providing a new public space for people to sit, relax, meet friends, etc.
- 1.10 The current proposals have evolved with Member input to a balance of 65% hard landscaping and 35% green landscaping. The proposals allow for a range of activities to take place within the Square. The design for the square has drawn inspiration from both the industrial maritime heritage of the town and the natural environment of the coast.
- 1.11 Consequently, the proposals have three 'character areas, dune gardens to the north and west, a dock edge to the east and a flexible event space to the south. Materials and planting ensure that there is continuity between the spaces. The dune gardens provide lawns, planting and raised edge seating for people to rest and enjoy the area. The dockside is reflected with hard landscaping and seating areas by the water's edge.
- 1.12 The Barge will remain in its current position with outdoor seating in the southeast of the square. Space has also been designed for outdoor café seating at the entrance to Freshney Place.
- 1.13 To the north of the square, a drop off point will be created for people accessing the Horizon Youth Zone in the West Haven Maltings. Vehicular access to the Freshney Place multistorey carpark will be unchanged although the planting regime and paving materials will be aligned with the rest of the square.

## *Materials*

- 1.14 Careful consideration has been given to the types of materials to be used in the square. Key considerations have been the appearance, ongoing maintenance, and budget. Where compatible, materials used during Phase 1 will be retained or reused. As outlined paragraph 1.8, input has been gathered to avoid proposing solutions that will be expensive or complex to maintain.
- 1.15 The proposed palette will be a combination of granite paving and sett, with sandstone edges forming the seating areas. Neutral and warm tones will be used, as outlined below.
- Paving - It is proposed that larger granite paving is used for the main part of the square with smaller setts used at edges and the dockside to provide contrast and retain the industrial character.
  - Street Furniture
    - Standalone benches matching those used in Garth Lane will provide continuity with area north of the River Freshney.
    - The planter edge seating will be designed to be as comfortable as possible and a proportion of them will have armrests, whilst studs will be used to deter skateboarding.
    - Waste bins and cycle racks are proposed at locations on the periphery of the square.
    - Secure bollards that protect the square will be installed at the northern and southern edges of the square.
  - Planting
    - Existing trees will be retained where they are in good condition and have a good life expectancy. Where they are showing signs of distress, they will be removed.
    - New trees will be used to increase the overall number with several species offering a variety of leaf shapes, sizes, and interest.
    - Trees will be used to frame views, provide height and shade.
    - Planting in the beds will be perennial and low maintenance with seed heads providing structure and interest through the winter. The planting palette is inspired by dune flora.
    - Planting in the dock will be designed to provide height and habitat for wildlife and nesting birds.
  - Lighting
    - A lighting strategy has been developed using similar equipment to that used in St James Square and Riverhead Square Phase 1
    - Lighting columns will also provide power points to supply electricity for events such as markets or staging.
    - Lighting will also be installed in planted areas to highlight planting and create a positive ambience.
- 1.16 Cost analysis of the landscaping scheme has costed these works at £3.2M, including professional fees. Therefore, the project budget is sufficient to implement these proposals and includes an amount for contingency in case of

increased inflation, etc.

### *Options for Structure and Public Art*

- 1.17 The initial design brief to Arup included provision of a major sculptural feature or canopy in the square that would function as a landmark for the town reflecting the town's heritage. It would be a large-scale place making structure that could become a symbol for the town and provide an identity for the square.
- 1.18 A design has been prepared that captures both the past heritage of the town and its future potential as a thriving port strongly linked to sustainable energy. However, the estimated costs of the structure (c £500k), when added to the landscape works proposed, will exceed the budget allocated within the Town Funds. It is therefore proposed that this option is deferred until further resources are identified.

### *Procurement*

- 1.19 Arup Landscape Design have prepared drawings to RIBA Stage 3. To ensure the scheme's delivery it is proposed that detailed technical designs (Stage 4) are prepared by EQUANS. This will allow the preparation of tender documentation to procure a contractor to undertake the works.
- 1.20 It is proposed that an initial contract is put in place through a tender process to provide hoarding for the site. Hoarding will safeguard the site and provide an opportunity to illustrate the works at Riverhead Square and elsewhere in the town centre.
- 1.21 The procurement process will use the Council's procurement frameworks, specifically the North East Lincolnshire Highways Framework 2022 – 2026, which will ensure value for money is secured.

### *Planning*

- 1.22 The proposals include the installation of new lighting columns and trees. It is proposed that planning applications are made for consideration in early February 2023.

### *Programme*

- 1.23 Subject to Cabinet approval, the activities outlined below are proposed.
- 1.24 A planning application for lighting and tree planting is submitted in mid-November for determination by the Planning Committee in early February 2023.
- 1.25 A contract to provide hoarding for the square is let with the installation of hoarding commencing in early January 2023. The removal of unneeded trees would be conducted in early February 2023.
- 1.26 A contract to conduct the main works is agreed by mid-January 2023 with construction works commencing in early Spring. It is estimated that the works

will be completed by mid-December 2023.

## **2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- 2.1 The key risks associated with progressing procurement of a construction contractor and submitting a planning application are:
- additional costs relating to the development arising;
  - the Council not been able to appoint a suitable construction contractor;
  - scheme designs not being achievable;
  - not securing, or delayed planning approval;
  - delays to the scheme putting funding at risk.
- 2.2 The Council will be using its strategic partner EQUANS to oversee the detailed technical design and procurement processes, using the Council's procurement frameworks. An experienced contractor will be procured to conduct the works.
- 2.3 The design team will provide assurance regarding potential additional costs (including inflation and risk contingencies) that might arise. However, it is important that the project proceed as planned, because delays in both procurement and planning will increase the risk of increased costs through inflation and supply chain issues.
- 2.4 The risk of not securing an appropriate contractor can be mitigated by commencing procurement as soon as possible. Soft market testing will be undertaken with the framework providers to ensure contractors are aware of the opportunity and can prepare accordingly. This will also provide further assurances regarding the project's timeline and costs.
- 2.5 The proposals have been subject to public consultation in July and August 2022, regular engagement with key stakeholders including local businesses and the Youth Zone project. The proposals have been independently reviewed by the Yorkshire Design Review Panel in August 2022. The planning process will ensure further consultation. The designs were positively received by over 90% of respondents in the public consultation.

## **3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1. The proposals in this report set out the soft and hard landscaping for Riverhead Square which will create an attractive setting within the town centre.
- 3.2. Detailed designs for the landscaping works will consider the possibility of the funds being found for the structure and public art and not hinder their future installation.
- 3.3. In summary the options are:
- |   |                        |           |
|---|------------------------|-----------|
| A | Landscaping            | £3,200,00 |
| B | Place making structure | £ 500,000 |
- 3.4. The Town Deal funding allocation for the project is £3.3 million. Therefore, subject to inflation and contingencies, the option set out in paragraph 1.16 is

deliverable within the budget. However, in the current circumstances, there is a budget risk which will be managed during the procurement process.

- 3.5. Proceeding with the additional option outlined in paragraphs 1.17-1.18 will require the identification of additional resources.

#### **4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1. Riverhead Square has the potential to become a focal point for the town centre that complements the other investments the Council is making to regenerate the town. 95.9% of respondents to the public consultation felt the square could be improved.
- 4.2. Since the relocation of bus services from the centre of the square, the area has lacked focus and is principally used as a pedestrian route to pass through. The public consultation identified that 74.9% of people use it as a through route and only 8% used it for social or leisure activities. Only 9% asked for public art in the square.
- 4.3. Tackling anti-social behaviour has been identified as a priority by many of the respondents to the public consultation. The expectation is that greater use of the square by responsible people will dissuade antisocial behaviour.
- 4.4. An action plan will be agreed with the Council's communications service. Media and social media channels will be used to ensure engagement and feedback.
- 4.5. Statutory consultations will be undertaken during the pre-construction phase. This includes securing Environment Agency permits for works in the Riverhead itself. The planning process will entail further consultation and the proposed hoarding will enable the progress of the works to be depicted and observed by the public.

#### **5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. £3.3m has been allocated from the central government's Town Fund grant to North East Lincolnshire for the regeneration of Riverhead Square. Expenditure more than this will need to be found from Council resources.
- 5.2. Preliminary costings for the proposals were estimated to be £4.44m, significantly above the £3.3m budget. However, these include provisional allowances of £500,000 for the structure and estimated costs for water related features of £700,000 which when excluded bring the estimated cost for the landscape work alone (Option outlined in paragraph 1.16) to be £3.2m.
- 5.3. Section 3 above sets out options to include public art and a large-scale place making structure in the square in the project. However, these options will need additional funding and therefore it is proposed that these are not progressed until resources become available.
- 5.4. Detailed costings will become clearer as the detailed solutions are worked up and tender prices are received. Inflationary pressure presents a significant risk to the project's budget.

- 5.5. Resilience and maintenance have been considered in the design of the proposals through engagement with operational teams within the Council and EQUANS. Low lifetime cost options will be adopted where possible. However, maintaining planting and keeping up the appearance of the square will incur an ongoing revenue cost.
- 5.6. Value for money will be achieved using the Council's procurement processes.
- 5.7. A key factor in the success of the square will be the animation of the space through events and activities. These are usually revenue funded and a costed events programme will need to be developed if the full benefits are to be achieved.

## **6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. The proposals have been reviewed by Arup's Access and Inclusion specialists and their recommendations have been included. These include making provision for young people and managing hazards like access to open water.
- 6.2. The project team from the Youth Zone have also been engaged in the development of the proposals. This will continue through the development of artwork and initiatives like engaging with the planting maintenance.
- 6.3. Safe access to the water will encourage safe interaction with local ecology.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The planting regime has been designed to have minimal maintenance and uses perennial planting suited to the anticipated changes in climate. Drought tolerant varieties will be used to minimise irrigation requirements.
- 7.2 Sustainable drainage systems and rain gardens are integrated into the scheme to reduce run off and pressure on the drainage system.
- 7.3 The planting will create shade and cooler environments in the town centre and so respond to rising temperatures.
- 7.4 The lighting strategy for the area has been designed to use low energy light sources whilst maintaining light levels that provide a positive atmosphere and sense of security.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY**

- 8.1. The proposals were considered at an informal meeting of the Economy Scrutiny panel on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022 and comments fed into the final proposals.
- 8.2. At the time of preparation of this report, the matter is due to be considered by formal Scrutiny on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any spend over the allocated £3.3m for this scheme will require an additional Council contribution beyond that currently budgeted and will result in additional annual unfunded borrowing costs. Only the landscaping element of the options



can be met from within the approved budget and the recommendation made reflects that.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The procurement exercise will be conducted 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.

10.2 The delegations sought are consistent with an exercise of this nature.

10.3 Officers should note that an award constitutes a further decision and will be subject to completion of an Officer Decision Record. Where key decision criteria are met such Officer Decision Record will be subject to call in. Award and implementation timelines should accommodate this.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct HR implications within this report,

## **12. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Riverhead Square is situated within West Marsh Ward.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet – Special, Virtual Meeting | Democracy ([nelincs.gov.uk](http://nelincs.gov.uk))

## **14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Damien Jaines-White, Assistant Director Regeneration

Richard Dowson – Head of Project Management

Peter Bright – Project Manager

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON**

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY, NET ZERO, SKILLS AND  
HOUSING**