

REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ECONOMY / EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 3 March 2016 / 15 March 2016

Report of: Corporate Manager Property

Title: South Street / Corn Exchange Regeneration

Is this a Key Decision?

No

* One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

Is this an Executive or Council Function? Council

1. What is the report about?

This report sets out the need to review the future place of South Street and the Corn Exchange block in the city and seeks approval to commence this review and put in place initial funding to resource the projects.

2. Recommendations:

That Executive approve the commencement of a review of South Street and the Corn Exchange block and an initial resource of £75,000 to progress the projects.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

South Street is an important part of the City which is changing as the city centre changes. We must look to ensure that these changes are positive if it is to play a revived role in the city centre offer.

The street needs to create its own identity and clarify its function. Potentially it can act as a bridge between the city centre and the Exeter Quay. The area can potentially provide an environment for a thriving independent sector as well as for exploring green initiatives and projects linked to the Exeter City Futures programme.

To begin to address these issues and plan the future of the area a comprehensive assessment of the areas constraints and opportunities will need to be carried out, linking into the City Centre Strategy.

This comprehensive analysis would enable the City Council to explore options in areas such as improved signage, parking, public transport, enhanced public realm and the creation of a "draw" to encourage visitors into South Street and on to the Quay.

The Corn Exchange block sits adjacent to South Street, forming a critical link between South Street and Fore Street. This has been a key trading and entertainment venue for a long time but we need to explore how it can respond to current leisure and retail requirements. The occupational lease agreements in the block are due to come to an end in 2020 which presents an opportunity to carry out a fundamental review of the asset and the functions it performs. This can be carried out as part of an examination of the need for a new performance venue in Exeter and whether the current building or its site has a role to play in meeting any such requirement.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources.

The initial funding requirement is for £75,000 to enable the engagement of consultants to assist with the necessary analysis and reviews. Once approved the funding will be added to the 2016/17 budget.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

Once approved the funding will be added to the 2016/17 budget.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Obviously securing a consultant will have to be in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Otherwise, no other legal issues identified.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This report raises no issues to concern the Monitoring Officer.

8 How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

It is anticipated that the development of identity and concrete proposals for South Street and the Corn Exchange block will allow for the strengthening of this part of the city centre and create a positive environment for investment.

9. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

At this stage of analysis and assessment there are no significant risks.

10. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

No such impacts have been identified at this stage. Proper consultation with stakeholders should ensure that these issues are fully addressed in due course.

11. Are there any other options?

A review of these areas could be deferred but it is felt that the need to address the issues is becoming increasingly pressing.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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