

REPORT TO: Place Scrutiny Committee and Executive
Date of Meeting: 14 September 2017
Report of: City Surveyor
Title: South Street Regeneration

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

This report follows on from the March 2016 report regarding the future place of South Street and the Corn Exchange block including feedback from the Public Consultation held in February. It sets out a course to action those priorities in an incremental way.

2. Recommendations:

Place Scrutiny Committee support and recommend approval by the Executive of the following:-

- 2.1 That the Executive notes the results of the South Street public consultation exercise held in February 2017 (Appendix 1) and
- 2.2 Support an incremental approach to improvement focussing on individual areas where development opportunities present themselves
- 2.3 An Urban Designer be appointed to be given a realistic brief based on the priorities identified in the public consultation to give context for current and future development opportunities.

3. Reasons for the recommendations:

South Street is an important part of the City which is changing as the city centre changes. The street needs to create its own identity and clarify its function. Potentially it can act as an important bridge between the city centre and the Exeter Quay. Proposed enhancements of South Street will be included within the revised City Centre Strategy..

- 3.1 Public consultation was held at the Corn Exchange in February 2017. Around 450 people attended. Three key priorities for the area were identified by the public; cultural activity and entertainment, independent businesses and the Farmer's Market. In terms of "Gateways and connections" significant improvement was prioritised for access to the Quay. In terms of the "Appearance of buildings" improvement in shopfronts, residential premises and historic buildings was given top priority. For "Public spaces and the street scene" paving, trees and planting and Wi-Fi were identified as the most significant improvements required. In terms of "Transport and getting around" the highlighted improvements of significance needed were in traffic (movement), walking, cycling and car parks.
- 3.2 A practical approach to moving these priority improvements forward is an incremental one based on a series of dialogues and further consultation with stakeholders including our tenants, BID representative etc. There are a number of conversations already initiated with developers and others who have an interest in various small development projects.

In order to progress these and ensure that they are incorporated into the wider context of the public priorities relevant numbered areas have been identified on the map (Appendix 2)

Area 1 Public Highway – Discussions commenced and to continue with Devon County Council concerning potential improvement to pedestrianised areas, cycle route and traffic movement including junctions.

Area 2 Link to Quay – Explore enhancement of potential access route

Area 3 11-18 South Street – Active discussion regarding potential for redevelopment

Area 4 Market Street – Active discussion regarding potential for redevelopment (includes surface level car park)

Area 5 St James Court & 50-53 South Street – Active discussion with Housing regarding redevelopment

Area 6 Corn Exchange and Guinea Street – Subject to separate report on needs analysis for New Exeter Venue and any outcomes therefrom.

- 3.3 It is recommended to appoint an Urban Designer to set a context and framework for these potential developments and others based on priorities identified in the public consultation exercise. The Urban Designer's brief would be to prioritise any suggested enhancements tempered with the practicalities of budget and timescale. Such a 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. Future ideas for the area to be explored might include incentives to improve shopfronts, adopting a letting policy and improvements to the public realm

Further reports to members on the outcomes of this work will be made as it progresses.

The previous report included the examination of the need for a new performance venue in Exeter and whether the Corn Exchange block had a role to play in meeting that requirement. Obtaining a "Needs Analysis" has been the subject of a separate strand of work with the appointment of consultants Fourth Street who are due to report to Place Scrutiny Committee in November. Any relevant outcomes from that report to be incorporated into any urban design work proposed for South Street or the wider "West Quarter."

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

The initial funding requirement was £75,000 approved in the March 2016 report to enable the engagement of consultants to assist with the necessary analysis and reviews.

The fee for the proposed appointment of an Urban Design Consultant should be affordable within the existing budget.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications for the Council to consider at this time.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None identified at this stage.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

The appointment of the consultant must accord with the Council's contract Standing Orders.

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

Identifying opportunities for improving South Street will allow for the strengthening of this part of the city centre and the wider West Quarter creating a positive environment for investment. The proposals contribute to elements of the existing city centre strategy and its proposed revision. There are potential links to the agenda for City Futures.

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 in the wider City context the need to address the future of South Street and the wider West quarter is becoming increasingly pressing.

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City Surveyor

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:

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