

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Clarke, Cabinet Member for Transport	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 17th September 2016 (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2862
TITLE:	Saw Close Public Realm Improvements	
WARD:	Abbey Ward and Kingsmead Ward	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: N/a		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Saw Close public realm scheme comprises improvements to the public realm in the Saw Close area to enhance another part of the city centre and complement the adjacent private development. This report seeks approval for £2.05m of funding to become fully approved as outlined in 3.3 below.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member are asked to agree that approval is given for the project to proceed to complete the design public engagement and to deliver the scheme with approved funding budget of £2.05m.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Finance has been secured from the LEP Revolving Infrastructure Fund along with funding applied through BTP from the DfT and corporate borrowing, which together will cover the costs of the project as well as reasonable contingencies. A project team has been working on the project and good working relationships are established both within the council, with the private developer and local business stakeholders.

- 3.2 RIF repayment is scheduled to be made through the casino licensing incomes, this is contingent on the opening of the casino and therefore there is a small risk around the repayment profile, however the casino development is currently on track and therefore this risk is considered to be low. The RIF funding has been allocated on the basis that the Enabled Sites will deliver 185 new jobs by 31 March 2019 and key milestones that have been agreed include:

Number	Milestone	Expected Date of Achievement
1	Detailed Design for procurement	Jul 2016
2	Procurement	Nov 2016
3	Construction Start on Site	Feb 2017
4	Construction Practical Completion	Feb 2018

3.3 The total project budget is £2.050 million.

3.4 The full public realm works are estimated at £2.15million and the funding for these works is as follows:

- £100k of Corporate borrowing (approved in 2105/16);
- £1.075 million of RIF (repayable with income generated from the Casino Licencing Agreement);
- £226k from existing Public Realm budgets (capital contingency funded);
- £536k from BTP (of which £318k is agreed corporate borrowing and £218k of DfT funding); and
- £213k from other 3rd Party (being payments made by Saw Close Casino Operator through the Licencing Agreement [£88k already received, £125k upon opening of the Casino]).

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

4.1 Statutory considerations regarding Sustainability and Planning have been taken into account in preparing this report.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 The Council has a long-standing policy of seeking to improve the public realm within the city centre and to reduce the impact of traffic. This was established with the Public Realm and Movement Strategy (2010) and the Bath Pattern Book (2015) which are now adopted as part of the Draft B&NES Placemaking Plan. In addition the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy seeks to make Bath “the most walkable city in the UK”. This strategy has been taken forward with the recent completion of the project at Seven Dials. Also recently completed are the access restrictions and carriageway improvements in Lower Borough Walls and Stall Street which have led to a noticeably improved environment for commerce and social life. The proposed works at Saw Close will bring similar benefits to this part of the city but also create a new focal point for the city’s emerging entertainment quarter.

5.2 Overall this project will extend the ‘shared space’ from Westgate Street up to Barton Street and in to Upper Borough Walls and will complement private external realm works being carried out as part of the new Casino development. It will also demonstrate the benefits of reducing the presence and impact of traffic in this area supporting in due course potential access restrictions in Cheap Street, West Gate Street and Upper Borough Walls, subject to the access requirements of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases site both now and in the future. The proposals will support the aim of making B&NES the place to live, work and visit and a range of Council priorities.

5.3 Following commitment of funding to develop the design (refer to SMD E2791) the project team have developed a draft design which has been consulted on

with the public, local businesses and key stakeholders. The design seeks to promote a vibrant space, support the local economy and reduce vehicle dominance and encourage courtesy between all road users. It uses high quality natural materials and the design is consistent with previously delivered schemes.

5.4 Royal National Institute for Blind People and Guide Dogs for the Blind suggested amendments to the scheme, which the Design Team has responded to in the following ways:

Issue	Design Team Response
Min. 60mm height kerb requested	Half height kerbs can cause issues for the mobility impaired and constitute a trip hazard. Full height kerbs would create a defined vehicle carriageway and necessitate a 1.5m cycle contraflow with significantly reduced pedestrian priority area. Carriageways encourage more typical driving behaviours less sympathetic to people walking. Carriageways would detract from the 'public square' potential of the space.
Safe places to cross are removed	There are no crossings in Saw Close at present. The design significantly expands the footway and includes two new courtesy crossings.
Tactile paving not sufficient	The tactile paving at crossing points has been maximised to be 800mm wide not including joints. In the World Heritage Site it would be inappropriate to include 800mm carriageway strips. A width of 300mm is consistent across the city centre and in line with the Bath Pattern Book.
Contrast paving	White granite high contrast edge included throughout.

5.5 The draft design has been discussed in one-to-one meetings with the individual businesses with significant presence for trading in Saw Close and a consensus is emerging as to how matters such as parking, loading and waste collection will be handled so that, besides new infrastructure, a high quality place is delivered. A Traffic Regulation Order for the scheme will be prepared for consultation following Single Member Approval.

5.6 Given the extensive lead times to procure the high quality stone supplies it is imperative that the design be finalised well before works actually begin (scheduled for February 2017). The works programme will be integrated with that of the adjacent private developer so that disruptions to the highway, public and businesses can be minimised, which requires adequate time for planning and coordination.

5.4 The private developer has been finalising the scheme details in terms of materials and we are now at a point where both projects draw on complementary palettes of materials such that the area comprising public and private realm will be attractive and cohesive.

5.6 There remains detailed work to be done on accommodating the numerous utility services in the area whilst protecting the highway infrastructure however no significant barriers have been identified so far.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 A design is ready which has broad acceptance amongst stakeholders and is compatible with the private development. To have the public realm works complete in line with the opening for business of the private development (scheduled for Spring 2018) is highly desirable and the project programme reflects this.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Section 151 officer, Monitoring Officer, Strategic Director Place and Cabinet member for transport. The project will take a wider stakeholder and public engagement in developing the scheme.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	<i>Tim Hewitt, Regeneration Team Manager</i>
Background papers	<i>Cabinet Decision E2791</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	