

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	6th February 2019	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3120
TITLE:	Keynsham High Street Public Realm Scheme	
WARD:	Keynsham North & Keynsham South	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
1. Draft Concept Public Realm Design Scheme		
2. Consultation Report		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Feedback from consultations that informed the Keynsham Town Plan, Keynsham Transport Strategy, the B&NES Placemaking Plan & the one-way trial highlighted the importance of public realm improvements in Keynsham. B&NES has consequently drawn up a draft public realm scheme and undertaken further consultation which will arrive at a preferred option incorporating suggestions made through the consultation process where possible. A Full Business Case will be submitted to the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for a £1.5 million grant in March 2019, which will be supplemented by £193,000 Section 106 funding to pay for the work.
- 1.2 High streets across the UK are struggling and it has been shown that public realm improvements can help to stem or even reverse the national trend towards online retailing with a consequent decline in town centre vitality. Town centres are also the place where many residents and visitors meet. The principles which the public realm scheme seeks to address are economic, social vitality and environmental quality.
- 1.3 The Local Plan options consultation document recognises that Keynsham has many unique assets and advantages as a town. These should be enhanced with physical development focusing on regeneration of the town centre to improve the economy through creation of new jobs. This will help to encourage a sense of well-being and community for all generating pride in the town.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

- 2.1 Note the draft concept design, which will be submitted as part of the Full Business Case to the Local Enterprise Partnership for funding of £1.5m to deliver the scheme, alongside £193k S106
- 2.2 Approve, subject to LEP funding approval on 31 May:
 - (1) the preparation of detailed design (including further consultation) up to tender stage
 - (2) the procurement of a project manager & contractor; and
 - (3) the construction of the scheme

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Funding was approved on 5th September 2018 in the capital programme for developing concept designs for a public realm scheme, developing the Full Business Case for submission to the LEP in March 2019 and to undertake public consultation.
- 3.2 An Outline Business Case was submitted to the LEP on 20th July 2018 for £1.5m Local Growth Fund for this scheme. A Full Business Case is due to be submitted on 12th March 2019. If successful, this funding will be added to £193k S106 funding (reference 7J80) held by Highways for the purposes of 'highway network and public realm improvements in and around Keynsham town centre'.
- 3.3 The Full Business Case is strong as the project offers good value for money, which is measured by benefit/cost ratio and cost per job created. This is the key criteria that LEP business cases are judged upon. The Value for Money assessment takes into account uplift in jobs, Gross Value Added (GVA), active modes of travel uptake and land value uplift. Investment in the High Street offers the best value for money under this criteria and this is why public realm improvements should be focused on this area. On this basis it is hoped that the LEP will approve the FBC at their Joint Committee meeting on 31 May 2019.
- 3.4 The Council's lead design consultant has worked with officers to undertake a detailed and thorough assessment of delivery scheme specification, construction and management costs. This included assessing proportionate associated risks involved in delivering a public realm scheme in an historic high street environment. This has concluded that the scheme can be delivered by Spring 2021 within the available project bid budget of £1.693,000. This figure includes prudent contingency sums to cover potential increased council or contractor costs should risks materialise.
- 3.5 A delivery project manager will be appointed in spring to manage the delivery phase of the project and will work closely with the Council's Highways Team. The Growth & Enterprise Service will retain the client role.

- 3.6 It is likely that an external organisation with experience in design of such schemes will be appointed to work up the detailed designs and manage the tender process once funding has been approved. This will be carried out in conjunction with the Council's Highway & Procurement teams.
- 3.7 Construction will be carried out by a suitable contractor, likely to be the appointed B&NES Highways Term Contractor.
- 3.8 Further public and stakeholder engagement will take place around autumn 2019 and this feedback will be fed into the detailed design.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

Corporate

- 4.1 An improved public realm scheme will support the aim of making B&NES the place to live, work and visit and a range of Council priorities including improving: local economy and environment; sense of place; transport and the public realm; building communities where people feel safe and secure; sustainable growth; addressing Climate Change.

Economic Growth

- 4.2 High streets across the UK are under increasing pressure from a shift in spending habits and a squeeze on household income. Town centres must look at ways of sustaining footfall.
- 4.3 The Economic Strategy Review 2014 – 2030 recognises that Keynsham acts as a local service centre for the immediate and surrounding population. The town centre makes an important contribution to local employment. Public realm improvements in Keynsham town centre will help to improve the attractiveness which will in turn encourage investment and encourage new and existing residents to use the town centre facilities more often.

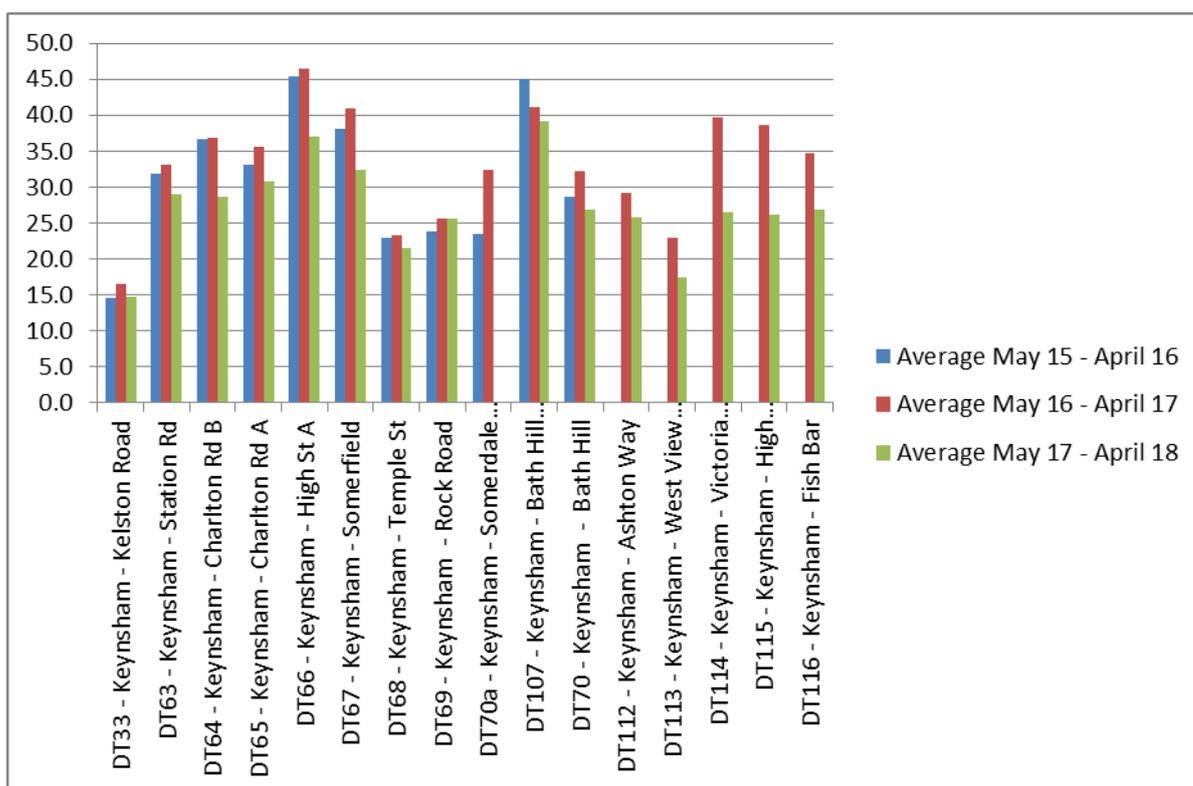
Planning Policy

- 4.4 The Placemaking Plan states that the future focus for the Keynsham town centre should be on qualitative improvements, both in terms of retail provision and public realm improvements in order to provide a better user experience to improve the town's image and enhance the Conservation Area.
- 4.5 If the project is not implemented then the current issues of poor image, poor public realm, and a Conservation Area 'at risk' (as assessed by Historic England) will remain, and the Council will not have fulfilled its obligations arising from the Corporate Strategy, Placemaking Plan or Keynsham Transport Strategy.

Air Quality

- 4.6 B&NES is legally directed to produce a Clean Air Plan to achieve compliance with European Limit Values by 2021 at the latest. In Bath & North East Somerset, three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), including Keynsham High Street. Air Quality monitoring was carried out before the one-way trial (baseline) and during the project to evidence the positive change the trial has produced.

4.7 The Keynsham air quality breakdown table showing annual NO2 reading is below. It should be noted that the 2018 figures are subject to peer review.



5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) was put in place on Keynsham High Street in May 2017 in order to assess whether a one-way system could work in terms of traffic flows and to determine whether B&NES should seek funding to deliver a permanent scheme. The trial took place on the High Street, with no wider traffic improvements and no change to the public realm. It closed one carriageway, widened pavements and provided additional space for pedestrians, shoppers, visitors and cyclists.
- 5.2 As demonstrated above, since the temporary one-way system was introduced there has been a reduction in air pollution levels to within European health guidelines. Consequently, the Council has made the one-way scheme permanent.
- 5.3 Monitoring of traffic flow, safety, air quality and surveys of stakeholder views were carried out before (baseline) and during the project to provide evidence of the positive change the trial has delivered, and be used as the basis for a permanent design.
- 5.4 The trial has linked together the significant changes that have already taken place in Keynsham (Civic Centre, housing growth including Somerdale, improvements to the leisure centre, rail upgrade, Riverside View).
- 5.5 Concept designs for a public realm scheme have been developed and consultation has taken place with stakeholders and members of the public from which a design of a preferred option will be drawn up. A Full Business Case is

being developed and will be submitted to the LEP on the 22nd March 2019 for funding to deliver the Keynsham Town Centre Public Realm Scheme.

5.6 The LEP will make a decision on funding on 31 May 2019 and then work will start on detailed design and the tender process to appoint a contractor. Delivery of the scheme will be complete by the end of March 2021.

5.7 The Keynsham Town Council has been fully involved in shaping the consultation process and stakeholder engagement.

6 WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS PHASE

6.1 The table below outlines the proposals for investment in public realm in the Keynsham town centre.

Charlton Road junction & Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to carriageway, kerbs & pavements • Improved crossings • Improved seating • Cycle contra-flow lane • Greening
Central High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavement & carriageway widening • Improved pedestrian crossing & cycle lanes • Improved bus stop accessibility • Retention of disabled parking space, short stay & delivery parking • Motor cycle parking to be re-located to Ashton Way car park
Bath Hill Junction & Market Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widened pavements • Improved pedestrian crossings • Retained Puffin crossing from Market Walk • Improved cycle lanes • Raised planters & trees • Seating with views • Cycle parking & litter bins • Feature lighting
Town Centre-wide Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decluttering of signs & street furniture within the town centre • Improved directional signage • Improved pedestrian & cyclist wayfinding & information
Community Led Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved pedestrian passages linking Memorial Park & Ashton way car park to the High Street • Enhancement of High Street church spaces • Temple Street Quarter greening

6.2 Further public realm improvements will under-taken eg. Charlton Road/Tesco Junction, in the future with funding from the Council's Capital programme or other funding programmes should they become available.

7 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

6 th February 2019	Cabinet approval to deliver scheme
22 March 2019	Full Business Case Submission to the Local Enterprise Partnership
31 st May 2019	Full Business Case approval
Summer 2019	Procure project manager, design client and start detailed design
Autumn/Spring 2019/20	Detailed design and procurement of contractor
Spring 2020	Commence construction
March 2021	Construction complete

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts, particularly respiratory conditions. It is also recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. The approach to improving air pollution is by traffic and transport improvement measures. Consequently a temporary one-way system was introduced in Keynsham town centre in May 2017. This has seen a reduction in air pollution levels to within European health guidelines and as a result, the Council has made the one-way scheme permanent.
- 8.2 Improvements to the public realm were highlighted as a priority during consultations that informed the Keynsham Town Plan, Keynsham Transport Strategy & the B&NES Placemaking Plan. The January 2018 consultation further reinforced the importance of these improvements to local people.
- 8.3 As a result of this feedback, B&NES allocated funding to draw up a scheme of public realm improvements, which will be submitted to the LEP on 18th March 2019, to pay for the work.
- 8.4 The main element of this programme is to implement a permanent one way High Street which dedicates space to walking and cycling, transforms the public realm and creates a town centre which has a healthy economy and environment.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Removal of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and revert to a two-way road. This option was discounted because it is likely that this would cause the air quality to deteriorate to a point where the NO₂ particles were higher than the objective level again.
- 9.2 Transition from an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to a Traffic Regulation Order without delivering a comprehensive public realm scheme. This option was discounted because the one-way trial public consultation showed that respondents would like to see public realm improvements in the town centre, and the current scheme materials are temporary (e.g. rubber kerbs) with a limited life span

9.3 The delivery of a comprehensive public realm improvement scheme would address issues raised in the consultation process, including the need for a new scheme to support the town centre economy and those with accessibility issues. It is important as it is key that the High Street public realm is improved prior to development of Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) detailed in the West of England Joint Spatial Plan.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Cabinet and Keynsham Ward members have been consulted throughout the project development and are supportive of the delivery of an improved public realm scheme.

10.2 Council teams, including highways, planning policy, environmental services, equalities & finance (S151 officer) have been involved in the development of the project.

10.3 Consultation has taken place on the public realm proposals with stakeholders at an event that was run in conjunction with the Town Council on the 6th November. On the 22nd November a public consultation event took place in conjunction with the Local Plan. The public consultation ran until 11th January with details of proposals and survey forms available online and in the Keynsham Library.

10.4 The Keynsham Town Clerk has said that the Town Council has been involved at a much earlier stage in the design process than previously afforded and have therefore informed the proposals that have been issued for public consultation. As the scheme develops B&NES will continue to work closely with the Town Council on the project and involve them in further consultation at an early stage

10.5 Consultation has also taken place with the Active Travel & Accessibility Forum (ATAF), Keynsham Now (young people) & the Keynsham Business Forum. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality. Feedback from ATAF (including RNIB & cycling groups) has allowed equality considerations to be reflected in the design of the scheme.

10.6 Feedback from the consultation will be used to inform the development of the final concept public realm scheme design.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

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Background	<i>None</i>

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