

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cllr Sarah Warren, Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel</b> <b>Cllr Mark Roper, Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development</b>	
DECISION DATE:	<b>On or after 28th September 2024</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <b>E 3511</b>
TITLE:	<b>Midsomer Norton High Street Regeneration</b>	
WARD:	<b>Midsomer Norton North and Midsomer Norton Redfield</b>	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> <b>Appendix 1:</b> Letter of support to January MCA Joint Committee from Midsomer Norton High Street Regeneration Steering Group Letter of support to July MCA Joint Committee from Midsomer Norton High Street Regeneration Steering Group		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

1.1 A further £856k of grant funding has been secured to support the delivery of the Market Square public realm improvement at The Island, Midsomer Norton from the Mayoral Combined Authority's (MCA) Investment Fund. This report seeks formal approval to accept the grants, as follows:

- (1) £607k increase in grant funding for the delivery of the Market Square
- (2) £249k grant funding for the delivery of a bus interchange at the centre of the High Street (at the Hollies bus stop).

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet Member is asked to;**

2.1 Delegate approval to the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to accept the uplift of £856k Investment Fund grant from

the Mayoral Combined Authority. These funds will be spent in line with the grant agreement.

- 2.2 To fully approve capital budget of £856k funded from MCA Investment Fund grant for delivery of Market Square scheme and delivery of an interchange and improvement at the main High Street bus stop (at the Hollies).

### **3 THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Midsomer Norton High Street Regeneration scheme is currently delivering the new Market Square at The Island, a 1,000sqm public realm improvement that will deliver a flexible civic space for the town. With the aim of supporting the functioning of the restored Town Hall and local businesses by creating an events space and driving footfall to the area.
- 3.2 The first element of funding (£607k approved at MCA Joint Committee 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024) relates to cost uplift for scheme delivery and would then align project budget with forecast costs and contractor tenders.
- 3.3 The second element of funding (£249k approved at MCA Joint Committee 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024) relates to the delivery of a bus interchange on the High Street. Which will widen the pavement along a 40m stretch of the High Street, install 2 new bus shelters provided with real-time information displays and associated electrical infrastructure, increase length of bus cage to facilitate increased bus routes, resurface and install accessibility kerbs.
- 3.4 As part of the proposed works the existing 'Town Hall' bus stop has been removed, given its poor siting for bus users and for the better functioning of the highway network. An agreement has been reached with the bus providers to re-route bus routes around South Road and onto the lower High Street to the 'Hollies' bus stop. This would mean that the main bus stop for Midsomer Norton for both east and westbound travel is located centrally to the High Street at the Hollies. Alongside it's relocation an opportunity has been taken to widen pavements and provide new interchange with upgraded bus stops and waiting areas to tie in with the future Somer Valley Links work
- 3.5 The opportunity to align the programme of works for the Town Square with the provision of a new bus interchange at the Hollies, has been realised as part of joint work across Council teams and with the MCA. Further improvements to mobility to support walking, cycling and support public transport use are also planned as part of the CRSTS Somer Valley Links programme and the two designs are integrated.
- 3.6 Works are required to the Hollies bus stop to ensure it is adequate to accept the increased number of buses and passengers. The proposal is the design and delivery of the following:
  - a. Provision of a second bus shelter
  - b. Replacement of the existing bus shelter
  - c. Installation of real-time information in both new bus shelters
  - d. Lengthened bus cage, through the relocation of a taxi rank

e. Widened and resurfaced pavement and installation of bus kerbs

3.7 Progressing the Town Square public realm improvements alongside the Hollies bus interchange improvements results in quicker delivery of the bus stop improvements and overall cost reductions due to the site team already being deployed for the Market Square project. Re-use of won materials from The Island scheme is also being explored to reduce costs and carbon footprint.

3.8 It is proposed that the Hollies bus stop works £249k, will initially be delivered using the MCA Investment Fund grant (approved at MCA Joint Committee 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024), but that this can be swapped out in future for CRSTS Somer Valley Links grant funding once this funding is available. The mechanism for this swap will be covered as part of the future CRSTS Somer Valley Links scheme Cabinet approval.

#### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy 2023 – 2027 sets out the overriding purpose of the Council's work is to improve people's lives, with two core policies that shape everything that the Council does, namely tackling the climate and ecological emergency and giving people a bigger say. The additional improvement to the sustainable transport infrastructure Midsomer Norton will help to support a modal shift away from the private motor vehicle supporting the wider climate action of the Council.

4.2 In parallel with this decision to make improvements to the 'Hollies' bus stop on the High Street, the necessary TRO is being progressed. The TRO covers the new parking and waiting layout for The Island as well as the changes necessary to the parking areas and taxi rank on the High Street, to facilitate the Hollies bus stop interchange.

4.3 The site is fully contained within the public highway and therefore there are no planning considerations for the implementation of the improvement works proposed which require Technical Approval through the highway's authority.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 A capital budget of £2.872m was approved for Midsomer Norton's High Street Renewal Programme through a combination of grants from Historic England (£889k), Combined Authority (£1.045m), UK Shared Prosperity Funding (£450k), B&NES through both CIL and CSB (£442k) and Midsomer Norton Town Council (46k).

5.2 This report seeks approval for an increase of £856k to £3.728m to reflect the uplift in grant value from the MCA.

5.3 The improvement works will be delivered and managed by the Sustainable Economy Service and the Capital Programme and Project Delivery Service, as part of the ongoing projects for Midsomer Norton High Street and all additional resourcing requirements are met from the project costs.

5.4 Ongoing maintenance of Market Square and bus stop will be managed by B&NES Highways Maintenance & Drainage, Environmental Services.

#### **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance. A risk assessment was undertaken at Full Business Case Grant application and the risk log continues through the construction phase and beyond to post construction review.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 A project specific equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been developed for the Market Square project, including the Hollies bus stop intervention (see background papers).

7.2 Within the EIA it was identified that the removal of the bus stop, within The Island would, in the short term, require adjustment to bus user habits and will therefore have the potential for perceived negative impacts on certain user groups. This is, however, mitigated by the positive steps of locating the main High Street bus stop in a more central and accessible location within the High Street. The proposed Mobility Hub improvements will further increase accessibility.

7.3 The project plan seeks to limit the time in which a temporary bus stop is required, by bringing forward the Hollies bus stop interchange works. This course of action is a mitigation to the identified potential for perceived negative impacts on certain user groups during the short-term disruption as identified in the EIA.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 A Climate Emergency was declared in March 2019 along with an Ecological Emergency in 2019. In response to this B&NES has pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. As part of the Climate Emergency Strategy transport is identified as a priority area. With a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling identified as required to reduce transport emissions, which have been identified as contributing 29% of the total greenhouse gas emissions throughout the district.

8.2 The proposed bus interchange improvements at the Hollies bus stop will create a better-connected town centre bus stops for the majority of users, will in turn make bus use more convenient, provide a more appealing waiting area, and help contribute to modal shift and public transport use and by providing convenient interchange. These works align with the proposed mobility hub which aims to provide opportunities to interchange between modes more easily, to be delivered through the forthcoming CRSTS Somer Valley Links scheme.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 There is an option to not accept the additional capital grant funding from the MCA however the Market Square project is currently on site and it is unlikely to attract alternative external funding sources at this stage. Not accepting the grant would leave the project £607k short of funding to deliver the programme of works. To not accept the £249k Hollies bus stop funding would result in a delay in delivering the improvement works to the town centre bus interchange. This would result in a prolonged use of a temporary bus stop on Silver Street, which does not provide as well for bus users and would increase delivery costs for this scheme.

## 10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, with ward and cabinet members and this report has been agreed by the s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

<b>Contact person</b>	David Gosset – Senior Development Officer Cleo Newcombe-Jones – Regeneration Service Manager Sophie Broadfield – Executive Director Sustainable Communities
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>B&amp;NES Core Strategy &amp; Placemaking Plan</i> Equalities Impact Assessment for the Market Square scheme: <a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments</a>  Project summary of Market Square: <a href="https://yourmidsomernorton.co.uk/about-the-new-market-square-at-the-island/">https://yourmidsomernorton.co.uk/about-the-new-market-square-at-the-island/</a>  MCA Joint Committee 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 <a href="https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&amp;MId=637">https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&amp;MId=637</a>  MCA Joint Committee 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 <a href="https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&amp;MID=688">https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&amp;MID=688</a>
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