

CHERRY HINTON HIGH STREET– APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT

To: Economy and Environment Committee

Meeting Date: 19th January 2016

From: Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

Electoral divisions: Cherry Hinton

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To explain the scheme development process followed and to seek approval to build the scheme.

Recommendation: Committee is asked to:

- a) note the scheme development process set out in sections 2 and 3;
- b) approve the scheme proposals set out in Section 4, paragraph 4.3; and
- b) note the programme for delivery of the scheme as set out in paragraph 5.3.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In the early 1990s a traffic calming scheme was introduced in Cherry Hinton High Street. This was successful in reducing traffic speeds and reducing accidents. However, by modern standards, the High Street is rather dominated by pedestrian guardrail, signage and general street clutter, and cyclists tend not to use the narrow lanes located behind islands provided to act as traffic calming.
- 1.2 The 2011 Census revealed that Cherry Hinton has the lowest levels of people cycling to work, and the highest levels of people driving, for any Cambridge electoral division. A High Street that is not very cycle friendly may be one factor.
- 1.3 As well as being an important local centre, the High Street also acts as a key cycling commuter route southwards to Addenbrooke's Hospital, The Biomedical Campus and Peterhouse Business Park, as well as to expanding businesses like ARM, and northwards towards Marshalls.
- 1.4 There are a number of primary schools in Cherry Hinton, and a large number of secondary school children ride each day to Netherhall School in Queen Edith's Way. Young people also use the High Street as a cycle route towards Long Road and Hills Road Sixth Form colleges.
- 1.5 Local County and City Members suggested that Section 106 developer funding be used to review and improve the High Street. In 2012 this Council's Cabinet approved the use of £275,000 of Section 106 funds to develop a scheme to enhance facilities for cyclists and to improve the general street scape.
- 1.6 A number of other schemes in the Cherry Hinton area are also being developed, including improvements for cyclists on Fulbourn Road, Queen Edith's Way and Cherry Hinton Road, as well as signal upgrades with some cycling improvements at Robin Hood junction and Coldhams Lane junction. Works were recently completed on The Tins path which links Cherry Hinton to the Romsey end of Mill Road.
- 1.7 With the completion of all of the planned works around Cherry Hinton, it is hoped that by the next census in 2021, levels of cycling to work (and indeed walking and cycling generally) will be much higher.

2. SCHEME DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 2.1 A walkabout with local members was undertaken to kick off the project, and this was followed by two well attended public workshops to brainstorm how the High Street could be improved and to gather the key issues. A range of issues and concerns were raised, and discussion took place on potential improvements.
- 2.2 To ensure that proper consideration was given to enhancing public realm, an urban design consultant was appointed to help develop some options. The consultant reviewed the results of the initial workshops and formulated some ideas for discussion with the Project Team. The consultation plans were then

developed, and these included a range of elements including changes to junctions, pedestrian crossings, different types of cycling provision, proposals for bus stops, street furniture removal proposals and ideas for public realm improvements.

- 2.3 The consultation took place in March 2015 with an extensive letter drop and a number of exhibitions. 431 responses were received, mainly from local people.
- 2.4 78% of people responding supported the removal of cycle bollard islands, with 86% in support of removing unnecessary signs, railings, bollards and street furniture.
- 2.5 64% of people responding supported introducing 1.5 metre wide cycle lanes, though there was less support (50%) for removing the mini roundabouts in the High Street.

3. LINKS TO OTHER INITIATIVES

- 3.1 A 20mph speed limit is due to be introduced in Cherry Hinton High Street next year. This is part of a city-wide Cambridge City Council initiative.
- 3.2 The City Council have developed a public realm scheme to improve the shop fronts of Rectory Terrace in Cherry Hinton High Street by introducing planting surrounded by attractive paving materials and seating. With further funding they have developed a scheme to introduce attractive block paving at various points in the High Street, and to develop an area in front of the library which includes new seating. Details of the public realm proposals developed and funded by the City Council can be seen at this link: www.tinyurl.com/h9x7q82
- 3.3 Cherry Hinton High Street has been under consideration for a number of years for carriageway resurfacing. This has now been brought forward so that the resurfacing can be undertaken at the same time as the wider scheme.
- 3.4 A Project Team has been working together comprising County and City officers, so that both Councils' initiatives can be joined up as one scheme with a single contractor delivering the works. This approach will provide financial savings for both councils, minimise construction disruption and make for a better, more integrated end product. This also reflects the ethos of the new operating model being promoted by the County Council as part of the Business Plan.

4. PROPOSED SCHEME DETAILS

- 4.1 The relatively narrow road width limits the possibilities for improving cycling infrastructure. There is insufficient width to provide segregation for cyclists either by kerbing or by providing a raised lane, as used in Huntingdon Road. As a busy local centre with many shops, there are large numbers of pedestrians, and thus creating shared use paths for pedestrians and cyclists to mix would lead to conflicts, and a less safe environment for more vulnerable people.
- 4.2 There was not strong support in the consultation for removing the mini roundabouts as people were of the view that returning these to traditional

junctions, with or without raised tables, would cause delays for those seeking to enter the High Street from side roads in cars, and indeed by bike. On balance the mini roundabouts, though not always considered good for cycle safety, do in fact act as a traffic calming feature.

- 4.3 The key components of the proposed scheme are the removal of numerous traffic islands and narrow cycle bypass lanes, the omission of the road centre line, amendments to two bus stop areas and the introduction of advisory cycle lanes. The general proposals are shown on **Plan 1**, with further visualisations on **Plan 2**. The proposed scheme can be viewed in detail at this link www.tinyurl.com/qz8kso9
- 4.4 Omission of centre lines is a technique that is widely used in the Netherlands, but there are also increasingly more UK, and indeed Cambridge examples. In 2010 a scheme including centre line removal was introduced in Gilbert Road and this has worked well in providing a safe environment for cyclists, whilst keeping traffic speeds low and allowing two way motor traffic to flow. The cycle lanes in Gilbert Road are 1.8 metres wide surfaced in red tarmac, with a central two way carriageway of 5.6 metres. Centre line removal generally, has been introduced more widely in built up areas, for instance Mill Road and Queen Ediths Way, Cambridge, as it generally has some effect in reducing traffic speeds, and reduces the ongoing maintenance liability of remarking lines.
- 4.5 At two sites in Norwich (The Avenues and Palace Street) a central two way carriageway which in places is as narrow as 3.6 metres wide has been deployed with advisory cycle lanes. Off peak this appears to work well, but when there are heavy flows of cyclists and motor traffic at peak times the arrangement works less well. The Project Team have visited Norwich and have spoken to engineers, safety auditors and cycling campaigners. It is felt that Cherry Hinton High Street would operate safely with our proposed design, which unlike Norwich includes contrasting red lanes and a wider central two way area of 4.6 metres which is of sufficient width for two cars to pass.
- 4.6 Cherry Hinton High Street is a bus route. It would be necessary for buses and larger commercial vehicles to enter the cycle lanes which would be advisory with broken lines, not mandatory (with solid lines). Stagecoach have been consulted, and support the concept of removing the many traffic islands. They are also comfortable with the general scheme concept.
- 4.7 A well established local business which manufactures perspex sheeting is also supportive of removing the traffic islands, as these can be difficult for their larger delivery vehicles to manoeuvre. The removal of islands would permit quicker and easier access for emergency vehicles.
- 4.8 If the scheme is approved, before and after monitoring of accidents, traffic speeds and cycle flows will be undertaken. A perception survey will also be carried out to gauge the reaction of local people to the completed scheme. If the surveys show that this sort of approach is successful, then this type of road layout could be used elsewhere.
- 4.9 The full length of the High Street was included within the consultation in consideration of the fact that additional funding may be attracted from S106 developer contributions in future, and thus a more extensive scheme or a

Phase 2 scheme may be possible. Additional funding could be used to look at the area from Coldhams Lane junction towards Teversham with a view to removing traffic islands and improving the cycling infrastructure and pedestrian facilities.

5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

5.1 A number of scheme elements and options were consulted on, the consultation responses were analysed and a scheme tailored to the available budget was then finalised in discussion with local members. The proposals have been developed by looking carefully at other similar schemes and giving careful thought to what can be achieved for cycle safety, in consideration for other road users, within a limited road width.

5.2 The scheme has the support of local Councillors, and efforts have been made to ensure that all initiatives within the High Street are joined up to ensure the very best value for public funds and a minimal period of disruption for local residents and businesses.

5.3 The likely programme for implementation is thus:

Action	Date
Completion of detailed design	End of February 2016
Contractor mobilisation	March/mid April 2016
Construction phase	Mid April – August 2016
After surveys and monitoring	September - December 2016
Compilation of report	January 2017

6. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

More people cycling and walking contributes to a more active population, improved productivity, reduced traffic congestion, reliability of journey times and adds capacity into an already constrained road network, all of which contributes to economic wellbeing. Cherry Hinton High Street is part of the commuter route to/from large employment sites such as Addenbrooke's/Biomedical Campus, ARM and Marshalls.

6.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

Currently many people feel unsafe cycling, although cycling is potentially a form of economic, reliable transport that allows them to access employment or training and hence have independence, and the opportunity to incorporate active travel into their lives.

6.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

Providing on road cycle facilities minimises the number of cyclists using footways and coming into conflict with pedestrians. The High Street scheme will improve public realm making for a better environment for cyclists as well as pedestrians and those with impaired mobility.

7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource Implications

The scheme will be capital funded from Section 106 contributions. The scheme is designed to ensure minimal maintenance and ongoing revenue costs, for instance by removing a large number of central traffic islands that are regularly struck by vehicles. Combining a number of initiatives and undertaking resurfacing of the carriageway as part of the scheme ensures a joined up, good value approach.

7.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The scheme involves the removal of centre line and relatively narrow space available for two way traffic. Monitoring of the scheme is planned as set out in Section 4.6 above.

7.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

The improvements to the High Street would appear to be beneficial to all parts of the community and with an improved streetscape this could engender more of a sense of community.

7.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

A thorough and extensive period of consultation and engagement has been undertaken. Details of the scheme remain on display at Cherry Hinton Community Centre.

7.5 Public Health Implications

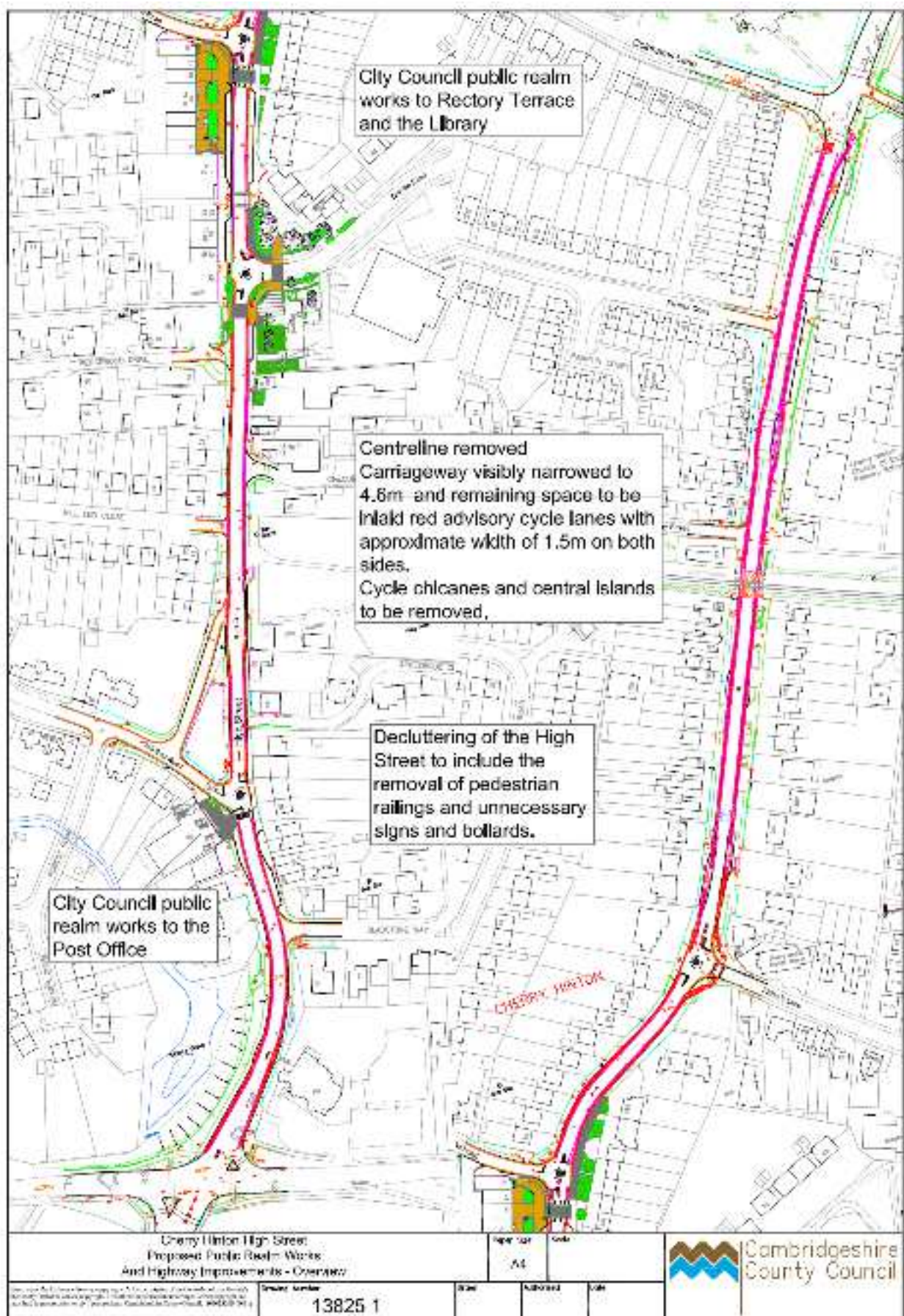
More people cycling and walking undoubtedly contributes to improved public health.

7.6 Localism and local member engagement

There has been extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The Project Team have engaged with, and updated local members throughout.

Source Documents	Location
Consultation responses	Room 310
Detailed scheme drawings	Shire Hall

PLAN 1 – SCHEME PROPOSALS



PLAN 2 – VISUALISATIONS OF PROPOSALS

Proposal showing new cycle lanes with traffic islands removed:



City Council urban realm improvements to shop fronts:

