Wellingborough town centre projects

1 Purpose of report

Following the Wellingborough town centre high level review and the property matters report approved at Resources Committee this report seeks to approve the projects to be progressed.

2 Executive summary

The Wellingborough town centre high level review and the property matters report approved at Resources Committee on 19 September 2018 identifies projects that could be progressed to improve Wellingborough town centre. This report seeks approval for officers to progress key projects in order to implement this improvement.

3 Appendices

Appendix 1 – High Street/Jackson Lane site proposed parking scheme

4 Proposed action:

The town centre sub-committee is invited to:

4.1 RESOLVE to agree the Wellingborough town centre projects to be progressed as identified in section 5 below.

5 Background

5.1 Property and Projects priorities have been agreed and are updated regularly as part of the Property Matters report, the update on these was reported to Resources Committee on the 19 September 2018.

5.2 Subject to the approval of the report Wellingborough town centre high level review being agreed at this sub-committee, this report seeks approval to progress a number of projects which were identified in the review or agreed as part of the Property Matters resources committee report.

5.3 The projects which approval is sought to progress are:

- High Street parking
- Mosaic repairs and projection
- Multi-Storey car park
• Connections into the town centre
• Town Centre car parking study benefits and opportunities
• Council owned assets
• Retail improvements – shop fronts
• Open space study

**High Street indicative parking scheme**
5.4 Officers commissioned KierWSP to propose an indicative layout for the land at the front of the High Street which the council determined to retain, as agreed at the Council meeting on 31 July 2015.

**Mosaics**
5.5 There are two mosaics in the town centre at Market St - the Five Wells mosaic is the larger mosaic that is situated between Coleman’s and Castello Lounge and the Twin Towns mosaic is near the Swansgate Centre.

5.6 The mosaics were repaired in 2015 at a reported cost of circa £26k. Both mosaics have been damaged since the repair work and discussion and inspection by mosaic restoration companies have confirmed that the damage is caused by vehicles driving over them and potentially items being dropped or unloaded on them. In order to restore the mosaics to their original state, further work due to the nature of the original screed would be required.

**Multi-Storey car park**
5.7 It is not clear what level of capital investment will be needed into the multi-storey car park. Officers are continuing discussion with the head lessee and operator regarding the re-gearing of the lease.

**Retail improvements – shop fronts.**
5.8 The council received some money from the S106 for Rushden Lakes to fund town centre events, further shop front improvements in addition to the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and other town centre improvements.

**Connections into the town centre – phase 1**
5.9 The Wellingborough town centre high level review identifies that connections and signposting of connections in Wellingborough town centre should improved.

**Town Centre car parking study benefits and opportunities**
5.10 Work on the outline proposal brought to Resources Committee in June 2018 on car parking is progressing but, due to the amount of work required, the scheme adjoining the High St development site has been given priority.

5.11 The Town Centre parking study which informed the Plan for the Borough for Wellingborough will be further updated at the end of 2018/early 2019 to identify usage and the estimates of car parking need going forward.

**Open Space**
5.12 As identified in the September 2018 Property Matters Resources Committee report a report is to be commissioned to undertake a review of the quality of the council’s open spaces/parks and play areas and identify where improvements
are needed and the cost of these. This work will inform/help to develop projects for S106 spend or external funding and input into the council’s planning policy on open space to be started later this year.

Other projects
5.13 It is proposed that the other projects identified in the Wellingborough town centre high level review are brought forward to the Town Centre Sub-committee at a later date these include:
- Connections into the town centre – phase 2.
- Town centre arrival.
- Strengthening Midland Road connection.
- Strengthening upper Market Street.
- Market Square/Pebble Lane/Churchyard.
- Public realm strategy review.
- Highway impact.
- Council owned assets.

6 Discussion

High Street car parking
6.1 KierWSP have proposed an indicative parking scheme on the High Street/Jackson Lane site (Appendix 1) taking into account the council’s land ownership, site constraints, access arrangements and the Keepmoat scheme. This scheme achieves the number of spaces set out below, some of these will be identified as disabled spaces at a later date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car Park</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacksons Lane</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leighton Coach House</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High St Mews</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West St</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>216</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Currently there are 482 spaces on the High Street/Jacksons Lane and Leighton Place car parks. The scheme in Appendix 1 identifies 216 could be provided which would mean a reduction of 266 spaces.

6.3 Approval is sought to progress this scheme should the decision be made to sell the council’s land to Keepmoat and to submit a capital bid for this work if appropriate.

Twin towns mosaic repairs and protection
6.4 The Twin Towns mosaic is located outside the Swansgate Centre in an area where vehicles drive and it is not possible to re-route vehicles. Because of this, repairs would be ongoing and expensive and are not recommended by mosaic restoration companies as the damage will continue. The options for the twin towns mosaic are therefore to:
   a) leave the mosaic unreppaired;
b) Identify the costs for repairs and undertake repairs, however this would need to be done regularly and some areas cannot be repaired or;
c) consider the options of removing the mosaic and installing a replica either in its place on a new modern base or installing elsewhere and reporting back. However these options are likely to be very costly.

6.5 Approval is sought to consider the option of installing a replica twin town’s mosaic or similar on a new modern base and report these options back to the town centre sub-committee.

Five Wells towns mosaic repairs and protection
6.6 The Five Wells mosaic is located in a pedestrian area that is sometimes used by vehicles making deliveries to local businesses. Enforcement of the no driving policy has been active since March 2018 and is ongoing, therefore quotes to make repairs have been sought. The mosaic restoration companies have provided quotes for around £4000 to do this but have recommended that something is put in place to prevent vehicles driving over it prior to repair.

6.7 Officers have considered the options to protect the Five Wells mosaic from vehicle damage and associated unloading, and discussed this with Wellingborough Norse and engineers. There are a number of options in relation to this which are:
a) leave the mosaic unrepaired;
b) repair the mosaics;
c) repair the mosaics and install bollards of a design sympathetic to the mosaic. Indications of cost for supply and installation of bollards are in the region of £5,000 or;
d) consider the options of removing the mosaic and installing a replica on a new modern base or installing elsewhere and reporting back. However these options are likely to be very costly.

6.8 Approval is sought to develop a scheme to install bollards to protect the Five Wells mosaic and repair the mosaic whilst the options are considered. This could be funded using the existing street furniture budget of approx. £8,500.

Multi-Storey car park
6.9 Approval is sought to progress a report to consider the condition of the multi storey car park, propose improvements that can be made to this car parking including indicative costs.

Retail improvements – shop fronts
6.10 As identified above £166,500 has been secured from the Rushden Lakes S106 to improve shop fronts in the town centre. It is proposed that this grant fund would provide funding to shops which are not identified within the Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme.

6.11 The THI scheme has improved the appearance of a number of shops in the town centre but there remain a number of properties that have a negative impact on the appearance of the town centre. Many of these shops are not eligible for THI
funding being part of a multiple or retail chain, or by not being designated as a building of townscape merit.

6.12 The existing THI shop front scheme covers most of the town centre focusing on the streets with heritage assets including Sheep Street, Silver Street, Market Street and Cambridge Street. It is proposed that this scheme be widened to be offered to the whole town centre shopping area and would cover the following areas of improvement:

- Repairs - a number of shopfronts are in a poor state of repair. It is often the case that the first floor above also needs repair and it may be that only this is required.
- Redecoration - Often all that is required is a fresh coat of paint.
- Signage – signage built up in layers has caused an unnecessary number of oversize signs that are not proportionate to the shop in question. Removal of the sign and layers of boxing would positively enhance many shop fronts.
- Empty properties - often shops are left vacant for a long time and the cost of renovation becomes a barrier for the landlord and potential tenants. The offer of a new tenant grant could unlock some shops.
- Replacement shop fronts - Where the THI scheme has replaced shop fronts to replicate heritage originals this scheme would not make this offer but would work with the existing.
- Shutters - These make a negative contribution to the area and it is possible to replace external shutters with internal shutters.

6.13 Approval is therefore sought to put in place a process similar to the THI grant process in order to provide a grant scheme as soon as possible.

Connections into the town centre – phase 1

6.14 Subject to the Wellingborough town centre high level review being agreed at this sub-committee approval is sought to appoint a consultant to review the sign posting and connections within the town centre and to identify schemes that could be put in place in the short term.

Town Centre car parking study benefits and opportunities

6.15 As identified in the Property Matters resources committee report on the 19 September 2018, consultants have been instructed to review the town centre car parking in line with the Wellingborough town centre high level review. This report will be brought back to the Town Centre Sub-Committee for consideration.

7 Legal powers

Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

8 Financial and value for money implications

Any decisions made by the sub-committee would be covered by existing budgets. If additional funding is needed this will be sought through the capital programme and/or external funding applications submitted.
9 Risk analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of risk</th>
<th>Consequences if realised</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough Town Centre High Level Review not agreed.</td>
<td>Progress on town centre improvements is delayed.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Agree the Wellingborough Town Centre High Level Review in Appendix 1.</td>
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10 Implications for resources

Any decisions made by the sub-committee would be covered by existing staff resources. If additional funding is needed this will be sought through the capital programme and/or external funding applications submitted.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

None arising from this report.

12 Implications for equalities

There are no equalities implications, any actions would be within the remit of the development committee. New projects would be subjected to any necessary assessments.

13 Author and contact officer

Victoria Phillipson, Principal Property and Projects Manager.

14 Consultees

Julie Thomas, Director  
Bridget Gamble, Director  
Liz Elliott, Managing Director  
Adrian Piper, Assistant Director

15 Background papers

None.