

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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| Meeting | Community Services Committee |
| Date | 16 September 2020 |
| Report by | Carl Cheevers – Town Clerk |
| Report title | Public Realm Improvement Plan |
| Business Plan theme | Lead the development of Harpenden as a sustainable Town where we promote sustainable transport and tread lightly on the environment with clean air, attractive public spaces and less waste. |

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To set out further details of the approach to developing a Public Realm Improvement Plan and to agree the scope of the Plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Committee is asked to:

- 2.1.1. Agree the spaces in the scope of the Plan as set out in para 3.3.
- 2.1.2. Discuss and put forward any initial ideas for improvements to the public realm.

3. Background information

- 3.1. Town Centres across the Country have seen significant changes in recent years that has meant difficult trading conditions for local businesses. It is widely accepted that one of the key roles that a local council can play in the rejuvenation of the High Street is to create attractive and accessible public spaces that encourage people to spend time in them.
- 3.2. The Council has a Business Plan priority to ‘Deliver improvements to public spaces, such as Harding Parade and the Sensory Garden, making them attractive and accessible to all’. These improvements will be delivered through a Public Realm Improvement Plan that will set out a vision for the future of the Town Centre and Southdown Local Centre.

3.3. The first part of the Improvement Plan is to agree the spaces that fall within the scope of the Plan. It is recommended that the scope includes the following parts of the public realm:

- All Town Centre and Southdown Greens
- The Concourse
- Fountain Area
- Sensory Garden
- Thompsons Close
- Harding Parade
- Roadside raised flowerbeds

3.4. In order to help inform the Plan, it is recommended that we carry out some community engagement to gather the ideas of local people. Once the scope of the Plan is approved, we will carry out a survey with the responses shared with CSC at a future meeting. The survey is just to generate ideas and there is no weighting associated to it i.e. if an idea received a large number of mentions it does not mean the Council is required to deliver that idea.

3.5. The aim is for the Public Realm Improvement Plan to be agreed by March 2021 so that any improvement projects can start to be delivered in the following financial year. The draft timetable is set out below:

| Milestone | Date |
|--|-------------------|
| CSC approve scope | 16 September 2020 |
| Community engagement survey | October 2020 |
| Audit of current usage | October 2020 |
| CSC consider audit and survey findings | November 2020 |
| Draft Improvement Plan approved by CSC | March 2021 |
| Council approve Plan | March 2021 |

4. Resource implications

4.1. The Council has allocated £150k from Capital Reserves to deliver the Improvement Plan. In addition, there are further allocations for the installation of water refill stations (£20k) and more secure cycle parking (£15k) that are relevant to the Improvement Plan.

5. Other implications

| Other Implications | Comment |
|---------------------------|--|
| Legal | In some cases the land included in the recommended scope is not owned by |

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| | HTC and so ownership will need to be transferred prior to investment. |
| Environment and biodiversity | The Plan provides an opportunity to improve the environment of the Town Centre and Southdown. |
| Crime and Disorder | The Plan has the potential to have a positive impact on crime and disorder. |
| Risk/Health & Safety | None |

6. Appendices

None