

CABINET

Morecambe Area Action Plan – Delivering Transportation Improvements and Public Realm Projects (previously agreed)

2nd September 2014

Report of Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To report on implementing the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP) and decide on specific expenditures by the city council towards this from the established MAAP Implementation Reserve.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		4 th August 2014		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JANICE HANSON

That Cabinet:

- (1) Approves the MAAP implementation activities as set out in the report.**
- (2) Gives delegated authority to the Chief Officer (Resources) to allocate £110K from the MAAP Implementation Reserve and update the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme once profiling of expenditure is known between the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.**
- (3) Approves that officers seek to secure additional contributions for the MAAP implementation Reserve from external funding sources towards further implementation of the MAAP.**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A report to the February 2014 Cabinet meeting covered approaches to implementing the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP).
- 1.2 On Cabinet's recommendation Council established a specific Reserve for MAAP implementation with £175k being allocated into it during 2014/15 as part of the Budget Process with contributions to and from the reserve requiring further Cabinet approval. A further sum of £15.9K was also transferred into this reserve during the 2013/14 year end process providing a total of £190.9K. This report makes proposals for what activity the council should undertake up to March 2016 that requires financing from the Reserve and also how to use the Reserve going forward to help maximise income from external sources.
- 1.3 These proposals concern improvements that the council can directly implement and work it can do to facilitate others, such as supporting efforts to establish a Business Improvement District, which is the subject of a separate report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 1.4 The report does not cover existing activity that supports plan implementation such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative 2 (THI2) and the ongoing work to encourage building owners to properly maintain the appearance of properties - as regularly reported to the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee.
- 1.5 Further, the report does not cover the council's work to try to facilitate private sector investment and development involving certain of its landholdings via a partner developer route with Carillion.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work to prepare the MAAP is almost complete and the Council will soon be able to decide on adopting it. For some time now the focus of work by officers in the Regeneration and Planning Service has moved from plan preparation to implementation.
- 2.2 The broad strategy of the MAAP is to improve conditions for private investment. It identifies many actions towards this with a significant number of these aimed at making the town function better and maximise footfall by assisting and encouraging pedestrians to find and access what the town centre offers. In turn, this benefits the town centre economy, regeneration and economic growth.
- 2.3 Implementing these and the MAAP as a whole demands actions by a wide range of organisations. The report in February 2014 made clear that while others must lead on many aspects, there are key roles for the council on some. These include coordinating implementation, facilitating investment, managing development and delivering direct improvements especially to the public realm.
- 2.4 The February report highlighted the need to:
 - Prepare and implement a joint transport plan for central Morecambe;
 - Improve the town centre;
 - Better manage the seafront and its integration to the town centre;
 - Regenerate the central Platform/Market/Car park area; and
 - Devise an acceptable approach to development of the Central Promenade (former Urban Splash site).
- 2.5 The report explained the particular need for regenerative action in the established town centre and at the central seafront including to give some

support to the proposals emerging from Carillion in the central areas (Platform/Market/car parks and central promenade) as per the MAAP. Appendix 3 to the report outlined actions the council could take over three years with estimates of the likely financing involved.

- 2.6 Also, a report back in April 2013 detailed ambitions for the established town centre as in (the then emerging) MAAP and Cabinet approved a first public realm project 'Connecting Victoria Street'. This focuses on Victoria Street and its immediate connections and fits to MAAP proposals to uplift the established town centre east of Northumberland Street.
- 2.7 Since this time officers have been working this project up and making sure as many as possible support the changes involved. Officers aim to commence contract works in the New Year.

3.0 PROPOSALS FOR WORK TO END MARCH 2016

- 3.1 Proposals are set out below with more details on most in Appendix 1. Expenditure proposals are identified where applicable.

3.2 Specific focused planning work

- In partnership with the county council, prepare a draft joint Transport and Parking Plan for Central Morecambe for consideration in late 2015 with a view to implementation from April 2016. £15k revenue costs in specialist external fees - traffic analysis and planning.

3.3 Direct improvements to public realm (in addition to 'Connecting Victoria Street')

- Make a new pedestrian gateway from the central seafront and 'Eric' to the town centre at Euston Road, by adjusting car park no.2. £50k capital costs including internal design fees.
- Provide dedicated pull in facilities on the central seafront by 'Eric' for both buses and coaches, by adjusting car park no 1. £25k capital costs including internal design fees.
- Make certain small scale beneficial changes at the central seafront east of the Clock Tower and particularly within car park numbers 3 and 4. £15k capital costs including internal design fees.

3.4 Work to facilitate others to help implement the plan

- Bring forward proposals to further encourage business investment and development, including providing more business advice, marketing support and streamlining regulatory requirements (planning, licencing etc.).
- Specifically help facilitate a new Business Improvement District (BID) if this is decided upon (see report elsewhere on this agenda).
- Work to support other public and private organisations to implement the MAAP with advice and capacity where available.

3.5 Prepare for further implementations post March 2016 (and subject to further authorisation)

- Prepare a project to provide a network of new pedestrian way finding points / signs. £5k revenue costs towards specialist external costs involved in the planning.
- With the county council prepare a project to rationalise and improve highway signs to and from central Morecambe and parking signs within the centre.

- Prepare further public realm projects 'Connecting Queen and Pedder streets' and Euston Road / New Town Square.
 - Consider how the council's service deliveries might be better attuned to regeneration, consistent with other priorities.
- 3.6 All of these proposals involve partnership working. Those that are preparatory are with a view to roll out after March 2016 subject to further authorisations and funding confirmation / allocation.
- 3.7 To maximise what can be achieved post March 2016 it is proposed that the council utilises the 'Investment Fund' model used successfully for Lancaster Square Routes in seeking to top up the Reserve with additional external contributions.

4.0 DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

As previously reported on, work to prepare the MAAP has involved extensive community engagement. Officers have consulted with the Town Council, the Town Team and local businesses on 'Connecting Victoria Street'. The proposals set out in the report benefit from close working with the County Council and the comments of the Town Council have partly informed these too.

5.0 OPTIONS AND OPTIONS ANALYSIS (INCLUDING RISK ASSESSMENT)

	Option 1: Authorise use of the Implementation Reserve as set out in this report	Option 2: Decline to authorise use of the Reserve as set out.
Advantages	Consistent with the MAAP and so assists regeneration. Makes clear what the council can and cannot do towards MAAP implementation up to March 2016 and so giving certainty to others. Specifically, the new bus and coach parking facilities should be in place for the 2015 season.	None.
Disadvantages	None	Does not assist timely and joined up MAAP implementation. Shows no leadership and gives no certainty. Will not assist in securing external funding for further regeneration and increasing private sector investments into the future.
Risks	Risks are as for MAAP implementation generally. This includes the residual risk that improving conditions for	Will likely prejudice wider partnership working and impair regeneration.

	<p>the private sector will not be matched by subsequent investment, however, this is unavoidable.</p> <p>The MAAP is an integrated spatial plan with many dependencies. There is a risk that unless sufficient activity is undertaken, the full benefits will not be achieved and other regeneration activity will be impaired.</p> <p>Furthermore, clearly there is funding risk attached to the actions planned post 2016.</p>	
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6.0 OFFICER PREFERRED OPTION

- 6.1 Option 1 is preferred as consistent with the needs for MAAP implementation and regeneration.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The report concerns the use of limited council financial resources and capacities to further the regeneration of central Morecambe and particularly its town centre, fitting to the MAAP.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The MAAP is part of the Local Plan which is part of the policy framework. The relationship to the Corporate Plan was set out in the February 2014 report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The MAAP has been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal to cover economic, social and environmental implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Legal Services Manager has been consulted and has no comments to make.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications arising from the preferred option as the associated revenue and capital expenditure can be funded from the MAAP Implementation Reserve as summarised in the table below:

MAAP Activity	Revenue £'000	Capital £'000	Total Reserve Allocation
New Pedestrian Gateway		50	50

Bus & Coach Pull In		25	25
Other Seafront Improvements		15	15
Joint Transport Plan	15		15
Pedestrian Information Signs	5		5
Total	20	90	110

Subject to the preferred option being agreed there will be a balance of £80.9K remaining in the reserve for allocation, subject to further cabinet reports for approval.

Although some of the planned activities are expected to start during quarter 4 of the current financial year, others are not likely to commence until 2015/16, e.g. the Joint Transport Plan, however a commitment is needed now as planning work is required in advance to inform future project implementation and funding needs. It is recommended therefore that authority to update the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme be delegated to officers once profiling of expenditure requirements are known between the financial years.

The report highlights other work being undertaken to try to facilitate private sector investment and development involving the Council's landholdings via a partner development route with Carillion and facilitating a new Business Improvement District (both to be reported to Members separately). The content of this report is not deemed dependent on decisions required on such activity however, and is considered necessary to enable activity to encourage private sector investment in Morecambe. It can also be seen as complementary to the 'MAAP – improving Morecambe's main streets' council led capital scheme, (subject of a report to Cabinet in April 2013) expected to commence during 2014/15.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

Work requirements can be met from existing capacities within the Regeneration and Planning Service.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

The proposals in part concern certain city council car parks and the detail will be worked up in conjunction with the Chief Officer (Environmental Services) including ensuring changes reduce maintenance liabilities and make no net significant impacts on parking revenues

Open Spaces:

The proposals in part concern public realm as outlined in the report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Morecambe Area Action Plan – Submission
version 2014

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/local-planning-policy/work-in-progress/morecambe-area-action-plan/>

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Ref: MAAP

APPENDIX 1.

Further details for proposals

Joint Transport and Parking Plan (report ref: section 3.2)

The MAAP (Action Set 11) tasks the city and county councils to work in partnership to plan and manage on and off street parking and traffic throughout Central Morecambe in an integrated way. This is to –

- Rationalise on street provision to better support traffic management objectives and the business of providing off street parking.
- Reduce excessive vehicle circulation
- Improve the parking offer to the benefit of customers
- Make streets more pleasant for pedestrians and more walkable

The Plan should fit to the Local Transport Plan and the city council's Parking Strategy. Officers can prepare the plan over some 12 months from now with a view to this informing the budget round for 2016/17. The work will involve the procurement of some specialist support in traffic analysis and planning.

New pedestrian gateway at the central seafront (MAAP Action Set 5) (report ref: section 3.3)

To provide a fitting pedestrian gateway from the seafront to the town centre to drive footfall into an improving town centre. Focused on the connection to Euston Road this involves part re-configuring car park no2 (between 'Eric' and the Clocktower toilets and upgraded facilities to cross Marine Road Central.

The works to car park no 2 can be undertaken early in the first quarter of 2015 via Environmental Services. It is envisaged that the changes will involve a net loss of 2 car parking spaces but this can be mitigated for in full via extra provision within car park no 3 – see below.

Officers will work with the county council to upgrade the pedestrian crossing over Marine Road Central to a larger capacity pedestrian and cycle crossing (this will replace the existing one which is just offset and potentially also the one close by to the east). These works will be in 2015/16.

Dedicated facilities on the seafront by Eric for bus and coach pull in (MAAP Action Set 5) (report ref: section 3.3)

To provide a pull in for buses (i.e out of the traffic flow) and also a pickup/drop off facility for coaches by reconfiguring car park no 1. This will mean passengers can alight and depart immediately beside Eric and readily then access the town centre via the new gateway.

The works can be undertaken early in the first quarter of 2015 prospectively via Environmental Services. This will involve a net loss of some 5 car parking spaces but this can be mitigated for in full via extra provision within car park no 3 – see below.

Other improvements at the central seafront (MAAP Action Set 5) (report ref: section 3.3)

Space at the central seafront between the Clocktower toilets and the Yacht Station can be rationalised to:

- Make better connections across for pedestrians,
- Increase parking capacities within car park no 3 (either side of the 'Old' Lifeboat Station opposite Queen St) and car park no 4 (nearest the Town Hall),

- Reduce maintenance liabilities,
- Improve the quality of green space.

This would involve a number of relatively minor and inexpensive changes that collectively should improve the experiences of visitors and reduce maintenance liabilities.

Works to car park no 3 could be undertaken in two phases via Environmental Services, the first early in 2015 the second in the autumn of 2015. The changes should make some 15-20 additional parking spaces, more than offsetting for the losses involved as per the above.

New pedestrian information and signs (MAAP Action sets 3 and 8) (report ref:section 3.5)

The MAAP identifies a lack of information for pedestrians within the town centre as a real problem. Working in partnership with others including the Morecambe Town Council and the Town Team officers propose to plan a network of new signs with a view to implementation from April 2016 subject to future funding decisions. The planning work may require some specialist external support.

Possible Future Projects

Better highway signs to and from Morecambe (MAAP Action Set 10) (report ref: section 3.5)

The MAAP identifies the need to review how drivers are signed to and from Morecambe with a view to making more efficient use of road space and improving peoples' experiences, particularly that of first time visitors. This has not been looked at for many years and many existing signs are inadequate and / or unclear.

Officers propose to support the county council to plan and design a rationalised and improved sign system over the coming months with a view to implementation from April 2016 timed with completion of the Heysham M6 Link. The financing of implementation is subject to future funding decisions by the county council.

Prepare a second main improvement project 'Connecting Queen and Pedder Streets (MAAP Action Set 8). (report ref: section 3.5)

This is to work up a significant element of the proposals for area-wide uplift as outlined in the April 2013 report. Officers propose to do this in partnership with the county council and other partners. Project implementation will depend on county council investment and the financing will be the subject of further reporting.