

# CABINET

## Lancaster Square Routes 6 September 2011

### Report of Head of Regeneration and Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To review the Cabinet decision of 6 December 2009 to keep all existing trees within Market Square (minute 95, 1)			
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	18 July 2011		
This report is public			

#### RECOMMENDATION OF COUNCILLOR HANSON

- (1) That Cabinet authorise officers to implement the first phase works in Market Square as per option 3 as set out in the report.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Officers are in the final stages of preparing for a first phase of works this autumn for the Lancaster Square Routes Market Square project, to complete six weeks before Christmas. This will make a real difference and if it can be completed to this programme should increase activity and benefit trading during the Christmas trading period and beyond. This year especially this period is critical given the general economic situation.
- 1.2 Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December 2009 (minute 95, 1) made the express resolution that all existing trees in the Square be retained. This decision required a significant but seemingly satisfactory adjustment to the detailed design proposals. However, translating these designs into a contract specification for the first phase has revealed difficulties in complying fully with the Cabinet decision.
- 1.3 In the light of this the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Planning has asked that this report be brought forward to allow Cabinet to consider the implications of the decision and the available options.

- 1.4 To maintain progress towards autumn implementation officers have tendered for the first phase but have retained sufficient flexibility in the proposed works contract to adjust to whatever decision is made by Cabinet. The decision now sought is needed to proceed with the first phase this autumn.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Lancaster Square Routes is a council led initiative to rejuvenate public realm (streets and spaces) on an east – west axis across the city from the canal corridor in the east through to the quayside and Luneside in the west. It is central to efforts to sustain and invigorate the established commercial centre and to assure the future draw of the city as a vibrant historic place.
- 2.2 On 23 June 2009, Cabinet endorsed outline concept design proposals prepared by the council's consultants Gillespies for improving spaces and routes within the city centre. On 8 December 2009, taking into account the results of extensive public and stakeholder consultations, Cabinet determined a number of parameters for further detailed design work, including Market Square. The decision included the express requirement to retain all eight lime trees in the Square.
- 2.3 On 5 October 2010 Cabinet resolved to contribute £220,000 to a city centre investment fund to help implement proposals brought forward under Square Routes. Cabinet also determined that Market Square is the top priority Square Routes project for the council.
- 2.4 The broad purpose of the works is to make Market Square fit to be the civic centre of the city. This means making the square more pleasant and enjoyable for people to spend time in and one capable of being used much better for a range of activities – a place to trade, gather, meet and celebrate. Key to the thinking is that the better use of the square should extend well into the evening and help bear down on anti-social activities.
- 2.5 Lancaster Square Routes is about physical improvements for a purpose and detailed proposals to improve the square must incorporate its future use and management. To do this, officers are working with a wide range of stakeholders to try to provide a better layout for the outdoor charter market, outdoor café use, better integration with museum and library whilst at the same time managing essential servicing and parking needs better.
- 2.6 The first phase will:
- Remove the redundant fountain. A temporary surface will establish the footprint of the “platform” space - a multi use structure to act as a focal feature in the square and to be used for seating and as a stage for both planned and impromptu performances
  - Help define this reserved space by re-siting the existing benches temporarily
  - Provide new surfacing for at least part of the main body or “carpet” to the square including “edge” detail for the future “platform”
  - Light the Square to meet highway standards including via building-mounted and column mounted lighting around the Square, including all necessary ducting and feeders

- Illuminate the front elevation of the Old Town Hall
- Rationalise some street furniture, including removal of one telephone box at the northern side of square

2.7 It should be noted that the new highway lighting in the square will be provided in partnership with the Lancashire County Council as Highway Authority. Subject to confirmation, a new lighting scheme for all of Market Street, part Penny Street and Gage Street will complement the works in Market Square and Frances Passage. If highway specifications and standards are met the County Council will both contribute to delivery and meet all future revenue costs.

### **3.0 Proposal Details**

3.1 The design and first phase of works must provide sufficient clearance for service and other vehicles to travel on Market Street at all times and to meet highway standards in terms of access and lighting.

3.2 The engineering team advise that this cannot be achieved with tree D in situ as shown on the attached plan. It is not possible to hoard off the phase one works site during the build period and give sufficient clearance to the tree. Even if the build could be achieved as sought thereupon heavy service and emergency vehicles would overrun onto the "carpet" to keep clear of the tree and its overhang. This gives significant risk that the high quality natural surfacing materials to be used for the "carpet" will fail.

3.3 It should also be noted that the County Council have faced a number of difficulties in designing a lighting scheme to meet required highway standards across the square. In this process it has proved impossible to achieve the required lighting levels with building mounted lights only. This is because much of the light output is obstructed due to the positioning and size of the trees. Column-lighting within the square is part of the Gillespies design, albeit to a different specification. Subject to the necessary permissions being granted this seems to present an acceptable solution.

3.4 Further to the above however, whilst lighting standards might be achievable, the retention of tree H results in a drop in levels to the north-east corner of the square which cannot be mediated easily without providing additional interventions that will affect the design of the square in other ways and also make for higher costs.

3.5 There are therefore a number of options to move forward but as some of these run counter to the past resolution it is Cabinet as opposed to the Project Board that must consider them.

### **4.0 Details of Consultation**

4.1 Consultation relating specifically to the Lancaster Square Routes initiative was reported to Cabinet in June 2009 (minute 23) and December 2009

(minute 95). It involved extensive public and stakeholder engagement. Further to this, the detailed designs were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 September 2010.

- 4.2 In detailing up the project and first phase for implementation officers continue to liaise with a range of organisations including the Highway Authority and the Chamber of Commerce.

## 5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 5.1 The options analysis is supported by the attached plans.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Option 1:</b> Further adjust the proposed design layout by siting the “platform” further into the square and reducing the area of the “carpet” at the eastern end</p>	<p>Works can go ahead</p> <p>Keeps all existing trees in the square as per the previous Cabinet decision.</p>	<p>A compromised layout that restricts space for a better market layout and constrains suitability for staging events</p>
<p><b>Option 2:</b> Authorise removal of tree D and implement the design improvements planned</p>	<p>Works can go ahead to improve the central part of the square consistent with the design presented to Cabinet in December 2009.</p> <p>Therefore gives significant improvements and potentials for multiple and flexible use of the square, for seating and passive recreation and for the market and staging events.</p>	<p>Loss of tree D.</p> <p>Removal of the single tree makes the number of trees on the north and south sides of the square unbalanced and asymmetrical.</p>
<p><b>Option 3:</b> Authorise removal of both tree D and tree H</p>	<p>As for option 2 but removal of tree H at the same time will also -</p> <p>optimise the effectiveness of the new lighting scheme in this corner of the square that presently attracts anti-social activity;</p> <p>open up the opportunity for street café use in this corner of the Square as per the Gillespie’s design</p>	<p>Loss of trees D and H</p>

	ambition  reveal Anchor Lane better  mean there are three trees at both sides of the Square	
<b>Option 4:</b> Undertake a more fundamental review	None	The project now proposed is devised after extensive consultations and review will unravel that consensus achieved to date.  Would make abortive much of the time and cost inputs to date.  Would involve significant time delay and new costs in design and additional consultation for which there is no financing.

### Risks

Option 1 has disadvantages that compromise and restrict how Market Square can be used for different uses. These can be read as risks also. Options 2 and 3 have no risks. Option 4 gives high risk that the council cannot begin to improve the square at a difficult economic time when the improvement should help support and sustain the city centre.

### Summary analysis

Option 1 adheres to the previous Cabinet decision but would mean that the re-design of the square is less accommodating and beneficial for the outdoor market than it should be, is restricting for the staging of events and less advantageous for general pedestrian circulation and enjoyment than it should be. Options 2 and 3 involve tree loss but enable the adjusted project design to be implemented largely as planned and option 3 with significant additional advantages including helping design out anti social behaviours and conferring increased flexibility for the use of this corner of the Square.

### Officer Preferred Option - Option 3

## 6.0 Conclusion

6.1 As part of the Lancaster Square Routes initiative, a first phase of improvements for Market Square is being readied for implementation this autumn. This report sets out options, including a preferred option that will mean works can go ahead and the benefits of implementation be achieved in

time for the Christmas period.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The 2010-2011 Corporate Plan identifies Square Routes under the Economic Regeneration Priority, one of four priorities in the 2011-14 Corporate Plan and Lancaster Square Routes is identified as one of the actions under "Visitor Economy". The indicators for success in implementing the plan include if: the number of visitors to the district is increased and improved; the profile of the district as a visitor destination is improved; the retail offer and built environment in the city centre is improved; the economic impact of festivals and events is improved and an improved future for the district's museums is improved. The project contributes to all these. In addition, its importance is clearly identified in the draft new Lancaster District Cultural Heritage Strategy. The project is identified as the critical project in the strategy's action plan.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Further to the engagement, community safety considerations in particular have informed aspects of these designs as well as access.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The decision has no legal implications.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

£220k of funding is identified in the council's General Fund Capital Programme for 2011/12 and, subject to tenders, the costs of the first phase of works in Market Square will be met from this.

The discrete decision the subject of this report as to whether to remove one or two trees or not is estimated to affect the costs of the first phase by less than 1% of the first phase costs and therefore is well within the tolerance afforded by robust cost estimation and provision for a contingency. There are no other revenue implications for the city council arising from the decision to be made.

#### **OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**Human Resources:**

None

**Information Services:**

None

**Property:**

The trees in Market Square are on adopted highway. The city council are responsible for managing these.

**Open Spaces:**

The project in Market Square is to improve public space and the main civic space in the city.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to make.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet minutes 95(1) 8 December 2009, 5 October 2010 (51).

Regeneration and Policy Service files.

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