

CABINET

Lancaster Square Routes 25 June 2013

Report of Head of Regeneration and Planning

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To decide on the centrepiece for Market Square to be constructed as part of the works approved in May 2013 to complete improvements to the Square in 2014				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member	
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision			24 May 2013	
This report is public.				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR HANSON

That Cabinet:

- (1) Consider the options for a centrepiece and associated artwork as set out in the report, and determine which centrepiece it wishes to proceed with and the theme that the embodied artwork should take; and
- (2) Authorise the Head of Regeneration and Planning to take all necessary actions to procure and install the centrepiece and artwork.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its last meeting Cabinet approved works to improve Market Square but deferred a decision on what the centrepiece to the square should be. This report is to inform members in making such a decision.
- 1.2 The report contains the further information requested by Cabinet on costs and possible cheaper options for the centrepiece. All the information on the centrepiece reported in May is otherwise included in Appendix 1.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 As reported in May officers present two options considered consistent with the concept design previously agreed by cabinet. It should be noted that officers do not include a "do nothing" option as this would be inconsistent with previous authorisations.

- 2.2 The first option is for a centrepiece in the form of one elevated rectilinear structure, the second in two structures.
- 2.3 The May report detailed that for both options the structures are to be constructed with a mass concrete core and finished in a mix of granites. The report omitted to say that the finishes might also include other natural stone along with granites, but of a similar quality and cost. Slip risk will be a consideration in materials selection and use.
- 2.4 As reported, officers propose that an artist be commissioned to detail the form and finish and embody artwork. The Square Routes visions for Market Square propose the centrepiece as a key opportunity for interpretation to add to the city's distinctiveness. Officers made some suggestions as to any theme artwork might take and members are asked to direct as to this.
- 2.5 The May report identified the estimated build cost of both options at some £118k. Officers consider that the options presented reasonably balance quality and capital and revenue (ongoing maintenance) cost considerations. However, should members want officers to make cost savings then three routes are available: savings on materials, artwork or lighting. Significant savings will however inevitably diminish the result achieved.
- 2.6 For example, cheaper materials might be used but the result would be inferior - concrete and artificial stones are less pleasing and less durable and wood much less durable. Any compromises in durability will ultimately result in an increase in future maintenance costs. Officers consider granites and natural stones to be the best available finishing materials in visual terms, in strength and durability and in the ability this material affords to embody inscribed artwork.
- 2.7 Should members want officers to pursue making significant savings this will require further work before officers are able to properly report on the costs and implications.
- 2.8 However, the need for such further work would inevitably impact adversely on officers preparations otherwise for the public realm works as a whole and increase risk of the council not being able to deliver the works within the period required to meet the ERDF funding requirements.
- 2.9 Members should further note that the net cost saving to the council of any savings made would be approximately 50% of the total saved given that the works are to be match funded 50% by ERDF i.e. a £10 k cost saving achieved would be £5 k net saving for the council.
- 2.10 An additional consideration is that the ERDF funding is available on the basis the council will deliver a centrepiece to a certain quality i.e. fitting to the approved design concept. Should the council wish to depart from this it will require officers to agree the variation with the Department for Communities and Local Government. This could take some time and the outcome cannot be certain.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 As reported in May.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 Both options presented fit to the concept design previously consulted on and approved. Both will add much seating capacity to the square, effectively doubling that planned elsewhere on the new benches. The options offer a similar capacity of seating, giving people opportunities to sit in a variety of arrangements.
- 4.2 Both options for a centrepiece are designed to fit to an improved layout of the Charter Market in the square and both take up much less space than did the arrangement of the former fountain in association with the benches around.
- 4.3 As regards the potentials for using the centrepiece as a stage for performance both options offer this but there are differences. These and all other relative differences between the two options are considered further in the table below.

Option 1	The centrepiece to Market Square comprising a single elevated structure (as per the Option 1 drawings in Appendix 1).
Advantages	<p>Option is wholly consistent with the agreed concept design for Market Square, with the first phase completed last year.</p> <p>This option is consistent with the concept designs which went through extensive public and stakeholder consultation at the inception of Lancaster Square Routes.</p> <p>Centrepiece is multi-purpose as it can be used as seating and as staging for performances and fits well with other uses of the square including the Charter Market.</p> <p>Builds in the ability to use the structure for a wide range of performances and is readily useable without additional interventions. The dimensions are proportional to the setting and the potential size of the audience.</p> <p>Builds in steps to meet building regulation requirements for staged performances.</p> <p>From a practical perspective it is much easier (eg no need for setting up, storage, transportation)</p>
Disadvantages	<p>It is more obstructive to pedestrian movement through the very centre of the square than option 2.</p> <p>Will not offer a sufficient depth of stage for certain larger bands.</p>
Risks	<p>That the centrepiece does not find favour with people. This is a risk with any public design installation and no more so here in the very centre of the city. The agreed concept design follows extensive consultation, which elicited a generally positive response. The extensive design and community engagement work informing the proposal suggests the square does need a fitting and multi-purpose centrepiece.</p>

<p>Option 2</p>	<p>The centrepiece to Market Square comprising twin elevated structures (as per the Option 2 drawings in Appendix 1) and also including for the council investing in demountable units that inserted between the two permanent structures would make it possible to provide for a full stage area equivalent to that offered in the option 1 proposal.</p>
<p>Advantages</p>	<p>Is broadly consistent with the agreed concept design for Market Square.</p> <p>Centrepiece is multi-purpose, as seating and as a space for performance and fits well to other uses to be made of the square including for the Charter Market.</p> <p>In the linear length of seating made available is comparable with that proposed in option 1.</p> <p>Gives better permeability for pedestrians through the very centre of the square than option 1.</p> <p>A stage area the same as that provided in the option 1 proposal is achievable via use of demountable units.</p> <p>Even without such units the structures will be an elevated facility that could be utilised for impromptu performances and street theatre.</p>
<p>Disadvantages</p>	<p>Is a variant on and to some extent does depart on the agreed concept design for Market Square and which went through extensive public and stakeholder consultation at the inception of Lancaster Square Routes.</p> <p>This option will require officers to seek a discrete variation from DCLG in the ERDF investment concerning the form of the centrepiece – see risks below.</p> <p>Surface treatments for the 3.7m by 6.4 metre ‘gap’ between the two structures will need to be designed to readily accommodate the insertion of demountable units whilst not permitting vehicles to access this area.</p> <p>The option is requiring of additional officer time involved in designing the demountable units – compared to option 1.</p> <p>The fact that to make available a full stage area will require the demountable units to be installed when needed for performances. Therefore, this option would require the council to plan and manage a system for making these available and this means additional officer time and ongoing costs compared to option 1.</p> <p>There would be many practical aspects to consider in devising such a management system including storage arrangements and methods for transportation, placement, training of staff for placement and dismantling. Insurance. There would be a</p>

	<p>promotional and marketing aspect to communicate the availability of the facility. There would also be several financial considerations for the council to consider including whether the council would want management of such a system to be at no revenue cost to it i.e. requiring it to be self financing through charging or whether the council is prepared to meet some or all of the revenue costs. Any charging system and the levels of charging would need to be devised in the context of the council's Fees and Charging policy. Further information on all these considerations for option 2 will be provided prior to the meeting.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	<p>The risk of not securing the specific variation required in the ERDF investment offer is considered very low.</p> <p>The risk that the centrepiece does not find favour with many people is as per option 1.</p> <p>A risk additional to option 1 is that the investment in demountable staging units proves not to give best value if either the city council and its partners fail to drive and market use of the square for performance and / or demand to utilise staging in ways requiring this proves limited. In this latter regard a particular risk of this option is that should the council decide to charge for making available the demountable units then it is inevitable that such charging will impact on take up of the facility by third parties - albeit the extent to which such take up would be impacted cannot at this stage be quantified.</p>

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Both options deliver improvements consistent with corporate policy and makes full and best use of available finance including European funding.
- 5.2 Option 1 is the better for making more use of the square for performances and events as the structure is readily useable without recourse to using demountable units as per option 2 and the risk that any charging system will deter take up. Option 1 is much more practical from a logistical and ongoing perspective as it does not require storage, transport, staff to set up etc
- 5.3 Option 2 is the better in terms of facilitating pedestrian movement through the very centre of the square. However, it does present practical problems and increased ongoing costs when events are planned
- 5.4 In the May 2013 report officers considered that both options presented for the centrepiece would prove fitting and beneficial and accordingly a preferred option was not suggested.
- 5.5 To try to give a little further guidance on this officers consider that any balance of advantage between the options really comes down to how committed the council is to growing use of Market Square as a venue for performances and events. Should the council be strongly committed to this then officers advise that option 1 should be preferred as this is much the more straightforward option is this regard involving providing a structure readily useable for most types of performance and thereby the more likely to facilitate use for performance.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This report details on the decision required concerning a centrepiece for market Square as part of the next phase of work to implement Lancaster Square Routes.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

As per the report in May 2013.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

As per the report in May 2013.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments to make.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report over and above those reported in May 2013 but should members approve option 2 a report will be required in due course as to a system for managing and charging for making the demountable units available.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

As per the report in May 2013.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to make.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and her comments incorporated into the report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Appendix 1.

Relevant extracts from the May 2013 report to Cabinet (notation as per the report)

- 6.2 Cabinet subsequently approved (Minute 95 8 December 2009) a design concept for a centrepiece to a rectilinear footprint, first and foremost a sought after place to sit (as was the former fountain) and secondary to this a place for performance.
- 6.3 This design concept was closely informed by operational considerations: that the centrepiece must fit to what is otherwise required for an efficient and attractive layout of stalls on market days and to other essential operational requirements including for traffic movements by emergency and refuse vehicles.
- 6.4 A centrepiece that seats many people will help make the central part of the Square active particularly when there is no market in operation - which is much of the time.. This is to help sustain the Square as the heartbeat of city life and a place that people are drawn to, enjoy spending time in and feel safe and secure. The design concept is that the opportunity to sit should be in a form alternative to the more traditional seating otherwise available at the sides of the Square.
- 6.5 In addition, the centrepiece can be a facility for a wide range of performance, small and large, informal through to very formal - impromptu stand up, street theatre, bands, choral events and music and formal staged theatrical productions.
- 6.6 The works to Market Square completed last year removed the former fountain, formed the rectilinear footprint for a centrepiece with a temporary surface and installed electrical and water connections.

Centrepiece to Market Square – detailed structural design

- 6.7 Two options are presented for the centrepiece, both in hard wearing granite with mass concrete as the hidden core. These:
- fit to the rectilinear footprint identified for the structure as part of the works completed last year,
 - sit well otherwise within its surroundings and in particular in relation to the City Museum,
 - are quite simple in form and unfussy in appearance,
 - effectively double the seating capacity otherwise available to the sides of the Square and enable people to congregate and sit in a relaxed and informal manner in a choice of facing directions and on its top surface,
 - give ready access to the elevated surface.
- 6.8 The structure would be finished in a mix of granites. A wide range are available for use affording much scope for colour variation and in texture including for rough and polished surfaces. This to complement the granite and stone used in the first phase of surfacing works.
- 6.9 The mix of granites is to be attractive and the appearance further made pleasing and interesting with embodied artwork.
- 6.10 The artwork should be to a consistent theme. Members are asked to

consider what this should be, mindful that officers' consider the theme should be appropriate to the city as a whole. Officers' suggestions are:

- Social heritage, the people, activities, work, industry and transport that shaped the city.
- Civic heritage: Market Square as the centre of the county town of Lancashire.
- Lore and Legends.
- A timeline of the city's history.
- A modern take – art that looks forward, not back.