

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
24 MAY 2015**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

11

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: PROPOSED PEDESTRIANISATION OF BRAND STREET

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform members regarding the request for a report on the pedestrianisation of Brand Street and part of the High Street.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 This Information note is at the request of minute 94 of 12 January 2016 Hitchin Committee meeting.

- 2.2 Members are advised that an email was sent to the Chair and Vice Chair of Hitchin Committee on 2 February 2016 following consultation with the Executive Members for Transport and the Local Plan. The email informed members that Officers would not be able to present a report to Hitchin Committee in March. This was based on current work priorities and set out the following points:

2.2.1 The concept of pedestrianising Brand Street, given the recent changes facing Hitchin with the Town Hall and Bancroft Gardens projects etc., is a large project and is best served initially by taking a more overall strategic view. This, it is suggested, would be best channelled through a review of the Hitchin Town Centre Strategy following the submission of the Local Plan. The Local Plan will include policies that seek to promote the vitality and viability of our town centres and will make reference to reviewing our town centre strategies in light of changing consumer and visitor patterns and usage.

2.2.2 At the outset the proposal to pedestrianise Brand Street will require Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) input in terms of assessing the traffic impact on the rest of the town centre and surrounding roads.

2.2.3 Funding for the pedestrianisation project is envisaged to be through an investment bid through a future budget process. Initial funding will be required for a feasibility study and traffic assessments, either through an investment bid or from County Councillor Locality Budgets.

- 2.3 As Members will be aware the Local Plan is a key top priority for the Council and the Strategic Planning Team are heavily involved in leading the preparation of the Plan, and therefore at this point in time do not have the capacity to liaise with HCC on traffic impact assessments or undertake a feasibility study until the Local Plan is adopted and we are able to put resources to the review of the town centre strategies. The use of consultants could be considered supervised by officers to undertake early initial traffic assessments. Currently there is no funding for this work, however, County Councillors may wish to consider funding this work from their Locality Budgets, and could approach HCC officers to undertake this work.
- 2.4 This information note has been discussed with both the Transport and Local Plan Executive Members who are both of the view that the Local Plan is high level strategic work which must be undertaken and progressed, and they do not see the situation changing in the foreseeable future with regard officer capacity.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Should Hitchin Committee wish to pursue the option of initial traffic assessments and/or a feasibility study to assess the impact of the pedestrianisation of Brand Street and part of the High Street it is suggest that this is channelled through the relevant County Councillors Locality Budgets or to approach appropriate senior officers at HCC to investigate the possibility of carrying out an initial feasibility study on the likely transport impacts, as such work would be necessary before progressing with and consulting on any Traffic Regulation Orders to stop up the highway in part or full.

4. APPENDICES

- 4.1 None

5. CONTACT OFFICERS

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