

**TITLE: ROYSTON CROSS DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

REPORT OF CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLANNING &amp; ENTERPRISE MANAGER

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval for public consultation on the draft Royston Cross Development Brief, which contains options for potential future development / enhancement. The draft Development Brief is attached as Appendix 1 to this Report.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Royston Cross is identified in the Royston Town Centre Strategy as an opportunity area (RTC2). It is also identified in the Town Centre Action Plan as a potential project to be developed in accordance with the Royston Urban Transport Plan (UTP).
- 3.2 The Royston UTP was published earlier this year and has subsequently informed the contents of the Brief. Scheme Reference “A4” from the UTP is particularly reflected in the enhancement / public realm option.

**4. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF DETAILS**

- 4.1 There are three options contained in the Brief:
- Firstly, whether or not formal development should take place on the northern area of the Cross allowing a continuous frontage along Melbourn Street, respecting the historic character of the surrounding buildings.
  - Secondly, if environmental and public realm enhancements are appropriate, which enhancements could be taken forward and how far should they go to increase pedestrian importance in the area; and
  - Thirdly, do nothing and leave the Cross as it currently is.
- 4.2 The options for environmental / public realm enhancements and formal built development could occur in combination, but the enhancement works can also be viewed as a fallback position from the major development option should the latter option not be found to be pursued for viability or other reasons in the future.
- 4.3 Within the enhancement option, there are variations of a similar theme relating to the junction of Melbourne Street into Lower King Street and to what extent vehicular movement should be restricted.

- 4.4 Consultation on the draft Brief will begin in November, allowing sufficient time between the current consultation on the Design of Fish Hill to prevent confusion and consultation fatigue.
- 4.5 Following consultation on the Brief a preferred option will be established and a final version will be brought back to Royston Committee for Adoption in January 2011.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Terms of reference for Royston and District Area Committee confirm that it has a power to act as a forum for discussion on matters of local interest and has the power to consider and report to Council on any matter affecting its area.
- 5.4 There will be legal issues to address regarding the acquisition and disposal of assets in terms of the Council's land ownership requirements.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The council's estates team have indicated that in the current economic climate formal built development is not commercially viable. This is not to say that it will not be in the future but as the northern area of open space on the Cross is a Council asset, it's future development will be particularly relevant. If the Council wished to pursue the enhancement option then funding would have to be sought from the Royston Urban Transport Plan, S106 funding and/or other sources of grant funding.
- 6.2 Funding the preparation of the Development Brief and consultation costs will be covered within current service area budgets. There are no direct risks associated with this project other than some reputational risk in not meeting the aspirations of the Royston Town Centre Strategy Action Plan.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The officer time involved in progressing the Development Brief is identified as part of the Council's Business Planning Process for Strategic Planning & Enterprise, and other relevant Service action plans.
- 7.2 There are no equalities implications associated with the progression of the Brief. All efforts will be made to meet the Council's equalities plan and Statement of Community Involvement when consulting with the local community.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 Following committee approval consultation on the draft Development Brief will occur with key stakeholders and the general public to gain consensus on a preferred option for the Royston Cross Area.
- 8.2 Once a preferred option has been established, the Development Brief will be redrafted and approval for adoption will be sought at the January meeting of Royston Committee for referral to Cabinet to formally adopt the Brief as Council Approved Guidance.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the Royston & District Committee agree the Development Brief in Appendix 1 for public consultation

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To enable the council to consult the general public on potential options for the Royston Cross Development Brief, delivering a project as set out in the Royston Action Plan and in accordance with the adopted Royston Town Centre Strategy SPD.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 A number of alternatives are being considered as part of the Brief.

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Draft Royston Cross Development Brief (September 2010)

## **13. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 13.1 Louise Symes, Projects Manager, ext. 4359
- 13.3 David Hill, Planning Officer, ext. 4453
- 13.4 Simon Young, Transport Policy Officer, ext. 4846

## **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1 Adopted Royston Town Centre Strategy: SPD (June 2008), prepared by BDP
- 14.2 Royston Town Centre Strategy Action Plan (June 2009)
- 14.3 Royston Urban Transport Plan (April 2010) Prepared by TPI for Hertfordshire Highways