

UPDATE ON FISH HILL SQUARE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME: INFORMATION NOTE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the project since the previous report in June 2011.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Royston Town Centre Strategy, adopted in June 2008, sets out an Action Plan which requires the preparation and delivery of an enhancement scheme for Fish Hill Square. The aim of the Strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework to promote integrated development and enhancement of Royston town centre over the next 10 to 15 years that will seek to benefit its future economic viability and vitality while emphasising its historic character and local identity as a market town.
- 2.2 The funding for the enhancements works is from Growth Area Funding (GAF). A contribution was made from HCC towards funding the drainage works. Building Design Partnership (BDP) were appointed in May 2010 to prepare design proposals for the Fish Hill Square enhancement scheme and to supervise the implementation of the works on site. Maylim Limited were the successful contractors appointed in May 2011 to undertake the enhancement works on site.
- 2.3 There has been a considerable amount of public consultation during the production of the Town Centre Strategy and on the design options for the enhancement of the Square. Press releases have appeared in the Royston Crow and the Royston Weekly News at key milestones through the project. There have been a series of joint briefing sessions with Local District Councillors and the Royston Town Council as a means of keeping everyone informed. The town centre manager, local businesses and local residents have also been kept informed through letter drops, meetings and via the Council's website.

3. PROJECT UPDATE**Enhancement works**

- 3.1 Maylim started works on site on Monday 4th July 2011. Their site compound was set up in Priory car park on Fish Hill. Their first task was to excavate for the attenuation tank required to ameliorate the potential for flooding in Fish Hill Square. A Written Scheme for Investigation (WRI) was carried out by NHDC's Archaeologist to ascertain whether there was anything of archaeological importance. The investigation only discovered a medieval post hole as this location had previously been the site of a row of cottages with cellars and the Fire Station.

- 3.2 The Council's website was updated through the construction works. Information on the phasing of the works was put up in Royston Library. The contractor liaised directly with those businesses and residents effected by any day to day operations through various leaflet drops and necessary meetings to keep people informed about the contractor's works programme throughout the construction period. The intention was to minimise disruption to the functioning of the town centre during the construction phase.
- 3.3 NHDC liaised closely with HCC and Herts Highways during the works to ensure that the drainage, lighting and highways works were carried out efficiently.
- 3.4 Officers and their Designers are pleased with Maylim's high standard of workmanship and on site management which has resulted in the scheme being successfully completed in accordance with the agreed design. The works were completed on time on 23rd September 2011 and within budget

Name of Square

- 3.5 In May 2011 a poll was carried out on NHDC website and in Outlook to find the new name for the Square. The winning name was 'Fish Hill Square' and this name is etched into the new granite benches in the Square.

Sculpture

- 3.6 A competition was held in the Meridian School in Royston to design a sculpture for the square. The winning design was by Vicki Chapman. The sculpture was erected in late September prior to the end of the works. There is a plaque with Vicki's name next to the erected sculpture. There was an official opening event for the sculpture.

Trees

- 3.7 Tree pits for the six trees were excavated during the main contract works. The trees were planted at the beginning of November to coincide with the planting season. The tree pits will need time to settle before a resin bonded seal is installed in the new year.

Traffic Regulation Orders

- 3.8 No objections were received to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) advertised in September. These were advertised via a public notice in the Royston Crow, notices being displayed on site and on the Council's website. Key organisations, the taxi operators, local businesses and residents along Fish Hill and Market Hill received letters informing them about the proposed TROs. The TROs were sealed and published on 26th October 2011 and came into operation on 18th November 2011. The only TRO that is yet to be published is the Order relating to the pay and display parking bays along the north-eastern side of Market Hill, outside Royston Surgery as the Council is waiting on the completion of the procurement process for acquiring new parking ticket machines to replace the existing ones across the District.

Fish Hill Square opening event

- 3.9 On Saturday 19th November 2011 an event was held to mark the opening of the new Square. This was an opportunity for the Council to thank those local businesses and residents who have weathered the disruption during the period of the works. It is hoped that the new Square will contribute to the vitality of the town centre and provide opportunities for different activities to take place within the Square that will encourage more visitors into the town.

Next Stage

- 3.10 A Stage 3 Safety Audit is to be carried out over the next few weeks and Officers will inform Members of the findings. The scheme is currently in the 12 month defect period during which any problems will be rectified. The six trees are covered by a 24 month maintenance clause in the contract, i.e. until November 2013.

- 3.11 Officers are in discussion with the Town Centre Manager and Hertfordshire Highways over licensing arrangements for various types of activities that may be carried out on the Square. The whole of Fish Hill Square is Highway Land and is therefore subject to any regulations set out by the Highway Authority.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 That Royston and District Committee note the content of this information note.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS

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