

Southampton Road Environmental Improvements

Notes of Steering Group Meeting held on 29th April 2009

Present: Cllr S Rippon-Swaine (Chairman) - NFDC & RTC
Cllr C Treleaven – NFDC
Cllr J Heron – NFDC & RTC
Cllr L C Ford – NFDC & RTC
Cllr N Clarke – HCC & RTC
Cllr N J Chard - RTC
Cllr Mrs B Woodfield – RTC and Chamber of Trade
Christianne Strubbe - HCC
Nick Hunt – NFDC
Bob Burns – NFDC
Graham Toms - NFDC
Jo Stannard - RTC

Apologies: Henry Barker – Student Advisor

1. Notes of last meeting

The notes of the Steering Group meeting held on 11th February 2009 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

There were none.

3. Financial Update

HCC –it was confirmed that the £100,000 in the 2008/09 budget had been rolled forward to 2009/10. No further funding will be available in 2009/10. £20,000 has been confirmed for feasibility studies and is in the process of being spent.

Developers' Contributions (NFDC) – it is intended to allocate the whole £100,000 Waitrose contribution to this scheme, subject to Member approval. A draft agreement is being drawn up with regard to the release of funds from NFDC to HCC.

RTC - £5,000 has been included in the 2009/10 budget.

Hampshire Highways – there is no funding available in 2009/10. However, there is a possibility that up to £25,000 may be available in 2010/11.

4. Design Concept

CS presented the proposed design for shared space in the northern part of the street, and pavement widening at the southern end near Friday's Cross. This proposal would improve the poor quality approaches from The Close and Meeting House Lane and the view from Mansfield Road, and improve the environment for shoppers and visitors.

The group discussed the proposal in detail and the following comments were made:

Surface treatment – ochre blockwork would be used for the majority of the surfacing. This would be similar in appearance to the Market Place and High Street and would therefore provide continuity. A different colour would be used to define the ‘square’.

Shared space – Cllr Heron was concerned that the volume of traffic using this part of Southampton Road was too high for a shared space, and that this could increase if the West Street exit to the A31 is closed. It was noted that there had been similar concerns in New Street, Lymington. However, the results there had been better than expected. The proposed bollards and change of surface treatment would serve to slow vehicles down and HCC’s safety team had confirmed the proposals were acceptable.

One way – it was noted that it was no longer proposed to introduce a one-way traffic order as this would conflict with the proposed strategic cycle route, which would require two-way movement for cyclists. There would be no need to introduce a separate cycle lane.

Speed limit – there was a suggestion to reduce the speed limit to 20mph. However, it was noted that when this has been trialled in Quomp it had only reduced speeds by 1 or 2mph and it would not be enforced by the Police. A speed limit reduction would also add to sign clutter. It was agreed not to reduce the speed limit, but to slow traffic using physical constraints instead.

Trees – Cllr Clarke was not in favour of including trees in the scheme as Southampton Road was a night time route out of town and there was a record of petty vandalism along the route. Other councillors did not share these concerns and supported the inclusion of trees. Cllr Woodfield hoped that the trees could be used for Christmas lights. It was noted that the position of the trees would be dependent on the location of underground services. There is a need to ensure that trees do not obstruct drivers’ site lines or CCTV camera coverage.

Entrance from Meeting House Lane – there is a need to improve the entrance to Southampton Road from the main car park and to minimise the impact of existing physical barriers, such as the taxi rank and shelter, bus shelters and sub station. CS explained that it was proposed to erect new railings around the sub station, relocate the noticeboard and to widen the footway and provide new seating to create a more attractive social space. It was suggested that further work could be done to direct pedestrians into the town via this route, such as using different surface treatments to highlight walking routes, which would complement new pedestrian signing being proposed by the Signage Project Group. It was also suggested that plaques could be embedded into the walkway to mark the route – a scheme was currently being proposed in Brockenhurst and Lymington to guide pedestrians from the stations to the town centres, with schools designing the markers. It was agreed that additional funds should be secured for any follow up work and that it should not be funded from the allocation for this scheme.

Cycle parking – it was felt important that the Community Safety Partnership be consulted on the location of the cycle parking.

Power supply – the group was supportive of a hidden power supply being installed for use at events.

The Steering Group confirmed general support for the proposals presented, and their agreement to proceed to public consultation on this basis.

5. Exhibition

It was noted that the public exhibition would be held in a vacant shop unit adjacent to the site where improvements were proposed (33A Southampton Road – previously Chinese Herbs and Acupuncture) on Wednesday 13th May between 10am and 8pm and Saturday 16th May between 10am and 1pm. An unmanned exhibition would then be displayed at the Library from 19th to 28th May, with comments forms available for completion. The deadline for comments to be received would be 1st June.

Volunteers were required to help man the exhibition. Jo will coordinate the rota.

Copies of the exhibition boards and comments form would be displayed on all three councils' websites. A press release had been issued and information would be included in the Ringwood and Fordingbridge News.

The group reviewed, amended and agreed the proposed exhibition boards.

It was agreed to inform the public that it was proposed to remove the pedestrian crossing in any future extension of the scheme and to seek comments on this basis.

It was requested that there should be a drawing of the whole scheme available at the exhibition to show how Phase 1 could fit in with plans for the remainder of the road should funding become available. CS agreed to consider and discuss this with colleagues, but expressed concerns regarding raising unrealistic expectations.

***Post meeting note** – Wording on the exhibition panel of design vision sketch and other proposals wording will be amended to allow public views to be sought on the principle of removal of the zebra crossing and extension of the shared space at a future date. This will open the way for allocation of any further developer contributions. It is felt advisable that testing of the current proposals and more detailed work is necessary before presentation of the current plan, which does imply a more finished level of detail than has actually been achieved.*

6. Timetable

It was expected that construction would begin in the first quarter of 2010.

7. Any Other Business

Although there are currently only funds available to improve part of the road, councillors were keen that the scheme for the whole road should be formally approved. This would have the benefit of facilitating the process of securing and using future developers' contributions and therefore the deliverability of the remainder of the scheme.

8. Date of Next Meeting

10am, Tuesday 4th August 2009 – to discuss the outcome of the public consultation.