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Summary

This report concerns the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme proposal for Cleobury Mortimer. The proposed scheme comprises environmental and pedestrian enhancements, including new footway paving and a zebra crossing facility.

The scheme would be part funded by Advantage West Midlands as a Market Town Initiative scheme.

The scheme has been subject to extensive consultation with local stakeholders. This cumulated in a final consultation on two options during the summer 2007. There is very high level of local support for the scheme; however there has been some opposition to the location of the zebra crossing facility, primarily from traders whose premises are located in the immediate vicinity of the proposed crossing.

SCC's total contribution towards construction and design would be £265,000. AWM will contribute a further £265,000 towards the highways element of the scheme.

Recommendation

Approve construction of the 'Option B' scheme

Background

1. The proposed Cleobury Mortimer High Street Enhancement Scheme has been developed over 3 years and has been subject to extensive public consultation.
2. The initial impetus for the scheme was an approach by the local 'Cleobury Country Partnership' (developed as a response to the AWM Market Towns Initiative). They asked SCC to help then deliver some key aims of the local strategic plan, including tackling traffic issues, improving pedestrian safety and improving the appearance of the commercial heart of the town.
3. Initial development of the scheme was steered by a local 'traffic and transport' sub group of the Cleobury Country Partnership. The group included representatives of the Parish, District and County Council, Chamber of Trade and Local Residents.

4. The scheme aims to achieve a balance between the following objectives:
 - Improving the appearance of the town
 - Assisting pedestrian movements
 - Minimising impacts on on-street parking
 - Improving traffic flow
 - Assisting local businesses and providing the conditions for new businesses to set up or to locate to the town

5. The proposed scheme comprises the following features:
 - A new zebra crossing facility
 - Footway reconstruction, new 'yorkstone' paving and new kerbing
 - Some formalisation of on-street parking areas
 - Small scale improvements to street furniture
 - Traffic signage improvements, including better car park signage
 - Provision of bus boarders
 - 20mph speed limit in the central area
 - 2 lay-by local information points on the approaches to the town (to follow as a later phase)

The highway improvements would be also be complimented by a shop front improvement grant scheme and the introduction of a CCTV scheme for the town - both fully funded by AWM and local contributions.

6. It is proposed that further revisions to on-street parking are undertaken once a new additional off-street car park planned by SSDC is in place (land in SSDC ownership).

Consultation

7. Five stages of public consultation have been carried out during development of the proposed scheme. The phases of public consultation undertaken, and an outline of the results are provided below. Further details are provided in Appendix A:
 - a. **Initial Household Survey-** This was undertaken in 2004 to understand local residents and businesses transport and traffic concerns and aspirations. The survey had a good level of response with 344 out of 1,000 households responding. The most significant improvements requested were more parking (car park), restrictions on lorries and pedestrian improvements. Three quarters of respondents (73%) supported the need to improve conditions for pedestrians. The call for better pedestrian facilities and a pedestrian crossing was taken forward through the enhancement scheme design brief.
 - b. **Scheme Options-** Three scheme options were developed and presented at a public meeting to which traders were invited and at a Public Exhibition in February 2006. Some 152 people attended this event and provided detailed feedback on the options presented. There was no clear preference for any of the three options presented;

therefore the most popular elements of each option were taken forward and incorporated into a single 'preferred option'. This included the proposal of a pedestrian crossing near to the centre of the town which 55% of respondents supported and 25% objected to.

- c. **Preferred option consultation-** The 'preferred option' was presented at a further public exhibition in September 2006, attended by 155 people. 70% of people responding to this consultation supported the proposed scheme. However, some objections were highlighted, particularly from local traders. The objections were around the loss of parking and loading space near to their properties, due to the proposed zebra crossing facility. Minor modifications were subsequently made to the design to minimise the loss of parking and loading space.
- d. **Proposal leaflet 2006-** A leaflet setting out a revised scheme proposal was distributed to every household in Cleobury in December 2006. A reply slip was included to allow people to express their view of whether they supported the overall proposal or not. The response rate was very low with only 38 responses, 15 (39%) against the proposal and 23(61%) supporting the proposal. Locally it was felt that the low level of response was due to the understanding by local people that they had already had their say and that the scheme was to go ahead.
- e. **Final consultation summer 2007-** Due to the low response rate on the household leaflet drop and the vocal objections from local traders, the scheme was reviewed and two final options developed:
 - Option A - A scheme with the zebra crossing in an alternative location.
 - Option B - The zebra crossing in the original location but with minor modifications to further reduce the reduction in parking and loading space.

In July 2007 these two proposals were subject to a final public consultation. A newsletter with a feedback form and prepaid return envelope were delivered to every household in the town. Local press and posters were also used to notify residents of the town and also the outlying rural areas of the Cleobury Mortimer parish. People living in these outlying areas were able to request a newsletter and feedback form. In total around 1,000 newsletters were circulated.

The detailed results of the final consultation are provided in Appendix A4. The vast majority of people responding to the final consultation supported a scheme going ahead. Overall 90% of all those people responding, (45% of the whole population of the town) supported one or both of the options presented.

Considering the two options (which offered different locations for the zebra crossing), the results show that both options were well supported:-

- 71% of respondents (803 people) supported option A (22% or 256 people objected to option B)

- 67% of respondents (765 people) supported option B (18% or 209 people objected to option A)

Option A had a slightly higher overall level of support (38 more people supported it) and slightly more people objected to option B than option A (47 people).

However these figures include the 48% of respondents (547 people) who said they would be happy with either option. Of these people 311 preferred option B and 177 preferred option A.

Considering the preferences of people who would be happy with either scheme:

- 46% of respondents (529 people) expressed a preference for, or only supported option B.
- 38% of respondents (433 people) expressed a preference for, or only supported option A.

7. Traders Objections: In addition to the questionnaire responses. Five traders whose business are on High Street/Church Street in the vicinity of the proposed zebra crossing under Option B have written at various stages during the consultation to express their strong objection to the crossing. Their objections primarily relate to the loss of road space for deliveries and loss of on street parking spaces for customers outside of their shops. Owners of the shops in the vicinity of the crossing under option A have been consulted on their views regarding locating the crossing near to their premises. Two of the five effected traders did not consider it a problem, three did. One of these shops has since changed hands, the views of the new florist shop owner are unknown. Further details are provided in Appendix B.
8. Parish Council Response-The Parish Council initially raised concerns over the location of the proposed zebra crossing, in terms of its impact on local business. In September 2007, having received the results of the final consultation, the Parish council voted in favour of the resolution:- *"This Council fully supports the proposed Street Enhancement Scheme in its entirety and will accept the will of the Parishioners, in so far as the location of the pedestrian crossing is concerned."*
9. The bus company have expressed the view that would be happy with the bus border arrangement, as they have difficulties pulling into existing bus stops because of parked vehicles.
10. The Police have not raised any insurmountable concerns. They have some concern over the enforceability of the zig- zag lines across The Talbot lay-by area, this will need to be taken into account in the final Safety Audit. They have also suggested that we consider providing designated loading bays near to the larger shops. The scheme would permit such measures to be provided at a later date if deemed necessary. They are supportive of the 20mph zone where we can demonstrate this is self enforcing; speeds in the town centre are already low.

Response to objections and comments

11. The views expressed at all stages of consultation have been taken on board in developing and modifying the scheme design. The majority of people responding to each round of consultation have expressed a desire for a formal pedestrian crossing facility in the centre of the town.
12. The design of the proposed scheme provides a pedestrian crossing facility along a key desire line, with the minimum loss of parking possible.
13. The overall impact on on-street parking in the central shopping area is minimal. Both options would result in a net loss of only 3 parking spaces out of the existing 34 that are available.
14. Loading for all premises adjacent to the crossing has been considered and with the revised designs there is on-street parking within a short distance of all shop entrances.
15. Members of the Parish Council have expressed concerns over the 'reduction in the width' of the road. The width of the road at the crossing facility would be 6.5m- this is wider than the current effective road width at this location when two vehicles are parked either side of the road (5.4m).

Preferred Option

16. The results of the final consultation show that the vast majority of people (90%) support a scheme going ahead. Around half of people were happy with either option, but more of these people would prefer option B. However there were also slightly more people who objected to this option.
17. The different ways of interpreting the consultation results makes it difficult to make a judgement on the most popular scheme based solely on these statistics.
18. There are a number of issues to be considered when making a judgement about what scheme to take forward. These are summarised below:

Option A

- The second choice in terms of crossing location as it is not on the most popular desire line. However there are still a large number of crossing movements at this location (75% of the number of crossing movements at Option B location).
- Overall this crossing location would have slightly less impact on traders. This location would satisfy the traders who have objected most vocally and it would have slightly less impact on the businesses which have large delivery vehicles (Spar and Londis). However there would still be some objections from business in the vicinity of this crossing location.
- Putting a crossing in this location would not provide a solution to the very narrow effective road width (5.4m) on the bend by Browns Bakery Corner. If option A was progressed there may need to consider further restrictions to on-street parking at this location in the future.
- This option does not provide the benefit of bus boarders to improve access for bus passengers
- Consultation showed that overall slightly more people supported this scheme, but when the preferences of those who would support either were taken into account it was the less popular option.

Option B

- The option provides the best crossing location, in terms of being the location where the highest numbers of people currently cross the road.
- There is a high level of objection from the shops owners in the vicinity of the crossing location. However, the design has been modified to ensure that delivery vehicles would be able to park within a short distance of the shop entrances.
- If a crossing wasn't placed here then parking restrictions would probably need to be put in place in future anyway as the effective road width is very narrow with parking (5.4m).
- This option provides the benefit of bus boarders to improve access for bus passengers
- Consultation showed that overall slightly less people supported this scheme (and more objected to it), but when the preferences of those who would support either were taken into account it was the more popular option.

19. In summary, option B provides a slightly better option from a technical point of view. The crossing is in the best location for pedestrians; it provides benefits to improving the road width and includes the introduction of bus boarders.. However, there are slightly stronger objections to the crossing at this location particularly from traders. These objections need to be balanced against the fact that the slight overall preference of the public was for Option B.

20. Although the decision is difficult, on balance it is recommended that the County Council proceed with Option B.

Scheme costs and funding

21. A competitive tender process has been completed for the construction works. Based on the preferred (and lowest) tender price the total design and construction costs for the highway scheme are £530,000.

22. The scheme is to be part-funded by AWM through their Market Town Initiative.

23. The total contribution from SCC will be £265,000. Some of this has already been spent in previous years on design work. A further £185,000 will be required in 2008/09. This funding is identified in the Provisional Environmental Quality and Regeneration Capital Programme (subject to Cabinet approval 19th March 2008).

24. The scheme will take 14 weeks to construct. It is anticipated that the earliest start date will be early May 2008.

Other considerations

25. The proposed scheme would contribute in some way to all the 9 LTP objectives, add make a major contribution to the LTP objectives of:-

- Improve local environmental quality and reduce the impact of traffic
- Support rural regeneration- the scheme will deliver a key strategic objective of the Cleobury Country Market Town Initiative programme and will importantly pull together many projects undertaken by the local partnership, including the award winning tourism project
- Reduce fear of crime and accidents

26. There have been two personal injury accidents in the last five years involving pedestrians crossing the road in the central area of Cleobury Mortimer, a slight injury to an elderly man and serious injury to a 10 year old boy.

27. A formal pedestrian crossing is justified using the traditional analysis based on pedestrian and traffic flows. There are around pedestrian 2,000 crossing movements of the main road each day.

28. Construction of the zebra crossing will enable a new walking bus route for Cleobury Mortimer Primary school to commence, without a formal pedestrian crossing point the route is considered too hazardous.

29. Stage one and stage two safety audits were undertaken on option B prior to the final modifications to the design in advance of the final consultation in summer 2007. At this stage there were no irresolvable safety concerns. However, in order to accommodate additional parking and loading space in the final design of both options the design departs from DfT design standards and guidance. Whichever option is progressed it is recommended that a final Stage 2 Safety Audit is undertaken on the design variations. The deviations from recommended practice are likely to be highlighted and will need to be formally approved by SCC.

Decision(s)

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Human Rights Act Appraisal

No significant impact

Environmental Appraisal

The scheme proposed should enhance the local environment and has been subject to consultation with the local conservation officer. Wider global environmental impacts are minimal.

Risk Management Appraisal

It is considered that the course of action recommended minimises the risk. In making any decision altering road traffic, there is a risk of legal action arising from road accidents. It is considered that the assessment has addressed the road safety issues adequately.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Extensive community consultation has taken place and the report highlights how responses have been considered.

Cabinet Member

County Councillor John Overall

Local Member

County Councillor Major Adrian Coles

Appendices

- A. Public Consultation Responses
- B. Other Correspondence
- C. Scheme Plans

Appendix A: Public Consultation Responses

Final consultation summer 2007

Option A - A scheme with the zebra crossing in an alternative location.

Option B - The zebra crossing in the original location but with less on- street parking space lost.

The results and a summary of the responses are provided below.

Results

Statement ticked	Description of response	1st person in house hold	2nd person in house hold	3rd person in house hold	4th person in house hold	Total No.	% from 1st person response only	% from all responses
1	Happy for either of the options	271	185	54	37	547	51	48
1a	<i>Prefer Option A</i>	97	57	14	9	177	18	16
1b	<i>Prefer Option B</i>	144	109	35	23	311	27	27
1c	<i>No preference between option A and B</i>	30	19	5	5	59	6	5
2	Happy for Option A , object to Option B	79	62	23	15	179	15	16
3	Happy for Option B , object to Option A	48	49	22	13	132	9	12
4	Object to both	35	22	14	6	77	7	7
5	No opinion	3	4	0	0	7	1	1
1a + 2	Incorrect form- supporting Option A (ticked both a 'preference for Option A' and 'happy for option A and object to option B')	40	25	10	2	77	7	7
1b + 3	Incorrect form- supporting Option B (ticked both a 'preference for Option B' and 'happy for option B and object to option A')	40	27	9	10	86	7	8
Other	Other incorrectly completed form	18	13	1	2	34	3	3
	Total Responses	534	387	133	85	1139	100	100

Summary of key responses

Statements ticked	Description of response	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	4th person	Total	% from 1st response	% from all responses
1,2,3	Total in support of a scheme	478	348	118	77	1021	90	90
1, 2, (1a + 2)	Total supporting Option A	390	272	87	54	803	73	71
1,3,(1b + 3)	Total supporting Option B	359	261	85	60	765	67	67
1a, 2, (1a + 2)	Total preferring or only supporting Option A	216	144	47	26	433	40	38
1b, 3, (1b+3)	Total preferring or only supporting Option B	232	185	66	46	529	43	46
1c	Support both options A & B - No preference	30	19	5	5	59	6	5
3 + 4	Total objecting to Option A	83	71	36	19	209	16	18
2 + 4	Total objecting to Option B	114	84	37	21	256	21	22
5	No Opinion or invalid form	21	17	1	2	41	4	4

Appendix B: Other Correspondence

Correspondence from Traders

Person	Address	Date	Concerns raised	Response
Objections to location of crossing				
Mr and Mrs Brown	GW Brown Bakers and Confectioners 18 Church Street Cleobury Mortimer	15/01/07	Should have spoken to traders. Congestion is not a problem. Requests compensation for loss of profits so can move on to pastures new.	The response to Mr and Mrs Brown's concerns has been to: 1) Modify the designs for option B so that parking/loading space is available with a very short distance of the entrance to the shop. 2) Include an alternative location for the crossing (Option A) within the final consultation. This has been accommodated
		19/01/07	Delivery lorries will not be able to get close enough to premises to deliver. There has been no regard to trade.	
		18/11/06	Asking to reconsider scheme and its economic impacts	
		23/10/06	Scheme is being imposed on community. On street parking essential to survival of business. Questions the benefits of the scheme	
		20/9/06	No consideration has been made to provide adequate arrangements for deliveries. Narrowing carriageway shortly after it has been widened is unbelievable. Bend in road is not a good place for a crossing. Crossing not justified. Would restrict flour deliveries and cause business irreparable harm	
Mrs Elizabeth M Griffiths	Mumfords Church Street Cleobury Mortimer	5/11/07	Questioning the fairness of the consultation process	Process was designed to maximise responses. Not an official ballot. Response as per above for Browns
		11/10/06	Street enhancement is much needed but there is no justification for the zebra crossing. Business will be severely effected- Browns Bakers, Spar, Post Office, Mumfords	
Mr M Baldwin	Bookshop 24 High Street Cleobury Mortimer (Also Cleobury Mortimer Chamber of Trade Chairman)	19/9/06	Parking will no longer be possible outside premises. Request compensation for material change in circumstances. The need for a crossing has not been demonstrated. Brown corner may not be the best place- better near the Manor House.	Modifications to design have reduced the area where parking is restricted and parking is now possible with a very short distance of the front door of this shop under Option B
		21/4/06	As below- preferred option without a formal pedestrian crossing	
		14/4/06	Proposals would stop parking near from door would impact on loading/unloading. Impact on property value and would hope for compensation.	
Gwilym Butler	Sub postmaster Post Office and Londis High Street Cleobury Mortimer	21/4/06	Oppose to pedestrian crossing. He and the Spar, Browns, The Talbot, Cleobury Fish and Chips all have weekly deliveries; sometimes involving articulated lorries. Deliveries may be refused if some distance.. Fear that restrictions would jeopardise business and cause loss of core High Street traders. Urge to move crossing to near that Manor House.	Modifications to design have reduced the area where parking is restricted Sufficient space has been provided outside this shop

				to accommodate a delivery lorry under Option B
Tara Singh	Spar 1 Church Street Cleobury Mortimer	2/5/06	Great concern over plans. Loss of parking spaces will affect trade and will affect deliveries.	As above for Londis
Support for scheme				
Peggy Munro Hall	Ellinor House B&B, High Street	15/1/07	Need to smarten up the town. Strongly support the enhancement plans	

Other responses from consultation with Traders

Shop	Comments from relevant traders regarding possibility of crossing at location as per Option A	Other comments made
Cleobury News	Not in support due to impact on passing trade.	Would cause problems for deliveries of other shops at Option B site. Better place for crossing would be at the Manor House
Talbot Hotel	Most pedestrians would use it at Browns Corner, would be less well used further up. Also at Brown's it will alleviate congestion. At Option A location it would make their deliveries more difficult.	
Confidantes	Would not be a problem, although needs to be at the site where it would be used most	
Potts and Co	Not a problem	
Crusty Cob (now moved location, shop effected is now Flowers by Fiona)	Would not like outside shop as would reduce parking and own access to shop. Prefer by Manor House	
Burnside Pine		Crossing should be as per Option A
Munfords		Better location for crossing by chemists/Old Vicarage

Residents writing to object to the scheme

Person	Address	Date	Concerns raised	Response
Mrs Sutton	Broome Green Farm	25.11.07	No need for crossing, corner location by Bakery not suitable, Baker will not be able to get deliveries, should support the Bakery.	Crossing technically justified and supported by the majority of residents. Location is suitable and bakery deliveries have been accommodated
Mr Trevor Moss	8 St Mary's Place	26.10.06	Yellow lines would devastate town	Misunderstanding of proposals

Residents writing to support the scheme

Person	Address	Date	Concerns raised
Kate Pearce	7 Heath Close	19/1/07	Support plans, opportunity to improve safety and general aesthetic
Roseann Genese	36 Lower Street.	11/1/07	Support scheme in entirety
Mary Holzman	4 Lion Lane	12/1/07	Very much appreciate the chance to improve the shabby high street
Chris Jones	3 Wells Place	11/1/07	Fully support the scheme
Richard Meredith	Mill Court, Pickham Lane	11/1/07	Support the scheme
Shelia and Tony Mullard	21 Langland Road	14/1/07	Pedestrian crossing would reduce risk to pedestrians
Mr Parker	12 Tenby Road	12/1/07	Unequivocal support for excellent proposal. Crossing in best place for safety and convenience
Val and Graham Simpson	2 Woodland Rise	12/1/07	Support proposal. Do not want to waste opportunity for facelift and improve safety of the main street. Safety improvements will benefit school children
Wayne Smith	27 Whitcombs Orchard	14/1/07	It would reduce risk of accidents for pedestrians
Mandy Smith	2 Wells Place	11/1/07	Fully support, crossing would benefit children and elderly.
Tricia Bodenham	Redthorn House, Lion Lane	14/1/07	Register support for scheme
Celia Brown	8 Furlongs Close	12/1/07	Feel crossing is probably in the wrong place, but would rather accept scheme rather than lose money
Chris Dimond	Brosley Cottage	12/1/07	Total support for the scheme. Pedestrian crossing required where people cross and to minimise parking loss. Chosen position satisfies both.
Mr Duley	Wild Acre, 2 The Paddocks	12/1/07	Fully Support proposal, particularly impressed with location of crossing.
Alan Kimber	Coombe Rise, Pinkham	15/1/07	Personally doesn't need a crossing but feels it will assist young children
James Smith	Swallows cottage, Redthorn Hill	17/1/07	Need crossing
Judy Sant	10 Church Street	15/1/07	Much needed improvement for the town
Anne Parker	12 Tenbury Road	15/1/07	Urge to proceed
Jan Booton	7 Furlongs Close	17/1/07	Fully support the need for a road crossing in our High Street
Gary and Steve Todd	4 Eagle Lane	11/1/07	Wholeheartedly support crossing and renovation works
J Reynolds	4 Childe Road	23/1/07	Support overall enhancement scheme which would bring great benefit.

Appendix C: Scheme Plans

Option A

Option B

Enhancements detail