

Not for Publication:

Report of Director of Development

To Executive Board

Date: 13 December 2006

Subject: DESIGN AND COST REPORT

Scheme Title : Mid-Albion Street Refurbishment
Capital Scheme Number 12093 / 000 / 000

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for a scheme for the refurbishment of the mid section of Albion Street. The scope and the quality of the scheme has been reviewed following the refurbishment of Briggate and it is proposed that the refurbishment of Mid-Albion Street should be of a comparably high standard and use similar high quality tradition materials.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek:

- a) approval for the scheme design outlined in this report;
- b) authority to spend £1,382,000 from Yorkshire Forward funding for the scheme outlined in this report.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Mid-Albion Street was refurbished in 1991/92 as part of the Landmark Leeds project. Its surface has now noticeably deteriorated and it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the street in a safe condition. The refurbishment of Mid-Albion Street is intended to create an attractive, high quality shopping environment befitting a major national retail centre. The scheme will make an important contribution to sustaining and improving the vitality and viability of Leeds city centre and ensuring that it continues to make a significant contribution to the economic and social well being of the region.
- 2.2 A Project Justification Form for the proposed Mid-Albion Street refurbishment scheme was agreed on 22 November 2004 as part of the Capital Programme Review on the basis of the funding coming from the Leeds Yorkshire Forward West Yorkshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan. The scheme is included in the 'Leeds City Centre Strategic Plan 2006 to 2010'.
- 2.3 The scheme was then included, along with a programme of public realm improvements that also included lower Albion Street, as part of the West Yorkshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan (WYSRIP) bid to Yorkshire Forward. The bid was successful and funding of £667,000 for Mid Albion Street was confirmed by Yorkshire Forward, together with £715,000 for lower Albion Street, a total of £1,382,000.
- 2.4 The City Council and Yorkshire Forward subsequently entered into an agreement, dated 7 April 2005, for the delivery of this project as one of a number of WYSRIP funded city centre public realm schemes.
- 2.5 The Leeds City Council / Yorkshire Forward agreement envisaged sections of Lower and Mid-Albion Street each being refurbished in the Landmark Leeds style of paving materials to match those existing in Bond Street. However, the City Centre Public Realm Project Board at their meeting on 9 March 2006 accepted that the Landmark Leeds style now looked tired and outdated and agreed that the refurbishment of Briggate using York stone and granite setts had established a benchmark for the quality of public realm improvement schemes within the pedestrianised shopping core of the city centre. It was therefore proposed that the refurbishment of Mid-Albion Street should be of a comparably high standard and use similar high quality traditional materials.
- 2.6 The cost of repaving Mid-Albion Street in York stone is estimated to be approximately £1,382,000. This sum was originally approved by Yorkshire Forward for the Landmark Leeds style refurbishment of two lengths of Albion Street.
- 2.7 Yorkshire Forward were requested to vary the original agreement so that the funding approval of £1,382,000 could be used in its entirety to fund the proposed high quality treatment of Mid-Albion Street, rather than pay for a lower quality scheme for both Lower and Mid-Albion Street. Yorkshire Forward have now confirmed their agreement and signed a contract variation with Leeds City Council in November 2006.
- 2.8 Lower Albion Street will be affected by the redevelopment of the Trinity Quarter so it would not be advantageous to proceed with its refurbishment at this stage. It is envisaged that this section of the street will be refurbished during or shortly following the Trinity Quarter redevelopment.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Design Proposals / Scheme Description

- 3.1.1 As was noted in the "City Centre Pedestrian Area" report to Executive Board, dated 15 September 2004, the city centre benefits the rest of the city and the region as a whole in terms of the jobs, investment, amenities and facilities which it provides. The image, attractions and environment of the city centre are important in terms of attracting investors, employers, employees, residents, shoppers, visitors and tourists to the city. The quality of the public realm is fundamental to the city centre's ability to compete successfully with other major cities.
- 3.1.2 The first phase of the refurbishment of Albion Street will comprise the middle section of the street. Mid-Albion Street extends from the start of the pedestrianised section at its junction with Short Street to a point approximately 5m south of the junction with Commercial Street and extending approximately 27m eastwards into and along Albion Place.
- 3.1.3 The scheme proposes the use of high quality, slip resistant 200mm x 150mm York stone setts as the principal material to create a single, level surface between building frontages. York stone not only provides greater durability and longevity in maintenance terms but also, as Briggate demonstrates, provides the quality of appearance appropriate within the city centre conservation area. This type of construction proposed is appropriate to deal with the vehicular traffic and loading that is experienced on Mid-Albion Street.

3.2 Consultations

- 3.2.1 The concept and detailed design of the Mid-Albion Street refurbishment scheme has been developed by a multi-disciplinary Project Team comprising officers from the City Council's Development and City Services Departments. Officers from Yorkshire Forward and representatives of Land Securities, the owners of Leeds Shopping Plaza, have regularly attended meetings of the Project Team and have, consequently, been consulted throughout this process.
- 3.2.2 City Centre Leeds commissioned a market research company to carry out a public perception survey and footfall count of Albion Street. Members of the public using Albion Street were interviewed during two weeks in September 2006 to find out what they thought about the street and their views were sought on how it could be improved. The footfall count was taken to monitor the pedestrian traffic flow currently experienced on Albion Street. In general, respondents had neutral views on the aesthetics and cleanliness of Albion Street but concern was expressed about the condition of the footway and road surfaces. The majority of respondents used the street for less than 15 minutes at a time indicating the usage appears to be purpose driven or as a route for people passing through the street rather than a destination. Footfall flows indicate that peak pedestrian times occur between 12 noon and 2:00pm. Following completion of the scheme the public perception survey and footfall count will be carried out again to provide a key performance indicator for the success of the works undertaken.
- 3.2.3 Representatives from each of the traders and businesses located on Mid-Albion Street and other interested parties, including Ward Members, Leeds City Centre Partnership Board Members, property owners and the Civic Trust were invited to a

presentation of plans and drawings detailing the refurbishment scheme held in the Leeds Shopping Plaza on 24 November 2006. The proposals were broadly supported by those who attended. A number of property owners have indicated that they will now be more willing to invest in their properties to ensure they complement the improved environment.

3.3 Programme

3.3.1 The following programme has been agreed with Yorkshire Forward:

Tenders Out	17 January 2007
Tenders In	21 February 2007
Start on Site	16 April 2007
Completion	30 September 2007

This timescale will avoid any conflict with the retailers peak shopping period of Christmas.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 Compliance with Council Policies

4.1.1 The proposals to upgrade the city centre streets and spaces, accord with a number of key Council policies and strategies which stress the need to improve the city centre public realm and the overall appeal and attractiveness of the city centre. These include the Council Plan, Unitary Development Plan, City Centre Urban Design Strategy and the Economic Development Strategy. The proposals accord with the Council's Green Strategy to help secure sustainable economic development by promoting the city centre, enhancing the local environment, and improving access within the city centre for all.

4.1.2 The proposals also accord with the 'Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020' key objectives and with the aims and objectives of the 'Leeds City Centre Strategic Plan 2006 to 2010'.

4.2 Council Constitution

4.2.1 There are no reasons for this report to be exempt from the call in procedure.

4.3 Community Safety

4.3.1 The proposals contained in the report do have implications under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and these are as follows:

4.3.2 The proposed improvements will help improve people's perceptions of safety in the city centre, and help reduce fear of crime.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 Scheme Design Estimate

- 5.1.1 The estimated cost of the refurbishment of Mid-Albion Street is £1,382,000 and can be met from scheme 12093 within the approved capital programme and will be fully funded by Yorkshire Forward.

5.2 Capital Funding and Cash Flow

Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2006 £000's	FORECAST				
			2006/07 £000's	2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0						
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2006 £000's	FORECAST				
			2006/07 £000's	2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	1150.0			1115.5	34.5		
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	232.0		140.0	90.0	2.0		
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	1382.0	0.0	140.0	1205.5	36.5	0.0	0.0

Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2006 £000's	FORECAST				
			2006/07 £000's	2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
LCC Funding	0.0						
Yorkshire Forward	1382.0		140.0	1205.5	36.5		
Total Funding	1382.0	0.0	140.0	1205.5	36.5	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

5.2.1 Revenue Effects

The proposal will not incur any extra revenue costs. Following completion of the refurbishment project, Mid-Albion Street will continue to be maintained from existing City Services resources.

5.3 Risk Assessments

- 5.3.1 Financial Risk – There is a financial risk that the cost of implementing the scheme will exceed the funding available.

Response – This risk will be minimised through the tendering process.

- 5.3.2 Operational Risk -There is an operational risk that there might be slippage in the construction programme or overspend on the project.

Response – These risks will be minimised by ensuring that only contractors on Leeds City Council’s approved list will be invited to tender and by appropriate on-site project management and supervision of the contract by the Design Services section of the Development Department.

5.3.3 Programme Issues – There are risks, as with any project of this nature, of delays in supply of materials or due to exceptionally adverse weather conditions.

Response – The appointed contractor will be experienced in securing materials and will be aware of the specified timescales. The contract timetable is flexible enough to accommodate a reasonable amount of exceptional weather.

5.3.4 General Risk Management – In addition to specialised management of the contract by staff from the Design Services section of the Development Department, the project will also have a dedicated project manager assigned from Asset Management, Development Department, to apply general project management techniques. The project manager will report to the City Centre Public Realm Project Board who will continue to oversee the project with regard to the quality of the scheme, timescales and funding. A risk register will be prepared and reported to the Board to allow risks to be properly managed. The contractors will also be invited to meetings of the Board, as and when necessary, to discuss and seek agreement on any outstanding issues.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is requested to :-

- Approve the scheme design as outlined in this report, and
- Authorize the release of scheme expenditure of £1,382,000 as outlined below :

£ 1,150,000	on construction	CPRH (3)
£ 232,000	on internal fees	CPRH (6)

£1,382,000	TOTAL	
