



Report for:	Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	19th September 2018
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Parking, Access and Movement proposals for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director, Planning, Development & Regeneration Authors: Nathalie Bateman, Team Leader Strategic Planning and Regeneration – Infrastructure and Project Delivery Claire Covington, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer
Purpose of report:	1. To report on the progress of the Parking, Access and Movement project.
Recommendations	1. That the report be noted
Period for post project review	Three years
Corporate objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clean, safe and enjoyable environment <p>The Parking, Access and Movement project will aid traffic flow, improve visitor experience and maximise the benefits of the Water Gardens restoration. It will create an attractive, safe and accessible route for pedestrians between the Leighton Buzzard Road/Water Gardens and the pedestrianised shopping area via Bridge Street.</p>
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>

'Value for money' implications	<p>The total project costs are estimated at £759,000 of which £86,000 has been spent to date. There is £475,158 in the capital programme to deliver the access and movement improvements across 2018/19 and 2019/20. Delivery costs will be £675,000.</p> <p>It is proposed to seek s106 contributions and sustainable transport funding from HCC to supplement the agreed capital allocation and to complete any additional public realm or highway improvements required to support the scheme. However, the value of funding is unknown.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>Project delivery and construction management has been awarded to OPUS ARUP International Consultants (UK) under the Herts Highways Framework Agreement.</p>
Risk implications	Risk assessment reviewed in August 2018.
Community Impact Assessment	This project supports the restoration of the Jellicoe Water Gardens – in particular the access improvements at Bridge Street which were not taken forward as part of that project. A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Jellicoe Water Gardens project in August 2014.
Health and safety Implications	An initial road safety audit was undertaken as part of the project, further stage audits will be completed prior to Hertfordshire County Council's consideration of the scheme
Consultees:	
Background papers:	<p>Cabinet Report: Hemel Evolution: Marlowes Shopping Zone & Bank Court, Bus Interchange and Market Square, and Water Gardens projects, June 2014</p> <p>Cabinet Report: Jellicoe Water Gardens Restoration: update on Parks for People application and delivery project, July 2014</p> <p>Cabinet Report: Bus Interchange Project – Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) proposal for Waterhouse Street, March 2016</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>PH - Portfolio Holder</p> <p>HCC – Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>Hemel Evolution – the group name for a range of activities covering the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan and other key regeneration projects. This update includes; The Old Town, Gadebridge Park, Marlowes Shopping Zone, Bus Interchange, Maylands Urban Realm Improvements, Maylands</p>

	<p>Business Centre Extension, Durrants Lakes, Jellicoe Water Gardens</p> <p>HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p>TRO – Traffic Regulation Order</p>
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Introduction

1.0 Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan

- 1.1 The objectives of the Parking, Access and Movement project originate in the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan, which provides the long term vision and strategic guidance for the regeneration of the town, building upon the seven key character zones and policies set out in the Core Strategy. Since its adoption in 2013 major regeneration schemes have been delivered within the Old Town Zone; Gade Zone and Original Marlowes Zone; Marlowes Shopping Zone; Jellicoe Water Gardens and Plough Zone.
- 1.2 The development of the Masterplan was informed by the evidence base of technical studies including an Access and Movement Study which sought to balance the needs of all town centre users by promoting a permeable and easily navigable town centre that minimises conflicts between different modes of travel. The Masterplan subsequently set an overarching strategy for access and movement with individual objectives identified for each character zone.

2 **Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone**

- 2.1 The Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone encompasses the whole of the registered Water Gardens running from Combe Street to Moor End Road, plus Market Square, Bridge Street (west), the Water Gardens north and south car parks, and adjacent highway land on Waterhouse Street and Leighton Buzzard Road.
- 2.2 The access and movement objectives identified for this zone were part implemented through the Marlowes Shopping Zone projects. This included the creation of a new taxi rank on the southern section of Waterhouse Street, re-provision of blue badge parking from Bank Court onto Waterhouse Street and the replacement of the pelican crossing by Bank Court with a zebra crossing, giving priority to rights of way to pedestrians.
- 2.3 The restoration of the historic Jellicoe Water Gardens has also been completed, supported by a grant of £2.465m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund towards a £3.6m project.
- 2.4 The restoration project initially included the access and movement objective of delivering a shared surface across Bridge Street, to physically and visually link the northern and southern sections of the Water Gardens. This proposal was challenged by the Heritage Lottery Fund as it involved works to the public highway beyond the registered garden, and was subsequently removed from the scheme.
- 2.5 The restored Gardens are now once again a high quality public space which are greatly used and appreciated by visitors, residents and shoppers. However, there remain areas of poor quality public realm adjacent to the

Gardens and issues which impede access to the car parks and shopping area, all of which detract from the overall impression of the town centre.

3 Parking, Access and Movement Project

- 3.1 The Parking, Access and Movement project focuses on outstanding access and movement objectives identified in the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan for the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone.
- 3.2 In June 2014 Cabinet approved the commencement of the Access and Movement Improvement project and for delivery to be combined with the planned capital works to the decked Water Gardens (North) car park and Water Gardens restoration. Due to the complexity of the Jellicoe Water Gardens restoration it was subsequently decided to focus resources on the delivery of the Heritage Lottery Fund project and deliver the access and movement project afterwards.
- 3.3 With the Gardens now complete, the parking, access and movement proposals are being brought forward for delivery. Project delivery and construction management has been awarded to OPUS ARUP International Consultants (UK) under the Herts Highways Framework Agreement and an initial design has been agreed with Hertfordshire County Council.

Key Issues

4 Parking, Access and Movement Objectives

- 4.1 The Parking, Access and Movement project puts forward a highway based scheme to form a new access into Water Gardens (South) car park from Leighton Buzzard Road, and to convert Bridge Street into a one-way egress from both Water Gardens (North) and (South) car parks, along with some changes to access arrangements to Water Gardens (North) car park from Combe Street. It also includes improvements to Bridge Street, west of Waterhouse Street, that will improve pedestrian movement through the Water Gardens and its car parks.
- 4.2 The project will deliver access and movement improvements to aid traffic flow, improve visitor experience and maximise the benefits of the Water Gardens restoration. A key objective is to improve access, connectivity and safety for pedestrians at Bridge Street, where the Jellicoe Water Gardens are physically and visually divided. At present Bridge Street does not provide a particularly attractive or accessible route between the Water Gardens, its car parks and the shopping area. Issues include:
 - poor visibility and public realm between Bridge Street and the pelican crossing on Leighton Buzzard Road;
 - poor connectivity through Water Gardens (South) car park to Bridge Street footpaths;
 - lack of dropped kerbs on Bridge Street for visitors walking through the Water Gardens;
 - blue badge parking on Bridge Street restricting visibility to pedestrians and motorists.

4.3 A fully accessible route suitable for visitors with disabilities is required to link the Leighton Buzzard Road, Water Gardens car parks and Jellicoe Water Gardens with the pedestrianised shopping area.

5 Layout and design

5.1 The layout and design is included as appendix A. Key features include:

- A new vehicle entrance to the Water Gardens (South) car park from Leighton Buzzard Road. This will be located at the southern end of the car park towards the Water Gardens flower garden and play area;
- Bridge Street changed to single width carriageway and exit only from the Water Gardens car parks;
- Footpaths widened at Bridge Street between the car park exit and Waterhouse Street;
- Blue badge parking removed from Bridge Street through a new Traffic Regulation Order;
- A new 4m crossing table added to Bridge Street to provide a more visible and level pedestrian crossing point and to connect the footpaths through the Water Gardens;
- An improved pedestrian route from the pelican crossing on Leighton Buzzard Road to Bridge Street to include relocated recycling facilities and public realm improvements;
- Signage on the Leighton Buzzard Road indicating the new entrance.

5.2 OPUS will also consider how access for cyclists can be improved as part of the project.

5.3 Access to the Water Gardens car parks

5.4 There are currently three vehicle access points serving the Water Gardens (North) and (South) car parks. Water Gardens (North) car park has two-way entrance/exit points from Combe Street and Leighton Buzzard Road. Both car parks have two-way access from Bridge Street, and the Water Gardens (South) can be accessed from the Water Gardens (North).

5.5 The proposals include changing Bridge Street (west) to exit only from the Water Gardens car parks to improve pedestrian access and safety.

5.6 Informal blue badge parking regularly occurs on the double yellow lines along Bridge Street between Waterhouse Street and the Water Gardens car parks. This obstructs access to the car parks and reduces the visibility of pedestrians crossing the road. In the new design, this section of Bridge Street will be reduced in width and made one way to exit only. In order to prevent parking on the reduced width section, a loading/unloading restriction will be introduced through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) enabling the Council's parking team to enforce and manage this area.

5.7 Within the Water Gardens (South) car park vehicle movements will follow the existing clockwise direction. As a consequence of the works, two car

parking spaces will be lost, reducing the car park's capacity to 93 spaces. There will be some loss of hedge screening and street trees along Leighton Buzzard Road as a result of the new vehicle entrance.

- 5.8 There is no change to the entrance and exits to Water Gardens North car park from Leighton Buzzard Road or at Combe Street where the access point will remain two-way. Further road safety audits may identify minor modifications for these areas.
- 5.9 HCC accepts the proposals subject to a satisfactory road safety audit and further consideration of pedestrian access, in particular calming features to improve pedestrian access and connectivity at the car park exit at Combe Street and Bridge Street/Waterhouse Street junction. Measures may also be required to control movements into and out of the car park exit at Combe Street if additional use of this access point results in queueing on the Leighton Buzzard Road. These aspects are estimated at £25,000. Opportunities to promote sustainable journeys including improvements to existing or new crossing points will be considered at detailed design stage and will be informed by further road safety audits.

6 Estimated costs

- 6.1 The total project costs are estimated at £759,000 of which £86,000 has been spent to date. Due to the nature of this project and the high risks associated with known and unknown utilities, a prudent contingency has been included within total project costs. There is £475,158 in the capital programme to deliver the access and movement improvements across 2018/19 and 2019/20. Delivery costs will be £675,000. Table 1 below outlines estimated costs.

Table 1 Estimated project costs

Type of Spend	up to and inc 17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	TOTAL
Total Cost	84,842	145,000	530,000	0	0	0	675,000
Capital	84,842	125,000	490,000	0	0	0	699,842
Professional & Design	84,842	55,000					139,842
Construction		30,000	355,000				385,000
Utilities		30,000	118,000				148,000
CCTV New Installation		10,000	17,000				27,000
Revenue	0	20,000	40,000	0	0	0	60,000
Feasibility Studies/other design/ professional fees							0
Contingency		20,000	15,000				35,000
Car Park Closure Loss of income							0
Public Realm improvements			25,000				25,000
TOTAL	84,842	145,000	530,000	0	0	0	759,842

- 6.2 There is currently no revenue budget allocated to this project. When costs are finalised through the tender process, budgets will be reapportioned between capital and revenue. The shortfall of funding will be addressed at this stage.
- 6.3 It is proposed to seek s106 contributions and sustainable transport funding from HCC to supplement the agreed capital allocation and complete any additional public realm or highway improvements required to support the scheme. However, the value of funding is unknown.

7 Programme and Delivery

7.1 The Parking, Access and Movement project is scheduled to be reported to Cabinet in October 2018 for approval to commence the delivery phase.

7.2 Subject to Cabinet approval, the plans will be submitted for planning approval with a decision expected in the New Year. Enabling works, such as tree removal will take place in early spring 2019 prior to the bird nesting season. The main works will follow in 2019/20, and will last 3 - 4 months, undertaken over several phases starting with utility diversions within the Leighton Buzzard Road verge. Works will be programmed to enable the Water Gardens (South) car park to remain open, with partial closures to bays and access points expected during the build period. Around 14 parking bays will be closed for one month to allow for construction of the new access into the Water Gardens (South) car park from the Leighton Buzzard Road.

8 Conclusions

8.1 The Parking, Access and Movement project will support the delivery of the access and movement objectives identified within the 2013 Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan.

8.2 The proposals will complete the vision of the Jellicoe Water Gardens restoration by physically and visually linking the northern and southern sections of the Gardens at Bridge Street, where access is currently impeded.

8.3 The alterations to Bridge Street to exit only from the car parks, and public realm improvements from the Leighton Buzzard Road will create a safe and accessible route to the pedestrianised shopping area for visitors.