

Report Title:	Windsor Castle Hill Public Realm Improvements
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Haseler, Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 26 January 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant, Executive Director – Place, Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth
Wards affected:	Eton and Castle

## REPORT SUMMARY

*In July 2020 the Council secured financial approval from the Berkshire Local Transport Body, which secured over £1.5M of funding from the Local Growth Fund to deliver improvements to the public realm and wayfinding in Windsor Town Centre. The project is intended to deliver an improved pedestrian experience around Windsor Castle and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more in the wider town centre.*

*The proposals directly support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, supporting the economic objectives of the ‘Inspiring Places’ objective and ‘Quality Infrastructure’ priority. The project is explicitly referenced as a goal within the plan: “Deliver the Windsor Public Realm project, transforming Castle Hill into a pedestrian first zone, and growing the local economy and increasing numbers of local jobs.”*

*The scheme is also an integral part of improving Windsor’s public realm over the foreseeable future and is referenced within the emerging ‘Vision for Windsor’ project improving access, the quality of place within the Town and ultimately driving our visitor economy.*

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves the delivery of the Castle Hill Public Realm Improvements in Windsor.**

## 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
<b>Approve delivery of the scheme</b>	This would support the achievement of the approved Corporate Plan goal as well as the wider objectives and priorities.
<b>This is the recommended option</b>	

Option	Comments
Do Nothing	This would not achieve the corporate plan goal and would require the funding from the LEP to be returned.

- 2.1 The improvement works on Windsor Castle Hill forms part of the approved RBWM Windsor Visitor Economy business case approved by the LEP and the Borough in July 2020. This was structured in line with the five-case model with strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management cases showing the benefits to the town and its residents and businesses.
- 2.2 The overall case relates to investing in Windsor to improve the visitor experience thereby encouraging dwell time and increasing engagement with the local economy. The result is anticipated to be an increase in the amount of visitor spend within the town, benefiting businesses and the local economy.
- 2.3 The overall business case allows for a £2.4m investment across Castle Hill and wider wayfinding around the town centre to improve pedestrian flow. At the time of the submission the business case had a high value for money benefit/cost ratio (2.32). Whilst the after-effects of the Covid pandemic may impact on this, there continues to be a strong case to bring this project to fruition. It has been included as one of the 50 corporate goals that make up the Corporate Plan demonstrating its importance to the Borough in its efforts to create a sense of place in town centres.
- 2.4 This project also forms an integral part of improving Windsor's public realm and is referenced within the emerging 'Vision for Windsor' project improving access, the quality of place within the Town and ultimately driving our visitor economy. Future 'Vision for Windsor' ideas and projects can build on this scheme, hopefully resulting in increased benefits for the town and its residents and businesses.

### 3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The works are scheduled to take place between February 2023 and December 2023 with a detailed break down of the phases in section 9 below. The works will be delivered through the existing Highways Contract, through our delivery partner Volker Highways.
- 3.2 At this time there is also a project in place to deliver a Jubilee fountain at the foot of Castle Hill and this will be integrated into the work taking place for this Castle Hill project. The location of the fountain at the North-West end of Castle Hill allows for the footway to be prepared for the fountain installation and then made good with the remainder of the footway post-installation.
- 3.3 Given the importance of the summer tourist period to the Windsor economy, the programme includes a 2-month break across July and August. This allows for more space for pedestrians to dwell in this area, reduces the visual impact caused by the temporary works and saves the project time and money as there is less lost time when the daily guard change takes place. As the detail of other

major events become apparent, the project will liaise with the ceremonial events team and the town manager to ensure the works can be managed alongside these events

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.1 The business case approved by the Berkshire Local Transport Body demonstrates a high value for money. This has been assessed through the Local Enterprise Partnership. There is an approved budget within the Council's Capital Programme which has £1.8m available to deliver the proposals, approved by Full Council in February 2022.
- 4.2 The project is estimated to cost £1.53m through direct costs with Volker Highways, with anticipated project management and design support costs of £70k. The remaining £200k is set aside for contingency. Traditionally contingency funding would be 20-25% of the delivery costs. Having worked closely with VH through early contractor involvement, it has helped to reduce the cost risks and therefore the slightly lower contingency figure is considered appropriate.
- 4.3 If all or part of the contingency is not required at the end of the project, the monies will be shown as an underspend. The project spend will be carefully monitored through the usual capital forecasting and reporting processes.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The project team at the council has worked closely with the procurement team to determine the right approach to procuring the project to ensure good value for money for the council. Following an initial engagement with Volker Highways, council officers worked with Procurement to run a fixed-price tender process in early 2022. Unfortunately, due to high inflation expectations, none of the 6 interested parties chose to submit a bid.

- 5.1 In September 2022, Volker Highways were re-engaged to determine whether a feasible programme timeframe and cost could be agreed. Both were provided in November 2022 with improvements and costs savings agreed in December 2022. The current proposal will result in the timely delivery of the project by Christmas 2023 and within the budget available. Our existing framework agreement with Volker Highways will provide the contractual basis for this delivery with client-side project management provided by in-house resource.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 A project risk register will be put in place to manage the operational and project delivery risks. The key strategic risk is a delay to the delivery programme which could put at risk the funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership:

**Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation**

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk that due to delays to the delivery programme because of unforeseen issues which could result in the funding from the LEP being withdrawn.	Major 3	Medium	Early contractor involvement in the project to produce robust programme and 3-month contingency post completion to funding deadline	Dedicated client project management resource to work with delivery partners.  Programme assurance oversight from senior managers	Major 3	Low

## 7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities. An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A. The EQIA screening has not identified any significant issues that need to be addressed.

7.2 Climate change/sustainability. The proposals are not expected to have a major impact on carbon emissions or the natural environment. The scope of works has considered where possible to re-use materials.

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. The project is not expected to require the processing of personal data and therefore no issues are expected.

## 8. CONSULTATION

8.1 A public consultation was completed in December and January 2020/2021 during which time an online survey was accessible to the public. Officers supported by colleagues from the Project Centre team hosted virtual consultation events for councillors and members of the public. The result of the consultation was that two-thirds of respondents supported the proposed design to make Castle Hill a pedestrian-first location with vehicular access restricted.

## 9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Work is proposed to take place across 4 phases commencing February 2023:

- Phase 1a and b, the northern (castle) side of Castle Hill, will run from March to May 2023 with the plan to retain and make good the existing yorkstone pavement and replace the road surface with a granite block

finish. Access to Henry VIII gate will be retained as will one-way traffic on Castle Hill.

- Phase 2, the southern (shops) side of Castle Hill, will commence on completion of Phase 1a/b anticipated in May to July 2023. As per the design this will see the introduction of a far wider pavement with new yorkstone paving as well as new high velocity vehicle mitigation (HVM) measures and a gate.
- A summer pause is being aimed for within the programme with, ideally, no works taking place during July and August 2023.
- Phase 3, junction of Castle Hill and St Albans Street, will commence in September completing on November and consist of further granite laying, the introduction of semi-permanent HVM bollards and a raised crossing point to the Castle visitor entrance.
- Phase 4 will commence on completion of Phase 3 and consists of the completion of pedestrian walkways either side of the carriageway down St Albans Street. Completion is planned pre-Christmas 2023.

## 10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by one appendix:
- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

## 11. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>	
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	05/01/23	09/01/23
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy & Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	06/01/23	06/01/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)		
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	05/01/23	06/01/23
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>	
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager		
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>	
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer		
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive		
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	05/01/22	05/01/22
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services		

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways and Transportation.	Yes
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## REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision  First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 16/12/22	No	No

Report Author: Tim Golabek, Service Lead Transport
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# Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact [equality@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rbwm.gov.uk)

## 1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	Windsor Castle Hill Public Realm Improvements
Service area:	Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth
Directorate:	Place

### **Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:**

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

The proposals are intended to improve the visitor experience in Windsor through improvements to the public realm around Windsor Castle. This should make it safer, more enjoyable and more accessible for residents as it includes elements such as new dropped kerbs and raised tables to improve accessibility for those with mobility difficulties. The proposals will be delivered by RBWM in Partnership with its partner Volker Highways.

## 2. Relevance Check

### **Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?**

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

The proposals will change the way in which pedestrians access Windsor Castle or the town centre and are expected to improve conditions for all pedestrians using the facilities. In developing the design, appropriate consideration was given to all users and application of appropriate design standards adopted. A full public consultation on the proposals did not highlight any concerns from an equalities perspective.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact [equality@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rbwm.gov.uk)

### 3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

**Who will be affected by this proposal?**

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

The changes will transform the way Castle Hill is set up with the area being given a pedestrian-first feel. This will impact on all users including visitors, residents and local businesses (both operators and customers). The removal of through traffic will have a positive impact on more vulnerable road users.

**Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?**

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

Castle Hill is a location open to all and whilst there is a greater than normal number of visitors due to the appeal of the Castle, there is no evidence to suggest any protected characteristics are disproportionately represented.

During the design phase, particular engagement took place with the local Disability and Inclusion forum to incorporate their views into the design work. This has resulted in the scheme including appropriate kerbing, dropped kerbs and tactile pavement to the benefit of users with disabilities.

**What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?**

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

A consultation took place in December 2020/January 2021. During this time the consultation had to take place virtually and this was through an online platform survey and Teams based consultation event with residents and business made aware of the consultation through leaflets and social media. Over two-thirds of responses received were in favour of the scheme.

**What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?**

Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.

The initial design phase took into account existing and potential future users of Castle Hill. A traffic survey took place to understand the existing flow of traffic helping inform how the design may impact the future look and feel of the area.

The consultation was open to all residents and businesses who were made aware through social media and letter drop communications. Comments received were reviewed and where relevant, alterations to the scheme design made though these were minimal.



## 4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	Accessibility improvements as road will be pedestrian-first	Yes	
Disability	The scheme includes the installation of dropped kerbs, tactile paving and raised tables to enable safe crossing.	Yes	
Sex	Not applicable		
Race, ethnicity and religion	Not applicable		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	Not applicable		
Pregnancy and maternity	The scheme includes the installation of dropped kerbs, tactile paving and raised tables to enable safe crossing.	Yes	
Marriage and civil partnership	Not applicable		
Armed forces community	Not applicable		

Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	Not applicable		
Children in care/Care leavers	Not applicable		

## 5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

*If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.*

<p><b>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?</b> For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>The scheme took the opportunity to build on design standards by engaging with the local Disability and Inclusion Forum to further inform the appropriate solutions for users with disabilities. This was then confirmed during the consultation phase.</p>
<p><b>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?</b> See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.</p>
<p>The council has standard channels of reporting faults through the RBWM website. Residents can make service requests if further steps are required and ultimately make use of our complaints process if needed</p>

## 6. Sign Off

<b>Completed by:</b> Tim Golabek and Chris Joyce	<b>Date:</b> 12/01/23
<b>Approved by:</b> Ellen McManus-Fry	<b>Date:</b> 17/01/23

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

<b>Reviewed by:</b> Ellen McManus-Fry	<b>Date:</b> 17/01/23
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