

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres
2.	Date:	29th November 2010
3.	Title:	RERF - Church Street Design Feasibility
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. **Summary**

This report seeks approval of allocation of £5,000 RERF revenue funding to preparatory work on designing a public realm scheme for Church Street in Rotherham town centre.

6. **Recommendations**

That £5,000 of RERF revenue is approved to fund the provision of the design feasibility for public realm works on Church Street.

7. Proposals and Details

After the demolition of the former All Saints Buildings the Council committed to providing a high quality public realm scheme, which not only covered the footprint of the demolished building but addressed the surrounding roads.

With the demise of the Regional Development Agency the original funding for the scheme was withdrawn. Officers have now secured funding through LAA Reward Grant, WNF and LABGI to create a new public open space on the site of the former building. This scheme is to be known as "Minster Gardens". Works are due to commence in January 2011 with completion scheduled for August 2011. The budget available has been significantly reduced and the new scheme designed to incorporate a larger amount of soft landscape with the aim of reducing costs without reducing quality.

Also ongoing at this time is the redevelopment of Minster Yard. This scheme includes the restoration of footpaths, new seating, lighting of the Minster and the creation of a new stepped access from Church Street and is due for completion December 2010.

Between these two new pieces of public realm and immediately adjacent the recently refurbished Imperial Buildings is a piece of important space which has suffered from lack of investment and maintenance. The space includes two trees and three hexagonal seats probably dating from the 1970's. The space is predominantly York stone paving with York stone setts and kerbs. Some areas are in good condition; however, several areas have been severely damaged by vehicular traffic during the restoration schemes as part of the wider Rotherham Renaissance.

The site is within the Town Centre Conservation Area and directly adjacent to two listed buildings. It is, therefore, vitally important that this space is improved to reflect the quality of the other two spaces and to ensure the connectivity with High Street.

The whole area would be a pedestrian only zone and free of vehicular traffic. Initial thoughts for the usage of the space includes, external event space for the Artists / Occupiers of Imperial Buildings and a dedicated café seating area with views over Minster Yard and Minster Gardens.

Officers from RiDO and Streetpride have been proactive in finding an affordable solution for this area. Currently the Council Highways Depot is relocating from Greasbrough Road to Hellaby. This move together with limited storage space at the new depot has resulted in a significant amount of paving materials which would be ideally suited to the Conservation Area becoming available.

The materials are generally left over from similar funded schemes, second hand products and other surplus to requirements including natural stone paving, setts and kerbs, steel bollards etc. Officers have earmarked all

suitable materials for the project and these will be available “free issue”, provided that the physical work on site is carried out by the Streetpride Team.

The next step is to compile a detailed inventory of all materials, to include sizes, finish quantity etc. Also carry out a survey of the existing area and identify the quantity of reusable materials.

Once these tasks are complete, the Landscape Design Team will produce a draft scheme utilizing the new and existing materials. This design will then identify any shortfall of materials which may be required to complete the scheme. Detailed estimates can then also be produced and the scheme fully evaluated.

8. Finance

Funding	Status of funding. Approved/ Awaiting Approval	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
RERF					
Capital		-		-	-
Revenue		-	3,500	1,500	5,000
TOTAL RERF		-	3,500	1,500	5,000
Other Funding Sources					
					-
					-
TOTAL OTHER FUNDING		-	-	-	-
Grand Total		-	3,500	1,500	5,000

There is currently £114,032 of revenue money available under the RERF programme. This is sufficient to fund this project.

The £5,000 requested will be split equally between carrying out an inventory of the existing materials then drafting a design around them and with their transport and storage in moving them from the Greasbrough Road Depot.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Cost for the full scheme are unknown until the feasibility study and draft plan are completed. If the project proceeds and further funding is required then potential sources which have been identified include further RERF or Arts council money.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The town centre has been identified by the LSP as being one of their two main priorities for the Borough, along with jobs.

This project contributes to the following strategic priorities under the Achieving Theme of the Community Strategy:-

- Revitalise the town centre

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the town centre traders, the relevant Cabinet Member and ROAR. All have expressed support for the original Minster Gardens proposal.

A copy of the full RERF application form for this project is available on request.

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