

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Eagle Square Improvements

**Date:** 7 September 2017

**Author:** Service Manager for Economic Growth and Regeneration

### **Wards Affected**

Ernhale

### **Purpose**

To seek Cabinet support for works to Eagle Square which will provide flexibility for events space and to report the outcome of public consultation on the proposals.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

### **Background**

Eagle Square, located at the southern tip of Arnold Town Centre, was the focus for the Christmas Light switch on in 2016. Although this event was successful, the physical layout of the space and presence of the brick planter restricted full use of the area.

To build on the success of last year's event and improve the image and offer of the town centre, officers have reviewed the current limitations of the square and considered whether simple modifications could be made to improve its appearance and function.

### **Proposal**

Colleagues in Parks and Street Care (PASC) have undertaken preliminary surveys and commissioned concept designs for a scheme which is anticipated to:

- increase pedestrian accessibility;
- increase the visibility of existing retail units;

- improve the functionality of Eagle Square particularly with regard to the Christmas Lights event; and
- enhance the general attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre.

An indicative scheme of works showing removal of the planter is shown at appendix 1. In summary the scheme includes:

- Removal of brick planter, shrubbery and trees within the planter;
- Simple repaving in matching blockwork across the area to provide an extended space for events;
- Introduction of removable wooden planters with appropriate tree species to attractively enclose the space and act as vehicular barriers and new smaller planter with street tree;
- Regrading to remove differences in level (as far as can be achieved across the site); and
- Provision of circular seating with removable elements to provide an appropriate location for the Christmas tree and additional seating near High Street.

The scope of the scheme is relatively modest and is aimed to improve the flexibility of the space in the short term. Funding opportunities for more comprehensive improvements for both Arnold and Carlton centres are currently being explored.

A large scale plan of the proposed works will be circulated at the meeting. The cost of the work is estimated to be approximately £85,000 - £90,000 including removal and disposal of soil and rubble off site.

### **Technical Consultation**

As the land is designated as highway, PASC have liaised with Nottinghamshire County Council about the improvements and they are supportive. The County Council will require an update as to when the works will be carried out so they can display the necessary highways notifications and ensure that no bookings are taking for this area during the term of the works.

PASC have liaised with Development Management to ensure there are no TPOs on the trees to be removed and that environmental and planning regulations are adhered to (planning permission is not required as the work is regarded as permitted development).

Utilities and plans have been reviewed and no obstructions to the improvement

works have been identified.

### **Public Consultation**

Retailers within Arnold Town Centre have been invited to share their views on the proposal by either:

- reviewing proposals online and completing an online survey;
- meeting officers to discuss proposals at consultation sessions held at the Bonnington Theatre; or
- directly contacting the Economic Growth Team

Consultation has also taken place via 'Keep Me Posted' alerts with information available on the Council's website. Respondents were also invited to share their views on Arnold Town Centre more generally.

The online questionnaire resulted in 341 responses from businesses and residents with 67% of businesses and 54% of residents in support of the planned works.

Comments both for and against the scheme were received as well as wider comments on Arnold Town Centre. The majority of concerns expressed related to the loss of mature trees and the need to invest in and improve other areas in the town centre such as Arnold Market. Others queried the need for the scheme and that funding would be better spent on improvements to roads and pavements. Comments were also made about the need to ensure sufficient seating areas. Support was expressed for improving the range of events and activities in Arnold and reducing cars/vehicles in the area.

A summary of the comments received is provided in appendix 2. Whilst removal of the existing trees within the planter is regarded as essential to facilitate a clear, flexible space, the scheme will ensure that new trees are introduced in appropriate locations.

### **Project Delivery and Timescales**

Subject to support from Cabinet, PASC will invite competitive tenders for the works which will be undertaken late September and early October in good time for preparations for the Christmas Light Switch on event. The anticipated duration of the works is 4-6 weeks.

As with all tender processes, there is a risk that tenders may be above the estimated amount, that tenders are of inadequate quality or that no tenders are received. In this case, further review will be required and the works delayed to ensure there is no conflict with the Christmas event.

## **Alternative Options**

- Do not proceed with the works.
- Scale back the work to reduce spend on site, although this would be limited as the majority of the costs relate to the removal of the brick planters.
- Implement a higher cost scheme to repave and remodel a wider area. The scheme provides a cost effective means of improving the area however other funding sources are being explored to support further improvements to the town centre.

## **Financial Implications**

The invitations to tender will provide confirmed costings which could be lower or higher than the quoted estimation.

The cost of the capital work can be met from the approved Strategic Intervention Fund capital budget. Any revenue costs associated with the project will be funded from service budgets.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Proposed Works

Appendix 2 Summary of Consultation Responses

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended THAT Cabinet:

- a) support the proposed modifications to Eagle Square; and
- b) subject to the above, note the intention to accept the winning tender for the works subject to this falling within the estimated cost.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

Delivering improvements to the image and offer of Arnold Town Centre is an action within the Gedling Plan.