



Title: **Fleet Street Regeneration – Consultation summary**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Transport Working Party** On: **2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012**

Key Decision: **No**

Change to Budget: **No** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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## **1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers**

- 1.1 The object of the report is to present the results of the formal and public consultations relating to the proposed refurbishment of Fleet Street, and to highlight comments of particular significance.
- 1.2 The design of the refurbishment scheme will be influenced by the consultation results

## **2. Recommendation(s) for decision**

- 2.1 To note the outcome of the consultation process and the inclusion of many of the consultation ideas and suggestions within the proposed scheme design, where practicable.
- 2.2 That the revised proposals as set out in Scheme Plan 8/03/12\_01C are progressed to implementation.

## **3. Key points and reasons for recommendations**

- 3.1 Public consultations - A public exhibition on the Fleet Street proposals, was held on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012, in a vacant ground floor Fleet Walk shop. The exhibition was well attended and the proposal generally supported, although concerns were expressed regarding the use of the road by buses. A detailed summary of the written responses are in **Appendix 1** to this report

3.2 Formal consultations – Formal consultees, such as the Town Centre Management Company, Community Partnership, Stagecoach etc were contacted by letter with a plan of the proposed Fleet Street refurbishment scheme. Again the scheme was generally supported although some feedback on the detail of the design was received.

A detailed summary of the written responses are in **Appendix 2** to this report

**For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.**

**Patrick Carney**  
**Group Services Manager – Streetscene & Place**

## **Supporting information**

### **A1. Introduction and history**

- A1.1 Fleet Street is the southern third of the main shopping thoroughfare in Torquay's town centre linking the harbour to Union Street. The existing layout of Fleet Street was implemented in 1989 and included the pedestrianisation of the road and traffic restricted to buses and delivery vehicles.
- A1.2 The design consisted of concrete block paving for both the footway and traffic lanes which are at the same level surface. When the original scheme was completed, public transport using Fleet Street consisted of small minibuses.
- A1.3 However with rapidly increasing demand for public transport services and steadily increasing patronage, these minibuses have been phased out and replaced by a mixture of large single deck and double-deck vehicles. The design of the street is now life expired, in serious need of maintenance and unsuitable for the current mixed use of the street.
- A1.4 The Fleet Street redevelopment is outlined within the Local Transport Plan 3, dated March 2011.
- A1.5 A verbal report was given on the proposed Fleet Street regeneration scheme at the 29<sup>th</sup> March meeting of this Working Party. The Working Party recommended that consultation with the community and key stakeholders be carried out and presented to a future meeting. Details of this consultation are included in this report but generally the improvements were supported.

### **A2. Risk assessment of preferred option**

#### **A2.1 Outline of significant key risks**

- A2.1.1 There is risk of damaging statutory undertakers plant and equipment when excavating the existing carriageway. However, these risks can be minimised with trial holes and the use of modern detection equipment
- A2.1.2 There is a risk of pedestrian vehicle conflict with construction vehicles. The successful contractor is obliged to operate safe working practises to minimise these potential conflicts.
- A2.1.3 The location of the works is within a busy social area of Torquay, and there are potential risks from vandalism, especially on a Friday and Saturday night. The successful contractor will be requested to erect suitable protective barriers to minimise this risk.

#### **A2.2 Remaining risks**

- A2.2.1 The remaining risks of the scheme are the potential conflict between buses and pedestrians using Fleet Street. This risk is being minimised with the new road layout, which includes kerbing and improved access by buses into the bus laybys provided.

Also, the through bus and service vehicle route will be better defined as compared with the original Fleet Street scheme.

### **A3. Other Options**

A3.1 Do nothing: The road will continue to be maintained as defects are identified.

### **A4. Summary of resource implications**

A4.1 The proposed scheme will be funded from the Local Transport Plan, capital allocation. Design and supervision will be provided by staff within the Resident and Visitor Service business unit.

### **A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?**

A5.1 The proposed scheme will provide a high quality pedestrian environment whilst also catering for buses and service vehicles.

A5.2 The materials used in the scheme (granite paving) and street furniture (mainly stainless steel), will be easier to clean and maintain than the existing block paving.

A5.3 Fleet Street is currently lit from lighting fixed to existing buildings, and which is to a high standard.

### **A6. Consultation and Customer Focus**

A6.1 Consultations:

A6.1.1 An extensive public consultation process was carried out to inform the public of the proposals and to canvas views and ideas that could be incorporated into the scheme.

A6.1.2 Also, formal consultations were undertaken with statutory bodies and other interested parties to present the scheme and to take account of feedback within the scheme design. Presentations were made when requested.

A6.1.3 A public exhibition on the Fleet Street proposals, was held on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012, in a vacant Fleet Walk shop.

The exhibition was well attended, and a brief summary of the written responses is shown below:

- a. 48% of the written response would like the buses removed altogether and 9% wanted the buses to remain
- b. 29% of the written responses agree with the proposed refurbishment and there were no adverse comments against it.
- c. The remainder of the written comments were mainly individual suggestions

A detailed summary of the written responses are in **Appendix 1** to this report

Also, smaller scale plans of the scheme were displayed in local shops for public viewing.

A6.1.4 A brief summary of their responses is shown below:

a. Town Centre Management company:

They support and welcome the proposals, but would like the GPO roundabout included in phase three of the refurbishment.

They do not like the red bitmac suggested for the new road surfacing and would prefer a colour more in harmony with the granite materials being used.

They welcome our proposal to make all the street furniture removable to enable street events to take place in a more flexible way.

b. Fleet Walk Manager:

Would like the street furniture, bollards, seats etc to be removable.

Removal of ACO drainage grills, and replaced with granite channels

Improved signage

c. Stagecoach:

Would like the angle of the bus bays changed

Relocate bus stop opposite Tesco

Install traffic lights

d. The remainder of the formal consultees have either have not responded or are happy with the proposals

A detailed summary of the written responses are in **Appendix 2** to this report

## A6.2 **Overview of the consultation process based on written and verbal comments**

A6.2.1 At the public consultation there was an overall view that it would nice if the buses were removed and a true café culture introduced. It was suggested that at a future stage an open atrium could be built over the street, similar to Princesshay in Exeter.

If this was introduced at a later date, then some provision for getting the elderly or infirm from one end of Fleet Street to the other needs to be addressed. It should be noted that whilst the scheme is designed to accommodate buses it can just as easily operate without buses in the future should a restriction be implemented.

A6.2.2 There was concern that the loading times were not being enforced and that it was currently being abused. It was suggested that that perhaps the loading times in the mornings should be earlier than 10am because shoppers are about then. Parking Services will be requested to provide additional enforcement during the morning period.

A6.2.3 The abuse of traffic using Braddons Hill Road West was mentioned several times and the need for better enforcement.

A6.2.4 The defined route, with kerbs, through Fleet Street was welcomed. However, the Town Centre Management Company did not like the proposed red bitmac surfacing, and prefer to see a colour more in keeping with the surrounding materials. A grey surfacing is now being considered.

### A6.3 “Wow” factor

A6.3.1 Tom Littlewood from Ginko Projects, was asked to introduce a “Wow” factor into the Fleet Street design (**Appendix 3**). He came up with the idea of banner poles through Fleet Street at 10m and 7m in height. The design on the flags could be the subject of competition, and also to advertise events. The narrow poles would not take up a lot of space and would be lit from the bottom or top. They are also useful for displaying planted baskets. Whilst this is an exciting proposal the scheme budget could not fund this but could be added at a later date.

### A6.4 Trees and lighting columns

A6.4. The existing ornate Victorian lighting columns will be removed and not replaced in the new proposals. They are not in keeping with the proposed new street furniture and are not required for lighting purposes, because Fleet Street is lit to a high standard from lights fitted to existing buildings. However, if the banner poles were installed, they would provide additional localised lighting.

A6.4.2 It was proposed to have either planted trees with tree grids or the above ground planters similar to those in Union Street. However, Torbay’s tree specialist said that the ground planted trees would not survive without a substantial root ball which would be difficult to achieve with all the local services. The existing soil is also not suitable for tree growth. Again, he did not consider the above ground granite planters suitable within Fleet Street. His recommendation is to fix plant baskets to the proposed banner poles with a self watering device.

A6.4.3 The benefits of not having lamp columns and trees or tree planters, is that it does remove some of the street clutter, which is recommended by the Town Centre Management Company.

### A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 The scheme will require input from the legal department to process traffic orders and advice from procurement on the tendering process.

### Appendices

Appendix 1 Summary of written responses from the public consultation process

Appendix 2 Summary of written responses from the formal consultations

Appendix 3 Fleet Street banner proposal prepared by Tom Littlewood from Ginko. Projects

### Documents available in members’ rooms

Scheme plan 8 / 03 / 12\_01C will be on display for members viewing

### Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report: