

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	27 th July 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
Report author	Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager
Title	Llangollen 2020 Castle Street Improvement Project

1. What is the report about?

To seek approval to proceed with the implementation of the Llangollen 2020 Castle Street Improvement Project.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

It is estimated that the project will cost £1.75 million to deliver. There is also significant community interest in this project. For these reasons a decision is sought from Cabinet to approve the implementation of the project

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Cabinet considers the report and approves the implementation of the Llangollen 2020 Castle Street Improvement project, including the amendments listed in Appendix A which resulted from recent public engagement feedback and which have been agreed with the local members.
- 3.2. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix C) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

- 4.1. In 2018, a community group called the Llangollen 2020 Group was formed, comprising both Llangollen County Councillors plus Llangollen Town Council representatives. Also in 2018, the Group initiated a project to consider improving traffic, parking, pedestrian safety and public realm issues in the Town Centre. The Group secured Cadwyn Clwyd funding and appointed a consultant to undertake a feasibility study.
- 4.2. Officers from Traffic; Highways; and Economic and Business Development regularly participated in project meetings with the Group. In accordance with the *Community Resilience* corporate priority, the Group was chaired by one of the elected members (Cllr Graham Timms) rather than being officer-led.
- 4.3. In 2018, the Llangollen 2020 Group held community engagement events as part of the feasibility study to ask people their views on traffic, parking, pedestrian and public realm issues plus potential solutions. These events included a public exhibition; an online survey; social media publicity; and stakeholder meetings.
- 4.4. The feasibility study identified a number of concerns including traffic and parking-related congestion, pavements being too narrow, difficulties for pedestrians crossing Castle Street, and the poor condition of the public realm.
- 4.5. The findings of the feasibility study led to the development of detailed design proposals through officers working closely with the Llangollen 2020 Group. These design proposals are detailed in both Appendices D and E. The proposals can be summarised as: removal of 14 parking spaces from Castle Street to allow both pavements to be widened; 2 new loading bays on Castle Street; 1 new loading bay on Market Street; 1 new loading bay on Bridge Street; speed reduction features and a 20 mph speed limit on Castle Street; dropped kerb pedestrian crossing points along Castle Street; repaving of pavements with high-quality paving materials; closure of Short Street; and removal of parking at the Abbey Road/Castle Street junction to allow the pavement to be widened.
- 4.6. To ensure the community understood the proposals; the Leader, Lead Member, Head of Service and Corporate Director for Public Realm decided that the Council would undertake a comprehensive public engagement exercise. This launched on the 15th June 2021 and ran for 3 weeks. The engagement

included: a letter-drop to Llangollen residents and businesses; online consultation materials and a questionnaire; a 5-day public exhibition on Castle Street attended by 450 people with paper questionnaires given out; visits to Castle Street and Market Street businesses; individual briefing sessions for both the MP for Clwyd South and the MS for Clwyd South; and a presentation given to a meeting of the Town Council.

- 4.7. A total of 507 questionnaire responses were received in response to the recent engagement. These were comprised of 322 online questionnaires and 185 paper questionnaires. Of the 507 responses, 95 were from business owners, 358 were from residents, 32 from visitors, and 16 from people who work in the town but live elsewhere. The full public engagement report is in Appendix F.
- 4.8. The questionnaire asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the main proposals contained within the project. Of the responses received, the number of people who agreed with the various proposals generally ranged from between 60% and 68%, except for 48% of respondents who agreed that the project would make them more likely to walk or cycle. Conversely, the number of people who disagreed with the various proposals generally varied from between 25% and 36%, except for the 22% of respondents who disagreed that the 20 mph speed limit and speed reduction features would make Castle Street safer.
- 4.9. A total of 64% respondents said the project is generally a good idea, with some of those saying the project could be improved further. A total of 36% of respondents said that the project isn't generally a good idea.
- 4.10. Where respondents raised specific qualitative issues in the questionnaires or at the exhibition, these were mostly where respondents had concerns about the proposals. The main issues of concern raised were: the proposed width of Castle Street is too narrow; the loss of on-street parking; the proposed loading bays being goods-only; the proposed closure of Short Street; the proposed width of the Bridge Street junction and the proposed Bridge Street loading bay.
- 4.11. The public engagement feedback has been carefully considered and discussed with the Lead Member and local elected members. This has led to some design changes proposed for the project, which are detailed in Appendix A. Those

concerns raised during the engagement that didn't result in design changes are listed in Appendix B with explanations of why changes haven't been made.

4.12. The two elected members for Llangollen are fully supportive of the project, as are Llangollen Town Council. Please see Appendix G for statements of support.

4.13. If Cabinet approves the implementation of the project, construction will commence in September 2021, with completion expected by March 2022.

4.14. If Cabinet approves the project, the next step will be to undertake the statutory consultation for the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which could result in further amendments to the proposed traffic and parking restrictions. If the TRO consultation required more significant changes to the project, then those proposed changes would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration. The Leader; Corporate Director; Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services; and Monitoring Officer would determine if the required changes are considered to be significant.

4.15. It is recommended that the project is implemented with the proposed amendments listed in Appendix A incorporated into the scheme design.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. The proposed project will improve highway infrastructure in Llangollen town centre, contributing to the *Connected Communities* priority.

5.2. The project was initially led and developed by the two elected members and Town Council representatives, in-line with the *Resilient Communities* priority.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. The total project cost is estimated at £1.75m, based on detailed cost estimates which allows some contingency for increases construction material costs. It will be funded by a combination of Council capital funding and WG grant funding which will need to be spent by 31st March 2022. See Appendix H.

6.2. The project has been developed jointly by officers within both Planning, Public Protect and Countryside Services; Highways and Environmental Services with assistance from officers in the Communications team.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. The project contains a number of potential benefits to people's health and the environment in terms of improving facilities for pedestrians, improving the public realm and reducing vehicle speeds.
- 7.2. Some local businesses have expressed concerns about the impact of losing on-street short stay parking. To mitigate against this, amendments are proposed to the operation of the loading bays which will replace the parking. The 14 free parking spaces in Market Street car park will also help mitigate against this.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. Paragraphs 4.4 to 4.10 of this report provide an overview of the engagement work already undertaken. Appendix E provides detail of the responses to the most recent public engagement exercise.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. The Council funding required for this project is already incorporated into our funding plans as it is funding carried forward for road improvement works from previous years. It is welcome that the project has attracted the level of external funding that it has in order for it to proceed. As with all capital projects, especially at this time of rising prices and economic uncertainty, it will be important that the expenditure is monitored closely. The proposal is supported.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. The public engagement demonstrates some significant differences of opinion about the project amongst the local community. Whilst the survey data indicates that nearly two-thirds of respondents think the project is generally a good idea, that still leaves 36% who don't think it is a good idea. The amendments listed in Appendix A will allay some of the concerns raised, but there is still likely to be a significant number of people who are opposed to the project.
- 10.2. Should Cabinet approve the project, thorough monitoring of the project will be undertaken.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. The Highways Act 1980 gives highway authorities the powers to alter the layout of the highway. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides powers to introduce traffic and parking restrictions to regulate the use of the highway.