

**HUNTINGDON HIGH ST, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS
(Report by the Head of Environment & Transport)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Huntingdon High Street was identified as being an area that required improvements due to its importance as a Town Centre area. There is a MTP scheme for £1060k in the programme to carry out these works.
- 1.2 Phase one of the works is on site at present. This consists of laying new surfacing and drainage channels in the High Street from the Market Square to Hartford Road. Completion of this section is due by the end of November. Work has progressed well by using the partnership contract under the County's term contract with May Gurney Contractors. Few complaints have been received about the construction work and compliments are being made about the final appearance.
- 1.3 Phase 2 of the work was planned to be improvements to the Benedicts Court area which joins onto the High Street.

2. RELATED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN HUNTINGON

- 2.1 Huntingdon has several areas which are being considered for redevelopment. These included Princes Street, which is being constructed at present, Chequers Court with new shops, and West Side of Huntingdon between Brampton Rd and Ermine Street.
- 2.2 The combination of these developments could affect the viability of the existing High Street shops, by moving the centre of the town.
- 2.3 It is important to ensure that the High Street viability remains. This would be helped by keeping the centre's appearance at a high standard. The modifications to the building at the High Street entrance to Chequers Court will also enhance this central area, and it is considered that this should be supported.

3. BENEDICTS COURT PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Huntingdon Advisory Group, which has included representatives from many local groups, has been involved in developing the proposals since the scheme's inception. The open space of Benedicts Court has been seen as an important meeting place with a more intimate feel than the Market Square. It is also the cross roads of the Princes Street/ Chequers Court axis with the High Street.
- 3.2 The basis of the proposals is to remove the Gazebo structure with its inherent problems, with more open, attractive seating, and therefore encouraging a footfall into Benedicts Court. The seating will be designed

into a low level structure with feature areas at each end. These are being developed as planted areas or a water feature to give some height and visual impact to the square. The layout will also enable the court to be used as a small performance area. The plan included in Annex A shows the layout.

- 3.3 These proposals were included in the public consultation undertaken in the summer and were favourably received and it is supported by the Town Council and the Town Centre Partnership.

4. PROGRESSION OF THE SCHEME

- 4.1 Funds were released in March 2005 for the first phase of the works. £450k is allocated in 2006/07 for the remainder of the works.
- 4.2 The programme for the works is that the design is finalised by the end of November, tenders be sought after Christmas with work commencing in April 2006.
- 4.3 A request for release of funds is included in Annex B.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Huntingdon town centre is going to experience many development changes over the next few years. The old centre of the town may be put under pressure for these proposals. It is considered that investment in the central area is needed to ensure its continued viability.
- 5.2 The contract for the High Street improvement works has progressed very well, with a positive reaction being received.
- 5.3 The second phase of works is planned for Benedicts Court and £450k is allocated in the MTP for this work in 2006. Release of Funds is required so that tenders can be prepared to commence work in April 2006.

6. RECOMMENDATION

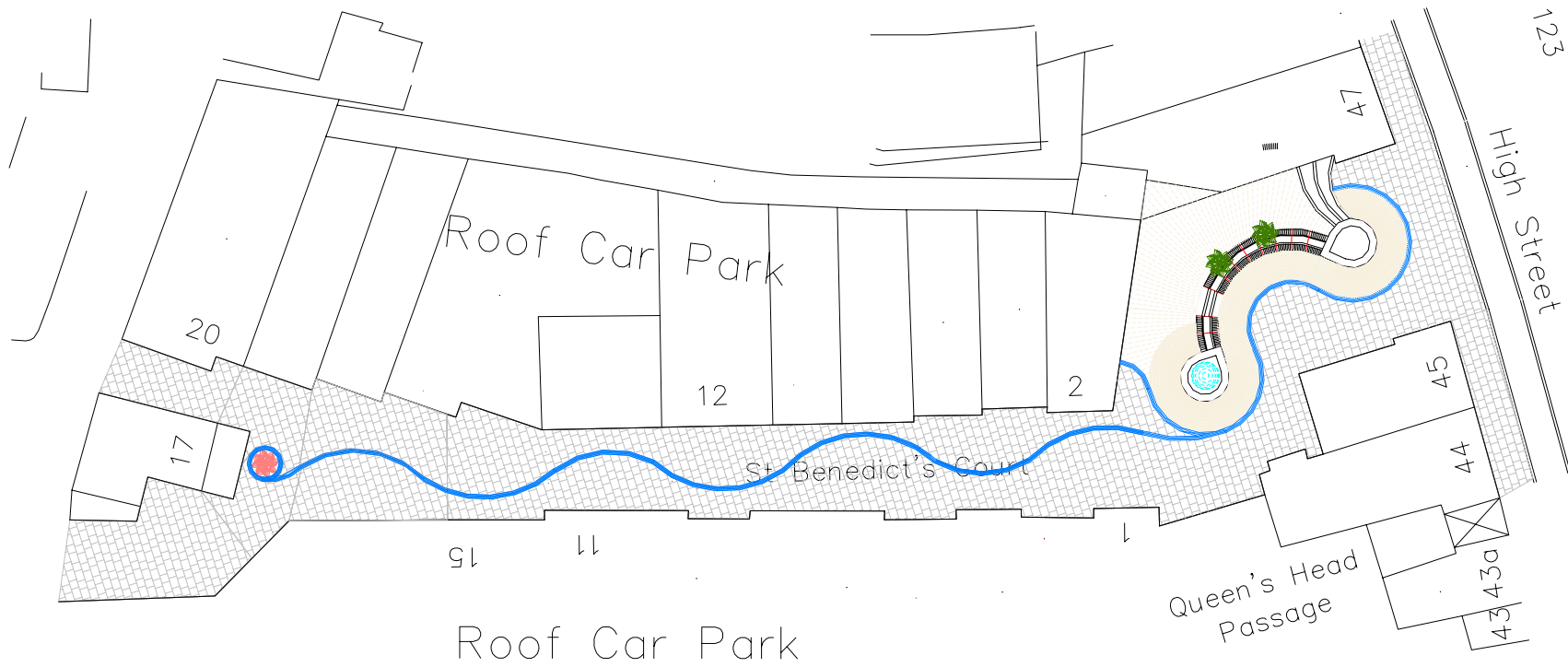
- 6.1 Cabinet are recommended to
- (a) note the progress of the High Street improvements to date; and
 - (b) release funds to enable the second phase to be constructed from April 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:-

1. Environment and Transport files.

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Annex A



St Benedicts Court, Huntingdon - Phase 2 Environmental Improvements

49 Huntingdon Town Centre Environmental Improvements Chris Allen – Project and Assets Manager
Phase 2

Financial Impact

	Net Revenue Impact							Net Capital						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	/	/	/	/	/	/	/201	/	/	/	/	/	/	/201
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	0	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	0
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Approved Budget		4	19	44	55	55	55	4	65	541	450			
Already released		4	19	32	32	32	32	4	65	541				
Amount for which release now requested				12	23	23	23				450			

Justification for Release

The first phase environmental improvement scheme in Huntingdon High Street commenced on site in August 2005 and will be complete in November 2005. With the developments around Huntingdon, it is important to maintain investment in the Town Centre. Benedicts Court has been identified as the next area to be improved.

The monies requested are to cover the design and construction of the next phase of the works.

