

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SERVICE DELIVERY)**

**2 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**CABINET**

**4 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE  
(Report by Head of Environmental Management)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 St Ives Town Centre has been identified as being an area that required improvements due to its importance as a Town Centre area. There is a MTP scheme for £1080k in the programme to carry out these works between 2008 and 2010. A previous phase carried out improvements to the Bridge Street area. Phase 2 of the work is looking to improvements in the Market Hill area of the town centre. It is important to ensure that the town centre's viability remains and this would be helped by keeping the centre's appearance at a high standard as this scheme proposes.
- 1.2 This report outlines the progress to date and the process required to take the scheme forward to construction and to get Cabinet's permission to take the consultation forward.
- 1.3 In September 2006, the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee was presented with a 116 signature petition which asked that, to enable the use of Bridge Street for Pavement cafes, the Committee vary the road traffic regulation order to prohibit loading after 10am daily. Preliminary consultation showed that there was a range of views on this proposal, and formal consultation was requested on the matter. It is intended that this consultation be included with the Market Hill proposals as they are related.

**2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 A previous phase was carried out in 2001 following wide consultation in the Bridge Street / Crown Street area. This removed the parking from the street and replaced it with loading bays and disabled parking. The surfacing was changed to yorkstone pavements and gravel finished asphalt on the road. Despite early concerns over the design, compliments have been made about the final appearance.
- 2.2 As part of the previous consultation, it was agreed that the second phase would be the Market Hill area. The district council supported this by including future monies in the capital programme.
- 2.3 Following the guidelines set by Cabinet, an Advisory Group has been set up for the scheme. This includes the local District and County Councillors, Town Council representatives, Scrutiny representatives and representatives from local consultative groups such as the Town Centre Initiative, Access Group and Civic Society. Meetings have been held since May 2006 with these groups to discuss the principle of the scheme and, more recently, detail of the design.

### **3. MARKET HILL PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Market Hill, a large market square, has a charter market every Monday which takes over most of the space with stalls. On Fridays there is a smaller market, with Farmers Market held fortnightly on Saturdays. There is charged parking (20 spaces) in the centre of the square with free parking on one side of the square. On Mondays, no parking is available within the square.
- 3.2 The pavements are narrow for a town centre and, with stalls erected on them, this causes restrictions to pedestrian flow. Cars will often drive around market place looking for spaces rather than go direct to the off street car parks.
- 3.3 Several options were drawn up and presented to the Advisory Groups over the last two years. These showed a range of options from slight reduction in parking provision, to minimum parking with maximum pedestrianisation. Total pedestrianisation is not possible as there is one road and several accesses off the square which need to be kept available at all times.
- 3.4 From discussions on these proposals, three options have been developed and it is on these options that consultation is planned to be taken forward. The new road layouts for the options 1 & 2 are similar, but Option 2 provides extra parking for Blue Badge holders and delivery areas at the west end of Market Hill. Option 3 is not to carry out any road layout changes, but just to enhance the existing street furniture, signage and surfacing. The Advisory Group has supported the principle of consultation on these options.
- 3.5 The plans included in Annex A show the three options proposed for consultation. The main changes to the existing layout are:
- A public space is created at the west of Market Hill which would be used for the Markets on three days and for special events or fairs at other times. Option 1 has no parking and limited loading / unloading in this area, while Option 2 will have bays for Blue Badge holders and loading / unloading within the area.
  - The war memorial is to be moved to outside the Town Hall where it has a better setting being surrounded by paving rather than roads.
  - The Cromwell Statue will need local adjustment in position to match the new road layout.
  - The pavements are widened to improve access.
  - The Sheep Market area is retained for use with stalls and other events. It could also be used for street cafes, as could the public space area.
  - Access is kept to the roads and private parking areas off the square.

- The market stalls will be designed into the new layout so that pavements are not restricted as at present.
- 3.6 The new layouts will give a better defined area for the markets and make them safer more attractive. Discussions are also in progress with the fair which occupies the town centre for 1 week each year.
- 3.7 The design will also allow for the access for busses through Market Hill. Whether buses use this route will be decided by the County Council and the bus operators and is not part of this consultation.
- 3.8 As part of the discussions on the use and control of parking in the town centre, it was requested that the east end of Broadway be covered by Pay and Display parking based on the existing 1 hour maximum period. This would ensure a regular turn over of cars and easier access for shoppers. The present system is hard to control due to the lack of police presence in the town for this issue. It is however recommended that this proposal be considered separately as part of the County Council's On-Street parking proposals.

#### **4. BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 When Bridge Street was improved in 2001, parking was removed and replaced with designated bays for Blue Badge holders and other bays for loading / unloading. This has reduced the traffic entering the road, but there have been reports that due to lack of enforcement the system is being abused.
- 4.2 There is a café culture in Bridge Street and one application was received for a street café. The Licensing Panel considered the application and recommended that it could be allowed if all loading was removed from the street after 10am. Such changes needed the approval of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee, and they recommended that consultation be carried out so that a decision could be made. Preliminary consultation showed that there is a wide division on making changes to the traffic order for Bridge Street. The majority of residents and shop keepers are against changing the Orders, and the formal groups are generally in favour of a change, but with a variety of suggested times.
- 4.3 In order for this to be progressed, formal consultation needs to be held on the options and reported back to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee. Since the Market Hill proposal also affects parking and loading in the town centre, these need to be considered together.
- 4.4 Taking into account the various options suggested, the Advisory Group agreed that a consultation exercise be undertaken consisting of the following options:-
- (1) to leave the order as it is at present;
  - (2) to restrict the use of one loading bay at the south end of the street to the time of 12 midday to 12 midnight to allow for street cafes
  - (3) to restrict all loading bays from 12 midday to 12 midnight and move the disabled bay from the south end to the north end;

Details are shown in Annex B

## **5. PROGRESSION OF THE SCHEME**

- 5.1 Monies are available in the MTP for construction in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 5.2 The next stage of the process is to go out for public consultation. Since the works are all on the public highway, the approval of the County Council is needed to proceed.
- 5.3 The Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee needs to give permission to consult on the proposals. The method of consultation is set by the County Council and, as partners in the scheme, their formal consultation system will be used.
- 5.4 Following consultation, reports will be made back to this Cabinet and then to the Area Joint Committee for them to approve the scheme and the necessary traffic orders.
- 5.5 Design and tendering for the scheme will follow with construction starting in the January of 2010.

## **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The risk assessment to the completion of the scheme is:
  - As the road is all Public Highway, County Highways approval is needed to the design and materials. Discussions have been on going with county officers and their approval is expected.
  - The Area Joint Committee need to give permission to consult on the scheme. Since Town, District and County Councillors have been involved in the Advisory Groups, their permission is expected to be given.
  - The results of the consultation will determine the public support for the scheme. Amendments can be made to the designs to take account of the requests. The final layout will need the approval of the Area Joint Committee

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 St Ives town centre, like many other towns, is experiencing challenges in the retail sector. It is considered that investment in the town central area is needed to ensure its continued viability and also to improve the environment to make it a better shopping experience.
- 7.2 Discussions on the proposals have been held with the Advisory Groups and they have generally supported the principles of the scheme. Two options have been developed which have taken into account the main views of these groups and these are recommended to go out for public consultation. A third option just enhances the existing layout.

- 7.3 The consultation will include the design of the Market Hill area and discuss the request for revised traffic orders on Bridge Street.
- 7.4 On approval by this Cabinet, the report will progress to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee for approval to consult. Results of the consultation will be brought back to Cabinet for their views.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

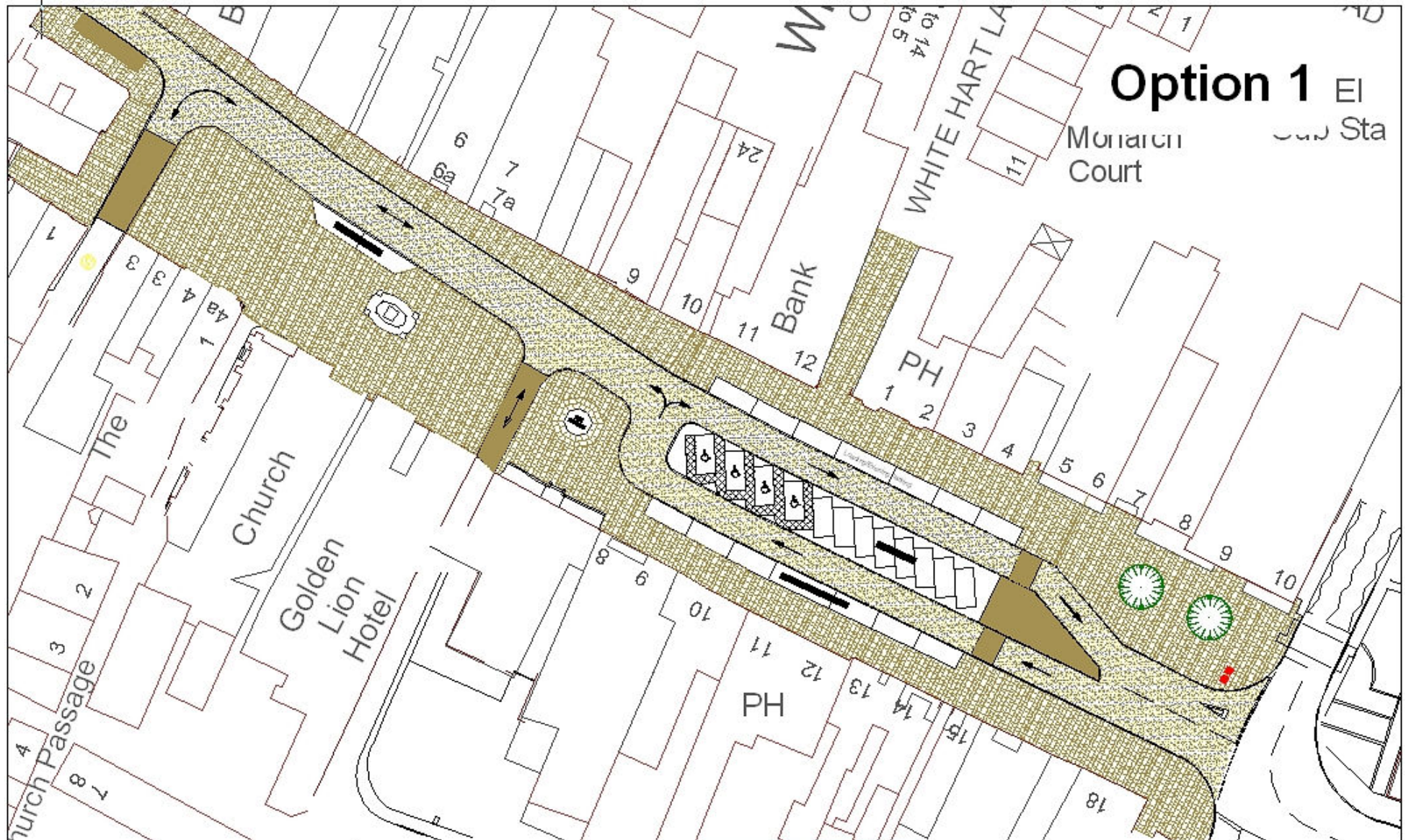
- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet–
- (1) note the progress of the scheme and consultation to date
  - (2) approve the basis of the scheme and agree to submitting a report to Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee for approval to consult
  - (3) and receive feedback at a future meeting.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Advisory Group minutes  
Environmental Management files

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**ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 1**



JOB  
 Environmental Improvements  
 Market Hill  
 St. Ives

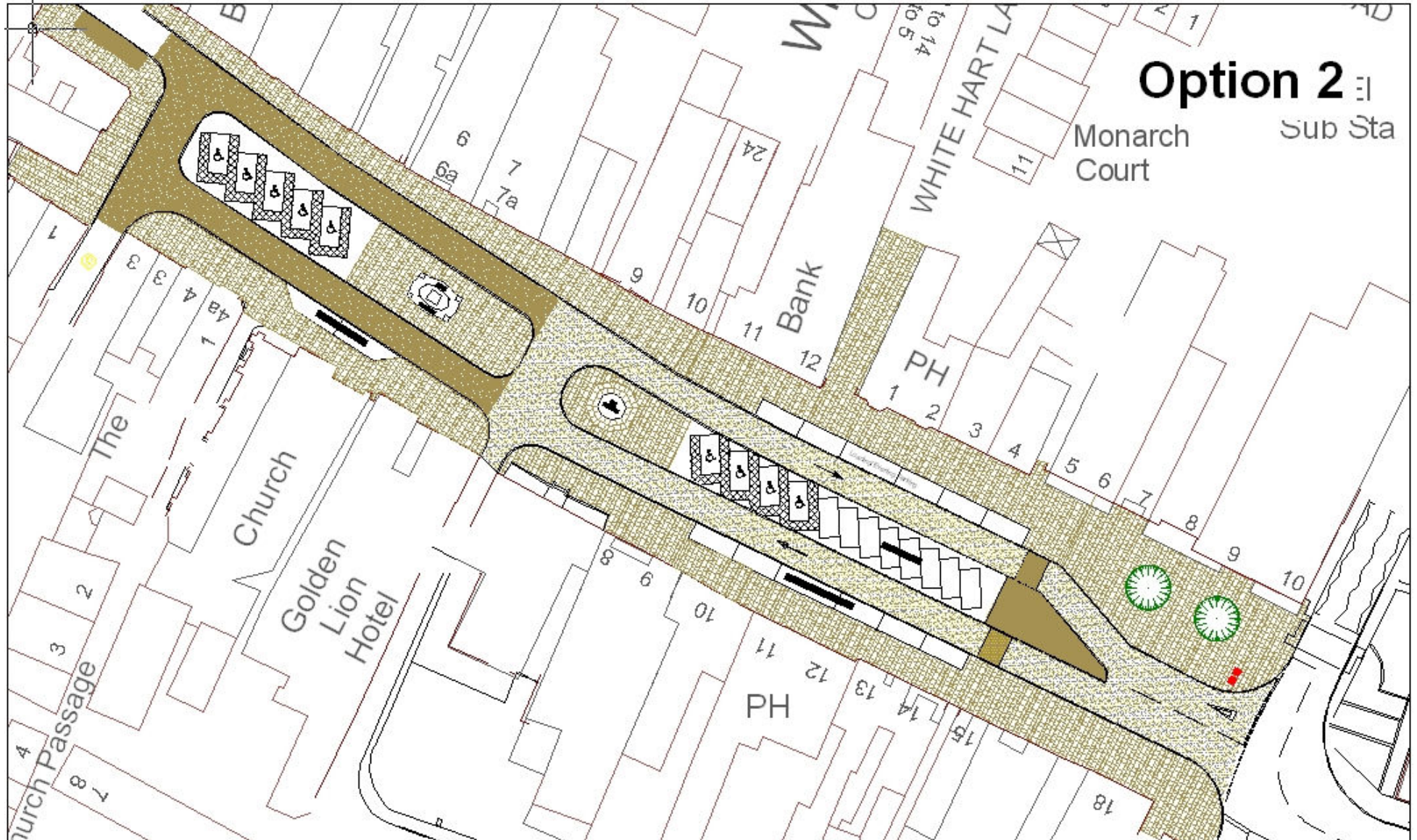
TITLE  
 Proposed Layout

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SCALE	nts	DATE
DRAWN BY	GVV	
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**ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 2**



**Option 2**

Monarch Court

Sub Sta

JOB  
Environmental Improvements  
Market Hill  
St.Ives

TITLE  
Proposed Layout

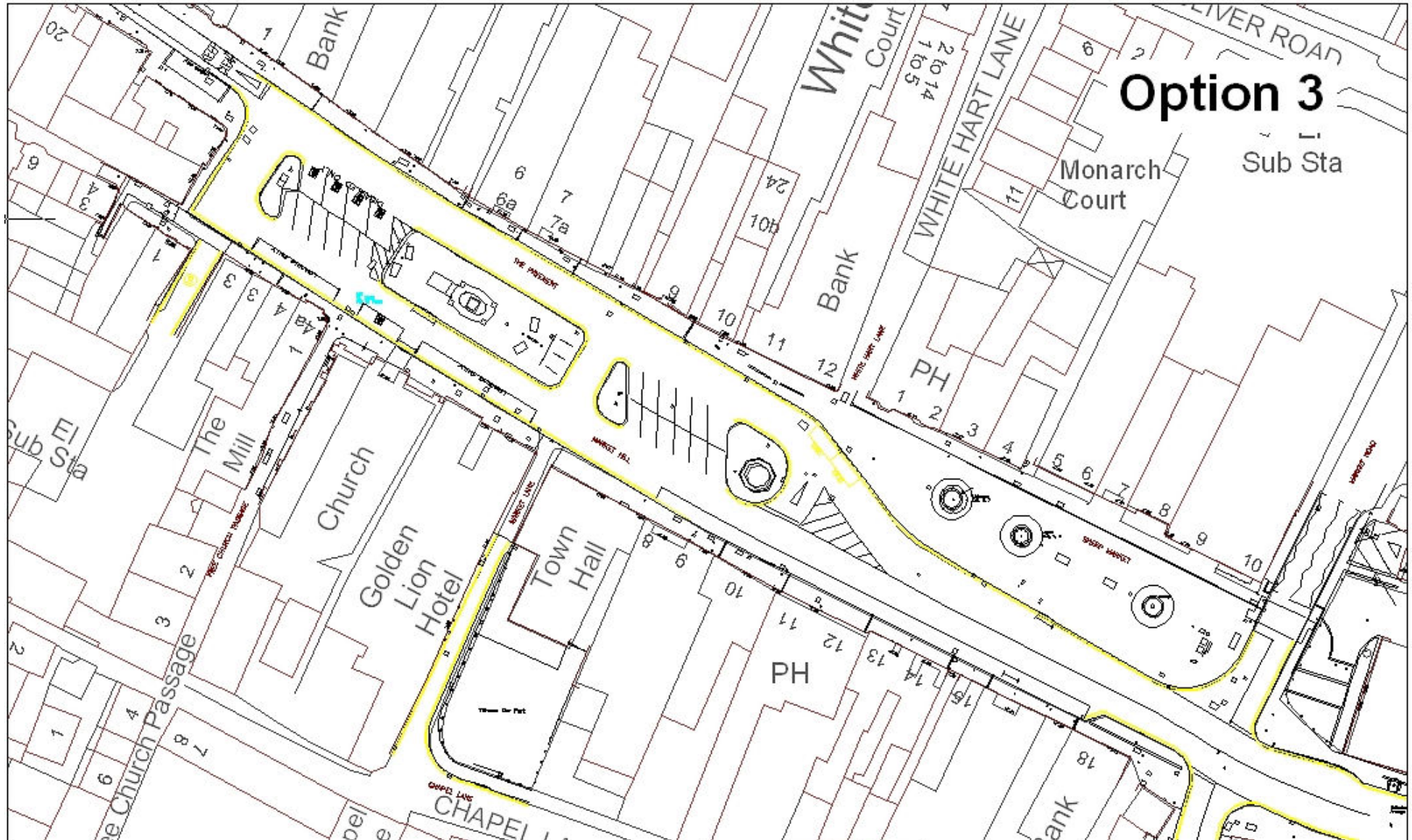
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**ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 3**



**Option 3**  
Sub Sta

JOB  
Environmental Improvements  
Market Hill  
St.Ives

TITLE  
Existing Layout

**Huntingdonshire**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

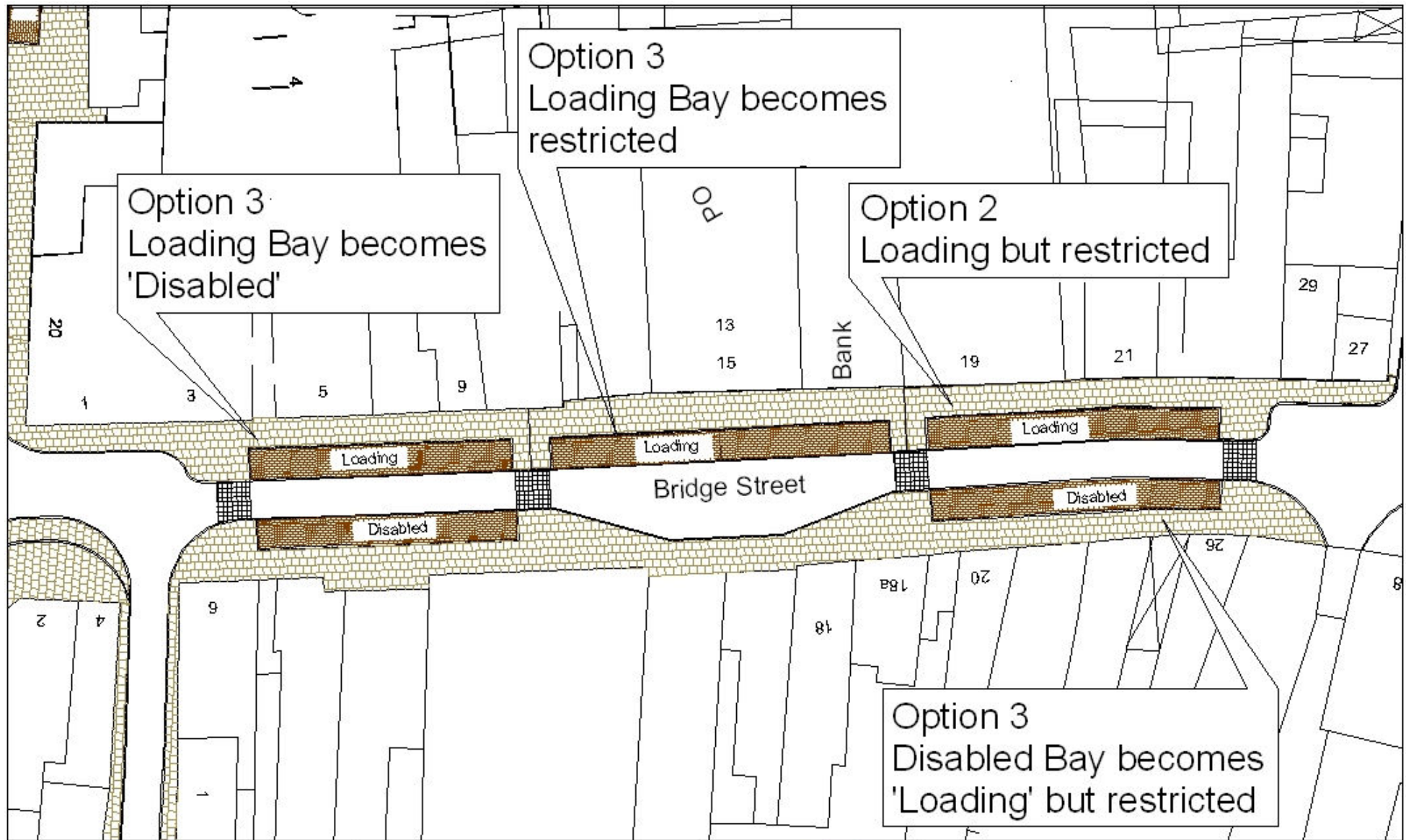
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**ANNEX B – BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS**



JOB  
**Bridge Street**

TITLE  
**Proposed Layout**

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