



Report of the Chair of the Economy & Infrastructure PDC & Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Cabinet – 18 July 2019

Re-imagining Wind Street

Purpose:	To grant approval to officers to progress the potential implementation of the Feasibility Study by developing further proposed plans to facilitate its delivery particularly in regards to funding.
Policy Framework:	Swansea Central Regeneration Framework (SCARF), Local Development Plan (LDP) and Purple Flag.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Development & Physical Regeneration, EU & External Funding, Planning & Control, Highways & Transportation, Community Safety, Licencing, Economy & Infrastructure Policy Development Committee (PDC), Swansea BID (Business Improvement District), Safer Swansea Partnership and South Wales Police.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The principles of the Wind Street Feasibility Study are approved as the over-arching framework for the physical regeneration of Wind Street, subject to a more detailed design and approval process.2) Cabinet approve the silver model scheme outlined in the report to proceed to the detailed design stage and that Officers be permitted to progress applications for funding.3) A further report is prepared setting out the detailed designs, explicit costs, detailed EIA report including action plan to incorporate further consultation and engagement, and confirmation of the funding arrangements prior to final decision on this scheme.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the key findings of the recent Feasibility Study, *Re-imagining Wind Street* which was jointly commissioned by the Council and Business Improvement District (BID). The Feasibility Study, which is attached as Appendix A, provides design concepts to guide the physical regeneration of Wind Street according to a preferred Bronze, Silver and Gold development pathway each consisting of several projects.
- 1.2 This report will also show how the Feasibility Study has considered the current and proposed future role of Wind Street as a key component of the City Centre leisure offer and how the scheme forms part of the wider portfolio of developments taking place across the City Centre.
- 1.3 Details as to the key considerations in delivering the Feasibility Study including the opportunities to access capital funds, secure external funding and options regarding a phased approach are also provided.

2.0 Existing Position

- 2.1 Wind Street is the main entertainment district in the City Centre which is a very popular destination for those seeking a night out in Swansea. On weekends and key evenings thousands of people visit the area given the variety and choice of pubs, clubs and eating establishments that are available within a compact geographic area.
- 2.2 At present, Wind Street is subject to an annual Road Traffic Order which enables it to be pedestrianised on Friday, Saturday and Bank Holiday Sunday evenings from 19.00pm until 6.00am the following morning.
- 2.3 During the week Wednesday and Thursday evenings are also pedestrianised which reflects the popularity of these nights particularly among students. Wind Street is also closed to traffic during key sporting fixtures such as the 6 Nations Rugby tournament as well as on Beaujolais Day and in the lead up to Christmas.
- 2.4 The current method of pedestrianising Wind Street is through the manual placement of cones, barriers and signs by Council personnel at either end of the street. These are stored and left in situ each day which detracts from the attractiveness of the area.
- 2.5 There are automated lifting bollards in place which have recently been commissioned as part of a trial. However, these are not fully functional at present. They are also not robust enough to prevent a vehicle from gaining deliberate access whilst the set-back position of the bollards at the junction of Wind Street/ Victoria Road is problematic.

3.0 Strategic Context

3.1 *Creating a vibrant and viable City Centre and economy* is a key corporate objective for the Council and provides the strategic context for supporting the recommendations set out within this report.

3.2 The *Swansea Central Regeneration Area Framework* or SCARF for short, which was adopted by the Council in February 2016, provides a strategic framework for how the Council will achieve this goal and regenerate the City Centre.

3.3 The SCARF identifies the key development sites in the City Centre and includes an appraisal of Wind Street. According to its Accessibility and Connectivity Strategy the principal of introducing a shared space/ low speed environment or pedestrianising Wind Street is endorsed.

'The Priority Area will continue to be an attractive mixed-use part of the City Centre based on its historic character and its emphasis on leisure and entertainment. Its role in linking the City Centre with the waterfront should continue to evolve through new development and enhance active pedestrian routes.'

3.3 As one of only two areas in Wales to have a Purple Flag, Swansea City Centre's evening and night time economy has been recognised since February 2014 for its high standards of management and the strength of its partnerships. Purple Flag is underpinned by several core themes, including the free movement and well-being of the public which offers support for the improvements proposed as part of the Feasibility Study.

3.4 Wind Street has been a key priority for the Policy Development and Delivery Committee (PDC) for Economy & Infrastructure. PDC has provided support and advice regarding the process of the inception and development of the Feasibility Study as well as endorsing the proposals it contains.

4.0 Background

4.1 During the implementation of the EU funded Waterfront City Project the opportunity arose to fully pedestrianise Wind Street. However, this was not considered a political priority at the time and funds were redirected to other projects within the Waterfront City programme.

4.2 Since then Swansea BID, which represents the businesses within the area, has lobbied the Authority to bring forward a scheme on the basis of its economic benefits.

4.3 In 2016 BID surveyed the businesses on Wind Street to gauge their support with over 90% of respondents being in favor. This was followed by a wider consultation exercise which was undertaken by City Centre Management on behalf of Highways and Transportation which galvanised support from the businesses as well as residents and started to test the servicing and access needs of the area.

- 4.4 This research highlighted the following key factors:
- Improving the attractiveness and appeal of the area.
 - Increasing safety.
 - Concerns about traffic congestion in and around the City Centre.
 - Concerns about access to premises by the public particularly elderly and disabled people.
 - Commercial opportunities associated with the expansion of outdoor seating areas and for events.
- 4.5 The ability of businesses to service their premise was also critical. The research found however that many businesses have rear access and the majority of loading takes place in the morning.
- 4.6 Following the reporting of the consultation results, support and funding was secured to commission a feasibility study jointly with Swansea BID. The objective of the study was to develop and test a range of suitable options and provide a preferred approach together with outline costs for the physical regeneration of Wind Street.
- 4.7 The Consultancy Brief, which also included the production of a delivery strategy to progress the scheme from concept to reality, required the following key factors be taken into account:
- Planning and the conservation and heritage status of the area.
 - Existing and ongoing maintenance of the public realm.
 - The wider servicing requirements of the street.
 - Location and type of street furniture.
 - Approach to premise licencing.
 - Management and development of pavement cafes.
 - Highway network issues.
 - Footfall.
 - Events.
 - Visitor experience.
 - Uses (daytime, evening and night time economies).
 - CCTV coverage.
 - Parking provision.
 - Occupation of commercial and residential premise.
 - Topography.
 - Connectivity of development sites within the City Centre.
 - Taxi provision.
 - Governance and on-site supervision arrangements.
- 4.8 External regeneration consultant Owen Davies Consulting was procured to oversee the project which commenced in January 2018 and was completed earlier this year.

5.0 Feasibility Study Process

- 5.1 The Feasibility Study, which is appended (Appendix A), was developed according to a series of set stages underpinned by a process of collaboration and consultation with identified stake-holders.

5.2 The key objectives of the Feasibility Study were:

- Great emphasis on pedestrian prioritisation.
- Improvement to the physical and economic environment to support the day, evening and night-time economies.
- Support for businesses to be creative, inspiring and ambitious with their day and night-time operations.
- Creation of a more inspiring landmark destination and enhance the brand and character of Wind Street.
- Examination of the way the street is regulated, managed and maintained, and identify ways for a more efficient and safer Wind Street.
- Consideration of how Wind Street will coordinate with other City Centre regeneration projects.

5.3 As part of its execution the Feasibility Study reflects on the changing evening and night time sector as well as the national security context. Research on Wind Street past and present in terms of its history and uses now and over the decades is also provided as well as a look to the future regarding its relationship with other development projects particularly the Digital Arena and Castle Square. Given the investment in these areas for leisure use it is imperative that Wind Street keeps pace to provide a complimentary offer.

5.4 As part of its analysis of Wind Street, the Feasibility Study identifies security, access and movement, street lighting and CCTV, heritage and conservation, building use and events, use of outside space, patterns of use, sun path/ trees, materials and components and management of the ENTE as the key issues and opportunities for potential interventions.

5.5 From the base-lining process, the following 8-point *Vision for Wind Street* has emerged.

Wind Street should become a place that:

- *Is hospitable, attractive and showcases the best of the city's heritage and built environment.*
- *Is accessible and welcoming to all.*
- *Inspires and encourages existing and new businesses to diversify their offer and create a first-class evening and night time destination.*
- *Retains its exciting edge but also welcomes all ages and interests through a wide variety of dining, drinking and entertainment experiences throughout the days and nights.*
- *Is safe and secure from major threats and minimises and manages nuisance activity.*
- *Supports businesses in carrying out their day to day operations.*
- *Provides opportunities for events, festivals, markets and performances.*
- *Celebrates the best of Swansea and becomes a foundation to the city's identity and brand.*

5.6 89% of respondents participating in the consultation that was undertaken as part of the scheme gave their support to the overall vision as well as the draft proposals outlined below.

6.0 Feasibility Study Proposals

6.1 Each of the proposed projects for improving Wind Street are summarised as follows, some of which are stand-alone whilst others are interdependent.

6.2 The results of a public and stake-holder consultation exercise, which included both an on-line survey and engagement event, are shown below in regards to most of the recommended measures.

6.2.1 *Improved Security Measures*

- Install PAS 68 Rated vehicle deterrent fully automated bollards with remote access at either end of the street and undertake associated junction alignment works.

6.2.2 *One-Way Street (88% support)*

- Devise a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to create a one-way vehicle system with ingress at the Castle Square junction to the western end of the street and egress at the eastern end onto Victoria Road.

6.2.3 *Controlled Access*

- Amend the existing road closure to minimise vehicle movements and implement a controlled access system that allows access for loading and unloading and for disabled customers.
- 82% of consultees supported controlling vehicle access throughout the day and 86% agreed that the existing road closure period should be extended through-out the week.

6.2.4 *Reduced Road Width & Increased Pavement Area (91% support)*

- Capitalise on the introduction of a one-way system to realign the road and reduce its width to create a corresponding increase in pavement and public areas.

6.2.5 *Defined External Seating Spaces*

- Following on from 6.2.4 above, develop protocols to provide more clearly defined and uniform outdoor seating areas using the additional pavement space available to facilitate businesses to expand and create new pavement cafés.

6.2.6 *Fixed Boundary System for Seating Areas*

- In conjunction with 6.2.5 above, implement a proprietary system for a fixed boundary treatment to define the outside seating area. Options include the use of fixed removable metal posts and infill panels.

6.2.7 *Use & Management of Pavement Areas (85% support)*

- Update the existing Pavement Café scheme to encourage more applications from businesses with the aim of increasing the level of day time and early evening activity and diversifying the demographic of visitors to the area, in particular families.

Unifying and streamlining the licencing system, introducing a flat rate based on square footage and relaxing the conditions to allow the use of cutlery and glassware are among the ideas that have been presented

together with trialling such a scheme on Wind Street.

6.2.8 *Formal Public Space (90% support)*

- Given the proposals above regarding the reduced dominance of the vehicle route, utilise the additional space to create more substantial formal public spaces at key locations, for example at the junction of St Mary's Street. Install new furniture and infrastructure such as Wi-Fi and pop-up power points to encourage events and activities.

6.2.9 *Gateway Features & Lighting*

- Replace the existing aging 'blue-style' street lights with the new city-wide standard.
- Replace the current pea lights in the trees, which are nearing 'end of life' with an easier to maintain and more cost effective solution.
- Develop and install an artistic landmark feature or features at gateways /key junctions to help establish a distinct identity.
- Incorporate ornamental lighting and effects.

6.2.10 *Tree Management*

- Improve the maintenance of the existing trees; specifically explore opportunities to reduce the density of the tree canopies to allow more natural light onto the street.

7.0 Phasing Options

7.1 In response to the Brief, subject to the availability of funding, the consultants have prioritised each of the proposed measures according to a Bronze, Silver and Gold proposition which can be delivered in phases according to a development pathway.

7.2 Bronze represents the most basic scenario focusing on vehicle mitigation, controlling vehicle access and the associated realigning of the immediate junctions.

7.3 Silver includes the core components of the Bronze scheme plus realigning and resurfacing the carriageway, repointing and creating new paved and public areas and replacing the street furniture and public lighting.

7.4 Gold incorporates both Bronze and Silver elements plus those measures that will enhance the identity and character of Wind Street as a landmark destination. Gateway and art work features, feature lighting and a boundary system for external seating areas are among the gold-star plans.

7.5 In terms of updating the existing Café Licencing Scheme, whilst this will entail a significant amount of officer time, providing that internal resources allow, this process could be undertaken separately to the physical regeneration works subject to which there is potential to generate additional income for the Council. It would however be opportune to dovetail this process with the wider measures being proposed to create additional space and pavement areas.

8.0 Delivery & Risks

- 8.1 The Feasibility Study provides a high level conceptual design strategy to upgrade Wind Street which is reflected in the outline costs in Paragraph 9.0 and programme for delivery.
- 8.2 According to the delivery plan which sets out the key steps to the delivery of the project, a 27 month programme is predicted from the point of, securing the funding for the capital works and corporate approval to proceed to the completion of the physical works on site. The programme will include the formal EIA process from the outset running in parallel with, and directly informing the detailed design including as part of that engagement and consultation.
- 8.3 Whilst this is an extended timetable which would be subject to the extent of the measures approved, it is contingent on a number of risk factors many of which have been identified within the Feasibility Study by the consultants.
- 8.4 The availability of funding and the ability of the Authority to provide officer resources to oversee the project are the most immediate issues that require resolution. Detailed design will be procured, and accessibility considerations will form part of the brief to the procured design team, informed by the detailed EIA process.
- 8.5 Following detailed design there will be specific consultation on key aspects such as traffic proposals, as well as further consideration by Cabinet prior to any final decision on implementation.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 A cost assessment to deliver the scheme in its entirety or in part is included in the Feasibility Study, a summary of which is provided below:
- *Bronze Model:* £680,000
 - *Silver Model:* £1,477,000
 - *Gold Model:* £2,214,000
- 9.2 These estimates are indicative of the approximate level of investment that is required according to the conceptual nature of the measures being proposed.
- 9.3 Whilst a detailed design will clarify more precisely the actual sums involved, the Feasibility Study has facilitated discussion both internally and with external partners regarding how the project might be funded.
- 9.4 As an independent company limited by guarantee, Swansea Business Improvement District (BID) is eligible to source an interest free Town Centre Loan. This scheme, which is administered by the Council on behalf of Welsh Government, aims to support projects which help regenerate towns and city centres across Wales.
- 9.5 Whilst confirmation of the funding is subject to an application and quality assurance process, discussions regarding the affordability and terms of a

potential loan have been undertaken with BID over several months. Agreement in principal has been reached to apply for approx. £28,200 during the current BID term which extend runs until 2021.

- 9.6 These sums represent the annual BID levy that is currently generated by the occupiers located on Wind Street.
- 9.7 As part of this arrangement, BID would be involved in the delivery of the Feasibility Study. In addition, it has been agreed that a percentage of the revenue generated by the Café Licencing Scheme on Wind Street would be re-directed to help fund projects that support the management and development of the area.
- 9.8 As a largely capital project, external funding sourced at a regional level by the Council through the Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRI Programme) is available and can be used in combination with the Town Centre Loan to support the delivery of the Wind Street scheme. As one of several local strategic projects, early indicators suggest that a formal application would be supported which would generate approximately £500,000.
- 9.9 In order to secure this funding, a capital investment by the Council will be required to provide the necessary level of match funding to support the TRI bid. The internal funding that would be required for the silver level would be circa £1,000,000 which could be derived from current unallocated city centre capital allocations listed in the 2019 capital budget. In addition, consideration is being given to a revised licencing charging structure for street furniture although charge levels are restricted by “full cost recovery” only
- 9.10 Given that the total amount of funding that is available from the various sources reported above is £1,528,200, the calculations suggest that the delivery of the Silver Model is possible. Members views are requested on which standard is preferable
- 9.11 In terms of the delivery of the additional measures according to the Gold Model, opportunities can be assessed as the project progresses to secure further funding for subsequent phases. For example, exploring with the individual businesses on Wind Street financing developing their own external spaces, using loans or co-investing. BID have also agreed to consider investing in the area and/or applying for further funding in the subsequent BID term subject to a successful ballot. Particular areas of BID interest include destination branding and street café furniture to provide a more uniform and quality public space.
- 9.12 The table below summarises how the proposed scheme will be funded according to the Silver Model.

PROPOSED FUNDING PROGRAMME:	CCS Capital Programme	TRI Programme	Town Centre Loan via BID	TOTAL (£)
PROPOSED SUMS (£):	£1,000,000	£500,000	£28,200	£1,528,200

9.13 It is recommended that Members approve implementation of the outline scheme on the basis of the funding package above. It is also recommended that further funding be pursued by officers to bring forward enhancements according to the Gold proposition.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 In the event that a decision is made to permanently close Wind Street to vehicular traffic because it is considered no longer necessary (or should be diverted) then an application to the Magistrates Court can be made by the highway authority to permanently close the highway.

10.2 The highway authority must give notice, at least 28 days before the application is made, to certain prescribed bodies and must display the notice at the ends of the highway. At least 28 days before the day on which the application is made, the highway authority must also publish notice in the London Gazette and in a local newspaper. The application must not be made if, within two months from the date of service of the notice, the district council, parish council or chairman of the parish meeting have, by notice to the highway authority, refused to consent to its being made. At the hearing before the Magistrates' Court, the applicant and any person to whom notice is required to be given, and any person who uses the highway has a right to be heard. The application by the highway authority for a stopping up order is treated by the Court as being by way of complaint, and so any person whose objection results in the order not being made is entitled to recover his costs from the order-making authority.

10.3 It may be necessary to implement a new Traffic Regulation Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in the event of a change to the current arrangements which are currently in force on Wind Street.

10.4 The Council will need to comply with the terms and conditions attached to any grant funding utilised in conjunction with the regeneration match funding budget identified in this report. This will include specified outputs as per the funding programme requirements.

10.5 All contracts for works, goods and services necessary to deliver the projects must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant EU Regulations as appropriate. The contractual liabilities/ obligations of the Council and any appointed contractors will be covered by the individual contracts entered into.

10.6 All statutory consents required in proposals to utilise the regeneration match-funding budget will be the responsibility of the Planning and City Regeneration Division.

10.7 A FPR7 report will be prepared for approval once the complete funding package has been secured and is fully defined.

11.0 Equality & Engagement Implications

- 11.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 11.2 The Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that due regard has been paid to the above.
- 11.3 In order to comply with the relevant equality regulations, an Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed. The Screening Form is attached as Appendix B.
- 11.4 It is recommended that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) be undertaken. In terms of the timings of the EIA, this will be undertaken during the next stage in the project and the development of detailed designs, the outcome of which will be formally reported and subject to formal consultation processes. .
- 11.5 We do recognise even at this early state there then maybe some potential equality implications, for example disabled users and older people may be impacted. These potential implications will be fully explored and consideration will be given to minimising the potential impact within the design process.
- 11.6 A process of consultation with a wide range of internal and external stake-holders was undertaken as part of the development of the Feasibility Study, the information derived from which was used to help shape the development proposals. It is anticipated that a similar approach will be undertaken in regards to the detailed design implementation of the Study if approved.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

- Appendix A Reimagining Wind Street – Feasibility Study.
Appendix B Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form.