

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 25 APRIL 2012

PROPOSED AGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF BURY STREET, ABINGDON

Report by the Interim Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. Planning permission has been granted by the Vale of White Horse District Council for a major refurbishment of the pedestrianised Bury Street shopping area in Abingdon. This is the first phase of plans to revitalise the town centre that will also involve the redevelopment of the shops along Broad Street and the Charter area including the multi-storey car park in the longer term.

The Proposed Agency Agreement

2. The detailed design for the refurbishment includes resurfacing Bury Street with York stone paving and the use of Windsor style standard lamps. Both of these will be more expensive to maintain than the materials and street lights the county council normally uses on the highway. To enable these features to be used while ensuring this council does not incur additional maintenance costs, it is proposed that the county and district councils enter into an agency arrangement so the district council takes on the maintenance responsibilities and associated liabilities for Bury Street. It is an alternative to this council requiring commuted sums for maintenance and is more acceptable to the developer and the district council.
3. The draft agency agreement is at Annex 1 to this report and a plan showing the area that would be covered at Annex 2. Its main purpose is to cover future maintenance, but it also refers to some related management functions concerning the removal of obstructions and other non-compliances.

Financial and Staff Implications

4. The agency agreement will remove future financial risk from this council as it will not have to bear the costs of future maintenance and it will be indemnified for payment of compensation in the event of accident or injury as a result of poor maintenance. These risks will be borne by the district council. However, if the district council wanted to end the arrangement within 25 years, this council would require the highway to be returned in a safe and satisfactory

state with an appropriate commuted sum for the 'abnormal' maintenance costs for the remaining period of the 25 years. There would be a small reduction in staff time for inspecting and maintaining the asset; but not so significant as to result in staff savings.

RECOMMENDATION

5. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **approve the draft agency agreement with the Vale of White Horse District Council for the maintenance of Bury Street, Abingdon, as set out at Annex 1 and shown on the plan at Annex 2 to this report;**
 - (b) **delegate authority to the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Highways and Transport) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to deal with any changes from the above relating to the extent (but limited to Bury Street) or terms of the agreement.**

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Background papers: none

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