



Consultancy Opportunity Connectivity of Halesworth Town Centre

Background

Like many small market towns Halesworth struggles to keep its centre vibrant. However, it has some advantages and important assets that it wishes to build upon.

- The Thoroughfare, because of the many independent shops, cafes, crafts and antiques, its pleasant appearance and semi pedestrianised status, is seen as the heart of the town.
- The Market Place, which still holds a small produce market once a week, is another pleasing space with notable heritage buildings but is cut off both visually and physically from the Thoroughfare. It is also dominated by parked cars which prevent it being used more as a public space.
- The Town Park and Millennium Green together provide the largest town centred open space in Suffolk with a national cycle route traversing it. However, the only connection from the Thoroughfare is through the car park and underpass which is dark and often floods. There is no indication for visitors that it is there to explore.
- The long-term car park site is accessed by a narrow pathway from the Thoroughfare. Along with parking and recycling bins it contains a wide range of different styled buildings dotted around the site. Developers are showing interest in the site.
- The Local Plan designates land in Halesworth for 750+ new homes over the next few years. Some building has started, and other developments are reaching the planning stage. This will increase the population bringing money and purchasing power to the town but better infrastructure is required.

Remit

Halesworth Town Council (HTC), in partnership with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG), requires a feasibility study and costed options appraisal

work to be undertaken that will assist them in ensuring the sustainability and economic viability of the Town Centre and in improving the experience of this area for residents and visitors.

This work focuses on the 'connectivity' of areas that together make up the town centre

- Thoroughfare to the Market Place
- Thoroughfare to the Town Park/Millennium Green
- Thoroughfare to long term car park site (developments pending)
- Coordinated and well-designed signage to places of interest such as the Town Park, Halesworth Art Gallery, St Mary's church, The Cut Arts Centre and for the circular town centre walk – Market Place-Chediston Street-footpath to Rectory Street-Bridge Street-Thoroughfare-Market Place
- Possibilities for making the Thoroughfare more pedestrianised and therefore safer.

Project Aims

The consultant will be required to consider each of the following core objectives and provide options for enhancing the connectivity of each. The implications of achieving these options must be identified and proposals are sought which will address technical matters arising (eg. changes to Highways designations, land ownership and potential acquisition). In addition, the cumulative impact these objectives may have on each other must be considered. Where impacts are identified, any issues arising (both positive and negative) must be clearly set out including where possible, options for addressing problems or enhancing benefits. Finally, where realistic options are proposed, the consultant will be expected to provide estimates for the full cost of delivering them. This would include works, associated professional fees, and costs related to local authorities' permissions / licences / other.

Core Objectives

- Thoroughfare to the Market Place
 - To create a clear physical and / or visual connectivity between The Thoroughfare and the Market Place.
 - Impacts on and changes to connecting roads and pavements will need to be considered (see below re. Thoroughfare pedestrianisation).
- Market Place
 - To explore ways of using the Market Place more as a public space for leisure activities.
 - Ensure the weekly produce market is well catered for in any changes
 - Impacts on car parking and traffic flow are a consideration, and solutions are sought on how it can be managed.
- Thoroughfare to the Town Park/Millennium Green
 - To create a link between these high profile areas of the town which avoids crossing the mini-bypass (Saxon's Way). Access at present is

through the Town Car Park with no defined pedestrian route and via a poorly lit underpass which floods. There is no signage. Another park entrance at the Angel Link roundabout has an unsafe crossing over the bypass. Options can include identification of private land for access purposes and enquires to ascertain whether landowners would be willing to consider selling or leasing it. Access to the river frontage should also be explored.

- Thoroughfare to long term car park site (developments pending).
 - There is already a link to this site but discussions with the site owner will be necessary, and possibly in conjunction with HTC and the NPSG in the context of overall site use.
- Coordinated and well-designed signage to places of interest such as the Town Park, Halesworth Art Gallery, St Mary's church, The Cut Arts Centre and to indicate the circular town centre walk.
 - Options for design in keeping with the town's character and optimal placement of signage.
 - Proposals for maximising signage effect while avoiding visual clutter.
 - The above to form the basis of a brief to an artist to refine the design.
- Possibilities for making the Thoroughfare more pedestrianised and therefore safer.
 - While the Thoroughfare gives an impression of being pedestrianised, it is categorised as a through road. A range of options is required, from methods of discouraging through traffic, street furniture to provide divisions of users, to full pedestrianisation.
 - Implications for residents, traders, delivery vehicles and people with disabilities (who may otherwise use Blue Badges) to park in the Thoroughfare must be considered and potential solutions proposed,

Consultation

The work needs to deliver the feasibility of and costed options for achieving the 'connectivity' wanted for the town. It is expected that concepts of good design and urban planning will be integral to any options presented.

Consultation with all stakeholders will be expected. These will include HTC, local planners, Highways Department, Thoroughfare and Market Place businesses and representative groups, residents immediately affected by any proposals, visitors, relevant landowners and developers and other community representatives.

The consultant will report regularly (details to be worked out with the consultant) to a group of HTC councillors and NPSG representatives during the feasibility work and they will receive the consultant's final report. Meetings will be arranged by the town clerk. This group will be responsible for interviewing and selecting applicants.

Your submission should include:

- Brief proposals as to how you would conduct the study.
- A full CV of background and experience
- Examples and details of similar projects that have been completed
- Background details of anybody that would be involved in the consultation.
- Two recent client references if possible
- The fees proposed for carrying out the project and suggestions as to timescales for delivery.

To assist potential applicants an information pack can be accessed on the Town Council website. This includes:

- East Suffolk District Council (formerly Waveney) Local Plan
- Halesworth Town Council's four-year strategic plan
- The Neighbourhood Plan's draft Vision and Objectives
- Design Codes report commissioned by the NPSG
- People and Places reports
- Relevant maps of the town

For further information prior to making a bid the applicant can contact Keith Greenberg, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan group on kgreenberg1955@gmail.com.

Written submissions should be sent electronically to Nick Rees, Town Clerk clerk@halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk

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