
Executive Decision

St Martin's Link

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 30th September 2026

Lead director/officer: Andrew L Smith

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: Andrew Smith, Director Planning, Development and Transportation
- Author contact details: Andrewl.smith@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

This report seeks approval for the demolition of properties at 12-20 Market Place and the subsequent development of a connecting walkway link between St Martin's and Green Dragon Square.

The scheme includes fully accessible pathways, landscaping, play equipment and potential opportunities for 'pop-up' retail concessions such as mobile cafes.

2. Recommendations

The City Mayor is recommended to:

- a. approve the St Martin's link scheme, with a total scheme cost of £3.5m;
- b. note the £2.42m already approved within the capital programme for 12-20 Cank Street Link (a previous version of this scheme);
- c. approve the transfer of £1.08m budget from the Transport Improvement Works programme earmarked for transport related schemes such as this.

3. Background and further details

- 3.1 The St Martin's Link scheme lies within the city centre in an important central position between Leicester Market, Green Dragon Square, St Martin's Square, the Old Town and the Lanes. See Appendix 1 for site and scheme plans.
- 3.2 A new landscaped connecting walkway link is proposed between the St Martin's Square retail area and Green Dragon Square. The path would establish a continuous pedestrian link between the Town Hall Square and the Lanes area, directly connecting the civic centre with the regenerated Market area, the Lanes independent shopping area and the Old Town.
- 3.3 To facilitate the scheme land has been assembled by the council between Cank Street and Market Place, including 1980s council owned former retail properties to be demolished at 12-20 Market Place. New gable end walls will be constructed that will provide structural support to the retained buildings and the potential for providing murals is being explored.
- 3.4 The scheme includes fully accessible connecting paths between Cank Street and Market Place with lighting, seating and bins provided.

- 3.5 The city centre has very limited green open space presently and this site provides the opportunity to create a substantial new green heart, providing an attractive amenity for visitors and also providing shade and cover from extreme weather.
- 3.6 The site lies within the Market Place Conservation Area and a high quality landscaping solution is proposed. This will include structural tree planting that will help to frame and protect views, for example of the Town Hall clock tower. Lower level planting will include a mixture of biodiverse shrubs, sensory planting and amenity grassland. Sustainable urban drainage planting zones will be incorporated to accommodate surface water run-off and provide drought resistance.
- 3.7 Children's play space is very limited in the city centre and this scheme has been designed to provide low level linear active play equipment running through the site. This will be of timber construction to blend with the landscaping.
- 3.8 Specific parts of the site have been designed to accommodate paved areas for freestanding pods or vehicles to provide concessions, for example cafes. This will provide opportunities to link complementary activity with the established vibrant St Martin's retail area, as well as provide refreshments for those using the space, including families with children.
- 3.9 The Heart of Leicester Plan ([Heart of Leicester - A Ten Year Plan](#)) identifies a number of key actions for the city centre which align with this scheme, including developing a more accessible and connected place, building on the historic value of the centre with new green spaces and improved public realm and also providing new play opportunities. The scheme would also contribute significantly to a plan aim to create a more welcoming centre, particularly for families and visitors to the city. Together with the regenerated Market Place and Old Town/Lanes area, this scheme would help to provide a well connected central cluster of city centre attractions for residents and visitors.
- 3.10 The scheme has a total estimated cost of £3.5m. This includes provision for professional and planning fees, demolition, main scheme delivery and landscaping establishment, after which the maintenance would be adopted by the council's parks and open spaces service. This scheme supersedes the previous proposals for this site with a sum of £2.42m being carried forward. A further £1.08m funding can be provided to support the walkway link scheme from available resources in the Transport Improvement Works Programme which is earmarked for transport related schemes such as this.
- 3.11 A planning application for the scheme is expected to be submitted coterminous with this decision report. Demolition would be expected to commence this calendar year and complete Spring 2027. Estimated completion of the scheme would be end of 2027.

4. Details of Scrutiny

An all councillor briefing session was held on 22nd September to provide details of the scheme and comments have been considered. A follow up briefing has been provided to a local ward councillor who could not attend the session.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

This report recommends approval of a re-designed scheme for the area between Marketplace North and Cank Street at a total cost of £3.5m. This will be funded from £2.42m already approved within the capital programme for this site, along with a budget transfer of £1.08m from the Transport Improvement Works programme, which is earmarked for transport-related schemes such as this. The on-going revenue maintenance cost of the site can be managed within existing budgets.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance

Dated: 18th September 2026

4.2 Legal implications

The release of capital funds being requested is for the creation of a new public realm space that will connect Cank Street to Green Dragon Square.

The proposed works identified in this report may be subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015-("Regulations") and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules and as such the Council's Procurement team and Legal services will need to be engaged to provide advice and ensure such works are procured in accordance with the Regulations.

Any works will also be subject to the appropriate planning and other consents being obtained and complied with.

Signed: Meera Patel, Solicitor, ext. 4069

Dated: 23rd September 2026

4.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regards to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender, reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. This report seeks approval for the demolition of properties at 12-20 Market Place and the subsequent development of a connecting walkway link between St Martin's and Green Dragon Square. As part of the continuing work and tendering of the scheme through the construction framework to develop the design, we need to ensure that accessible and inclusive design concepts are taken into account, as these help to support the general aims of the PSED and will be particularly beneficial in removing barriers to participation for people from across a range of protected characteristics, with particular emphasis on disability. In order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts is taken into account as an integral part of the process it is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA process can support the Council to predict possible issues and take appropriate action such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and maximising any potential for positive impact. The EIA is an iterative process and should be revisited as part of the process.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer

Dated: 16th September 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

The proposal has the potential to make a positive contribution to the Council's climate emergency and adaptation objectives. The scheme would increase green infrastructure within the city centre through new tree planting, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements, helping to improve resilience to climate change through increased shade, urban cooling and sustainable drainage features. The creation of a new pedestrian link would also support walking and improve connectivity between key city centre destinations.

The demolition and construction phases will result in embodied carbon emissions and generate waste. Opportunities should therefore be taken during design, procurement and delivery to minimise whole-life carbon impacts, maximise reuse and recycling of materials where practicable, and incorporate sustainable construction measures.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer

Dated: 15th September 2026

4.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

NA

5. Background information and other papers:

N/A

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1: Site and indicative scheme plans

7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

8. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



Indicative scheme plan and images



