

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director for Place

to
Cabinet

on

19 September

Report prepared by: Krithika Ramesh, Project Officer and
Justin Styles, Senior Engineer, Major Projects and Strategic
Transport Policy

Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Phase 2 London Road

Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Tony Cox
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the 'Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS)'.
- 1.2 To advise Cabinet that two design options have been developed for S-CATS Phase 2 - London Road (between Queensway and College Way, refer to **Appendix 1** for scheme extents) based on "concept design and vision statements" which were included in the S-CATS cabinet paper submitted on 15 March 2016 (**Appendix 2**). These design options were submitted with the Business Case application to the South Essex LEP for Local Growth Funding (refer to **Appendix 3** for design options).
- 1.3 To advise Cabinet that Design Option A has emerged as the preferred option as it scored higher on the scheme options matrix (refer to **Appendix 4**). However, Design Option B also meets all the project objectives and the final selection between the two options will be made upon conclusion of on-going stakeholder and public consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the proposed design options for London Road (between Queensway and College Way) and confirm that either of the two options can be taken forward to construction. This confirmation will allow selection of final design to be carried out in consultation with stakeholders and public.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves that drainage works can be started along London Road in September 2017 in preparation for the scheme construction to start in October 2017.

- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive (Place), in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillor for Transport, Waste and Regulatory Services, to agree the final design option, Option A or Option B, selected after stakeholder and public consultation, be taken forward to implementation with a programmed commencement in October 2017, together with the advertisement of any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) is a Local Growth Fund Scheme that has an allocation of £7m. The purpose of the scheme is to take forward aspects of transport and public realm infrastructure that are seen as necessary to support both housing and employment growth in the Town Centre.

The scheme is being developed in four phase:

S-CATS	Phase 1: Victoria Avenue Improvements	Phase 2: London Road Area (between Queensway-London Road roundabout and College Way)	Phase 3: Stud end of London Road Area (between College Way and Victoria Circus)	Phase 4: Victoria Circus
Financial Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Local Growth Fund	£1m	£2m	£2m	£2m

Phase 1 included a series of junction improvements along Victoria Avenue that better manages traffic into and out of the town centre. Access and public realm improvements along London Road, College Way, Queens Road and Elmer Avenue are the next steps to encourage more residents and tourists to visit and spend time in the Town Centre and for local businesses to flourish.

Therefore, Phase 2 focuses on London Road (between Queensway and College Way), which is the key western approach for pedestrians and cyclists into the town centre. Phase 2 also includes streetscape works on the College Way / Queens Road / Elmer Avenue route between London Road and The Forum / South Essex College.

The scheme supports and compliments the improvements made to A127/A13 Victoria Gateway and links to the junction improvement works along Victoria

Avenue and continues public realm, walking & cycling enhancements being undertaken along Victoria Avenue as a part of S-CATS phase 1.

- 3.2 The Business Case was submitted to the South East LEP (SELEP) in July 2017 to unlock £2m from the Local Growth Fund to deliver S-CATS Phase 2.

Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) represents a major opportunity to support the continued growth and regeneration of the Southend Central Area. It is the delivery mechanism for the policies set out in the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) Revised Proposed Submission Document that are aimed at strengthening and transforming the Town Centre sub-regional role as a successful commercial and retail destination, cultural hub, educational centre of excellence, leisure and tourism attraction – an excellent place to live, work and visit.

- 3.3 Two design options have been developed for London Road based on ‘Concept designs and Vision Statements’ for the S-CATS scheme which were included in S-CATS cabinet paper submitted on 15 March 2016 (**Appendix 2**).

In both options the key features of the proposed layouts include:

- Realignment of the carriageway to include provision for cycling
- Replacement of Sainsbury’s’ mini roundabout with simple junction that is at a raised level acting as a traffic calming feature simplifying movements for pedestrians at this location
- Replacement of the mini roundabout junction at College Way with a simple junction that is also at a raised level acting as a traffic calming feature
- Raised tables at London Road’s junction with Ashburnham Road and Gordon Road
- Reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 20mph
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System along the footway and cycleway
- Improved street lighting
- Block paving of footway, cycleway and parking bays
- Improvements to landscaping including introduction of trees and planters

These changes will require the reallocation of road space to provide a larger area for pedestrians and an improved street environment, while also maintaining essential access for delivery vehicles, taxis and cars.

- 3.4 Improved safety, access and mobility in the town centre area will encourage more walking and cycling, resulting in positive benefits for health and well-being, whilst also enabling a “shop local” culture, reinforcing the offer of the High Street.
- 3.5 Public realm and transport investment plays a key role in raising aspirations, the quality and growth potential of an area and is therefore at the core of this work. The scheme will invest £7m in improvements, which will support both Borough Council and private sector investments and development.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 The Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) will guide development and regeneration within the town centre area and central seafront until 2021. The Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) Revised Proposed Submission Document sets out all known major potential development sites and the vision for them within the central area which includes the key sites identified for the Southend Central Area Transport Scheme.
- 4.2 Without the improvement that S-CATS Phase 2 will bring, the wider improvements to the Town Centre as set out in the SCAAP, both completed and planned will not fully maximise their intended benefits. This will have on-going consequences for securing investment in Southend.
- 4.3 This intervention will demonstrate a strong commitment to provide the infrastructure needed to support growth in the Town Centre. Whilst the development will be phased over the SCAAP period, it must be recognised that in order to encourage the investment and to revitalise the Town Centre, a clear funded route for infrastructure development must be put forward to support the SCAAP developments and further economic growth.
- 4.4 The other option would be to take no action on these issues and continue as now in which case the investment opportunity would be lost. This would reduce the contribution to supporting local health and wellbeing and restrict accessibility and local mobility, and potentially undermine business confidence and investment within this area.
- 4.5 This scheme is a critical element of a wider improvement to support planned growth in Southend Central Area. Therefore if the scheme is not progressed there will be a greater impact from planned growth, including reduced highway capacity, increasing congestion and a lack of access to sustainable transport choices.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- High quality public realm enhancements will create spaces within the Town Centre to attract more people to the area, encourage activities in the public spaces and revitalise the commercial areas.
- Improved access to the High Street will encourage more walking and cycling
- The better streets and public spaces will bring greater civic pride to encourage investment and visitor numbers supporting the local economy.
- To support the spatial planning activity identified in the SCAAP and other plans either prepared or being prepared by the Council's planning team.
- To support and align with S-CATS phase 1 to provide a welcoming Gateway to the Town Centre.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The SCATS will be fully aligned to delivering the vision and corporate priorities, particularly prosperous in respect of supporting the SCAAP and other plans either prepared by or under preparation by the Council's planning team.

6.2 Financial Implications

The SCATS is seeking funding of £7m from the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership. The allocation is profiled across four years as set out below and is wholly grant funded. The allocation for 2017/18 will deliver the Phase 2-London Road improvement and support design work to enable the other scheme elements to commence in 2017/18.

Financial Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Local Growth Fund	£1m	£2m	£2m	£2m

6.3 Legal Implications

Any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders will be identified and follow the legal processes.

6.4 People Implications

The scheme affects the lives of all those who live, work and visit the town. The implications are positive as the intention to improve accessibility and safety and improve the public realm.

6.5 Property Implications

The schemes proposed will affect land for which the Council is the highways authority and will involve working with private landowners and local business, especially Sainsbury's, to bring forward detailed proposals.

6.6 Consultation

The consultation process for this work is based on the "Southend Together" toolkit which seeks to engage and inform residents, businesses and key stakeholders throughout the life of the project.

Detailed stakeholder engagement plan attached (**Appendix 5**)

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Best practice will be adopted in the design proposals with the aim to improve accessibility for pedestrians, cyclist and the disabled which will be a major factor in the development of the scheme.

Different user groups have different needs and part of the development of the final design plans will be a full equality analysis as part of the stakeholder engagement plan.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Risks are reviewed throughout the life of the project and mitigation measures undertaken to reduce risks.

6.9 Value for Money

S-CATS Phase 2 represents Very High Value for Money with a BCR of 4.06.

The following Value for Money indicators have been estimated for S-CATS Phase 2:

- Present Value of Benefits (PVB): £8.43 million (2010 prices with future benefits over a 60-year appraisal period discounted to 2010).
- Present Value of Costs (PVC): £2.07 million (2010 prices with future costs over a 60 year appraisal period discounted to 2010).
- Net Present Value (NPV): £6.36 million (2010 prices discounted to 2010).
- Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR): 4.06.

Sensitivity analyses show that a four-fold increase in scheme costs would be required to reduce the BCR to 1.0. Sensitivity analyses also show that the BCR is not overly sensitive to small changes in the main assumptions.

(Refer to **Appendix 6** for more details)

6.10 Community Safety Implications

Understanding the community safety impacts and improving the quality of streets and public spaces provided in the Town Centre area is an essential part of this scheme.

6.11 Environmental Impact

This will be considered in the effective re-use of materials, sustainability of the supply chain, flood risk and managing surface water systems, low energy lighting systems and ensuring that corporate policies are considered.

7. Background Papers

Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) Revised Proposed Submission Document:

http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200420/development_plan_documents/391/southend_central_area_action_plan_scaap

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Phase 2 scheme extents.

Appendix 2: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Cabinet paper submitted on 15 March 2016.

Appendix 3: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Design Options.

Appendix 4: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Phase 2 scheme options matrix

Appendix 5: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Phase 2 Stakeholder engagement plan

Appendix 6: Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) Phase 2 Economic Appraisal