

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director for Place

to
Cabinet

on

15 March 2016

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Local Growth Fund - Southend Central Area Transport Scheme Update and Future Development

Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Martin Terry
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'.
- 1.2 To seek views from Cabinet on the draft "concept design and vision statements" for Victoria Avenue, London Road (Town Centre), Southchurch Road (between the High Street and Chichester Road) and Victoria Circus (see **Appendix 1** for scheme extents), which will be developed into preliminary design layouts for consultation to support the Business Case application to the South Essex LEP for Local Growth Funding
- 1.3 To advise Cabinet that a preliminary design has been developed for the Carnarvon Road junction with Victoria Avenue (incorporating a right turn facility) which can now be taken forward to the detailed design stage as set out in **Appendix 2** and subsequently proceed to Business Case submission as above.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the proposed "concept design and vision statements" for the Southend Central Area Transport Scheme and agree that these be worked up into option layouts and taken forward for stakeholder and public consultation sufficient for SELEP Business Case submission and funding approval in June. In consulting on these proposals the Cabinet also agrees that other suggestions in and around the Town Centre to improve access and movement would be welcomed.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the preliminary layout design for the traffic signal junction at Carnarvon Road and Victoria Avenue, incorporating a right-turn out of Carnarvon Road, so that detailed design can commence. Any

loss of vegetation caused by the change in road layout will be replaced within the scheme.

- 2.3 That Cabinet approves the principal that, wherever possible, landscape elements are designed with integrated Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in mind and that permeable surface treatments will be considered to attenuate surface water run-off from the Town Centre area and reduce the risk of flooding.**
- 2.4 That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection, Waste and Transport following circulation of details to Ward Councillors and discussions with the Leaders of the opposition parties to agree:-**
- the preliminary design layouts developed from the “concept design and vision statements” for consultation and subsequent submission of the Business Case for approval, with a programmed commencement in 2017/18. Details to be brought to a future Cabinet meeting to agree the final design for construction.**
 - the detailed design proposals for the Carnarvon Road junction to be taken forward to Business Case submission for implementation in 2016/17, together with the advertisement of any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (SCATS) 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 at the concept and preliminary design stages and it is timely that Cabinet considers the proposals so far, in order that a Business Case submission can be made to the South East LEP (SELEP) in June to release the Local Growth Funding allocated to this scheme.**
- 3.2 The draft Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) outlines the policy response to the challenges and opportunities presented within the Southend Central Area, as part of the spatial strategy for Southend set out in the Core Strategy. This makes provision for a large share of the Borough’s new growth and regeneration to be focussed in the Central Area. The SCAAP, when adopted, will give site specific policies aimed at strengthening and transforming Southend Town Centre’s sub-regional role as a successful commercial and retail destination, cultural hub, educational centre of excellence, leisure and tourist attractive, and as a place to work and live.**
- 3.3 The SCATS will support this vision by building upon existing successes and investment and unlocking the potential of significant regeneration opportunities. Developments within the Central Area will be supported by transport and public realm improvements to create a safe and vibrant atmosphere for communities and businesses and as a welcoming visitor experience.**

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 The draft “concept design and vision statements” are focussed on the first four areas with the fifth area of more detail comprising Carnarvon Road:-

1. *Victoria Avenue*

The vision for Victoria Avenue is for it to be a gateway into the town centre. The key design features will include:

- Gateway Features
Gateway features that create a visual connection with the town centre and gradually increase in drama and visual impact as the town centre is approached;
- Use of Subway
Study the level of pedestrian usage of the subway and consider replacing it with at-grade crossings;
- Public Realm Improvements
Refurbish the footways and adjust the accesses to the service road, especially along the west side of the road with high quality paving, lighting, seating and tree planting. Improve the public spaces to better serve the Civic area and the new residential developments, extending to Victoria Gateway;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Identify potential locations and type of SUDS to attenuate surface water run-off from this area to reduce the risk of flooding.

2. *London Road – from Queensway to Victoria Circus*

Improvements in the area will be focussed on enhancing the experience for visitors, residents and workers, and extending the activities in the public spaces throughout the day and into the evening. The key design features will include:

- Encouraging more pedestrian footfall & cycling
High quality public realm enhancements to create a pedestrian-priority area and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Outside seating areas
The restaurants and cafes could make better use of space on the street to create a more vibrant atmosphere.
- Alignment Improvements

Changes to the allocation of road space to provide a greater area for pedestrians and a better street environment, whilst maintaining essential access for delivery vehicles and taxis.

- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Identify potential locations and type of SUDS to attenuate surface water run-off from this area to reduce the risk of flooding.

3. Victoria Circus

Victoria Circus is a focal point for the Town Centre attracting people from Victoria Gateway, London Road and Southchurch Road towards the High Street. Improvements will focus on:-

- Encouraging more pedestrian footfall through a better public realm
The public realm improvements will consider additional seating, landscaping elements and features that help establish the space as a focal point and activity space, whilst maintaining the desired pedestrian routes across the area and access for emergency vehicles;
- Welcoming access routes
The alleyway from Victoria Gateway to Victoria Circus is one of the main routes to and from the Town Centre and should welcome people and encourage them to visit the High Street. Introduction of vertical features like canvas along the side walls, colourful roof features and lighting will help highlight this route to the town centre.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Identify potential locations and type of SUDS to attenuate surface water run-off from this area to reduce the risk of flooding.

4. Southchurch Road – short section linking Carnarvon Road and the High Street

- Improve appearance of the Deeping underpass
The appearance of the Deeping parapet and access to the underground service area needs improvement;
- Pocket Park
Enhancement of landscaping elements (with integrated SUDS) to provide a coherent, linked number of green spaces essential for improving the environment of the area;
- Pedestrian crossing
Surface treatment at the pedestrian crossing at the entrance of the Deeping to highlight this as a route to the High Street (also to be considered as part of the Better Queensway Project)

5. Carnarvon Road junction with Victoria Avenue

- Provide a new right turn out of Carnarvon Road

Identified need for the right turn from Carnarvon Road on to Victoria Avenue, partly due to the re-development of the old College site;

- Replacement of vegetation
Any loss of vegetation caused by the change in the junction layout will be replaced within the scheme;
- Traffic Movements
Impact on traffic movements are negligible with the signal timings consistent with junctions either side and pedestrian movements

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 Preferred Approach version of the SCAAP 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 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.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The concept design and vision statements to guide the SCATS focus on ensuring that:-
- 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.

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 2016/17 will deliver the Carnarvon 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	£0.75m	£2.25m	£2m	£2m

6.3 Legal Implications

Any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders will be identified and follow the legal processes. In the case of London Road and Victoria Circus, procedures to obtain permission for outside seating and event spaces will be consulted upon and followed.

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 may involve working with private landowners 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

There will be a stakeholder engagement plan prepared and all aspects of the design plans for Victoria Avenue, London Road and Victoria Circus will be consulted on.

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

This will be assessed in the financial analysis and Business Case preparation.

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

Preferred Approach Southend Central Area Action Plan

[http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/603/scaap -
december 2015](http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/603/scaap_-_december_2015)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 SCATS – Scheme Extents

Appendix 2 SCATS – Layout of proposed Carnarvon Road junction with Victoria Avenue