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| Subject: | Valley Gardens Phase 3: Edward St Junction - The Old Steine - Palace Pier roundabout: Preliminary Design and Engagement | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 26th June 2018 | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Oliver Spratley | Tel: 01273 290390 |
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| Ward(s) affected: | Regency, St. Peters North Laine, Queens Park | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 In the city centre, the Valley Gardens comprise the open spaces and surrounding roads that run in a linear manner from Old Steine in the south to the Level in the north, excluding the Pavilion Gardens. This area is of unique strategic and topographic significance to Brighton & Hove in the way in which a number of major issues co-exist and, in some cases, conflict. These include: the area's role as an arrival/departure point for visitors; its function as a major traffic route (the A23 sustainable transport corridor) and junctions with the A270 Lewes Road and A259 seafront road; its civic, cultural, and heritage significance within a Conservation Area; its provision of public open space; its inclusion within the academic corridor; its wide mix of land uses; and its role as a venue for major events. However, the area is currently failing to fulfil its potential.
- 1.2 The council's adopted City Plan Part 1 (2016) identifies the corridor as a Special Area and it has a specific policy (SA3) which aims to ensure that the strategic potential of the Valley Gardens as public open space is fully realised and that future proposals for the regeneration of this historic area are considered within the context of an overall spatial framework. The council's fourth Local Transport Plan [LTP4] (2015), also identifies the corridor as a priority for improvement, comprising three phases which will help achieve some of the aims of the City Plan policy. Phases 1&2 of the project include the area between The Level/St Peter's Church and Church Street/Edward Street, and Phase 3 lies between the Royal Pavilion and the Seafront (A259), including the Old Steine, and is illustrated in Appendix 1. The Phase 3 section of the corridor is also within one of the council's Air Quality Management Areas [AQMAs].
- 1.3 The approvals sought within this report will mark the end of the first stage of Valley Gardens Phase 3 preliminary design stage, and permit officers to advance to the next stage of design activities, supported by the appointed consultant.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the Phase 3 Core Design Objectives, as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.2 That the Committee approves the Three (Phase 3) Project Scenario options, as set out in paragraph 4.3 of this report to be taken forward for further investigation, to include detailed assessment of how effectively options to be developed through the Project Scenarios meet the Core Design Objectives.
- 2.3 That the Committee authorises officers to undertake the development of an Outline Business Case and to report this back to November 2018 ETS Committee.
- 2.4 That the Committee approves the Project Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee requests officers to fully brief and consult its Lead Councillors as the preliminary design work progresses.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Situated in a conservation and Air Quality Management Area [AQMA], Phase 3 of the Valley Gardens project forms a major transport and green/public space corridor and regionally forms the most southerly section of the strategic M23/A23 growth corridor.
- 3.2 Policy SA3 of the council's City Plan Part 1 states *"The city council will work with public and private sector partners and the local community to enhance and regenerate the Valley Gardens area in an integrated manner that reinforces its strategic significance, emphasises its historic and cultural character, reduces the adverse impact of vehicular traffic, improves local air quality and creates a continuous green boulevard that reconnects the open space to the surrounding urban realm."*
- 3.3 The aim of Phase 3 of the project is to develop the final southerly section of an integrated sustainable transport corridor in order to enable safe and efficient movement, and create a more attractive environment. This aim is allied to developing transport interventions to increase the quality of the environment, to help balance place with movement in a location that is both historic and iconic, within central Brighton & Hove.
- 3.4 In line with the approved scheme for Phases 1&2, further changes to roads, pavements and the public realm within the Phase 3 area will significantly help to ensure the city's continued success by enabling sustainable economic growth and supporting regeneration within the area. Interventions will enhance the use of the transport network and improve the quality of the built and open space environments of this central area. Proposals will also aim to support public health outcomes by improving air quality.

3.5 The scheme's focus on travel and transport will:

- assist in improving road safety, air quality, and flood risk management;
- improve access to public transport services and ease of movement throughout the area;
- provide safer walking and cycling links throughout the area; and
- provide up-to-date traffic signals equipment where required; and
- renew existing, poor condition, highway infrastructure.

3.6 The development of the Phase 3 project has taken place within the overall Valley Gardens project programme, as follows:-

November 2011 – the council's Environment Cabinet Member agreed to the development of a vision for the enhancement of Valley Gardens.

March 2013 – an outline Valley Gardens Concept Project was considered and agreed by the council's Transport Committee to help guide the design of future improvements in and around Valley Gardens.

May 2013 - the C2C LEP's Local Transport Body [LTB] requested funding applications for projects which were considered eligible for the newly 'devolved funding' for major transport schemes made available by the government for 2015-19.

June 2013 – BHCC completed and submitted a C2C LTB proforma/template for to promote the redevelopment of Valley Gardens which was identified as two stages, with estimated requirements of £8 million (Phases 1&2) and £6 million (Phase 3) from the LEP's devolved funding budget.

March 2014 – Phases 1&2 and Phase 3 were included in the C2C's SEP, illustrating that it would help support 1,179 jobs, 100 homes and 9,000sqm of employment space.

July 2014 – the Government confirmed availability of £8m funding for Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 (the northern section) subject to the Local Enterprise Partnership LTB approving the BC submitted. As part of the C2C's 2015/16-2020/21 Growth Deal, the Government also announced its intention to allocate an additional, provisional £6 million in funding to enable the southern section (Phase 3) of Valley Gardens (from Pavilion Parade to the Palace Pier Roundabout) to start in 2016/17 or beyond. This would be dependent on progress with Phases 1&2 and subject to production, submission and approval of a robust Business Case to the LEP.

March 2015 – Phase 3 was included in council's approved Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

November 2016 – This Committee was advised that, following the review of Phases 1&2, further funding bids and decisions on Phase 3 would be made once significant progress had been made with Valley Gardens Phases 1&2.

March 2017 – Council Committees considered and approved the council's LTP capital programme for 2017/18 which included an allocation to begin the formal, preliminary development stages of the Phase 3 project, which will include the

preparation of a Business Case. The report indicated that further LTP allocations will be required in 2018/19 and 2019/20, and that the sums required need to be confirmed.

- 3.7 In order to progress Phase 3 of the project it has been necessary to appoint consultants. The consultant appointment process was completed in April 2018 which has allowed for the first stage of preliminary design, and engagement works, including technical and qualitative survey work required to establish an up-to-date evidence base. This initial stage of work is nearing completion. The Valley Gardens Phase 3 project evidence-base will inform the next stage of preliminary design.
- 3.8 Work on Phase 3 has been planned to begin once Phases 1&2 had been finalised and agreed. Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 construction is now due to commence in late summer 2018. Plans for Phase 3 must coherently tie in with Phases 1&2 to meet project interdependencies in terms of realising the predicted benefits and outcomes associated with a sustainable integrated transport corridor.
- 3.9 The approvals requested within this report will permit the next stage of preliminary design, and further options development to progress, subject to the approval of the Core Design Objectives as set out in Appendix 2, the Three Project Scenarios outlined in paragraph 4.3, and the Project Programme as set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.10 The Project Programme attached in Appendix 3 of this report sets out the high-level, life-cycle of the project, to the end of construction.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 has interdependencies in terms of anticipated benefits and stakeholder requirements, and therefore, 'doing nothing', with regards to Phase 3 area is not considered to be an option. Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 outcomes are significantly predicated on the delivery of a coherent Phase 3 arrangement to realise the predicted benefits-cost ratio and transport outcomes.
- 4.2 Phase 3 objectives include exploring the best possible integration of the alignment of the priority lanes (the 'park road') which forms a Public Transport Corridor, as agreed within the approved detailed designs for Phases 1&2.
- 4.3 Three initial design scenarios have been developed for the Palace Pier roundabout (the junction of the A23 and A259) to be used to develop project options and improve people and vehicle movement in this location. Once developed through the three scenarios, these options will be assessed in order to determine how well each one will meet the core design objectives of the project – to best integrate with Phases 1&2, and therefore, help elicit the best option.

The three design scenarios for the Palace Pier roundabout are as follows:

- an option which retains a roundabout;
- an option which replaces the roundabout with a signalised junction;
- a 'hybrid' option which will explore alternative highway layout features that may not necessarily be regarded as fully 'conventional' but must be rooted in successful transport precedence and improved outcomes.

4.4 The above design scenarios will provide a basis for the development of a longlist of options that will then be considered against the previously discussed core design objectives. The sifting process will elicit three preferred options which will then be subject to detailed options appraisal to include economic impact appraisal and traffic modelling exercise that will inform the recommendation of a single, preferred option, to be presented to this Committee in October 2018.

4.5 Further development of the preferred option will inform the completion of the Outline Business Case which will need to be submitted to the C2C LEP in order to secure the £6.0m of LGF grant. The Outline Business Case will be reported back to this Committee in November 2018 in order to seek its agreement to submit it to the C2C LEP Board to formally consider approval of the LGF £6m grant in January 2019.

4.6 A computer-based Transport Model used for Phases 1&2 will be extended to and tested with each of the three Phase 3 options to help elicit a 'preferred option'. Traffic and pedestrian surveys are currently being conducted to obtain a robust evidence-base which will help to inform modelling as well as create the required reference points for monitoring post-construction.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 Internal stakeholder engagement for Phase 3 has commenced including a Design Review Panel with lead councillors and officers from a range of the council's service areas.

5.2 The Connected City's Transport Partnership has been, and will continue to be, engaged. Ward councillors will be kept informed throughout the project stages.

5.3 A six week public survey is currently live on the consultation portal from 21st May until 29th June 2018. Data collected will help to fill the existing gaps in the evidence base to help inform the options to be developed during the next stage. It is intended that an improved understanding of some of the common problems currently experienced across the Old Steine, and Palace Pier roundabout areas, in terms of transport infrastructure provision, and public realm/environmental quality will be further elicited and understood – and be factored into options development.

5.4 The second stage of public consultation following October 2018 ETS Committee will include a public exhibition presenting the preferred option with the opportunity for the public to influence the single preferred option's further development.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The three scenarios outlined in paragraph 4.3 of this report are considered to present an appropriate framework from which to begin the development of design options across the Phase 3 (Old Steine and Palace Pier) area. The proposed approach outlined within this report responds to the project timeline and LGF Grant conditions, as well as the wider range of transport stakeholder requirements. The project plan approach has been taken to achieve the best project-to-scheme outcome.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The current, total budget expected to be available for the project to the end of 2020/21 is £7.25m, comprised of £6.0m LGF grant (subject to confirmation from the LEP) and a committed local contribution of £1.25m from future year's Integrated Transport capital allocation included within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and other possible sources of external funding that may become available.
- 7.2 To ensure that the LGF grant is secured, officers are seeking approval for the development of the Outline Business Case to address the strategic aims of the Coast to Capital's SEP (Strategic Economic Plan), and its emerging Local Industrial Strategy. The conditions of the LGF grant stipulate that the funding must be fully drawn down and works completed across all Phases (1&2, and 3) by end of March 2021.
- 7.3 The council's approved, 2018/19 LTP Capital Programme for Preliminary design is sufficient to cover the cost of this requested continued project investment. It was agreed by the Policy, Resources and Growth Committee on 20 March 2018.
- 7.4 An outline business case is expected to be presented back to this committee in November 2018.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen

Date: 18/06/218

Legal Implications:

- 7.5 The proposed Phase 3 project will be designed and constructed within the existing highway boundary and within land owned by the council. The council's Planning team will be consulted to determine if planning applications are required. A Design & Access Statement is being produced to meet any planning permission requirements should they arise during the next stage of the project through the feasibility study/reporting.

Lawyer Consulted: Stephanie Stammers

Date: 31/05/18

Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 An early draft of the Equalities Impact Assessment is currently being produced in Stage 1 and will be updated within Stage 2 of the project as part of the Preferred Option Feasibility Study.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 The core aim of this project is to complete an integrated sustainable transport corridor. A proportionate Environmental Impact Assessment will be produced at a later stage of the project.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.8 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.9 Phase 3 LGF funding conditions necessitate officers to continue to report to the C2C LEP to meet its monitoring requirements relating to the independent LEP project review conducted last year that resulted in categorising the Phase 3 project as an 'Amber' risk. Both projects (Phase 1&2 and 3) LGF Grant funding must be drawn-down by the end of March 2021. Due to this there will be an unavoidable overlap of the Phases 1&2 construction programme with the Phase 3 construction programme.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 This project will provide an opportunity to address issues within the corridor by considering highway design options which could help to achieve significant improvements in air quality in the AQMA and improve public health outcomes.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Plan of Valley Gardens Phase 3 area
2. Valley Gardens Phase 3: Old Steine to Palace Pier roundabout: The Core Design Objectives
3. Project Programme

Documents in Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents:

1. 2015 Local Transport Plan [LTP4]
2. 2013 Valley Gardens Concept Design
3. Detailed design of Valley Gardens Phases 1&2

