

CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 77

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Brighton Station Gateway – Update and Next Steps		
Date of Meeting:	24th January 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jim Mayor	Tel: 294164
	Email:	Jim.mayor@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No	Forward Plan No: N/A	
Ward(s) affected:	St Peters & North Laine		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is investigating ways to enhance the environment around Brighton Rail Station (Brighton Station Gateway) to increase the area's success as a welcome, a public place and a transport interchange.
- 1.2 It is critical that wherever possible, any new design enables the Gateway to meet the needs of all users of the station and surrounding areas. To this end the council recently undertook extensive public consultation to gather community views that will inform the design process. This report shares the results of that consultation, and outlines the next steps in the design process. Sharing this information will help to ensure that the design process is as transparent and engaging as possible.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Transport & Public Realm formally notes the outcome of the recent public consultation.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Transport & the Public Realm agrees the process set out in this Report that will see a preferred design for the Station Gateway environment developed over the next 6 months.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 In November 2010 Brighton & Hove City Council's Cabinet agreed that work should commence towards a redesign of the area around Brighton Rail Station. The decision reflected awareness that despite its importance to many aspects of the city's life, Brighton Station did not work particularly well as a fitting welcome to the city, as a public place or as a transport interchange.
- 3.2 Between February and October 2011 the City Council worked with partners (notably Southern Rail and Network Rail) and a representative group of stakeholders to develop ideas for the improvements. The stakeholder group comprised two members of each of the main user groups of the station area (residents, business representatives, taxi drivers etc) to ensure the views of each group were equally represented. The stakeholder group was designed to act as a sounding board to gauge community opinion ahead of full public consultation
- 3.3 A range of general principles were identified and broadly agreed by the stakeholder group. As well as support for the overall objectives of an enhanced welcome, public place and transport interchange, stakeholders agreed the need for:
- a more accessible environment
 - a better walking environment
 - better cycling facilities
 - better managed deliveries
 - better links with surrounding areas (such as North Laine and Seven Dials)
 - an environment that encourages businesses
 - a safe environment
 - an environment that can be and is well maintained
 - better public pick up / drop off facilities
 - better use of Mangalore Way (to the immediate east of the Station)
 - a high quality northern as well as southern station entrance
- 3.4 The stakeholder group had mixed views as to the best location for taxis and the best arrangement for buses.
- 3.5 It was recognised that due to the finite space in front of the station, competing transport movements would have to be rationalised if the opportunity for enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities, along with an enhanced interchange, welcome and public place were to be achieved. Initial transport modelling indicated that space could be created for other users and uses outside the southern station entrance by re-routing private traffic away from Queens Road. In the short term, the easiest way to achieve this would be by making Surrey Street two way. This would retain access through the general area for local / essential private vehicles. Non essential local traffic could be dissuaded from using the area by closing access to Trafalgar Street and / or restricting northbound access along Terminus Road for private vehicles.
- 3.6 In order to test community opinion on the options for taxi and bus arrangements and re-routing of private vehicles (and also raise general awareness of the Station Gateway project), an initial public consultation process was recently undertaken. The consultation, which incorporated direct mail-outs to approximately 6000 addresses around the station, and an online feedback option, concluded in November 2011.

- 3.7 The stage of consultation was quantitative, seeking to ascertain general levels of support for, or opposition to, general design options. The consultation feedback would inform the next stage of design by identifying which options had sufficient community support to warrant further investigation during the process of developing design options.

What the Consultation Told Us

- 3.8 Approximately 1200 people took part in the consultation. Respondees who provided details of their demographic tended to be within the 25-64 year old age ranges, and were more likely to be male. The most cited reasons for using the station area were for leisure (68%), to commute (50%), as a resident (48%) and to meet visitors on foot (48%). Notably, 79% of respondents said they accessed the station by foot, despite the poor quality of existing pedestrian facilities. 24% used buses, 15% taxis, 12% cycled and 10% arrived by cars. 8% said they used a variety of modes (some ticked multiple modes).
- 3.9 A significant majority of respondents (74%) supported re-routing private vehicles away from the southern station entrance. Additional comments included concern over the loss of pick up / drop off facilities at the southern station entrance, reflecting a misconception that this is a legitimate activity within the current arrangement. Other comments included concern raised by and on behalf of some residents of Surrey Street as to the potential negative impact of making that route two way, and potential issues associated with displaced traffic. (Percentages are rounded and a full summary of responses, including additional comments, is attached as Appendix 1).
- 3.10 Opinion was divided over closure of access to Trafalgar Street. A slight majority felt Trafalgar Street should be closed to vehicles (49% compared with 40% who felt vehicle access should be retained). The most popular additional comments were that continued access to Trafalgar Street was important for businesses and personal journeys, and that the current environment of Trafalgar Street felt dangerous / busy because of vehicle arrangements. It should be noted that there appeared to be some confusion as to which area of Trafalgar Street was being discussed. The consultation sought to test opinion on stopping eastbound vehicle access to Trafalgar Street from Terminus Road only, although with hindsight this question could have been worded more clearly as it appears some consultees assumed the question related to all traffic in Trafalgar Street.
- 3.11 Opinion was also divided over whether northbound access should be restricted in Terminus Road for private vehicles. A slight minority (35%) felt northbound private vehicle access should be restricted, compared with 40% who felt arrangements should remain in their current form. Wider comments to this question reflected concern over possible displacement of traffic into surrounding residential streets if access in Terminus Road was restricted and reduced general vehicular access.
- 3.12 A small majority (43%) wanted buses to be concentrated outside the southern station entrance, compared with 20% who wanted buses concentrated in Queens Road and 30% who wanted buses to remain in both locations. Additional comments reflected recognition of the need for a good public transport system,

and the feeling that the current bus arrangement added to congestion around the station.

- 3.13 A small majority (36%) wanted to see taxis moved to the north of the station. 31% felt that taxis should occupy a space at the north and south of the station, 23% felt taxis should remain in their current location and 7% wanted to see taxis moved to Queens Road. Of those who justified their choice with comments, several said the current location was beneficial due to legibility and convenience, whilst a mix of locations gave benefit of choice to all users.
- 3.14 The summary above (and contained in Appendix 1) excludes a late return signed by 66 members of the Brighton Sudanese Taxi Forum, who support diverting private vehicles away from the southern station entrance, don't support closing Trafalgar Street, want buses to use both the area outside the station and Queens Road, and want to see the taxi rank retained in its current location.

Proposed Next Steps

- 3.15 The responses, along with the ideas identified by the stakeholder group, will be used to inform development of design options for the Station environment. The design options will be shared with the public in March / April. Feedback on design options will guide development of a preferred scheme option, which, pending future CMM approval, will be displayed at a further public consultation event in July / August.
- 3.16 Following agreement of a preferred scheme, detailed design will commence ahead of implementation of physical improvements in 2013. The enhancements to the area around the station will complement work being undertaken by Southern Rail to improve facilities within the building. Southern Rail is also currently investigating opportunities to create an 800 space cycle parking facility as part of the overall enhancement scheme.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 To date the project process has been undertaken in line with the Community Engagement Framework and Standards, from incorporating workshops with representatives from various communities affected by the Station environment to the sharing of consultation information in this report. The Framework and Standards will continue to inform the consultation approach followed by the project during the process of developing and consulting on design options and a preferred final scheme over the coming months.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs of the recent public consultation have been met from an LTP budget which was set aside to fund this work on the Brighton Station Gateway.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 12/01/12

Legal Implications:

5.2 In carrying out consultation the Council must comply with the legal requirements for fair consultation that have been set out by the courts:

- consultation must take place while the proposals are still at a formative stage;
- those consulted must be provided with information which is accurate and sufficient to enable them to make a meaningful response;
- they must be given adequate time in which to do so;
- there must be adequate time for their responses to be considered; and
- the council must consider responses with a receptive mind and in a conscientious manner when reaching its decision.

The Council must take the Human Rights Act into account in respect of its actions but it is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendations in this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsom

Date: 13/01/2012

Equalities Implications:

5.3 An EIA will be undertaken during the design process to ensure the new scheme is accessible to all.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 The enhancement project will promote sustainable transport, and particularly overcome current barriers to walking and cycling in the vicinity of the station. Sustainable construction practises and materials will be used where possible. The improvements will enhance the built environment and, through albeit indirect links to the greenway, contribute towards enhanced natural habitats and wildlife conditions. By improving the station as a welcome to the city and improving the immediate environment for businesses, the scheme will contribute to enhancing the local economy at a micro and macro scale. The scheme will seek to enhance health by reducing causes of air pollution (specifically relating to the congestion around the existing southern station entrance arrangement) and will provide better access for all users.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 Stakeholder consultation has identified the need for any improvements delivered by the Station Gateway project to enhance real and perceived safety in the area, especially later in the day. The design process will seek to deliver this objective.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 The main risk associated with the next stage of the Station Gateway project is inability to reach a final design that has support of all stakeholders, especially given the transport related sensitivities associated with the Station environment. This risk will be mitigated as far as possible by maintaining a transparent and equitable consultation process. Longer term risks include the inability to find

funding to implement enhancements (although it is expected that improvements could be delivered from within Local Transport Plan budget if alternative funding cannot be sourced) and the risk of any identified enhancements having unforeseen negative consequences when implemented. The latter risk will be mitigated by a careful design process in the first instance, and trialling a temporary version of any proposed changes before they are permanently and irreversibly implemented.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 By tackling the poor quality of the existing public realm around the Station, the project will overcome issues impacting on public health including air and noise pollution. The project will also enhance living and working conditions and contribute towards a healthy and sustainable place and community.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Enhancing the Station as a place, interchange and welcome will contribute towards the Corporate Plan objectives of tackling inequality and creating a more sustainable city, whilst the design process will contribute towards the objective of engaging people who live & work in the city.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The process outlined in this report contributes towards enhancement of the Station environment to the benefit of all residents and visitors. Doing nothing would result in the Station environment continuing to fall short of realising its potential benefit to the city (and in doing so potentially having a detrimental impact on both residents' daily lives and the city's economic viability).
- 6.2 The forward steps identified to progress the project are designed to combine expediency in developing a preferred design for an enhanced station environment as quickly as possible with true community involvement. An alternative approach would either reduce community involvement in the process, or result in a significantly elongated timescale (with no benefit of an enhanced design solution as a result).

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 By formally noting the outcome of the recent public consultation, the Member for Transport and Public Realm will support the process of developing the Station Gateway project in an open and transparent way, and also in line with the Community Engagement Framework and Standards.
- 7.2 Agreeing that the project is progressed in line with the proposed 'next steps' will help ensure the design process moves forward with the best balance of expedience and community involvement.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Summary of public consultation

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Brighton Station Gateway (Cabinet Report 11th November 2010)

