

Subject:	Brighton Station Gateway		
Date of Meeting:	30 April 2013		
Report of:	Executive Director Environment, Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jim Mayor	Tel: 294164
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Brighton Station Gateway project has been under development since 2010. It aims to rationalise and improve circulation and access for people and vehicles at the main entrance points to, and in the area around, the city's main railway station. The project seeks to contribute towards a number of the Council's transport goals including assisting in economic growth, improving safety and security and enhancing equality of access.
- 1.2 Consultation on a preferred scheme for Brighton Station Gateway was undertaken in late 2012. The results of consultation were reported to Transport Committee in January 2013. Committee agreed that more work should be undertaken to better understand the impact of relocating the Station taxi rank to Frederick Place, and that feasibility work should be carried out on options relating to the Station canopy to enable a decision to be made on these aspects of the scheme at March 2013 Transport Committee (subsequently rescheduled to April 2013).
- 1.3 This report summarises that additional work and requests that the preferred scheme be progressed to delivery. The preferred scheme delivers a host of benefits around the station's southern entrance including enhanced cycling and pedestrian facilities, simplified junctions and crossings, an enhanced, de-cluttered environment, enhanced bus provision and new taxi drop off facilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Instructs the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing to progress to detailed design a preferred scheme that retains taxis in their current location (as set out in Appendix 5) and to advertise any necessary traffic regulation orders (TROs).

- 2.2 Instructs the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing to implement the detailed design subject to the outcome of the statutory TRO consultation process
- 2.3 Instructs the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing to work with other relevant partners to develop a Taxi Management Plan that will ensure the station taxi rank is properly managed in future.
- 2.4 Agrees that a decision on the future of the Station Canopy be deferred, subject to receipt of a future Network Rail planning application.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 In November 2010 Cabinet granted approval to undertake work that would lead to the enhancement of the environment around Brighton Station. The project sought a design solution that improved the station environment as a welcome, a place and an interchange: an aspiration supported by all political parties.
- 3.2 In January 2012 officers updated the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting (CMM) on the results of public scoping consultation. CMM agreed that design options should be developed and shared with the public through full consultation.
- 3.3 Feedback from design options consultation was reported to Transport Committee in July 2012. Committee agreed that an amalgamated preferred option should be developed based on the positive and negative comments received relating to all the various options. This preferred option would be presented back to Committee in October 2012, where members would make a decision as to whether the proposed preferred option should be progressed to full public consultation.
- 3.4 Officers worked with stakeholders between August and September to develop a preferred scheme for the space to the south of the Station that could form the basis of public consultation. At Transport Committee in October 2012, members agreed that this should form the basis of a final stage of consultation, and that officers should report back in January 2013 with the results of consultation.
- 3.5 Consultation on the preferred option took place in late 2012. Feedback was reported back to Transport Committee in January 2013. Compared with previous stages of consultation, levels of feedback were reasonably low. Most of the feedback focused on the impact of moving the taxi rank into Frederick Place. A secondary focus of interest was proposed changes to the station canopy.
- 3.6 Officers felt that concerns around the proposed taxi rank relocation warranted further investigative work and recommended that additional time was granted to properly investigate, quantify and where possible resolve consultee concerns in order to enable members to make a more informed decision as to how the project should be progressed at Transport Committee in March 2013 (subsequently rescheduled to April 2013).

Conclusions of Additional Work

Frederick Place

- 3.7 Since January 2013 work to better understand the impacts of placing a taxi rank in Frederick Place has been undertaken with the support of representatives from the taxi trade and the council's transport modeling consultancy, JMP. A copy of JMP's report, outlining their findings, is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.8 JMP's report suggests that concerns raised during consultation around the relocation of the taxi rank to Frederick Place could be resolved by a mixture of design, introduction of a voluntary code of practice for taxi drivers, and introduction of a marshal (which would necessitate revenue funding of approximately £20,000 per annum).
- 3.9 The report supports the concern raised during consultation as to the suitability of Trafalgar Lane for accommodating increased numbers of southbound traffic. The report suggests two alternative transport arrangements that could enable the Frederick Place taxi rank to be accommodated. However both restrict some vehicle access and/or create some increases in traffic on residential streets between Gloucester Road and Trafalgar Street. The potential for negative impact would be greater if the taxi rank did not operate as expected.
- 3.10 Significantly there has been ongoing opposition to the proposals from sections of the North Laine community, particularly from the North Laine Community and Traders Associations. A letter from the Traders Association is attached as Appendix 2: an e-petition against the taxi relocation has also been signed by 217 people. If the options investigated had positive outcomes for the North Laine – such as significantly lowering levels of traffic - it would be easier to make a case for moving ahead with Frederick Place. However this is not the case, and it is therefore recommended that the Frederick Place option is not pursued.

North of the Station

- 3.11 Initial analysis of taxi locations identified a number of inherent issues with relocating taxis to the north of the station. However, throughout the consultation processes, a number of residents have expressed a preference for pursuing this option. In March, officers met with Southern Railway to ascertain whether Southern would reconsider relocating taxis to the north of the Station. Southern had expressed reluctance to relocate taxis to the north for operational reasons – particularly due to potential conflict with replacement bus services, and have reaffirmed these concerns.

Keeping Taxis in their Current Location

- 3.12 Keeping taxis in their current location also raises issues. The issues are largely operational and ambient. Primarily the presence of large numbers of taxis directly

outside the station leads to conflict with other users of the space. Certain aspects of existing carriageway design contribute to congestion in the wider area. These issues are exacerbated by the lack of management of the taxi rank. The detailed design process will look to resolve engineering issues which exacerbate taxi conflict issues, informed by a taxi management plan which will be developed with partner agencies. Southern Railway's written confirmation of their commitment to better manage the taxi rank in future is attached as Appendix 3.

- 3.13 Retaining taxis in their current location does not have a significant impact on the physical layout of the core southern environmental improvement. The road into the taxi rank area needed to be retained for servicing access and wider improvements, such as improved pedestrian and cycle facilities and simplified junctions in Queens Road, Surrey Street, Gloucester Road and Junction Road can be delivered irrespective of where taxis are located.

Benefits

- 3.14 The scheme vision was agreed with a representative group of Stakeholders on project commencement. The section below illustrates how each element of the Vision will be realised.

A fitting welcome to the city

The first impression of the city upon leaving the Station is dominated by complex traffic infrastructure and associated clutter (such as guard-railing and traffic signals). It is this infrastructure that has the greatest negative impact on the environment around the Station. By simplifying the carriageway design, the impact of traffic infrastructure will be greatly reduced, enabling positive elements of the environment to take precedence.

- 3.15 An efficient interchange

Formalising the current temporary gyratory road system, which was established to accommodate development of the Old Bingo Hall, will enable simplification of junctions, improving traffic flow and enabling easier crossing for cyclists and pedestrians. The gyratory system will also enable carriageway space to be reduced – significantly enhancing provision for pedestrians (the main users of the space) without any detrimental impact on vehicular traffic. The rebalancing of space will also enable a cycle contra-flow to be provided in Queens Road. Cycle parking is due to be enhanced by Southern Railway's efforts to deliver a dedicated cycle parking facility at the north of the Station. Bus and taxi services will be retained outside the Station's southern entrance in a simpler arrangement which complements rather than dominates the environment.

- 3.16 A high quality public place

As with the welcome to the city, the main way in which the public places around the station can be improved is by removing the elements that currently have the greatest negative impact on the environment (those relating to the overly complex traffic infrastructure). The simplified traffic arrangement will enable widened footways which provide opportunities for businesses lining Queens Road to create outdoor activity areas. Improving the environment is also likely to encourage investment from business owners (as has happened in New Road). Where possible tree planting will be introduced to bring additional aesthetic benefit.

- 3.17 Further details of how the scheme's objectives will be met are contained in Appendix 6.
- 3.18 Therefore, it is recommended that the preferred option previously presented to Transport Committee in October 2012 is progressed towards implementation, incorporating the amendment or taxis being retained in their current location (Appendix 5).

Cost & Wider Investment

- 3.19 A cost estimate has been prepared for the scheme. Physical works are expected to cost in the region of £1.5million, including design fees and a contingency of 20%. This estimate is consistent with costs assumed at scheme outset, and the provisional Local Transport Plan.
- 3.20 The proposals for Station Gateway form an integral part of wider regeneration of and investment in the Station and surrounding area.
- 3.21 Within the station Southern Railway are currently carrying out £4.9m of enhancements with works targeted for completion by the end of the current year. In addition the council is committed to supporting Southern Railway and Network Rail in reopening one or both of the historic entrances from the Station to Trafalgar Street. The council is also working with English Heritage and rail partners to assess the costings and practicality of enhancing the station forecourt by improving or removing the canopy.
- 3.22 To the north of the station Southern Railway has now secured funding of £850K for a dedicated cycle hub and a planning application is being prepared. In addition S106 funding in excess of £300K has been secured to enable improvements to be made to the area directly outside the north of the station, and design will progress following the outcome of the Cycle Hub planning decision.
- 3.23 In the surrounding area development of New England Quarter Block J, to the immediate east of the northern Station Entrance, is currently ongoing. As well as providing new office, hotel and residential space, Block J will incorporate direct connections between the northern Station entrance and Anne St / London Road. To the south the new Ibis Hotel on Queen's Road is near completion.
- 3.24 Further details on these wider works are set out in Appendix 4.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Station Gateway project process has been undertaken in line with Community Engagement Framework and Standards. This report seeks to address issues and concerns arising from full public consultation on the preferred Station Gateway proposal.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The Station Gateway project is funded from the Local Transport plan capital budget. This includes a budget of £400,000 for 2013/14. There are provisional allocations of £900,000 for 2014/15 and £500,000 for 2015/16. The overall provisional allocation includes funds for the works outlined in this report, wider improvements (such as a contribution towards the cycle parking hub and potential re-opening of one / both of the Trafalgar Street entrances) and design fees. The costs of improvements to the south of the station will need to be managed within these allocations.

Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates

Date: 03/04/2013

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the Highways and Traffic Authority the Council has powers to make the alterations and improvements outlined in this report. Any necessary traffic regulation orders will need to be advertised in accordance with the statutory requirements and if there are objections these will need to be considered at a future meeting of the Transport Committee.

The Council is under a legal duty as a public authority to consider the human rights implications of its actions. Parking and traffic restrictions have the potential to affect the right to respect for family and private life and the right to protection of property. These are qualified rights which means they may be restricted where this is for a legitimate aim, necessary and proportionate.

Lawyer Consulted:

Carl Hearsom

Date: 18/04/13

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The project improves the accessibility of the environment for all through measures such as simplifying road crossings (the current arrangement has been described as one of the worst in the city for visually impaired people) and creating accessible taxi drop off facilities. An accessibility audit will be undertaken during the process of developing detailed design.

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.

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 Due to the large number of stakeholders the primary risk was that stakeholder support would not be achieved. A significant amount of consultation has taken place during the design process and there is now a reasonable confidence that the proposal is supported by the majority of stakeholders.

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 and work in the city.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 During the course of the Station Gateway project, every potential location for the taxi rank has been considered. The only remaining alternative options are to have no taxi provision at the Station, or to abandon all attempts to improve the wider Station environment.
- 6.2 It is considered that significant benefits can still be achieved by retaining the taxi rank in its current location.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Reasons for the recommendation not to pursue the Frederick Place rank are set out in the main body of the report (3.7 to 3.10)
- 7.2 All alternative options for taxi rank locations in the vicinity of the station have been tested. None have been identified as currently suitable. Therefore the report recommends that the wider Station Gateway improvements are progressed with taxis retained in their existing location. Better management of the taxi rank and changes to the design of the station environment should reduce many of the negative impacts of the existing rank on the station area.
- 7.3 The preferred scheme is still offers significant benefits in line with the project vision and objectives previously agreed by the council. The benefits achieved against original objectives are summarised in Appendix 6. In order to capture those benefits as quickly as possible, it is recommended that Committee agree that the scheme should now progress to detailed design ahead of physical implementation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. JMP report into the implications of a Frederick Place taxi rank.
2. Letter of objection to the Frederick Place taxi rank from the North Laine Traders Association.
3. Southern Railway's written confirmation of their commitment to better manage the taxi rank in future.
4. Wider Station Phases.
5. Revised Proposal.
6. Benefits achieved by the scheme against original vision & objectives.

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None