

Subject:	Brighton Station Gateway Progress Report		
Date of Meeting:	10th July 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director - Place		
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Ward(s) affected:	St Peter's & North Laine		

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 enhance equality of access.
- 1.2 This report outlines results from recent feedback on design options for the Brighton Station Gateway project and seeks a decision on the next step in the project process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Committee notes the results of the recent public consultation on options for Brighton Station Gateway.
- 2.2 That Committee agrees that a preferred option should be developed drawing on feedback received prior to a further round of public consultation to agree the final layout of the Brighton Station Gateway scheme.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**Background**

- 3.1 In November 2010 Cabinet instructed officers to undertake work that would lead to the enhancement of the environment around Brighton Station. The project should seek a design solution that improved the Station environment as a welcome, a place and an interchange, and the aspiration was supported by all parties.
- 3.2 A Vision and series of Objectives for the project (set out in Appendix 1) were agreed with a representative group of Stakeholders on project commencement.

- 3.3 In January 2012 officers updated the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting (CMM) on the results of public scoping consultation. CMM agreed that the next 6 month stage of project development would incorporate development of design options, that would be shared with the public in March / April to inform development of a preferred option, which would be shared with the public in July / August.
- 3.4 Following agreement of a preferred scheme, detailed design would commence ahead of implementation of physical improvements in 2013. The enhancements to the area around the station would complement work being undertaken by Southern Railway to improve facilities within the building. Southern Railway was also investigating opportunities to create an 800 space cycle parking facility as part of the overall enhancement scheme.

Delays

- 3.5 The project has suffered a slight delay on the programme agreed at CMM. The delay resulted from the IBIS redevelopment of the Old Casino in Queens Road, which necessitated the current temporary rearrangement of traffic in Queens Road and Surrey Street. The changes commenced in April, and it was considered prudent to delay consultation for a few weeks to avoid public confusion between the IBIS works and the Station Gateway project. As a result the options consultation took place between 21st May and June 2012. Pending Committee decision today, consultation on a preferred option/s is also likely to be delayed by a similar period, and commence in September 2012, as soon as possible after the summer holidays.

Option Consultation

- 3.6 Option consultation focussed on 3 main options. In line with good practise, Option 1 showed a do minimum arrangement which effectively maintains the status quo, with a few minor improvements to junctions to ease pedestrian crossing and traffic flow.
- 3.7 Option 2 was based on the interim gyratory arrangement put in place to facilitate the IBIS / Old Casino redevelopment. This arrangement had proved to work quite well for many users of the space during the period of enforced trial, with the notable exception of problems caused to residents and businesses of Surrey Street by the temporary relocation of the northbound bus stop normally outside the Queens Head pub.
- 3.8 Option 3 showed an amalgamation of some of the more radical suggestions from previous consultation, such as 2 way private traffic in Surrey Street (enabling this traffic to be removed from Queens Rd), all buses in one location (Queens Road) and reclamation of the existing taxi rank area as a public space, with taxis relocating to the area currently used by buses in Junction Road, directly outside the station.
- 3.9 In addition, variations on Options 1 and 2 were included which incorporated a new eastern entrance to North Laine, and potential relocation of taxis to Frederick Place. Both these elements offer some merit, although would need further investigation to be sure of their viability.

- 3.10 Consultation was primarily carried out via the council's online intranet portal. Paper copies of the information were made available on request. As with the previous consultation, people were made aware of the consultation via a direct mail-out to 6000 addresses in the immediate vicinity of the Station, complemented by media advertising of the process to attract city-wide feedback. Officers also spent 2 days at Brighton Station, providing details of the consultation to members of the public. A paper copy of the consultation document, including the Design Options, is attached as Appendix 2.

Brighton Bus & Coach Company Campaign

- 3.11 The Brighton Bus & Coach Company has used a campaign incorporating email distribution lists, posters, and media releases to urge people to vote for options 1a and 1b.
- 3.12 The Bus Company's campaign claimed that the previous council consultation was 'deeply flawed' as it only sought opinions from people in the immediate vicinity of the Station, that options 2 and 3 would necessitate 6 key services being withdrawn from the station area and that options 2 and 3 would reduce space for buses outside the station from 9 spaces to 4 or 5.
- 3.13 In the spirit of transparency, the council provided details of services the Bus Company thought may be put at risk on the consultation portal. However, the council does not feel that any of the options proposed (Options 2 and 3 reduce bus spaces from 9 to 8 but could be expanded to retain all 9) would have any impact on bus services, whilst the previous consultation was also made available to people across the city and beyond via the online consultation portal / paper copies on request.
- 3.14 Consultation feedback shows that a high number of people have been influenced by the campaign. On one hand this has been positive, confirming that many people share the council's desire to maintain high quality bus connections to Brighton Station. However the comments provided also show that a high proportion of people have primarily used the consultation to try and protect bus services that they feel may be lost. Effectively the process has become two separate consultations; one focusing on ways in which the Gateway vision can best be achieved, the other providing an opportunity for people to raise their concerns about bus services they (wrongly but understandably) feel may be at risk.
- 3.15 The impact of the Bus Company's campaign has been accounted for when assessing consultation feedback. Dialogue will continue with the Bus Company to better understand their concerns during the next stage of design development.

What Consultation Told Us

- 3.16 People were asked to rank the options in order of preference and to provide supporting comments if they wished. Option 1a gained the highest number of 'first preference votes', followed by Options 1b and 2b. However, accompanying

comments show that support for options 1a and 1b was significantly influenced by people's concern that other options would result in lost bus services.

3.17 Options 1a and 3 gained the highest number of 'last preference votes', the most common comments relating to the former being that it 'doesn't do enough' or 'doesn't change anything'.

3.18 As well as a desire to maintain existing bus services, more generally the consultation indicated:

- A high level of support for a new Eastern Station exit
- A desire to at least consider restrictions on non-local traffic
- Mixed views over the suitability of Frederick Place as an alternative taxi rank, but a desire for current taxi rank location and its operation to be reviewed

A full summary of consultation feedback is attached as Appendix 3.

Next Steps

3.19 Whilst Option 1a was ranked by the highest number of people as their first preference, this figure was significantly influenced by the Bus Company's campaign. Accompanying comments received during the consultation process suggest that a high number of those expressing a preference for this option were actually expressing a preference not to have bus services on which they rely being moved away from the Station. Although relatively easy to deliver, this option, included in the consultation in the best practise tradition of presenting a 'do minimum', does not meaningfully deliver the Gateway vision previously agreed by all parties and stakeholders. As such, it is recommended that this option should not be taken forward.

3.20 Instead, it is recommended that an amalgamated preferred option be developed based on the positive and negative comments received relating to all the various options. This preferred option (with sub-options relating to issues such as local traffic restrictions and taxi arrangements) will then be presented for a final stage of consultation in September. The results of that consultation will be reported back to Committee in November 2012.

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 £100,000 funding has been set aside within the 2012-13 Local Transport Plan capital allocation to fund Brighton Station Gateway.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw Date: 19/06/12

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.

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsum Date: 19/06/2012

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 the 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 trialing 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. Project Vision & Objectives
2. Paper copy of consultation document
3. Full summary of consultation feedback

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

