

Subject:	Brighton Station Gateway		
Date of Meeting:	11 November 2010		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

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

- 1.1 The following report outlines the findings of initial feasibility work to enhance the Brighton Station area, and recommends next steps that will enable aspirations for an enhanced Brighton Station Gateway to be realised.
- 1.2 The benefits of enhancing Brighton Station and its surrounding areas are set out in the Public Space Public Life study, which in turn informs the Local Development Framework and the Sustainable Community Strategy. The need to undertake enhancements in the Brighton Station area is also identified in the current Local Transport Plan, and most recently an enhanced Brighton Station Gateway has featured prominently in the Leader of the Council's "Ten in 10: Creating a City of Opportunity" priorities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet formally recognises the Brighton Station Gateway project and agrees that the project is further developed within a Planning Brief.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the establishment of an Urban Design Framework Contract as set out in the main body of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS**Progress to date**

- 3.1 In October 2009, a brief was established which identified broad aspirations for an enhanced public realm around Brighton Rail Station and suggested that an initial feasibility conceptual study be commissioned from Gehl Architects, whose previous work with the council included New Road and development of the city's Public Space Public Life study.

- 3.2 This work led to a preferred concept being identified in late January. The concept sees the Station offering high quality entrances to the north and south, and the “Station Gateway” study area expanded to take in a route linking Preston Circus (north) with the seafront via London Road and Queens Rd / West Street. The Station becomes a link in a high quality boulevard conceived to give a taste of Brighton’s varied offer: in doing so it “ties the city together” – particularly strengthening links to New England Quarter.
- 3.3 Initial discussions that have taken place with rail companies with rail partners (Southern, Network Rail and Railway Heritage Trust) have been very positively received; the Rail partners confirming that they support the developing concept in its entirety.
- 3.4 Once an indicative concept was agreed with Rail partners, the next task involved testing the practical viability of the concept, to inform a decision on whether the scheme should be taken forward as a project. The keys to unlocking the project were seen as clarifying development opportunities and undertaking initial transport modelling to test the feasibility of re-routing private vehicles from the Queens Road section of the Surrey Street gyratory.
- 3.5 Since June, early discussions with the developers of New England Quarter’s Block J, have progressed with a view to seek development that complements the Station Gateway vision and incorporates elements that help deliver a linked aspiration for a high quality cycle parking facility. These discussions are ongoing but have also been very positive, and in broad terms the developer and rail companies support a common vision with the Council for the Northern Station Entrance. It should be noted that these discussions have been on a “without prejudice” basis in respect of the council’s role as Local Planning Authority.
- 3.6 Initial Transport Modelling suggests that making Surrey Street two way, and Terminus Road one way northbound to private vehicles, is an achievable means of diverting private vehicles away from the immediate southern station frontage. The council’s engineers have carried out some early work to test whether removing private vehicles from Queens Road could achieve real benefits. This early work suggests that improvements could be achieved: however consultation with taxi companies, commuter groups, the bus company, local businesses and other stakeholders is required before a final proposal can be identified and modelled in more detail.
- 3.7 This initial feasibility work has indicated that a Station Gateway scheme capable of delivering the “Ten in 10” vision is viable enough to warrant further work, and as a result it is recommended that Brighton Station Gateway should be recognised as a formal project.

Next Steps

- 3.8 Next steps will involve progressing the scheme towards a design that is ready for delivery. This “Design Stage” will involve:

- Continuing to facilitate discussions between developers, Network Rail, Southern Rail and the Railway Heritage Trust towards a mutually agreeable and deliverable scheme incorporating the Northern Station Entrance and links through Block J to London Road.
 - Refining a preferred design for the Surrey Street Gyratory / Southern Station Entrance through consultation with partners, transport operators and other stakeholders that can then be tested and costed.
 - Ensuring existing Coastal Transit System (CTS) plans are updated and refined to ensure they also reflect Station Gateway aspirations between the seafront and the Surrey Street Gyratory.
 - Undertaking initial consultation
 - Identifying implementation opportunities and a works programme
- 3.9 In the short term, work will focus on continuing to lead discussions relating to Block J, and leading workshops with consultees to refine the approach to be taken at the Southern Station Entrance.

3.10 It is also recommended that an Urban Design Framework arrangement is established - in partnership with other authorities in the south east region (through SE7) if appropriate. To date, Urban Designers Gehl Architects have supported the Council in delivering a high quality concept for the Station Gateway; however Gehl's contract is now expired. If additional external Urban Design support is required, a new arrangement must be established through a tender process. More detail on the proposed Urban Design Framework is attached as Appendix 1.

Future funding / delivery approach

- 3.11 Although the precise detail and cost of the scheme will be developed during the Design Stage, it is reasonable to estimate an achievable delivery approach. The current vision can be grouped into 5 general delivery packages:
- 3.12 **Preston Circus & London Road (a):** Improvements between Preston Circus and the Station via London Road should follow an initial piece of work to resolve wider transport infrastructure issues impacting on these locations.
- 3.13 **Block J, Cycle Parking Centre, Northern Station Gateway (b):** In this area, the council can act as facilitator rather than a direct investor in delivering the vision: ideally physical measures will be delivered by other partners. This would enable the council to focus limited funding on the Southern Station Entrance, which does not benefit from as many potential delivery partners.
- 3.14 **Complementary Station Works (c):** This work, covering enhancements within the Station building, will be undertaken by Southern Rail.

- 3.15 **Queens Road / West Street (d):** Ideally physical aspects of this work could be delivered through the CTS project. It is recommended that work during the Design Stage ensures that CTS plans for the Queens Rd / West Street corridor reflect Station Gateway aspirations and vice versa, that the two schemes become one. (Since the change in Government and the subsequent uncertainty over existing regional transport priorities and availability of Government funding, work on CTS has currently stopped pending funding clarification through the Comprehensive Spending Review in October).
- 3.16 **Southern Station Entrance / Surrey Street Gyrotory / Taxi Area (e):** This stage of work represents the council's most direct, immediate funding involvement. Although the cost of the scheme will be largely influenced by details of design, £2-3million would be a reasonable approximate estimate for this section. One of the next steps would be refining the cost of this aspect of the project and identifying potential funding opportunities.
- 3.17 It is recommended that in the short term, efforts be focussed on delivery packages b and e. These will deliver the core Station Gateway vision, potentially at relatively limited cost to the council. Developing a planning brief around the Brighton Station Gateway project will support delivery of the concept, especially at the north of the station.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As initial study work has focussed on testing the practical feasibility of a scheme, consultation has been limited to partners who would help deliver the project and / or own land directly impacted by the concept. It is necessary to undertake wider formal consultation to develop the proposals towards a deliverable conclusion, as reflected in the main body of the report. This consultation will commence if the report recommendations are accepted.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The consultation and feasibility work that will continue this financial year will be contained within existing budget allocations. Initial funding for this scheme will be included in the list for funding from the 2011/12 LTP allocation.

Finance Officer Consulted: Patrick Rice

Date: 08/10/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Any contracts for goods, works or services which may be let as part of implementing the above proposals must comply with the Council's contract standing orders and relevant procurement legislation. In particular it is proposed that an urban design framework agreement is established. If, as is stated in Appendix 1, the individual and/or aggregated value of services ordered under the proposed framework agreement is below the threshold for services for the purpose of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006, the legislation will not apply to

the procurement process. The Council is nevertheless required to comply with EU Treaty objectives of non-discrimination and openness in procurement, as well as the Council's contract standing orders. However if, as is also contemplated, such a framework arrangement is made through SE7 in conjunction with other authorities, this threshold is likely to be exceeded and the contract must be procured in accordance with aforementioned legislation. Contracts over £75,000 must be prepared in a form approved by the Head of Law. Works carried out will be subject to the requisite planning consent. 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: Sonia Likhari / Elizabeth Culbert Date: 08/10/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Development of the concept to a deliverable scheme will take full account of the Public Space Public Life objective of ensuring the city's public spaces maximise their potential for all our residents.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 If the city's public spaces work well for residents, residents are more likely to choose to spend time in the city. If spaces do not work well, people are more likely to see the city as somewhere to move through as quickly as possible, perhaps on their way to out of town destinations. Therefore the Brighton Station Gateway project impacts directly on economic and environmental sustainability.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Well designed public spaces that attract a wide variety of users are less likely to encourage crime than poorly designed spaces that are devoid of human activity.

- 5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management implications
There is a risk that investing in developing the scheme further will not result in physical improvements, and also that some potential benefits that could be realised through an enhancement scheme have yet to be identified in the concept proposals. The former risk has been minimised through a feasibility study that has been as thorough as possible without commencing discussions with wider stakeholders and individuals. The objective of the initial scoping work has also been to develop a concept that works better than the existing arrangement for everyone, limiting the likelihood of insurmountable objections to the work during consultation. The latter risk will be managed through a full consultation process.

Corporate/Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Delivering an enhanced Brighton Station Gateway is key to delivering the "Ten in 10" priorities and objectives of the Public Space Public Life Study and Local Transport Plan. Delivering the concept would bring a range of sustainability,

health, social and economic benefits through an enhanced environment, better connections between city districts and an enhanced “image”.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

- 6.1 During the process of developing a preferred concept, it was considered that a “do minimum” option based on tweaking the existing arrangement of space at the front of the Station would not provide sufficient benefit to be worthwhile. Knocking down buildings to create more space in front of the Station would be detrimental: this would simply result in an inappropriately sized space bounded by unsuitable buildings. A ‘do more’ solution – the preferred option - would require relocating either private vehicles or taxis to the rear of the station (due to the arrangement of the bus network, relocating buses is impractical). For various reasons, it is preferable to maintain a significant taxi presence at the southern station entrance and create an enhanced private vehicle drop off facility at the northern entrance.
- 6.2 Initial Transport Modelling tested two options for re-routing private vehicles from the Queens Road area of the Surrey Street Gyratory. The first tested the feasibility of moving traffic along New England Road, the second of making Surrey Street 2 way. The modelling suggested that the Surrey Street option is achievable in the short term if Terminus Road is made one way northbound to private vehicles, but that New England Road should be considered as a longer term aspiration.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The report recommendations set out the best means of delivering the objective of an enhanced Brighton Station Gateway.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Further detail on the Urban Design Framework

Documents in Members Rooms

None

Background Documents

None