

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Date of meeting: 14 March 2022
By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title: Eastbourne Levelling Up Fund – Grant Agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council
Purpose: To approve East Sussex County Council, as the scheme delivery partner, entering into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council in relation to the Levelling Up funding allocated for the delivery of the Victoria Place pedestrianisation scheme of Terminus Road.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended:

- (1) To approve East Sussex County Council, as the scheme delivery partner, entering into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council in relation to the £4.74m of Levelling Up funding allocated for the delivery of the Victoria Place pedestrianisation of Terminus Road: and**
 - (2) To delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Assistant Chief Executive , to negotiate and agree the terms of the grant funding agreement between Eastbourne Borough Council and East Sussex County Council.**
-

1 Background Information

1.1. Following the Spending Review in March 2021, the Government published the prospectus for the first round of a new £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The first round of the Fund focussed on three themes - smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding cultural and heritage assets. District and Borough authorities were encouraged to submit investment proposals that focussed on supporting high priority projects that make a visible impact in their local areas.

1.2. In June 2021 East Sussex County Council as the local highway authority worked in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council to provide the necessary preliminary plans for the Eastbourne 'Victoria Place' pedestrianisation of Terminus Road (southern section) for inclusion within the Borough Council's LUF bid proposal 'Linking Town Centre Regeneration with a Strengthened Visitor Economy @Victoria Place and @Towner'. The plans for the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road continues the ambition to create a continuous pedestrian route from the train station to the seafront and builds on the previous Local Growth Fund investment in pedestrian and public realm improvements on this key arterial route in Eastbourne town centre.

1.3. In October 2021 Eastbourne Borough Council received notification that their £19.85m LUF bid had been successful. Within this amount, £4.74m was allocated for the delivery of the Victoria Place pedestrianisation scheme. East Sussex County Council, as the local highway authority, will act as the delivery body for the scheme.

2 Supporting Information

Victoria Place Pedestrianisation scheme

2.1 The Victoria Place pedestrianisation scheme represents an opportunity to sustainably

upgrade this section of the town centre by creating more space, priority and accessibility for pedestrians; as well as providing a clear and inviting pedestrian route between the Town Centre to the Seafront and improving connections with existing pedestrianised areas through upgraded crossing points to the Seafront and over Seaside Road/Trinity Trees. A plan showing the extent of the scheme is at Appendix 1.

2.2 The scheme builds on the £8m investment, including £5m of Local Growth Fund, on Phase 1 of the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package which focussed on improvements for pedestrians and buses on the section of Terminus Road between Station Road and Bankers Corner, Cornfield Road and Gildredge Road, and supported the investment made in extending the 'The Beacon' shopping centre. It also supports the planned £3.4m investment, including £3m LGF, on Phase 2a of the Movement and Access Package related to the section of Terminus Road between 'Bankers Corner' and Langney Road, which is due to begin construction in Spring 2022.

2.3 The Victoria Place pedestrianisation scheme represents an opportunity to bring strategic economic and cultural benefits to the Town Centre, by creating opportunities for boosting the night-time economy of Eastbourne and supporting the creation of a restaurant quarter and public realm improvements and new space with the potential for social and cultural activities. These fit within the County Council objective of supporting economic growth alongside the Borough Council's strategic development objectives for Eastbourne town centre.

2.4 The scheme also supports the East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP 2011 - 2026), which identifies that in order to meet the likely travel demand from new development and to promote the local economy, improvements to accessibility for pedestrians as well as traffic movement would be required within Eastbourne town centre. In addition, the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021), approved by the County Council in September 2021, identifies the pedestrianisation of Terminus Road to the seafront as one of its priority schemes.

Grant Funding Agreement

2.5 Following their successful Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid, Eastbourne Borough Council has entered into a grant funding agreement with the Government in order to receive their £19.85m LUF allocation.

2.6 The County Council, acting as a delivery partner for the Victoria Place element of Eastbourne's LUF package, will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council to enable the £4.74m of LUF funding allocation to be defrayed to enable delivery by the end of the LUF funding period in March 2024.

2.7 The County Council has completed the preliminary design stage for the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b Terminus Road upgrading and pedestrianisation, which covers the Victoria Place scheme extent. The preliminary design current cost estimates indicate that the LUF allocation will fund the Victoria Place section, however exact details of costs will be achieved through detailed design development and in discussions with Eastbourne Borough Council.

2.8 It is envisaged that in the event of any cost overruns to the project, this will be managed by Eastbourne Borough Council acting as the LUF lead authority. The precise details of the mechanisms for risk for any overspend will be reviewed once the County Council receives the grant funding agreement this month.

Programme Delivery

2.9 The current delivery programme for the Victoria Place pedestrianisation scheme will see engagement, public consultation and the development of the detailed design continue throughout 2022, with construction programmed to commence in spring 2023 and complete by March 2024.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 In October 2021, Eastbourne Borough Council successfully secured £19.85m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for its 'Linking Town Centre Regeneration with a 'Strengthened Visitor Economy @Victoria Place and @Towner' proposal. This included £4.74m for the delivery of the Victoria Place pedestrianisation of Terminus Road. The scheme builds on the existing investment the County Council has made using Local Growth Fund and other funding sources in the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package and represents an opportunity to sustainably upgrade this section of the town centre by creating more space, priority and accessibility for pedestrians, as well as providing a clear and inviting pedestrian route between the Town Centre to the Seafront.

3.2 The County Council, acting as the scheme delivery body, will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council to defray the Victoria Place funding allocation to the County Council to progress the consultation, detailed design and construction by the end of the LUF funding period of March 2024.

3.3 The Lead Member is recommended to approve East Sussex County Council entering into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council in relation to the £4.74m of Levelling Up funding allocated to the Borough Council for the delivery of the Victoria Place pedestrianisation of Terminus Road. The Lead Member is also recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Assistant Chief Executive to negotiate and agree the terms and conditions on the grant agreement.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Richard Lambert

Tel. No. 07783 802411

Email: Richard.Lambert@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Holt, Taylor

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Eastbourne Borough Council Levelling up Fund BID – Executive Summary](#)