

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 25 September 2023

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b & Victoria Place Levelling Up Fund (Seaside Road to Grand Parade) public consultation outcomes

Purpose: To consider the public consultation results and East Sussex County Council's response on the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b schemes and recommend the next steps on taking forward each of the schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) approve the East Sussex County Council response and report on the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b public consultation;**
 - (2) Approve the Victoria Place (Trinity Trees/Seaside to Grand Parade) pedestrianisation of Terminus Road progressing to detailed design and construction; and**
 - (3) Approve the Memorial Roundabout and Ring Road relocation elements of the package progressing to detailed design and that funding opportunities are explored to enable the construction of both of these schemes.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 During 2018 and 2019, significant investment was made on pedestrian, public realm and public transport improvements in Eastbourne town centre (Phase 1) to augment the extension to The Beacon shopping centre. Focussed on Terminus Road between Station roundabout and Bankers Corner, Cornfield Road and Gildredge Road, Phase 1 was funded from a range of sources including South East Local Enterprise Local Growth funding, the County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Network Rail and development contributions.

1.2 During 2018 and 2019, the County Council and Borough Council undertook extensive citizen-led engagement with key stakeholders from a wide variety of business, transport, sustainable travel, youth participation and disability involvement groups to identify further movement and access improvements for Eastbourne Town Centre. This engagement helped to identify a pipeline and prioritised list of schemes to utilise existing and secure future funding.

1.3 From this stakeholder engagement process, the Town Centre Phase 2a scheme focussed on the section of Terminus Road between Bankers Corner and Langney Road/Bolton Road was developed and subject to public consultation in autumn 2019. The outcomes of the consultation were reported to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 19 July 2021, with a resolution to progress to detailed design and construction. Funded from South East Local Enterprise Local Growth Fund monies, as well as the County Council's capital programme of local transport improvements and funding secured through Active Travel England, the scheme is currently programmed to start construction in 2024.

1.4 A further phase of improvements, Phase 2b, was also identified to progress to preliminary design and consultation. This phase comprised:

- upgrading the existing Terminus Road pedestrianised area from the end of Phase 2a scheme extents at Langney Road through to its junction with Seaside Road/Trinity Trees as well as pedestrianising the section of Terminus Road from Seaside Road/Trinity Trees to Grand Parade (known as Victoria Place);
- proposed improvements to pedestrian priority and space at Memorial Roundabout;
- the relocation of the northern and western sections of the town centre Ring Road from Ashford Road and Susans Road to The Avenue/Upper Avenue and Cavendish Place to support reducing traffic through the town centre.

1.5 The Phase 2b schemes seek to:

- Build on Phase 1 and Phase 2a, by completing the pedestrian spinal route on Terminus Road through the primary retail area of Eastbourne town centre to the seafront.
- Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility (ease of movement for vulnerable users, parents or carers with pushchairs etc.) by reallocating road space in the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road to pedestrians.
- Complete the pedestrian spinal route on Terminus Road through the primary retail area of Eastbourne town centre to the seafront.
- Improve the public realm within the town centre by upgrading street furniture and signage.
- Relocate the Ring Road to reduce town centre through-traffic and create a greater sense of arrival in Eastbourne.
- Improve pedestrian priority and safety at Memorial Roundabout with zebra crossing points on all arms that aid pedestrian movement and reduce vehicle speeds.

1.6 In autumn 2021, Eastbourne Borough Council were successful in their Round 1 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) application which secured £4.74m for the highways element of the 'Victoria Place' scheme within the Phase 2b package. At the Lead Member's decision-making meeting on 14 March 2022, it was resolved that the County Council, acting as a delivery partner, enter into a grant funding agreement with Eastbourne Borough Council in relation to the LUF monies, which is required to be spent by March 2025, to enable the delivery of the pedestrianisation of the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road.

2 Supporting Information

Public Consultation Approach

2.1 Between 2020 and 2022, key stakeholders made up of local interest groups, including locally elected Councillors, transport users, accessibility groups, business representatives such as Your Eastbourne BID team and the Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce were involved in a series of constructive co-development workshops and site visits, to help shape the preliminary stages of the Phase 2b schemes. Additional accessibility assessments were also carried out alongside the necessary road safety audits associated with the feasibility stage of the proposals. An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted which found that on balance, the benefits of the scheme far outweigh any negative impacts. The ongoing engagement with the stakeholder groups representing the experiences of disabled people and the significant dialogue and changes to the detailed design demonstrate the positive action measures that ESCC has undertaken for those with protected characteristics who suffer detrimental or substantial disadvantage. Working in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council to advance the Phase 2b schemes, and to ensure the spend timescales of LUF were met, the public consultation on the Phase 2b preliminary design proposals were undertaken during October and November 2022. Prior to the consultation, a series of stakeholder engagement sessions were held in September 2022 to brief key stakeholders and locally elected officials on the consultation proposals.

2.2 The public consultation asked for feedback on the overall package of Phase 2b schemes as well as on each specific scheme. Staffed exhibitions were held at three different locations in the town centre to seek the views of the public, businesses and key stakeholders on the proposals; in addition, the proposals were presented to the Eastbourne Disability Involvement Group. The consultation was widely publicised both online (via email, social media and newsletters) and in person (via post and at key locations in the town centre). All the consultation material, including the questionnaire, was also available online on the East Sussex consultation hub which can be seen here: [Eastbourne Town Centre - Phase 2b Public Consultation - East Sussex - Citizen Space](#).

Public Consultation outcomes & key themes

2.3 The outcomes of the consultation are set out in the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package Phase 2b Consultation Report at Appendix 1.

2.4 Overall, public and stakeholder feedback identified mixed levels of support for the proposals, with 64% of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that the proposals would have a positive impact on Eastbourne Town Centre. It should be noted that respondents to a consultation are a self-selecting group, and therefore a non-scientific sample made up of those who have chosen to respond. The responses reflect the views of only those who responded and whilst this provides an invaluable insight into the concerns, themes and issues surrounding the

proposals presented, they should not be considered a fully representative sample of the views of the whole local population. Respondents commented that full pedestrianisation of Terminus Road would improve accessibility and the town centre as a whole, as well as improve and create a safer environment for pedestrians. Comments also noted the success of the temporary closure of Victoria Place during Summer 2022 and the potential increased footfall the scheme could bring for local businesses. It was also noted that respondents felt the proposals could encourage more visitors and locals to eat out, as the proposals will make the environment feel more relaxed.

2.5 In addition, 88 out of 159 comments received were made in relation to the proposal to not allow cycling through Terminus Road. Therefore, a large proportion of those responses received strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the proposals can be attributed to those concerned about not allowing cyclists through Terminus Road, and that these respondents may not necessarily be opposed to the scheme as a whole. Provision for cyclists in the town centre, particularly between the rail station and seafront, is being made via alternative identified routes which were subject to public consultation in summer 2021 and considered by the Lead Member on 21 February 2022. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) have also sought guidance with Active Travel England in relation to improvements in the town centre and have been provided with town centre assessment tools which are currently being reviewed by officers.

2.6 In relation to the proposals for the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road, 58% of respondents either strongly opposed or opposed the scheme with 33% strongly supported or supported; this level of opposition is likely to be a result of the proposals to not allow cycling in Terminus Road.

2.7 In response to the proposed improvements to Memorial Roundabout, 75% either supported or were neutral to the proposals, whilst 68% of respondents were supportive or neutral on the proposed relocation of the Ring Road.

2.8 A number of respondents noted that the Terminus Road and Memorial Roundabout proposals would support the objectives to improve pedestrian safety, thereby enhancing the overall pedestrian environment along the whole length of Terminus Road between the station and seafront.

2.9 Common concerns reported through the consultation centred on:

- not enabling cyclists to use Terminus Road;
- ensuring there is disabled (blue badge) parking provision (blue badge) as well as taxi and other drop off areas in the vicinity of Victoria Place;
- general access to the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road for those with accessibility issues, and
- the re-routing of the no.99 bus from Terminus Road and Trinity Trees to Grand Parade and Devonshire Place.

2.10 Responses to the key themes, trends and comments related to the proposals are set out in the consultation report at Appendix 1.

Next Steps

Victoria Place Pedestrianisation LUF Phase 2b

2.11 Subject to Lead Member approval, it is proposed to progress the detailed design for the Victoria Place section of Terminus Road during 2023/24 and where practicable, seek to address the comments/concerns raised during the public consultation. The detailed design process will also include continued engagement with key stakeholder groups including the business community, accessibility groups, transport groups and heritage groups. Construction is proposed to take place in 2024/25 and proposed completion targeted for end of March 2025.

Other Phase 2b schemes

2.12 As identified in the 2023/24 capital programme of Transport Improvements approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment at her decision-making meeting on 13 March 2023, the Memorial Roundabout and Relocation of the Ring Road will advance to detailed design. Funding has been secured through the Active Travel Fund 4, administered by Active Travel England, to progress the detailed design during 2023/24.

3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Phase 2b of the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package focusses on upgrading the existing Terminus Road pedestrianised area from Langney Road through to its junction with Seaside Road/Trinity Trees. In addition, it addresses pedestrianising the 'Victoria Place' section of Terminus Road from Seaside Road/Trinity Trees to Grand Parade funded through Eastbourne Borough Council's 'Levelling Up Fund' allocation, alongside future pedestrian crossing improvements at Memorial Roundabout and the proposed relocation of the northern and western sections of the town centre ring road.

3.2 Following a series of co-development and design workshops and site visits held with a mixture of local interest groups and elected officials, public consultation was undertaken on the Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2b proposals in October and November 2022. There was a mixed response on the proposals with good levels of support for the Memorial roundabout and ring road relocation schemes. However, there was less support for the Terminus Road proposals with the majority of comments expressing concerns regarding the lack of cycling provision through the existing and proposed pedestrianised area.

3.3 Whilst the Terminus Road proposals did not receive as much support as the other Phase 2b proposals, they build upon the previous and planned investment made in Phase 1 and Phase 2a improvements to Terminus Road and will enable the completion of the pedestrianised route between the rail station and the seafront meeting a key objective of the overall movement and access package for Eastbourne town centre. As a result, it is recommended to progress the Phase 2b scheme to detailed design and construction whilst continuing to engage with stakeholders and drawing on guidance and assessment tools from bodies such as Active Travel England to further shape the detailed design. The concerns raised during the consultation will, where practicable, be considered and addressed at the detailed design stage. The scheme will be funded using the £4.74m Levelling Up funding secured by Eastbourne Borough Council with construction currently programmed to be completed by the end of March 2025. Due to ongoing cost inflation pressures being experienced in the construction sectors and across supply chains as a result of cost inflation rises, arising from external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine and cost of living crisis, programme delivery will be continued to be monitored closely.

3.4 It is also recommended that the detailed design for the Memorial roundabout and ring road relocation elements of the Phase 2b package are progressed, funded using the Active Travel Fund 4 funding, and that potential future funding opportunities are explored to construct the schemes.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Holt, Rodohan and Wright

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Eastbourne Town Centre and Movement and Access brochure FINAL upd.pdf \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#)