

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: Place St Maur Project, Bognor Regis

REPORT AUTHOR: Rachel Alderson – Principal Landscape & Project Officer

DATE: February 2021 EXTN: 37946

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on the Place St Maur and Esplanade scheme and seeks approval for the sign-off of the preferred design following public consultation, in order to progress with the delivery of Place St Maur.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are requested to approve;

1. The designs presented at the meeting for Place St Maur and the Esplanade, and that the delivery of Place St Maur is progressed in line with the project programme.

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Project Summary

Place St Maur and the Esplanade are important public spaces in Bognor Regis, with the potential to form a strong connection between the seafront and town centre. The Place St Maur however has a particularly run-down appearance and is considered to make a negative contribution to Bognor Regis. Enhancing the public realm in this area will create a flexible and functional active space and encourage visitors to stay longer. In addition, delivering the missing link of the Bognor Regis public realm masterplan will strengthen links and encourage visitors to discover more of the town. The impact of visitors spending more time in the town will benefit businesses and boost the local economy.

Cabinet Decision (C/032/16112020) approved the Project Proposal and that the designs for the scheme will be presented at future Cabinet meetings. The Decision also recommended to Full Council the approval of a supplementary estimate of £370K as partnership funding and that should the £1.2m bid to Coast to Capital be successful, the Council enters into a funding agreement with Coast to Capital and approve the drawdown and expenditure of external funding. These recommendations were ratified by Full Council at their meeting on 13 January 2021 (minute 414).

1.2 Early stakeholder engagement

An initial stakeholder engagement process was undertaken in November and December to seek knowledge about the site as well as suggested ideas for potential inclusion within the designs. A range of stakeholders were contacted and included ADC Members and Officers, immediate neighbours of the site, local businesses, Bognor Regis Town Council, West Sussex County Council, Bognor Regis BID, Bognor Regis Regeneration Board and event organisers.

The consultants (LUC) worked with the information gathered to prepare concept designs which would test public opinion on a variety of elements through public consultation.

1.3 Public consultation process

The public consultation was launched on 11 February and will close on 8 March 2021. The plans are being displayed through an online hub and the consultation was widely publicised through posters, banners, press release, letters, emails and social media. The Covid-19 restrictions in place meant that it is not possible to hold an exhibition for people to visit. Members of the public who do not have online access are able to request a paper copy of the consultation material and survey.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 Public consultation outcome

At the time of writing the report, more than 250 survey responses had been returned. It is expected that a number of written representations from organisations within the town will also be received. A summary of the results of the public consultation will be presented at the Cabinet meeting.

It is intended that the most popular features from the concept designs will be used to develop the preferred option, to be presented at the Cabinet meeting. As part of this more detailed design stage the consultants will be considering a range of factors including the layout of events, new and existing service infrastructure, as well as materials and costs. The final layout will enable events such as the ice rink to continue to be held on the site.

It is proposed to approve the preferred design in order to progress with the delivery of Place St Maur in line with the project programme. The design will be frozen at this point to ensure that the design team are working to a fixed scope. Any further changes will impact on the project cost and delivery programme.

2.2 Technical design and procurement

Following approval of the preferred design LUC will work on the technical designs so that the scheme can progress to tender stage.

The tender process will invite companies to submit bids for the delivery of the project. The award of contract for the construction phase will be made in accordance with revisions to the Constitution.

2.3 Esplanade traffic surveys

The design scope for the Esplanade was for concept designs only and will conclude following the public consultation. Further design phases will depend on the outcome of traffic studies which will determine whether closing a section of the Esplanade can be undertaken successfully without affecting the surrounding road network. This would enable the space to be used for events and create a pedestrian-friendly environment at particular times of the year. The project team is working with officers from WSCC to produce a brief to procure consultants for this work. It is hoped that the traffic studies could be carried out in Summer 2021.

2.4 Project costs

The total project budget is £1,807,000 with an allocation of £1.5m for capital works. An external grant of £1.2m has been provisionally awarded from Coast to Capital with a partnership contribution from ADC of £370K plus a £237K revenue sum providing the remaining funding.

LUC are working with a cost consultant to monitor the expected cost of delivering the scheme throughout the design phase. The actual cost of the scheme will only be known following the tender period.

Once the construction phase is completed there will be ongoing maintenance costs to be considered and built into revenue budgets. This will need to allow for maintenance of water features, soft landscape, repairs and maintenance of site furniture. In signing off the preferred design there is an associated commitment to maintaining the completed scheme.

3. OPTIONS:

- a. To approve the recommendation as set out in this report.
- b. To not approve the recommendation.

4. CONSULTATION:

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken early in the design phase. A public consultation on the concept designs is running between 11 February and 8 March 2021.

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	✓	
Relevant District Ward Councillors	✓	
Other groups/persons (please specify) All ADC Members, residents and businesses adjacent to Place St Maur, Bognor Regis Town Council, Bognor Regis BID, Bognor Regis Regeneration Board, wider public	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	

Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability	✓	
Asset Management/Property/Land	✓	
Technology		✓
Safeguarding		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:

- Financial – In committing to delivering the project the Council will need to ensure there are sufficient funds in place to maintain the completed scheme long term.
- Legal – The Council is required to enter into a legal agreement with Coast to Capital.
- Sustainability – Sustainability is a factor when sourcing materials for the scheme and consideration of maintenance of the completed project.
- Asset Management/Property/Land – ADC will retain responsibility for the land on completion and therefore its maintenance.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To progress enhancement plans for the Place St Maur site in accordance with the project programme.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Cabinet 9 March 2020 – Minute 499](#)
[Full Council 22 July 2020, Minute 114](#)
[Environment & Leisure Working Group – 3 September 2020 – Minute 14 refers](#)
[Cabinet 16 November 2020, Minute 285](#)
[Environment & Leisure Working Group 10 December 2020 – Minute 22 refers](#)
[Full Council 13 January 2021, Minute 414](#)