

Crawley Borough Council

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Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 20 March 2017

Report to Cabinet 22 March 2017

Town Centre Regeneration Programme (Phase 2) Queensway & The Pavement

Report of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services, **PES/230**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Members of a proposal to extend the environmental improvement scheme in Queens Square along Queensway and The Pavement, as part of the next phase of the Town Centre Regeneration.
- 1.2 The report seeks Cabinet approval of the design concept for Queensway and The Pavement to be developed further into a detailed design for the submission of a planning application later in 2017.
- 1.3 The report also seeks delegated authority for approval of the final design, to spend up to the allocated budget for the scheme and to appoint a contractor to construct the scheme, following a procurement exercise.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2 To the Cabinet:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Approve the design concept for the Queensway & The Pavement Regeneration Scheme;
- b) Delegate authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development to approve the detailed design;
- c) Delegate authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic

Development to spend up to the allocated budget of £2.2m for the scheme, subject to formal approval from West Sussex County Council for a contribution of £1.1m;

- d) Delegate authority to officers to undertake a procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code to select a suitable Contractor to construct the scheme;
- e) Delegate authority to the Head of Economic and Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into a contract with the successful bidder for the construction of the scheme.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 Approval of the design concept for the scheme is required in order for the project team to undertake detailed design and prepare a planning application for submission in mid-2017. This will be closely followed by the procurement process leading to the selection and appointment of a contractor, with a view to commencing construction in early 2018.
- 3.2 The scheme will complement and build on the momentum set by the Queens Square project and breathe new life into Queensway¹ and strengthen the positive perception of Crawley town centre in order to consolidate and boost retail / business investment.

4. Background

- 4.1 Improving the public realm is a primary objective of Crawley's Town Centre Regeneration Programme and a number of areas within the town centre have been identified as priorities for investment in revitalised public space. These include:
 - Phase 1 – Queens Square
 - Phase 2 – Queensway and The Pavement
 - Phase 3 – Station Gateway
- 4.2 Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council and the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership are already working together to regenerate Queens Square (Phase 1) and construction of the £3.2m environmental improvement scheme started on site in September 2016. Due for completion in summer 2017, the project will redefine Queens Square as the heart of the town centre and play a major role in transforming the area into a high quality, distinctive and enjoyable public space.
- 4.3 It is proposed that Phase 2 will see the Queens Square scheme extended along Queensway, a principal connector street that links Queens Square to other parts of the town centre including Memorial Gardens, the Town Hall, Library and Central Sussex College. The full extent of the proposed scheme area, comprising 5,500m², is shown at Appendix A.
- 4.4 As well as being a significant connector street, Queensway has been identified as the preferred future location for a new and improved, quality town centre market. The scheme will therefore ensure that the necessary infrastructure required to support a new market is delivered.

¹ All references to 'Queensway' in this report refer to the public realm and highway in Queensway, The Pavement, Kingsgate and Parkside as shown in Appendix A

- 4.5 In October 2016, the landscape architects who designed Queens Square (Burns + Nice) were asked to prepare an initial design concept for the scheme, based on the above information and supplementary feedback from officers. Using their extensive knowledge of the area, they have prepared an initial design concept which is shown at Appendix B.

5. Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The aims of the proposed project are to complement and build on the momentum set by the Queens Square project and to breathe new life into Queensway and strengthen the positive perception of Crawley town centre in order to consolidate and boost retail / business investment.
- 5.2 The following scheme objectives have been identified:
- To establish Queensway as an important, informal town centre space;
 - To deliver physical improvements to Queensway as an integral extension of the Queens Square scheme, progressed in consultation with residents, local businesses, councillors and officers from CBC and WSCC and other key stakeholders;
 - To help create a high quality, unrestricted, attractive and comfortable public space that encourages the vitality of the town centre and provides a seamless connection to other parts of the town centre, notably Memorial Gardens;
 - To stimulate physical regeneration of retail and business space in Queensway, the Pavement, Kingsgate and Parkside;
 - To ensure this space is accessible to all users including children, older people, the disabled, workers, residents, and visitors that will be using the space at different times of the day and night;
 - To enable the space to be used as a town centre market location in the future, ensuring the necessary infrastructure is in place;
 - To consider options for improving vehicular access to the NCP car park in Parkside whilst ensuring convenient and accessible parking for visitors to the town centre is maintained;
 - To ensure the space is designed to facilitate cyclist access into the core shopping area, with cycle rack provision in set locations that connect with key cycle routes;
 - To ensure the area feels safe and is designed to limit opportunities for anti-social behaviour; taking into account the limited evening and night time use of the area;
 - To minimise disruption to pedestrians and existing businesses for example through phasing, timing, consultation and a considerate approach to construction
- 5.3 The following specific design requirements have also been identified:-
- High quality paving in all pedestrianised areas, using the Queens Square scheme as a benchmark; materials should be easy to clean and maintain;
 - Consider relationship with Memorial Gardens and an opportunity to open up the area, improving visibility and connectivity between Queens Square and Memorial Gardens;
 - Flat, accessible surface in order to provide a flexible, adaptable public space;
 - New lighting, seating (formal and informal), cycle racks, storage facilities, water and power supplies;
 - Vehicular access for occasional (e.g. market) and emergency use along Queensway and into Queens Square to be maintained;
 - Disabled parking and taxi pick up on Parkside and Kingsgate to be retained;

6. Consultation

6.1 Consultation took place during February and March 2017 and this involved:

- Online questionnaire and information on both Crawley Borough Council and Regenerating Crawley websites
- Trade, local and social media coverage
- Face to face briefings
- A drop in session in the Civic Hall (27 February) aimed at the local business community
- Targeted meetings with individual stakeholders
- Letters sent to over 43 property owners, leaseholders and occupiers in Queensway, The Pavement, Kingsgate and Parkside.

6.2 A total of 42 responses were received and a full report of the findings has been produced. It should be noted that despite the consultation being widely publicised, the number of respondents is not statistically significant in relation to the total amount of users of this space.

6.3 Summary of key findings:-

93% of respondents (39 people) live in Crawley with only 7% (3 people) residing in other towns. The largest proportion of respondents were aged between 45-54 (13 people or 31%), with the second largest age group being 25-34 (7 people or 17%). Only 2% were aged between 18 and 24 (1 person).

- 83% (34 people) use Queensway and / or The Pavement at least once a week. Most use it for shopping and / or working; other comments included using the area out of necessity (to reach other areas) or to get a sandwich.
- Respondents were asked to describe the area in three words. The most common words used were *uninviting*, *dated*, *cluttered* and *bland*. There were very few positive words used to describe the area.
- 43% (18 people) said they would be *more* likely to visit a market located in the area if it were to be regenerated, while only 5% (2 people) said they would be less likely.
- When asked if respondents would be more or less likely to visit Memorial Gardens if the entrance was widened with hedges removed and sight lines improved, 41% (17 people) said they would be more likely while 19% (8 people) said less likely. A further 41% said there would be no change. Those who responded positively cited safety and openness as reasons and those who responded negatively suggested the park would be less attractive and less sheltered.
- When asked if removing the hedgerows into Memorial Gardens would make them feel safer, 15 people agreed it would while 16 people said it wouldn't.
- 14% of respondents (6 people) said they cycle in and around the area with 86% (36 people) not cycling. All respondents who cycle would use cycle racks in the regeneration area.
- 4 people (10%) use the disabled parking bays located on Queensway
- 19% (8 people) use the NCP surface car park and none of these respondents use it more than twice per month

- When asked to comment on the proposed plans, 12 responded positively; 8 negatively and 6 were neutral. 15 others provided suggestions, improvements or adjustments to the proposals.

6.4 These comments will be taken forward to the final stage of design development and will include the following key principles:

- Ensure the space is inviting, clean and uncluttered
- Create good sightlines between Memorial Gardens and Queensway whilst carefully considering how the two areas interrelate.

7. Programme

7.1 Subject to the funding streams being agreed, the concept design will be taken forward for extensive stakeholder consultation and detailed design development with a view to submitting a planning application by summer 2017. This would be followed by a procurement exercise to appoint a construction contractor and it is hoped that construction would begin on site in early 2018. This will also give the businesses in Queensway a short break from the construction work currently taking place immediately outside their premises in connection with the Queens Square works.

8. Ward Members' Views

8.1 There is support from Members generally for the scheme following consultation briefings including a meeting of the Economic Regeneration Working Group on 15 November 2016. Detailed consultation with ward members will occur as part of the planning application process.

9. Implications

9.1 Staffing

Resources are in place to manage the project and there are no additional staffing implications associated with these recommendations.

9.2 Financial

On 30 November 2016, Cabinet approved a total allocation of £1,100,000 from Crawley Borough Council's Capital programme for the delivery of the Queensway regeneration scheme.

The remaining £1,100,000 is subject to formal approval from West Sussex County Council in accordance with their internal approval procedures. The total scheme cost is £2,200,000.

9.3 Legal

A construction contract will be entered into following a robust procurement exercise, in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code.

An agreement with WSCC regarding the future maintenance and management of the scheme area will be formalised once the detailed design has been completed and costed.

9.4 Environmental

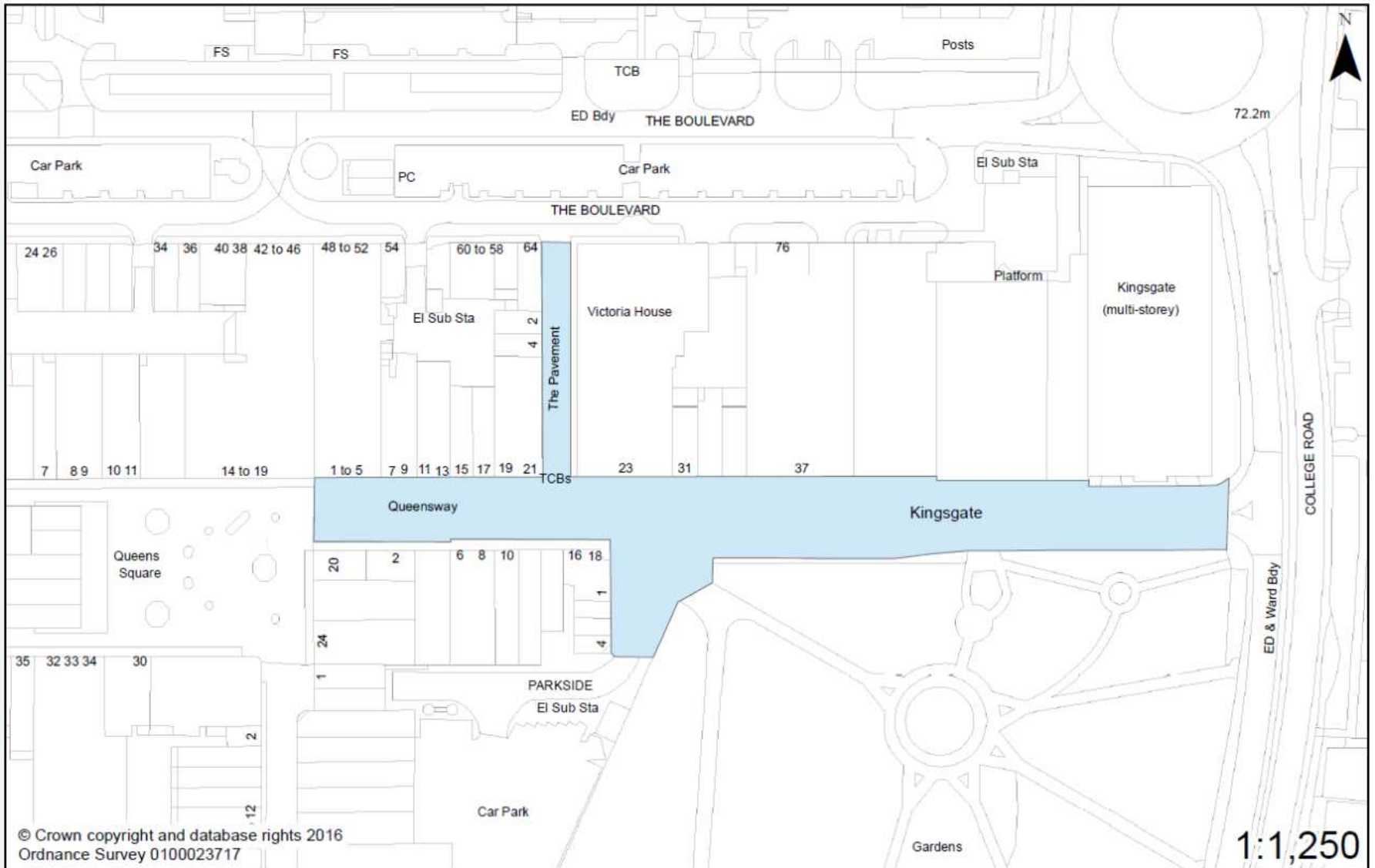
Environmental sustainability has been considered throughout the design process and, where feasible, measures will be taken to minimise energy consumption, waste production and pollution emissions. Environmental impact assessments will be undertaken for all working practices and products associated with the final scheme and assessed through the discharge of the planning conditions.

10. **Background Papers**

- Report [PES/195](#) to Cabinet 2 December 2015 - Town Centre Regeneration Programme
- Report [FIN/395](#) to Cabinet 30 November 2016 – 2016/17 Budget Monitoring Q2
- www.regeneratingcrawley.org.uk/queensway

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Queensway, The Pavement and Kingsgate



Appendix B – initial concept design

Queenway Improvement Works

13 October 2016

QUEENSWAY CONCEPT DESIGN

