

ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Key Decision Yes

**Delivering High Quality Public Realm in Worthing Town Centre**

**Report by the Director for the Economy**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The proposal to develop a Worthing Town Centre Public Realm Strategy is detailed in a Growth Deal signed by Worthing Borough Council and West Sussex County Council earlier this year. The Growth Deal also confirms a commitment from the County Council to support the implementation of the public realm works, once approved.

The County Council commissioned the development of a Worthing Public Realm Options Appraisal Study earlier this year. Initial design options were discussed with officers, Members and stakeholders in a series of workshops held from September to November 2017. This included a presentation to the West Sussex County Local Committee on 8th November.

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of Worthing Borough Council Members for the initial design options and materials palette identified in the Options Appraisal Study. In addition, to confirm the Council's preference for the Option 3 designs for Portland Road and South Street (north and south) and that these should form a first phase of public realm works; subject to the outcome of further refinement and consultation on preferred options for each of the eight areas identified.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To approve the development of the initial design options and materials palette identified in the Options Appraisal Study for Worthing Town Centre Public Realm, attached as Exempt Appendix A;
- 2.2 To confirm the Council's preference for Option 3 designs for Portland Road and South Street (north and south), and that these form the first phase of works; subject to the outcome of further refinement and consultation on preferred options for each of the eight areas identified.
- 2.3 To authorise officers to continue to work in partnership with West Sussex County Council to progress options to a detailed design stage and support the preparation of a business case, funding and phase plan, for further consideration and approval at a future meeting of the Joint Strategic Committee.

## **3. Context**

- 3.1 At the beginning of 2017, Worthing Borough Council and West Sussex County Council signed a Growth Deal, which set out a number of priority projects that both Councils are committed to delivering in partnership. One of these priorities is Worthing Town Centre and the delivery of an improved public realm that meets the aspirations set out in 2016 Worthing Investment Prospectus and supports the delivery of key sites.
- 3.2 In May 2017, West Sussex County Council commissioned WSP consultants to develop a Public Realm Options Appraisal for Worthing Town Centre, including the preparation of initial design concepts and a suggested materials palette.
- 3.3 Prior to this, Worthing Borough Council had commissioned Mott MacDonald to assist in the development of a Worthing Seafront Investment Plan. Recognising the interdependencies between these pieces of work, links were established between WSP and Mott MacDonald early in the process. This has helped to ensure that design ideas are complementary, particularly in the area of Marine Parade, and in the use of the materials palette.
- 3.4 Work on the public realm has been led by the County Council's Growth Team, working in partnership with colleagues from the Borough Council's Place & Investment Service and with input from officers working on major projects in the town centre.

## **4. Issues for consideration**

- 4.1 A diagram showing the study area for the public realm strategy is attached at Appendix B. This shows the two main pedestrian routes considered by the strategy and the key areas of focus for design (hatched green).

- 4.2 A grid approach has been used to further delineate the areas requiring public realm design solutions and, for each 'boxed' area shown on the attached plan, two or three design options have been identified.
- 4.3 The design principles for each and every option are consistent in order to ensure that, along with a common materials palette, the strategy delivers a level of quality and coherence across the town, irrespective of when each area comes forward.
- 4.4 The differences in the design options reflect the extent of hard and soft landscaping proposed, potential impacts on parking or traffic movements and/or the quality of materials used. Option one represents minimal change in an area. Options two and three represent increasingly ambitious, high quality schemes which have the potential to deliver greater economic impact, complement plans for the Seafront and regeneration of the town centre. These options use higher quality and more durable materials.

## **5. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1 A series of workshops were held from September through to November 2017, providing opportunities for all Worthing Borough Councillors, West Sussex County Councillors on the County Local Committee, officers from both Councils, and up to 50 stakeholders representing partner, business and community interests in the town, to view and contribute to the development of options.
- 5.2 The workshops, which were organised in partnership with West Sussex County Council, also provided an opportunity to share the design proposals emerging from the work on the Worthing Seafront Investment Plan and highlight the complementarity of designs for, and around, Marine Parade.
- 5.3 Feedback from the workshops on the rationale and design proposals for the Public Realm Strategy has been overwhelmingly positive and is being used to finalise the Options Appraisal Study report, which is expected to be publicly available from the County Council shortly.
- 5.4 A number of issues were identified that will require further investigation and engagement with partners, and these will be addressed as options are developed. Issues range from the potential to re-route buses and reconfigure on-street car parking, through to timescales and cable laying for the Gigabit project.
- 5.5 The workshops also provided an opportunity to discuss potential priorities for the first phase of public realm works. Initial feedback suggests that improvements at the railway station/ Teville Gate and Grafton car park would need to tie in with the development schemes for these sites, and that funding through these schemes will help deliver associated public realm

improvements. Other locations, including Chapel Road, were considered to be areas where minimal change was needed.

- 5.6 Initial discussions identified overwhelming support for the Option 3 proposals for Portland Road and South Street (north and south), with works in these areas having the potential to make a significant impact and provide significant economic and reputational benefits for the town.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The County Council has committed £5million to the first phase of public realm works, subject to agreement of a delivery plan that outlines the phasing and funding required for different areas. The Council will also look to secure improvements through the contributions from the developments at Grafton and Teville Gate, any additional available s106 or CIL funding. The Council will also seek other private sector contributions and external or Government funding when suitable opportunities arise.
- 6.2 Consequently, the cost of any works to improve the public realm will be funded by the County Council or via other funding specifically held for such a purpose.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is ancillary to its current functions.

## **Background Papers**

Adur & Worthing Growth Deal 2017-2022

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

There are opportunities for the Council to work in partnership with businesses and investors to safeguard and promote the natural environment and/or to encourage investment in infrastructure and facilities that support walking, cycling and electric vehicles. These will be referenced in the Public Realm Strategy and taken forward as part of the next phases of work.

### **1. Economic**

The proposals contribute to the delivery of Platforms for our Places and specifically: Commitment 1.6 - Investment in and delivery of Major Projects and key infrastructure and Commitment 1.9 - Creating places that businesses wish to invest in and sustain

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

The proposals contribute to the Social Economy, specifically Commitment 3.4 - Using our natural environment to promote good health and wellbeing in our places

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Matter considered, no issues identified.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Proposals will assist by improving the town centre's amenity, increasing community activity and improving community safety.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered, no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered, no issues identified.

### **4. Governance**

Reference is made to contribution to Platforms for our Places commitments at 1. and 2.1 above.

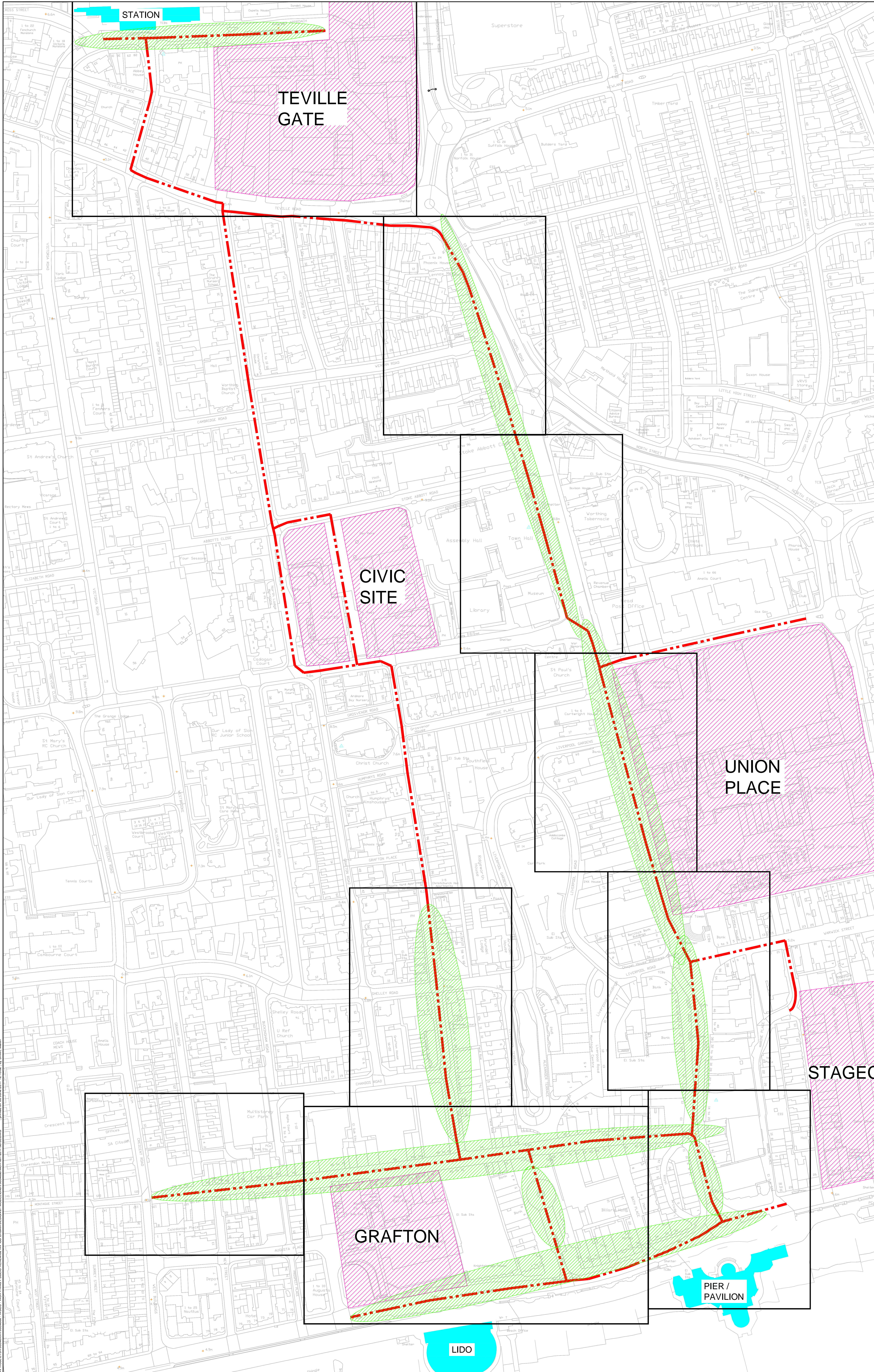
The approval and implementation of proposals contained in the Public Realm Strategy will have the potential to enhance the reputation of Worthing as a place to live, work, invest and visit. It strengthens the reputation of the Council as an authority that works in partnership and demonstrates leadership and vision.

The Public Realm Strategy is a partnership project with West Sussex County Council and forms part of the Growth Deal between the Borough and County Council. Other partners, including local businesses, public and

community organisations have - and will continue to be - involved in workshops and detailed scheme proposals.

DO NOT SCALE

-  Key Public Realm Areas
-  Key Buildings
-  Future Development Sites (Investment Prospectus)
-  Site Extents



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