



# ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
13 July 2021  
Agenda Item 19

Key Decision [Yes/~~No~~]

Ward(s) Affected: Central

## **Designing the future for Montague Place**

### **Report by the Director for the Economy**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the approach to the Montague Place public realm scheme and outline that Worthing Borough Council (WBC) will act as the lead design agency for West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) under the terms set out in this report.
- 1.2 To present the rationale for WBC designing the project and the approach being undertaken to deliver temporary works to help inform the long term design of Montague Place.
- 1.3 To release budget to cater for the temporary works and main public realm design works to enable WBC to have a fully consulted, designed and costed scheme.

##### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree to WBC taking on the project management and design responsibility of Montague Place Public Realm work, supported by

WSSC and if required to enter into a collaboration agreement to support that relationship.

- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, the authority to procure and award all contracts necessary to complete the Phase 1 temporary works and main public realm design schemes, within the approved budgets.
- 2.3 To approve the creation of a budget of £163k within the Worthing Borough Council revenue budget fully funded by the Welcome Back Fund to complete the temporary works (Phase 1).
- 2.4 To approve the creation of a budget of £200k within the Worthing Borough Council capital programme fully funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to complete the main design works (Phase 2).

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Adur and Worthing Growth (A&WG) Deal signed in March 2017 identified up to 8 public realm schemes aimed at supporting the regeneration of Worthing town centre. The agreed programme included initial funding from WSCC Capital Programme (£5m) with the remainder being sourced through developer contributions, to include Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); planning obligations (Section 106) and grants to support delivery of later phases of the programme.
- 3.2 The delivery of the Worthing Public Realm programme is overseen by an Officer Group, namely the Public Realm Board. The Public Realm Board is a joint WBC and WSCC Board.
- 3.3 Portland Road (in construction) and Railway Approach (in preliminary design) were the initial phases agreed by the Public Realm Board. These schemes are being funded by a combination of the WSCC Capital Programme (£5m allocation) and Coast to Capital LEP. In March 2021, the Board agreed that Montague Place, due to its location and significance in the heart of the town centre, would be the next phase to be designed as part of the overall public realm improvement programme.
- 3.4 The Worthing Public Realm programme provides a significant and exciting opportunity to revitalise the public spaces through a people-centred design approach. As with Portland Road and Railway Approach, Montague Place will deliver a number of social and economic benefits, including:
- Establishing a new destination, arrival zone and meeting point
  - Alignment and enhancement of routes to create town centre circuits
  - Ability to design inclusive and welcoming spaces
  - Improving and enhancing sustainable travel options
  - Responding to key stakeholders through direct consultation
  - Improving place activation by providing improved outdoor spaces
- 3.5 The delivery of improvements at Montague Place have been signalled as an area that will aid future economic investment and, in light of COVID-19 pandemic, economic recovery. Railway Approach also continues to be prioritised in terms of gateway design options, linked to the development sites at Teville Gate. Portland Road is now under construction and is due for completion in early 2022.

3.6 The need for excellent outdoor spaces have been brought into sharp focus as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people taking advantage of the outdoors and, due to changes in work life patterns, enjoying staying local. This project will support the longer term requirement to create safe pedestrianised areas where residents and visitors feel confident they can enjoy the space within a sound environment. Projects such as this will support the economic recovery and performance of Worthing town centre. Montague Place presents a real opportunity to create a 'heartbeat' for the town centre.

#### **4. Context**

4.1 In 2016, the northern section of Montague Place received an upgrade by WSCC in partnership with Coast to Capital LEP. This public realm upgrade was delivered in consultation with local business and residents, including WBC and the Town Centre Initiative (TCI). This attracted £800k of investment from Coast to Capital.

4.2 This report signals appetite to complete the works identified in 4.1 by improving the southern section stretching from the top of the roadway down to Marine Parade. This section has been long identified as Phase 2 of the works by WSCC and as such is identified in the Worthing Investment Prospectus (2016) and subsequently as part of the Public Realm Programme within Worthing town centre.

4.3 The northern section of Montague Place is currently used as a multifunctional space including a main pedestrian and retailing thoroughfare, a meeting place, an events space whilst also activated by neighbouring businesses, namely cafes and restaurants. Whilst this section will be reviewed for additional resting points and green infrastructure the main area of work referenced in this report is the southern section.

4.4 The southern section is used for vehicular access for drop offs, loading and parking provision. The current highway layout dominates the area and whilst some green infrastructure is in place on the eastern side, this area does have the potential for greater activation, especially when taking into account the businesses located on the western side.

4.5 In response to the Covid pandemic, and aligned to the government's response, since 18th June 2020 a road closure has been in place at Montague Place to aid social distancing. This provides the opportunity for

not only the public to maintain distance but also gives cafes and restaurants the ability to trade safely outside. A number of local authorities installed road closures as part of the Reopening High Street Safer Fund (RHSSF). Worthing Borough Council (WBC) also funded this road closure from RHSSF, as well as a number of other interventions in response to the pandemic in 2020.

## **5. Temporary Works - Phase 1**

- 5.1 In June 2020 Montague Place was closed to enable improved social distancing for Worthing town centre. The road closure, purely functional in design, provided much needed external space for existing restaurants and cafes during the emergence from Covid lockdown. Further to the road being closed for 12 months there is now an opportunity to move from this to a semi-permanent solution ahead of the main public realm works (to be designed as part of Phase 2).
- 5.2 It's recommended that the Welcome Back Fund grant, provided by the government to WBC, be allocated towards these works to provide a significantly more attractive central interchange between the high street and seafront. WBC have been allocated £163k from the government under the Welcome Back Fund in order to support town centre activation.
- 5.3 In utilising existing partnerships and frameworks the temporary works, proposed for completion end November 2021, will provide a canvass for the main design works to be fully consulted on with key stakeholders, including local businesses, community groups, residents and visitors. The new area will also provide an experimental space for approximately 12 - 18 months to help inform what ingredients need to be designed into the main scheme for the longer term, informed by the aforementioned stakeholders.
- 5.4 The works include levelling the road camber and introducing an event space suitable for performances, markets and external hires. This in addition to softening the appearance of Montague Place and encouraging dwell-time through pocket parks and improved planting and pedestrian lighting. In extending the road closure further south it also enables all businesses on the western side to 'spill out' and create more alfresco dining and experiences. With completion due in November 2021 the intention is to utilise the 'new' space for, initially, the town centre's Christmas offer and thereafter cultural activities, pop-up markets and community events.

5.5 As part of the initial covid road closure over the last 12 months, additional parking provision has been provided to offset some of the loss in Montague Place. This includes the creation of extra disabled parking bays at Montague Centre car park (Council managed) and also temporary bays on Marine Parade outside Marks & Spencers Store (WSCC managed). As part of the temporary works a more permanent solution will be explored with WSCC. Existing discussions are ongoing with emergency services and other providers in order to mitigate the change from vehicular access to pedestrianisation for this space.

## **6. Design Works - Phase 2**

6.1 The design for the main public realm improvements at Montague Place, will run in parallel and be informed by the temporary works. The process for installing the temporary space allows for a dual consultation process and the ability to 'test' ideas as the main scheme moves through the RIBA design stages.

6.2 The Council will procure an external design team that specialise in public realm works and technical highway design. The brief will seek professional services for RIBA stages 2 - 4, allowing the Council to be ready for contracting following the design works. The RIBA stages move from concept design through to technical design. It's anticipated the provider will be procured via a framework approach. WSCC will support the process as the highways authority.

6.3 As part of the design works a vitally important aspect will be direct and indirect consultation and engagement on the proposed design. As with Portland Road and Railway Approach an extensive stakeholder engagement exercise will run through the project to ensure 'on the ground' views are considered alongside the technical elements.

6.4 Under 6.2, if assumed a provider will be secured through a framework agreement (preferred procurement route) then it's estimated the main design works will run from August 2021 to August 2022. This procurement method is the same, successful, process undertaken to deliver the works at Portland Road.

6.5 Following the completion of the temporary works (estimated to be November 2021) this provides over 6 months of testing and consultation to

inform the final design. To reiterate, the design is for the southern section of Montague Place.

- 6.6 The design works will be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) strategic pot. At the Joint Officer Member Board (JOMB) on 25th May 2021 it was agreed that a funding envelope of up to £200k to be established and be able to be drawn down to fund this piece of work. This figure was set against an industry baseline for public realm design work of this nature. At the Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) in June 2021 Members will note the Worthing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) report; this paper ‘activates’ the CIL pot for infrastructure design and, ultimately, the construction works.

## 7. Phasing Summary

- 7.1 The estimated timelines for both pieces of work are below. The dualling of these workstrands adds efficiency into the consultation, engagement and decision making process with Phase 2 being informed by Phase 1:

	<b>Temporary Works - Phase 1</b>	<b>Design Works - Phase 2</b>
Start	June 2021	August 2021
Completion	November 2021	August 2022

- 7.2 With Phase 1 works due for completion in November 2021, this temporary arrangement will last for a minimum of 12 months prior to the permanent works coming forward, which is estimated to be in 2023.
- 7.3 Following Phase 2 the Council will have a completed design ready to tender for the construction contract. A further report will be presented to the Joint Strategic Committee at such time to authorise the procurement subject to an approved budget. The main scheme is currently intended to be funded from the CIL strategic pot, as a continuation of the design works, however undertaking this work now puts the Council in a strong position for any external funding as a ‘shovel ready’ project will be in place, should external funding be required.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Worthing Borough Council has received funding of £163,170 from the Welcome Back Fund which can be used to support the temporary improvements set out above.
- 8.2 It is proposed to allocate £200,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund the design work associated with Phase 2 of the project. Worthing Borough Council currently holds £1.29m of CIL funds available to fund the Infrastructure Investment Plan which includes public realm improvements.
- 8.3 Under the Council's financial regulations, any budget virement over £100,000 concerning the use of CIL should be approved by the Joint Strategic Committee.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.
- 9.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 9.3 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the local authority to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the local authority.
- 9.4 When entering into supply service or works contracts for implementing Phase 1 and the design stage for Phase 2 of the Project, the Council must have regard to the Public Contract Regulations 2015, and to the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

## **Background Papers**

- [Montague Place - Sustainable Transport Package \(Coast to Capital\)](#)
- [Worthing Public Realm - Delivering enhancements at Portland Road \(JSC1420-21\)](#)
- [Worthing Community Infrastructure Levy \(JSC7/21-22\)](#)

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- Public realm improvements are important to create the right setting for our town centres and economy, including our business base, to operate. Not only does this project represent an opportunity for our businesses, it will also provide alternate possibilities for 'open space' activities, including events and pop up markets.
- The aforementioned activities are vital to support and revitalise our changing high streets; even more so in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The 'in store' and 'out of store' experiences will need to be balanced; public realm improvements at Montague Place, and future schemes, will support and give confidence to residents and visitors regarding the outdoor environment.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

- The scheme will support a number of stakeholders, including community groups and those businesses in and around Montague Place. The proposal will upgrade and improve the open space experience, which will serve both visitors and residents to Worthing town centre. Potential benefits also include supporting cycling and walking interventions in this location, subsequently supporting the wellbeing agenda. All elements combine to improve the attractiveness of Worthing town centre.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

- The design for Montague Place will include consultation with accessible groups and organisations. This consultation, and wider equality points, will be considered and implemented further as the project progresses through detailed design, procurement and delivery.

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

- The improved public realm works will fully consider crime and disorder act implications through the detailed design phase of the project. Consideration will also be given to the ongoing environment that the new public realm will create in relation to providing a safe and enjoyable space.

## **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

- The improvements at Montague Place will require construction work for the temporary solution. During this period it's anticipated there will be disruption to local residents and businesses in the immediate area. WBC, with guidance from the appointed design team and contractors, will assess the impacts throughout and consider mitigating actions to reduce the disruption where possible.
- During constructing the temporary phase, parts of Montague Place won't be accessible to the public, however alternative routes and options will be provided.

## **3. Environmental**

- It's highly anticipated that the scheme design will include additional green infrastructure and the integration of sustainable methods, to include water retention. Environmental improvements will be considered as part of both phases, in readiness for construction.
- The design will also support improvements to the cycling and walking infrastructure in Worthing town centre, encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the additional pedestrianised space to support their own wellbeing.

## **4. Governance**

- The Growth Board and Public Realm Board are existing and functional, and they will act as the key governance control for this project. These will have strict oversight of all elements of the project, including spend and programme.
- JOMB will also be kept informed of the project as CIL will be the main funding source for Phase 2.