



ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

Adur Joint Strategic Sub-Committee
10 November 2021

Key Decision: Yes

Ward(s) Affected: Southwick Green

Investing in public realm improvements at Southwick Square

Report by the Director for the Economy

Officer Contact Details

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline to Members the opportunity to formally work in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) through a recognised Growth Deal with Adur District Council (ADC), focusing on mutually agreed regeneration and infrastructure projects.
- 1.2 To ensure Members are aware of the previous arrangements and how this Growth Deal differs to ensure Adur has dedicated pooled resources, including supportive WSCC capital funding, to prioritise and invest into places across the District. It should also be noted that the Growth Deal can be adapted to ensure the 'deal' is reacting and responding to the ongoing requirements across the District.
- 1.3 To outline how the Growth Deal can have an immediate impact with the prioritisation of the refurbishment of Southwick Square. This project

has previously been identified as an area for improvement through local traders and stakeholders.

- 1.4 To present the rationale for ADC delivering the project and the parallel approach being undertaken by WSCC in order for allocated WSCC capital monies to be used by ADC for the purposes of Southwick Square.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree to ADC taking on the project management and delivery responsibility of Southwick Square Public Realm work, supported by WSCC (both financially and by its officer time) and to enter into a Delivery Agreement with WSCC.
- 2.2 To note that ADC have already contributed £87k towards the scheme, which includes the appointment of a design team through an Officer Decision Notice ([DforE/010/22-23](#)) to enable the scheme to be appropriately designed in readiness to tender for the construction works.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and WSCC, the authority to approve and award a contract for the construction work required to deliver the public realm project subject to the development of a procurement strategy, the outcome of a compliant procurement process and the award being within the available budget.
- 2.4 To approve the creation of an additional budget of £600k within the capital programme, primarily funded by WSCC as part of the Growth Deal. This is subject to WSCC releasing funds from their capital programme as part of their governance process.

3. Context

- 3.1 The Adur and Worthing Growth (A&WG) Deal signed in March 2017 identified a series of public realm schemes in Worthing, including 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. This paper represents an opportunity for Adur District Council, as part of a new dedicated Growth Deal, to access similar capital funding from WSCC in order to improve public spaces across the District.
- 3.2 As part of the wider opportunity across Adur District, Southwick Square has been identified as an area that has received limited investment, against neighbouring places such as Shoreham. The revised Growth Deal is anticipated to be formally agreed in early 2023, however after negotiations with WSCC, this scheme presents an immediate opportunity to signify the 'Deal' and act as the forerunner.
- 3.3 Southwick's main shopping street was purpose built in 1962 as part of a major regeneration scheme replacing the old shopping area which ran along Albion Street, the A259. The consequence was to move the centre of Southwick away from the seafront where it had shifted from the mid 19th century back to the medieval centre which lay surrounding The Green, the old village common. The 'square' itself is at the eastern end but hasn't experienced any significant investment for decades.
- 3.4 The intervention at Southwick Square, provides an exciting opportunity to revitalise the public space through a people-centred design approach. A number of social and economic benefits include:
- Establishing a new destination and meeting point
 - Designing an inclusive and welcoming space
 - Improving and enhancing sustainable travel options
 - Improving place activation by providing improved outdoor spaces, supporting local businesses and stakeholders
 - Delivering sustainable planting and 'greening', contributing to biodiversity and climate emergency targets
- 3.5 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 continue to support the economic wellbeing and performance of the town centre. Southwick Square presents a real opportunity to establish a new 'centre' and legacy for the area.

- 3.6 This scheme supports the emerging direction under *Our Plan*, which identifies a need for the Council to work and deliver in a 'place-based' way. This also aligns with WSCC's Economic Plan (2020-24) and 'Our Council Plan' (2021-25) and the requirements to support growth in our town centres and high streets.
- 3.7 Southwick Square will form part of the Adur Growth Deal and therefore is subject to Growth Board governance. This comprises of a quarterly Adur & Worthing Officer Growth Board followed by a Adur Growth Board which is comprised of Members and Senior Officers. Southwick Square is subject to its own project governance led by ADC of which WSCC Officers will be invited to attend project meetings.

4. The proposed scheme

- 4.1 The Southwick Square public realm improvements presents a significant opportunity to create a human-centred urban space. This design approach creates multiple social benefits and creation of destinations and arrival points – the district centre of the future will rely on high quality, distinctive, attractive places for people to enjoy.
- 4.2 This scheme seeks to create this place to ensure the major sites within Southwick, and the wider district centre, are complemented by great spaces. This is a key economic driver, whilst other attributes include:
- **Improving access and key facilities** – bringing the public realm up to a modern standard
 - **Inclusive spaces** – Improving safety and inclusive space in the public realm
 - **Sustainable travel elements** – Create healthy and attractive spaces
 - **Listening to, and supporting, key stakeholders** – strong local support from residents and businesses

- 4.3 As part of the initial investment made by ADC, and in line with the Officer Decision Notice ([DforE/010/22-23](#)), Officers have been working with Project Centre (procured consultants) to 'work up' a concept design for the space. This design was informed by a number of stakeholder conversations ahead of the wider public release which happened on 29th September 2022. The significant upgrade in design is planned to feature local materials, new planting and the removal of the steps and walls to the north, offering a clearer view to the shops and bars behind. In addition the new scheme will feature sustainable pedestrian lighting and a large open space suitable for events, performances, seasonal concessions and markets. Improved accessibility, community safety and sustainability also lie at the heart of new design.
- 4.4 Southwick Square sits in the heart of the Southwick community. Bookended by Southwick Recreation Ground at one end of the high street and Southwick Green at the other the scheme naturally sits in the 'centre' and will serve, and support, those residents, businesses and visitors that utilise these neighbouring assets.
- 4.5 Subject to approvals, the current headline timetable associated with the delivery of this scheme is:
- Concept design - September 2022
 - Public consultation - October 2022
 - Detailed design - November 2022
 - Issue Tender - December 2022
 - Tender Award - February 2023
 - Start on Site - March 2023
 - Expected completion - Summer 2023

5. The WSCC proposal

- 5.1 As identified under 4.5, work has already been undertaken on Southwick Square, including concept design and technical studies. This design has been informed by Members and town centre stakeholders. The design is being delivered and informed by Project Centre, notably their urban designers and technical engineers.
- 5.2 The initial design work and technical studies for the Southwick Square scheme have been funded by ADC, out of the capital programme (£87k). A

further £600k for Southwick Square has been allocated by WSCC from its capital programme, however this is subject to formal governance. A letter of comfort is appended to this report to highlight WSCC's commitment to completing a 'mirrored' governance process, and subject to approval will formally release the funds to ADC in January 2023.

ADC Officers have agreed with WSCC that the scheme won't proceed, and won't enter into any contracts, until the business case has been agreed through the WSCC governance process and the funds have been secured, as above.

- 5.3 It's proposed ADC will act as the delivery body and project manage the Southwick Square, with WSCC agreement on collaboration. This proposal is supported by a similar report through the WSCC governance process as outlined in 5.2. In both this report and the WSCC notice, it's recommended that ADC agree to be the delivery body for this scheme.
- 5.4 WSCC have agreed to reimburse ADC on a quarterly basis for costs incurred on the project, within an overall capped contribution to budget (£600k). WSCC will approve the funding and this will be drawn down over a number of key stages, with reviews to be carried out by both parties, in line with the partnership governance controls.
- 5.5 A final specification for Southwick Square will be drawn together by professional technical advisors, ADC and WSCC officers, endorsed by WSCC Highways, the Public Realm and Growth Boards, including the WSCC Executive Director of Place, prior to ADC procuring for a construction partner.
- 5.6 As indicated in 4.3, Project Centre Consultants have already been procured and appointed as technical advisors to project manage and supervise these works on behalf of ADC. The appointment was made under the ESPO framework and outlined in the Officer Decision Notice ([DforE/010/22-23](#)). As part of the next phase ADC, supported by Project Centre, will develop the procurement strategy associated with the main works.
- 5.7 Project Centre Consultants have extensive experience in delivering public realm works and have recently assisted other local authorities in West Sussex with similar schemes.

6. Engagement and Communication

- 6.1 A Southwick Square Working Group has been engaged in the concept design for Southwick Square from the outset. At each stage of design the working group has supported its development, however members of the group agreed that local consultation was critical. Southwick Square is at an advanced stage of project design, and therefore Members and officers agree this should be prioritised over other projects and run as a precursor to the new Growth Deal.
- 6.2 Akin to 3.4 and people-centred design, the Southwick Square scheme is being developed in collaboration with local stakeholders. Positive feedback was received in response to the initial consultation and more detailed and targeted activities thereafter. For example, Officers and Members completed an 'in person' consultation at Southwick Square on Saturday 1st October to ensure first hand information was gathered. In addition, the Council provided an opportunity for stakeholders and members of the public to contribute additional comments through a dedicated webpage; press and social media releases were also delivered to maximise reach and engagement.
- 6.3 ADC and WSCC officers have, and continue to, listen to feedback from local businesses (especially those impacted), key stakeholders and community groups to tailor the final design ahead of the scheme being tendered for construction. As outlined under 4.5 this will continue over the next 4 - 6 weeks (until the end of November). It is worth noting that ADC have also reached out to a number of community and accessibility groups via our partners in Adur & Worthing Community Works to ensure the scheme is inclusive.
- 6.4 The initial design has also considered the integration of sustainability measures, in both the use of materials and infrastructure to support biodiversity. This consideration falls in line with the Council's commitment to the climate emergency and the need to enhance 'greening', notably in our urban fabric. These elements will be further designed as the work progresses ahead of the tendering phase.
- 6.5 Based on the consultation activities above, and the early feedback that has already been reviewed (at the time of writing), the current design supports the requirements of an accessible 'square', additional green infrastructure and upgraded cycle storage, all of which were suggestions as part of the design process to date. As the design progresses, these will be further

considered, in line with the impacts on the immediate businesses and wider regeneration opportunities of the Southwick Square public realm scheme.

- 6.6 The Growth Board and Southwick Square Working Group have been consulted and agree that it's crucial to focus initial resources on the delivery of Southwick Square. Not only will this scheme add longer term benefits to the town centre, it will also be an important project to integrate with the continued economic recovery planning resulting from the pandemic, and the need to improve public spaces through this capital investment.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Council has a capital budget of £161,250 to support improvements across Adur Town Centres which is being used to fund the initial studies. A small contribution, from this fund, will also go towards the scheme as matched funding from Adur District Council.
- 7.2 The funding of £600,000 from WSCC needs to be added to the Councils budgets to comply with the Councils financial regulations.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. 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
- 8.3. Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.4. s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the Council 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 Council.

- 8.5. A procurement process compliant with the Council's Contract Standing Orders found at Part 4 of the Council's constitution is to be carried out.
- 8.6. The project will need to be managed by ADC on the terms set out in the delivery agreement to be entered into between ADC and WSCC.

Background Papers

- Officer Decision Notice (5th September 2022)
- Southwick Square Consultation - Press Release (29th September 2022)
- Letter of Comfort (WSCC)

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 (in Southwick Square and the immediate vicinity), 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 outturn experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 'in store' and 'out of store' experiences need to be balanced and the public realm improvements at Southwick Square, and future schemes in Adur, 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 those immediate businesses in Southwick Square. The proposal will upgrade and improve the open space experience, which will serve both visitors and residents. Additional benefits include supporting cycling and walking interventions, sustainability and biodiversity interventions in this location, subsequently supporting the wellbeing agenda. All elements combine to improve the attractiveness of Southwick town centre.

2.2 Equality Issues

- The design for Southwick Square includes consultation with accessible groups. 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 Southwick Square will require extensive construction work. During this period it's anticipated there will be disruption to local residents and businesses in the immediate area, however the current plan is to fully retain access to the shops during the construction works. ADC, with guidance from Project Centre, will assess the impacts throughout and consider mitigating actions to reduce the disruption where possible.

3. Environmental

- The initial scheme design includes additional green infrastructure and the integration of sustainable methods, to include water retention. Environmental improvements will continue to be developed through the final design, in readiness for construction.
- The scheme will also support improvements to the cycling and walking infrastructure in Southwick town centre, encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the additional pedestrianised space to support their own wellbeing.

4. Governance

- The Growth Board and the Southwick Square Working Group 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) through from final design to construction and completion.
- These groups combine Members and Officers from ADC and WSCC.

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26 October 2022

Cllr Neil Parkin
Leader, Adur District Council
The Shoreham Centre
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Hi Neil

Ref. Southwick Square Growth Deal Scheme

I understand that your Joint Strategic Sub-Committee is keen for a letter of intent from the County Council concerning the proposed Southwick Square Growth Deal scheme.

I am happy to let you know that I support the scheme in principle noting that it is in alignment with the Adur Growth Deal signed in 2017 and with our conversations supporting growth through improving access and key facilities in town centres and highstreets, including sustainable transport links and digital connectivity to support businesses, residents, and visitors.

The County Council's internal governance process is underway to draw up a formal decision report for me to consider in December detailing the scheme designs as drawn up with you and the required funding. I will ensure you are informed as soon as this is agreed and published.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Waight". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Waight
Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development

Cc. Nick Burrell, Strategic Manager (OPE & Growth)