

Chichester City Council briefing update April 2023

Chichester city centre public realm.

Background

Public realm transformation in Chichester is cited as a priority in the Chichester Vision and the Chichester Growth Programme. A Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid was submitted in 2022 which sought to design and deliver a package of works including:

- North, East and South Street, street furniture, crossings and 'pocket park'.
- Cathedral Square in West St (informed by Feasibility work completed by WSP)

The LUF bid was unsuccessful and as a result, the City, District and County Council wish to pursue a phased programme for improving the streetscape of the city centre with a short-term priority focused on the pedestrianised North and East Streets.

In 2020, WSCC commissioned WSP to assess and evaluate the potential interventions which could be undertaken to assist in the maintenance of the highway and footway pavements on the key pedestrian and access streets in the City Centre of Chichester. This was funded in partnership with Chichester City Council and Chichester District Council. The report recommended several short, medium, and long-term costed strategy options for consideration. The report also recommended further survey and design work to propose a suitable solution. We now wish to act on that recommendation (to progress RIBA stages 2-7).

Previous studies and concepts will be used to inform the approach, design and proposals.

Objectives

Specific objectives for the West Street Public Realm improvements priority study are as follows:

- Refresh and uplift North Street and East Street public realm enhancing their role as a destination point for the city and defining them as an important point of arrival which is key to making a positive first impression to those visiting the city centre.
- A streetscape that has the flexibility to support a range of social, cultural and economic uses in the City centre and any associated vehicular traffic.
- Create an attractive multi-functional area which links into its surroundings, in particular the heritage assets and pedestrian/cycle routes towards the city centre through the surrounding key streets.
- Link to wider sustainable transport infrastructure to access the City centre.
- Ensure that any design, and materials (including hard and soft landscaping as well as street furniture) relate to and complement the setting and support climate resilience.
- Ensure any materials used take into consideration whole-life costs.
- Review and propose any changes that may be required to the existing TROs for any future proposals.
- Ensure designs take into consideration the need for increased urban greening and biodiversity in the form of Tree planting, in-ground planters and rain gardens / sustainable urban drainage systems.
- Ensure designs take into consideration Wayfinding / Signage.
- Ensure inclusive design best practice approaches are applied for visual and mobility impaired, those with neurodiverse/cognitive disabilities as well as other vulnerable users.

WSP scope of services

- Concept design
- Preliminary design
- Detailed design

Timeline

In order to meet a WSCC highways gateway review for procurement and inclusion in the 2024/5 Capital programme, the detailed design needs to be completed by Sweetest 2023.

Subject to funding and approvals, outline programme is suggested below:

- Project inception April 2023
- Survey work April/May 2023
- Concept design April/ May 2023 (to include wider public realm opportunities)
- Developed design and public engagement May/ June 2023 (for north and east st)
- Detailed design and consultation July/ August 2023 (for north and east street)
- Gateway 3 report and procurement Sep 2023
- Sign off February 2024
- Mobilisation March 2024
- Delivery form April 2024

It is proposed to initiate a project board made up of key stakeholders (officers and Cllrs) from a core group of partners to ensure the project progresses in a timely manner and costs/risks are managed appropriately and proportionately.