

Forward Plan reference number: FP/AB/179

Report title: Southend Central Area Transport Project Phase 3 LGF funding decision	
Report to Accountability Board	
Report author: Rhiannon Mort, SELEP Capital Programme Manager	
Date: 15 th February 2019	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Rhiannon Mort, Rhiannon.Mort@southeastlep.com	
SELEP Partner Authority affected: Southend	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Accountability Board (the Board) to consider the award of £4m Local Growth Fund (LGF) to the Southend Central Area Phase 3 transport project (the Project) based on the Outline Business Case, which has been through the Independent Technical Evaluator (ITE) review process.

2. Recommendations

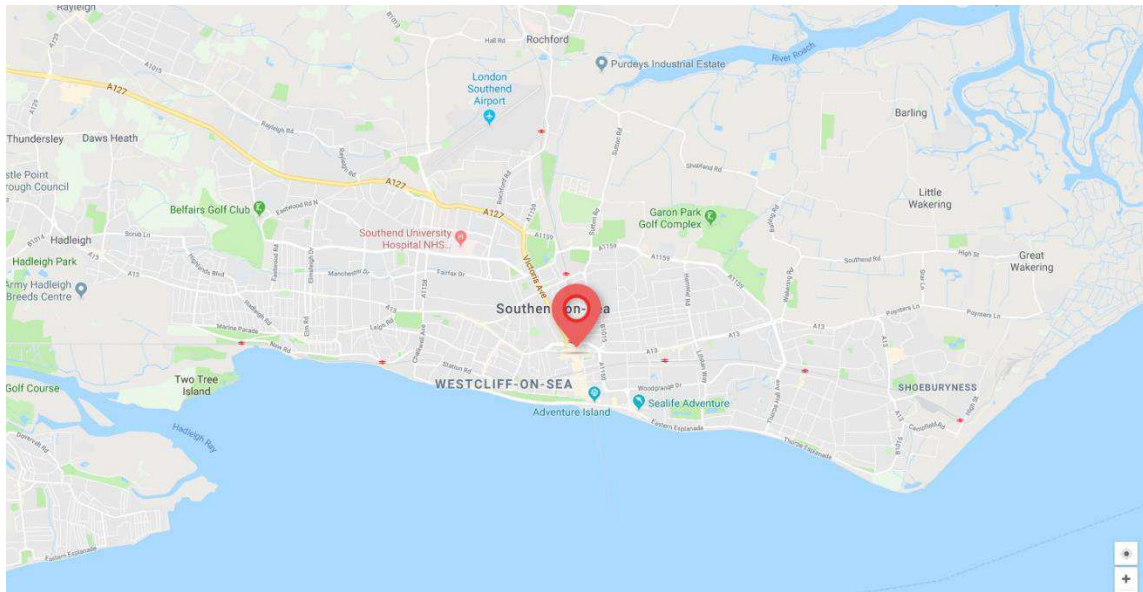
2.1. The Board is asked to:

- 2.1.1. **Approve** the award of £4m LGF to enable the delivery of the Project and which has been assessed as presenting high value for money with medium to high certainty of achieving this.
- 2.1.2. **Note** that all LGF payments are subject to SELEP's receipt of sufficient funding from Central Government, as detailed in the LGF Capital Programme Report, considered under Agenda Item 15.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Project forms the final phase of the Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS), which has been supported by SELEP through a £7m LGF allocation.
- 3.2. To date the Board has approved the award of £3m LGF to S-CAT Phases 1 and 2, as detailed in section 4 below. This reports brings forward the final phase of S-CATS, for the award of £4m LGF.
- 3.3. The overall aim of the S-CATS project is to support the continued growth and regeneration of the Southend Central Area, as scoped within the Southend Central Area Action Plan. The programme of works being delivered through S-CAT will strengthen and transform the Town Centre sub-regional role as a successful commercial and retail destination, cultural hub, educational centre of excellence, leisure and tourism attraction. The Southend Central Area Action Plan is part of the spatial planning strategy for the Borough.

4. Southend Central Area Transport Project (S-CATS) Phase 1 and 2~



- 4.1. Phase 1 included a series of junction improvements along Victoria Avenue to improve traffic flow into and out of the town centre, funded through a £1m LGF award.
- 4.2. These junction improvements were completed in 2017.
- 4.3. As a result of the scheme, vehicles can turn right from Carnarvon Road as well as Great Eastern Avenue on to Victoria Avenue northbound. These two junction improvements allow for the redevelopment of the library car park in the future and have reduced rat running through the residential area, which used to run behind the police station and the Civic Centre and previously added to the traffic on East-Street.
- 4.4. Phase 1 has helped in reducing the severance created by the Victoria Avenue stretch of the A127, including amendments to the pedestrian crossing on Victoria Avenue to allow the right turn movements on to Victoria Avenue.
- 4.5. East Street – West Street junction was remodelled to allow greater right turn movement from Victoria Avenue eastbound into East Street. This has also reduced rat running through the residential area to the north of the Civic Centre.
- 4.6. Further, public realm improvements along Victoria Avenue service road have created a more welcoming access to new residential developments on Victoria Avenue and encourage walking and cycling in the area.
- 4.7. S-CATS Phase 2 (London Road area) included improvements to the streetscape, public realm and walking/cycling facilities along the segment of London Road between Queensway Roundabout and College way, College Way, Queens Road and Elmer Avenue that provide access to the high street,

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the main library (The Forum), College, University and other key destinations in the Town Centre.

- 4.8. The Phase 2 scheme, completed in 2018, included changes to the allocation of road space on London Road. This has provided a larger area for pedestrians and an improved street environment, while also maintaining essential access for delivery vehicles and taxis. The carriageway width on London Road was reduced to 3 meters, a central island for planters and lighting was created. Traffic calming treatments like raised pedestrian and cyclist crossings were introduced. Furthermore, new block paving, on footways and parking bays, surface treatment at College Way junction and guidance strip for blind and partially sighted on footways has created a pedestrian-priority area. Footway improvements were extended to College Way, Queens Road and Elmer Avenue.
- 4.9. These improvements have helped in encouraging more pedestrian footfall and cycling in the area as well created a more welcoming gateway into the Town Centre. Additionally, improvements were made to the drainage system along London Road to help adapt to increased surface water run-off and the impacts of climate change.

5. Southend Central Area Transport Project Phase 3



Figure 1 - S-CATS Phase 3 Project Area – Victoria Circus and stub end of London Road

- 5.1. S-CATS Phase 3 is the final phase of the S-CATS project; delivering public realm improvements and place-making interventions at Victoria Circus and stub end of London Road.

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- 5.2. The interventions to be delivered as part of the Project have been identified through the EU Horizon 2020 SUNRISE action research project (SUNRISE).
- 5.3. The SUNRISE project has involved Southend-on Sea Borough Council collaborating with stakeholders, including local residents, businesses and partner organisations. The SUNRISE project aims to develop, implement, assess and facilitate co-learning about new, collective ways to address common urban mobility challenges in the area. The outcomes of the SUNRISE project have informed the scope of the Project which is being recommended for the award of £4m LGF.
- 5.4. As the key Gateway into the Town Centre, Victoria Circus and the stub end of London Road has been the focus of improvement plans to be delivered through the Project. This area of the Town Centre attracts approximately 3,000 pedestrians on weekdays and 4,000 pedestrians at weekends.
- 5.5. Victoria Circus is a key space that pedestrians need to cross to get to and from any of the 5 areas in this end of the Town Centre – High Street, London Road (restaurants, bars and main supermarket in Town Centre), Southchurch Road (shops and bars), Victoria Shopping Centre and alleyway connecting Victoria Gateway and train station.
- 5.6. Through investment in public realm and improved walking and cycling infrastructure, the Project will improve the quality of journey for pedestrians/cyclists, further increase the modal share of walking/cycling to the Town Centre, and provide a more attractive gateway into the Town Centre. In addition, the Project will also contribute to tackling health and wellbeing issues resulting from physical inactivity.
- 5.7. The overall objectives of the Project are to:
 - 5.7.1. Create a welcoming gateway to the Town Centre
 - 5.7.2. Provide a useable public space that is attractive, thriving, and reflects the character of Southend
 - 5.7.3. Improve wayfinding in the Town Centre
 - 5.7.4. Encourage walking and cycling in the Town Centre; and
 - 5.7.5. Improve safety for pedestrians at all times of the day

6. Options considered through consultation and engagement

- 6.1. Through the SUNRISE EU project there has been extensive engagement in defining the interventions to be delivered through LGF investment.
- 6.2. Initially a series of 'co-identification' engagement activities were organised, including public events, drop-in sessions and workshops to identify mobility issues in the project area as well as ideas and potential solutions for addressing these issues. This generated a long-list of ideas that were categorised into the following 6 groups of improvement types:

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- 6.2.1. Planting – ideas for greening including, trees, planters, grassed areas as well as water features
 - 6.2.2. Street Furniture – ideas for addition of elements like seating, lighting, public art, covered area, play equipment etc.
 - 6.2.3. Use of public space – ideas for change of layout, reallocation of road space and use of space.
 - 6.2.4. Wayfinding – ideas related to signage and wayfinding in the Town Centre
 - 6.2.5. Walking and cycling – ideas for improving walking and cycling facilities; an
 - 6.2.6. Improving safety – ideas to improve safety and security
- 6.3. Subsequently a core group has been established as a steering group and administrative secretariat to short list the interventions to be included with the scope of the Project. This core group involves representatives from Southend Borough Council, 6 representatives from partner organisations including the Business Improvement District (BID) and 3 local residents.
- 6.4. The core group has shortlisted the interventions set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Interventions to be delivered under the scope of the Project

Improvements	Specific intervention
Planting	Water features Planning and 'greening' of space
Street Furniture	Seating Lighting Entrance features Public art Extend the cover over the Deeping underpass
Usable public space	Amphitheatre style events space Move taxi rank Big restaurant seating area in the middle
Wayfinding	Increasing links to the station
Walking/Cycling	Cycle parking
Safety Improvement	Improvements to safety to support night time economy and improvements to design out anti-social behaviour.

- 6.5. These options will now be further refined through a process of borough wide voting. These votes will be collected online and on location, to enable further

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consultation on the options which have been identified and to consult with as wider a reach of people as possible.

- 6.6. The preferred options which are identified through this borough voting will include elements of the 6 improvements listed in section 6.2 above.

7. Project Cost and Funding

- 7.1. The total estimated cost of delivering the Project is £4.060m, with a further £60,000 to be invested in the Project through the SUNRISE project, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Funding available (£m)

	2019/20	2020/21	Total
SELEP LGF	1.359	2.641	4.000
SUNRISE EU Horizon Project	0.060		0.060
Total	1.419	2.641	4.060

8. Outcome of ITE Review

- 8.1. The outcome of the ITE assessment confirms that the business case analysis provides a proportionate assessment of the scheme costs and benefits and results in a strong benefit cost ratio representing high value for money.
- 8.2. The analysis was robustly carried out using Department for Transport active mode appraisal guidance and delivers high levels of certainty around this value for money categorisation.

9. Project Compliance with SELEP Assurance Framework

- 9.1. Table 2 below considers the assessment of the Business Case against the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework. The assessment confirms the compliance of the Project with SELEP's Assurance Framework.

Table 2 Assessment of the Project against the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework

Requirement of the Assurance Framework to approve the project	Compliance (RAG Rating)	Evidence in the Business Case
A clear rationale for the interventions linked with the strategic objectives identified in the Strategic Economic Plan	Green	The Business Case identifies the current problems and why the scheme is needed now. The objectives presented align with the objectives identified in the Strategic Economic Plan.
Clearly defined outputs and anticipated outcomes, with clear additionality, ensuring that factors such as displacement and deadweight have been taken into account	Green	The expected project outputs and outcomes are set out in the Business Case and detailed in the economic case. The Department for Transport's WebTAG active mode appraisal guidance has been used to calculate the transport costs and benefits of the scheme.
Considers deliverability and risks appropriately, along with appropriate mitigating action (the costs of which must be clearly understood)	Green	The Business Case demonstrates clear experience of the project team in delivering similar schemes. A quantified risk assessment has been prepared as part of the Business Case.
A Benefit Cost Ratio of at least 2:1 or comply with one of the two Value for Money exemptions	Green	A BCR of 3.38:1 has been calculated for the Project.

10. Financial Implications (Accountable Body comments)

- 10.1. All funding allocations that have been agreed by the Board are dependent on the Accountable Body receiving sufficient funding from HM Government. Funding allocations for 2018/19 have been confirmed however funding for future years is indicative. It should be noted that Government has made future funding allocations contingent on full compliance with the updated National Assurance Framework. Allocations for 2019/20 are also contingent on the Annual Performance Review of SELEPs LGF programme by Government, the outcome of which is expected in March 2019.

- 10.2. There is a high level of forecast slippage within the overall programme which totals £43.3m in 2018/19; this presents a programme delivery risk due to the increased proportion of projects now due to be delivered in the final years of the programme; and it presents a reputational risk for SELEP regarding securing future funding from Government where demonstrable delivery of the LGF Programme is not aligned to the funding profile. This risk, however, is offset in part by the recognition that the profile of the LGF allocations did not consider the required spend profile when determined by HM Government.

There are SLAs in place with the sponsoring authority which makes clear that future years funding can only be made available when HM Government has transferred LGF to the Accountable Body.

11. Legal Implications (Accountable Body comments)

- 11.1. There are no legal implications arising out of the decision set out within this report.

12. Equality and Diversity implication

- 12.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 12.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 12.3 In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the Project and the ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision making process and where it is possible to identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

13. List of Appendices

- 13.1. Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent Technical Evaluator (As attached to Agenda Item 6).

14. List of Background Papers

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14.1. Business Case for the Southend Central Area Transport Project Phase 3

(Any request for any background papers listed here should be made to the person named at the front of the report who will be able to help with any enquiries)

Role	Date
Accountable Body sign off Stephanie Mitchener (On behalf of Margaret Lee, S151 Officer, Essex County Council)	07/02/19