

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	ALBION PLACE/CASTLE WAY CAR PARK – CHANGE OF USE.
DATE OF DECISION:	07 FEBRUARY 2022
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR MOULTON CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
To provide an update of the Albion Place Bus Hub Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) scheme. Members are asked to approve the conversion of Albion Place and Castle Way car parks into a new bus interchange hub and new public park respectively. This report provides updated details on the project and revenue funding implications.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
It is recommended for Cabinet	
	(i) To approve the creation of a new city centre bus hub interchange and public park on the site of the existing Albion Place and Castle Way car parks as shown on the current proposed layout for the TCF Albion Place Bus Hub scheme.
	(ii) To approve the closure of Albion Place and Castle Way car parks for change of use to a bus hub interchange and public park, subject to formal TRO / planning processes being completed, and to change the use of the land to a bus hub interchange and public park.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	The creation of a city centre bus hub interchange and public park at Albion Place and Castle Way car parks respectively will improve public transport access in the city centre and create a more inviting environment and will aim to improve the setting and protection of the city's nationally important heritage assets.

2.	To provide officers with the member support to complete the design of the proposed new layout, subject to heritage approvals, required to subsequently apply for formal planning permission.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
3.	<p>The 'original' proposal (submitted as a TCF bid) for Albion Place Bus Hub was presented for Cabinet Member (Growth) consideration as part of the recent transport plan review. Further to feedback from the Cabinet Member, key partners, and statutory consultees this original (TCF bid) proposal has been revised, with changes requested to incorporate improved heritage views, increased public realm areas and improved pedestrian mobility and access. These changes have been approved and incorporated into the current proposal and deliver similar benefits to the original TCF bid proposal.</p> <p>The 'do minimum / do nothing' proposal of retaining one or both existing car parks was considered and rejected on the basis, that this option would not be in accordance with The Car Parking Plan, as a supporting document of the Local Transport Plan 'LTP'. A hybrid option was considered of converting Albion Place Car Park into a bus interchange but keeping Castle Way as an existing car park was rejected as would have three major disbenefits of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromising the efficiency of bus operators using the Albion Place Bus Hub as bus operations would be restricted due to conflict with the car park movements opposite. • Would require a substantial change control submission to the Department for Transport 'DfT', our funding partners, with implications of all the funding for this TCF project being withdrawn, losing the associated heritage and aesthetic benefits this project would deliver as whole. • Would not be in accordance with current SCC planning policy requiring the conversion of Castle Way into a public park as a mitigating measure for the Albion Place bus movements.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
4.	<p><u>Scheme Aims and Outcomes:</u> The Albion Place Bus Hub and new city centre park will deliver two elements of a new consolidated bus hub / interchange on the site of the Albion Place car park and a new public park on the site of the Castle Way car park.</p> <p>The Albion Place Bus Hub is proposed to provide 10 new bus stops, increasing from current 6, at the Albion Place car park and on Castle Way (road). The 0.15 hectare site will also incorporate a large public realm area with soft landscaping, trees and high quality paving and materials in keeping with and emphasising the heritage features of the medieval Town Walls, with potential for pop up business and activities.</p>

	<p>The new public park will transform the existing Castle Way car park into a public open space, incorporating 0.2 hectares of a combination of soft landscaping, trees and high quality paving and materials in keeping with and emphasising the heritage features of the Town Walls, and Arundel and Catchcold Towers.</p> <p>These two elements of the scheme have the combined following objectives and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with the long-term City Centre strategy, to provide a bus hub location to the west of the city centre, allowing for consolidation of services and flexibility for both terminating and through services from and to the north and south. • To increase the number of available bus stops to futureproof and allow more services to use the location, including a future Park & Ride service. • To provide more flexibility to service routing and turnaround points. • To act as a gateway to the City Centre with its location by West Quay and Mayflower Quarter. This improves the profile of public transport and access within the City Centre. • To provide high quality facilities for passengers including new high-quality waiting shelters with CCTV and real-time passenger information, raised kerbs for bus accessibility, seating, lighting, access to shared e-mobility (such as e-scooter hire), and onwards travel information and wayfinding. • To create new areas of public realm that significantly enhance the setting and interpretation of the old Castle and Town Walls. Removing car parking in both Albion Place and Castle Way will enhance the setting. The bus hub will be more transient with buses passing through, and people using the stops will activate the area. The Walls will be enhanced through lighting, high quality public realm materials, public art opportunities, and soft landscaping in the new landscaped open space area at Castle Way car park. • To strengthen pedestrian and cycle routes through the area linking to the Old Town, to West Quay, and the Bargate, and access to views to cruise ships. • To improve crossings across Castle Way and reduce the impact of passing traffic. • To improve integration with the Shopmobility site which has a high proportion of users that come by bus and require to transfer to a Shopmobility mobility scooter.
5.	<p><u>Scheme Development:</u></p> <p>Further to the TCF City Centre launch in February 2021, a review of the TCF schemes including Albion Place / Castle Way was undertaken. Following this review and feedback from cabinet member, key partners, and key stakeholders, the TCF team have undertaken minor amendments to the layout as shown below in Figure 1. This will now form the basis for development into detailed design. The principle of the scheme – to provide a bus hub and new public park – remains unchanged.</p>



Figure 1 – Albion Place / Castle Way current proposed layout

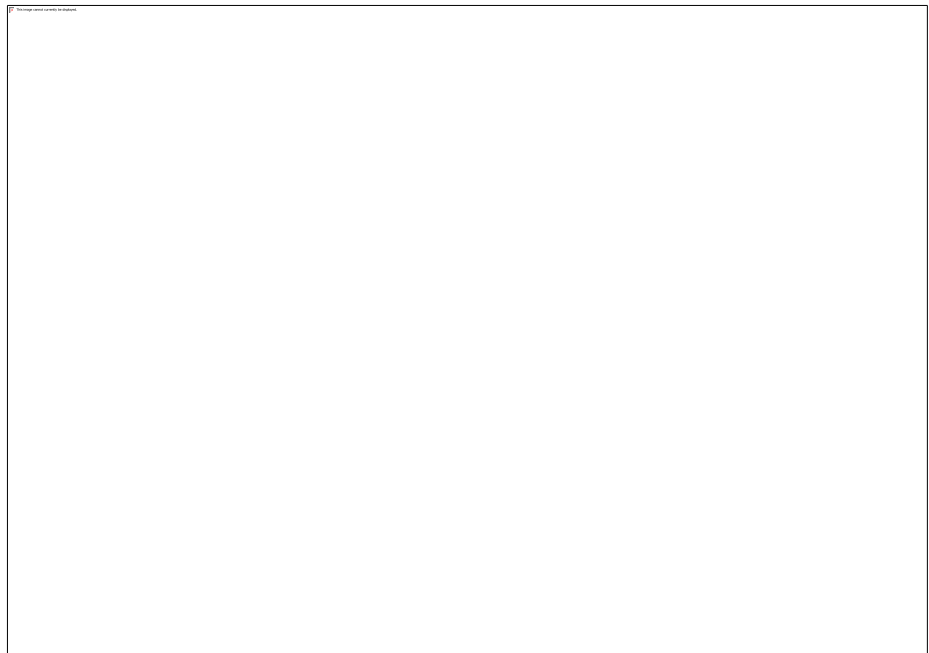


Figure 2 – Artistic impression of proposed Albion Place Bus Hub.

The amendments focused on the following:

- Improved emphasis on promoting the heritage view of the medieval Town walls – This has been achieved by revising the layout and locations of the bus shelters combined with local narrowing of Castle Way to increase the area of public realm, thereby supporting the aims of the City of Culture bid.
- Protection of the heritage area of Old Walls and Arundel Tower – This has been addressed by incorporating ambient lighting and relocating kerb lines and bus shelters away from the walls. Combined with the conversion of the Castle Way Car Park into a public park, this enables a more unobstructed view of the walls.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian Connectivity – This has been achieved through increased public realm space along the walls, creating an improved walking route between Old Town and West Quay via Maddison Street also linking to the Bargate and Forest View, and providing improved accessibility across Castle Way through carriageway narrowing and adjusted kerblines. • Mobility – Potential to increase disabled parking next to Shopmobility. • Bus operator needs – amendments to the bus hub to facilitate the use of future longer buses to future proof the facility.
6.	<p><u>Parking Revenue Loss:</u> Supported by the monitoring of car parking usage (pre pandemic), this has assisted in identifying locations of car parking within the City Centre to support sustainable transport and efficient management of the parking stock. It identified Albion Place car park as a location for a bus hub and Castle Way car park as a location for a new public park. The associated loss in revenue – then estimated at £320,000 per annum – was accounted for within the budget from 2022/2023, with future years having the income target return to normal.</p>
7.	<p><u>Statutory Consultees:</u> As part of the ongoing scheme development, it was identified that planning permission would be required due to the change of use and proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monuments. SCC’s planning service has provided pre-application advice and confirmed that the scheme is in accordance with planning policy AP29 (March 2015) of the City Centre Action Plan.</p> <p>Historic England have been formally consulted and a heritage statement compiled with their comments and recommendations incorporated. Historic England have confirmed that they are largely in support of the proposals.</p>
8.	<p><u>Public Consultation:</u> Early public consultation was carried out as part of the City Centre Perception survey in early 2021. 30% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the Albion Place Bus Hub proposal, with the 4% undecided and 66% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A high proportion of the respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed were responding on behalf of the nearby Masonic Lodge, raising concerns over the loss of nearby public parking immediately outside their premises. Recognising the concerns of the Masonic Lodge, SCC officers have met them several times to discuss concerns with a view to offering mitigating measures. This engagement with the Masonic Lodge over their concerns of losing access to car parking immediately outside their premises is ongoing.</p> <p>Further public local consultation with immediate local residents to address any concerns and issues on the current proposed layout shown in figure 1 is ongoing, and feedback, issues, and concerns to be incorporated into the design.</p> <p>Formal consultations in connection with Traffic Regulation Orders will be required for changes to the on and off-street parking, new zebra crossing and other traffic restrictions.</p>

9.	<p><u>Archaeology:</u> Archaeological investigations will be required during groundworks for the scheme, to be determined at a future date. Working closely with Cultural Services, sufficient time / resources will need to be allowed to make sure this is undertaken with integrity and care, particularly given what it may reveal about the city's heritage and stories.</p>
10.	<p><u>Programme:</u> Indicative milestones are shown below. These are subject to cabinet approval, planning permissions, TROs and other statutory requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline / Detailed Design - Nov 2021 to August 2022. • Cabinet Report for Albion Place / Castle Way change of use – 07 February 2022. • Planning application – Early Summer 2022 • Construction – Winter 2022 to Late Spring / Early Summer 2023.
11.	<p><u>Castle Way Car Park – Change of Name:</u> The new public park is proposed to be built over the existing Castle Way car park. To reflect this transformational change of use and raise the prominence of this new park against the existing Castle Way car park, it is proposed to be re-named to reflect its own unique identity, and its history and heritage. The proposed process will include compiling a list of suitable names from SCC officers to reflect the history and heritage of this area and following a period of public consultation on this list, present the results back for a future cabinet report for member decision.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
<u>Revenue</u>	
12.	<p><u>Post Delivery Revenue Loss</u> The SCC Car Parking Plan published 2019, reviewed the use and locations of car parking within the City Centre to support sustainable transport and management of the parking stock. It identified Albion Place car park as a location for a bus hub and Castle Way car park as a location for a new public park. The associated loss in revenue was subsequently identified as a pressure in the 2020/21 budget setting process, and built into the financial projections from the financial year 2022/23. The proposals for the 2022/23 budget amends this pressure to reflect the loss of income from January 2023, on the assumption construction works commence from the end of 2022.</p> <p>The total pressure is expected to be £0.105M in 2022/23, and £0.42m from 2023/24 onwards, based on 2019/20 income performance. The budget assumption is that Penalty Charge notice activity can be redirected from Castle Street and Albion Place to other areas of the City.</p>

Table 1 below shows the recorded income from both Albion Place and Castle Way car parks over the past five years, with income peaking in FY18/19. These figures combine both P&D (Pay and Display) and PCN's (Penalty Charge Notices) for these car parks. The revenue in financial year 2020/21 was significantly impacted by covid restrictions, and for 2021/22 is currently running at approximately 80% of 2019/20 performance.

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Albion Place	£188,094	£207,274	£194,866	£165,687	£84,984
Castle Way	£304,545	£49,054	£327,867	£272,664	£160,100
Totals	£492,639	£256,328	£522,733	£438,351	£245,084

Table 1 – Recorded income from Albion Place & Castle Way Car Parks

13.

Operating Revenue Costs

From a conversion from two car parks into a bus hub and public park, it is not anticipated there will be any additional revenue maintenance costs as per the current proposed layout. This is subject to the developing landscape design and any specialist landscape or public art features that may be subsequently incorporated.

Capital

14.

The capital investment needed to deliver this scheme is predominantly DfT TCF with SCC LTP match funding. The anticipated phasing is focused on spending the FY21/22 and FY22/23 DfT TCF funding receipt grant first, then FY22/23 and FY23/24 LTP funding.

Estimated spend profile is:

FY21/22 = £0.126M

FY22/23 = £1.728M

FY23/24 = £0.867M

15.

Details of the overall scheme costs and investment are set out below:

Cost	£M
Feasibility Design	0.025
Detailed Design	0.380
TCF SCC support costs	0.145
Construction Cost Estimate	1.709
Contingency / Risk	0.462
Total Cost	2.721

Investment	£M
DfT TCF	-1.971
SCC LTP	-0.750
Total Funding	-2.721
<p>Feasibility design delivered under SCAPE, costs include SCAPE management fees, SCC project management and additional development of proposed option.</p> <p>Detailed design fee is tendered costs incorporating design (street lighting and detailed design), surveys (drainage, street lighting, pavement, tree) and people (comms, network planning and TRO).</p> <p>Construction cost estimate based on Balfour Beatty Feasibility Study Cost dated Dec 2020.</p> <p>To date expenditure on the project is £0.025M on feasibility works.</p> <p>Approval to spend on this scheme will be sought as part of the February 2022 Capital Budget which will include detail of all schemes within the TCF programme.</p>	
<u>Property/Other</u>	
16.	<p><u>Highway Adoption</u></p> <p>The existing Albion Place and Castle Way car parks are currently SCC land under the Leader's portfolio and as such maintainable under SCC Property Services. The decision to convert a suitable extent of the proposed Albion Place Bus Hub currently defined as SCC land into public highway adoptable at the public expense, would require a new boundary of the bus hub to be identified and would need to be progressed through a section 38/ section 278 procedure through the Highways Act 1980.</p> <p>Noting there are benefits and disbenefits to both SCC and the bus operators in making the proposed bus hub public adopted highway, the decision to proceed with a highway adoption option is under review and subject to further consultation with affected third parties by SCC officers.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
17.	<p>This scheme will be delivered in accordance with a variety of Highways and Environmental legislation, including but not limited to the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1994, Traffic Management Act 2004, and s.1 Localism Act 2011 – general power of competence.</p>

Other Legal Implications:

18.	<p>Any scheme or change to a scheme must be made having regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 (with any national minimum scheme will be deemed to comply) and the Equalities Act 2010, in particular the Public Sector Equalities duty. Procurement of Schemes will be carried out in accordance with the Council's procurement strategy, existing and newly procured partnership contracts and in accordance with National procurement legislation and directives. Design and implementation of schemes will take into account the provisions of s.17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and the impact of schemes on individuals and communities will be assessed against Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities legislation provisions.</p> <p>Compliance with section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.</p>
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RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

19.	The project uses a Risk Register to identify, monitor and manage any high, medium, and low project risks from design through to construction.
20.	Financial – scheme costs include a risk allowance, however there may be increases in costs identified following completion of outline and subsequent detailed design.
21.	Stakeholder – Whilst their remains ongoing consultations with the Masonic Lodge who premises are located on the boundary of Albion Place car park, some mitigating measures have been proposed but SCC cannot realistically fully meet their concerns of losing car parking immediately outside their premises. The option of retaining Castle Way as a whole car park or a hybrid half car park / half open space would substantially compromise the operational effectiveness of the bus hub and not deliver the other TCF benefits required under the TCF bid award.
22.	Funding – This scheme is subject to an ongoing DfT change control approval, whilst the changes are relatively minimal compared to the original DfT bid, should the change control not be approved, there remains the risk that the FY22/23 DfT grant funding for this scheme may be withheld. Anticipated feedback on our DfT change control in anticipated to be received late January / early February 2022.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

23.	Connected Southampton 2040 (Local Transport Plan) sets the long-term transport strategy and sets out the approach for public transport through the Southampton Mass Transit System (SMTS) Policy C1 covering bus, Park & Ride and interchanges, Liveable City Centre Policy A1, and developing 15-minute Neighbourhoods. These incrementally seek to change the City Centre so that it supports the needs of people and sustainable economic growth. Policy C1 identifies new bus interchanges/hubs on Portland Terrace and Castle Way.
24.	It supports the City of Culture 2025 bid, Southampton's Cultural Strategy and Heritage Asset Management Plan by enhancing the setting of the Castle and City Walls.

25.	<p>The scheme has been endorsed within Planning Policy AP29 (March 2015) of the City Centre Action Plan which states:</p> <p><i>“Albion Place car park, immediately in front of Castle Bailey Wall, will be developed as new public open space.</i></p> <p><i>Limited development will be supported at Castle Way car park only if it complements visitor and leisure use in this important historic site and is highly sensitive to the setting of the Town Walls.</i></p> <p><i>Development will be small scale, have no negative impact on the Town Walls or their setting; and retain views looking into and out from this part of the Old Town. If development cannot be achieved which meets these criteria, Castle Way car park will provide new public open space.</i></p> <p><i>Castle Way / Albion Place / Portland Terrace is identified as a location for a bus super stop. Proposals will be supported for this super stop and supporting facilities providing they are of high-quality design and have no negative impact on the Town Walls and their setting.</i></p> <p><i>The design of new public space and any development on these sites must improve the setting of the Castle Bailey and Town Walls, include the provision of a public footpath along the Town Walls and maintain links from Bargate to Watermark Westquay.”</i></p>
26.	<p>The proposals for Albion Place would meet this and be in accordance as they provide both the bus hub on Albion Place car park and seek to have no negative impact on the walls themselves. The Pocket Park public realm on the Castle Way car park would provide a new space to experience and enjoy the Walls, enhance the setting of the Arundel Tower, and continue to provide views over West Quay, the Mayflower Quarter and towards the cruise terminals and Southampton Water.</p>
27.	<p>The proposal has gone through pre-application and planning advice given. Prior to pre-application advice was sought from Historic England and SCC’s Conservation Officer is broadly in support of the proposals, who has advised further work and consultation is required including with the Head of Culture, Archaeology Unit Manager and Monument and Memorials Officer to further minimise any impact on the setting of the walls and potential finds.</p>
28.	<p>The SCC Car Parking Plan published in 2019 reviewed the use and locations of car parking within the City Centre to support sustainable transport and management of the parking stock. It identified that both Albion Place and Castle Way car parks as locations for a bus hub and public park respectively.</p>
29.	<p>The City Council is the Local Transport Authority as laid down in the Transport Act 2000 and the Council’s relevant Policy Framework is Connecting Southampton 2020 Transport Strategy (LTP4).</p>

KEY DECISION?	Yes	
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bargate	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	None	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	ESIA - Albion Place Castle Way Car Park Change of Use 7 Feb 2022	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		Yes/No
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.		Yes/No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	
1.	None	