

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Valley Gardens – Events</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>25 June 2019</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director – Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Enhancing the Valley Gardens corridor (the main north-south route into and out of the city centre, connecting the A23 (London Road) and A270 (Lewes Road) with the seafront) has been an objective of Brighton & Hove City Council (the 'council') for a number of years. The longstanding recognition of the need to improve Valley Gardens is reflected in a number of core strategic documents. These include past and current Local Transport Plans [LTPs] and the adopted City Plan Part 1. In 2014, the role of the corridor was further emphasised when it was designated as one of four Priority Development Areas in the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership's [LEP's] Strategic Economic Plan, which sets out its ambitions, investments and proposals for realising sustainable economic growth by 2021.
- 1.2 The key principles of the Valley Gardens scheme are to simplify the existing highway network making the journey through the corridor less complicated, more legible and safer for all users. Creating an improved public realm and green space area will unlock its potential as a 'Gateway to the City', designed to encourage greater use and enjoyment of the area. Designs will facilitate better movement for walking & cycling; provide high impact, low maintenance features which can facilitate a range of events, while contributing to improvements in air quality, community safety, and flood risk management.
- 1.3 The council's Outdoor Events Strategy (2019-2024), identifies Valley Gardens as one of the city's priority event spaces and highlights the importance of infrastructure to support the objectives of the strategy by 'enhancing our national and international profile and reputation' and 'encouraging civic pride and community cohesion and developing capacity and capabilities in the city's events sector'. Furthermore the strategy places an importance on event-ready infrastructure enabling more efficient use of water and energy management to reduce environmental impacts.
- 1.4 The council's Open Spaces Strategy (2017-2027) highlights the importance of urban green space and the challenges faced by recreational areas including pressures on maintenance resources.

- 1.5 In response to a deputation that was presented to this committee in March 2019 about outdoor event spaces within the Valley Gardens scheme, it was agreed that the committee receive a report to its next meeting addressing and clarifying the points made in the deputation. This report therefore provides Members with an overview of Valley Gardens provision of events facilities. It also provides assurances that Phase 3 design work will continue to ensure the area can adequately cater for events.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the provision of facilities to support events within Valley Gardens Phase 1&2 scheme.
- 2.2 Note that the council's Outdoor Events Team and event organisers will be engaged to further develop plans for Valley Gardens Phase 3 during the detailed design stage.
- 2.3 To note that the that the Annual Events Calendar will be proposed at the relevant Tourism, Development and Culture meeting to ensure forward planning for locations events during the construction phase.

## **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The green spaces within the Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 scheme area currently consist of three gardens; Victoria Gardens South, Victoria Gardens North and St Peter's Gardens which are separated by complex highway junctions. The area is largely grassed with some planting in Victoria Gardens North and interspersed by trees. Annual Events are held in the green space including some of the larger ones forming part of Brighton Festival Fringe such as the Ladyboys Of Bangkok and The Warren. Other events such as the London to Brighton Bike Ride and the Brighton Marathon and half-Marathon travel though the Valley Gardens corridor.
- 3.2 The Phases 1&2 scheme introduces north-south and east-west paths throughout the gardens and cycle routes to link key destinations or places. The north-south paths provide a continuous route between St Peter's Place and Church Street/ Edward Street junction, broken only by one formal pedestrian crossing point at the North Road junction.
- 3.3 The new paths though the gardens benefit from new lighting and seating to further encourage use and enjoyment of the gardens. These facilities have been designed so they can be temporarily removed to offer further flexible use of the space and to facilitate a range of uses.
- 3.4 The Phases 1&2 scheme also introduces newly designed public squares which can be utilised to support a range of events. These hardscaped areas are located at the Richmond Place/ Richmond Terrace junction and the area to the south of St Peters Church. These can be seen in Appendix 1.

- 3.5 The majority of the green space is proposed as grassed areas. The ground will be renovated with new top quality soil and existing areas will be aerated and decompacted. This will improve the overall quality of the ground and its tolerance against overuse and compaction. The scheme also introduces a range of trees, perennial grasses and bulbs to enhance the gardens' appeal. This planting will contribute to increasing the gardens' biodiversity and in reducing the impacts of emissions from transport which affect air quality and climate change.
- 3.6 To facilitate a range of events within the gardens new facilities have been discussed and agreed with Events Organisers. This includes the public square areas that are designed with a hard permeable surface with designated vehicle access points for maintenance and event-related traffic. These hardscaped areas are designed to reduce maintenance requirements and limit remedial works required after event use. At both of the hardscaped areas 100Amp, three-phase power supplies will be supplied in a dedicated feeder pillar. Access to a fresh water supply will also be provided. These facilities will be managed by the Council for use by event organisers. Access to water and power facilities will also be available at Victoria Gardens South. These proposals have been developed in co-ordination with event organisers and are detailed in Appendix 1&2
- 3.7 Access to the foul water drainage system has also been identified at two locations within the gardens area. The team have received permission from Southern Water to discharge at Victoria Gardens South and to the west of St Peter's Square. This will enable more efficient siting of toilet facilities for larger events and can be seen in Appendix 1&2.
- 3.8 During construction of the Valley Gardens scheme, detailed proposals identify how the works can be implemented in stages to reduce the impact on all users in the area. Officers have worked with event organisers to accommodate a range of events within the scheme boundary and the majority of planned events that use the roads have largely been accommodated including the London to Brighton Bike Ride and Brighton Marathon and Half Marathon.
- 3.9 Construction works in the gardens have been programmed to accommodate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans Festival (LGBT) and the Warren Event between March–June 2019. There were two planned changes to the 2019 Fringe Festival events which were recommended and approved at the November 2018 Tourism, Development and Culture Committee. These were the Warren event, which was relocated to the Victoria Gardens, South and the Ladyboys which was relocated to Hove Lawns.
- 3.10 In 2020 the gardens will likely be in the early stages of ground improvement and planting however the majority of the Construction works are programmed to be completed by April 2020 leaving hardscape areas available for event use. Officers will continue to work to limit disruption to event organisers during the construction and establishment phases. The council will continue to work with event organisers to mitigate the impacts of the Valley Gardens construction works and to develop mutually agreeable arrangements prior to the submission of the programme of outdoor events to the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee.

- 3.11 The usual process of granting of Landlords consent for event locations is considered when the programme of outdoor events is submitted to the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee in November of the previous year.

### Valley Gardens Phase 3

- 3.12 The development of Valley Gardens Phase 3 has been considered, agreed and progressed through decisions made by this committee. This process has culminated in the approval of the Final Preliminary Design in February 2019.
- 3.13 The agreed Core Design Objectives include the following goal 'To improve the public realm' and within it the aim to 'Maintain and enhance the capacity of events space'
- 3.14 The Preliminary Design Plan approved by ETS Committee (February 2019) creates more than 8000m<sup>2</sup> of additional public space across the Phase 3 area from Edward Street to Brighton Palace Pier. The existing area across the Steine Gardens used for events is approximately 6,250 m<sup>2</sup>. The new public space will provide additional capacity for temporary and seasonal events to support the local and visitor economy. These new spaces will be designed to be flexible for events and will relieve pressure on people moving to and through events areas. The spaces will provide the opportunity to be used as additional/supplementary cultural events space, therefore further strengthening their civic and economic potential.
- 3.15 During the detailed design stage officers will use public consultation results from 2018 to review ideas and suggestions put forward as they could be used to make sure that they are successful and revitalised spaces. This could also help inform future events planning as well as permanent design features.
- 3.16 Officers will work collaboratively with event organisers to ensure that the design objective to enhance the events space is realised during the detailed design stage of Phase 3 and to ensure continuity of events in this location. This will include access and servicing of events. This could include additional dropped kerb access points with hardstanding on the east of the Steine Gardens. Options to improve access to sewer and waste water outlets, and access to fresh water supply will be further explored. The feasibility of providing 100Amp three-phase power service pillar(s) connected to the existing electricity network in, or adjacent to, the Steine Gardens is currently being reviewed. This type of provision will mitigate the risk of poor air quality and noise pollution associated with diesel generators.
- 3.17 Opportunities to integrate removable street furniture, traffic signal heads and signage will also be reviewed as part of the detailed design brief to maximise the flexibility of the total available space for the city's unique and nationally recognised events.
- 3.18 The construction phasing for Phase 3 will be planned to minimise disruption to existing events programming wherever possible. Alternative sites to support a full events programme during the construction period will also be discussed with events organisers and considered where possible. Traffic management plans will be finalised once the construction contractor has been appointed and the

detailed design has been finalised. The outline project programme at this pre-tender construction programme stage indicates that works will be completed by Spring 2021 subject to review.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Since the Phases 1&2 preliminary greenspace design was approved, officers have worked with Landscape Architects, Highway Engineers and other specialists to further develop the detailed design for the gardens. This work includes specifying the materials within the gardens including hard and soft landscape areas, developing tree specifications and planning species, developing soil specifications, materials selection, amenity lighting, seating and power facilities for events.
- 4.2 The Management and Maintenance Plan for the greenspace has been developed in co-ordination with City Parks' officers. The current Construction contract places the responsibility of establishment and maintenance on the Contractor for the first 3 years, following this; maintenance will be managed by the City Parks team. The design has been developed taking into account limited available maintenance budgets and also anti-social issues observed and reported in adjacent greenspace areas, particularly The Level.
- 4.3 Options for vehicle access points, power, water and foul water discharge have been discussed with officers and event organisers and these proposals are considered appropriate for use.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Substantial community engagement and consultation has been carried out to develop the concept designs for the three phases of the Valley Gardens project through various workshops and targeted community and stakeholder engagement.
- 5.2 Meetings with the council's Outdoor Events Team and event organisers have taken place during the design and construction phase, and will continue to take place for Phase 3.
- 5.3 The council's Open Spaces Strategy identifies a number of potential opportunities to engage with partnerships and local communities including the potential to develop a parks' Volunteering Programme to support the maintenance and upkeep of the gardens.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The construction of Valley Gardens Phases 1&2 is underway with facilities proposed to support events. These facilities have been designed in liaison with event organisers and directly deliver elements of the new Outdoor Events Strategy.
- 6.2 During the construction period there will be some disruption for all users in the Valley Gardens area. Officers have taken steps to limit disruption wherever

possible and will continue to liaise with the Outdoor Events Team and events organisers to ensure they have information to plan ahead.

- 6.3 The Valley Gardens Phase 3 detailed design will ensure that events infrastructure as outlined above is integrated into the scheme. Officers will continue to work with event organisers to identify how the designs and final scheme can continue to support events in this busy city centre location.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 In accordance with the existing Outdoor Events Policy, fees are charged for commercial events and any costs incurred are the responsibility of the organiser. A reinstatement bond is required from event organisers where there is the potential for damage to be caused to parks and open spaces during and event. The bond required ranges from £500 -£5,000 depending upon the scale, location and nature of the event.
- 7.2 The estimated figures for the installation of power, water and access to the foul water system are in the region of £0.171m. This will be included in the Valley Gardens Phase 1 & 2 capital scheme and monitored alongside the overall project budget.
- 7.3 The Council will be required to pay a standing charge for the power and water supply. It is expected that revenue generated from the recharge of services to event organisers will cover the costs of standing charges.
- 7.4 The Council will work with the event organisers to manage and maintain the provided facilities. Once installed the services will be on a metered supply and will be charged according to use. As with events currently, the fee that is charged by the Council for each event will need to ensure it adequately covers the cost of maintenance. It is hoped that with the new facilities there will be savings for event organisers in terms of the current costs of providing generators and water provision and water discharge.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Gemma Jackson*

*Date: 22/05/2019*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.5 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward Date: 9/5/19*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 The developed design process and the construction stage have undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure equalities impacts are properly considered.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 The event facilities provide an opportunity to provide a sustainable source of water and power for events to utilise. The provision of power reduces the need for expensive and polluting generators which have an impact on noise and air quality implications.

Officers have worked with Landscape Architects and Arborists to reduce their impact on the gardens during the construction phase. Best practice guidance has been produced to apply to construction and works within the gardens to protect the health and quality of the existing and proposed landscape. Measures are included in the Tree Protection specification.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.8 The facilities proposed contribute to the overall objectives of the Valley Gardens Proposals and which directly supports the objectives of the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, the City Plan and Local Transport Plan, Conservation Area and Enhancement Plan, Biosphere, Air Quality Management Area, Seafront Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy, One Planet Living, Public Space Public Life, the London Road SPD and the LR2 study.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. General Arrangement drawing with new squares and event facilities
2. General Arrangement drawing with event facilities

### **Background Documents**

1. Open Spaces Strategy (2017- 2027)
2. Outdoor Events Strategy (2019)

