

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 129

Subject: A259 (King's Road)
Seafront Highway Structures (Arches') Phases 4& 5

Date of meeting: Thursday, 12th February 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure

Lead Officer: Name: Corporate Director- Operations

Contact Officer: Name: Nick Bean

Email: nick.bean@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the City Council's budget, namely above £1,000,000.

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove's Council Plan outlines our mission to develop a flourishing and inclusive local economy in a city that is accessible and has a sustainable environment we can all be proud of. The seafront arches supporting the A259 are a core part of this mission with a commitment to extend the life of the seafront for another 150 years.
- 1.2 The A259 Kings (Road) Seafront Highway Structures (Arches) Phases 4&5 Scheme (the "Phases 4 and 5 Scheme") is core to realising our aims and is necessary to ensure that the main seafront transport route is maintained for the lifetime of the structures.
- 1.3 This work will ensure the safety of members of the public, both using the A259 and the arches from the risk of catastrophic failure. Phase 4 and Phase 5 is continuation of the ongoing work to strengthen and renew the arches along the A259. Phase1 and Phase 2 around i360 and Phase 3 was Shelter Hall.
- 1.4 As well as essential maintenance to ensure the continuation and safety of the A259 (and the Council as local highway authority has a duty to maintain the highways for which it is responsible) the improvements to the seafront arches will provide new and improved spaces for local businesses, supporting the delivery of our economic strategy. The programme will also see the start of consultation on the next steps for the Kings Road paddling

pool site, and is also being undertaken alongside other significant projects to improve the seafront and surrounding area, such as Madeira Terrace restoration, improved cycle and active travel routes and the redevelopment of the King Alfred swimming pool.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations with consultation with the cabinet member to submit the completed Full Business Case (See Appendix 1) for the Phases 4 and 5 Scheme to the Department for Transport (DfT) for approval and release of the Major Road Network (MRN) Funds amounting to £22.2 million.
- 2.2 Subject to approval of the Full Business Case for the release of the MRN Funds by the DfT to the Council, Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations with consultation with the cabinet member to take all steps necessary to implement the Phases 4 and 5 Scheme including to award the two suitable construction contracts for the Phases 4 and 5 Scheme to the preferred bidders of Knights Brown Construction Limited and to enter into the contracts and any associated warranties and documents..
- 2.3 Cabinet approves a Capital budget for phases 4 and 5 of the programme totalling £24.850m. This represents the total scheme costs less costs incurred to date, funding arrangements are included within the financial implications of the report.
- 2.4 Cabinet agrees to provide approval to undertake a play area feasibility study for the future of the wet and dry play areas in front of Phase 4 once construction is complete. This is detailed in section 3.13.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The main seafront road through the city is supported by Victorian arches which are in urgent need of replacement to avoid a future collapse and the closure of the road which would bring severe negative impacts for transport, the economy and employment as well as affecting tourism and impacting negatively on the environment.
- 3.2 Traffic surveys carried out in October\November 2022 have indicated that Kings Road (A259) carries a two-way average weekday traffic flow of 25,837 vehicles, with peak flows of up to 1,700 vehicles per hour and around 6% are HGV's. The weekend traffic flows are similar to weekday traffic.
- 3.3 The cycle route, which to the south of the westbound carriageway, is part of the National Cycle Route, carrying around 2,190 cyclists per day. This peaks to around 3000 in the summer months.

Description of the scope of the scheme

- 3.4 A section of the A259 MRN is supported by 365 Victorian Arches which are at or nearing the end of their life and have been found to be in a very poor structural condition following structural surveys and inspections in line with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Management of Highway Structures Code of Practice.
- 3.5 Assessment was undertaken initially as part of the 2009 Structural Assessment. In addition, a Principal Inspection carried out on the 14 Phase 4 arches in 2017 identified cracking in the roof slab, it has been necessary to prop these arches ever since as there is a risk of failure. The arches in Phase 4 are monitored regularly due to these structural concerns.
- 3.6 The internal propping is to support the filler beam roof slab and is designed to be capable of supporting 8t deadweight and 5kn/sqm live load. The propping has been installed so that access to the arches is maintained; however, this is under constant review as there may come a time when the arches require further temporary propping and strengthening works.
- 3.7 Therefore, the findings of these surveys demonstrate that the arches that form Phase 4 are structurally deficient and in part have failed structurally to withstand the imposed loads due to cracking and movement with the slabs and walls. As the whole structure is formed from linked arches, which all exhibit decay in varying degrees means the entire structure must be replaced and strengthened at the same time. It is anticipated that within 5 years these arches will be unusable requiring significant propping and therefore requiring the tenants to move from the arches.
- 3.8 For Phase 5 there are a number of concerns regarding structural movement and cracking of the 22 arches that form this section, as identified within Principal Inspections from 2015-2022. The nature of the filler beam deck is in shear and therefore these structures are monitored regularly; it is anticipated that structural failure will occur within sections of the Phase 5 arches within 5 years. It is anticipated that within 10 years these arches will be unusable, requiring significant propping and therefore requiring the tenants to move from the arches.
- 3.9 This section of the A259 is particularly important as the Phase 4 and 5 arches serve as a key part of the Brighton seafront and the wider economy. It is essential to mitigate the long-term risks to the A259 that the structures are rebuilt.
- 3.10 The closure of the A259 would result in an adverse impact on tourism and the reputation of Brighton together with a loss of revenue from city centre car parks near to the structures which would be underutilised. Additionally, the concreting up of the arches would be a significant cost.
- 3.11 These works are consistent with the Council's "Local Transport Plan", and will contribute to its overall strategic goals, including safety, economic growth and a local transport system which is fit for purpose. Regenerating this area of the seafront as part of the works will enhance visitor attraction and generate job opportunities by allowing new business to operate and

trade within the newly built structures. This can be demonstrated by the success of the Phase 3 works – Shelter Hall.

- 3.12 The works will continue the previous works to the arches

Work	Location	Date
Kings Road Arches Phase 1	Section west of i360	Constructed 2011 - 2014
Kings Road Arches Phase 2	Section east of i360	Constructed 2013 – 2015
Kings Road Arches Phase 3	Shelter Hall	Constructed 2015 – 2021

- 3.13 The paddling pool and play area in front of the Phase 4 arches is maintained and operated by Parks and Leisure and the Seafront Office. The proposed works will impact on the existing paddling pool, necessitating the closure of the play area for the duration of the works. The play area has reached the end of its operational life and will need to be improved following the works.
- 3.14 The programme of work is being managed collaboratively to ensure that the council is able to identify suitable solutions for this important seafront facility. The first step in consideration of the options for the paddling pool area is a feasibility study which will be followed by consultation, and work with the local community to identify solutions. Further updates and recommendations regarding the future of the paddling pool will be brought forward in a subsequent report, following the completion of the current feasibility study.
- 3.15 The award of the construction contract for Phase 4 is not dependent on the outcome of any decisions relating to the feasibility or any future use of the site.
- 3.16 As for the previous phases, there has been ongoing discussions with the tenants of the arches affected as part of the works. The works will require the tenants to vacate the arches for the duration. There has been allocation made within the funds for compensation.
- 3.17 The public will not be able to use the promenade in the designated areas of works. However, the unaffected areas of the lower promenade will remain open for the enjoyment of the public. As in the previous phases.
- 3.18 Following competitive tender exercises using the Hampshire Gen-5 framework, a preferred contractor, Knights Brown Construction Limited has been selected for both Phases.
- 3.19 The DfT grant agreement states that for a scheme of this value a contribution of 15% is required from the highway authority.
- 3.20 Subject to the approval of the Full Business Case, the DfT have agreed to a grant of £22,241,438. With BHCC contributing £3,924,960, of which £1,800,000 will be funded from public borrowing.

- 3.21 Over the lifetime of the loan the borrowing will be repaid from the increased rental income generated from the improvements to the tenanted arches.
- 3.22 The required contribution from BHCC was confirmed in a letter dated 23rd May 2023 to the DfT from the Council's Section 151 officer.

	£'000	Comments
Construction costs		
Phase 4	5,310	
Phase 5	20,860	
Total construction costs	26,170	
Funded By:		
DFT Grant	22,240	Grant funding secured
LTP grant	1,320	Sunk costs to date
BHCC Funding	2,610	Part of the final costs - grant to be fully utilised in the first instance
Total Funding	26,170	

The objectives of the Phases 4 and 5 Scheme

- 3.23 Economic growth benefits
- The scheme will ensure the continued economic growth of the city and enable key strategic developments to be realised. The arch strengthening will provide for a 120-year life extension of the structure and enable weak structures that also house businesses within the space/voids fronting the Lower Promenade to be refurbished and continue to provide commercial floorspace and other opportunities that will generate additional economic activity and revenue and help further regenerate the area.
 - This economic growth will be achieved by changing the configuration of the space beneath the promenade. Currently each arch is a separate self-contained structure. By replacing the arches with a reinforced concrete box, the available floor space is increased, as the back of the arches will be available for businesses to use, along with the opportunity to reconfigure the internal space with partition walls allowing individual businesses to use several arches. This flexibility will enable a better use of space and provide different income models to Brighton and Hove City Council.
- 3.24 Transport and scheme related economic benefits
- These works will ensure the condition of these structures will be maintained for the next 120 years and therefore the carriageway, cycle lane (National Cycle Route) and footway of the A259 will be able to continue to perform

their strategic function for vehicle and people movements approaching the city centre. The failure of the structures could significantly affect east-west movements and therefore severely impact on journey times and increase the cost of some journeys.

- The works will provide opportunities to improve the public realm and further add to the attractiveness of the seafront, by reducing severance and increasing connectivity between the promenade and the city centre, in addition to decluttering and improving street furniture and the current aging play area.

3.25 Social benefits:

- The strengthening of the city's seafront structures that are active (approximately a 2.5 km section) will also help the regeneration of the more rundown parts of the seafront. Wherever possible, works will maximise the internal areas to be brought into use (or be upgraded) as commercial premises which will add vitality, activity and new business opportunities to this location.
- The proposed works will not affect severance, other than during any essential demolition and construction period. Comprehensive and safe diversion route for pedestrians and cyclists will be incorporated into the design and provided.
- These works will increase commercial opportunities in this part of the seafront and therefore enable greater choice for visitors and customers.
- The works will provide for pedestrian, cycling and vehicle movement and infrastructure, therefore creating a more attractive seafront environment that everyone can access safely and enjoy.

3.26 Environmental benefits:

- The failure of the structures supporting the highway would necessitate diversion of vehicle traffic, adding to congestion on the alternative routes with a consequential reduction in air quality locally and on a city-wide basis.
- Consideration will also be given to seeking to combine strengthening works with improvements to the A259 corridor. This will seek to secure changes or reductions to the current impacts associated with traffic and greenhouse gases by enabling more efficient movement of traffic and better facilities for walking and cycling. This will require further assessment.
- As above, these works may also enable an improvement in air quality if combined with improvements to the A259 corridor. Effects may be apparent during any essential demolition and construction periods, but these will be mitigated within the contractor's Construction Phase Health & Safety Plan.
- These works are unlikely to result in any direct/discriminable impacts associated with increased noise other than during any essential demolition and construction periods. These effects will be mitigated in the contractor's Construction Phase Health & Safety Plan.
- The works for Phase 4 are programmed to begin in March\April 2026 and completion of Phase 4 will be March 2027. Phase 5 is programmed to begin in November 2026 and to be completed March 2028.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Due to the nature and impact of the Phases 4 and 5 Scheme there is no *Do-Nothing* option. As failure of the arches, it will result in the closure of the west bound carriage way of the A259 and a cross-city diversion be put into place. This has been identified as the *Do Minimum* option.
- 4.2 Option 1 - Do minimum, involving the closure of the westbound carriageway and adjacent cycle route and rerouting of traffic through the town. This option achieves none of the benefits of the preferred option and would incur significant disbenefits to road users, local residents, economy, and the environment.
- 4.3 Option 2 – Infill of the arches - to retain the existing highway network but with the loss of commercial space and access. Infilling the arches is the only alternative to undertaking a structural replacement. This option would be to completely infill the structures with concrete. This option would render the internal usable area, which is in a prime location, sealed and inaccessible in perpetuity. Thereby, excluding all future business development and extinguishing all future rental income, prohibiting seafront regeneration at this location, leading to an area devoid of any future amenities.
- 4.4 Option 3 – Preferred scheme - to reconstruct the arches retaining the existing highway network and enhancing the commercial area beneath. This option follows from the successful completion of earlier phases of reconstruction along the adjacent A259 Arches and Shelter Hall.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Details of public consultation activities on the scheme to date, and key findings including how any key questions/concerns have been addressed is discussed below.
 - The seafront is split between two conservation areas, Regency Square to the west and the Old Town to the east. The development aims to conserve the character and significance of these two distinct areas and the links between them, through the new development and its design. The railings along the esplanade including those that line the seafront steps and ramps are grade II listed. The seafront arches are not listed but are deemed to be a non-designated heritage assets and that any designs together with all materials used should be considered in determining the design.
 - When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight is given to the asset's conservation environment. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. For this reason, the design of any replacement Highway seafront structures requires detailed engagement with Brighton and Hove City Council's Conservation Officers, Planning Officers, and

Historic England, following a similar approach to the successful completion of earlier phases of the King Road Arches. This engagement has been undertaken as part of the design phase and as part of the planning process. Furthermore, detailed meetings have been held with Stakeholders, such as the Seafront and Property management teams to accommodate current and future businesses needs within the structures; Transport Planning, Highways and Structures teams to design a structure and environment that is fit for purpose and safe for use. Further discussions have been held with local amenity and conservation groups such as the Regency Society.

- The design proposals are developed to respond to the local vernacular and Victorian proportions while encouraging appropriate innovation which reinforces local distinctiveness. All new designs seek to integrate proposed developments within the strategic and unique conservation areas of Brighton Seafront which will improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions. The scheme is about change for the better. It seeks positive improvements in the economic, social and environmental roles, through the provision of infrastructure, a high-quality built environment and the protection and enhancement of the heritage and improved connectivity and linkages of access for the pedestrian, cyclist and road user. This is achieved through developing designs that are safe for use and fit for purpose which incorporate Planning, Conservation and Heritage requirements.
- As part of the development of the Seafront Investment Plan the Seafront Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel interviewed thirty people during meetings of which sixteen were external to the council, including businesses who are key stakeholders who play a key role in the seafront's success through their occupation of the internal premises that are established within the arch structures. The council's internal stakeholders, include officers representing Sport & Leisure, Major Projects, Planning, Property & Design, Transport and Economic Development.
- A presentation has been provided to the Seafront Development Board, an independent advisory board, established to co-create a long-term vision for the seafront and provide advice on strategic development and regeneration. The Seafront Development Board supported the project, as there was demonstratable benefit to the seafront and businesses.
- All key stakeholders within Brighton and Hove City Council have been consulted, this includes Strategic Directors, Lead Members and Key officers. The Council owns all the Highway Structures and acts as Highway Authority, Coast Protection Authority and Landlord.
- The areas affected have been fully surveyed and existing tenants are aware that the Council is working up redevelopment proposals. Public consultation has been undertaken as part of the planning process.
- The contractor will have a dedicated project liaison officer available throughout the duration of the construction.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Approval of the recommendations in this report would establish a new capital budget of £24.850m within the Council's Capital Programme. This reflects the total estimated project cost of £26.170m, less sunk costs incurred to date of £1.320m, which have been funded from the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) allocation.
- 6.2 The capital programme is proposed to be funded by a secured Department for Transport (DfT) grant of £22.240m, with the remaining £2.610m expected from future external contributions that have not yet been secured, therefore carrying an element of risk. Should these external contributions fail to materialise, the Council would be required to borrow to fund the shortfall, and the associated financing costs would need to be incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at that point.
- 6.3 Grant funding will be applied in the first instance, meaning any requirement for additional contributions or borrowing would not arise until 2028/29 at the earliest.
- 6.4 To date, £1.320m has been spent on the project. A further £0.645m is forecast to be spent in the current financial year, which is expected to be funded from the DfT grant. However, the timing of grant receipts may create a short term cashflow requirement, requiring temporary internal funding that would be replenished once the grant is received. The impact of this will be reflected in the 2025/26 Outturn Report.
- 6.5 While grant funding would remain available for the project, pursuing option 1 and option 2 as alternatives would significantly reduce the council's ability to maximise income from this strategically important seafront location. This would represent a lost opportunity to generate future revenue, which is an important component of the council's ambition to become more financially sustainable over the MTFS period.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garaghan

Date consulted (dd/mm/yy): 30/01/26

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to maintain its highways, which is confirmed through case law to mean a duty to repair and keep in repair. The proposed works will seek to fulfil that duty.
- 7.2 Any temporary change to traffic flows or road closures will need the required orders.
- 7.3 Using a suitable framework to call off from is a compliant route to market and the Hampshire County Council Generation Civil Engineering, Highways and Transportation Collaborative Framework 2024-2028 is a suitable framework for the works under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR)

2015). This framework is valid and it has not expired. An NEC 4 ECC contract is a suitable call off contract from the framework.

- 7.4 The Council will also be complying with its Contract Standing Orders

Name of lawyer consulted: Siobhan Fry

Date consulted: 03/02/26

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 This project supports and helps to mitigate SR40 - Failure to maintain a clean and safe city. This scheme achieves this by ensuring the security of the A259 for the next 120 years and by improving the condition of the seafront in the working areas.
- 8.2 Procurement risks have been mitigated by using an established local government framework the Hampshire County Council Gen-5 framework. Using call-offs from the Gen5-Lot 2 (medium works) for Phase 4 and Gen5-Lot 3 (medium to major works) for Phase 5. The Gen 5 framework offers access to prequalified contractors and conforms to the Procurement Regulations 2015.
- 8.3 The construction contract used is the NEC4 – Engineering Construction Contract. The NEC4 is a suite of contracts designed to deliver major infrastructure projects. It is the recommended contract for all UK government infrastructure projects.
- 8.4 The contract option used is Option A – Fixed Price with Activity Schedule. This option places most risks with the contractor and provides certainty in final price.
- 8.5 The contract will be managed by experienced BHCC project managers, with contract advice being provided by a certified NEC4 practitioner.
- 8.6 The project will be managed through the use of PRINCE 2 methodology, a recognised UK government project management method. There are certified Prince 2 practitioners working in the BHCC project management team.
- 8.7 Financial risks will be managed through the NEC4 contract process, and £3.2million of contingency and risk has been allocated to the project delivery costs.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 As the proposed finished arches will provide improved access and an enhanced seafront, there is no negative equalities implications.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The Phase 4 and 5 Scheme is to strengthen the next identified set of arches under Kings Road (A259). Should these arches fail, then the westbound carriageway and cycle lane will have to be closed.
- 10.2 The diversion will result in the need to install a permanent diversion for traffic across Brighton. This diversion will result in increased journey times and costs, increased congestion across the city and increased air pollution across the city.
- 10.3 As part of the procurement process the contractor was required to provide details of their sustainability and carbon management proposals.
- 10.4 The Knights Brown Construction Limited is committed to Net Zero 2030, underpinned by a 1.5°C Science Based Targets initiative-aligned 42% reduction target in scope 1/2 emissions, alongside reducing scope 3s. The ultimate goal is to reach net-zero by 2050. These targets are part of Knights Brown Construction "Goal 13" corporate strategy, committing us to social value initiatives, focusing on economic growth, sustainable jobs and community engagement. A 40% (2,030.7 tCO₂e) carbon reduction since 2020 highlights the benefits from Goal 13.
- 10.5 An Environmental Management Plan will outline carbon hotspots, reduction opportunities and actions. It will define key carbon management roles, duties and reporting lines. These include a Contracts Manager (CM), Carbon Champions, a Project Manager (PM) and Project Staff. Oversight will be provided by an Environmental Advisor.
- 10.6 Valuing early collaboration, the CM, with Council support, will lead Carbon Efficiency Workshops (CEWs). These will guide designers/subcontractors using the PAS 2080 hierarchy (avoid, switch, improve) to find optimal carbon solutions and set project targets. Our Project Staff will implement sustainable practices, e.g., using HVO in our machines, and include 'Carbon Reduction' as an agenda item in monthly meetings.
- 10.7 Our Carbon Champions will promote low-carbon practices on the project, supporting carbon reduction training, coordinating carbon reporting and analysis, and sharing best practices to ensure compliance with PAS 2080.
- 10.8 Our PPN 06/21-aligned Carbon Reduction Plan details efforts to annually lower emissions, via our Goal 13 Committee. As CLC CO2nstruct Zero Champions, we partner with 250+ organisations quarterly, applying their expertise.
- 10.9 Knights Brown Construction Limited's ISO14001:2015 system integrates PAS 2080 to reduce project carbon/cost, including policies and processes for CSR, environment, green travel, and sustainable procurement. Our HVO policy, launched April 2025, has cut monthly CO2 emissions by 91%, from 128t to 10.8t.
- 10.10 Knights Brown construction Limited's ESG platform, SmartWaste, will be used to monitor resource usage, waste and transport carbon. SmartWaste

data, outlining waste diversion, types and recovery, will be provided as part of Council progress meeting reports.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 By undertaking these works to strengthen the arches, there is an opportunity to improve the public realm space in front of the arches along the lower promenade.
- 11.2 The new units will provide better weather proofed spaces for the small independent business to flourish within the city.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 The DfT required actual tender prices to be used in economic appraisal for the full business case.
- 12.2 Procurement has been carried out using the Hampshire County Council Gen 5 framework. The total value for the framework is £500 million
- 12.3 As part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) it was made clear that Brighton and Hove City Council will not enter into contract until funding from the DfT has been confirmed.
- 12.3 Phase 4 was tendered using Lot 2 – value up to £5 million
- 12.4 Phase 5 was tendered using Lot 3 - value range £4m to £20m
- 12.5 The preferred contractor was assessed using a 50% Quality and 50% Price.
- 12.6 Knights Brown Construction Limited was successful in both lots. This will provide an opportunity to work with Knights Brown Construction Limited to undertake value engineering and programme optimization, before the contracts are signed.
- 12.7 As part of the ITT the contractor needed to detail their commitment to Brighton and Hove City Council's net zero by 2030 policy and also detail the Social Value offer.

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 As part of the planning process, Sussex Police were consulted on the improvements delivered by the works. There were no significant concerns raised around the work. The response from Sussex Police acknowledged the accompanying Design & Access statement that a specialist Security Needs Assessment has been commissioned.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Phases 4 and Phase 5 of the Kings Road strengthening programme is essential for securing the integrity of the A259 for the next 100 years.
- 14.2 By delivering the scheme the future of the seafront as a vibrant and diverse are of the city is secured for future years.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Full Business Case
2. Letter of support from MP Sian Berry

