
A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains details of financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The grounds for privacy are that it refers to the identity, financial and business affairs of an organisation and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services.

Cabinet
Council

7 October 2014
7 October 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Public Services) – Councillor Lancaster

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director Place

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Public Realm Phase 3

Is this a key decision?

Yes as it has the potential to affect all wards within the City and expenditure is in excess of £1m

Executive Summary:

Coventry's very successful programme of public realm improvements in the city centre has attracted significant further funding totalling £18.8m, which includes £7.5m European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant, £5m Growth Deal, £3.6m private sector investment, £0.642m Growing Places funding and £0.164m from Centro.

Including previously approved resources, this will provide £18.8m for a third phase of public realm improvements. Phase 3 will include improvements at 5 strategic locations in the city centre:

- Gosford Street and Coventry University campus
- Belgrade Plaza
- Junction One and pedestrian link to the Canal Basin
- Broadgate/Hertford Street
- Lidice Place

These schemes will complete the 'medieval-cross' of improvements as originally set out in Coventry City Centre Public Realm report to Cabinet in October 2012 to connect major development sites, visitor attractions and shopping areas. Once completed the routes between

the Friargate/Railway Station and the Canal Basin and Far Gosford Street to Spon Street will have been transformed and will complete an important element of the Council's ambitious programme to transform the city centre and make Coventry great again.

The public realm improvements have been instrumental in attracting significant interest in the leasehold of Cathedral Lanes shopping centre to create a new restaurant/bar quarter. In addition, many targets from the original public realm programme for the attraction of new businesses and the creation of new jobs have been exceeded. The 2013 Coventry City Centre Survey reported some encouraging results compared to previous years, with an increase in visitor spend, an 8% rise in the number of people visiting the city centre in the evening, and also a rise in the number of people that stated visiting city centre events has increased their use of the city centre. 59% of those questioned were in agreement that the public realm Phase One works had improved the city centre.

Subject to approval, the works will be delivered between autumn 2014 and spring 2016. The ERDF funding has been allocated against Gosford Street, Belgrade Plaza and the Canal Basin public realm improvement schemes. Spend and delivery of these projects will need to have been made by 31st December 2015. There is more flexibility regarding the Growing Places, Growth Deal and CIF funding timescales. The Growth Deal money available is £2m for 2015/16 and a further £3m for 2016/17 so expenditure will be accelerated under the capital programme, subject to formal award of the funding.

The Public Realm Programme has been designated a West Midlands 'sink fund' by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This is a fantastic opportunity, as means that if other projects in the region underspend and grant becomes available, there is an opportunity for further funding to be awarded to Public Realm Phase 3.

Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to recommend to Council to:

1. Authorise the new programme of works for Public Realm Phase 3 totalling £18.8m to be added to the approved capital programme for 14/15 and 15/16, utilising £7.5M ERDF to part fund Gosford Street, Belgrade Plaza and the Canal Basin Junction One public realm improvements.
2. Subject to funding agreement and conditions, authorise the accelerated expenditure of £5m Growth Deal grant to part-fund the public realm programme, £2m will be made available in 2015/16 and a further £3m in 2016/17 but will all be spent in 15/16 and cashflowed by the capital programme.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with Cabinet Members (Public Services) and (Business, Enterprise and Employment) to agree the detailed works for schemes in Coventry city centre Public Realm Phase 3 as set out in Appendix A and their implementation.
4. Authorise the City Council to act as guarantor and delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place in conjunction with the Executive Director, Resources to enter into grant aid agreements with DCLG on ERDF terms and conditions for the £7.5M ERDF awarded, and any further funding that becomes available from DCLG as part of the 'sink fund'.

Council are asked to:

1. Authorise the new programme of works for Public Realm Phase 3 totalling £18.8m to be added to the approved capital programme for 2014/15 and 2015/16, utilising £7.5M ERDF to part fund Gosford Street, Belgrade Plaza and the Canal Basin Junction One public realm improvements.

2. Subject to funding agreement, authorise the accelerated expenditure of £5m Growth Deal grant to be used as match funding for Belgrade Junction, Canal Basin and Lidice Place, £2m will be made available in 2015/16 and a further £3m in 2016/17.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place, in conjunction with Cabinet Members (Public Services) and (Business, Enterprise and Employment) to agree the detailed works for schemes in Coventry city centre Public Realm Phase 3 as set out in Appendix A and their implementation.
4. Authorise the City Council to act as guarantor and delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place in conjunction with the Executive Director, Resources to enter into grant aid agreements with DCLG on ERDF terms and conditions for the £7.5M ERDF awarded, and any further funding that becomes available from DCLG as part of the 'sink fund'.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix A – Plan showing location of Phase 3 schemes
Appendix B – Descriptions of new and enhanced schemes

Background Papers:

None

Other Useful Documents:

1. The Coventry & Warwickshire First Wave Growth Deal – Council Report of 9th September 2014
2. Belgrade Plaza Development – Cabinet Report of 22nd July 2014
3. ERDF Open Call for Projects - Council Report of 29th June 2014
4. Coventry City Centre Public Realm Phase 2 Update – Council Report of 23rd July 2013
([Click Here to Access Council Report](#))
5. European Development Fund Accountable Body Report – Cabinet Report of 16th April 2013
([Click Here to Access Council Report](#))
6. Strategic Alignment of Regional Growth Fund Round 3, Growing Places and LEP Core Funding with Coventry City Council as the Accountable Body – Council Report 23rd February 2013
7. Coventry City Centre Public Realm Phase 2 – Council Report of 23rd October 2012
([Click Here to Access Council Report](#))

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes, 7 October 2014

Report title: Public Realm Phase 3

1 Context (or background)

- 1.1 The background to the Coventry 2012 Public Realm Project was covered in a report to Cabinet on January 21st 2011. Phase 1 was completed in Summer 2012 and the success of these works led to Phase 2 being approved by Cabinet on October 9th 2012, and a revised programme subsequently approved July 9th 2013.
- 1.2 Phases 1 and 2 of the Public Realm programme have been extremely successful to date, with the programme having already regenerated almost 9.5 hectares of brownfield land within Coventry city centre, and levered in more than £8.5 million of additional public sector funding.
- 1.3 Completed schemes under Phase 2 to date include a second entrance to Pool Meadow, improvements to Little Park Street/New Union Street Junction, Spon Street, additional Phase 1 paving works on Gosford Street and Trinity Street. High Street and Council House Square are almost complete, subject to surfacing and installation of street furniture. Gosford Gate works are underway, and programmed for completion in December 2014.
- 1.4 A number of opportunities have arisen since the revised second phase of public realm works was approved. These are:-
 - The invitation to bid for further ERDF and award of £7.5m additional funding to date, with an opportunity to be awarded further funding before June 2015 as the project has been allocated as a 'sink fund' for the West Midlands ERDF funding programme by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This means that if other projects in the region underspend, further ERDF grant may be awarded to Public Realm Phase 3 between now and the end of 2015.
 - Coventry University committing funding for improvements on Gosford Street and around their campus;
 - Additional private investment in public realm, from Deeley and Barberry
 - Growing Places funding of £642,000 has been awarded for Broadgate/Hertford Street;
 - £1.8m Coventry Investment Fund (CIF) previously approved to be allocated as match funding against the public realm programme;
 - £5m Growth Deal (Strategic Economic Plan - SEP) grant offer to the Council for improving city centre access, which we can utilise to fund public realm projects which meet the grant criteria, subject to funding agreement.
- 1.5 The additional ERDF needs to be drawn down by December 2015, which enables us to extend the public realm programme for another year to deliver the Gosford Street, Belgrade Plaza and Canal Basin schemes.
- 1.6 The primary purpose of this investment is to promote the regeneration of the city centre and further improve accessibility to employment, retail and tourist attractions, alongside attracting inward investment to create jobs. The extension programme will complete the missing links between the enhanced routes along the alignment of the medieval Coventry cross referred to in previous Public Realm reports to create a more holistically attractive city centre environment.

1.7 Details of all five schemes can be found in appendices A and B. The schemes are summarised below:

- The Belgrade Plaza and Lidice Place schemes will much improve accessibility to the retail and leisure facilities in the west of the city centre.
- In the north the Junction 1/Canal Basin scheme will improve the capacity of Junction One of the ring road and create a new high quality public realm environment linking the city centre and Barberry site to the Canal Basin. This will support a number of development sites in this area.
- Public realm improvements to the Broadgate/Hertford St junction will include laying of high quality granite paving extending the enhanced Broadgate scheme into Hertford Street
- To the east the Gosford Street scheme will improve the setting of the University campus and links to Far Gosford Street and Whitefriars Monastery. This will support the continuing growth of the University and encourage people to visit the newly regenerated Far Gosford St. Works for the Gosford Gate scheme currently underway will be extended up to the Gosford Street scheme boundary to complete public realm improvements along this key route.

1.8 The enhancements will further improve disabled access in the city centre, and support the Council's aspiration to become an Age Friendly City. Narrowing of roads and removal of traffic signals should help enforce slower speeds, improve traffic flow and help to reduce accident rates.

1.9 Procurement options for the delivery of the works are currently being explored. It is likely an existing OJEU compliant framework will be utilised for Gosford Street, Canal Basin and Belgrade Plaza. The DLO will deliver Lidice Place, part of the public realm works at Broadgate/Hertford Street and possibly some enabling works on the other schemes. Professional services will be procured using the West Midlands Highway Alliance Framework Shared Professional Services Contract. Procurement Board approved the procurement strategy for the works in May 2014. All works will be procured to meet EU procurement requirements.

1.10 All external funding requires there to be an accountable body and the City Council will take on this role to act as guarantor for all funding streams that make up the resource package for the programme extension. The works will be delivered by the same internal team currently managing the delivery of the Phase 2 programme who are highly experienced in administering grant funding. The team will also seek further support from Finance and technical assistance from Resources and New Projects to ensure that robust management processes are in place to avoid the risk of claw-back of grant.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 **Option 1 - The City Council approves using ERDF for Gosford Street, Belgrade Plaza and the Canal Basin and approves the use of SEP to be used as match funding to enable Broadgate and Lidice Place to be delivered** - The City Council has acted as lead applicant or accountable body for many European-funded projects since 1984 when the area first became eligible for such funding. In essence it means being responsible for monitoring spend, submitting grant claims to DCLG for eligible expenditure and demonstrating that the grant has been spent in achieving the outputs of the project. By taking on this role, the City Council will administer a further £7.5m ERDF grant, along with £5m SEP funds and £0.642m Growing Places as well as managing the other public sector and private sector resources which make up the funding package. It is recommended this option is approved to maximise funds available to deliver the full programme of public realm improvements to maximise impact. It is not known what funds may become available for public realm post 2015, therefore this is a last opportunity to

utilise a significant package of grant funding to further enhance the city centre and complete the programme of works started at part of the Coventry 2012 initiative.

Option 2 - Proceed without Growth Deal funds - Without utilising SEP grant the ability to deliver all of the projects proposed will be diminished and Phase 3 would have to be scaled back in terms of the number of schemes to be delivered and quality and extent of the improvements. The Council would also lose flexibility to fund any non-ERDF schemes beyond the end of December 2015.

Option 3 - Proceed without any of the external funding package - If the Public Realm work were to be funded entirely by City Council funding, the overall impact of the works undertaken would be diminished and it would only be feasible for statutory duty works to be funded such as maintenance of footpaths and highways. With increasing pressure on the Council's capital programme an opportunity would be missed to improve the public realm environment of the city centre and attract inward investment.

2.2 Recommended Proposal

It is recommended that the Council moves forward with Option 1.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 The New Jobs Strategy 2014 - 2017 is the Council's proposal for taking forward the economy of the city in the light of the changed circumstances experienced over recent years. ERDF matched against core funds for these projects is aligned to delivering the Jobs Strategy and the priorities of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) set out in their 4-year strategy based on the Local Economic Assessment and feedback from local businesses which include:

- Creating New Jobs
- Creating business growth
- Removing barriers to growth

3.2 The development of the ERDF projects has been completed with LEP partners and reflects the CWLEP's priorities most in need of public investment.

3.3 The CWLEP has undertaken a consultation exercise with local business to determine the priorities it should focus on. The proposals and projects within this report fully align to the proposed CWLEP Strategic Economic Plan and the new European Structural Investment Fund Strategy.

3.4 Consultation with Access Groups has been ongoing throughout the delivery of Phase 1 and Phase 2, and will continue for the development of the additional schemes. All schemes incorporate trees and grass wherever practical in response to repeated calls for more greenery in the city centre.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Additional funding was awarded 14th July 2014 and planning and design are underway on all projects.

4.2 All ERDF spend must take place by 30 November 2015 in order for submitting a final grant claim by 31 December 2015.

- 4.3 SEP funding must be defrayed by March 31st 2017; however it is currently anticipated that all expenditure will be defrayed by spring 2016.

5 Comments from Executive Director Resources

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 The report proposes the addition of a new programme of capital works for a further round of Public Realm (Phase 3) totalling £18.8m. No additional corporate resources are required to enable this programme. The contribution being made is just over 10% showing a significant level of financial leverage into the City. The ERDF will enable us to temporarily capitalise a number of revenue funded posts.
- 5.1.2 The Council are proposing to be the accountable body for all of the ERDF projects listed in Appendix A. Whilst this is not unusual, the financial implications to the Council should be clearly understood. We have entered into a legally binding ERDF contract with Department for Communities and Local Government and therefore are obliged to ensure that the projects are delivered compliantly within ERDF rules or face financial penalty, which could result in withdrawal of a proportion or all of the grant awarded. There is minimal risk of this occurring. For risk management refer to section 6.3.
- 5.1.3 The Council's financial contribution indicated in the above table is from existing approved resources, £1.8m of which relates to the use of Coventry Investment Fund (CIF) monies, approved by Cabinet in July 2013. The remainder relates to the use of revenue budgeted salary as further match funding.
- 5.1.4 The Growth Deal funding conditions will mean that £2m will be allocated to the Council in 2015/16 and a further £3m in 2016/17, therefore accelerated spend is required under the Capital programme as it is forecast that the total grant will be spent by spring 2016.
- 5.1.5 In the event that any of the above resources are not successfully secured, the proposed works will need to be scaled down to match available resources.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The Council will act as the accountable body for the ERDF projects on the terms of the EU and DCLG requirements. The Council will be issued with a grant offer containing terms and conditions. It is anticipated that based on other grant funding agreements entered into by the Council there will be provisions relating to repayment/clawback of the grant to DCLG in certain circumstances, the risk of such will be managed in accordance with 6.3.
- 5.2.2 Planning consent will be required for Broadgate, Belgrade and Gosford Street Schemes. The City Council will be the applicant under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 5.2.3 The public realm schemes will be delivered under the Council's general highway improvement/traffic management powers under the Highways Act 1980 except in relation to any new or amended formal pedestrian crossings/traffic regulation orders/traffic-calming measures which will be implemented following a separate statutory notice/objection process under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

6.1.1 The City Council's New **Jobs Strategy 2014-17** highlights the importance of creating jobs which the city needs. All project extensions will support job creation within Coventry and be aligned with the following two objectives of the strategy:

- Secure job opportunities through investment – businesses and investors continue to recognise Coventry as the right place for them to invest and grow
- Help people get jobs – pursuing prosperity so that in Coventry everyone who wants a job will have the opportunity to secure one that matches their skills.

6.1.2 All these schemes will indirectly or directly provide jobs across the city and sub-region. The Jobs Strategy specifically acknowledges the importance of public realm improvements in creating new jobs in the city centre. Coventry's Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the ambitions for "a prosperous Coventry with a good choice of jobs and business opportunities for all the city's residents". One of its long-term outcomes is accelerating economic growth for the city and creating a more diverse range of businesses and employment.

6.1.3 The proposed extensions to the current Public Realm programme are closely aligned with one of the **CWLEPs core objectives**, which is to develop Strategic Infrastructure. It is also aligned with the CWLEP's Inward Investment objective, particularly as improved public realm will help to open up new employment sites (most notably the Friargate and City Centre South sites), and provide compelling reasons for companies to locate into the region.

6.1.4 The CWLEP recognises the importance of a successful Coventry city centre to the sub-region as a whole in its strategy. The proposed extension of the Public Realm Phase 2 is closely aligned with the "Unlocking Growth Potential" theme of the Coventry and Warwickshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), specifically by unlocking the potential for development on key new city centre employment sites.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.2.1 Arrangements are in place within the Place Directorate to deliver the accountable body role ensuring that procedures are in place to manage risk. There is a governance structure in place for the public realm programme whereby risks are managed by project team level and reported to strategic board. There is a separate project board to manage shared risks between Coventry University and the Council for the Gosford Street project. Regular risk workshops are undertaken on all projects to ensure active monitoring and management.

6.2.2 The financial risk associated with the ERDF sits with the Council. However the risk of claw back by DCLG and/or the EU is minimal so long as the expenditure is defrayed against eligible activity and in the permitted timeframe. This risk will be mitigated by the implementation of strict procedures for the project management of ERDF-funded work and ensuring that the risks for the two outside projects are devolved appropriately to the partner organisations. The Council maintain close liaison with our monitoring officer in DCLG, and ensure that funding contracts awarded by the Council for the completion of infrastructure works place risk on the organisations which complete the works.

- 6.2.3 The Council has a good track record for maintaining and achieving significant financial controls and well established procedures for handling public funds and these will be applied to the ERDF projects in order to ensure that the best possible value is achieved for the EU's investment in the schemes. Therefore the view of officers is that risk of clawback for each scheme is minimal.
- 6.2.4 The Council has already put in place an External Funding Board, chaired by the Assistant Director Financial Management, with officers from both Place and Resources, whose role is to ensure that the Council satisfactorily carries out its legal responsibilities and manages the risks to the Council in holding these types of funds. The group sits alongside partnership decision making and strategy groups such as the CWLEP Board where investment policy is determined and spend proposals are approved.
- 6.2.5 The City Council's Resources & New Projects (RNP) Team is highly experience in dealing with external funding and will ensure that suitable monitoring and governance arrangements are in place.
- 6.2.6 The programme manager for the works is responsible for managing compliance with the funding requirements such as publicity, procurement and for monitoring progress including making grant claims to DCLG. The highly experienced Planning, Transport & Highways division who have already successfully delivered Public Realm Phase 1 and parts of Phase 2 will continue to implement any successful public realm schemes.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

6.3.1 HR Implications

- 6.3.2 To ensure successful delivery of these large projects and the Council's ability to provide an adequate accountable body function, additional staff resources may be required and will be recruited through the council's authorised recruitment protocols. Staff are already in place for the existing ERDF-funded projects and they may be able to continue to carry out this function and take on the new projects.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

- 6.4.1 Each of the infrastructure projects will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment as part of project development and impact. The proposals will make movement around the city centre easier for everyone. This is because of the removal of unnecessary street furniture and measures to reduce the dominance of vehicular traffic. However, access by car for those that need it will be maintained. Discussions with the Access Groups and representative organizations are underway to ensure that the design of Belgrade and other areas properly reflects access needs. There have been regular meetings with the Access Development Group and the Coventry and Warwickshire Access Committee to review the impact of Phase 1 and 2 schemes and to consider the design of further schemes. In particular, the Council has been working closely with the Guide Dogs Association.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

- 6.5.1 The large scale infrastructure projects will have an impact on the environment in the city centre. Introducing more capacity at Junction 1 of the ring road and removal of traffic lights at Belgrade Plaza junction will result in freer flowing traffic, which will have a positive impact on air quality. We will also be introducing more green spaces and trees into the city centre.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

6.6.1 Private sector developers and Coventry University stand to benefit from the proposed Public Realm Phase 3 programme. The proposed Gosford Street public realm improvements would significantly improve pedestrian access to Coventry University. In addition, the public realm activities at the Canal Basin, Belgrade Plaza and Broadgate/Hertford Street would increase the attractiveness of these sites to private sector developers, and is likely to bring new employment land forward for development (again, this is reflected by the fact private sector developers have committed to provide some of their own resources to develop the first two sites in question).

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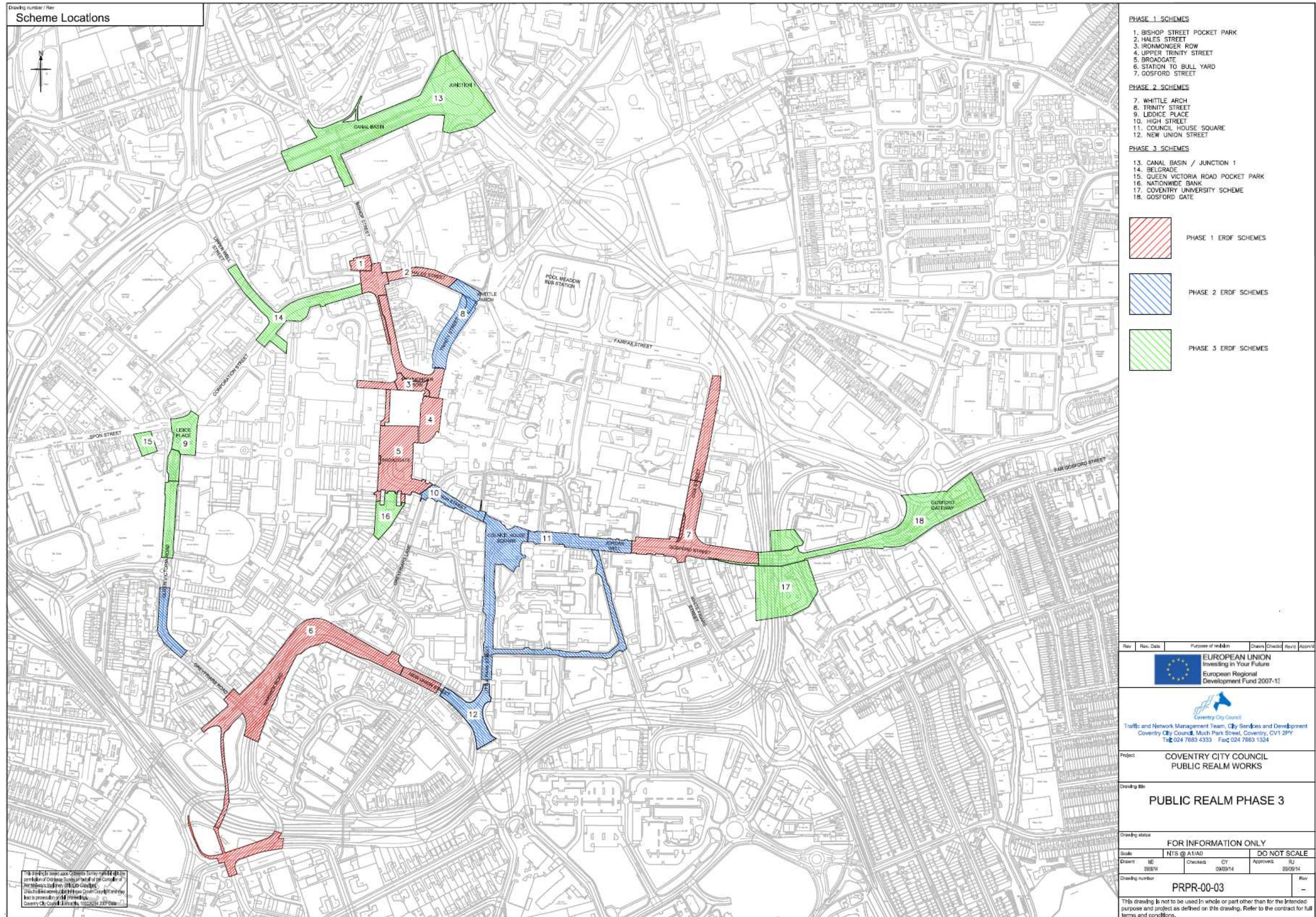
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APPENDIX A - Plan showing location of Phase 3 schemes



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APPENDIX B – Descriptions of new and enhanced schemes

The proposed Public Realm Phase 3 programme schemes are as follows:

- **Gosford St/University** – following on from the success of the Gosford Street/Cox Street junction scheme and further investment in Gosford Gate, Coventry University have committed match funding to transform the area between the Ring Road and the William Morris Building and underneath the flyover to create a campus fit for a modern successful University. This will complete the innovative and successful work started by the City Council three years ago to transform the streetscape and create a high quality pedestrian link between Broadgate and Far Gosford Street. High quality landscaping, paving and lighting will be delivered to improve the setting of the iconic new University buildings and to open up access to Whitefriars Monastery. The scheme also includes for some additional works for the previously approved Gosford Gate scheme to fully complete this key arterial route into the city centre.
- **Canal Basin / Bishop Street** –The existing footbridge will be demolished, and replaced by a new at grade pedestrian crossing integrated with a reconfigured Junction 1 (Foleshill Road) which will improve capacity traffic flow. This scheme will complete a high quality pedestrian route linking Broadgate to the canal basin and will also provide a key link in the Cycle Coventry network. This link will also provide a stimulus for the Bishopgate development and link to the new development on the site of the old Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital.
- **Broadgate /Hertford Street** - This project will significantly improve the public realm connecting Hertford Street and Broadgate, by installing high quality granite and will further improve the pedestrian route from the rail station to the city centre, complementing the improvement works underway at Junction 6 and the pedestrian boulevard.
- **Belgrade Plaza** – the public highway around Belgrade Plaza will be reconfigured to complement the existing landscaped area to create an attractive public space. The scheme will follow the successful design principles used elsewhere in the city centre, including the removal of the traffic lights. Centro have pledged £164k towards a new city centre wayfinding scheme. This will include new totems erected around the city centre to provide information to visitors regarding popular and lesser known tourist attractions, and make it easier to travel around the city through improved information on transport options, including walking and cycle routes and public transport.
- **Lidice Place and Spon Street**- The scheme will improve pedestrian linkages between the Lower Precinct and Spon Street. This project offers additionality from current approved scheme through the use of higher quality materials to mirror the standard of other public realm improvement schemes in the city centre, as well as increased scope through the creation of a new multi-functional events space to enable local traders to hold events and markets. The existing signalised pedestrian crossing adjacent to the City Arcade Entrance will be removed and replaced with a zebra crossing and narrowed carriageway. At the junction of Croft Road and Queen Victoria Road a pseudo roundabout will be constructed to aid in traffic movements. Additional car park spaces will be created adjacent to the City Arcade entrance. The works are proposed to be split into packages to enable phased delivery so should any of the other public realm schemes require additional funds this project can be scaled back accordingly.