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**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Subject: Update on City Centre Development Projects

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on progress with key city centre development projects.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are recommended to:
- 1) Note the contents of this briefing note
  - 2) Identify any comments or recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member
  - 3) Receive a further progress report on the City Centre South scheme later in the 2020/21 municipal year

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The regeneration and physical transformation of Coventry city centre is a key priority for the City Council as well as the wider set of stakeholders the City Council is working with to bring improvement and positive change to the city.
- 3.2 City centres experience constant evolution and renewal and, for Coventry, this process is given even sharper focus through projects being delivered either in readiness for, or as a legacy to, City of Culture 2021. These projects are also set against the backdrop of unprecedented change to 'the high street', and the town and city centres in which they operate. Beginning with the major economic downturn that started in 2008, this upheaval has resulted from the continued importance of out-of-town shopping centres and supermarkets, the rapid rise in online shopping and wider shifts in consumer spending and behaviour that has created a situation where what the customers of today and the future want often isn't being delivered by traditional retail-led high street environments. This has led to a string of well-known retailers entering into administration or closing stores. Therefore, it is imperative that the city centre projects the Council is involved in delivering are focused on bringing people back into the city centre to invest, live, shop, work or play.
- 3.3 This briefing note provides updates on City Centre South (CCS), wider city centre development schemes and the public realm schemes which will transform the look and feel of the city centre in readiness for 2021.
- 3.4 City Centre South
- 3.5 CCS is the Council's key regeneration priority for the city centre. It will transform some of the most tired and out dated areas of the city centre, including Bull Yard, Shelton Square, City Arcade and Hertford Street. In January 2017, Cabinet and Council approved the appointment of Shearer Property Group (SPG) as the preferred bidder for the City Centre

South (CCS) scheme and provided permission for the Council to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements with SPG to bring forward the delivery of the CCS scheme.

3.6 The Council is currently working with SPG to bring forward an outline planning application for CCS which will set the parameters for future development. Further to public engagement anticipated for later this year, the scheme set out in the planning application will identify the potential for a significant number of new homes, a modern and forward looking retail, food and beverage, workspace and leisure offer and high quality public realm throughout the scheme which will complement the schemes being delivered throughout the wider city centre (see paras 3.10 – 3.19 below).

3.7 The uses brought forward in CCS will complement what is working successfully elsewhere in the city. For example, the delivery of the Cathedral Lanes scheme has demonstrated the demand from Coventry residents for a high quality restaurant offer in the city (which will be further improved through new food and beverage operators locating within the EDG Co-op scheme) and CCS will build on, and learn from, the operators that have worked successfully at those locations.

### 3.8 Key city centre development schemes

3.9 The delivery of wider development schemes in the city centre is helping to create the conditions for the successful delivery of a mixed use scheme of the scale of CCS. Relevant schemes include:

- **Friargate:** the creation of a new office led, mixed use district next to Coventry rail station. The master plan sets out the basis for the delivery of 14 major buildings to transform this fantastically located part of the city centre. One Friargate has been built and Two Friargate and the Hotel Indigo scheme are due on site during 2020.
- **Coventry rail station:** work is underway to deliver a new station entrance, multi-storey car park and new bus interchange at one of the fastest growing stations outside of London.
- **The Wave:** opened in 2019 following £36.7m of investment, the award winning water park is playing a key role in bringing significant footfall to an area of the city adjacent to CCS.
- **Coventry Evening Telegraph scheme:** this comprises the refurbishment and regeneration of the former newspaper offices and print works into a boutique hotel. The finished hotel, which is due to open in autumn 2020 will provide 88 high quality rooms in keeping with the 1950s ethos of the original building.
- **Co-op scheme:** this high quality scheme has delivered 63 new homes and provided a new benchmark for residential development in the city centre. The ground floor is being activated by a high quality new restaurant offer. This includes Rodizio Rico and Café Morse (already opened) with Franzos and Heavenly Desserts opening in March 2020.

### 3.10 Key public realm schemes

3.11 The £44m regeneration of the public realm in the city centre is a key part of the overall programme of city centre development works. The creation of transformed public spaces will provide a lasting impact and legacy in order to promote ongoing economic growth and investor development for Coventry as well as enhancing and developing a city in which Coventry people can be proud of, and ready to share with millions of extra visitors in 2021.

3.12 **Upper Precinct, Smithford Way and Market Way:** The works in the city centre retail area began in earnest in December 2019. The regeneration of the precinct's spaces will create a world class public realm experience which will enhance and pay homage to the original

Gibson design. The public realm team are working closely with SPG, Eurovia Contracting and wider stakeholders to minimise disruption and alleviate any concerns raised whilst we go through a period of disruption to the area. The current works are at ground level and extensive excavation is underway in all areas across the shopping precincts. As we move towards the summer period the fountains and plant rooms will be installed and the city will begin to see the transformation of the space. The works are planned to be finished by December 2020.

- 3.13 **Bullyard and Public Realm outside The Wave:** The civils works outside the Wave are nearing completion and are on target for the project to be finalised by April 2020. This will create a new fantastic family focused area in which to spend time. The new play area will be ready for the 2020 Summer holidays. The Bullyard area is being enhanced with a new lighting scheme, which will enhance the area in the evening and make it a more pleasant space to walk through and spend time. The team are also undertaking extensive research into the history of the area to ensure that this is appropriately reflected in any new public realm created. Greyfriars gate is an example of where we are looking to create a new visitor experience within the public realm, tapping into new technologies such as augmented reality and using that to tell the story of our history.
- 3.14 **Hertford St:** The Hertford St project has completed its first phase which has included the removal of the old Nationwide building. Phase 2 will be laying the resin bound gravel which will take place in March 2020 (subject to temperatures). The team are working with a company called Creative Giants to create a lighting installation within the Hertford St canopy by the end of 2020. Additional face-lifting works such as re-grouting, deep cleaning and painting will be taking place throughout 2020.
- 3.15 **Pool Meadow:** Working with Transport for West Midlands, the team are finalising concept designs for the Pool Meadow regeneration project. This will create a welcoming arrival experience for visitors in 2021 but also create an enhanced and usable bus station for the people of Coventry. This project will begin in May 2020.
- 3.16 **Walking routes:** Areas such as Greyfriars Green, Greyfriars Lane and Pepper Lane are all being upgraded with either enhanced lighting schemes, new granite surfaces or both. Pulling on the history of these areas is important and the finalised designs will reflect this in the way that people experience the space. We are working with SPG to explore options with Pepper Lane so we can move away from a service yard feel and do credit to the space in order to make it a destination that people want to arrive at. The Pepper Lane scheme starts in April 2020, with Greyfriars following on after.
- 3.17 **Lighting:** A significant upgrade of lighting is to take place across the city centre, this involves ensuring functional lighting is fit for purpose and provides safe access and egress to the city as well as lighting enhancements to some of our best heritage buildings and relighting some of the bridges and structures such as Whittle Arches. The lighting projects will start in April 2020 and be delivered over the next 12 months.
- 3.18 **Travel and Transport:** A new wayfinding solution will be installed across the city centre. This will be clear, concise, low maintenance and easy to follow. This will create a visitor experience that allows people to navigate the city in a way that can drive footfall, promote our assets and manage people flows for events. The tender for this is under development and will be procured by May 2020, ready for installation during summer 2020.
- 3.19 **Public realm refresh:** The public realm refresh project covers everything from upgrading plants and trees across the city centre to deep cleans of subways and repairs of broken assets. Work on this will take place throughout 2020.

### 3.20 Stakeholder engagement

3.21 We work closely with city centre stakeholders in the development and delivery of key projects and schemes, these include Coventry University, local businesses and amenity groups. Of particular importance is Coventry City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) who play a key role in representing hundreds of businesses and delivering a wide range of activities, events and campaigns to support a vibrant city centre business district.

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