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**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Subject: Update on City Centre Public Realm 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 public realm projects.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are recommended to:
- 1) Note the contents of this briefing note and the presentation at Appendix 1
  - 2) Identify any comments or recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

## **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.
- 3.3 This briefing note provides updates on the public realm schemes which will transform the look and feel of the city centre in readiness for 2021.
- 3.4 Key public realm schemes
- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 **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 construction to the area. The current works are at ground level with new paving being laid daily and extensive excavation is underway in all areas across the shopping precincts. As we move towards the autumn period the fountains and plant rooms will start to be installed and the city will begin to see the real transformation of the space. The works are planned to be finished by Spring 2021.
- 3.7 **Bull Yard 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 Nov 2020. The new fountain is installed with final testing and commissioning underway. This will create a new fantastic family focused area in which to spend time. The Bull Yard 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.
- 3.8 **Hertford St:** The Hertford St project has completed laying the resin bonded material and new seating and benches were installed during September 2020. The team are working with a company called Creative Giants to create an art 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 and early 2021
- 3.9 **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 Oct 2020.
- 3.10 **Walking routes:** Areas such as Greyfriars Green, Greyfriars Lane and Pepper Lane are all being upgraded with either enhanced lighting schemes, new granite surfaces and new public art. 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 started in April 2020 and is due to finish October 2020.
- 3.11 **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 started in April 2020 and will be delivered by Dec 2020.
- 3.12 **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 ready for installation during early 2021.

- 3.13 **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 and early 2021
- 3.14 Stakeholder engagement
- 3.15 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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**Appendix 1 – City Centre Public Realm presentation**