



Leader's Office
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
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Jonathan Sharrock
Chief Executive
Coast to Capital

Date: 30th August 2019

Phone: 01273 280481

Dear Jonathan

VALLEY GARDENS PHASE 3

I am writing to you on behalf of the city council, with the full support of the Leader of the Council, to provide you with a statement on Phase 3 of the Valley Gardens project so that you can share it with members of your Investment Committee when they consider the project at their next meeting.

As you, your officers and LEP members will no doubt be aware, an extensive amount of work has taken place in partnership with the LEP on the entire Valley Gardens project since 2013, when it was first considered for funding by the LEP's Local Transport Body, and subsequently included in the 2014 Strategic Economic Plan. The project was broken down into phases at the request of the LEP to make it more deliverable, a point that was recognised by the Government when it announced the LEP's Growth Deal and provisionally allocated the £6 million worth of LGF to Phase 3, subject to a robust Business Case. That Business Case was considered and approved by your Board earlier this year when it allocated the funding, subject to the completion of the Funding Agreement which we now await.

The historic Old Steine area of Brighton was once a place where residents and visitors would flock to, famous for its promenade, open green space and the ornate Victoria Fountain, all of which made it a pleasant place to spend time in. Over the years, well-intentioned changes to roads and traffic management, including provision to prioritise movement by public and sustainable transport, especially buses, taxis and cycling, have delivered some significant improvements but not enough to overcome some of the barriers that have isolated the green spaces and made them harder for people to access because of traffic. Residents, businesses and other users of the corridor have therefore unfortunately experienced congestion and an increase in road traffic collisions and the effects of air pollution over time. The area has therefore failed to fulfil its potential as a prime city centre locations and the three phases of the Valley Gardens project are designed to address these issues.

Overall, all three phases of the finished Valley Gardens scheme will bring two key outcomes. Firstly, it will form a vital part of our move to become a carbon-neutral city by 2030 through significant investment in a sustainable transport network that supports walking, cycling, and public transport. The LGF allocations are therefore critical as without them, this outcome will not be achieved. Secondly, it will give public space back to the local community, allowing the city's residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy safe, accessible and more attractive green spaces once more, and adding to its regeneration.

Phases 1 & 2 of the Valley Gardens scheme are now well underway, with significant changes made to improve the road layout from St Peter's Church to Edward Street. They introduce new paths for cycling and walking, as well as provide a designated corridor for buses and taxis. Works to create a new central park will soon follow, including the planting of over 150 new trees, which will improve the environment and air quality.

Phase 3 of the Valley Gardens scheme is a continuation of Phases 1 & 2 and it is vital to achieving the overall aims and benefits for the area. Phase 3 will complete sustainable transport links, including walking and cycling paths, public transport priority, and new open green spaces through the city centre and down to the seafront. Furthermore, the approved Phase 3 design will significantly mitigate the high number of collisions and casualties in this area, many of which involve vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. These are forms of transport that we want to increase the use of to improve people's health and the environment.

The level of local interest in Phase 3 has also meant that the project has been thoroughly scrutinised at every stage of the council's transparent and robust decision-making processes by councillors and members of the public and other organisations during public committee meetings, such as the Environment, Transport and Sustainability [ETS] Committee which I now chair. These processes are continuing as the council seeks to ensure that the information and processes associated with the project are appropriate and proportional to the decisions being made at each stage regarding its development and delivery.

Public consultation and engagement has played a key role in developing the project's design so far. This will continue. A two-stage consultation was carried out in 2018 and the feedback gathered was reported back to committee. In February 2019, following the second stage of public consultation, the outline plan was significantly revised and approval was then given by committee to proceed to detailed design. Since then we have continued to work and liaise with representatives of the local community to consider and seek to address the concerns they have raised about aspects of the proposed design. We remain committed to meaningful engagement with community groups, including the Valley Gardens Forum, as well as transport partners, businesses and other key stakeholders as we develop the approved design. Matters include concerns about environmental impacts such as air quality and noise; the design of new public spaces; traffic movement and management, including parking and loading; and the facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers.



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While we are alive to the issues raised by stakeholders and communities and are keen to work with them to resolve them, the next essential stage of the project cannot fully progress until the Funding Agreement for Phase 3 is signed. We therefore look forward to Valley Gardens Phase 3 being on the agenda of your Investment Committee's next meeting and receiving clarity about your support for it. A positive outcome will provide greater certainty, in advance of your Board's final decision, and move us closer to the successful delivery of the scheme in the near future and the realisation of the combined benefits that will be achieved through the vital and exciting work that is already well underway with Phases 1 & 2.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Anne Pissaridou
Chair of Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee

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