

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	City Growth and Resources Committee
<b>DATE</b>	11 May 2021
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	City Centre Masterplan Review
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/21/115
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steven Whyte
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	-
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Steven Whyte
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.1.5, 3.2, 3.3

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report presents considerations by officers of what can be prioritised within the CCMP in the short term to support initial economic recovery within the city and then sets out actions to progress in the medium and long term which will ensure the CCMP contributes to the medium and long term recovery and growth.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1. Approve the proposed objectives for the CCMP review set out in paragraph 3.5, noting that COVID-19 has exacerbated some existing structural changes and there are some emerging structural changes also taking place;
- 2.2. Approve the proposed work plan set out in Appendix 1 which informs the review of the CCMP over the short (year 1), medium (years 2-4) and long term (year 5+);
- 2.3. Instruct the Chief Officer (Corporate Landlord) to support the city's short-term economic recovery from Covid-19, by facilitating the re-opening of existing CCMP projects, in line with Scottish Government guidance; and to prioritise non-capital works across the Council's building stock in order to increase aggregate demand in the local economy;
- 2.4. Instruct the Director of Resources to develop design works for current City Centre interventions on Union Street, West End, George Street and Schoolhill and report outcomes to the City Growth and Resources Committee in August 2021;
- 2.5. Instruct the Chief Officer (Capital) to support the City's short term economic recovery from Covid-19 , by accelerating, where possible, the completion and

opening of CCMP projects under construction within the next 12 months ensuring a focus on the realisation of the Council's community benefit policy;

- 2.6. Note that the Chief Officer (Operations) has already received an instruction to prioritise road maintenance work programmes with the aim of increasing aggregate demand in the local economy;
- 2.7. Note that the Council's sport and culture ALEOs and Joint Ventures (Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen Sports Village and Aberdeen Performing Arts) will be re-opening a range of sport and cultural facilities in line with Scottish Government guidance; and that ambitions are for these attractions to be available to support this year's "staycation" market to the city as uncertainty remains around overseas travel;
- 2.8. Instruct the Chief Officer (Governance), in conjunction with Chief Officers (Strategic Place Planning) and (City Growth), to undertake a review and evaluation of all existing powers available to Council in order to drive the return of footfall to the city centre and incentivise city centre living;
- 2.9. Note that the Council will participate in the Scottish Government's cities recovery taskforce via Cllr Laing, as the Council's member in the Scottish Cities Alliance, and that the outcome of the Chief Officers' review and evaluation of existing powers referred to in 2.8 will be discussed with the taskforce;
- 2.10. Note that the Chief Officer (City Growth) will continue to review the economic trends over the course of the next 6 months as part of Invest Aberdeen's "North East Performs", and to report back to this committee if further medium-term stimulus is required in response to the analysis of economic impact of covid-19 on the city;
- 2.11. Instruct the Director of Resources to develop and undertake engagement exercise with the public, all appropriate partners and stakeholders to seek their views on the City Centre Review, what it would take to attract them back to the city centre in the short-term, how the changed travel patterns and reductions in travel experienced throughout the pandemic can be embedded and report the results to the City Growth & Resources Committee in August 2021;
- 2.12. Note that the workplan proposes that the Chief Officer (Strategic Place Planning) use the opportunity of the CCMP Review to ensure it considers environmental intervention into our medium-term plans for the CCMP, given the scale of transition required to achieve net zero by 2045;
- 2.13. Instruct the Chief Officer (City Growth) to ensure that the CCMP also plays a part in ensuring a "just transition", as envisaged by the final report from Scottish Government's Just Transition Commission;
- 2.14. Instruct Chief Officer (Digital and Technology) to use the CCMP Review to integrate further "smart city thinking" into our medium-terms plans for the

CCMP, as part of positioning the city as a leader in the knowledge and digital economy;

- 2.15. Instruct the Director of Resources to use the CCMP review to consider the possibility, post pandemic, of a more fundamental change to how the Aberdeen City Centre operates in the future, be it in response to a seismic permanent rise in home-working and shift to on-line retail or changes to business and consumer confidence on how we approach our leisure time;
- 2.16. Instruct the Chief Officers (Strategic Place Planning) and (City Growth) to use the CCMP review and the Local Development Plan to ensure that the ambition to secure economic growth by attracting businesses operating in energy transition or low carbon sectors to the city is realised;
- 2.17. Note that Chief Officer (Strategic Place Planning) will ensure that changing needs of the city are reflected within future iterations of the regional and city spatial and land use plans.

### **Funding**

- 2.18. Instruct the Director of Resources in consultation with the Convener of City Growth & Resources Committee and Chief Officer (City Growth) to develop bids for potential submission to the following UK and Scottish Government programmes (with deadlines as noted below):
  - Scottish Government Placed Based programme (17 June 2021)
  - UK Government Levelling Up Fund (18 June 2021)
  - UK Government Community Renewal Fund (18 June 2021)
  - Scottish Government Green Growth Accelerator Pathfinder (date to be confirmed)
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (date to be confirmed)

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **3.1. Committee Decisions**

- 3.1.1. In February 2021, the Council's City Growth & Resources Committee agreed to review the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and instructed the Director of Resources and the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services to develop a specification for a review of the Masterplan to incorporate appropriate surrounding areas, including the area known as the Beach, in consultation with the Co-Leaders and the Convener of the Capital Programme Committee reporting back to the committee on 11 May 2021.
- 3.1.2. At the Council's budget meeting in March 2021 two further recommendations were approved:
  - 1 To note the Levelling Up Fund prospectus issued by the UK Government and note that the funding will be delivered by local authorities. Instruct the Chief Executive to work up funding proposals,

in conjunction with the Co-Leaders, and submit these proposals to the UK Government for consideration,

- 2 To note the UK shared Prosperity Fund set up by the UK Government, noting that the funding will be available to local authorities. Instruct the Chief Executive to bring forward a report to the next City Growth and Resources Committee on how best the Council should work with the UK Government to ensure the Council receives its fair share of funding.

### 3.2. **Impact of Covid-19**

3.2.1. In addition to the health harm which the global pandemic has created, Covid-19 has also created significant economic and social harm in the short-term. It has also had some unintended positive impacts on the natural environment of the city. It is also important to acknowledge that the pandemic has amplified a number of pre-existing economic challenges which the city was wrestling with pre Covid-19. Any review of the city centre masterplan needs to be undertaken against the understanding of those pre-existing challenges as well as the ongoing uncertainty of how long and widespread the fall-out from the economic shock created by Covid-19 will be. An analysis of the impact of Covid-19 and details of the pre-existing challenges are set out in Appendix 3.

3.2.2. We must be wary of assuming that we will enter a period of long-term economic contraction as a result of the short-term shock. It may be that a large part of the economic damage could be temporary and pent up demand for local services or 'revenge purchase' retail waiting to be released by homeworkers after the end of the restrictions. What remains uncertain is how quickly economic activity will "bounce" back and what the impact will be over the short, medium and long terms, albeit in the short term, and based on the response to restrictions being lifted in England, we would anticipate a similar initial positive 'shock' on the city centre economy.

3.2.3. Appendix 3: "The Problems & Opportunities presented by the 2020 Global Covid-19 Pandemic" presents an overview of the short-term impact of Covid-19 on the City. The study provides commentary on key themes including economy, environment, health and wellbeing. A series of recommendations arise from that study which are incorporated in the recommendations to this report.

### 3.3. **Economic Stimulus**

3.3.1. To respond to the economic harm created, there are two recognised ways for stimulating economic growth. Firstly, an expansionary fiscal policy which relies on tax cuts in order to boost disposable income, enabling people to spend more – for example, cuts in VAT. Secondly, an expansionary monetary policy – whereby government increases its spending in order to create higher demand – for example the 'Eat Out to Help Out' campaign.

3.3.2. A substantial proportion of national government support for businesses, through fiscal and monetary policy initiatives, is having a positive impact locally and the Council can build on that national support by creating locally tailored solutions that will deliver more economic support, social benefits and resilience.

- 3.3.3. Most of the fiscal levers rest with the UK and Scottish Government, with council tax being the only lever over which Council has direct control. At its budget meeting, the Council approved a council tax freeze as well as a rent policy freeze. In terms of government spending, infrastructure spending is often viewed as the most effective way of stimulating demand. And of course, in addition, to the infrastructure spending by both governments, the Council does have a significant Strategic infrastructure Plan and Capital Programme in place.
- 3.3.4. Council can therefore direct its approved Capital Programme, including the CCMP, as well as its maintenance programmes to act as a stimulus to demand. We can bring forward infrastructure spending, prioritising projects that create work and employment in the short term.
- 3.3.5. For those sectors that have been hardest hit by covid-19 and pre-existing challenges, then our response must continue to be to provide skills, training and start-up support to prepare workers for jobs in recovery.
- 3.3.6. Both governments have attempted throughout the pandemic to support those sectors hardest hit by social distancing. The Council's Socio-Economic Rescue Plan also focused on those specific sectors.

#### 3.4. **Economic Recovery Timeframes**

- 3.4.1. The context for the CCMP Review is a doubling of claimants for unemployment benefit and universal credit. There are around 10,000 and 18,000 claimants respectively, and under the latter, as these claimants may also be people that are in part time work, they indicate the scale of the challenge. There are more young people claiming unemployment benefit, (14%) compared to the Scottish level (11%), while the Job Retention Scheme may be masking the scale of the problem until this support ends.
- 3.4.2. Further, there is a requirement for employers to notify the Scottish Government of potential redundancies of more than 20 people. As of January 2021, there were just under 9,000 notifications for Aberdeen City Council area and a further 2,300 for Aberdeenshire, from 144 employers in the city. These data reflect the effect of both a downturn in the oil price to \$18 per barrel in April 2020, that coincided with the beginning of Covid-19, a unique challenge for Aberdeen, as evidenced by contrasting numbers of 3,000 and 2,000 notifications in Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively.
- 3.4.3. In response, it is useful to try and define the short, medium and long term. Ideally, we would align our thinking around the expected epidemiological end of the coronavirus. Unfortunately, that remains unclear and in reality, we may have to adapt to "living with covid-19" in the same way we live with the flu. As an alternative consideration for the short term - we can measure the pandemic in terms of the first national lock down which began in March 2020 and take ourselves through to the end of April when critical parts of the unlocking of society and the economy takes effect in Scotland. So given that it has taken a year to get to the unlocking, we could arbitrarily define the short term in terms of another year, mirroring the year Covid-19 gripped us - April 2021 to April 2022. In terms of a logical alignment for defining the medium

term, this could be defined as the next 5 years (2022 - 2027) and this would enable alignment between the first 5 years of the City's Net Zero by 2045 route-map and then the longer term being from (2027 - 2045), which would see us through to the statutory timescale for net zero.

3.4.4. Whilst the definition of short, medium and long term is convenient for the purposes of co-ordinating work to be done, it will be important that we continue to monitor the economic trends in order that we keep adapting and adjusting our plans to respond, where appropriate, to what the data is telling us. We need to capture the short, medium and long term trends. At this stage the emerging immediate challenge, and therefore a priority, is rising unemployment in the Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council areas.

### 3.5. **Objectives of the Review**

3.5.1. The CCMP is a 25 year plan and its review affords us the opportunity to consider how it can provide a framework for economic recovery in the short, medium and long term, and a basis from which to monitor and consider the impact of structural changes that the pandemic has accelerated and the implications on the future of city centres. For example, the loss of retail, the impact of homeworking and the effects, if any, on consumer and business confidence and behaviour. The review also presents an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of cultural assets in the city and their importance in supporting recovery in the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors.

3.5.2. The proposed objectives of the Review are:

1. To facilitate the city's short-term economic recovery from the shock created by Covid-19, through the re-opening of existing CCMP projects, the acceleration of the completion of existing projects under construction and the continued exploration of how regulatory powers may be used differently to facilitate business investment in the city centre;
2. To capitalise on the city's new and developing tourism and cultural attractions and supporting exhibition and event programmes for 2021/22 – the British Art Show, Zandra Rhodes Exhibition, Tour of Britain;
3. To build on existing mechanisms for engaging with the public and businesses on the short, medium and long term changes required within the city centre;
4. To consider the implications on city centre footfall as a result of the significant changes to multi-channel retail offer beyond solely a 'physical presence' and the anticipated increased levels of sustained hybrid working by city centre offices and employers that can be anticipated post the pandemic and consider solutions to mitigating this anticipated reduction;
5. To consider how the policy environment and regulatory system across planning, compulsory purchase and licensing can facilitate the re-purposing of buildings to enable increased city centre living and

flexibility in how businesses in hospitality or food and drink sectors operate;

6. To integrate our environmental thinking (from a place and economy perspective) into the prioritisation and planning of the next wave of CCMP projects over the medium term and long term;
7. To integrate our smart city thinking more deliberately within the prioritisation and planning of future waves of CCMP projects over the medium and long term.

### 3.5.3. The Review:

- is not to replace or supersede the 2015 CCMP, but rather look at a small number of priority intervention areas, within scope.
- may need to re-design those priority areas so that the city is pleasant to live in, attractive to visitors – with a focus on cultural capital and Aberdeen as a bona fide regional centre of cultural excellence.
- is a Green Recovery framework and draws on the Net Zero Vision and Route Map priorities. The assumption is that following an initial bounce back, there will be a hybrid model of return to work, and the corresponding effect on how people commute in and out of the city.
- will focus on those interventions that will improve the economic performance of the city.
- recognises and brings together what has been achieved already, and capitalises on investments in Union Terrace Gardens, Aberdeen Art Gallery, TECA, Provost Skene's House and the City Region Deal.
- is an opportunity for all stakeholders with a vested interest in ensuring a sustainable future for the city centre and the role it plays in supporting the bigger region.

## 3.6. **Blueprint for Short Term Economic Recovery**

3.6.1. Members will be aware that officers worked with stakeholders and partners through the CPP to produce a Socio-economic rescue plan as an immediate response to Covid. A report on this agenda notes that the Plan has been completed and proposes that the remaining open actions are integrated into the refreshed LOIP. As a single institution, the review of the council's CCMP affords us with an opportunity to consider what more we can do to assist the city's recovery.

### Re-opening:

3.6.2. As we consider our approach to reviewing the CCMP, we must recognise the role that the current masterplan can play in this short-term recovery. Lessons learned from the delivery of the Rescue Plan indicate that priority is given to interventions that are deliverable within the next 12 months. Prior to covid-19 we opened up a number of CCMP/SIP projects and the unlocking of public health measures will enable the re-opening of these facilities – which will hopefully help with the initial 'bounce back. In addition, work continued on the development and delivery of a number of further CCMP projects throughout the last 12 months and some of these are due to be completed within the

defined “short term”. Again, these could assist with the short term boost, and in particular the investment in tourist attractions and Union Terrace Gardens which will attract additional footfall reflecting anticipated increase in demand for safe outdoor, attractive and entertaining public spaces.

#### Retail:

3.6.3. Economic shocks tend to accelerate structural changes. The high street and retail pre covid-19 were continuing to adapt to the structural change brought about by on-line shopping. Pre Covid, we witnessed the demise of BHS which occupied a prime site on Union/Market Street. The pandemic has exacerbated the pace and scale of the decline of high street retail, with recent closure announcements by Debenhams and John Lewis.

3.6.4. Such structural changes require an appropriate response. In a global trends study of retail in 2020 produced by KPMG, three trends were identified.

- Trend 1- the days of being able to drive growth through physical stores are over
- Trend 2 – nearly two thirds of consumers around the world said they would decide to either buy/boycott a brand based on its position on a social/political issue
- Trend 3 – expect to see a flurry of investments on improving the value of existing assets over the coming year

3.6.5. The trends continue to evolve but despite the ongoing uncertainty and ambiguity of what the fully integrated retail experience will be – we do need to take some action in the short term. Our response to the “High Street” challenge must be to try and create a city centre that takes advantage of under-utilized space and brings vitality back to the high street – by creating the conditions for a change in or new uses. As a local planning authority, a public landlord, and a licensing authority, the Council can play an important role in supporting “meanwhile use”. Such strategies can allow and incentivise temporary use of under-used and vacant spaces by businesses and community organisations in the short term as we consider what the medium and long term response could be. Our responses in the short, medium and long term must be guided by understanding what the human desire for contact and socialising is post the pandemic as well as ensuring any interventions are focused on the long term economic and environmental ambitions of the city

#### Open Spaces, including the Beach

3.6.6. Green and open spaces have been a haven for everyone during the lockdown whether that be the formal parks across the city, the coastal walks or within the neighbourhoods we live. And for many, these spaces have been discovered and enjoyed for the first time. Within the city centre, Union Terrace Gardens are a significant green and open space and their re-opening is very timely. We should also consider the other green and open spaces within the CCMP boundary and the impact of maximising these from any existing parking provision. The Beach area has been the focus of leisure and active travel activity throughout lockdown, emphasising its importance to the city. We need to understand the future requirements in this area, again on a short, medium



and long-term bases. The Beach review is subject to a separate report (Ref RES/21/118).

### Green Recovery

- 3.6.7. It is also important to remember that in conjunction with many partners, prior to Covid-19, we were attempting to address some of the city's under-lying economic challenges. We have been, and are continuing, to actively work to support the economic transition of the city region economy away from fossil fuel and gas and towards low carbon energy as part of the long term regional economic strategy. This work continues and the CCMP and the LDP will need to play their parts in the competitive advantage that is being sought through the opportunity to cluster businesses.
- 3.6.8. While covid-19 has temporarily suspended the concentration of people gathering, we know that these suspensions will be lifted. We need to be ready to capitalise on the agglomeration benefits that accrue from the clustering of businesses in response to the spillover benefits to the city from the ScotWind seabed leasing round, the opening of Aberdeen Harbour South Expansion, and anticipated demand from new inward investors.
- 3.6.9. Capitalising from the economic opportunities offered by the Net Zero transition, is a focus of Invest Aberdeen – the city region investment promotion approach that is focused on promoting and attracting inward investment, working with the two governments and city region stakeholders. Our City Growth team remain focused on supporting the growth opportunities for indigenous companies and supported by the delivery of the Business Gateway contract. Our local employability partnership continue their work in preparing for the acquisition of the required Net Zero skills. There is an opportunity for these important city centre recovery services to have a 'satellite' presence in the city.

### **3.7. Resourcing the Review**

- 3.7.1. Appendix 1 outlines the scope of work necessary to deliver the objectives of the review detailed in section 3.5, into stages of work. Lead Chief Officers are identified and will require to work collaboratively. They may require further external capacity to assist them in the delivering outcomes which will be quantified along with the outcomes of the review. The workplan will lead to a blueprint for economic recovery in short, medium and long terms and, in addition to including core elements of the existing CCMP, it also includes the alignment of core city growth business as usual activities aligned to support businesses recovery from covid-19.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The 2021 Budget meeting on 10 March outlined a funding commitment totalling £150M from the General Fund Capital Programme over financial years 2021/22 to 2025/26 to ensure the Council transforms the City Centre and the Beach area.

4.2. The UK and Scottish Government are making considerable sums of funding available that is seeking to support “shovel-ready” schemes that can be immediately implemented in order to aid economic recovery. Appendix 2 includes details of 5 funds which are presently available to local authorities from the UK and Scottish Government. In the context of the City Centre Masterplan, it is important to consider each of the funds and submit business cases that will both fulfil the vision of the CCMP, and contribute to the policy objectives for each fund. The review will also look at the feasibility of any schemes being led by wider stakeholders or the private sector.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. In order to fully understand land ownership patterns, it will be necessary to compile up to date information on land and building ownership, leases, agreements etc that may affect projects in the CCMP.

5.2. Procurement of various project delivery opportunities may be required and will be resourced from the City Centre budget.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risks inherent in not addressing the changing circumstances in the city centre will have a significant effect on the delivery of our city and regional economic strategies	H	Review update and reprioritise masterplan objectives and delivery programme as set out in this report
<b>Compliance</b>	None so far identified with this report	L	Continue to monitor throughout the review
<b>Operational</b>	Resource capacity for our staff involved in the review	H	Hub North Scotland has been approached to support the review and provide project management support
<b>Financial</b>	It is expected that there will be emerging financial implications as a	H	Financial implications for the Council in terms of city centre recovery

	result of this paper being approved, particularly around where best to support recovery		and programme delivery will be identified through the review
<b>Reputational</b>	Not carrying out the review and identifying appropriate short, medium and long term actions would have significant reputational damage for the Council as a “place leader”	M	Undertaking the necessary review and taking appropriate action in the short term will assist in building confidence in the city
<b>Environment/Climate</b>	Environment and climate implications may potentially be in danger of being undermined in favour of short term economic gains	M	Any risks will take into account the Council’s own Net Zero targets and be embedded in the masterplan review

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	Supports the delivery of Economy Policy Statement 4 – Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan. 7 – Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments.
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcome 1 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcome 7 Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Supports Outcome 14 Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate Supports Outcome 15 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026

<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The report supports the priorities in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) investment in infrastructure, regenerating our city centre, unlock development potential, improve the deployment of low carbon transport, to enable Aberdeen to realise development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan
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## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	An Assessment will be carried out as an integral part of the masterplan review process.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required at this stage.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/strategy-performance-and-statistics/city-centre-masterplan>

North East Performs

<https://investaberdeen.co.uk/why-aberdeen/economy/north-east-performs>

The Just Transition Commission

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/just-transition-commission/>

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Workplan

Appendix 2: Funding opportunities

Appendix 3: The Problems & Opportunities presented by the 2020 Global Covid-19 Pandemic

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## Appendix 1: Workplan

### SHORT TERM (YEAR ONE) BLUE-PRINT FOR RECOVERY (Table 1)

CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief Officer	Timescale	Governance Oversight
1. To facilitate the short-term economic recovery through the re-opening of existing CCMP projects, acceleration of completion of existing projects under construction and the continued exploration of how regulatory powers can be used differently to facilitate business innovation.	Re-opening campaign to support the re-opening of CCMP projects	City Growth	Short	
	Complete the construction of Provost Skene's House, Union Terrace Gardens	Capital	Short	Capital Committee
	Launch opening campaigns for Provost Skene House and Union Terrace Gardens	City Growth	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Relaunch Events 365 programme in line with government advice	City Growth	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Develop the case for a more permanent change to the requirements of the regulatory system to meet the needs of the City	Strategic Place Planning	Short	Planning Development Management Committee

CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief Officer	Timescale	Governance Oversight
	Renew the Business Gateway contract to ensure it is focused on supporting recovery from Covid for city centre businesses	City Growth	Short	Strategic Commissioning Committee
	Develop a full business case for Council delivery of redevelopment of the former Aberdeen Market and BHS site linked to design works for public realm improvements to Union Street (central) and Green area	Corporate Landlord, Capital, Strategic Place Planning	Short	City Growth & Resources, Capital, Strategic Place Planning Committees
	Design works for current City Centre interventions on Union Street, West End, George Street and Schoolhill	Capital	Short	City Growth & Resources, Capital Committees
	Scope and procure necessary demolition contract(s) for Queen Street to include Police Headquarters and Shoe Lane, pending acquisition	Capital	Short	Capital Committee

CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief Officer	Timescale	Governance Oversight
	Procure a development partner to develop options for the redevelopment of Queen Street	Resources	Short	City Growth & Resources
	Design works for Castlegate area (linked to Beach Connectivity Study below)	Capital	Short	City Growth & Resources, Capital Committees
2. To capitalise on the city's new and developing tourism and cultural attractions, supporting exhibition and event programmes for 2021/22 – eg the British Art Show, Zandra Rhodes Exhibition, Tour of Britain	Exhibition and Events Programme	City Growth	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Undertake a Connectivity Study, identifying options to connect the Beach to City Centre	Strategic Place Planning	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Develop a Masterplan for the redevelopment of the Beach, identify a sports development partner for the Council and proceed through the stages of business plan, budget and procurement approval (subject to a separate report ref RES/21/118)	Director of Resources	Short	City Growth & Resources, Capital, Planning Development Management Committees

CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief Officer	Timescale	Governance Oversight
<p>3. To develop an approach for engaging with the public and businesses on the short, medium and long term changes required within the city centre and the beach</p>	<p>Develop a communications programme and appropriate questionnaire</p>	<p>Strategic Place Planning</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Corporate Management Team</p>
<p>4. To consider the implications on city centre footfall as a result of the seismic changes which are happening within the retail sector, the increased levels of sustained hybrid working which are anticipated post-pandemic and develop solutions to mitigate this anticipated reduction</p>	<p>North East of Scotland Performs economic database, Economic Policy Panel</p>	<p>City Growth</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>City Growth &amp; Resources Committee</p>



CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief Officer	Timescale	Governance Oversight
5. To consider how the regulatory system across planning, and licensing can facilitate the re-purposing of buildings to enable increased city centre living	Explore how the planning system could be used further to support development – review of developer obligations, develop Planning Advice specific spatial guidance for City Centre and explore potential “levers” that are within the control of the Council to set or outline.	Strategic Place Planning	Short	Planning Development Management Committee
6. To integrate our environmental thinking (from a place and economy perspective) into the prioritisation and planning of the next wave of CCMP projects over the short, medium term and long term	Review the Spaces for People Interventions and consult with the public about which interventions to retain	Strategic Place Planning	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Explore the benefits which can be gained through the LEZ, including parking strategy/ planning policy guidance	Strategic Place Planning	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee
	Implement the electric vehicle infrastructure as per City Growth & Resources Committee instruction	Strategic Place Planning	Short	City Growth & Resources Committee

## MEDIUM AND LONG TERM BLUEPRINT FOR RECOVERY (Table 2)

CCMP Review Objective	Tasks	Lead Chief officers	Timescales	Governance Oversight
<p>7. To consider the implications on city centre footfall as a result of the seismic changes which are happening within the retail sector and the increased levels of sustained hybrid working which are anticipated post the pandemic and consider solutions to mitigating this anticipated reduction</p>		City Growth	Medium	City Growth & Resources Committee
<p>8. To integrate our environmental thinking (from a place and economy perspective) into the prioritisation and planning of the next wave of CCMP projects over the short, medium term and long term</p>		Strategic Place Planning	Medium	City Growth & Resources Committee

<p>9. To integrate our smart city thinking more deliberately within the prioritisation and planning of future waves of CCMP projects over the medium and long term</p>	<p>To work with Microsoft, on their clean cities initiative</p>	<p>Digital</p>	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>10. To determine our long-term objectives (year 5+) arising from the review and ensure the aims and objectives of the CCMP reflect these</p>			<p>Long</p>	

## Appendix 2: Funding opportunities

There are five funds:

### 1. Levelling up fund – UKG (Department for Transport, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Treasury to invest £4.8 billion in high value local infrastructure)

What is supported:

<p><u>Transport</u></p>	<p>Requesting proposals for high-impact small, medium and by exception larger local transport schemes to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, cut congestion, support economic growth and improve the experience of transport users. Projects submitted may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in new or existing cycling provision.</li> <li>• Improved priority for public transport services.</li> <li>• Enhanced public transport facilities, such as bus stops and stations.</li> <li>• Accessibility improvements to local transport networks for disabled people.</li> <li>• Enhancements and upgrades to local road networks (e.g. by passes and junction improvements).</li> <li>• Structural maintenance works to local roads, including bridges.</li> <li>• Multi-modal proposals which combine two or more interventions to enhance transport across modes.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Regeneration and town centre investment</u></p>	<p>Projects submitted for appraisal under this theme may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regenerating key leisure and retail sites and improving their security, in order to encourage new businesses and public services to locate there.</li> <li>• Removing derelict buildings and other eyesores to make way for new developments.</li> <li>• Site acquisition and remediation of abandoned or brownfield sites, for both commercial and new residential use.</li> <li>• Improving the public realm including high streets, parks and green spaces, designing out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>• Creating better connectivity between and within key retail and leisure sites.</li> <li>• Putting forward 'Town Deals' for individual or groups of smaller towns that did not receive investment from the Towns Fund.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Cultural investment</u></p>	<p>Projects submitted for appraisal under this investment theme may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading and creating new cultural and creative spaces including sports or athletics facilities, museums, arts venues, theatres, libraries, film facilities, prominent landmarks or historical buildings, parks or gardens – visitor attractions.</li> <li>• New, upgraded or protected community hubs, spaces or assets (and associated green spaces).</li> <li>• Acquiring and refurbishing key cultural and heritage sites including hotels and historic buildings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fund</b></p>	<p>The Fund will focus investment in projects that require up to £20m of funding. Bids above £20m and below £50m will be accepted for transport projects only, such as road schemes, and can be submitted by any bidding local authority. They will be subject to a more detailed business case process and will need to score highly overall. Local authorities may wish to consider pooling funding from their bids in order to improve the chance of taking forward a larger transport scheme. The Fund will set aside at least £800 million across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (£400m for Scotland) over four years from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025. For the first round of funding, at least 9% of total UK allocations will be set aside for Scotland.</p>
<p><b>Criteria:</b></p>	<p>Awards made on basis of most significant need, as measured by an index taking into account the following place characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for economic recovery and growth;</li> <li>• need for improved transport connectivity;</li> <li>and,</li> <li>• need for regeneration.</li> </ul> <p>Using this index, places have been placed into category 1, 2, or 3, with category 1 representing places with the highest levels of identified need. <b><u>Aberdeen is in a Category 2 area of need.</u></b> Glasgow and Dundee in Category 1, Aberdeenshire in 3. In the first round of funding, projects able to demonstrate investment or begin delivery on the ground in the 2021-22 financial year will be prioritised. Expectation that MPs will back one bid that they see as a priority. The number of bids that a 'Category 1' local authority can make will relate to the number of MPs in their area. Every local authority can submit at least one bid. Where an MP's constituency crosses multiple local</p>

	<p>authorities, one local authority should take responsibility as the lead bidder and local areas should work together to designate that lead bidder.</p> <p><b>Local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of the Fund.</b> Local authorities are therefore encouraged to consider whether bids that they wish to submit for the first round of the Fund reflect their local priorities, or if they should wait until later rounds so that they have more time to consider and develop their proposals.</p>
<b>Submission deadline:</b>	<p>To apply for investment from the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, eligible local institutions must submit their bids to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by noon on Friday <b>18 June 2021</b>. There will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds. All funding provided from the Fund to be spent by 31 March 2024, and, exceptionally, into 2024-25 for larger schemes.</p>

<b>2. Community Renewal Fund – UKG, revenue funding</b>	
<b>What is supported:</b>	<p>The UK Community Renewal Fund will help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The funding aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and supporting people into work</li> <li>• community and place</li> <li>• local business</li> </ul>
<b>Budget:</b>	<p>The UK Government is providing an additional £220m funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund. The UK Community Renewal Fund will help us prepare over 2021-22 for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by piloting new approaches and through provision of capacity funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £206m will be invested in pilots that support “innovative responses” to local challenges and need.</li> <li>• Up to £14m of the Fund is being held back to later in 2021 as capacity funding to support local places to prepare for the Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> </ul>

**Criteria:**

All proposed projects will be assessed against the following 'strategic fit' priorities:

- Level of contribution to local needs articulated in relevant local plans and with evidence of local support;
- Level of contribution to an articulated investment priority;
- The extent of contribution to net zero objectives or wider environmental considerations (not applicable to employment support interventions);
- The extent to which the project can inform UK Shared Prosperity Fund through transferable learning or opportunity to scale up for local partners and UK government;
- The extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in service delivery, through:
  - introducing new delivery approaches (for example, trialling new modes of delivery)
  - integrated approaches across policy themes or
  - collaboration across more than one place

The UK Government will run a competitive process with no pre-set eligibility. There will be a "lead authority" for each application and the lead authority will be responsible for inviting project bids for a place, appraising project bids and submitting a project shortlist to UK Government for assessment and approval. Lead authorities will also be responsible for issuing grant agreements to successful bidders and for conducting monitoring and assurance work.

Although open to all places, UK Government has identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience. Places out with the 100 priority places have not been ranked. Applications that target these 100 places and contribute to strategic fit will be prioritised. **Aberdeen is not included in the 100 priority places.** A place is either in the top 100 or not, so no further ranking. The following are considered 'priority places' in Scotland:

- South Ayrshire Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Inverclyde Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glasgow City Council</li> <li>• Argyll &amp; Bute Council</li> </ul> <p>The lead authority of each of the 100 priority places will also receive capacity funding (of £20k) to help them with the required bid coordination and appraisal for that place.</p>	
<b>Submission Deadlines:</b>	This funding will be limited to this year only:	
	<b>Process</b>	<b>Key Date</b>
	Capacity funding bids	1 April 2021
	Lead authority submits project bid for assessment – 100 places	18 June 2021
	Announcement by UKG	Late July/ August 2021
	Mid-point monitoring of successful projects	November/ December 2021
	Fund closes	31 March 2022

### 3. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – EU Structural Funds replacement programme

<b>What is supported:</b>	<p>There is a lack of information on this but at this stage, the UKSPF will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and places, using the new financial assistance powers in the UK Internal Market Bill. A portion of the UKSPF will target places most in need across the UK, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ex-industrial areas;</li> <li>• Deprived towns; and</li> <li>• Rural and coastal communities.</li> </ul> <p>The Government will develop a UK-wide framework for investment prioritising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in people and skills tailored to local needs, such as work-based training, supplementing and tailoring national programmes (e.g. the Adult Education Budget); and other local support (e.g. for early years)</li> <li>• Investment in communities and place including cultural and sporting facilities, civic, green and rural infrastructure, community-owned assets, neighbourhood and housing improvements, town centre and transport improvements and digital connectivity.</li> <li>• Investment for local business including to support innovation, green and tech adoption, tailored to local needs.</li> </ul>
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	<p>The UKSPF is specifically designed to reduce inequalities between communities to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth based on the UK industrial strategy. In July 2018, a Written Statement was published setting out more details about the Fund. The main points of this statement were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the Fund is “to reduce inequalities between communities across our four nations”.</li> <li>• The method for doing this is “strengthening the foundations of productivity as set out in our modern Industrial Strategy to support people to benefit from economic prosperity”;</li> <li>• The role of the Industrial Strategy is heavily emphasised, both at a national and local level, with areas “being asked to prepare Local Industrial Strategies to prioritise long-term opportunities and challenges to increasing local productivity”.</li> <li>• The Government will “respect the devolution settlements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland” so that the Fund works across the UK.</li> <li>• Consultation on the design of the Fund would take place later that year.</li> </ul>
<b>Budget:</b>	The intention is that Government will ramp up funding, so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match current EU receipts, on average reaching around of £1.5 billion a year.
<b>Criteria:</b>	Criteria have not been published for this fund yet.
<b>Submission deadline:</b>	The investment framework governing the Fund will be announced in spring 2021, and funding for the portion of the Fund targeted at the places most in need will be allocated at the next Spending Review (presumably also in 2021). There are therefore no current submission deadlines published.

<b>4. Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) – Local Government Capital Funding - SG</b>	
<b>What is supported:</b>	<p>The 2020-21 Scottish Government Programme for Government announced the creation of a Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) to support place-based working and regeneration, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community led regeneration;</li> <li>• Town centre revitalisation;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Wealth Building; and</li> <li>• 20-minute neighbourhoods (neighbourhood location where people can access most of their basic needs within a 20-minute walk.)</li> </ul> <p>This could also be an important source of funding to contribute to mixed-use development projects which include affordable housing.</p>	
<b>Budget:</b>	Local government will receive a £165m share of £325m	
	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
	2021-22	£53m
	2022-23	£43m
	2023-24	£23m
	2024-25	£23m
	2025-26	£23m
	Reserve	£25m
	TOTAL	£165m

<b>5. Green Growth Accelerator Fund - SG</b>	
<b>What is supported:</b>	
	The reserve will accommodate anticipated cost increases in Regeneration Capital Grant Fund projects and to support town centre, place and 20-minute neighbourhood demonstration projects over the next two years. Details of the latter are still under development and discussions are progressing with COSLA.
<b>Criteria:</b>	<p>The criteria for PBIP has not yet been published although we anticipate that criteria will be similar to the Town Centre Fund, and also covering place and 20-minute neighbourhoods. High-level criteria will also include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• net zero</li> <li>• wellbeing and inclusive economic development</li> <li>• the place principle</li> <li>• tackling inequality and disadvantage</li> <li>• community involvement and;</li> <li>• community ownership.</li> </ul>
<b>Submission Deadline:</b>	<p>Submission deadlines for PBIP have not yet been published.</p> <p>The easiest route would be for Local Authorities to invest their own cash in the capital element of the project (if we stick with the example of the Hydrogen hub that could be either supply side kit / infrastructure OR demand side assets like hydrogen buses / hydrogen vans / hydrogen bin lorries). SG would then pay revenue grant over a set long term period (could be 10 years, could be 20) based</p>

	<p>on the achievement of outcomes associated with those assets. So could be carbon emissions reductions, hydrogen training opportunities, take up of more demand (these are just high level examples).</p>
<b>Budget:</b>	<p>For Pathfinders, SG is looking for capital investment of up to £10m (for each of the 4-6 pathfinders). This means the majority of the target of £200m for GGA remains in place for the full roll out.</p>
<b>Criteria:</b>	<p>Aberdeen is in the frame because we have been in discussion with SFT and this has been highlighted to SG and COSLA.</p> <p>We now need to work more on exactly what we would use GGA for, albeit to some extent pathfinder status would allow flexibility - so sufficient information on where we are targeting GGA – eg H2 hub and what elements. We need to capitalise on the messaging that when “people talk hydrogen, it’s Aberdeen.”</p> <p>Outcomes could relate to emissions reductions as well as economic benefits (eg supply chain, inward investment). Have shared concept with bp. If the targeted outcomes agreed are not delivered by the project, payments could be reduced and the Council would bear that risk</p>
<b>Submission Deadlines:</b>	<p>April to July 2021 - application window with a project kick off - September 2021. The COSLA call on GGAM is going to be delayed until post-election.</p>

## **APPENDIX 3: The Problems & Opportunities presented by the 2020 Global COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **An overview of short-term impact of Covid-19 on the city**

#### City economy

Aberdeen has been hit proportionately harder than other areas in Scotland in the last year, given the link between economic performance in the city and exogenous factors such as oil barrel prices. During the pandemic, we saw alarming increases in unemployment and threat of redundancy, corresponding as it did with a collapse in April 2020 of oil prices to \$18 per barrel. For the first time, the data suggest a worsening impact across the city, beyond the traditionally more deprived wards in the city. 2020 saw a collapse in output of 10% for the city. Recovery is likely to be a fragile and output is forecast to remain below 2019 levels.

By February 2021, the number of people actively seeking work reached 9,500 people in the city, an increase of 136% over the previous year. Wider, 18,479 people were in receipt of universal credit, representing 12% of the working age population, and a 132% increase over the previous year. The Monthly Job Postings Index shows that between January 2020 and January 2021, Job Postings in Aberdeen were down 36%, compared to 12% for Scotland.

There are 12,500 people on the Corona Job Retention Scheme, the highest since August 2020, reflecting stricter lockdown measures. At 12%, Aberdeen has a higher rate of those working age people on the JRS, indicative that the mobile 'exporting jobs' are less impacted than the local services jobs that have been furloughed as the city went into lockdown.

City centre footfall for the first 6 weeks of 2021 was around 800,000 compared with over 3.3 million in the first six weeks of 2020 prior to the pandemic. This represents a fall of over 75%, and a 50% fall from September to November 2020, reflecting increased lockdown measures. The immediate economic impact has seen the more 'visible' retail, leisure and hospitality sectors been hit hardest by lockdown and social distancing.

The retail draw has been even more compromised and as a result of recent rationalisation. At the same time, thousands of office workers have switched to home working and people are likely to remain cautious about spending leisure time in the city. There is a risk that any permanent shift towards working from home restricts recovery.

#### Environment

Using Google Mobility data for Jan-Feb 2021 compared to pre-pandemic levels, Retail and Recreation mobility was down 71%; Grocery and Pharmacy mobility was down 24%; Parks mobility was down 7%; Transit Stations mobility was down 60% and Workplace mobility was down 52%; and Residential mobility was up 20%, indicative

of the way people have had to operate during lockdown. The review could consider the impact, if any, of these new behaviours that have become embedded in the last year.

### Health/wellbeing/social

On the social front, Covid-19 affected those crucial 'service jobs' that hitherto may not have been as valued in policy terms. And the most vulnerable people were disproportionately affected - elderly, low-paid workers and minorities that are over represented these 'city centre service sectors'.

More deprived communities in Aberdeen have been further exposed by the pandemic. 12.7% of Working Age population in Tillydrone were unemployed compared to an Aberdeen rate of 6%. Torry (East and West), 12.4%, Middlefield, 11.2% and Woodside, 11.2%, all have a claimant count unemployment rate in excess of 10% of the working age population.

### **Pre-pandemic City Trends**

#### Economy

Pre-covid, the economy was still performing above Scottish and UK averages across headline indicators. In 2018, GVA per head in the Aberdeen Region remained some 41.9% and 29.1% above the Scottish and UK averages respectively. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's employment rate at the end of 2019 was 78.5% and 80.9% respectively, compared to 74.5% in Scotland and 75.9% in the UK. In 2019, average earnings were £32,915 – still over 9% higher than the Scottish average.

Worryingly, performance has been declining as the Aberdeen Region has faced significant economic challenges in recent years. The downturn in oil and gas from 2014 onwards led to a sharp decline in economic output (GVA). Conditions stabilised in 2018, with a modest increase in real GVA for the first time since 2014.

For retail/ leisure/ hospitality operators, two aspects are key to the investment/ dis-investment decision: catchment/ spend in the city; and actual physical footfall in-store. The problem for Aberdeen has been that on these two headline measures, has been experiencing a decreasing trend for a number of years. Total available expenditure in the catchment area has been affected by recent and wider decline in economic performance. Covid-19 has merely accelerated that existing decline.

As well as declining demand and sales, retail/ leisure sector is faced with no change to long term fixed costs –running costs (eg rents) and business rates are challenging in the context of turnover decline.

## Environment

**Table 2:** Aberdeen City Emission Estimates within the scope of influence of the local authority. All measures in ktCO<sub>2e</sub>.

Sector	Breakdown	2005 baseline	2018 measure	% change
Industrial & Commercial	electricity	459.6	174.6	-62%
	Gas	258.9	184.2	-29%
	Other fuels	170.78	97.2	-43%
	Agriculture	3.3	3.3	No change
	<b>Total</b>	<b>892.67</b>	<b>459.3</b>	<b>-48.5</b>
Domestic	Electricity	269.73	89.17	-67%
	Gas	309.23	253.6	-18%
	Other fuel	8.9	7.0	-21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>587.85</b>	<b>349.8</b>	<b>-40.5%</b>
Transport	Roads (A class)	163.01	136.57	-16%
	Roads (minor)	162.44	159.7	-1.7%
	Other	22.1	26.7	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>347.52</b>	<b>323.0</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1828.05</b>	<b>1132.16</b>	<b>-38%</b>
Waste		90	TBC	TBC
Natural Environment data TBA				

Sources: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018>. Waste data from [Powering Aberdeen](#) BEEI.

## **Positive Dynamics of Covid-19 and the behaviours we want/need to sustain**

### Economy

The Covid-19 regulations and associated guidance issued by the Scottish Government, enabled the relaxation of a number of existing regulatory requirements, for example, planning, licensing. In a desperate attempt to salvage their businesses, many within the cities' hospitality sector adapted their business models and took advantage of the regulatory relaxations provided by the Scottish Government and we saw many businesses operate across the "public realm" outdoor space as well as their own outdoor space.

### Environment

Every cloud has a silver lining, and the pandemic has seen more innovative responses to how cities move people safely around. On the one hand, increased working from home appears not to have coincided with reduced traffic, but instead to have displaced travellers into cars as they avoid public transport and city centres. Following a decrease, air pollution is now returning to pre-pandemic levels, in the Core Cities for

example, even though city centre commuting has not. Public transport utilisation in Core Cities (December 2020) is around 40-60% of pre-Covid-19 levels. Correspondingly there has been an inevitable surge in car usage to pre-pandemic levels. The challenge is that driven by a need for safer or socially distanced travel, air pollution is returning to pre-pandemic levels (as measured by nitrogen dioxide levels). Despite lockdown, air pollution will remain as a challenge and retaining the 'best bits' of Spaces for People measures to get people considering cycling for trips that may otherwise have been by public transport.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE REVIEW OF THE CCMP**

The review of the CCMP presents us with an opportunity to reset the role and purpose of the City Centre – in light of the impact of on line shopping, reduced office occupancy and footfall, growth of leisure activity/ social contact, domestic tourism opportunity. Whilst also enabling us to take bolder steps to realise the ambition of net zero by 2045.

### **Conclusion 1:**

There may be an economic bounce back in the short term from covid-19 as we see the gradual unlocking of public health measures. Evidence from 2020 reopening corroborates this.

Recommendation 1a: The review of the CCMP should prioritise projects that will support the bounce back in the "short term" by focusing on increasing footfall, particularly in the city centre in order to support city centre businesses operating in the tourism, leisure, hospitality and retail sectors.

Recommendation 1b: The Review could look at how the exemptions introduced during covid-19 from a planning and licensing perspective, could be maintained in order to sustain outdoor social/ entertainment precincts across the city – with the objective of restoring and attracting footfall.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8)*

### **Conclusion 2:**

Covid-19 demonstrated the scale of societal change required in order to achieve net zero targets and demonstrated that in a relatively short period of time, significant new societal norms were created and accepted by society.

Recommendation 2: The review of the CCMP should prioritise engaging with the public to establish what changes introduced via spaces for people could be maintained as part of achieving net zero, attracting footfall and increasing dwell times in the city centre.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendation 2.11)*

### **Conclusion 3:**

Covid-19 has both accelerated and increased the adoption of online shopping and throughout the pandemic, significant restructuring of retail has taken place, resulting in the closure of many retail outlets.

Recommendation 3: If city centres present a reduced retail experience, then an alternative experience proposition will need to be developed. The CCMP should explore some of the alternative uses emerging across cities.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendations 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.15)*

### **Conclusion 4:**

Remote working has been tested to a scale that never could have been imagined and the test has proven to many, that it can work. Early indications are that the preference for many is to still operate from a physical place of work, but it is a realistic planning assumption to assume that hybrid working model is likely in the short/ medium term.

Recommendation 4: given the reduction in retail units forecast and the potential reduction in office space required, the CCMP will need to consider how existing buildings can be easily re-purposed.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendations 2.1, 2.5, 2.10, 2.13, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17)*

The policy objective is to be more flexible to immediate demand in recovery uses. Aberdeen will continue to need high quality Grade-A commercial space but may not need Grade B or C+. Ensuring the City Council's planning, licensing and/ or trading standards policies are sufficiently flexible and nimble to facilitate change of use and allow Aberdeen to get ahead of changes to city centre usage that Covid-19 has accelerated.

### **Conclusion 5:**

Footfall in the city centre has been significantly affected by the closure of retail and hospitality sectors as well as from the physical absence of the student population.

Recommendation 5: Need to review City Centre Living Strategy – what is the future for living in the city centre- students/ young people or second base or elderly. Who wants/ needs to live in CC going forward.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendations 2.8, 2.10, 2.15, 2.17)*

### **Conclusion 6:**

Despite a global pandemic, Aberdeen remains a legitimate and competitive energy capital. Significant investments continue to be made in the city region including the City Region Deal, the Aberdeen Harbour South Expansion, the City Centre Masterplan investments and, more recently, the support from the UK Government and Scottish



Government around energy transition. This reflects the importance of these skilled and productive supply chains and resulting employment footprint.

Aberdeen has experienced a higher rate of working age people on the JRS, indicative that the mobile 'exporting jobs' are less impacted than the local services jobs that have been furloughed as the city went into lockdown.

Recommendation 6: Recovery for Aberdeen will need to focus on its unique selling point of industry specialisation, global trade links and labour market distinctiveness – eg productive, export-oriented, skilled, qualified jobs; and, at the same time, support employability responses in the city centre services sector.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendations 2.10, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17)*

### **Conclusion 7:**

The global pandemic, demanded that vast quantities of data were pulled together from different agencies across the public sector , which when combined, revealed valuable insights which then informed the response to the problems created by the pandemic.

Recommendation 7: continue to foster the use of digital tools which enable the gathering of city-wide data in order to support the response to many of the challenges which cities face.

*(Note: incorporated in covering report recommendation 2.14)*