

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	28 February 2022
EXEMPT	No Appendix 1 is exempt under Estimated Expenditure on Contracts exemption in terms of paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Beach Masterplan Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	COM/22/064
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Craig Innes
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig Innes
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.4

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the City Growth and Resources Committee meeting on the 12th November 2021 the committee approved recommendations to progress on the beach masterplan. This report details the progress on these strategic work streams setting out the suite of further recommendations and programme of works going forward for elected members to consider, recognising the interdependencies and phasing required.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Council:-

- 2.1 Instruct the Director of Resources and the Head of Commercial & Procurement Services to progress the undernoted listed items (1 to 5) to Full Business Case, and report back progress to the June 2022 meeting of this Committee:
- (1) New Play Park: Urban Park, Sports Area & Pump Track;
 - (2) Events Park: New Amphitheatre, Events Field, Gateway Building & Hub Building;
 - (3) Landscaping: Landscape Mounding;
 - (4) Broadhill: Public Realm & Landscaping;
 - (5) Reconfigured Beach Landscaping
- 2.2 Instruct the Director of Resources and the Head of Commercial & Procurement Services to progress the undernoted listed interventions (6 to 12) to Outline Business Case and report back progress to the June 2022 meeting of this Committee:

- (6) Beach Pavilion Building;
- (7) New Canopy Features;
- (8) Beach Ballroom Plaza;
- (9) Broadhill (Structures);
- (10) Pedestrian Spine;
- (11) Beach Boulevard;
- (12) Surf Village.

2.3 Instruct the Director of Resources and the Head of Commercial & Procurement to progress the undernoted Long-Term items (13 to 18) to Outline Business Case and report progress to the June 2022 meeting of this Committee:

- (13) Beach Ballroom;
- (14) New Stadium;
- (15) New Leisure Facility;
- (16) Boardwalk;
- (17) New Slipway;
- (18) Energy Centre.

2.4 Instruct the Head of Commercial & Procurement and Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to develop an Outline Business Case to improve the connectivity between the city centre and beach and report back progress to the June 2022 meeting of this Committee.

2.5 Instructs the Director of Resources and Head of Commercial & Procurement to continue to engage with stakeholders across the City, including children and young people and the Disability Equity Partnership, in relation to the work packages contained herein;

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Rope Works Masterplan concept was approved at City Growth & Resources Committee in November 2021. It is inspired by the organic form of the rope weave, unravels into strands to form a hierarchical network of sinuous footpaths and desire routes, extending down from Beach Boulevard and opening up towards the heart of the Masterplan. The open strands shape the Masterplan framework to create the geometry of the key elements of the proposal, including areas of Arrival, Play, Parkland, Gathering and Shelter. Natural landforms offer protection from the elements, with proposed dune formations providing shelter from North Easterly winds.

3.2 The Rope Works concept allows the main desire route from Castlegate to flow down the Beach Boulevard and transition from a formal character to more natural, softer and playful forms, as the pathways extend out organically to link the key features of the Masterplan, culminating in a dramatic Boardwalk structure and viewpoint which extends out towards the sea.

3.3 Currently there are 16 further interventions that are either in place or in progress along the beachfront promenade. These include the installation of new 'Big Belly' bins; replacement of 230m of boardwalk with new low level timber boardwalk with anti-slip strips; patching of poor surface areas lower

promenade; replacement of poor condition steps and stairwells; replacement and painting of railings; new benches to replace existing; patching of poor surface areas lower promenade; replacing all public rescue equipment and casings; exterior drench showers x 4 at central toilets; improvements to the area beside the central toilets – repair and painting of wall and the commission of a new mural; central toilet redecoration and renewal of plumbing; renewal and refresh planting at Beach Ballroom roundabout; general tidy up of landscaped areas

3.4 The City Growth & Resources Committee on the 12th November 2021 agreed that the following short-term items from the Masterplan are progressed to Outline Business Case, and report back progress on design and programming:

- (1) New Amphitheatre;
- (2) New Events Field;
- (3) New Urban Park areas;
- (4) New Sports Areas;
- (5) Pump Track;
- (6) Landscaped Mounding Features;
- (7) Reconfiguration works/Beach landscaping;
- (8) Interventions /Upgrades Along Beach;
- (9) Broadhill (Public Realm/Landscape).

3.5 Each of the above developments (1 to 5) are detailed in Appendix C with clear graphics of how the feature is expected to look and function (subject to necessary consents being obtained). Core to this is the Urban Park. This is a tremendous opportunity to create an outdoor destination for the city in a unique context. The urban park is part of the wider landscape framework that glues together many of the proposed and existing buildings and uses in the area, and importantly facilitates connections back to the city centre.

3.6 The potential of this Beachfront urban park will not only be on a city and regional level but should also be seen as distinctive in a national and international context in line with the City's ambitions to become a UN Child Friendly City. Successful public parks from around the world are, by their very nature, invariably designed with the public. The exercise of mutual understanding and design is in fact the start of the actual project. There has been initial consultations with various youth groups and children and young people to date, and this will continue, alongside wider public consultation

3.7 The public park will be accessible for everyone. The richness of the park will come in its form and uses. Play and games are an obvious part of this mix and creating the physical environment for this to flourish is key. The whole park should be seen as incorporating elements of play opportunity, with areas that are more focused and defined along with the more natural and incidental play integrated throughout the park. To ensure this, engagement with children and young people will continue.

3.8 There are many other uses to be considered, and careful analysis of what is best is important as flexibility will be key in the evolution of a public park along with its functionality and flexibility to cater for yet unforeseen city uses.

- 3.9 The outline business case considers justification of the Beachfront Masterplan project in terms of its significant social and economic benefits and undertakes a demand assessment of the proposed facilities in the Beachfront Masterplan.
- 3.10 The findings from this outline business case will be used as a basis for the for the development of a Full Business Case for the Beachfront as the project progresses. The Outline Business Case is Appendix B of the report.
- 3.11 The city is recognising the need to sustain its position as an economic driver, adapt to structural change and diversify into other emerging growth areas around, for example, low carbon energy, food and drink, and tourism. The Beachfront Masterplan proposals and the initial outline business case therefore create an opportunity to bring employment associated with leisure, tourism, and hospitality, as well as construction employment.

4. Vision and Objectives for the Beachfront

- 4.1 The vision and objectives for improving the Beachfront and the associated facilities have been developed by the Council. This was initially developed and set out in the 2015 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (CCMP). The CCMP is a regeneration blueprint that is transforming the city centre while conserving its proud heritage. Eight objectives feed through the masterplan: to change perceptions, grow the city centre employment base, introduce a metropolitan outlook, create a living city for everyone, made in Aberdeen, reveal the waterfronts, become technologically advanced and environmentally responsible, and be culturally distinctive. In all the Council has 50 projects that range from delivering enhanced civic space to helping support exciting new events like the Great Aberdeen Run. The City Centre Masterplan is targeted at making Aberdeen an even better place to live, work, visit and do business.
- 4.2 The core principles that form the basis for the Beach Masterplan proposals and embody the essence of the initiative for the Beachfront regeneration are:
- The importance of the re-imagined Beach Ballroom, including a desire to return it to its former glory when it was known as the 'People's Ballroom'. This needs to recognise the buildings heritage and historic significance whilst equipping it for the future as a modern events venue.
 - The potential to share / link facilities associated with the new Stadium and Leisure facilities to support joint funding with the Stadium Anchor tenant and realise economies of scale.
 - A desire for a dynamic waterfront making the most of the Beach Boulevard and considering support facilities such as changing accommodation / beach huts and a potential pier structure.
 - Excellent, high quality public realm.
 - Leisure activities that are inclusive and accessible to all income groups that may visit the Beachfront.
 - Improved Access and Connectivity between the Beachfront and City Centre.
 - Infrastructure, including traffic management that reduces the impact of the existing road network to promote alternative forms of travel, including walking and cycling, whilst improving public realm.

- Co-ordination with potential flood and/or sea defence works planned for the area.

5. Community Involvement and Engagement

- 5.1 Council officers and the associated Beachfront design team acknowledge that the Concept Masterplan work and the development optioneering that has been undertaken to date for the Beachfront has moved at a significant pace since the initial reporting to the August 2021 City Growth and Resources Committee. This work to date, and the masterplan concepts and indicative development options that have subsequently emerged for consideration, have been directly influenced by the significant public engagement exercise undertaken between June-July 2021 on “The Future of Aberdeen City Centre and the Beach”, to which there were 7,697 responses, the largest response that the Council has received to any such consultation.
- 5.2 Building on the success and level of engagement to the Summer 2021 consultation, and while there has been recent engagement with Community Council stakeholders and Children and Young people in relation to the Beach, it is acknowledged by Council officers and the associated Beachfront design team that significant future engagement with key stakeholders will be key to ensuring a successful project.
- 5.3 In the months ahead the Council and design team will undertake wider engagement with key stakeholders and end users of the Beachfront in order to have the discussions and ask the very questions which will make these projects the best they can be for all users of the Beach of the future. Subject to the necessary approvals in relation to the scope and design intent for the Beachfront at February Council, a series of engagement with key stakeholders, end users and the public is proposed throughout 2022, with an initial focus on the Beachfront Development Framework, the preparation of which has been agreed by the Council. A first draft Development Framework will be informed by stakeholder engagement during its preparation and reported back to the council meeting in June 2022 to request approval for a wider public consultation exercise prior to any final approvals.
- 5.4 A summary of the comments and feedback captured from the engagement undertaken to date is provided in Appendix C.
- 5.5 Towards the end of 2021 schools and youth groups were invited to take part in a ‘postcard exercise’. A video has been produced based on this engagement and QR codes will be issued for interested parties to monitor progress of the development. This engagement will continue throughout and, as public health restriction ease, we intend to establish a City Centre and/or Beach network with pupils from schools across the city.

6. Development Framework

- 6.1 As per the decision of the 12th November 2021 City Growth and Resources Committee, it was agreed that the chosen Masterplan Option and associated developments were to be further progressed as a Council-approved

Development Framework, including ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, and for this to be reported back to this Committee in June 2022. A Development Framework is one of the tools under the Council's 'masterplanning' umbrella and, informed by the concept masterplan created to date, will set out a two-dimensional framework of development principles and parameters for the way in which the wider site is to be developed in the future. It is proposed that, following the approval of the Development Framework by the Council, detailed planning applications for the constituent parts of the Beach would be submitted. The Development Framework will also include a visual assessment of the indicative three-dimensional forms of proposed development from a number of viewpoints. The final approved Development Framework will set out principles and parameters to be followed, and will not be 'set in stone' or represent a final design solution for the Beach or any of the constituent developments, which may require ongoing detailed design development in advance of any detailed planning applications in the future

- 6.2 An updated Indicative Planning Consent Programme is presented in this report. This proposes:

The Development Framework process as outlined above – a draft Development Framework presented to Council in June 2022 and a final Development Framework (post public consultation) presented in late 2022;

- A public consultation process on the draft Development Framework from July/August ;
- A potential public consultation on emerging proposals for Stadium/Leisure and Pier proposals to align with any consultation on the Development Framework – this is to garner as much feedback from the public as possible at one time, rather piecemeal consultations and to avoid consultation fatigue;
- Surveys and Assessments progressing throughout 2022 to both inform the Development Framework preparation, and to support any future detailed planning applications and Environmental Impact Assessments as required;
- Detailed planning applications will follow the approval of the Development Framework;
- Promenade/Esplanade works ongoing;
- A Marine License process, required for any Pier structure, to align with the Development Framework and planning application processes

7. Surveys

- 7.1 As reported in the Beachfront Projects Feasibility Report of August 2021, there will be a suite of surveys and technical reports that will be required to support the development of the Development Framework and any subsequent statutory consent processes, be it Planning Permissions, Building Warrants or Marine Licenses. Following the selection of Preferred Options for the Masterplan and the constituent developments, these surveys and assessments can be fully scoped and commenced to align with said statutory processes and consultations. Appendix C outlines the scope for some of the more important detailed surveys to be procured, plus a list of the remaining surveys and assessments that are anticipated as being required.

8. Beach and City Centre Connectivity

- 8.1 The existing roundabout at the bottom of Justice Street presents a significant obstacle to pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the City Centre and the Beach. This is both in terms of physical connections and also due to the change in character that is experienced on encountering the roundabout and infrastructure dominated street.
- 8.2 A key aim of the Beach Masterplan is to improve links and sustainable modes of transport between the City Centre and the Beach. In order to achieve this alterations are proposed to Beach Boulevard. Officers have explored options for the roundabout in this context and a desktop review has assessed options against scored criteria. As per para 2.4 a more comprehensive analysis through an outline business case will be presented to the June 2022 Committee.

9. Energy Centre

- 9.1 The project gives a platform to create a 'wow' factor by incorporating new & innovative technologies and systems, to provide a net zero carbon, electricity, heating, and cooling solution to serve the load demands of the development. Additionally, there is scope for a solution which aligns with Aberdeen City Council's hydrogen strategy, to generate demand and interest in hydrogen as a power source in order to achieve their climate goals and to capitalise on the unique skills-base of the region.
- 9.2 At this early stage in the design development of the project it is recommended that a full options appraisal be carried out to determine the best Energy Strategy for the proposed development. Collaboration will be possible with both Aberdeen Heat & Power and the Councils Green Hydrogen Joint Venture partner to fully explore and understand the feasibility of options.
- 9.3 This appraisal would include all load profiling, sizing, location considerations, technical specifications, capital costs and running costs considerations. In conjunction with the Council's wider net zero targets the appraisal will also explore the potential for future proofing benefits through green energy for other nearby assets.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The financial implications are contained within the exempt Appendix 1 – Financial Summary.
- 9.2 The construction industry is finding it exceptionally difficult to price capital projects on a standard bills of quantity basis. Officers have therefore, using the Treasury Green Book, applied an optimism bias of 23-28% across all projects.
- 9.3 Full cost certainty can therefore not be provided until such time as contracts are awarded. The exempt financial appendix therefore makes an allowance to provide as much assurance as possible at this juncture of the costs associated with taking forward these strategic transformational projects for the City of Aberdeen.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Ongoing Legal advice will be required around the conditionality of grant funding, construction contract agreements, operator agreement and tendering etc.
- 10.2 Mapping of the land ownership at the beach has been carried out, and will be taken into account in any development.

11. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Covered within individual appendices		
Compliance	Covered within individual appendices		
Operational	Covered within individual appendices		
Financial	Covered within individual appendices		
Reputational	Covered within individual appendices		
Environment / Climate	Covered within individual appendices		

12. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Covered within individual appendices
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Covered within individual appendices
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Covered within individual appendices
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Covered within individual appendices

Regional and City Strategies	Covered within individual appendices

13. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Covered within individual appendices
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Covered within individual appendices

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

15. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Financial Summary - Exempt
Appendix 2 – Outline Business Case
Appendix 3 – Development Pack

16. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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