### ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	29 June 2022
EXEMPT	Appendix G Exempt
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Beachfront Masterplan Update
REPORT NUMBER	COM/22/138
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Craig Innes
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig Innes
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides Members with relevant background to the Beachfront Masterplan and provides updates on preparation of a Beachfront Development Framework as well as a number of key projects which are progressing through to either Outline Business Case (OBC) or Full Business Case (FBC).

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 2.1. Approves the content of the Draft Beachfront Development Framework and Executive Summary (Appendix A and Appendix B);
- 2.2. Notes the content of the Draft Beachfront Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (Appendix C) and recognises that an Environmental Report will be prepared to accompany the Development Framework;
- 2.3. Instructs the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to publish the Draft Beachfront Development Framework and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment for a 6-week public consultation period;
- 2.4. Instructs the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to report the outcomes of the public consultation on the Draft Development Framework back to a future meeting within the next 6 months, including any recommended revisions to the Draft Framework;
- 2.5. Instruct the Chief Officer Commercial & Procurement to continue to progress the following short term interventions to FBC: Urban Park, Events Park, Beach Landscaping, Broadhill (Public Realm and Landscaping) and report progress to December 2022 Council:
- 2.6. Instruct the Chief Officer Commercial & Procurement to continue to progress the following medium term interventions to OBC: New Canopy, Beach Ballroom

- Plaza, Broadhill structures, Pedestrian spine and report progress to December 2022 Council;
- 2.7. Instruct the Chief Officer Commercial & Procurement to provide further updates on all longer term interventions to OBC: Beach Boulevard, Surf Village, Beach Ballroom, New Stadium, New Leisure Facility, Boardwalk, New Slipway, Energy Centre, Justice Street Roundabout and report progress to December 2022 Council:
- 2.8. Instruct the Chief Officer Commercial & Procurement in conjunction with Chief Officer Operations & Protective Services to progress coastal protection studies and design development to inform OBC and report progress to December 2022 Council; and
- 2.9. Note the development of the engagement plan and instruct the Chief Officer Commercial & Procurement to report updates on an ongoing basis to this Committee.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

## **Beachfront Development Framework**

- 3.1. Officers were instructed at the 12 November 2021 meeting of the City Growth and Resources Committee to progress work on a Beachfront Development Framework (to sit as a sister document to the City Centre Masterplan 2015) and report back in June 2022.
- 3.2. A Draft Beachfront Development Framework is presented as Appendix A, an Executive Summary is present as Appendix B, and an accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report is presented as Appendix C. This Scoping Report will be circulated to the consultation authorities (Nature Scot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland (for Scottish Ministers)) and subsequently progressed into an Environmental Report to accompany the final Framework document.
- 3.3. The area contained within the Beachfront Development Framework is covered by several allocations by the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017. Large areas of the site are covered by Urban Greenspace NE3 and Greenspace Network NE1, with the remainder of the site being Beach and Leisure (NC9). There are also a number of natural environment, historic environment and transport policies that are relevant to the area.
- 3.4. The Development Framework has been prepared in accordance with Aberdeen City Council's Masterplanning process. It is proposed that, once a final version is approved, the Framework will sit as one of the Council's Strategic Plans alongside the wider City Centre Masterplan. It will be used to guide development in the area and inform future planning applications. The document is strategic and does not go into a significant level of detail or provide detailed assessment. It does however identify a vision, opportunities, areas for potential changes and future design principles and parameters for the future development of this area.

- 3.5. The Draft Development Framework highlights a vision for the Beachfront proposals to "revitalise and renew the area to maximise the potential of this unique space and create an exceptional asset for the city of Aberdeen". The design approach has been "collaborative and landscape led in order to set an appropriate structure to accommodate a broad range of leisure uses, events and public spaces". The proposals will also "be attuned to the needs of the local community whilst aiming to position the Beachfront as a prominent visitor location and reconnect the beach with the city centre"
- 3.6. The Draft Development Framework progresses with the Ropes concept option presented to the City Growth and Resources Committee in November 2021. This option is inspired by the historical Rope and Sail making works that were located on the site to the south of Queen's Links. This concept is centred around the Beach Ballroom and it being re-imagined within the parkland setting with improved public realm. The proposal also integrates the Beach Ballroom with the potential state of the art sport and leisure facilities (the preferred and two alternative options are identified in the Development Framework).
- 3.7. The Draft Development Framework (Appendix A Section 6.9 onwards) develops and identifies key design interventions and opportunities and identifies the following character areas:
  - 1. Beach Ballroom
  - 2. Events Park + Field
  - 3. Core Play Park
  - 4. Esplanade and Beach (north + south)
  - 5. Beach Boulevard
  - 6. Broad Hill
  - 7. Potential Stadium and Leisure
  - 8. Beach Village
- 3.8. Each character area is split into sub sections which set and describe design principles, spaces, interventions, and proposals. Though the character areas are identified separately they all integrate with and relate to each other, with some of the proposals clearly overlapping. Proposed development areas are also identified on the plans, with proposals, aspirations, assessments, and opportunities identified for each area. These specifically link to the individual projects listed further below (para 3.11 onwards).

## <u>Development Framework Next Steps - Public Consultation</u>

- 3.9. This report seeks approval to begin public consultation on the Draft Beachfront Development Framework and associated Strategic Environment Assessment Reports over a 6-week period. The consultation will be publicised through the Council's website and social media platforms, as well as via email to key stakeholders and consultees.
- 3.10. Officers intend to report the results of the public consultation within the next 6 months, including any recommended revisions to the Draft Framework.

## **Beach Projects**

- 3.11. The contents of the report align with requests made by Council on 28 February 2022 to update on progress in the current period since and the anticipated next steps going forward.
- 3.12. The report is structured to address all elements currently associated with the Beachfront and includes:
  - Public realm including the urban park and events field
  - Provision of new leisure facility
  - Refurbishing Beach Ballroom
  - Beachfront Energy Centre
  - Highways works including Beach Boulevard and City centre connections
- 3.13. A range of planning activities have been progressed in conjunction with the PMO since the February 2022 Council meeting. Appendix D Project Phasing sets out the current timetable of design/consultation activities, business case preparation and pre-construction planning activities being taken forward.
- 3.14. The key features of the Beachfront Projects are shown in Appendix E where they are numbered one to nineteen (including Justice Street roundabout) as per the below:

#### **Short Term Interventions**

- (1) New Urban Park: Play 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;
- (6) Beach Pavilion Building;

### Medium Term Interventions

- (7) New Canopy Features;
- (8) Beach Ballroom Plaza;
- (9) Broadhill (Structures):
- (10) Pedestrian Spine;

## Longer Term Interventions

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

(19) Justice Street Roundabout.

## **Progress Updates**

3.15. Detailed phasing and market appraisal studies in response to market volatility considerations have been undertaken with the Programme Management Office (PMO). The adoption of a phased pre-construction strategy for the public realm projects is now in place to achieve a greater level of certainty in delivery. This approach, which has been developed in conjunction with the PMO and the design team, allows for the up -front delivery of the works that do not involve major services diversions or transport/roads related consultation and approvals processes. This approach ensures that the impact of inflation associated with current market conditions is mitigated to ensure best value.

### **Public Realm Overview**

- 3.16. A range of options for developing the Beachfront Masterplan associated with public realm were previously presented to Committee during 2021. An option appraisal exercise was undertaken in late 2021 and the "Ropeworks" theme referencing the industrial heritage of Aberdeen Beachfront was selected. Further work was then undertaken to understand how this theme could deliver the facilities and venues desired by Aberdeen City Council and in February 2022 a report was presented confirming this. At the February Council meeting, Officers were requested to begin development of the Beachfront Public Realm based on this theme and associated facilities to Full Business Case. This included:
  - New Urban Park including a play park, sports area and pump track
  - An Events Park including a new amphitheatre, events field, gateway building and hub building
  - Landscape work associated with Broadhill
  - Reconfiguration of wider Beachfront Landscaping

### **Progress in Period**

- 3.17. Since 28 February 2022 the Tier One Construction Contractor has been appointed to support design and development of the Beachfront Public realm. This has allowed detailed survey activity to be procured and this has commenced on site. This includes topographical surveys and environmental surveys that will ultimately inform future planning applications. Work has also been undertaken with the PMO to understand design requirements and how works can best be phased on site to achieve the desired construction start date whilst also accommodating key activities with Aberdeen City Council concerning road works, closures and diversions. Current programme dates associated with the Beachfront Public Realm activity are included in Appendix D.
- 3.18. Concept visuals and design layouts associated with the above are included in Appendix E.

### **Next Steps**

- 3.19. The PMO will continue to progress the development of the masterplan proposals through the RIBA Stage 1 (preparation and briefing) preparation and brief and seek sign off of proposals as they emerge with a view to developing the concept design in RIBA Stage 2 (concept design). Information gathering will step up through the delivery of key topographical and environment surveys procured via the PMO and this information will be used to inform the concept design. Engagement with Council officers will be scheduled to provide critical technical and advisory support during these stages.
- 3.20. The PMO will provide support to the development of the detailed programme and the phasing of construction works in a safe and secure way with input from Council officers.
- 3.21. The PMO will continue to engage in the stakeholder management programme of activities with outputs informing the design development. Progress on the development framework will continue with input from planning officers followed with the preparation of a strategy for managing anticipated applications coming forward.

## **Leisure Facility Overview**

3.22. The Council on February 28th 2022 instructed the progression of the design and development of the leisure facility to OBC.

## **Progress in Period**

- 3.23. The PMO has adapted the design of the Leisure Facility to function as a standalone facility. Work has been undertaken developing a draft OBC that confirms the brief for the facility and an associated accommodation schedule. An options appraisal is currently underway to explore how the Ice pad can be retained during construction of the new facility. In tandem with activity associated with the beachfront public realm elements, topographic and environmental surveys have been procured and these have commenced on site. This has been presented to key stakeholders including Sport Aberdeen and will form the brief and associated Accommodation Schedule to allow detail design to progress in line with the development programme included in Appendix D.
- 3.24. The main activities have been carried out since February include:
  - Analysis of possible additional sports that could support the facility;
  - Market Assessment and Demand Analysis of both Leisure and Ice elements;
  - Updated reviews of shared spaces between leisure and stadium;
  - Detailed review of options for retaining the existing ice arena during construction with developed option.
  - Demand studies

### **Next Steps**

3.25. The next steps to allow design of the Leisure facility to progress includes confirming the project brief and accommodation requirements which has been undertaken in consultation with Sport Aberdeen. The leisure facility is also impacted by decisions associated with the potential Beachfront Stadium. If it is decided that a stadium will be constructed the accommodation requirements of the new leisure facility may be adjusted to take account of overlapping facilities and shared areas. This includes a decision on whether the stadium and leisure facility become a combined facility. In this respect the programme will be subject to review to reflect the revised scope of a combined stadium and leisure facility, should it proceed.

### **Stadium Progress**

3.26. Continued engagement with Aberdeen Football Club (AFC) to assess relationship and synergies with wider beachfront development has taken place since February 2022. Planning activities have been progressed including demand studies for the facility undertaken in association with AFC. These have been undertaken in preparation for development of an OBC at the next stage. These completed studies have also enabled appraisal of other complementary functions on the beachfront development.

### **Next Steps**

- 3.27. The next steps to progress with the stadium are as follows:
  - Consideration of commercial arrangements for progression will be developed to inform the OBC.
  - Consideration by Council Committee(s) of OBC: within the next six months.

### **Beach Ballroom Overview**

3.28. The Council on the 28 February 2022 instructed the progression of design and development of the Beach Ballroom toward OBC. The design of the Ballroom at this point had progressed to a concept design based on the Council's aspirations for refurbishing the Ballroom and returning it to its former glory. The Beach Ballroom facility is also impacted by decisions associated with the potential Beachfront Stadium. If it is decided that a stadium will be constructed the accommodation requirements of the Beach Ballroom facility may be adjusted to take account of overlapping facilities and shared areas. In this respect the programme will be subject to review once the status of the stadium is confirmed.

### **Progress in Period**

3.29. The PMO has been progressing options appraisals and value management studies to respond to variant briefing requirements, subject to decisions associated with the stadium. Ongoing studies are progressing to assess the optimum operational models across the beachfront development which will be

tested through the OBC process. Consultation has taken place with Historic Environment Scotland on the evolving proposals.

## **Next Steps**

3.30. Exploration of opportunities for efficiency in the Ballroom design will continue in parallel with brief definition once the Stadium decision has been made. This will allow a definitive brief and accommodation schedule to be prepared for the Ballroom. Prior to this, survey activity will proceed to confirm structural condition, Mechanical and Electrical Services (MEP) services condition and the presence of asbestos within the building. Further discussions are also planned with Historical Environment Scotland (HES) to inform design activity.

# Boardwalk, Surf Village and Slipway (including interface with Coastal protection) Overview

3.31. Council Officers are currently progressing detailed scoping and planning activities to inform briefing, design development and business case planning on the above projects. These projects will then be competitively procured via the PMO.

### **Next Steps**

3.32. Council officers are currently reviewing coastal flood defences associated with Aberdeen beachfront. During the period prior to design work progressing on the boardwalk/slipway elements of the Beachfront project further discussion will be held on how the flood defence work can integrate with and/or complement the beachfront development including boardwalk configuration. A specialist marine survey organisation has now been appointed via the PMO to support this activity.

### **Energy Centre Overview**

- 3.33. The energy centre solution will need to meet the requirements of Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan 2021-25: Towards a Net Zero and Climate Resilient Council. The Plan sets out the approach, pathway, and actions towards net zero and climate resilient Council assets and operations, by 2045. As such, energy-efficient designs will be incorporated alongside renewable and low carbon energy sources, with consideration provided on how further decarbonisation could be achieved in the future. Following the Net Zero Carbon planning process, the aspiration is for one energy centre to serve the entire site.
- 3.34. The project provides a platform to create new and innovative technologies and systems in order to provide a net zero carbon, electricity, heating, and cooling solution to serve the load demands of the development.
- 3.35. Following a Net Zero planning process with the design team and Council officers it is proposed that the project will achieve Net Zero Carbon in operation status. The design team will also seek to reduce carbon associated with

- construction, but the project will not seek formal Net Zero on construction certification.
- 3.36. Whilst the project will not seek formal Passivhaus certification, the design team should seek to implement these principles where practical, in order to reduce energy demand as far as possible.

## **Progress in Period**

- 3.37. Energy appraisals and studies aligned with the Council's Net Zero policies have been progressed to inform the optimum energy strategy associated with the various beachfront development projects.
- 3.38. Initial scoping processes have been initiated to align these proposals with the wider city heat and power infrastructure solutions and partnerships. These will be reported on as part of the December 2022 report update.

### **Next steps**

3.39. This appraisal, when complete, will include all load profiling, carbon modelling sizing, location considerations, technical specifications, commercial appraisals, capital costs and running cost considerations.

## **City Centre to Beach Connectivity**

- 3.40. The existing roundabout at the bottom of Justice Street presents a significant barrier 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.
- 3.41. At the Council meeting on 28 February 2022, Council officers were instructed to develop an OBC based on the redevelopment of the junction 'at grade'. In order to do this, work has started to develop the necessary technical studies, which combined with analysis of economic, social and environmental benefits, will be presented to the Committee in Q1 of 2023. It is recognised that the development of the existing roundabout is inextricably linked to the emerging proposals for the Beach Boulevard and hence these projects will be developed as a coordinated piece of work.
- 3.42. The opportunity exists for the development of a 'vision' for connectivity leading to transportation, environmental and urban realm improvements which will positively impact on the current junction and surrounding buildings e.g. Hanover Street School and the Health Village.
- 3.43. An overview is shown in Appendix E.

## **Project Linkages**

- 3.44. There are a number of key linkages between this project and work underway within the City Centre Masterplan which will be taken into consideration whilst developing the OBC. These include;
  - Beachfront Development Framework (currently being prepared). The roundabout is within this study's redline boundary
  - Castlegate Streetscape Project at the junction with Justice Street
  - Proposed improvement to the Beach Boulevard
  - Recalibration of the City Centre Master Plan
  - Ongoing ACC transport specific projects, particularly the Ellon to Garthdee Bus Partnership Fund Study

## **Next steps**

- Continue with the development of the Beach Boulevard and Roundabout Options Appraisal and progress discussion on statutory approval requirements, processes and timelines.
- Develop proposals; recognising key linkages to ongoing other Council projects. Alongside the PMO progress the RIBA Stage 1 proposals in support of the Options Appraisal exercise.
- Work with PMO to develop stakeholder engagement strategy with key users and operators to engage at regular intervals as design develops.
- 3.45. The proposed OBC (with identified options) will be reported to the Committee for approval in Q1 2023.

### **Community Involvement and Engagement**

3.46. As detailed in Appendix F, since February Council, we have also undertaken specific initial engagement with ACTUP, DEP and young people. The engagement to ACTUP focussed on the Development Framework and provided members of this forum with a high level understanding of the Framework's aspirations. At this session, DEP raised the possibility of undertaking "User Journey Mapping" for less mobile citizens to help the design team understand existing and potential challenges. A User Journey Mapping planning session was subsequently held with DEP and a follow up workshop which provided useful insight into components that could support mobility across the Beach masterplan area.

3.47. The young person engagement involved 450 P6 pupils from Hanover Street, Seaton, St Peters, Ferryhill, Ashley Road, Gilcomstoun and Skene Square schools. From 9 – 13 May, young people were "on site" at the Beach and in the City Centre. The engagement aim was to enable young people to contribute further to more detailed design elements now being considered by the design teams, particularly around play and street furniture.

### **Next Steps**

3.48. A detailed engagement plan for the Beach is currently being prepared and will be finalised when the design and implementation programme is agreed. The engagement plan recognises that the Beach transformation will have city and region wide interest and it is proposed to be of significant scale and include activation events that will generate widespread interest and discussion.

### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Council Budget meeting on 10 March 2021 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 Council will continue to facilitate the next phase of design works with Hub North Scotland Limited and the supply chain of current contractors who will undertake works relating to two or more workstreams allowing lower cost.
- 4.3. The Beachfront Financial Tracker (Appendix G) provides an update on the total budget approvals to date in relation to project delivery.

### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Beachfront Development Framework will inform planning applications, but each application will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Authority.
- 5.2. The Council has undertaken an extensive title examination of areas covered within the Beach Masterplan to determine if there are any ownership, third-party right, and/or Common Good Land issues affecting the review site. No material issues have been identified as part of this process.
- 5.3. As each project proposal progresses, they will be examined and managed within the professional scope of property / conveyancing industry accepted standards, ensuring all due diligence exercises and pre-contract enquiries are complete and satisfactory.

### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The Draft Beachfront Development Framework (Appendix A) is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (Appendix C). This Scoping Report will be circulated to the consultation authorities (Nature Scot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland (for Scottish Minister)) and subsequently progressed into an Environmental Report to accompany to final Framework document.

## 9. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)	*Does Target Risk
		Target Risk Level	*taking into account controls/control actions	Level Match Appetite Set?
Commercial	Budget pressures due to current market volatility	Robust budgets established. Independent monitoring process established. With PMO early supply chain mitigations action plan established across the programme	M	Yes
Operational	Beach Boulevard/Beach promenade traffic arrangements	Significant consultation with Council Roads and Planning Teams, Bus companies and Emergency services planned.	M	Yes
Performance	Sufficient capacity of resources with Councils teams to meet programme objectives	Resource review ongoing and augmented support through the PMO	M	Yes
Operational	Coastal flooding risk	Engagement with Flooding Team and understand that risk exists mitigated by Coastal Defences - Planned maintenance/upgrade activity is required to support this project	М	Yes

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## 8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council	Supports the delivery of Economy Policy Statement
Policy Statement	4 – Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan. 1. – Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy	Supports Outcome 1 10% increase in employment
Stretch Outcomes	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.
Regional and City Strategies	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.

### 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Neutral Impact
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA Screening Questions completed. Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage
Other	Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (Appendix C)

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Council Decisions 13 December 2021
   <a href="https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/g7675/Decisions%2">https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/g7675/Decisions%2</a>
   013th-Dec-2021%2010.30%20Council.pdf?T=2
- Report to Council 28 February 2022
   https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s129266/220228%2
   OCity%20Centre%20Masterplan%20Update%20Report.pdf
- Council Decisions 28 February 2022
   https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/g8184/Decisions%2 028th-Feb-2022%2010.30%20Council.pdf?T=2

### 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Draft Beachfront Development Framework

Appendix B: Executive Summary – Draft Beachfront Development Framework

Appendix C: SEA Scoping Report Appendix D: Project Phasing

Appendix E: Beachfront Design Overview

Appendix F: Ongoing City Centre and Beach Engagement

Appendix G: Beachfront Financial Tracker

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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