

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	7 February 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C)– Outline Business Case Update
REPORT NUMBER	COM/24/037
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Craig Innes
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig Innes
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an overview of the prepared Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) Outline Business Case (OBC).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Note the update from the Chief Officer – Commercial & Procurement on progress of the Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) Outline Business Case (OBC).
- 2.2. Refer all projects relating to the Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) to the capital planning and budget process for future years' delivery and;
- 2.3. Subject to the outcome of the budget process, instruct the Chief Officer – Commercial & Procurement to progress the Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) work to the completion of a Full Business Case (FBC) to Council, reporting back to the October 2025 Committee (on the short-medium interventions) and June 2026 Committee (on the medium-long interventions).

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C)

- 3.1. Officers were instructed at the Council meeting on 14th December 2022 to progress work on an Outline Business Case for the Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration which forms part of the next stage of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.
- 3.2. This vision of the Masterplan brings together aspirations from a number of publications including from the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, which aim towards the ambition that "all people can prosper".

- 3.3. The development of this Shoreline Regeneration is necessary to complete the vision of providing a world class destination to revitalise the Beachfront and reconnect it to the City Centre - and again be known as the 'Silver City by the Sea'.
- 3.4. This integral part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan brings the beachfront plan together and provides the benefit of preservation of the coastline frontage therefore delivering long-term protection for this most important of community assets. Achieving integration between wider beachfront investments and future coastal management and defence measures crucial to ensure a coherent solution to the City Coastline.
- 3.5. The Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration Strategic Outline Case (SOC) approved by Council on 26th April 2023 identified key elements which should be taken forward in the preparation of an Outline Business Case. The elements included: (refer to Figure 1 within the Appendix B)
1. Esplanade,
 2. Boardwalk (Pier)
 3. Beachfront Interface,
 4. Satellite Facilities,
 5. Beach Village, Pavilion & Slipway, and
 6. Footdee Club House
- 3.6. The Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration Outline Business Case has been developed in the interim period and is included under Appendix A. The Outline Business Case has considered these initial elements identified within the Strategic Outline Case, with the following interventions proposed to enhance the Beachfront as part of the wider Beachfront Development Framework.
- Esplanade (North) & Esplanade (South) (short-medium intervention): This interface will provide a much-improved visual connection between the park and the sea through public realm improvements to existing land, road & footways including 'street furniture'. All of this will improve access to and enjoyment of the beach encouraging increased activity and the improved wellbeing of residents and visitors. Along with improved active travel opportunities to the area, and a more attractive and accessible means of reaching the beach area this will satisfy the strategic objectives set-out in the Outline Business Case of providing a people-focussed environment which will be inclusive for all, creating a real community asset and bringing the 'Wow' factor back to the Beachfront.
 - Boardwalk (medium-long intervention): Both of the Boardwalk options extend from the Esplanade and project beyond the sea wall and over the beach, with access points to the new pedestrian spine (Beach Boulevard) and the proposed new Beach Ballroom entrance. This feature will provide a standout focal point with views to the sea and will be a major element in delivering the

transformational new waterfront destination, increasing use and consequential economic activity, by creating a unique and attractive destination.

- **Beachfront Interface (medium-long intervention):** This will reprofile the existing access points from esplanade to beach level, building over the existing lower sea wall through a series of ramps and steps, making the beach accessible to all. Providing improved and safer access/egress to the beach area and its surroundings, providing a people-focussed environment which will be inclusive for all users.
- **Satellite Facilities (short-medium intervention):** A variety of modern enhanced Satellite Facilities located at key points along the length of the Esplanade will provide toilets, changing, shower and storage facilities for all beach and water users, all for the purposes of improving access to and activity on the beach. Promoting more individuals and organisations to capitalise on the beach and its surrounding assets by increasing the participation in activities will provide a benefit to the wellbeing and health of the users.
- **Beach Village (short-medium intervention):** A multi-functional external space with associated access with toilets, changing, showers, campervan electrical charging amenities, accessed via a realigned Accommodation Road. The beach village will provide facilities for beach and water users and provide a platform for one off events. This will provide enhanced and modern infrastructure and enablers to promote greater activity and footfall with a potential economic return.
- **Footdee Community Club House (short-medium intervention):** A community asset which could provide excellent amenities, centred around enhanced education and awareness on safe water usage, with opportunities for an elevated observation deck at the most accessed part of the water and local community facilities for both residents and water users including Surf Club, Wild Swimmers and Surf Life Saving Club.
- **'Safer swimming facility' (medium-long intervention):** in addition to the 6 elements identified in the SOC, an engineering arrangement to alter existing groynes and 'fish tails' to provide a safer opportunity for open water swimming located centrally to the beachfront masterplan zone and boardwalk has been incorporated. This has the potential to contribute to long term coastal protection with a focus on wellbeing and active health and would complement the boardwalk as an attractive feature at the centre of the beachfront. This will likely provide increased footfall from both within and out with the region.
- The Boardwalk, safer swimmer zone, beach interface and the esplanade work in particular could have the added financial benefit of reducing the ongoing

erosion and maintenance of the access and coastline in this heavily used beach location, whilst protecting the natural and bio-diverse environment for future generations.

These proposed interventions are illustrated in Appendix B.

- 3.7. The original proposed Pavilion and Slipway adjacent to the Beach Village have been considered as part of the Outline Business Case evaluation and studies. Having considered the viability and demand, these interventions no longer form part of this Phase. The existing beach slip provides sufficient access to the Beachfront below the Esplanade, whilst the need for a second Pavilion to the north of the beach has not been demonstrated.
- 3.8. A people-focussed approach has been adopted in creating an environment that will be inclusive for all, creating a community centred asset and bringing the 'Wow' factor back to the Beachfront through the delivery of intervention solutions providing a supporting infrastructure for increased and more diverse beach and open water users.
- 3.9. The Boardwalk central mast structure would incorporate the 'light of the north' feature at its most easterly and highest point, increasing the Beachfront visibility during the day and at night. Importantly creating a landmark focal point for the beach which will be visible on the journey from the Beach to the city Centre.
- 3.10. The Beachfront interventions collectively create a transformational destination which will attract visitors and residents of the area.
- 3.11. The satellite facilities will provide enabling infrastructure to the beach and water users, enhancing the beach as a destination to promote health and wellbeing activities. The facilities developed through engagement with the local community groups, with the ability to support competitions and events at the Beachfront, whilst having the opportunity to incorporate commercial outlets and storage space for local community groups.
- 3.12. The Beach Village will support the Beachfront through the provision of controlled short-stay overnight campervan parking and adjacent serviced amenities attractive to visitors, beach and water users. A continuation of the enhancement of the Beachfront as a destination.
- 3.13. Due to the interdependency of the Beach Masterplans package of investments the figures for the economic impact appraisal undertaken by external advisers, relate to the full Masterplan including the public realm, boardwalk, redevelopment of the Beach Ballroom and the Leisure and Ice Arena.
- 3.14. The modelling using the Option A Boardwalk, which provides a larger and more iconic feature as a centrepiece for the Beach Masterplan, found that the beachfront masterplan developments together would generate £597 million (Present Value) of additional gross value to the Aberdeen economy over a 30-year appraisal period.

- 3.15. The modelling using the Option B Boardwalk, which provides a smaller feature as a centrepiece for the Beach Masterplan, found that the beachfront masterplan developments together would generate £498 million (Present Value) of additional gross value to the Aberdeen economy over a 30-year appraisal period.
- 3.16. Significant active travel and visitor spend benefits of the Beach Masterplan inform this study with total footfall assumed to increase to 1 million post investment.

Masterplan Linkages

- 3.17. In providing this Shoreline Regeneration Phase, enhancing the Beachfront as a major destination to visit, there were several key linkages considered whilst developing this Outline Business Case between this project and work underway within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and the Beachfront Development Framework.
- 3.18. The Shoreline Regeneration Phase brief has been developed as part of the Outline Business Case to enrich and enhance the offering at the Beachfront, with complementary interventions to further encourage visitors and tourism.
- 3.19. The remodelled Beachfront Interface links directly into Public Realm work for Phase A and Phase B, which will provide a seamless extension from these earlier phases down to the beach level. This phase provides the essential connectivity for the linkage between the beach, wider masterplan, Beach Ballroom and other existing facilities.
- 3.20. The Boardwalk has been developed to align with the main Pedestrian Spine and Beach Boulevard routes from the City to the sea (through the masterplan event parks), whilst creating a direct axis towards the Beach Ballroom. The Boardwalk will increase the wider long-distance visibility of the Beachfront through the structural scale and proposed 'light of the north' feature, further amplifying the destination.

Coastal Management Defence Integration

- 3.21. The Shoreline Regeneration interventions have discussed and will be developed in conjunction with the Council Structures, Flooding and Coastal (SFC) team to ensure that the proposals look to enhance the existing coastal management provisions within the core Beachfront area. The Boardwalk, Beach Interface and Safer Swimming Zone will look to enhance the coastal measures within this zone.
- 3.22. The Council Structures, Flooding and Coastal team have previously engaged with a specialist coastline and engineering consultancy company, where their most recent reports have highlighted the need to consider future coastal

management works. This combined with recent deterioration of the existing coastal defence conditions, has highlighted the importance of a joint approach to the protection of the City Coastline.

- 3.23. The Safer Swimming Zone construction will form the first part of the outer coastal defence to the concentrated central Beachfront masterplan zone. The Swimming Zone enhancing the existing sea groynes by the introduction of concrete revetment structures walls to provide a contained swimming environment.
- 3.24. As part of the Safer Swimming Zone and central Beachfront elements the proposals will introduce new 'artificial reefs' to encourage biodiversity and marine ecology by introducing large rock and concrete elements to emulate rock pools and reef structures. These new features will be located adjacent to the existing rock armour.
- 3.25. The Boardwalk feature will project out over the sea defence wall and sand beach beneath, the predominant structural support elements have been developed to sit behind the sea defence wall and concealed beneath the Beachfront Esplanade and Interface section, minimising the impact of beach users and potential changes to the water and sand movements.
- 3.26. The new Beach Interface section and Boardwalk will incorporate the reconstruction of the existing coastal defence wall along this section of the coastline to accommodate the construction works. The new defence wall section will form the first steps in addressing the sea defences along this stretch of the Beachfront and provide a catalyst for the long-term coastal management. The wall defences will be developed to align with the long-term future coastal management defence strategy.
- 3.27. The Structure, Flooding and Coastal Engineering team undertake regular inspections, repairs and maintenance to the existing sea defences and an overall strategic review of the coastal management is ongoing which will consider the coastal management options. The outcomes of any ongoing commissioned studies will be coordinated as part of this phases long term interventions to develop a joint solution to the Beachfront coastline defences.

Community Involvement and Engagement

A detailed stakeholder and consultation plan covering this specific phase has been implemented, with a good level of participation and engagement throughout. The engagement has continued with members of the Aberdeen Water Safety Group (AWSG). The AWSG is formed of key groups including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), HM Coastguard, Royal Life Saving Society UK, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Police Scotland, Aberdeen Surf Life Saving Club (ASLSC) and Sport Aberdeen.

- 3.28. The Shoreline Regeneration Phase has involved several of the local community groups including Free Swim Aberdeen (Wild Swimming), Granite City Surf Club, Scot Surf and Aberdeen Surf Life Saving Club. The sessions have been in the

form of open workshops, meetings and included a walk the full length of the esplanade.

- 3.29. The Outline Business Case stakeholder engagement built on the initial extensive engagement undertaken through 2022 and early parts of 2023, with discussions focusing on the:
 - operational usage of the existing Beachfront,
 - open water participation and support facility needs,
 - community clubhouse approach and brief requirements,
- 3.30. The Community Clubhouse concept design has been developed through regular engagement sessions with the local water groups. The Clubhouse designed to provide a combination of water user supporting facilities, storage space and multi-functional accommodation for flexible community activities. The Clubhouse providing the platform to increase footfall to the beach and sea, whilst providing the opportunity to consider wider water use events and competition to the region.
- 3.31. The Satellite Facilities have been designed for flexibility to accommodate the evolving needs of the water activities, public use patterns and visitors. The location and extents of these facilities has developed through dialogue with the local water users to define the provisions, locations along the esplanade and scale, with the focus on providing facilities adjacent to the main water and beach uses.
- 3.32. Council Planning Officers have been consulted on each of the proposed elements to establish an understanding of the application processes and anticipated timelines. This has been accompanied by engagement with EnviroCentre on the Environmental Impact Assessment deliverables and Marine Scotland on the extent of Marine Licences that would be required for the interventions or temporarily during the construction stage. This dialogue is reflected within the preparation of the Outline Business Case.
- 3.33. The Beach businesses were visited in summer 2023 offering a general masterplan update and incorporating an overview of the Shoreline Regeneration. Where businesses have registered to be kept informed of progress, the team has been back in touch as this phase develops.
- 3.34. The team updated the Community Council Forum in October 2023 with members of Pittodrie and Castlehill Community Council attending. Dates are being co-ordinated to provide further updates to the Forum, the Community Council and the Footdee Community before the first week in February.
- 3.35. Early engagement with Children and Young People (CYP) around the Beachfront Development Framework was primarily focussed on Phase A and the concept of play. Key themes of fun, sport, adventure and colour fed directly in the development of the Phase A proposals however other elements such as 'clean, green and safe', accessibility to the beach, areas for reflection and imagination have flowed naturally into the proposals for Phase C.

- 3.36. Many Children and Young People said they had been restricted in coming to the Beach as there is currently too much traffic. The more inclusive scheme proposed will improve pedestrian access and cycleways. This was reinforced through wide consultation with the young ASN community in summer 2023 when elements such as wheelchair access to the beach, suitable and sufficient changing and toilet facilities and sea view disabled parking were all highlighted as issues by young people and their carers and families. These elements are all considered within the Phase C proposals.'
- 3.37. Specific activities are currently being developed to build on the extensive engagement to date with Children and Young People (CYP) to ensure these conversations both widen and deepen around all elements of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. An online tool on 'the journey so far' and how CYP have influenced the process, as well as allowing interactive involvement by individuals and classes as part of school-specific pages. The platform being developed is Thinglink, which is an interactive, map-based resource which local schools are already familiar with.

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. The funding included in the current Capital Programme is fully committed and no additional projects can be undertaken without additional funding being added to the General Fund Capital programme.
- 4.2 Estimated costs to take all of the six identified projects to Full Outline Business is £7M. This will require to be factored into the future years capital planning budget. These costs are indicative current estimates which are likely to change if and when technical design proceeds pending the outcome of the budget and capital programming processes.
- 4.3 The undernoted provides a summary overview of the project work required to reach full business case to put cost estimations in perspective:

Short to Medium Interventions

- Complete the RIBA Stage 2 Report – target April 2024.
- Detailed survey works to be undertaken – including Ground Investigation works around the Clubhouse (piled foundation anticipated due to ground conditions).
- Statutory Planning Application processes to be complete.
- Community engagement and consultation on the proposals and management.

- Design development to meet the demands of the marine environment.
- Developed technical design and market testing.

Medium to Long Interventions

- Complete the RIBA Stage 2 Report.
- Undertaking of several detailed survey works – many which are marine related which take forward the required planning involved.
- Development of the Detailed Design – robust set of proposal required for the application process.
- Major Planning Application (longer timeline) to be submitted, with associated community engagement to be complete.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – screening report, EIA scoping and preparation of the EIA will take 12-18 months.
- Marine Licence – minimum 18 months process, with the EIA a key component of the application process.
- Developed technical design and market testing

4.4 The Council has previously been successful in obtaining funding through the Levelling up Fund for the City Vision. Examples of other funding options that may be considered are the Place Based Investment Programme Fund, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, Just Transition Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund, Green Growth Accelerator Fund.

4.5 Opportunities for commercial support through naming rights, sponsorship and other supported investments will be sought as part of the process of identifying preferred options during the Full Business Case process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration OBC has considered the planning applications in conjunction with the Beachfront Development Framework and any wider statutory application requirements. The proposed interventions have been considered individually in their own right with the requirement extents outlined within the OBC.

5.2. The Council has commenced 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 to date 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 Shoreline Regeneration Phase energy strategy is aligned with Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan 2021-25, founded on delivering a sustainable asset and service models supporting our transition to Net Zero. The Plan sets out the approach, pathways, and actions towards delivering net zero and climate resilient Council assets by 2045. The strategy will seek to build on existing partnerships and apply learnings from previous projects delivered by the Council.
- 6.2. The energy strategy is based on principles of delivering a Net Zero Carbon in Operation performance standard, in addition to considering how to reduce carbon associated with embodied carbon in construction. Both principles are diligently modelled to ensure alignment with capital budget parameters by applying whole life costing planning methodologies to balance revenue and capital requirements.
- 6.3. As part of ongoing design development and planning appraisals we will continue to consider energy supply resilience, security and value for money in order that the energy plan can incorporate appropriate redundancy provision.
- 6.4. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken as part of the FBC stage to inform the design development and will form part of the statutory approval process for planning and marine licence for the medium-long interventions.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic	Failure to proceed with the Beachfront	Continue to work collaboratively to achieve the	M	Yes

	Masterplan impacts on wider City commitments and economic targets.	masterplan delivery and wider advantages.		
Compliance	Council title issues and other competing third-party rights.	The Council have undertaken an extensive title examination and engagement of a Third-Party review.	L	Yes
Operational	Beach Boulevard/Beach promenade traffic arrangements Sufficient capacity of resources with Councils teams to meet programme objectives	Significant consultation with Council Roads and Planning Teams, Bus companies and Emergency services planned. Resource review ongoing and augmented support through the PMO	M M	Yes Yes
Financial	Budget pressures due to current market volatility. Removal or reduction in anticipated funding Streams.	Robust budgets established. Independent monitoring process established. With PMO early supply chain mitigations action plan established across the programme. Continual engagement and monitor of ongoing funding applications.	M M	Yes Yes
Reputational	Failure or delay in proceeding with the recommendations	Continue to work collaboratively to achieve the masterplan delivery and wider advantages.	M	Yes

Environmental & Climate	Coastal flooding risk	Engagement with Flooding Team, local community groups and understand that risk exists mitigated by Coastal Defences. Respond to risks identified as part of coastal studies.	M	Yes
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Supports the delivery of Economy Policy Statement 4 – Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. 1. – Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
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.

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 (including increased tourism spend), improve the deployment of low carbon transport, to enable Aberdeen to realise development opportunities in the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	The IIA for the Beachfront Masterplan has been updated to reflect this report. There are no material changes from previous assessments at this stage
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA Screening Questions completed. Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Council Meeting, Wednesday 14 December 2022
- City Centre and Beach Masterplan
- Development Framework Phase 1, April 2023, Aberdeen Beachfront

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration Outline Business Case Paper
Appendix B: Design Proposal Illustrations

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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