

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	07 August 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Castlegate Public Realm Update
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/24/219
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandy Beattie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the programme for redeveloping the public realm in the Castlegate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 2.1 Instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to develop the detailed and technical design for the Castlegate element of the City Centre Masterplan Streetscape programme and, following consultation with the Chief Officer – Commercial & Procurement Services, proceed with the negotiation and execution of contracts for delivery of the construction programme in line with the previously approved total project budget as detailed in paragraph 4.1, reporting progress through the Chief Officer – Capital’s regular capital programme monitoring reports.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Council at its meeting in February 2024 agreed the City Centre Streetscape Update and referred projects, including the Castlegate and its associated business case, to the capital planning process.
- 3.2 Council, at their budget meeting in March 2024, included the Castlegate in the future years capital programme. In conjunction with the approvals and instructions from the February Council meeting, the Chief Officer - Capital will monitor projects through the capital planning process reporting progress to this Committee.

Progress Report 2024

- 3.3 City Centre Masterplan Project EN07 sets the ambition to reestablish Castlegate as a central civic location, providing a high quality space that creates a destination at the end of Union Street and encourages sustainable economic activity. The space also provides an important gateway to the beach and the proposals currently being taken forward through the Beachfront Development Framework. As well as a focus for visitors and tourists, the space will play an important part in delivery of the city's events programme, capable of hosting a range of events that will provide a much needed sense of vibrancy and animation. Tied to the Council's bid to the national Heritage & Place Programme, it is expected that proposals for the Castlegate will also help stimulate interest from surrounding building owners to invest more in the area.
- 3.4 The scope of work and programme for the redevelopment of the Castlegate public realm has been developed and is summarised below. The Project comprises public realm and streetscaping improvements to the Castlegate including street furniture, public art, improved lighting, enhanced street greening. An active travel route will be included through the Castlegate towards the Beachfront, combined with consideration given to vehicular access for servicing businesses. Design work has previously been reported and a summary of the spatial arrangements is included in Appendix A.
- 3.5 Previous reporting included an option for bus routing through the Castlegate, however the limited demand for such services, combined with the significant amount of space required to accommodate a workable route, presents significant challenges to both the pedestrian realm and the potential for hosting future events. This option has therefore been removed.
- 3.6 The project boundary will be the existing pedestrianised area. Given the Castlegate will be a focus for the Tall Ships race event in July 2025, future construction works will be programmed to follow the Tall Ship race event to ensure the event can proceed at this location without any disruption.
- 3.7 Members should note that there are trials for temporary repair works currently underway. Any repair works necessary will include provision to undertake site investigation tests whilst slabs are lifted in order to reduce future impact on programme and minimise disruption.
- 3.8 The approach to engagement has been developed to encourage a consensus of opinion by bringing together stakeholders in a collaborative workshop process. This brings efficiency, allowing all stakeholders to understand their respective views and considerations as part of a collaborative exercise.

Q3 2024 Concept Design, Costing and Engagement

Q4 2024 Detailed and Technical Design and Stakeholder Engagement

Q2 2025 Market Testing, Financial Close and Advanced Works

Q3 2025 Site Start (following completion of Tall Ships event)

- 3.9 The project will now proceed with the negotiation and execution of contracts for delivery of the construction programme in line with the previously approved total project budget as detailed in paragraph 4.1 below, reporting progress through the Chief Officer – Capital’s regular capital programme monitoring reports to Finance and Resources Committee. At present it is anticipated that an estimated 12-month construction programme will be undertaken, although this will be confirmed pending financial close

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The updated financial modelling approved by the Council Budget meeting in March 2024 approved a total project budget of £15.5M to year 2027/28. Project scope has been developed to reflect that budget, including building 44% optimism bias.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are likely to be several access rights to properties, lanes and pends which will require to be taken into consideration during construction work.
- 5.2 As project proposals from the Masterplan report progress, 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.
- 5.3 Any work that is recommended to property not owned by the Council will require effective dialogue and the owner's consent before it can commence. Other local authority consents, such as planning permission and listed building consent, may also be required for any necessary works to buildings.
- 5.4 All changes to vehicular movement on the road network are subject to statutory processes, although it is not envisaged that any will be required as the project will be delivered within existing pedestrian boundaries.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan has been screened through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process and the consultation authorities have confirmed that no Environmental Report specific to this overarching Masterplan is required. Individual plans, programmes and strategies falling out of the Masterplan will be considered individually, as will any requirements for project-specific Habitat Regulations Appraisals (HRAs).

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council’s Risk Appetite Statement.

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 Risk	Not delivering CCMP and Beach projects	Full programme of works will be developed, project funding included in capital programme	L	Yes
Compliance	Statutory approvals will be sought where necessary	Manage through ongoing delivery programme	L	Yes
Operational	Sufficient capacity of resources within Councils teams to meet programme objectives	Forward planning through CCMP and Beach project delivery programme Resource review ongoing and augmented support through the PMO	M	Yes
Financial	Budget pressures due to current market volatility	Robust budgets established including significant optimism bias and inflation risk. Independent monitoring process established. With PMO early supply chain mitigations action plan established across the programme	M	Yes
Reputational	Delivery	Agree and implement projects, clear communications, articulate vision	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Air quality improvement Active travel	Incorporated into project proposals. Early engagement	M	Yes

	Local material supply	underway with material suppliers		
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</p>	<p>Supports the delivery of Economy Policy Statement 4 – Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan. 1. – Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments.</p> <p>Vibrant City- We will work tirelessly to make Aberdeen a more attractive place to live, work, report and visit with a vibrant cultural offering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to make Aberdeen a premier destination for festivals, productions, conferences, bands and events.
<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	<p>Supports Outcome 7 - Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.</p> <p>The report references active travel and cultural participation which support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 10. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes <i>To be updated</i>	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 <i>To be updated</i>	The report supports the National, Regional and Local Transport Strategies, particularly the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which prioritises the needs of those walking, wheeling and cycling above other road users, and the 4 pillars identified in the recent Regional Transport Strategy, Nestrans 2040: Equality, Climate, Prosperity and Wellbeing.

	It also supports the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, both of which seek to improve conditions for people walking and cycling in Aberdeen, particularly to, from and within the City Centre, through the provision of more and safer infrastructure.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	N/A
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

RES/24/039 City Centre Streetscape Update

<http://councilcommittees/documents/s153355/240207%20City%20Centre%20Update%20report%20to%20Council%20RES%2024%20039.pdf>

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A Castlegate Spatial Principles

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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