

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	5 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Silver City Heritage and Place Programme
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/235
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gail Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Sian Loftus
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.2, 3.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Heritage and Place Programme bids and to note the success of the grant applications.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note that Aberdeen City Council have received grant offers from Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund and is currently reviewing these offers;
- 2.2 Approve the allocation of the £2.1M from the General Fund Capital Programme in respect of the match funding required from Aberdeen City Council;
- 2.3 Approve the delivery of the Silver City Heritage and Place Programme (SCH&PP) 5-year project subject to the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning approving the grant offers in 2.1 and subject to 2.2. being approved; and
- 2.4 Note the proposed programme of twice-yearly reports and requests for third-party grant approval from the Committee (in line with the approved Governance Structure), over the 5-years of the project.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As Members will already be aware, the Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is due to conclude 2025, and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has launched a replacement funding programme, entitled the Heritage & Place Programme (H&PP). On 12 November 2021 the former City Growth and Resource Committee instructed the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to seek additional funding from HES and other sources

such as The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and to report back to Committee once funding arrangements had been identified (RES/21/297). This report satisfies this instruction.

Bid Process

- 3.2 To support delivery of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, in December 2022 first round (Development Phase) applications were submitted to HES and NLHF for the Silver City Heritage & Place Programme (SCH&PP), with successful outcomes received in May 2023. In line with Committee approval of 29 March 2023 (COM/23/100), the Development Phase offers of grant were accepted in June 2023, with the NLHF 'Permission to Start' issued 15 August 2023, triggering the start of the 18-month development phase.
- 3.3 In line with Committee approval of 7 August 2024 (CR&E/24/208), the second round (Delivery Phase) applications for the SSCH&PP were submitted to HES and the NLHF in February 2025.
- 3.4 In June 2025 offers of grant for the project Delivery Phase were received from HES and NLHF, for the amounts requested (£1,138,090 from each organisation). To date Aberdeen City Council is only the third grantee under the H&PP. Comments received on the second-round submission were highly favourable, noting a strong bid including an exciting Training Plan.

Delivery Phase

- 3.5 The Silver City Heritage and Place Programme will deliver outcomes through third-party capital grants, heritage skills training and community heritage activities, in line with the requirements of the H&PP funding scheme. Third-party grants will be available for repairs to traditional buildings through twice yearly application rounds. Third party grants will also be offered for the approved priority projects, for building repairs, public realm upgrades and greenspaces. These projects were developed in consultation with owners and stakeholders during the 18-month development phase. The area covered by the SCH&PP is shown at Appendix 2, and the projects listed in the bid documents are as follows, with estimated costs provided in Appendix 1:
- Priority projects building repairs - Justice Street shopfronts
 - Priority projects building repairs - Peacock's printworks
 - Priority projects building repairs - Seabury House
 - Public realm - Castlegate north courts
 - Greenspaces - Smith's/Peacock's Close sensory garden and community growing
 - Greenspaces - Castlehill community garden
- 3.6 The HES and NLHF grant offers are currently being reviewed by the Council's Commercial and Procurement Services Legal Team and the Council's Finance team, and in line with Delegated Powers, it is anticipated that the offers will be accepted on behalf of the Council in due course, if terms and conditions of the grant offers are acceptable to the Council.
- 3.7 Representatives from HES and

NLHF attended in the city on 10 September, announcing the grant offers. On receipt of the formal 'Permission to Start', a communication plan will be developed with the Council's External Communications team with the formal launch of the scheme (including promotion of the third-party grants) anticipated in March 2026.

- 3.7 In line with the project governance structure, approved by Committee on 7 August 2024 (CR&E/24/208), applications for third-party capital grants (for building repairs, greenspaces and public realm in the project area) will be reported to Committee twice a year. The Project Board will assess all applications and report its recommendations to Members at these meetings.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The £2.1M match funding from Aberdeen City Council is available from within the General Fund Capital Programme (City Centre and Beach Masterplans: Other Projects and Grants). The £2.1M is an increase of £100,000 over the £2M provisionally allocated by the City Growth and Resources Committee in November 2021 (RES/21/297) due to increase in project costs, predominantly construction costs. This increase is also reflected in the increased grant requested from (and awarded by) HES and NLHF.
- 4.2 The SCH&PP team will comprise 3.5 FTE staff (new, fixed term), funded through the project. The H&PP Project Team draw on the support of colleagues from across a number of Council services (predominantly Finance and Legal) in the delivery of the project. There are resource implications to this (covered through existing budgets), though opportunities too for coordinating efforts and ensuring the H&PP activity contributes to and supports wider Council outcomes, particularly around the City Centre Masterplan.
- 4.3 Where specific professional services are required in support of the SCH&PP project which might be commissioned from external suppliers (and therefore qualify as a grant eligible cost), these have been budgeted for in the delivery phase budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The SCH&PP third-party capital grants programme, the Heritage Careers Bursaries and the Community Grants have been assessed as qualifying as subsidy schemes. It is the intention that Subsidy Schemes will be established under delegated powers and published on the UK Government's Subsidy Control Transparency Database.
- 5.2 The Council will be under a contractual obligation to deliver the SCH&PP in accordance with the terms and conditions of the HES and NHLF grant offers. Distribution of funding requires grant agreements to be entered into with third parties, on terms and conditions approved by HES and NHLF, and for higher value grant, the Council will be required to obtain standard securities and conservation burdens in relation to the buildings which the grants are being

applied for. Legal support will be required throughout the delivery phase in relation to this.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are positive environmental impacts in the awarding of third-party grants. Building Repair Grants support Net Zero ambitions through bringing historic buildings into good repair and supporting climate adaptations. Greenspaces grant support new and improved greenspaces, increasing the area and biodiversity of greenspaces in the city centre.

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 Risk	The project does not deliver against outcomes	Approved outcomes clearly defined, all actions cross-referenced to outcomes, regular evaluation, review and reporting	L	Yes
Compliance	Council fails to comply with legislation in relation to subsidy scheme.	Scheme established and published no less than 30 days before the first grant or bursary offer. Due process followed in assessing individual grants under the scheme.	L	Yes
Operational	Activities not delivered, spend not achieved, due to staffing issues	Project appropriately resourced against all activities. Overlap of insight for core activities, ensuring continuity in critical areas in the event of reduced staffing due to extended leave or change of staff.	L	Yes
Financial	Project is over	Regular monitoring and reporting, in compliance	L	Yes

	forecast spend	with ACC and funder requirements. Quarterly funder and project Board reporting and twice-yearly Committee reporting.		
Reputational	Failure to deliver project outcomes	All activities cross-references against approved outcomes. Regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The project supports greater partnership working and community participation in protecting and enhancing the historic environment and pride in place.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The outcomes of the project aim to support the stretch outcome 2, specifically; 2.1 Support 25 people from ethnic minorities into sustained, good quality employment by 2026 2.3 Increase employer sign up to the Real Living Wage by 5% year on year to 2026 to achieve Real Living Wage City Status by 2026. 2.4 Support 100 people into sustained, good quality employment by 2026, with a particular focus on those from priority neighbourhoods and people over 50. 2.6 Support 40 young parents into training and / or employability provision by 2026. 2.8 Support 25 individuals to gain employability skills through volunteering opportunities by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The outcomes of the project aim to support stretch outcomes 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12 specifically: 4.4 Increase by 5% the number of S1-S6 pupils who report that they feel confident by 2025. 4.5 Increase by 10% the % of children living in areas of deprivation who feel safe in their communities by 2025.

	<p>6.3 Increase by 10% the rate of completion of NPA/FA/HNC courses available to young people across the city by June 2024.</p> <p>6.4 Increase the % of learners entering a positive and sustained destination to be ahead of the Virtual Comparator for all groups by 2025.</p> <p>7.5 Reduce by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025.</p> <p>9.9 Reduce by 10% the number of adult anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2026</p> <p>10.4 To support 50 low-income families in priority neighbourhoods to improve healthy eating behaviours and adopt good life choices to support healthy weight by 2026.</p> <p>12.9 Increase accessibility to a wider range of housing options to people at risk of homelessness</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The outcomes of the project aim to support stretch outcome 15, specifically;</p> <p>15.1 Increase to 65% the proportion of people who feel they can regularly experience good quality natural space by 2026</p> <p>15.3 25% of people report that they understand the importance of nature on both their neighbourhood and individual wellbeing by 2026</p> <p>15.4 At least 23 organisations across all sectors in Aberdeen pledging to manage at least 10% of their land for nature by 2024 and at least 26% by 2026</p> <p>15.5 Increase by 50% the number of community groups delivering local environmental improvements in their neighbourhoods by 2026</p>
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	<p>The project aims to support Stretch Outcome 16, specifically;</p> <p>16.1 100% of decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026.</p> <p>16.4 10% increase in amount of funding distributed by local funders across Aberdeen City using non-traditional methods by 2026.</p> <p>16.5 Increase the number of community led projects promoted and celebrated across the City, and increase by 20% the proportion of policy and decision makers who feel they have a good awareness of community-led initiatives in the City by 2025.</p> <p>16.6 Increase the number of people (staff and communities) who state that they have the skills, tools and support they need to work together to</p>

	make improvements in the community to 50% by 2025.
Regional and City Strategies	The project will help conserve Aberdeen's historic built environment which supports policy D6- Historic Environment of Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to Silver City Heritage and Place Programme has been reviewed and no changes required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Required. At the time of drafting this report the DPIAs for the Capital Grants, Activities Plan and Training Plan were in train and will be finalised by The Committee meeting on 5 November 2025
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Finance and Resources Committee (7 Aug 2024) - CR&E/24/208
 Finance and Resources Committee (29 March 2023) – COM/23/100
 City Growth & Resources Committee (12 Nov 2021)- RES/21/297

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1- SCH&PP Project Budget
 11.2 Appendix 2- SCH&PP Scheme boundary

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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