

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	18 December 2013
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	City Centre Regeneration Board
REPORT NUMBER:	OCE/13/042

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report brings before the Council a number of matters for decision arising from the first meeting of the City Centre Regeneration Board on 2 December 2013.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council resolves:

- a. that the up to £750,000 cost of the proposed masterplan for the city centre is underwritten from the financing set aside for the City Centre Infrastructure Fund;
- b. that funding contributions towards the costs are sought from partners including Scottish Enterprise, the Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen and from the private sector in the City;
- c. that officers be requested to discuss development options for the Denburn Valley with Network Rail within the context of a masterplan for the City and that discussions should be undertaken with relevant organisations and companies on the potential for a light transport system for the City; and
- d. that officers be requested to confirm to the Wood Family Trust that as a masterplan is to be developed for the city centre as part of the delivery of the Strategic Infrastructure Plan, it is not currently possible for the Council to provide the Trust with the clear indication it seeks in relation to the design criteria stipulated as part of its proposed funding offer towards the costs of a city centre project.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The report recommends that the costs of the proposed masterplan for the city centre are underwritten from the financing set aside for the City Centre Infrastructure Fund established by the City Council in order to ensure that procurement of the masterplan team is not delayed while funding is sought. In the meantime contributions will be requested from Scottish Enterprise, the Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen and from the private sector in the City.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Further reports will be brought to the appropriate committees as required in relation to the procurement of the masterplan team.

### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At its meeting on 31 October 2013 the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive on the Strategic Infrastructure Plan (CE/13/033).

Among other recommendations contained in the report, in order to deliver the Plan's Key Goal 5 – A better image for Aberdeen - the Council approved i) the establishment of a City Centre Infrastructure Fund and the investment of £20m into the Fund and ii) the creation of a City Centre Regeneration Board as a working group of full Council, comprising elected members and representatives from appropriate external organisations.

The City Centre Regeneration Board met for the first time on 2 December 2013 and the minute of its meeting is on the agenda for this meeting of the Council. A number of matters require a decision of the Council.

The Board received a report presenting a draft procurement brief for the preparation of a masterplan for the city centre which would address the 10 action points from the Robert Gordon University paper *Regenerating Aberdeen: a vision for a thriving and vibrant city centre* in the context of the Local Development Plan and the Aberdeen City Centre Development Framework. The proposal for the masterplan builds upon work undertaken at a series of workshops hosted by the Robert Gordon University and attended by representatives of ACSEF, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and the City Council.

The Board was informed that the procurement process for the masterplan would be likely to take some six months. The Board agreed the recommendations of the report and requested officers to approach partners before the Council meeting on 18 December 2013 at which time a decision would be sought on funding for the masterplanning brief.

Work is underway on approaching and discussing with partners contributions towards the estimated total cost of £750,000 for the brief. However, given the time taken to undertake procurement for the team it is suggested that the Council resolves that the costs of the proposed masterplan are underwritten from the financing set aside for the City Centre Infrastructure Fund so that the procurement process can begin.

The Board also agreed that officers should approach Network Rail to discuss options for the development of the Denburn Valley within a masterplan for the City. Given such discussions, it is suggested that officers should also seek views from appropriate organisations and companies on the potential development of a light transport system for the City.

Finally, the Board was made aware at its meeting on 2 December 2013 by the Wood Family Trust that it is seeking from the Council by the end of the current calendar year a clear indication of whether or not a design for the city centre project which meets the Wood Family Trust's stipulated principles for development might be acceptable.

While noting the Trust's position and appreciating that given other calls on its philanthropic activities that it is unable to keep funds available for the Aberdeen project beyond the end of the year, with a masterplanning process for the city centre to be undertaken as part of the delivery of the Strategic Infrastructure Plan it would seem that it is currently not possible for the Council to provide the Wood Family Trust with the clarity it is seeking. However, given the generosity of the offer made and the ongoing commitment to seeing a transformational development of the city centre it is hoped that the Wood Family Trust will actively engage with the masterplanning process as it unfolds.

## 6. IMPACT

The subject matter of the report relates directly to the delivery of the Strategic Infrastructure Plan.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The subject matter of the report relates directly to the delivery of the key goal – A better image for Aberdeen – through the regeneration of the city centre. The Strategic Infrastructure Plan recognises that “there is evidence that a thriving urban core plays an important part in a successful city”.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Council Strategic Infrastructure Plan.  
*Regenerating Aberdeen: a vision for a thriving and vibrant city centre*  
(RGU)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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