

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	20 th September 2017
REPORT TITLE	Middlefield/Northfield Place-Making (2 nd report)
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/008
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Bill Watson

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 Finance, Policy and Resources Committee, on 9th March 2017, instructed that the Head of Land and Property Assets report back should Sustrans make a provisional grant offer.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- (a) approves acceptance of Sustrans' offer of a grant of up to £469,094 (subject to 2.5 below) to enhance active travel routes in, and around, Heathryfold Park, Middlefield and Northfield (so as to improve their accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians) (see 4.1. below);
 - (b) approves the expenditure of this grant allocation, from Sustrans;
 - (c) authorises the required procurement exercise(s) and approves delivery of improvements to paths in, and around, Heathryfold Park, Middlefield and Northfield up to the value of this grant allocation;
 - (d) instructs that an allowance be made within future revenue budgets for the maintenance of these enhanced paths;
 - (e) instructs the Director of Communities Housing and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Heads of Finance and Legal and Democratic Services, to confirm to their satisfaction that the terms and conditions of the grant funding can be met in relation to this offer of funding (see 4.1 below);

- (f) instructs the Head of Land and Property Assets to identify a responsible officer to monitor compliance with the grant conditions;
- (g) gives approval for the public to be consulted on other potential active travel improvements within this Locality;
- (h) instructs the Head of Land and Property Assets to report to a future Committee meeting as to the results of this public consultation, along with recommended actions.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

3.1 This project is intended to:

- increase the accessibility and usage of the paths that cross Heathryfold Park, and routes which link to the Park;
- improve the night time accessibility of these paths; and
- increase the number of journeys made by bicycle, and on foot, within Middlefield and Northfield by providing improved active travel routes.

3.2 Where the idea for the project came from

3.2.1 The initial impetus to develop this project came from a 'Total Place' consultation process that commenced in 2014. The lack of provision for cyclists; and the quality of the environment were identified as priorities by this community.

3.2.2 An audit of the streets and paths in, and around, this Park was undertaken in June 2016 by 'Living Streets' and members of the public.

3.2.3 A community based steering group has been formed so as to guide the development of the detailed designs, so as to ensure the range of aspirations within the community are fully considered, and met where possible.

3.3 How this project fits into the bigger picture

3.3.1 A number of regeneration projects have recently been completed and are underway within Middlefield and Northfield: "Aberdeen Treasure Hub"; the community "Hub" to Manor Avenue; the redevelopment of the Haudagain junction; the new housing developments at Byron Terrace, Marchburn Drive, Manor Walk and Smithfield Drive; and the environmental improvements of Heathryfold Park. Improving the pedestrian and cycle routes, within these neighbourhoods, will:

- link these new projects with each other and the other public facilities within these neighbourhoods (adding to the momentum of regenerational change to these priority neighbourhoods); and

- reduce the need for residents to use motorised forms of transport to access these facilities (with consequent improvements in road safety and air quality).
- 3.3.2 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Data Zones (2016) S01006727, S01006726, S01006729 and S01006724 (located within Middlefield and Northfield) are ranked in the 2nd most deprived decile. The regeneration of the areas of multiple deprivation within Aberdeen (including these) are a priority for Community Planning Aberdeen. The project will (for those with a low disposable income):
- reduce transport costs (releasing income for other needs);
 - reduce isolation;
 - improve access to public services and employment; and encourage healthier lifestyles.
- 3.3.3 Car ownership within these data zones is understood to be relatively low. A relatively high proportion of adults within these neighbourhoods rely on public transport to get to the shops, education, training and employment. Improvements to the access routes to the bus stops will:
- increase safety;
 - reduce isolation, amongst those with mobility constraints; and increase the accessibility of public services and employment, amongst those with mobility constraints.
- 3.3.4 Attendance levels at Northfield Academy is significantly lower than the City's average: this is linked to high rates of sickness. This low rate of attendance is linked to poorer academic attainment and poorer employment prospects. An environment conducive to healthy living, in the form of improved leisure facilities and increased opportunities for active travel, is expected to reduce incidences of ill health and hence improve school attendance. In addition, studies have shown that children who walk and cycle to school are more alert and are better able to absorb information. It is anticipated that this project will contribute to improved school attainment and, therefore, improved employment prospects.
- 3.3.5 The accident rate for the elderly in data zones S01006727 and S01006729 is more than twice the City's average. This neighbourhood is also classified as a 'high risk' area for children. It is understood these raised accident rates are partly due to barriers the elderly and the young experience in accessing supportive and safe public facilities. This project will reduce these barriers by improving the safety and accessibility of the routes from residents' homes to the wide range of public facilities, within these neighbourhoods.
- 3.3.6 The Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017-2021 recognises the priority that should be given to "Local Improvements", so as to achieve higher proportion of journeys being made on foot and by bicycle.
- 3.3.7 This project is aligned with the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2013/2035, "Proposals for Action: Walking and Cycling (IC6)", and "The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland".

3.4 How this project will improve the local area

3.4.1 The strategic objectives of this Project are:

- to improve the quality and accessibility of the Park, which currently has low value amenity;
- to improve the path network in this neighbourhood so as to increase and enhance the opportunities for people to get outdoors to relax, exercise and socialise;
- to build community confidence and capacity through community collaboration during the design, delivery and long-term management processes;
- **link** the regeneration projects with each other and the other public facilities within these neighbourhoods (adding to the momentum of regenerational change to these priority neighbourhoods);
- reduce the need for residents to use motorised forms of transport (with consequent improvements in road safety and air quality);
- reduce transport costs (releasing income for other needs); and
- reduce isolation and increase the accessibility of public services and employment: amongst those with mobility constraints.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Capital cost

4.1.1 The capital and administration costs of these recommendations are to be met by the grant from Sustrans.

4.1.2 Sustrans have made a budget allocation of £469,094 towards this project, for financial year 2017/18.

4.2 Revenue costs associated with the recommendations

4.2.1 There are existing paths, across Heathryfold Park, in the locations of the proposed improved paths. The upgraded paths will not require repair works for a considerable period of time. It is proposed that when these upgraded paths do require repair works that this will be considered within the usual budgetary process.

- 4.2.2 It is envisaged that lights will be provided to these improved paths across the Park. The grant application has been made on the basis that these lights will be energy efficient LED luminaires (with detectors to further reduce power output when the path is not in use). It is proposed that the running cost of these additional street lights are allowed for within the usual budgetary process. This has been estimated at £110, per annum.
- 4.2.3 It is envisaged that the upgrading of the paths across the Park may increase the public's maintenance expectations: for additional glass sweeping etc. It is proposed that an additional maintenance expenditure of £5000, per annum, is allowed for within the usual budgetary process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The paths to be improved, across the Park, are on land which the Council's Property Legal Team has confirmed as being owned by the Council's General Account.
- 5.2 The Commercial and Procurement Legal Team shall be asked to review the terms and conditions of the grant funding agreement.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial

- 6.1.1 If the works are not undertaken in a manner that meets Sustrans expectations then this could lead to the loss of the grant. To avoid this eventuality, officers have been undertaking the design development in consultation with Sustrans. Prior to construction of the paths Sustrans will be asked to approve the detailed drawings and specification.
- 6.1.2 The recommendations in this report are designed to ensure adherence to the Council's Financial Regulations, Management & Control, A Code of Practice, dated 1 December 2016, especially regulation 5.14 thereof relating to External Funding / Grants.
- 6.1.3 The Council's Finance team are to review the terms and conditions of the grant funding to ensure they can be complied with.

6.2 Employee

- 6.2.1 Not applicable

6.3 Customer / citizen

- 6.3.1 These neighbourhoods have been troubled by the anti-social use of motorbikes. It is possible, that this might result in a perception that improved paths might, in some way, exacerbate this motorbike issue. It is anticipated, however, that increased use and the increased visibility of these paths, at all hours, will deter their anti-social use.

6.4 Environmental

6.4.1 The improved paths are likely to increase active travel within these neighbourhoods and, thereby, reduce carbon emissions.

6.4.2 The introduction of lighting to these paths may reduce the wildlife habitat improvements that will be achieved through the upgrading of Heathryfold Park. The lighting will be selected so as to provide lighting that is appropriate to the needs of the community, while minimising the adverse impact on wildlife.

6.5 Technological

6.5.1 Not applicable

6.6 Legal

6.6.1 Not applicable/see above

6.7 Reputational

6.7.1 It is intended that public awareness events will be conducted to promote this project.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

7.1.1 These recommendations will increase economic activity within Aberdeen, by securing external funding.

7.2 People

7.2.1 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken. It has been assessed that this project will have a positive impact

7.3 Place

7.3.1 These recommendations are designed to meet the community's aspirations for an enhanced and safer environment. In addition, they are designed to meet the following objectives:

- **Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2016**
- **Aberdeen – the Smarter City:** Smarter Governance (Participation); Smarter Living (Quality of Life); Smarter People (Social and Human Capital); and Smarter Environment (Natural resources)
- **Shaping Aberdeen:** Improving Customer Experience; Improving our Use of Resources; Transform; Place; and People
- **Shaping Middlefield**
- **Joint working across Public, Community and Council organisations:**

Communities and Housing, Land and Property, Public Infrastructure and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development. Police Scotland. Heathryfold Allotment Holders' Association. Healthy Roots.

7.4 Technology

7.4.1 Not applicable

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Community Planning Aberdeen, Single Outcome Agreement 2013

Aberdeen – the Smarter City

Community Planning Aberdeen Board, minutes 20th June 2016

Shaping Middlefield. Aberdeen City Council/Shaping Aberdeen ACC's Open Space Strategy 2011-2016

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012

Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2016-2021

ACC's Core Paths Plan

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Data Zones (2016)

Scotland's People Annual Report: results from 2014 Scottish Household Survey (Transport and Travel). Scottish Government.

Let's get Scotland Walking: the National Walking Strategy (2014)

Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2017-2020. Transport Scotland

Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017-2021. Aberdeen City Council

Benefits of active travel for young people. Sustrans

Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2013/2035, "Proposals for Action: Walking and Cycling (IC6)".

Locality 2 Strategic Assessment 2016. Community Planning Aberdeen.

Community Street Audit Report, Middlefield, Aberdeen City. June 2016. Living Streets

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Not applicable

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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