

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	16 January 2018
REPORT TITLE	AWPR Non- Motorised Users Off-set mitigation
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/305
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Karen van Eeden

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of changes to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) Non-motorised users (NMU) offset mitigation relating to core paths and to seek approval of the revised projects.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee:-

- (a) Note the allocation of £237,575 from Transport Scotland, via the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) Managing Agent, for AWPR off-set mitigation on the revised projects (see 3.3 below);
- (b) Approve the alternative route for the path for Bucksburn-Brimmond as detailed in 3.6 below;
- (c) Approve that money be re-allocated to an additional section of Bucksburn Valley (Core Path 42) Boardwalk given that the Standing Stones and Peterculter to Milltimber projects are no longer required through AWPR offset mitigation (see 3.8 below); and
- (d) Authorise the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services in consultation with the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to procure and deliver the AWPR offset mitigation for core paths as listed in the main body of the report in accordance with grant conditions and the Council's own procurement procedures.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 The AWPR will cross numerous established public access routes (minor roads, paths, rights of way, etc.) used by non-motorised users (NMUs). Offset

Mitigation projects have therefore been identified to provide safe access to pedestrians and cyclists around the proposed route corridor and to address issues of NMU fragmentation.

- 3.2 A Committee Report titled External Funding for Transportation Projects (CHI/15/143) was submitted to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on the 19th May 2015 detailing all the proposed path projects. The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations. This led to the signing of the AWPR Service Level Agreement (SLA) which detailed the funding allocated to the Council and the criteria for spend.
- 3.3 Four core paths were identified and agreed under the AWPR SLA as meeting the criteria for funding. Some of these paths projects have since proved to be unfeasible/ unnecessary. Alternative project options which meet the AWPR SLA funding criteria have now been developed. An outline of the projects is provided in the table below:

Project title	Project status
Peterculter – Milltimber	No longer required through AWPR offsite mitigation – connection now a condition of private development
Standing Stones	No longer required through AWPR offsite mitigation – connection made by AWPR infrastructure
Bucksburn Valley (Core Path 42)–	Project unchanged – approval already in place
Bucksburn - Brimmond	Revised to ‘Newhills Church’ project – approval required
Bucksburn Valley (Core Path 42) Boardwalk	New project - approval required

Further information on each are provided below.

3.4 Peterculter – Milltimber

In January 2017 the new Local Development Plan was adopted and two new opportunity sites for housing (OP112 and OP113) were included in the area of the proposed path. As the aspirational core path runs through the site, the Council is working towards this path being constructed by the developer. No other missing links were identified in this locality so it is proposed to re-allocate the funding to another project.

3.5 Standing Stones

This path originally was to act as a recreational route between the Industrial estate in Dyce and Kirkhill forest. The path was to follow field boundaries to a bridge crossing which linked into the forest. Two bridges are located in fairly close proximity to each other in this location – one is for local access and the other is a new wildlife bridge. It has now become possible to achieve a fairly direct route to the forest via the local access bridge making it unnecessary for a new route to be created.

3.6 Bucksburn-Brimmond

The original project proposal for this area was for a path that linked Bucksburn and Brimmond Hill. The path was to follow existing farm tracks and then a new section of path would have been created along the side of the burn which would lead to a farm bridge crossing and onto Brimmond Hill. After further discussions with the landowner, it became clear that this would no longer be a suitable location for the path due to current land management practices.

An alternative route for the path (see Appendix 1 for location plan) has been identified which is approx. 300m further north than this route and forms part of Aspirational Core Path 2. This path is in Council ownership and runs from the Newhills Parish Church to the graveyard.

3.7 Bucksburn Valley (CP42)

This project remains the same as previously approved (see Appendix 1 for location plan). The majority of this path is on Council owned land. The remaining section is owned by a private developer and a 'Path Agreement' between the Council and the landowner is currently being drafted it is envisaged that this agreement will be signed in January 2018.

- 3.8 With the removal of the Standing Stones and Peterculter to Milltimber project, it is proposed that the money be re-allocated to an additional section of Bucksburn Valley -Core Path 42 Boardwalk (see Appendix 1 for location plan) to replace and extend the existing boardwalk which is currently in a poor condition and beginning to rot. This area is waterlogged and runs parallel to a burn. The boardwalk would be extended to improve access along this popular path. This path (along with the proposed Newhill Church path) fulfils the funding criteria by providing safe, off-road paths for different users, linking communities in Kingswells, Bucksburn and Northfield and recreational areas such as the Bucksburn Valley and Brimmond Hill. This path is on council owned land.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposed projects have changed since the original Service Level Agreement and AWPR agents have confirmed that the new path proposals meet the necessary funding criteria. The cost estimate and fees for the new path projects is currently estimated at £325,623, which will be funded from the £237,575 AWPR offset mitigation money and developer contributions for core paths. There is therefore no cost to the council for the delivery of these core path projects.
- 4.2 The three path projects will be put out to tender as one package to make the work as cost effective as possible. The cost estimate is based from the detailed design drawings and combined Bill of Quantities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If the above projects are progressed this will result in the Council entering into procurement processes. These will adhere to the Council's Procurement Regulations and will be published on Public Contracts Scotland to reduce any legal risk.
- 5.2 The Council (Transportation Strategy and Programmes Team) has already entered into a Service Level Agreement with AWPR/B-T Managing Agent for delivery of NMU projects. The Agreement states that the grant is to be used wholly and exclusively for the approved projects that meet the AWPR NMU criteria. These recommended project changes have been communicated to and agreed in writing with the AWPR Managing Agents.
- 5.3 If the recommendations of this report are not approved the Council risk's losing access to this funding. Identifying and delivering alternative NMU mitigation projects that meet the funding criteria and in the required timescales would be very difficult.
- 5.4 The Council owns and manages the paths at Newhills Church and Bucksburn Valley – core path 42. Only a very small section of one path is owned by a private developer and a Path Agreement is currently being drafted. This path will only be constructed after the Agreement is signed.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the risk level for delivering the elements outlined within this report will be low:

- **Financial – low risk**

Should responses to the tenders come back higher than the funding available the projects will either need to be redesigned to reduce the overall cost or one of the projects will be removed and new approvals sought from the AWPR Agents.

It is unlikely there are any other projects that suit the funding criteria. Therefore if these projects are not agreed, the funding may be re-allocated by the AWPR Agents to other purposes.

- **Employee – low risk**

There should be no employee risk to the Council from progressing the projects above.

- **Customer/ citizen – low risk**

There should be no customer/ citizen risk to the Council from delivering the projects identified above. Delivery of safe and coherent infrastructure should improve safety and reduce the risk of accidents.

The risks of non-delivery would be the loss of access along popular paths, preventing links to other communities and adverse impacts in terms of health and wellbeing.

- **Environmental – low risk**
There should be no environmental risk to the Council from progressing the projects above. These paths already exist on the ground and are being upgraded. Works will be undertaken before the bird breeding season to reduce any impacts.
- **Technological – low risk**
There should be no technological risk to the Council from progressing the projects above.
- **Legal – low risk**
Legal implications/ risks are outline in section 5 above.
- **Reputational - medium**
There should be no reputational risk to the Council from securing external funding for delivering the projects identified above.

If no core path projects were delivered using the funding then the Council may be criticised for not taking the opportunity to improve infrastructure with money already allocated.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

The recommendations of this report may have a minor positive effect on the economy due to improved pedestrian/ cycle infrastructure to support recreation, tourism and safeguarding routes for future generations.

7.2 People

The recommendations of this report will have positive effects on people by safeguarding access and improving health and wellbeing due to improved infrastructure in countryside recreation areas. The recommendations of this report will have no significant impacts on groups of people with protected characteristics out with the impacts already identified.

7.3 Place

The recommendations of this report will have a positive effect due to the better linkages that these projects will provide. There will be no significant negative effects on the environment by the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

7.4 Technology

The recommendations of this report will have no effect on technology.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee – 19th May 2015 – External Funding for Transportation Projects – CHI / 15 / 143

9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1 – Path locations

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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