

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	1 February, 2018
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen in Colour – A Creative Lighting Strategy and Implementation Plan for Aberdeen City Centre
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/17/028
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 Committee to receive and adopt Aberdeen in Colour – City Centre Creative Lighting Strategy and Implementation Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that committee –
- a. Approve the Aberdeen in Colour – City Centre Creative Lighting Strategy.
 - b. Instruct the City Centre Masterplan Programme Manager to initiate action to implement Aberdeen in Colour through the development of business cases for creative lighting projects to be considered at future meetings of this committee.

3. BACKGROUND AND MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 In considering the Strategic Infrastructure Plan Progress Update at its meeting on 9 March 2017, committee resolved to approve expenditure of up to £75,000 to award a contract to consultants to prepare a City Centre Lighting Strategy and Implementation Plan (Aberdeen in Colour) and report progress to Finance, Policy and Resources Committee following completion.
- 3.2 A brief was prepared for the appointment of a consultant to prepare a comprehensive creative lighting strategy to bring forward innovative and imaginative proposals that transform the city centre in terms of inclusion, legibility, identity, movement, night time safety, public art and events. The brief emphasised that the strategy must demonstrate how it is unique to the

City, how it will enhance safety, vibrancy and the economy, encourage activity and respond dynamically to changing circumstances.

3.3 In August, following a robust procurement procedure, Steensen Varming – a leading creative lighting consultant – were appointed with McGregor Coxall in relation to urban design and place making input as well as community engagement and Gardiner and Theobald, supporting with cost and programmatic management.

3.4 In their work Steensen Varming have:

- Reviewed the City Centre Masterplan to ensure that the creative lighting strategy addresses its themes and objectives.
- Undertaken investigation to assess the Aberdeen nightscape, identify opportunities for improvement and possible challenges.
- Carried out a precedent study to identify best practice, the application of new technologies and innovative solutions.
- Promoted stakeholder and public engagement to understand concerns and priorities of lighting in Aberdeen city centre.
- Developed a creative lighting strategy.
- Considered implementation that addresses priorities, programme and cost for each project.

3.4.1 Steensen Varming identified a number of shortcomings with the current lighting provision including:

- City centre lacks presence at night.
- Lack of visual wayfinding.
- Lighting focused on vehicular traffic with little consideration to the human scale.
- Prominent façades and monuments and other features not accentuated.
- Lighting levels generally poor but some installations create glare and obtrusive spill.
- Uneven lighting has impact on perception of safety.

3.5. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

3.5.1 Drop-in sessions, hosted by Steensen Varming, were held for Elected Members, Council officers and key stakeholders in early October 2017. The team presented their early thinking and took questions. Attendees included representatives of the arts and business sectors, as well as the wider community and the Disability Equity Partnership.

3.6 A public survey ran from October 6th to 15th. It was publicised through media releases; reports on the Aberdeen City Council website; and via social media channels and stakeholder networks. The survey was made available online and paper copies were available at Marischal College Customer Service Centre and in city libraries. The survey asked participants to choose their favourite lighting treatments (up to three) for six different themes, which were based on the project's aspirations as described in the City Centre Masterplan.

The potential treatments were presented pictorially. It was explained that feedback would be a consideration in shaping the proposed strategy.

3.7 The design team held a drop-in day at the Bon Accord Shopping Centre. As part of the engagement exercise, workshops were held at four city schools, where the views of pupils were captured.

3.8 In all, the survey attracted 895 responses with most popular choices being:

- Illuminating iconic architecture
- Engaging public spaces at night
- Surprising lighting features
- Illuminating bridges
- Activating laneways
- Seasonal responsive lighting

3.9 This has informed the development of the creative lighting strategy.

3.10 **The Proposals**

3.10.1 Taking into account existing creative lighting proposals for Union Terrace Gardens, Marischal College and Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen in Colour has established 12 creative lighting projects for the city centre including proposals for Castlegate, Union St, Belmont Street, Langstane Place, Correction Wynd, Golden Square, Wellington and Victoria Bridges, the banks of the River Dee, St Nicholas Kirk, The Green, Donald's Way and Adelphi Lane. These are presented in Appendix 1 with the strategy that underpins their selection. Aberdeen in Colour has also established guidelines for creative lighting proposals for different parts of the city centre (eg. Laneways, landscaped areas, facades, etc). In addition, and in response to consultations, work has taken place, led by Aberdeen Inspired, to bring forward a winter seasonal lighting scheme at The Green.

3.11 Further, the strategy establishes guidelines for creative lighting projects that may emerge in the future. These provide advice and direction for different typologies of the city centre including primary streets, mixed use neighbourhoods, underpasses and connections, squares, waterfronts, landscape areas, facades and monuments and laneways. This will allow proposals to be developed in the future at, for example, Bridge Street, George Street or Windmill Lane.

3.12 **Implementation and Costing**

3.12.1 Careful consideration has been given to the implementation of the creative lighting projects and this is presented in Appendix 1. The projects have been prioritised and programmed. The cost has been established for each project. Prudently, at this stage, these costs have established each project's capital cost and an allowance for development. This establishes a total cost of circa £6.5million. As projects are brought forward during the implementation programme it is anticipated that increasing certainty will allow the development cost allowance to reduce.

3.13 Each project will be the subject of development through a business case that will establish its scope, funding, risk, etc as part of the capital governance regime.

3.14 Maintenance

3.14.1 The maintenance implications and life cycle costs for each project have been assessed and a suitable approach proposed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Aberdeen in Colour has an estimated cost (including a development allowance) of circa £6.5million. There are a variety of funding sources potentially available to meet this cost over the course of the implementation programme.

4.2 Aberdeen Inspired has committed £118,000 (with a potential additional £50,000) for implementation of the first phase of Aberdeen in Colour on the proviso that Council will make a strong commitment also.

4.3 Implementation of Aberdeen in Colour projects will be progressed through the development of business cases for each that will consider the cost and funding.

4.4 The Green winter lighting, led by Aberdeen Inspired, accessed a match funding contribution of £9,950 that was brought forward within the approved budget allocation for Aberdeen in Colour approved by this committee on 9 March 2017.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Risks arising from this report are:

- Financial – A low risk that the cost of implementation will exceed projections. This has been mitigated by robust independent assessment that includes a development allowance. Further, each project, delivered by Council, will be required to comply with governance requirements in its development and implementation.
- Employee – None
- Customer / citizen – None

- Environmental – None
- Technological – None
- Legal – None
- Reputational - None

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

7.1.1 Aberdeen in Colour makes a contribution to a city centre that is the economic hub of a prosperous city region. In particular, it will help to support the development of the night-time economy in Aberdeen.

7.2 People

7.2.1 Paragraphs 3.5 – 3.9 have set out consultation undertaken in developing the strategy and proposals.

7.3 The proposals will aid wayfinding in the city centre that will improve accessibility. In addition, the proposals will help to improve the safety of the city centre through reducing the fear of crime.

7.4 Place

7.4.1 Aberdeen in Colour will contribute to achieving a city centre environment that makes for a unique and interesting experience attractive to people regardless of interests or means.

7.5 Technology

7.5.1 Aberdeen in Colour project proposal will utilise latest lighting technology to ensuring that lighting will be smart and digitally compliant.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Finance, Policy and Resources Committee, 9 March 2017, ***Strategic Infrastructure Plan Progress Update*** (CG/17/002)

Council on 24 June 2015 ***Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme*** (OCE/15/021)

9. APPENDICES

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