

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Capital Programme
<b>DATE</b>	23 May 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/18/018
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steve Whyte
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Stephen Booth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Scott Davidson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Purpose – 1.1, 1.2 Remit – 1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the implementation of the first stage of a public realm enhancement at Schoolhill.
- 1.2 To seek approval to refer this report to the Strategic Commissioning Committee on 7 June 2018 for approval to proceed to tender and thereafter the City Growth and Resources Committee on 19 June 2018 for approval of a budget for the first stage public realm enhancement.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

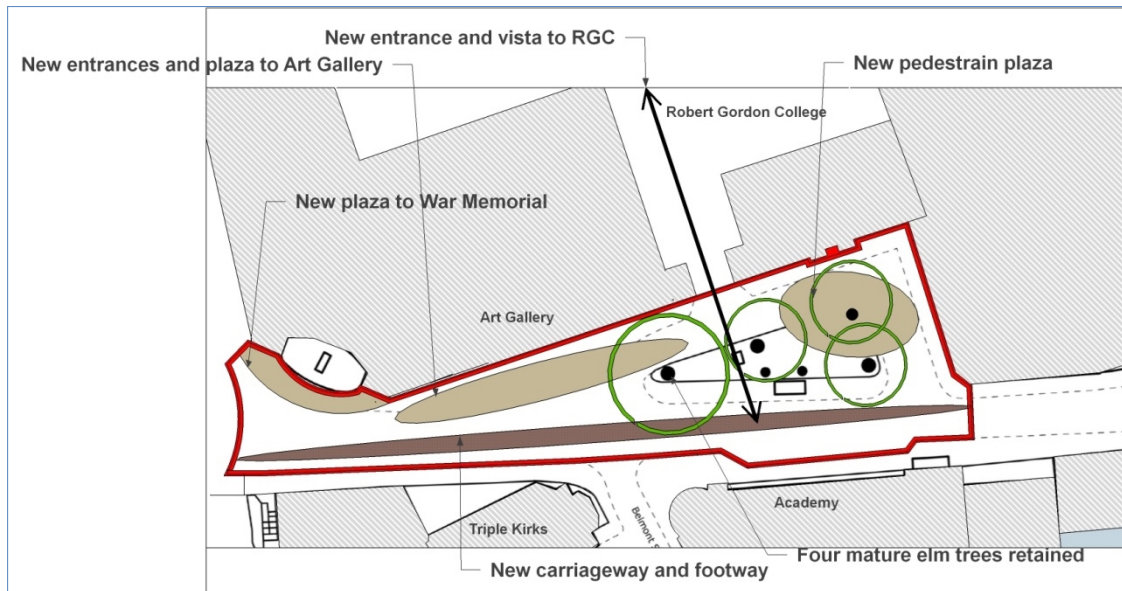
- 2.1 Note that the Business Case for Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement has been considered and agreed for their interest by the City Centre Masterplan Board and Capital Board.
- 2.2 Note the authorisation for the preparation of detailed design of Schoolhill public realm by Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June, 2016.
- 2.3 Approve the first stage Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement project as an addition to the Capital Programme and notes the estimated costs in Section 4 which shall be considered by Strategic Commissioning Committee on 7 June 2018 and City Growth and Resources Committee on 19 June 2018 and for the works to be complete by the beginning of 2019.
- 2.4 Refer the report to the Strategic Commissioning Committee on 7 June 2018 to:
  - a. approve the Business Case and the budget for the proposed works;

- b. delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Capital, following consultation with the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services, to procure the first stage public realm enhancement, including all necessary consents, licenses, orders and agreements for the area in front of Aberdeen Art Gallery subject to approval of the funding of £550,000 by the City Growth and Resources Committee on 19 June 2018;
  - c. delegate authority to the Chief Officer – Place to bring forward a comprehensive public realm enhancement design for the wider Schoolhill area as future stages of works and report to appropriate committees; and
  - d. instruct the Director of Resources to apply for appropriate external grant funding for design costs of £30,000.
- 2.5 Refer the report to the City Growth and Resources Committee on 19 June, 2018 for approval of a project budget of £550,000 to be met from the Non-Housing Capital Programme.

### **3. BACKGROUND AND MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 7 June 2016 the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee resolved to:
- a. Agree that the City Centre Masterplan public realm proposals at Golden Square and Schoolhill Pocket Park were also important to secure the long-term transformation of the city centre.
  - b. Agree that detailed design proposals for both Golden Square and Schoolhill Pocket Park be procured from specialist consultants.
  - c. Agree to delegate authority to the City Centre Director in consultation with the Depute Leader of the Council and the Convener of Finance Policy and Resources for up to £2 million of expenditure to implement the Union Street package of works together with the Union Terrace Gardens, Golden Square and Schoolhill Pocket Park design proposals.

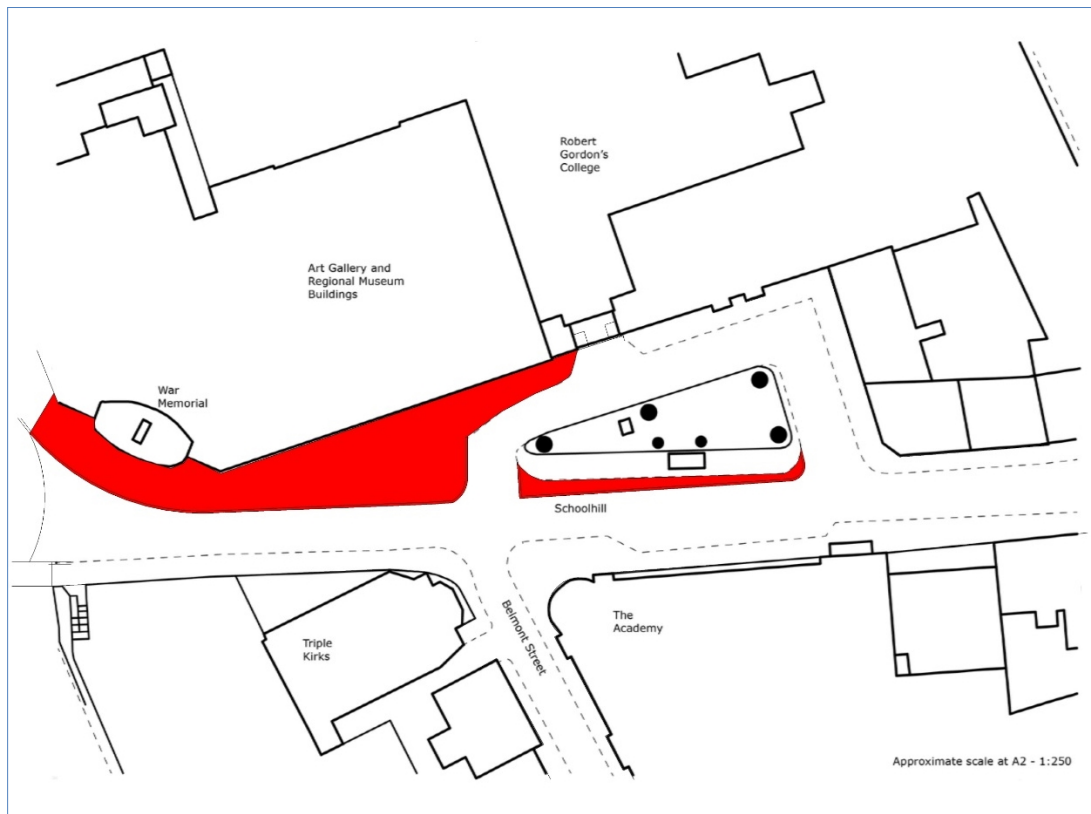
- 3.2 Figure 1 presents the scope of a comprehensive urban realm enhancement project for Schoolhill. The high level principles include establishing a new entrance to Aberdeen Art Gallery, the potential for an improved plaza to the Cowdray Hall war memorial, creating a new access route to Robert Gordon's College, creating an appropriate plaza adjacent to the Robert Gordon University buildings, retaining appropriate mature trees and the Victoria Cross memorial in addition to reconfiguring the Schoolhill carriageway to support active travel recognising that it is part of the national cycle network.



**Figure 1 – Key Structural Elements for Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement**

- 3.3 As a development of the City Centre Masterplan the urban realm enhancement must be accessible to all and safely resolve the current place and movement conflicts enabling people to walk and cycle, as well as use bus and car access, in what is a key destination place for the city centre. The project should be an exemplar for city centre public realm provision.
- 3.4 A clear contribution to city centre place-making needs to show a creative and integrated approach to urban design and travel management. The enhancement will help to create a significantly improved urban environment that delivers on the City Centre Masterplan objective of promoting the city centre as an inclusive and attractive place where people will want to live, work and visit.
- 3.5 The area is a primary place in the city centre serving several important destinations with significant pedestrian activity. The footfall is set to grow substantially with the re-opened Art Gallery in 2019 anticipating 350,000 visitors a year, the residential development at Triple Kirks anticipating over 450 residents and staff as well as the likely re-use of the currently vacant Robert Gordon University buildings and the on-going needs of Robert Gordon's College. The immediate vicinity includes the Academy (retail and leisure) as well as the adjacency of Belmont Street.

- 3.6 The first stage of Schoolhill public realm enhancement encompasses the road, footways and small plaza in front of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Robert Gordon's College as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 – Schoolhill Public Realm Site**

- 3.7 During 2016 and 2017 options for the public realm enhancement were developed and consultations were undertaken with key stakeholders. This resulted in extensive and positive dialogue with Robert Gordon's College (RGC), particularly in 2017.
- 3.8 In developing the first stage project for the area in the forthcoming weeks, engagement will continue with Robert Gordon's College, Robert Gordon University, the Disability Equity Partnership, the City Centre Community Council and the Aberdeen Civic Forum, etc. Upon approval the future compressive public realm project will be subject to continued stakeholder engagement.
- 3.9 The first stage project will be developed, designed, costed and procured through an in-house team. This team will secure all necessary consents and will also manage the tendering for, appointment and supervision of contractors to undertake the work for completion in early 2019.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Funding of £550,000 (as advised by Faithful and Gould) would be required from the Council's non-housing capital programme to implement the first stage. An

application for external funding of £30,000 as a contribution to design costs will be made.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	Overspend	L	Active project management and costing during design to ensure project delivers within budget
<b>Legal</b>	None		
<b>Employee</b>	Key project staff leave Council	L	Use notice period to redirect staff or secure external support
<b>Customer</b>	Maintaining stakeholder engagement and support	M	Active engagement with stakeholders with clear responsibility to Project Manager
<b>Environment</b>	None		
<b>Technology</b>	None		
<b>Reputational</b>	Lack of implementation timeously	L	Active project management and early delivery through staging

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	Investment in infrastructure – enhancement of the public realm at Schoolhill will represent a transformational enhancement in the city centre infrastructure and active travel
<b>Prosperous People</b>	Protected from Harm – the scheme will increase safety for all in a vital and vibrant area of the city centre
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	People friendly city – the enhancement of the public realm will help to develop the city centre as a people focused place that encourages sustainable travel options; particularly walking and cycling. It will also create a place designed for people that can demonstrate a creative and integrated approach to high quality urban design

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Not required at this time although assessment will be required of the scheme and its consultation. EHRA will be presented to the Strategic Commissioning Committee on 7 June 2018 and City Growth and Resources Committee on 19 June 2018.
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Not applicable

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme  
FP&R Committee 7 June 2016 - Strategic Infrastructure Plan - CG/16/077

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement Business Case

## **11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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