

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	19 June 2018
REPORT TITLE	Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement
REPORT NUMBER	RES/18/029
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Scott Davidson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose – 1 Remit – 1.2, 1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the implementation of the first stage of a public realm enhancement at Schoolhill.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the scheme's financial implications presented in Section 4 and approve an allocation of £550,000 for the Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement 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 At its meeting on 23 May 2018, the Capital Programme Committee resolved to:

- a. 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.
- b. Note the authorisation for the preparation of detailed design of Schoolhill public realm by Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June, 2016.
- c. 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.
- d. Refer the report to the Strategic Commissioning Committee on 7 June 2018.
- e. 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.

3.3 At its meeting on 7 June 2018, the Strategic Commissioning Committee resolved 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.

3.4 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.

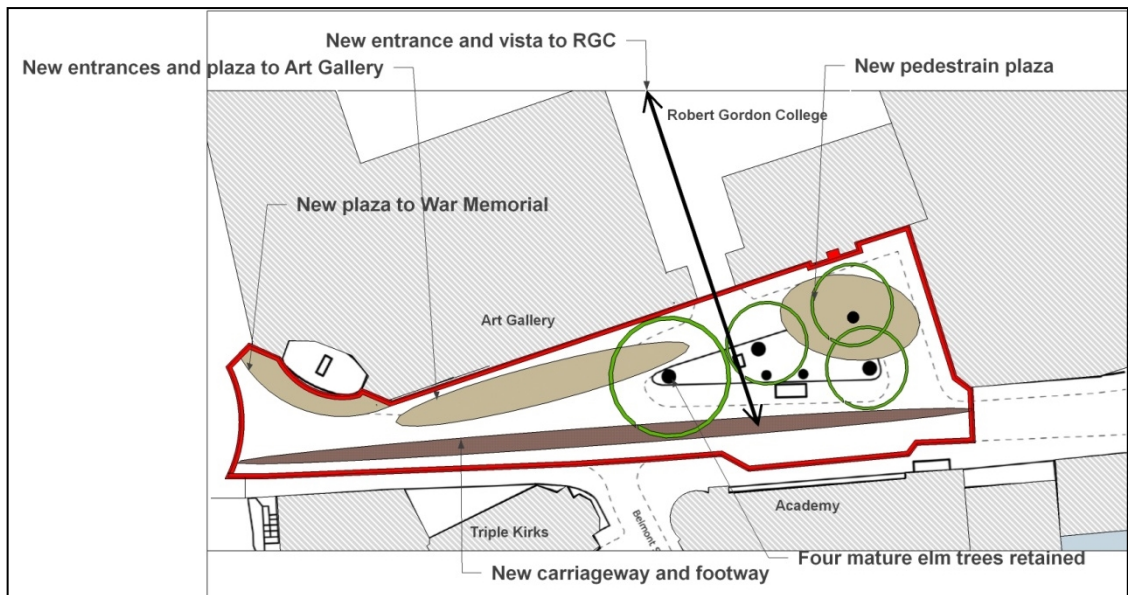


Figure 1 – Key Structural Elements for Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.

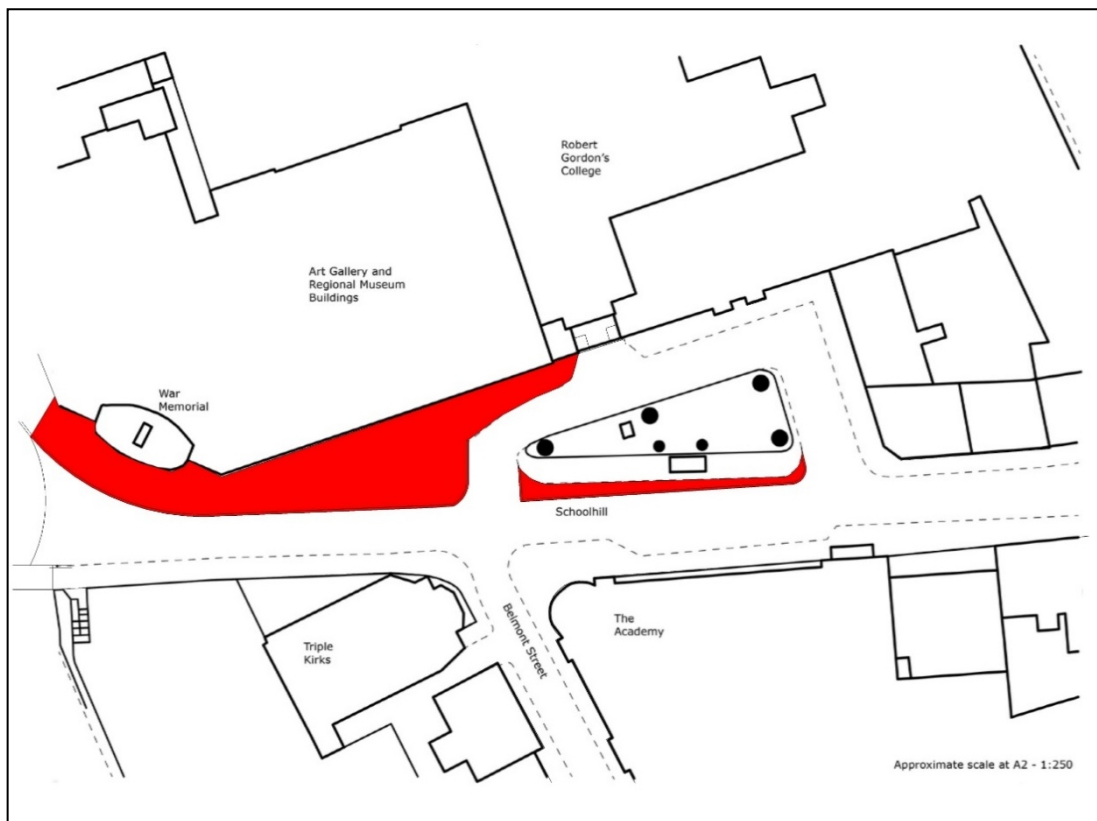


Figure 2 – Schoolhill Public Realm Site

- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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
Financial	Overspend	L	Active project management and costing during design to ensure project delivers within budget
Legal	None		
Employee	Key project staff leave Council	L	Use notice period to redirect staff or secure external support
Customer	Maintaining stakeholder engagement and support	M	Active engagement with stakeholders with clear responsibility to Project Manager
Environment	None		
Technology	None		
Reputational	Lack of implementation timeously	L	Active project management and early delivery through staging

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Investment in infrastructure – enhancement of the public realm at Schoolhill will represent a transformational enhancement in the city centre infrastructure and active travel
Prosperous People	Protected from Harm – the scheme will increase safety for all in a vital and vibrant area of the city centre
Prosperous Place	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

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Provided at Appendix 2
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme
FP&R Committee 7 June 2016 - Strategic Infrastructure Plan - CG/16/077
Capital Programme Committee 23 May 2018 – Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement - RES/18/018
Strategic Commissioning Committee 7 June 2018 – Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement - RES/18/033

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Schoolhill Public Real Enhancement Business Case
Appendix 2 – Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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