

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| <b>COMMITTEE</b>          | Capital Programme<br>Strategic Commissioning<br><b>City Growth and Resources</b>  |
| <b>DATE</b>               | Capital Programme: 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2018<br>Strategic Commissioning: 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2018<br><b>City Growth and Resources: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018</b>                     |
| <b>REPORT TITLE</b>       | Middlefield/Northfield Place-Making (3rd report)  |
| <b>REPORT NUMBER</b>      | RES/18/021  |
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>           | Steve Whyte   |
| <b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>      | Stephen Booth   |
| <b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>      | Bill Watson   |
| <b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b> | Capital Programme: Remit 1.1<br><br>Strategic Commissioning:<br>Remits 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2 & 3.4<br><br><b>City Growth and Resources:</b><br><b>Remit 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2 &amp; 3.2</b> |

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Capital Programme Committee: to report on development proposals and to seek approval for the principals of their implementation and the incorporation of this project within the capital programme.
- 1.2 Strategic Commissioning Committee: to report on commissioning proposals and to seek approval for the implementation of their procurement.
- 1.3 City Growth and Resources Committee: to report on investment proposals and to seek approval for the use of resources for their implementation.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Capital Programme Committee:-

2.1.1 approves delivery of improvements in, and around, Heathryfold Park and Auchmill Wood, up to the value of the capital grant allocation from Scottish Natural Heritage.

2.2 That the Strategic Commissioning Committee:-

2.2.1 authorises the required procurement exercise(s) for improvements in, and around, Heathryfold Park and Auchmill Wood, up to the value of the grant allocation from Scottish Natural Heritage; and

2.2.2 approves the required procurement exercise so as to facilitate the preparation of Active Travel plans for the schools within this Locality.

**2.3 That the City Growth and Resources Committee:-**

2.3.1 approves acceptance of a grant of £270,096 from Scottish Natural Heritage: to undertake additional capital works in the Locality of Middlefield and Northfield;

2.3.2 notes the recommendation that an additional allowance of £9415 per annum (plus an allowance for inflation) be made within future revenue budgets for the maintenance of these improvements in, and around, Heathryfold Park and Auchmill Wood, and instructs the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to submit this to the budget process for 2019/20;

2.3.3 approves acceptance of a grant of £64,668 from Scottish Natural Heritage: to extend the employment of the Middlefield Community Ranger to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 to work within the Locality of Middlefield and Northfield;

2.3.4 gives advanced approval to accept an anticipated grant of £50,000 from Sustrans, to undertake surveys, consultations and develop the designs for further active travel improvements in the Locality of Middlefield and Northfield;

2.3.5 approves the expenditure of these grant allocations, from Scottish Natural Heritage and Sustrans;

2.3.6 instructs the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance (Interim) and Chief Officer CPS, to confirm to their satisfaction that the terms and conditions of the grant funding can be met in relation to this offer of funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (see 4.1 below);

2.3.7 instructs the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to identify a responsible officer to monitor compliance with these grant conditions;

2.3.8 approves the preparation of Active Travel plans for the schools within this Locality (Manor Park, Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, West Park, Orchard Brae and Northfield Academy) (in consultation with the pupils) and approves the co-ordination of this consultation with the "I Bike" and "Northfield Cycle Maintenance" projects; and

2.3.9 approves the expenditure of grant funding so as to permit the preparation of Active Travel plans for the schools within this Locality.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016 the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee instructed:
- that a flood alleviation project to Heathryfold Park proceed (as a project to complement the Manor Walk new Council Housing project); and
  - that grants be sought so as to fund additional environmental enhancements to this Locality.

Grants were secured from Scottish Natural Heritage, Sustrans and Nestrans.

The HRA funded flood alleviation works are Practically Complete. The Sustrans funded (active travel) works are due to be complete by early summer 2018.

Contractors have been appointed to undertake the Nestrans (road crossings) and Scottish Natural Heritage (environmental) works. Completion of both is expected later in 2018.

- 3.2 On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee instructed:
- the first tranche of Scottish Natural Heritage funded environmental improvement work to proceed; and
  - approved the addition of the Park Ranger post to the staff establishment, for the duration of the SNH grant period.

- 3.3 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee instructed:
- the first tranche of Sustrans funded active travel improvements to proceed; and
  - that the public be consulted on further potential active travel improvements within this Locality.

- 3.4 The Heathryfold Park Steering Group was consulted as to its priorities for further improvements to the Park and the adjacent neighbourhood. The Group's priorities were:
- further improvements to the play facilities to the Park;
  - measures to tackle the damage caused by cars parking on the grass to Heathryfold Circle;
  - improvements to Auchmill Wood; and
  - extension of the Park Ranger's support for community activities.

- 3.5 Public consultation events were held at "The Hub" on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and at Northfield Academy on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The initial findings were then tested at a further public consultation event at "The Hub" on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

These consultations and the resultant report were funded by Sustrans. See Background Paper 9.1.

3.6 In addition, Sustrans funded a study and report into the Active Travel links between Middlefield and Auchmill Road. See Background Paper 9.2.

3.7 The Active Travel Reports identified the immediate priorities as being improvements to:

- the routes through Auchmill Wood; and
- the crossings of Provost Rust.

Measures to tackle these priorities are contained within this report.

3.8 The Active Travel Reports also suggested potential improvements to the active travel links to Northfield Academy. Information on the desire lines and barriers to active travel to the Academy was, however, not available.

Measures to tackle this lack of information are contained within this report.

3.9 The Active Travel Reports also identified other potential improvements, but which have longer delivery timescales:

- the Haudagain link road and the de-trunking of Auchmill Road will give rise to the opportunity to establish active travel routes from Middlefield to the Haudagain Triangle redevelopment site; and
- the Greenferns development will give rise to an opportunity to improve the west/east active travel routes along Provost Rust Drive and Provost Fraser Drive.

3.10 "I Bike" is a schools based project promoting cycling, walking and scooting. "I Bike" empowers children, parents and teachers to travel actively, safely and confidently to school - encouraging exercise and reducing traffic congestion. Sustrans fund an "I Bike officer within Aberdeen City. It is proposed that this officer be located within the Northfield schools cluster for academic year 2018/19, so as to achieve synergies with the recommendations of this report.

3.11 "Northfield Cycle Maintenance" project is a cycle maintenance workshop in the Cummings Park centre's garage. This is allowing the centre to offer targeted cycle maintenance classes to residents / young people in the Northfield area, as well as providing provision to other interested participants / groups across the city (both youth and adult).

Adventure Aberdeen (AA) became approved by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in 2016 to deliver cycle maintenance courses for both young people and adults.

Delivery of SQA or Velotech cycle maintenance courses at Cummings Park Community Centre will not only increase Adventure Aberdeen's capacity to deliver cycle maintenance courses, but also enhance the employability options for participants and help with the process of providing a positive

destination for young people and prepare them for employment. The SQA course is delivered at SCQF level 3 and Level 4, and in particular will support those young people who are more suited to vocational training and qualifications, rather than the traditional academic qualifications.

Northfield Academy has booked to send pupils on this course, and there is strong interest from other groups in the Northfield area (including the Northfield Youth Action Group). Police Scotland are also looking at this project as a possible diversionary activity and positive destination for young people on their radar.

- 3.12 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; and
  - encourage healthier lifestyles.
- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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".
- 3.16 The strategic objectives of these proposals are:
- to continue to improve the quality and accessibility of a Locality which currently has low value amenity: in line with Aberdeen's Open Space Audit & Strategy;
  - to continue 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, improving health and wellbeing in one of

Scotland's deprived communities: in line with the objectives of Aberdeen's Core Path's Plan;

- to continue to create a diverse matrix of habitats, connected to the wider greenspace network, so as to support biodiversity: in line with Aberdeen's Nature Conservation Strategy; and
- to continue to build community confidence and capacity through community collaboration during the design, delivery and long-term management processes. in line the City's Strategic Infrastructure Plan, 5 Year Business Plan; Aberdeen - The Smarter City; and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

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

4.1 The capital cost of undertaking: further improvements to the play facilities to the Park; measures to tackle the damage caused by cars parking on the grass to Heathryfold Circle; and improvements to Auchmill Wood has been estimated £270,096. (The match funding of these works is to be the Sustrans grant for the path improvements across the Park). The net result of which is that the new works be 100% funded by the grant from Scottish Natural Heritage. When the terms and conditions become available these will be passed onto Chief Officer Finance (Interim) and Chief Officer CPS to confirm to their satisfaction that the terms and conditions of the grant funding can be met in relation to this offer of funding.

4.2 The additional annual maintenance of the improved facilities has been estimated as:

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| - enhanced play area     | revenue neutral |
| - grass verge protection | revenue neutral |
| - bio-diversity measures | £3500           |
| - path protection works  | revenue neutral |
| - additional paths       | £ 5600          |
| - benches and signage    | £ 315           |
| <u>Total</u>             | <u>£ 9415</u>   |

4.3 The gross cost of extending the employment of the Park Ranger to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 has been estimated at £64,668 (based on known pay settlement information). (The match funding of this is to be time allocated to support this project from the existing permanent staff establishment). The net result of which is that this post is to be 100% funded by the grant from Scottish Natural Heritage.

There is currently an employee in the Middlefield Community Ranger post on a fixed term contract until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. The proposal to extend the fixed term contract until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 would not have any implications in terms of redundancy rights. It should be noted that redundancy rights would apply after 2 years of continuous service and consideration would need to be

given to this if the fixed term contract were to be extended in future beyond 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

- 4.4 The cost of undertaking the surveys, consultations and design development for further active travel improvements in the Locality of Middlefield and Northfield has been estimated at £50,000 from Sustrans. This cost is to be 100% funded by Sustrans. No match funding is required against this grant.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A legal agreement will be required between the Council and Scottish Natural Heritage with regard to the delivery of these additional works and consequential reporting.
- 5.2 A legal agreement will be required between the Council and Sustrans with regard to the delivery of the design development works.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

|                     | Risk  | Low (L),<br>Medium<br>(M), High<br>(H) | Mitigation  |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Financial</b>    | Overspend due to unforeseen site conditions and/or tender inflation | M                                      | Contingency allowance has been made. Some flexibility in scope of works<br><br>Contract management by officers skilled in this type of work |
| <b>Legal</b>        | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |
| <b>Employee</b>     | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |
| <b>Customer</b>     | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |
| <b>Environment</b>  | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |
| <b>Technology</b>   | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |
| <b>Reputational</b> | no significant or unusual risks                                     |  |   |

## 7. OUTCOMES

| Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
|                                       | Impact of Report   |
| <b>Prosperous Economy</b>             | The recommendations of this report will have a positive economic impact.   |
| <b>Prosperous People</b>              | The recommendations of this report will have a positive impact on those that participate in active travel, recreation and environmental activism.  |
| <b>Prosperous Place</b>               | The recommendations of this report will have a positive impact on the Locality of Middlefield/Northfield: by providing an enhanced environment and facilitating an enhanced engagement by the citizens of this Locality in their environment and in active travel. |
| <b>Enabling Technology</b>            | Not applicable   |

| Design Principles of Target Operating Model |                  |
|---|------------------|
|   | Impact of Report |
| <b>Customer Service Design</b>              | NA               |
| <b>Organisational Design</b>                | NA               |
| <b>Governance</b>                           | NA               |
| <b>Workforce</b>                            | Positive         |
| <b>Process Design</b>                       | NA               |
| <b>Technology</b>                           | NA               |
| <b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>           | Positive         |

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

| Assessment   | Outcome             |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b> | <i>Undertaken</i>   |
| <b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>                     | <i>not required</i> |



|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</u></a> | <i>not applicable</i> |
|---|-----------------------|

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017 – 2021, Aberdeen City Council, January 2017
- 9.2 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016;  
[http://simd.scot/2016/#/simd2016\\_20pc/BTTTTTT/13/-2.1549/57.1585/](http://simd.scot/2016/#/simd2016_20pc/BTTTTTT/13/-2.1549/57.1585/)
- 9.3 Nestrans Active Travel Action Plan;  
[http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/AcTrAP\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/AcTrAP_FINAL.pdf)
- 9.4 Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy Refresh;  
[http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/RTS\\_Refresh\\_FINAL\\_APPROVED\\_BY\\_MINISTER.pdf](http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/RTS_Refresh_FINAL_APPROVED_BY_MINISTER.pdf)
- 9.5 Grampian Health and Transport Action Plan;  
<http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/HTAP-Annual-Report-2017.pdf>

## 10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

- 10.1 Middlefield, Heathryfold, Northfield, Active Travel Improvement Priorities Report, Local Transport Projects, January 2018  
  
[Middlefield-Heathryfold-Northfield Active Travel Final Issue 1.pdf](#)
- 10.2 Auchmill Road, Aberdeen Feasibility Assessment of Cycling Measures Technical Note, Local Transport Projects, December 2017  
  
[Auchmill Road Cycle Crossing Technical Note Final Issue.pdf](#)

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## **ADDENDUM**

The Capital Programming Committee, on 23 May 2018, requested clarification of the staff costs previously reported in item 4.3.

It is noted this previously reported item contains an error, the SNH grant of £64,668 is, in fact, a grant towards both fees (£36,686) and ACC's staff costs (£27,982).

The gross cost of extending the employment of the Park Ranger, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, has been estimated at £28,874.43 (based on known pay settlement information).