

7.5 PROMENADE / INTERMEDIATE WORKS



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A Teams meeting was held on the 8th October with ACC Environmental Services to discuss the Beachfront Masterplan.

Attendees

Steven Shaw – Head of Environmental Services at ACC (SS)
Stephen Knight – Project Manager at HUB North (SK)
Chris Mitchell – Keppie Design (CM)
Evie Harper – OPEN (EH)
Pol MacDonald – OPEN (PM)

As part of this meeting there was discussion about the desire to get some immediate work done, to improve the environment and to show care for the existing space. Steven Shaw explained what ACC have been doing in the City Centre which has aimed to improve perceptions and care through enhanced cleaning and maintenance. This could be carried out on the beachfront area. The most important first step however is to define an area to focus on, as the beachfront area is large and a lot of effort and money could be spread very thinly without much impact.

It was discussed that the emerging Masterplan concepts would be a good place to start – therefore including: Beach Boulevard from Justice Street right down to beach itself, from the start of the Amusements in the south to where Accommodation Road joins with the Esplanade in the north, incorporating the Hill, and from Links Road to the beach are itself.

Steven Shaw suggested, as they had done with the City Centre, that a site walk-around should be undertaken to consider all the possible elements that could be tackled by his team in the first instance. It was also suggested that Doug Richie from the Road team should be involved. This site walk-around could happen with the Aberdeen Beach Design Team and a ‘shopping list’ of what was possible in a certain time-frame be agreed. The aim would be to carry this out by end of October.

The below list was used to aid initial discussion about what was possible. This is listed below with commentary on discussion.

The need for improved maintenance and cleanliness

- This was agreed, and the definition of the site boundary/extent of work would need to be defined at the outset. This is part of what is ongoing in the city centre. It is a form of enhanced cleaning.

Additional lighting along the lower promenade

- This would be difficult in the short term but should be something to consider for the bigger proposals. However, some additional feature lighting could be considered in focused areas where power exists already, such as the underpass to the beach.

Street art on the stairways and tunnels

- This is a definite possibility, and there are several groups which could be engaged

with. Again, a remit for engagement needs to be defined.

Sculptures

- Same as above. Consideration of temporary artwork was suggested.

Painting of railings

- This is possible but again within a defined area.

Improve pavement surface

- There are large areas of pavement surface, and the extent of work could eat up a great deal of resource.

Creation of a cycleway along the back of the road

- Discuss with Roads Department. There is plenty of space down there already. Do cycleways need more definition? Perhaps further discussion with Active Travel within ACC would be useful.

Creation of a bay for a multitude of water sports and include a pier

- Agreed that this is a great idea but needs to be part of the bigger proposals and involve some of the many active groups that are part of the beachfront use – these need to be carefully identified and a working group set up to discuss how this would evolve for the beachfront area and access to the sea.

Additional signage including signage to connect the beach and city centre

- In principle yes, however the new overall park area will require new signage and this exercise shouldn't be doubled up. There was a discussion about how ACC use temporary signage to inform people about the management of the beach area. For instance, they sometimes must close some of the steps leading to the beach because of sand erosion due to tidal shift. People/Public don't understand this and often get frustrated. This can be alleviated by keeping people educated about the management of a natural resource and signage could play a part in this. There was also a further discussion about incorporating art and signage, with highlights of local history. It was suggested something like a QR code system could be used throughout the site that fed information about interesting local facts, both historical, natural history and events. This is also something that can be reused in any final scheme. Ideas for information could relate to 'Dolphin Watch' for instance, education about the Groynes and tidal erosion/climate change, former industry like the Rope works etc...

Options for relocating the cricket pitch

- Part of the bigger picture.

Ideas around visitor attractions

- Part of bigger picture. But there could be a great information link, signage etc from city centre to beachfront.

Upgrade on the play park on the Queens Links

- This does not need to be a specific action, as play needs to be throughout the overall park, and effort should be put into this – as well as highlighting the youth engagement in doing this.

Additional accessibility

- Needs further investigation, as enhancing accessibility in the short term may require significant structural modifications, that will be addressed in the overall park exercise.

Clubhouse for recognised clubs and users, changing rooms, shower

- This is really one for the overall beachfront park. However, there was a specific need for outdoor shower area when coming off the beach, as toilets are being used presently, and affecting maintenance. It was suggested that this could be an easy fix by including shower facilities/taps within the shelter structure/colonnade immediately adjacent to the beach, where it is believed there is main water connection (within former adjacent toilet?).

Other elements discussed

- It was suggested that it would be straightforward to introduce new seating/benches, more bins along with enhance litter clearance and general ongoing tidy up.



INTERMEDIATE / SHORT TERM / MEDIUM TERM WORKS

Promenade / Immediate Works (as discussed 28.10.21)

The following sets out proposed interventions at the Promenade/Esplanade at Aberdeen Beachfront (as per recent discussions and site visits), for which approval will be sought at the November CGR Committee. These are itemised under the following headings:

1 – Immediate (i.e. action between Nov – Feb CGR Committee, reporting back to Feb CGR on progress)

2 – Short Term (i.e. report back to Feb CGR Committee with indicative brief/designs/ costs?)

3 – Medium Term (i.e. part of wider Masterplan design activities / may require longer term input from design team/consultants/user groups etc)

1 – Immediate

(Area to be identified on plan – c1km stretch from Ice Arena to Burger King)

Repair/upgrade (tie in with C&YP Engagement where possible)

- The need for improved maintenance and cleanliness (new bins / tie in with feedback from C&YP consultation)
- Inspect and repair historical handrails (weather dependant).
- Repair and replace stairwells at shelter / toilet locations.
- Installation of safety signage to notify why stairwells leading to the beach are closed off
- Tidy up of some grass banks but retain natural feel.
- Clean and repair street furniture, bins benches etc.
- Clean and replace existing signage as required.
- Tidy up of existing shrubs and landscaped areas.

2 - Short Term

Repair/upgrade suggestions

- Repaint historical handrails (weather dependant)
- Renovate Fittie public toilet block (potential conversion to Surf Club clubhouse with potential alternative toilet facilities)
- Treat rust and repaint stairwell handrails on from upper footpath to lower footpath (weather dependant)
- Repointing to granite walls
- Repairs to subsiding stairwells
- Additional signage including signage to connect the beach and city centre
- Resurfacing of poorly damaged footpaths and seating areas
- Repairs to granite cobbles at roadside
- Repairs to road surface, potholes etc.
- Remarking pedestrian crossings, road markings, parking bays, and sleeping



SYNERGIES WITH ENGAGEMENT

policemen

- Installation of retaining walls as required at specific locations to protect erosion of banks and provide seating (Lower Esplanade, to bottom of grass banks)
- Install standing tables or picnic benches or relocate Union Street parklets [potential crossover with Spaces for People workstream]
- Information and recognition of beach and water users. Aberdeen`s outdoor swimming groups, surfing groups etc
- Upgrade existing Queens Links playpark
- Additional/improved accessibility opportunities

Ideas/points of interest/Interpretation Points (May become Short Term – potential tie in with Gray’s School or Art project)

- Reference and information to sighting Northern lights (QR codes) and viewing points
- Reference and information to dolphin watching (QR codes)
- Reference to maritime museum and other local attractions (QR codes)
- Information on cold water swimming, the benefits tempered with health and safety (QR codes)
- Interpretation Points could also be included at Broadhill

Ideas/points of interest/Interpretation Points

- Aberdeen’s fishing history, Aberdeen’s relationship with oil and gas, Aberdeen’s relationship with renewable energy, what’s next for Aberdeen
- Surfboards planted on their ends to provide outside changing space for beach users and water enthusiasts.
- Additional bike stations, repairs tool kits. (Cycle hub days where local business mechanics have set times to teach cyclists basic repairs).
- Water bottle stations (potential Scottish Water engagement)
- Additional lighting on lower Esplanade.
- Clubhouse for recognised clubs and users, changing rooms, showers

Other areas for consideration

- Working with local artists (street art / tunnels / sculpture)
- Working in conjunction with RGU for young architects
- Working in conjunction with the clubs who heavily use the beach
- Ideas around visitor attractions

3 – Medium Term

Ideas/points of interest

- Creation of a cycleway along the back of the road
- Creation of a bay for a multitude of water sports inc Pier/Boardwalk
- Options for relocating the cricket pitch

Children and Young People Engagement

Some of the ideas raised within the engagement sessions with young people could be incorporated as intermediate works. This would be a great way of showing that the ideas raised have been listened to and are being acted on. In this way, through the next stages of engagement when we show how proposals are developing in response to the comments it would also be possible to show physical evidence that the input received is valued and is being acted upon. For example this could include the following:

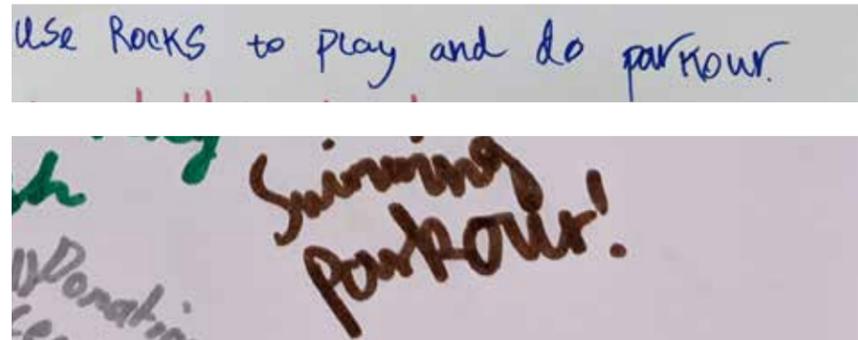
Bins

A frequently raised item by the P6 students was the desire for a cleaner beach and the provision of more bins. Installing bins, potentially with artwork from the school or similar as part of the branding could be a quick win. Beach litter pickers could be provided and events undertaken in association with this.



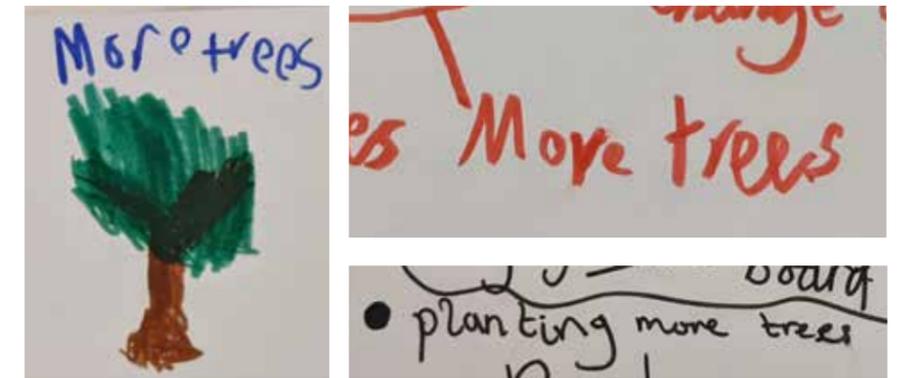
Play

Some of the play proposals suggested by children could be reasonably easily implemented, for example informally placed rocks for use in parkour could be installed and relocated at a later date.



Tree planting

As the Masterplan proposals begin to firm up it may also be possible to undertake some early tree planting if areas can be identified which will not be subject to change. This would have benefits in allowing the planting to establish and could respond to consultation responses which requested more trees. School children could be included in the planting of trees.



More bright colours and Street Art

The inclusion of street art or repainting walls in brighter colours could also respond to comments raised by P6 students,

