

**CITY CENTRE AND BEACH MASTERPLAN 2022**  
**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**



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# 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan (2022) provides an excellent opportunity for the City of Aberdeen to assess the needs of its citizens, look toward the future and create a progressive plan of action for the betterment of all.

The current socio-economic landscape has been analysed in a post-pandemic world where spaces for people have rightly been prioritised with a renewed focus on both environmental and economic sustainability in the current climate emergency. City trends have also been reviewed to ensure that the future vision for Aberdeen aligns with the current and future market demands of this evolving context.

The Masterplan is set out, together with a SMART objectives review process to ensure that it can be measured against the four key stakeholder pillars:

- Economy,
- Inclusion,
- Net Zero and
- Quality.

The Masterplan projects illustrate a coordinated approach to the future development across the city centre and nearby beachfront. A robust movement strategy illustrates the principle of a connected city by prioritising the needs of those walking, cycling, wheeling and using public transport.

The stakeholder and delivery programme set out the next steps of the Masterplan, highlighting key stages, events and identifying funding, implementation and maintenance strategies. The Masterplan will be a live programme that will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure progress, relevance and deliverability.

Many of the projects being progressed will provide high quality spaces and activities that are free to use for everyone. The projects, both within the city centre and the beachfront, include significant new planting opportunities, improving the natural environment throughout the development area. Key examples include a new urban park at the beach and the creation of public spaces and event opportunities.

The urban park projects within the beach area will also provide a major new play area that will benefit children and young people across a spectrum of ages and interests. Opportunities for incidental play in the city centre streetscape projects and the prioritisation of active travel measures will encourage activity and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.



AERIAL VIEW OF CITY CENTRE AND BEACH MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY, LOOKING NORTH

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and Delivery Programme was approved unanimously in 2015 by Aberdeen City Council. Its purpose was to create a regeneration blueprint to transform the city centre while conserving Aberdeen's proud heritage to ensure greater economic prosperity and a better quality of life for all.

Due to the significant economic, social and environmental changes in the previous 6 years, including the Covid 19 pandemic, in May 2021 the Council undertook a review of the 2015 CCMP in conjunction with the development of a new Beachfront Development Framework and George Street Mini Masterplan.

That review afforded the opportunity to consider how a framework for economic recovery in the short, medium and long terms could be provided, and a basis from which to monitor and consider the impact of structural changes that the pandemic had accelerated, alongside the implications for the future of the city centre. This included, for example, the loss of retail, the impact of home working and the effects on consumer and business confidence and behaviour. The review also presented an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of cultural and other assets in the city and their importance in supporting recovery in the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors.

This review did not replace or supersede the City Centre Masterplan, but instead recognised that many CCMP 2015 projects are not within the direct control of Aberdeen City Council and may no longer be relevant given changing priorities brought about by the public health emergency. The Council therefore agreed in the short-term to focus resources and attention on a number of intervention areas that the Council itself could progress as priorities to help the City's wider socio-economic post-pandemic recovery.

Following this, in February 2022 the Council announced its intention to recalibrate the City Centre Masterplan to incorporate the Beach and George Street master planning exercises. This was instructed to provide a cohesive, strategic overview and framework for all Masterplan projects and ensure these are aligned within an overarching vision.

It is intended that this recalibrated City Centre and Beach Masterplan (2022) will serve the following purposes:

- An investment tool that showcases the city
- A live programme that can be flexible in responding to future trends/needs
- A communications tool to enable understanding of what the City Centre and Beach Masterplan is about
- A reference document to identify priorities, next steps and monitor progress.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is an iterative review process that plans and programmes must undergo to ensure that significant environmental effects arising are identified, assessed and mitigated in order to integrate environmental considerations into strategic decision-making. An assessment will be undertaken to combine existing Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) for the City Centre and

the Beach in line with this recalibrated report. This assessment will be screened under the SEA process to confirm that all areas have been appropriately considered.

This report will be a live document that will be updated annually to record progress against delivery. All the proposed changes to the city centre and beach areas are informed by engagement with stakeholders including children and young people, public transport operators, residents, and traders. A child friendly version of this report in a more graphical format will also be prepared.

The audience for this report is anyone with an interest in the city centre and beach. From an engagement perspective, we have identified the following audiences:

- Key stakeholders representing a range of interest groups that are relevant to the individual project objectives
- Technical Stakeholders such as statutory consultees and regulatory bodies
- Immediate neighbours for the individual projects
- Children and young people, including the Aberdeen Youth Parliament
- All Aberdeen residents and businesses, alongside those within the wider Aberdeen City region who travel into the city for leisure or business
- National and international investors and visitors

The annual update will report on progress against the key objectives of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan and comment on any changes or external influences that may impact on it, as well as update on progress of delivery of key projects. It will also provide a look ahead to the next year on delivery of the Masterplan.

# 2.0 INTRODUCTION

## 2.2 VISION

The vision for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan is:

### TO CREATE A WORLD CLASS CITY CENTRE AND BEACH THAT RESPECTS AND ENHANCES ABERDEEN'S UNIQUE QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS AND PUTS PEOPLE AT ITS HEART.

As well as being appropriate for both the city centre and beach, the vision reflects the aspirations of a number of key plans including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which was refreshed in 2021 to reflect the additional challenges brought on by Covid 19. The ambition of the Council and its Community Planning Partners remains that Aberdeen should be a place where “all people can prosper”.

Under each LOIP theme, the Community Planning Partnership has developed 15 goals that it is working to achieve over the next seven years. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan will directly contribute to a number of these goals as follows:

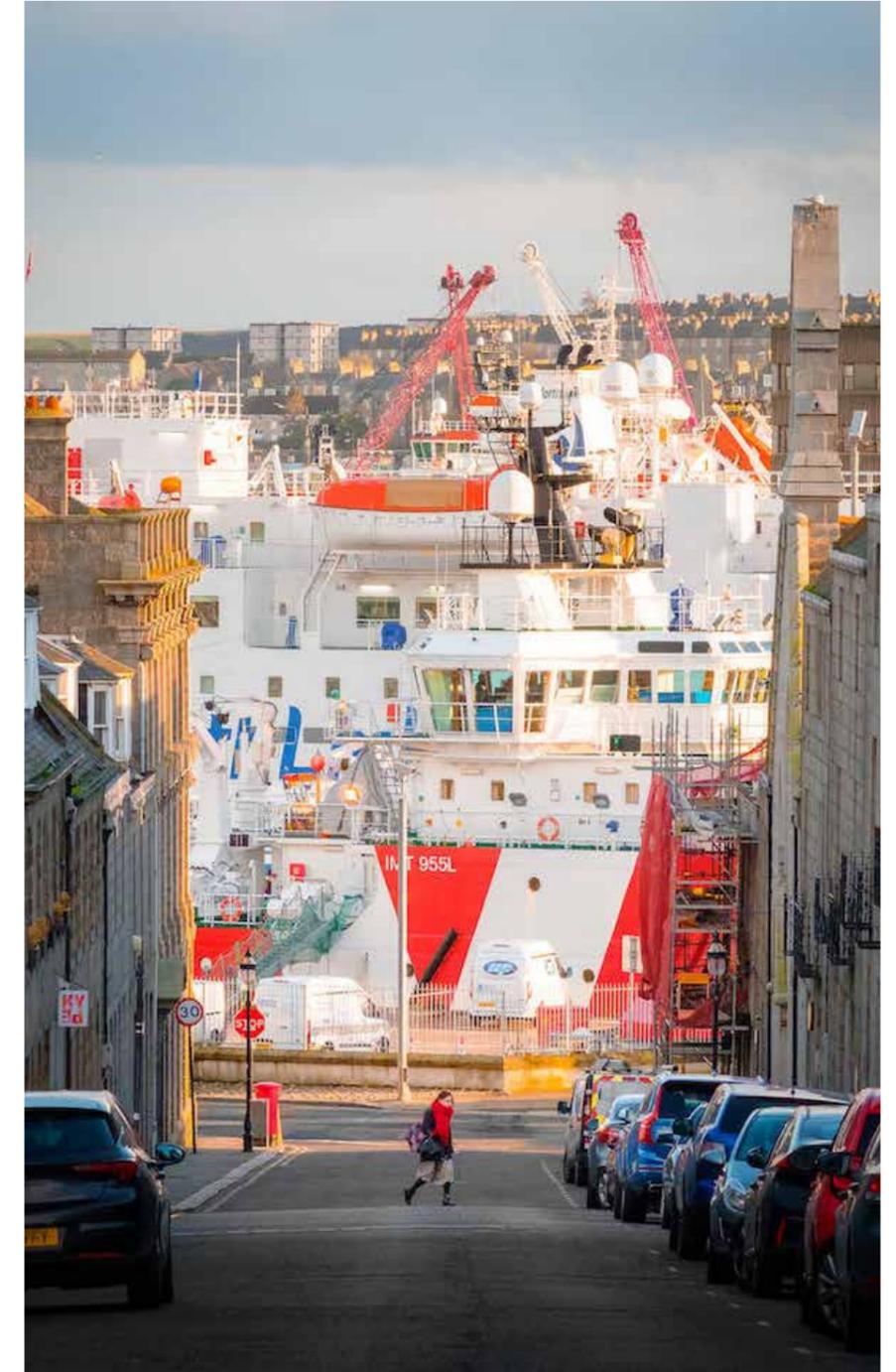
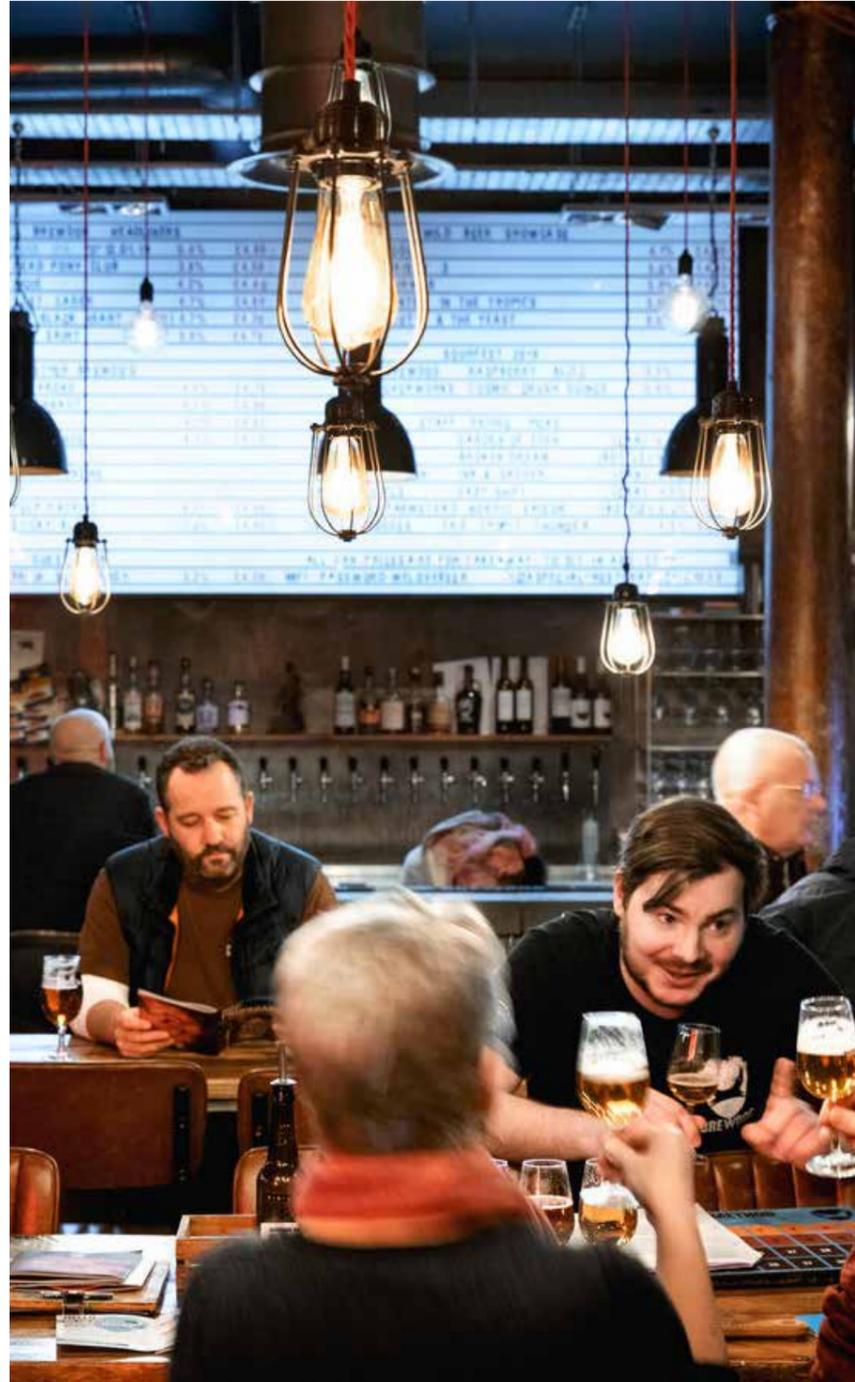
**Economy** – the 3no. economic goals of the LOIP relate to eradicating poverty, supporting 400 residents into Fair Work and enabling 500 residents to upskill and move into economic opportunity. Delivery of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan will both directly and indirectly contribute to these employment and upskilling goals, therefore tackling poverty.

**People** – the 9no. people goals relate to both children and young people, as well as adults, and delivery of the Masterplan can have a positive impact on many. For example, our bespoke children and young people engagement will deliver Masterplan related curriculum and work experience opportunities which can support educational attainment and positive destinations, whilst also ensuring the child-friendly goals are supported by enabling children and young people consultation and participation. The new public realm in the city and at the beach will support healthy living for residents and visitors of all ages.

**Place** – a major objective of the Masterplan, and a goal of the Place theme of the LOIP, is to increase sustainable travel. The proposed transport changes in the city and at the beach will directly support this. The Masterplan will also contribute to the other two goals of reducing carbon emissions and protecting areas for nature.

All projects delivered by the Council and its partners, including the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, should help to deliver the themes of the LOIP. When considering the overarching objectives for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, we have reflected on the LOIP themes and propose the Masterplan objectives should be: Economy, Inclusion, Net Zero and Quality.

As individual projects are brought forward within the Masterplan, they should be assessed against these objectives.



THE NEW URBANISM CREATED BY COMPACT GROWTH IN ABERDEEN  
SOURCE: ABZOLUTELY

# 2.0 INTRODUCTION

## 2.3 SMART OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	MEASUREMENT
<b>MASTERPLAN</b>		
City centre population growth	More people live, work, and use city centre facilities	3,000 extra people living in the city centre by 2040
Increased Gross Value Added	Still having the highest GVA per head in Scotland	£s per annum
Reduction in crime (actual)	Offences and crime figures in a downward trend in the city centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30% fewer young people (12 to 17) charged with an offence and a crime by 2026</li> <li>• 2% fewer people re-convicted within one year by 2026</li> <li>• 1 point increase (4.31 -&gt; 5.31) (/7) in the mean score for people who "Feel safe in the city centre throughout the day and night" by 2026</li> </ul>
Increased footfall in the city centre	More locals, visitors and tourists visiting Aberdeen throughout the year	10% increase in daily average footfall in the city Centre by 2026
Reduced Office/Retail vacancy rates in the city centre	Less empty office/retail space in the city centre	2% (13.99% -> 11.99%) decrease in the office vacancy and 1% (6.39% -> 5.39%) decrease in the retail vacancy rate in the city centre by 2026
Increased ease of walking and cycling around Aberdeen	More active travel across all demographics	30% (1,244 -> 1,617) increase in average daily cycling in the city centre by 2026.
Reduction in car journeys in the centre	Less cars in the city centre	20% reduction in average daily traffic flow by 2026
Reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> /NO <sub>2</sub> emissions	Ongoing reductions in CO <sub>2</sub> /NO <sub>2</sub> emissions in the city centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By at least 61% by 2026 and NZC by 2045</li> <li>• Reduce NO<sub>2</sub> to &lt;35ug/m3 annual mean in the city centre by 2026.</li> </ul>
Increased educational attainment, skills, and life-long learning	Improved education outcomes	To match or be under Scotland's density of skills gaps in each occupation groupings (High Skilled, Middle Skilled, Service and Labour Intensive) by 2026

Measuring success of any Masterplan requires an understanding of the baseline you start at and what the key objectives are that you want to achieve. A set of SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timely) Objectives with metrics and owners has therefore been developed for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan informed by Aberdeen City Council's vision for the city, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and recent Economic Performance Reports.

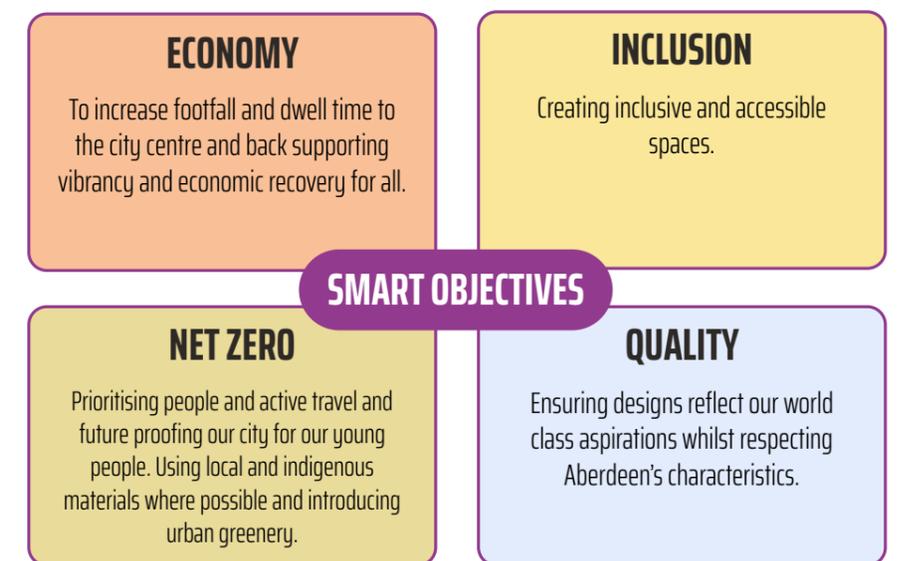
A process for ownership, management, and reporting of the SMART Objectives has been developed where the baseline metrics will be established and regularly reported

OBJECTIVE	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	MEASUREMENT
<b>CITY CENTRE</b>		
Contractor's labour from the local area	Greater use of local labour pool	60% Local labour employed
Creation of new jobs	Construction jobs over build period and market jobs (catering, cleaning, management, and operations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 - 120 new Construction Jobs - Public Realm</li> <li>• 150 - 175 new Construction Jobs - Market</li> <li>• 250 new Market Jobs</li> </ul>
Attracting regional and local businesses into the new Market	New businesses attracted to the city centre	20 - 40 new businesses
Creation of new public realm space leading to increased satisfaction with the city centre	Improved perception of city centre from residents and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62,559 m2 new public realm space</li> <li>• Increased life satisfaction in Aberdeen - 1 point increase (7.21 -&gt; 8.21) in the level of "Life Satisfaction" in Aberdeen residents by 2026</li> <li>• Increased happiness in Aberdeen - 1 point increase (7.17 -&gt; 8.17) in the level of "Happy" in Aberdeen residents by 2026</li> <li>• Increased green space for city residents - 1 point (5.2 -&gt; 6.2) increase in the level Aberdeen Central Residents score for "Can you regularly experience good quality natural space? This includes a wide variety of environments from parks and woodlands to green space alongside paths and streets"</li> </ul>
Reduction in city centre congestion	Bus journey times reduced, more buses on time etc	Buses generally on time 75% (64% -> 75%) of the time
Materials sourced from the local area	Greater use of locally sourced materials such as granite	30 - 50% of net Construction Costs to be local materials

against to allow success to be measured. Some areas of data are already being measured by the Council and other Public Sector bodies and we will measure others such as construction related employment and amount of locally sourced materials.

These SMART Objectives will deliver against the four Masterplan objectives of Economy, Inclusion, Net Zero and Quality. A summary of the measures and metrics are shown in the table above and the full suite of SMART Objectives are included in Appendix 01.

OBJECTIVE	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	MEASUREMENT
<b>BEACH</b>		
Increased footfall and revenue at the Beach Ballroom and other Beach Leisure Facilities	Facilities are more popular, have greater footfall and generate more profits	100% Footfall and 100% revenue increases (Leisure and Ballroom only)
Creation of free public realm and open park/play space, leading to increased satisfaction with the Beach area	Improved perception of Beach from residents and visitors	2,000 m <sup>2</sup> - Decrease in the average distance (m) for city centre Residents to nearest Park, Garden or Playing Field.
Reduction in car journeys at the Beachfront	Less cars in the Beach front area	20% (12,552 -> 10,042) reduction in all vehicle journeys at the beachfront
Creation of new jobs directly associated with new Leisure offering at the Beach	Increase in jobs in Aberdeen	30 new Leisure Jobs by 2025
Materials sourced from the local area	Greater use of locally sourced materials such as granite	20 to 30% of net Construction Costs to be local materials
Contractor's labour from the local area	Greater use of local labour pool	50% Local labour employed



SMART (SPECIFIC MEASURABLE ACHIEVABLE RELEVANT TIMELY) OBJECTIVES

## 3.0 AREA OF FOCUS

### 3.1 ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE + BEACH MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION + ENGAGEMENT

In 2014/15 the City Centre Masterplan was prepared following an extensive engagement exercise. This included three rounds of consultation with stakeholders and the public; an initial discussion in September 2014 on people's priorities and aspirations; Masterplan vision, objectives, projects and spatial strategy in November 2014 and the draft Masterplan in March/April 2015. Taking into consideration the feedback received through the consultations, the final Masterplan and delivery programme were unanimously agreed by Council in June 2015.

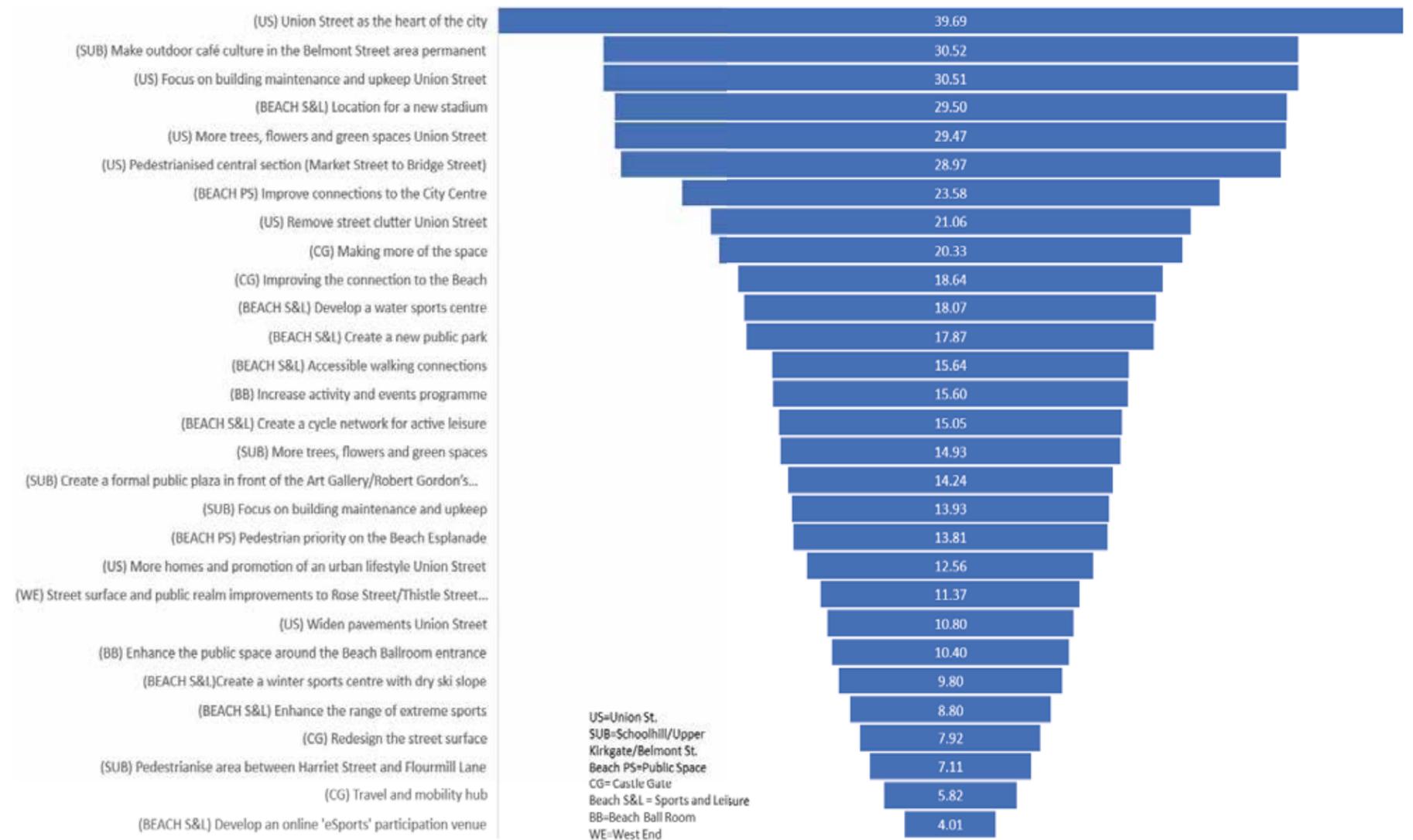
In order to understand current public views and reflect the changing socio-economic context since 2015, a public engagement exercise entitled 'The Future of Aberdeen City Centre and the Beach' ran for 3 weeks from 12 June – 02 July 2021.

Participants were asked to imagine they were responsible for the future of the City Centre and Beach and were allocated a maximum of 500 points to distribute to a series of improvement projects they would most like to see progressed. A maximum of 100 points could be allocated to any single project or theme to reduce the risk of any one project being artificially weighted.

A total of 7697 responses were made to the simulator exercise. Of these, 7610 responses provided demographic information and 2753 responses included 'free text' in one or more of the comments boxes provided. Of those responses, 71% were from those living in Aberdeen City, 23% from those living in Aberdeenshire and the remaining 6% from those in Angus, Moray, Highlands and elsewhere.

In terms of demographics most respondents were in the 35-54 age groups, the largest proportion of respondents listed 'Aberdeen City' as their locality, there was an approximate 60/40 split between male/female genders and the majority of respondents identified as 'White-Scottish' in relation to ethnicity.

The diagram to the right shows the mean score received for all projects and subsequent ranking of priorities by all participants.

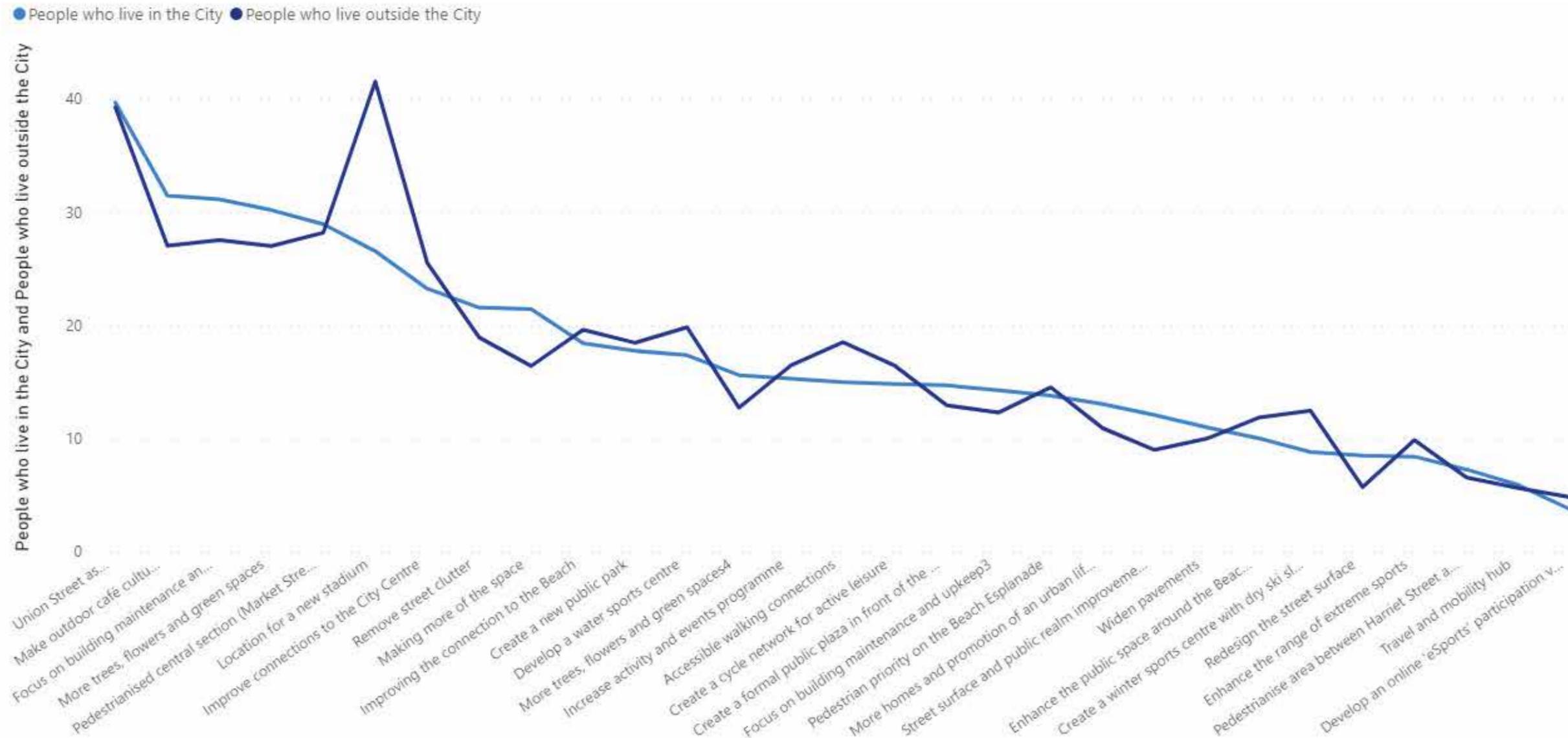


RANKING OF PRIORITIES FOLLOWING CCMP REVIEW  
SOURCE: 'CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN REVIEW' CCMP REPORT, AUGUST 2021

## 3.0 AREA OF FOCUS

### 3.1 ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE + BEACH MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION + ENGAGEMENT

The following graph portrays the differences in response between those living in and those outside the City boundaries. It should be noted that this graph represents the average points scoring in the simulator and not the number of respondents, and therefore represents the priority that those respondents placed on issues. The apparent spike in responses from those outside the City in relation to the beach as location for the stadium represents a points allocation from 29% of respondents, compared to 71% from the City.



COMPARISON OF PRIORITIES FOR THOSE LIVING IN/OUTSIDE OF THE CITY  
SOURCE: 'CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN REVIEW' CCMP REPORT, AUGUST 2021

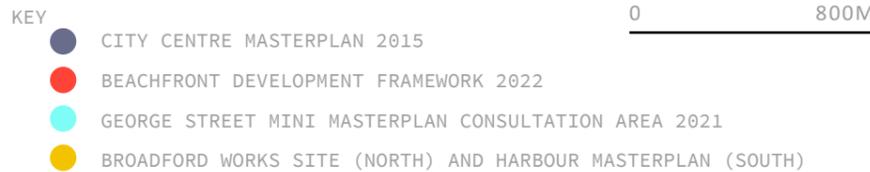
## 3.0 AREA OF FOCUS

### 3.2 MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY + ZONE OF INFLUENCE

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan incorporates the Beach and George Street areas, resulting in a new boundary being developed.

This revised study area combines the City Centre boundary and the Beachfront Development Framework area, in recognition of the importance of the city centre's connection to the beach and vice versa. The George Street Mini Master Plan boundary has also been integrated, due to the overlapping nature of the proposed development areas. Together these individual parts create a new City Centre and Beach Masterplan boundary, shown in purple on the adjacent diagram.

The projects within this revised single boundary will be designed to have a positive impact on the surrounding areas, and act as a catalyst for potential future development in these areas. Particular zones of influence include the adjacent Port of Aberdeen and the former Broadford Works site. This boundary could potentially expand in the future, extending the footprint from the River Dee to the River Don.



PREVIOUS MASTERPLAN BOUNDARIES



REVISED CITY CENTRE + BEACH MASTERPLAN 2022 BOUNDARY, INCLUDING RADIATING ZONE OF INFLUENCE

## 3.0 AREA OF FOCUS

### 3.3 HERITAGE ASSETS

Within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan boundary there are a number of existing built and natural heritage assets which must be protected and enhanced by the Masterplan projects as they are developed and delivered.

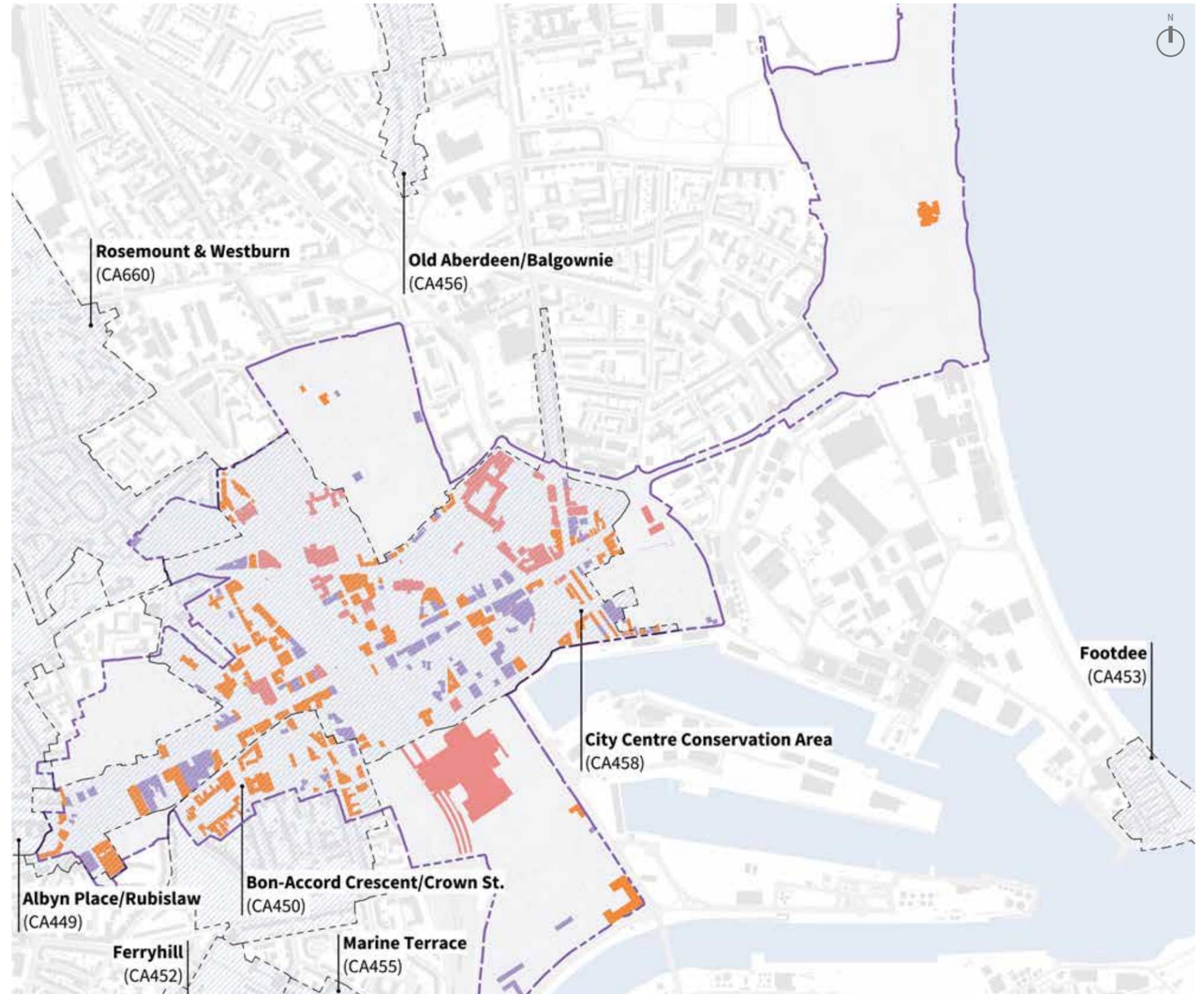
Most of the City Centre is included within the recently reviewed City Centre Conservation Area, and a number of other Conservation Areas such as Footdee, Old Aberdeen and Rosemount and Westburn cover areas within the zone of influence of this Masterplan and the projects it contains. The City Centre is also home to a large number of listed buildings, whilst at the Beach, the Beach Ballroom represents the 'jewel in the crown' for the beachfront proposals.

A Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) was set up in 2017 to tackle the problem of run down historic buildings and streetscape on Union Street, the city's main thoroughfare. The scheme has included over £2.4 million in grant funding to owners of eligible buildings to undertake high quality repair, restoration and refurbishment works.

The current CARS project ends in 2023, however, the Council has committed an additional £2 million towards a future heritage led regeneration scheme for the Union Street Area. Moving forward, the Council intends to submit expressions of interest to both Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for future funding opportunities, including to the new Heritage and Place Programme.

In terms of natural assets and greenspaces, although a lack of meaningful urban external public space currently exists within the City Centre, the beachfront provides an exceptional natural resource for the City and its residents. Improving the public realm in the City Centre and better connecting the City Centre and the Beach are key aims of this Masterplan and were noted as top priorities during public consultation on the City Centre and Beach projects in 2021.

In line with the priorities of this initiative, a pilot project of the Masterplan is the Union Street revitalisation works, which restores the listed frontages along Union Street Central. As reinforced by the Council's public engagement in July 2021, the preservation of Aberdeen's heritage and architecture is of paramount importance to its residents. To learn more about this project, please refer to Section 6 of this report.



LISTED BUILDINGS + CONSERVATION AREAS WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE + BEACH MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY

# 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

## 4.1 LESSONS LEARNED 2015-2022

This City Centre and Beach Masterplan report has been prepared within a changing landscape of policy and guidance across all administrative levels, from UK Government level to local community level. This policy landscape is emerging with a view to achieving a post-pandemic economic recovery, a resetting of our relationships with our city centres, and a global shift in emphasis on sustainable responsibility, reinforced with the signing of the Glasgow Climate Pact at COP 26.

### SOURCES

As part of this exercise a desktop study was undertaken utilising a number of key sources to establish 'lessons learned', which included bespoke reports and documents prepared with reference to local and national policy guidance:

- Scottish Government + COSLA, Town Centre Action Plan Review (Apr 2022)
- Scottish Government + Scottish Cities Alliance, City Centre Recovery Task Force Report (Mar 2022)
- Scottish Futures Trust, Place Guide (Nov 2021)
- National Planning Framework 4 - Scotland 2045 (Nov 2021)
- Scottish Futures Trust, Net Zero Public Sector Building Standard (Mar 2021)
- Scottish Government, A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres (Feb 2021)
- Mark Logan (commissioned by the Scottish Government), Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review (Aug 2020)
- Scottish Government, Place Principle (Apr 2019)
- Our Place, The Place Based Framework (Apr 2019)

### KEY PRINCIPLES

A number of key principles and findings from this research and new policy and guidance can be summarised as follows:

- Adopting the principles of localism and the 20 minute neighbourhood
- Prioritising active travel, recognising the importance of connectivity and accessibility
- Designing places for people, encouraging and facilitating the repopulation of urban centres
- Ensuring long term environmental and economic sustainability
- Providing access to green space for both residents and visitors

### IMPACT ON ABERDEEN

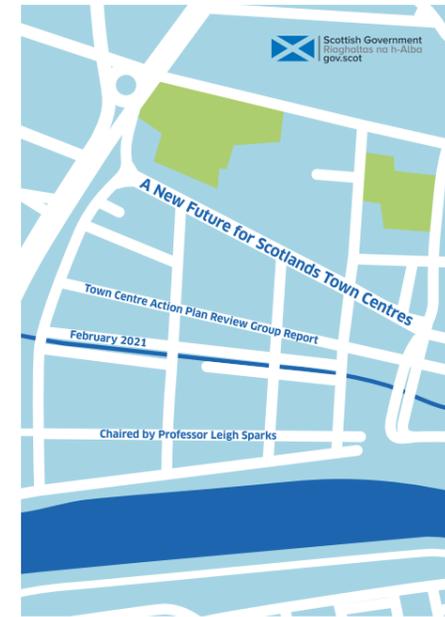
A significant amount of work has already been undertaken to demonstrate what may be possible for the future of the City Centre and Beachfront in terms of individual projects and priority areas for change. Informed by this change in local and regional policy landscape, particular focus will now be given by this recalibrated exercise to prioritising the following areas:

- Prioritising placemaking and providing opportunities for sustainable and active travel connections
- Improving health and well-being and providing inclusive access to outdoor space
- Addressing the recent struggle of commercial retail and revitalising resultant vacant units
- Promoting sustainability and localism

A number of projects, described in more detail later in the report, have been undertaken that begin to address the prioritised areas of focus noted above. These include:

- The City Centre Streetscape Projects which will improve the public realm, enhance active travel and create spaces for people with a real sense of place.
- The redevelopment of the Beach and associated projects will create a wide variety of spaces for outdoor activity, offering a number of opportunities to improve health and well being.
- The Market project will promote the local economy, helping to drive commercial activity in the city centre and arrest the diminishing footfall as a result of a contracting retail sector.
- The projects at George Street and Queen Street offer unique opportunities to re-imagine these neighbourhoods, re-populating the city centre.

The future stages of the Masterplan exercise will continue to identify areas with opportunities for change, to act as a catalyst for the improvement of Aberdeen both short, medium and longer term.



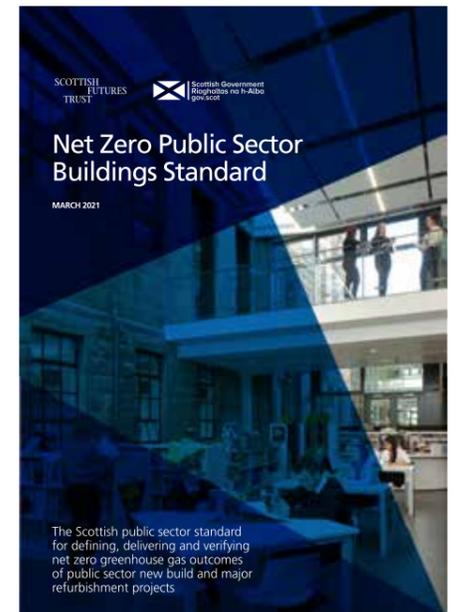
A NEW FUTURE FOR SCOTLAND'S TOWN CENTRES 2021



CITY CENTRE RECOVERY TASK FORCE 2021/22



SCOTTISH TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM REVIEW 2020



NET ZERO PUBLIC SECTOR BUILDINGS STANDARD 2021

# 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

## 4.2 POLICY OVERVIEW + CONTEXT

This section sets out the policy and guidance at varying administrative levels, namely UK, Scotland, Regional and Local, that have influenced preparation of the Masterplan and which this exercise seeks to comply with.

### NATIONAL POLICY

At a National level, in addition to Scottish Planning Policy, the Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and associated strategies, the emerging National Planning Framework 4 was published in draft in 2021. In July 2022, the Scottish Government confirmed that there was strong support for the general direction of NPF4, and that their intention is to lay a revised draft for the Scottish Parliament's approval in the autumn of 2022.

At a UK level, the UK Government's 'Levelling Up' White Paper identifies the requirement for a clear framework to "act upon the drivers of spatial disparity", and identifies six 'Capitals' to be considered – of particular relevance to Aberdeen City Centre and Beach are: Physical capital; Human capital; Social capital; and, Institutional capital. In addition, the White Paper identifies 12 clear 'Missions' to be achieved by 2030.

Those of particular relevance to the success of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach include:

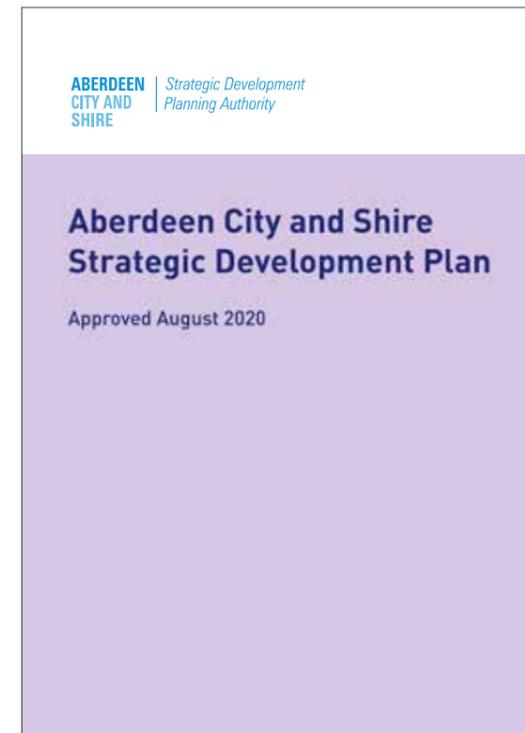
- Transport Infrastructure – improved public transport connectivity and services;
- Health – Health Life Expectancy gaps to be narrowed;
- Well-being – to improve in every area of the UK; and,
- Pride in place - people's satisfaction with their town centre to have risen.

The Aberdeen City Region City Deal in 2016 committed both the UK Government and Scottish Government to jointly investing up to £250m whilst Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and local partners committed to investing £576m over the next decade. Six years in, the Deal is now worth £1.001billion due to partner/private sector investments and benefits realisation. The commitments made under the deal include Transport and Digital Connectivity Projects, Aberdeen Harbour Expansion, Net Zero Technology Centre, Bio Hub and SeedPod. At the same time of the Deal signing, the Scottish Government committed to a further £254m to support the digital and housing investment and £200m to reduce rail journey time between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

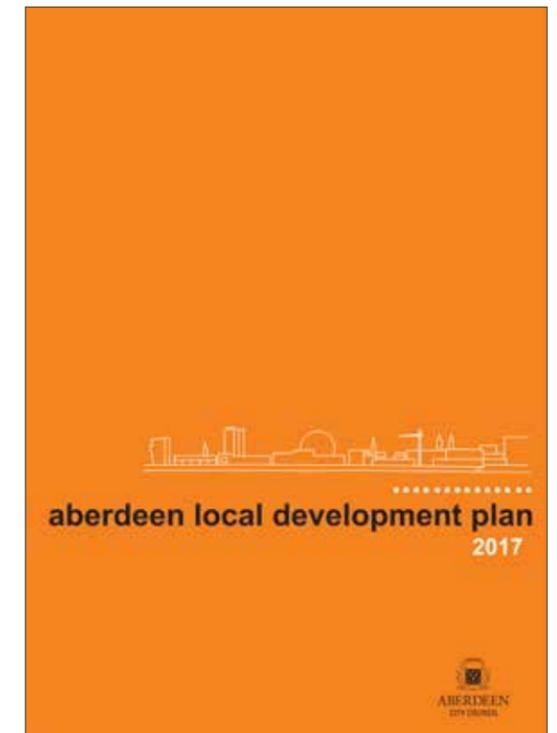
A new regional economic strategy is in the process of being written to reflect progress made on delivering the 2015 plan and the impacts of external shocks on the city centre economy and alignment to UK/SG strategies.



ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL 2016



ABERDEEN CITY + SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020



ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017

# 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

## 4.2 POLICY OVERVIEW + CONTEXT

The draft National Planning Framework 4 identifies that each part of Scotland can be planned and developed to create:

- sustainable places, where we reduce emissions and restore and better connect biodiversity;
- liveable places, where we can live better, healthier lives;
- productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy; and
- distinctive places, where we recognise and work with our assets.

In addition, NPF4 sets out specific actions for a “North east transition” which actively plans a just transition from oil and gas to a net zero future. These actions include: Transition to net zero; Improve local liveability; Regenerate coastal communities; Decarbonise connectivity.

Additional Scotland-wide actions which are key to the City Centre and Beach Masterplan Recalibration are that of: 20-minute neighbourhoods and local living representing liveable environments and great access to services for all; Sustainable Tourism, where tourism is a priority sector within the Aberdeen Regional Economic Strategy; and the Reinvention and Future Proofing of City Centres, where the City Centre and Beach Masterplan will have a national impact, similar to, if not exceeding, the impact of areas such as the Dundee Waterfront.

### CITY AND TOWN CENTRES

Specifically in relation to city and town centres, the Scottish Government’s ‘**A New Future for Scotland’s Town Centres**’ (Feb 2021) promotes a set of proposals which will strengthen the role of town centres in planning and the role of communities in shaping their town and town centre. Recommendations include: Towns and town centres to be included in NPF4 with a requirement to create and implement town plans; and, Expanded and Aligned Funding of Demonstration Projects in Towns and Town Centres.

**More recently, the Scottish Government, partnering with the Scottish Cities Alliance, have also published ‘At the Heart of Economic Transformation’, the City Centre Recovery Task Force Report (March 2022). This identifies the impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency on city centres, and sets out the areas and actions that the Task Force have agreed to prioritise. These immediate priority actions focus on: Action on immediate recovering; Data on spend; Building expertise; Visitor campaign; Investor attraction; Greater clarity around the return to offices; and, Call on UK Government to make changes to VAT to better support city centre recovery.**

**In putting these recommendations into practice, the Task Force Report sets out seven 5-year outcomes for city centre recovery, namely: 1 - Increased residential capacity and occupancy in city centres; 2 - Smaller city centre carbon footprint; 3 - Reduction in the amount of vacant and derelict land and property; 4 - Increase in city centre creative, entrepreneurial and start-up activity; 5 - More revenue raising opportunities for local authorities; 6 - Reduction in oversupply of retail, and increase in cultural offer; and, 7 - Faster and more agile planning decisions. The City Centre and Beach Masterplans as prepared, in conjunction with other Council activities, shall align with the 5-year priorities as set out by the Task Force.**

### TRANSPORT

With respect to transport at a national level, in addition to the **National Transport Strategy, the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (Feb 2021)** echoes the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan by identifying the need for a 20% reduction in car kilometres with a modal shift from car to walking, cycling and public transport. The Review also includes a number of recommendations which are pertinent to Aberdeen City Centre, most notably the development of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) – a bus-based rapid transit system for the region which would prioritise buses and connect key destinations on the outskirts of Aberdeen to the city centre. A national development around provision of a new Rapid Transit network for the city is also outlined in the draft NPF4.

At a Regional level, the **Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2020)** recognises Aberdeen City Centre as a ‘Transformation Zone’ and “an important asset for the City Region [which] must continue to be enhanced and promoted”. **The Regional Economic Strategy and Action Plan (2018)** focuses on key themes of: Investment in infrastructure; Innovation; Inclusive economic growth; and, Internationalisation. In addition, there are Key Actions identified for Aberdeen, including: Enhance City Centre environment by implementation of transport elements of the City Centre Masterplan and a Low Emissions Zone; and, Review and scope potential future transformational projects.

Echoing the national position on transport, the **Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2040** sets out six key priorities: Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity; Zero fatalities on the road network; Air quality that is cleaner than WHO standards for emissions from transport; Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net zero by 2045; Accessibility for all; A step-change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes. Related to this is the key Policy Heading of ‘Delivering Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART)’

### LOCAL POLICY

At the Local level, planning policy and guidance is provided by the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017, which will soon be replaced by the emerging Aberdeen Local Development 2022 which is currently undergoing Examination in Public by the Scottish Ministers. Both of these plans provide detailed planning policy to be considered when considering proposals across the city, including the city centre and beach, and also provide more detailed information and briefs in relation to specific opportunities (OP sites). In addition, within the emerging **Aberdeen Local Development 2022**, the Council have identified their first Energy Transition Zone - a land use zoning and supporting policy specifically aimed at supporting the delivery of low and zero carbon technologies, placing Aberdeen at the forefront of this emerging industry. The Energy Transition Zone has been placed adjacent to Aberdeen’s South Harbour Extension and the rail line to maximise the development opportunities.

**The Council’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan** and associated Locality Plans are key in setting out a vision for an Aberdeen as “a place where all people can prosper”, and considers the People, Place and Economy of Aberdeen. The refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) was approved in July 2021, with an annual report published in July 2022. The LOIP identifies 15 ‘stretch’ outcomes to be delivered by 2026 and 75 shorter term improvement aims. Stretch Outcomes particularly relevant to the City Centre and Beach include: Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026; Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 - this includes the Key Drivers of encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles, and increasing satisfaction and use of community facilities and green environment to increase the health and well-being for older people and people managing long term conditions); Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen’s carbon emissions by 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate; and, Increasing sustainable travel with 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.

**The Locality Plan for Aberdeen City – Central (2021-2026)** identifies six Locality Priorities for the area. Of specific relevance to the City Centre and Beach Masterplan Recalibration, and under the Place Theme, is the priority to ‘Maximise use of spaces in communities to create opportunities for people to connect and increase physical activity’. Associated with this Priority for Place within the Central area are the aims to: Increase the number of community run green spaces, including in priority neighbourhoods, by 2023; Increase percentage of people who cycle as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023; and, Increase percentage of people who walk as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023.

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Council's City Growth cluster continues to review the economic trends and with the monthly economic bulletin and the Council's independent Economic Policy Panel Report (due November 2022) will monitor the economic trends in the city and region. The Economic Report will produce a set of recommendations based on the region's progress to date in response to the regional economic strategy. A new strategy is being worked on and will be available in autumn 2022.

At the same time as the work on the CCMP Review, the Scottish Government and the UK Government have been developing new funding and investment schemes around Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund, Just Transition Fund and Green Freeports. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan and Local Development Plan will, together, provide opportunities for interventions to align to these new funds, and potential themes in the Share Prosperity Fund. At the same time the City Centre and Beach Masterplan aligns to both the UK Government and Scottish Government Climate Change plans, and in particular opportunities for the scalable offshore wind production under ScotWind and Intog and corresponding opportunities around hydrogen production and distribution. In November 2021, the Council approved bp as its partner in a new joint venture company, bp Aberdeen Hydrogen Ltd.

There has been increased take up of commercial property in the city centre reflecting both ongoing offshore energy production, the transition to net zero and the end of Covid-19 restrictions. The Port of Aberdeen saw its first vessel at the new harbour south expansion, and it will be fully operational in two phases in October 2022 and summer 2023. In June 2022, the Port, along with Aberdeen International Airport and Peterhead Port Authority, supported by the Council and Aberdeenshire Council, submitted a bid to be one of two Green Freeports in Scotland. If successful, this would deliver three tax sites in the region that would secure additional inward investment to Scotland, estimated at around 32,000 jobs and £8.5bn gross value added.

In response to changing shopping patterns, and the effects of Covid-19, a new 2021-2026 business plan for Aberdeen Inspired has been published. Officers will continue to work with the BID to align elements of the Business Gateway support to independent city centre businesses, and projects supporting the events and tourism sector.

Local employability partnerships continue their work in preparing for the acquisition of the required Net Zero skills. There is an opportunity for these important city centre recovery services to have a 'satellite' presence in the city.

In 2022, the Scottish Government and Scottish Cities Alliance published its Cities Recovery Report on what Scottish cities should focus on in the recovery phase. Based upon the above, Scottish Cities Alliance is developing a workplan that addresses the immediate, medium-term and long-term priorities of the report. This workplan, due to be finalised in autumn 2022, involves:

- Identifying revenue raising opportunities for local authorities and whether there are policy levers including changes to VAT we could usefully use to better support city centre recovery
- Identifying ways to reduce the carbon footprint of city centres
- Increasing the occupancy and residential capacity of city centres
- Reducing the amount of vacant and derelict land
- Creating jobs and increasing business growth in city centres
- Increasing the consumer cultural offer and mitigating the impacts of the oversupply of retail in city centres
- Developing faster and more flexible planning decisions

Since the huge impact of the pandemic and the lockdowns, employment rates in the City have risen for the 2nd straight quarter after falling for several quarters during the pandemic. Job postings in the city have risen, but not as quickly as in other Scottish cities. City centre footfall levels rose throughout 2021 to around 83% of pre-pandemic levels. Aberdeen's reliance on the energy sector means its retail market has faced an even greater burden. The office vacancy rate in the business improvement district is 5.5 percentage points since the pandemic began. The city's retail vacancy rate has risen from 4.3% in 2020 Q1 to 5.8% as of 2021 Q4. Shopping Centres have been most affected in Aberdeen, with the vacancy rate increasing from 6.2% in 2019 Q4 to 13.8% by 2021 Q4. The work of the Scottish Cities Alliance in point 1.6 addresses this 'High Street' challenge. We need city centres that use under-utilised and vacated space to reinvigorate city centres by creating the conditions for a change in or new uses. As a local planning authority, a public landlord, and a licensing authority, the Council can play an important role in supporting 'meanwhile use'. Such strategies can allow and incentivise temporary use of under-used and vacant spaces by businesses and community organisations in the short term. Our medium- and long-term responses are focused on the long term economic and environmental ambitions of the city.

As the City emerged from lockdown restrictions because of Covid-19, a number of successful events were delivered including Spectra, Tour of Britain and touring exhibitions at Aberdeen Art Gallery.



PROVOST SKENE'S HOUSE, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



ABERDEEN 365: SPECTRA FESTIVAL OF LIGHT, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.4 CULTURE + TOURISM

The Council contributes to the sector in a number of ways – direct support to promotion of the city attractions via VisitAberdeenshire and VisitScotland; operation of a number of city centre attractions within Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums; and supporting events in the city and at P&J Live.

The City of Aberdeen has a rich array of cultural assets including historical buildings, traditional theatres, arts centres, an arena complex, a music hall, libraries, archives, museums and galleries, and a varied programme of cultural events which attracts a growing number of visitors. History and culture are within the top three motivators for overnight visits to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, reflecting the importance of these assets and the wider cultural sector to the visitor economy. Pandemic restrictions have had significant impact on cultural and visitor economy, in particular cultural venues, events and festivals which in some cases have not been able to open for the past two years. Many face an increasingly challenging operating environment with increased running costs and visitor figures still to return to pre-Covid numbers.

The Event 365 Programme has been a key component of the City's cultural offering, delivering a host of successful events within the city centre since 2015. These events have included the Great Aberdeen Run, Tour Series, Granite Noir, NuArt, Aberdeen Jazz Festival, True North, SPECTRA, Scotland's Festival of Light which attracted 116,000 visitors as the first major event to return after Omicron. Looking forward to the remainder of 2022 and into 2023 Aberdeen City Council are working with Aberdeenshire Council and other regional and national stakeholders on the grand depart of the 2022 Tour of Britain.

The year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the Aberdeen Lemon Tree, at the same time Aberdeen Performing Arts unveiled its plans to revamp the iconic venue through a £8.9m redevelopment which will include an extension to create a new studio, foyer, café, meeting space and a new, accessible entrance. The feasibility study was commissioned with support from Scottish Enterprise and ACC and aligned to the Council's commitment to regenerate Queen Street as part of the City Centre Masterplan.

P&J Live, opened in September 2019, the £333 million complex, delivered by Aberdeen City Council in partnership with Henry Boot Developments, replaced the Aberdeen Exhibition Conference and Centre (AECC) with 48,000 square metres of multi-purpose event space. 2022 has seen Scotland's newest events complex win a number of accolades including Best Conference Venue at the GCNE's Conference and Events Awards 2022 as well as securing the Venue of the Year Award at the AEO Awards, fending off competition from Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre, The NEC in Birmingham and The O2 in London.

Provost Skene's House opened to visitors in October 2021 following a £3.8m redevelopment as part of the CCMP. Dating from 1545, Provost Skene's House is Aberdeen's oldest surviving townhouse. The new attraction celebrates the pioneering people of Aberdeen and the North-East who have not only shaped the city but have

also helped transform the world. The stories of around 100 remarkable people are featured in 10 themed interactive displays, ranging from scientists and innovators to writers, sporting champions and stars of stage and screen. The Council works closely with VisitAberdeenshire and VisitScotland to promote the attraction to local residents and visitors to the city, including an #AberdeenIsCalling campaign with VisitScotland in summer 2021, promoting the city's cultural attractions including Provost Skene's House, the Art Gallery and Maritime Museum. There have been 20,500 visits to Provost Skene's House since opening.

Aberdeen's Art Gallery is another of the City's key cultural assets, reopening in 2019 following a landmark redevelopment supported by the Council, the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund and a wide range of funders and individual donors. It has received a number of accolades, including Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020 and the RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland award 2021. Judges commented that the redevelopment had made an existing building more welcoming, sustainable and accessible. The Gallery was also short-listed for the European Museum of the Year Award 2022. The Art Gallery has achieved 325,023 visits since opening in November 2019, including two periods of closure during the pandemic Mar-Aug 2020 and Jan-Apr 2021.

Highlights of the Art Gallery exhibition programme during the period included:

**British Art Show 9** (Jul-Oct 2021) - the first time this prestigious survey of the best recent art from the UK has been seen in Aberdeen. Aberdeen was the launch venue for the tour which included Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth.

**Zandra Rhodes – 50 Years of Fabulous** (Nov 2021-March 2022) - the Art Gallery was the first venue outside of London to host this major exhibition celebrating the 50-year career of the iconic fashion designer.

**Aberdeen Artists Society** exhibited in the Gallery for the first time since the redevelopment (April-July 2022), displaying over 300 works by 270 artists.

**The Galloway Hoard – Viking-age Treasure** brings this remarkable collection of rare and unique Viking-age objects ever found in Britain or Ireland to Aberdeen from 30 July to 3 October 2022.

On a smaller scale, but no less significant, Scotland's oldest surviving manuscript, the **Book of Deer** (Jul-Oct 2022) is on loan from Cambridge University Library. This important loan is part of a summer-long season of cultural activity celebrating one of Scotland's greatest treasures, which contains in its margins what is thought to be the earliest examples of written Scots Gaelic. The project and exhibition are being promoted widely as part of VisitScotland's Year of Stories 2022.

Working with VisitAberdeenshire, the three venues: Aberdeen Art Gallery, Maritime Museum and Provost Skene's House are developing a travel trade offer, ensuring Aberdeen is recognised as a must-visit destination. Expos play a vital role in the promotion of the venues and the travel trade product, communication with VisitAberdeenshire is imperative, collating up to date exhibition information and support can be provided to ensure potential buyers have an excellent experience when visiting. The visitor journey is also being developed to establish a cruise ready welcome, collaborating with various partners across the city.

With support from the Scottish Government City Centre Recovery Fund in 2021 and 2022 the Archives, Gallery & Museums team has delivered marketing campaigns with VisitScotland and VisitAberdeenshire highlighting the three city-centre venues: Art Gallery, Provost Skene's House and the Maritime Museum. The campaigns position Aberdeen as a vibrant year-round cultural destination, with quality attractions, festivals and events, accommodation and food and drink.



ABERDEEN ART GALLERY, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

## 4.5 NET ZERO JOURNEY

The value of integrating sustainable development and environmental thinking and interventions into the Masterplan Objectives and projects is critical to ensure a safe, attractive, productive and future focused City Centre. This includes enhanced connectivity, facilitating increased active and sustainable travel and improving urban greening.

The current and future impacts of the climate and nature crises on all aspects of society are becoming far more evident and driving change. Global climate, food and biodiversity initiatives have come to the fore and significant statutory and policy advancements have been introduced, aiming to tackle poverty, health and wellbeing, emission reduction, resilience and enable a just transition.

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 put in place a target for net zero greenhouse emissions by 2045 in Scotland, accelerating new and updated associated policy interventions, which are articulated in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan update. Outcomes to increase resilience to the impacts of a changing climate are set out in Climate Ready Scotland, the second Scottish Adaptation Programme.

In response, the city-wide climate journey is progressing. Following production of a Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen (2020), the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap was produced collaboratively and approved in February 2022, setting the pathway for a net zero city by 2045.

The Routemap is accompanied by 6 net zero enabling strategies which establish the direction for Aberdeen over themes of Buildings and Heat, Mobility, Energy Supply, Circular Economy, Natural Environment and Empowerment. These set outcomes that support a just transition, energy efficiency, decarbonisation, local energy schemes, active and sustainable travel, nature protection and enhancement, maximising resource use, upskilling and reskilling, empowering through education and participation.

Net zero strategic aims for Aberdeen include:

- Decarbonisation of city buildings, with many changes to the ways power and heat is generated and used.
- Reduce travel demand, play a key role in enabling a transition to low/ zero emission vehicles.
- Facilitate more walking, wheeling and use of public transport to reduce emissions.
- Identify, promote and develop circular economy models that can maximise the

value of products and materials.

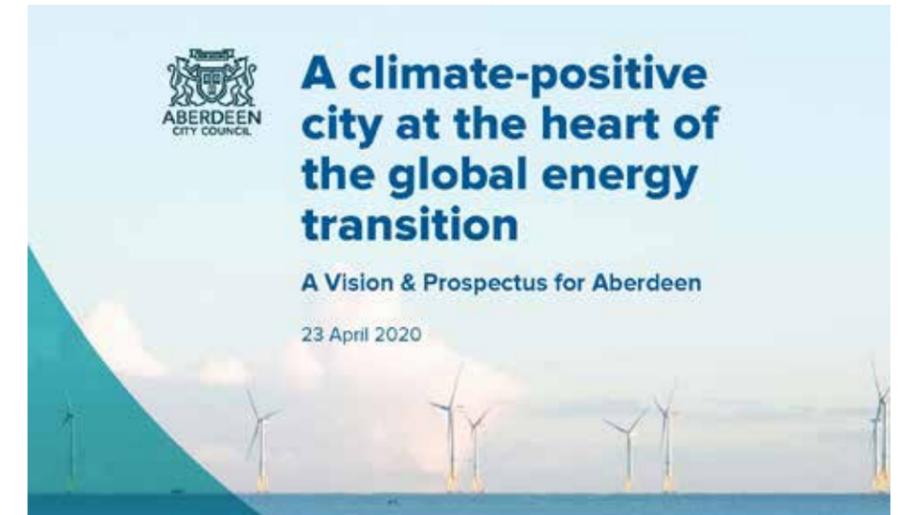
- Develop affordable low-carbon energy choices for our citizens.
- Use our strengths as a global energy capital to put ourselves at the front of the energy transition.
- Further protect and expand nature across Aberdeen, enhancing its integrity, managing it to contribute to an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reversing the nature decline for the multiple benefits.
- Empower stakeholders working with them on our net zero journey, ensuring a strong partnership approach.

Aberdeen Adapts, the City's Climate Adaptation Framework, was refreshed in February 2022. This reflects risks to the City from current and future climate impacts, including more extreme weather events; warmer, wetter winters; hotter, drier summers; and a rise in sea level. It outlines adaptation priorities for the City including; increased use of nature-based solutions, business and community resilience, flood risk management, protecting the coastline, as well as addressing climate change in the planning, build, maintenance and protection of city buildings, infrastructure and heritage.

Aberdeen City Council approved a Council Climate Change Plan in March 2021, setting out actions for climate resilient and net zero Council assets and operations by 2045. In addition, made commitment to: integrated food policies and systems through the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration; taking action towards achieving net zero through the UN Race to Zero campaign; and approved signing of the Edinburgh 'Biodiversity' Declaration. These plans and declarations recognise the significance of these issues; the international call to action on them; as well as a commitment to act at a local level through areas we both control and influence, including the development of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

The Community Planning Aberdeen LOIP refresh has strengthened outcomes for addressing climate change and increasing sustainable travel; as well as introduced a new outcome for addressing the nature crisis by protecting and managing areas for nature. The climate and nature challenges are complex, interconnected and inseparable from our economic, social and physical policies and infrastructure. The Covid-19 recovery needs to address these issues collectively and holistically.

It is critical to ensure these drivers for climate and sustainability are embedded and delivered in the City Centre and Beach Masterplan objectives; and the projects within this plan will do everything possible to align with existing and emerging climate, food, sustainable travel, resource efficiency and nature commitments, targets, strategies, policies and plans.



ABERDEEN CLIMATE VISION



ABERDEEN ADAPTS

**Aberdeen Adapts**



ABERDEEN COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.6 HEALTH + WELLBEING

Within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan there is a desire to improve open spaces, active travel, play, sports and leisure facilities across Aberdeen for the benefit of all citizens and visitors. This presents a great opportunity to consider how these investments can be optimised to support the Scottish Government's strategic objectives to promote positive changes in health and wellbeing.

Enhanced public realm and outdoor green space will not only enhance mental wellbeing, opportunities for play and socialising, but will also support increased levels of active travel, such as walking and cycling, which promote healthier lifestyles and also lower levels of carbon emissions. This will have health and wellbeing benefits not only for those who choose active travel, but will also benefit the entire community through the overall reduction in pollution and emissions.

As a result, there is a specific focus on creating meaningful public space, prioritising active travel and creating accessible streets through the Masterplan streetscape projects.

Several of the key projects within the Masterplan will directly benefit the population of Aberdeen by making wellbeing and leisure facilities easily accessible, widely publicised and free at the point of access. For example, the Beach Boulevard will provide active travel links to the new Urban Park at the beachfront, whilst the Aberdeen Market will showcase local, seasonal produce in a centrally accessible location.



CYCLE RACE PASSES IN FRONT OF GREYFRIARS CHURCH, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



BROADHILL TOWARD ABERDEEN BEACH, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



SURFERS AT ABERDEEN BEACH, SOURCE: VISITABDN.COM



JOGGERS ENJOYING ONE OF ABERDEEN'S RUNNING TRAILS, SOURCE: REBEL PT

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.7 MARKET DEMAND + ANALYSIS

The Property Market in Aberdeen City Centre is regularly monitored by the Council's City Growth cluster. Ongoing economic trends will be monitored to inform the annual review of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

#### RETAIL / LEISURE

The retail / leisure market in Aberdeen is suffering from a significant over supply of available accommodation coupled with weak demand. The current cost of living crisis will continue to bring further pressure on the retail/ leisure sector, albeit, parts of the leisure sector have proven to be defensive in previous downturns. Efforts by Aberdeen City Council to turn the city centre into more of a multi-faceted mixed use and cultural destination which is attractive to the widest possible demographic rather than a mono retail focus on purely shoppers are continuing. The Union Terrace Gardens project is due to complete later on this summer and works to transform the former BHS on Union Street into an exciting new leisure and food venue - the Aberdeen Market - are ongoing. Of further note is that investors are being attracted back to the retail market with Reality Investment Corp paying £60million for the Beach Boulevard Retail Park. There is also an opportunity to purchase Trinity Shopping Centre which is located in a strategic intervention area in Aberdeen city centre and its future repurposing could help to further improve the profile of Union Street.

#### LOCAL ECONOMY

There is significant investment planned for Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland over the coming decade. Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce's 'Investment Tracker' records a pipeline of c.£12bn of investment due to be realised in the region by 2030.

The principal aim of this investment strategy is to maximise economic return from the North Sea continental shelf, whilst simultaneously looking to diversify the local economy, reduce reliance of local industry on the oil and gas sector, and to capitalise on the significant and unique opportunities presented to the region by the energy transition.

Projects of note include;

- The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub Programme - bp's commitment to design, build and operate a Hydrogen hub incorporating solar power, green hydrogen production and refuelling facility for transport, which is targeting production from 2024
- BioHub, a facility for life science start-ups and high growth enterprises currently under construction at Forresterhill (£40m)
- Seedpod, a centre of excellence for manufacturing and production in the food and drink industry (£21m)
- Aberdeen-Inverness rail improvements (£330m) and A96 dualling between Aberdeen and Inverness (£3bn)
- The new Aberdeen South Harbour (£400m), due for completion later this year.

Recently completed projects include The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) incorporating the P&J Live arena (£350m) and the Aberdeen Bypass Western Peripheral Route (c.£1bn).

Aberdeen South Harbour expansion is a major economic focus for the city and will be one of the most modern ports in Europe. The existing Aberdeen Harbour is currently the largest marine centre in Europe for the offshore oil and gas industry, handling a wide range of general and specialist shipments as well as regular roll on/off ferry and cargo vessels. Aberdeen South Harbour will provide 24-hour non-tidal deep water access which will render the city capable of competing on a global scale for major offshore infrastructure projects which are expected to be offered by the energy transition.

Earlier this year, a regional alliance, (including Port of Aberdeen, Peterhead Port Authority, Aberdeen International Airport, and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils) have launched a formal bid for Green Freeport status. If successful, this Green Freeport status is expected to help grow GVA in the region by £7.5bn in the next ten years. It has been suggested that the status could also help to create up to 30,000 jobs in the North East of Scotland. The application is one of five made across Scotland, with the two successful applicants due to be selected by late summer 2022.

In January 2022, Crown Estate Scotland announced the outcome of its application process for ScotWind Leasing; the first Scottish offshore wind leasing round in over a decade. Seventeen projects were selected from a total of 74 applications, and successful applicants have been offered option agreements reserving specific areas of the seabed. These applications are expected to deliver around £700m straight into the public purse and billions of pounds of supply chain commitments over the coming years. Of the 25GW planned, 17GW are expected to be generated from sites within 100 nautical miles of Aberdeen. Scottish Government estimates that every GW of power equated to £1bn of value across the supply chain.



TRINITY CENTRE SHOPPING CENTRE, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



BON ACCORD SHOPPING CENTRE, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



UNION STREET FACADE WORKS, SOURCE: ACC



THE CAPITOL BUILDING, ART DECO OFFICES ON UNION STREET, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.7 MARKET DEMAND + ANALYSIS

Activity following the award of the ScotWind licenses is part of a projected £170+ billion investment in capital and operating activities in the UK offshore energy sector between 2021 - 2030. Much of this will be located in the Aberdeen region or powered by the companies and people based within the city.

Since the start of 2022, the Ukraine conflict, together with subsequent sanctions imposed on exports of Russian oil and gas, and increased acknowledgement of the need for national energy security, has resulted in a strong upward trajectory for Brent Crude, with many industry analysts predicting unprecedented high pricing levels later this year (current pricing is \$102.30 – 1 Aug 2022).

On 26 May 2022 the UK Government announced a new tax on the profits of oil and gas companies operating in the UK and the UK Continental Shelf. The “Energy Profits Levy” is a supplementary 25 percent taxation applied to future profits, which increases the headline rate of corporation tax on oil and gas sector UK profits from 40 percent to 65 percent.

In an attempt to counteract the negative publicity surrounding this added taxation, the Chancellor also announced a ‘super-deduction’ style investment allowance to provide an immediate incentive for the oil and gas sector to invest in UK extraction and to support energy security. It is considered that this investment allowance will encourage energy companies to reinvest in the region, and thus the taxation (combined with the grant of further exploration licenses) has the potential to significantly extend the lifespan of the industry in the area.

The Acorn CCS (carbon capture and storage) project, which is an ambitious proposal to tap into the Atlantic pipeline from the St Fergus gas terminal, the Green Freeport application, and the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub programme, are all believed to have capability to have significant impact on employment opportunities in the region.

It is anticipated that this investment and activity, together with the renewed activity and buoyancy in the Oil and Gas sector, will drive office-based employment in Aberdeen City over the next 10 years. Aberdeen is expected to see an additional 2,260 office-based jobs over the next ten years.

#### ABERDEEN OFFICE DEMAND

The 2021 Aberdeen office take up extended to just 197,914 sq.ft (city wide). Take up at this level was the lowest we have experienced since detailed records began. The “record” years for the city of 2012 and 2014 each showed in excess of 1,000,000 sq.ft with 2013 lagging solely due to chronic supply constraints. The 5 Year average prior to 2021 is 378,492 sq.ft, and 10 year is 584,837 sq.ft.

Q1 2022 office take up has been recorded at a much improved 260,000 sq.ft. with a significant pipeline of “under offer” deals expected to conclude in Q3. The Council’s property advisors anticipate that take up will surpass the 5-year average by a considerable margin by the end of the 3rd quarter this year. It is also predicted that 2022 will see the highest end-of-year take up figures since 2014, as the UK government’s Energy Security Strategy. Simultaneously, the market will begin to see tangible property requirements associated with the low carbon energy transition.

#### ABERDEEN OFFICE SUPPLY

Aberdeen market supply stands at c.2,617,000 sq.ft (Q2 2022) from an estimated total of around 11,000,000 sq.ft. Supply at this level represents a vacancy rate of just under 25%, which is the highest of any key regional market in the UK.

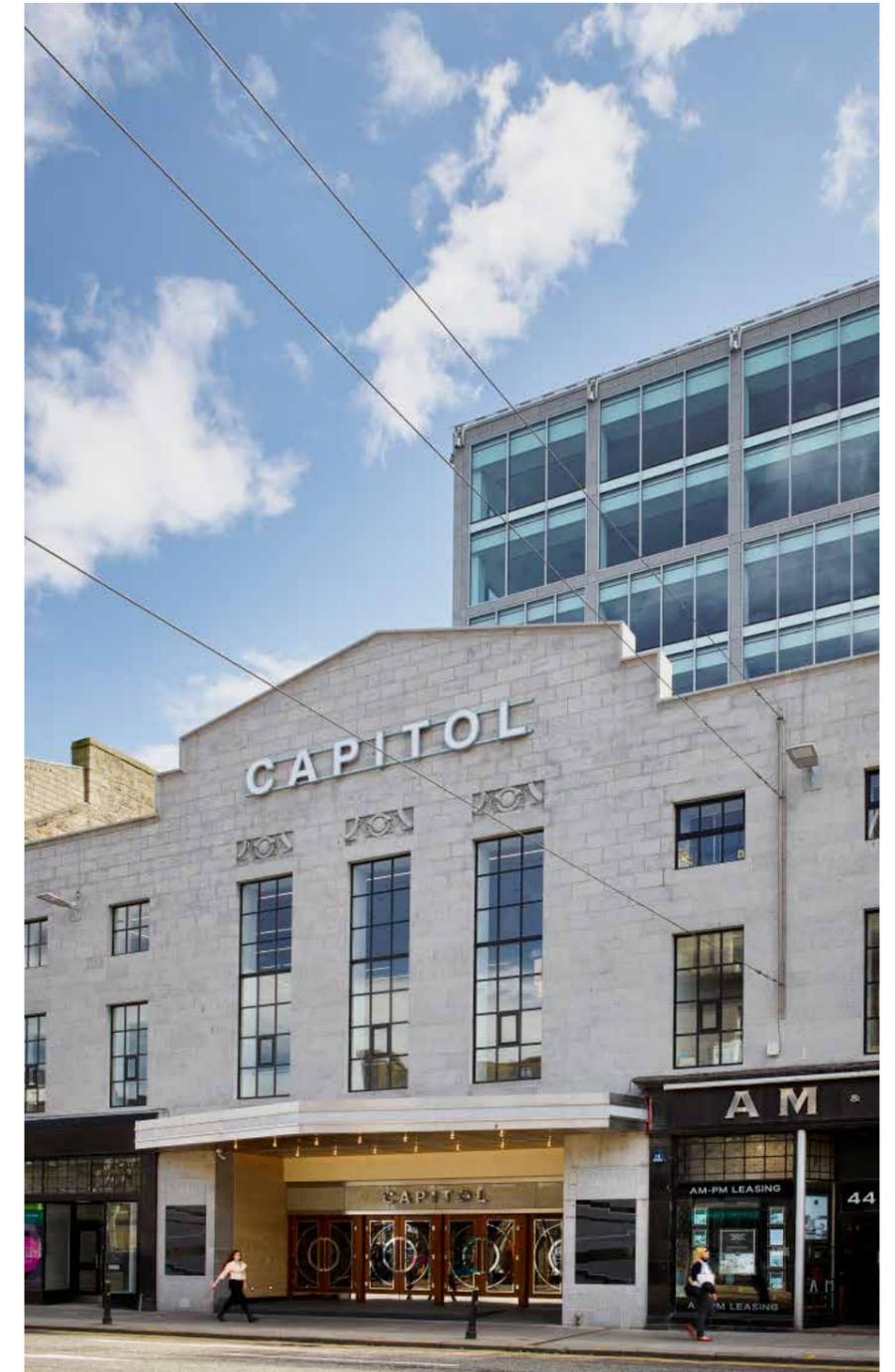
Whilst current supply indicates only a marginal increase on the 2,480,000 sq.ft (or 22.5%) reported pre-Covid-19, it is not withstanding the fact that we have already seen in excess of 1,000,000 sq.ft either repurposed or demolished since the 2014 downturn.

Despite improving market conditions, the drive toward better quality, energy efficient space mean that further attrition of Aberdeen office stock is inevitable in the coming years.

Notwithstanding current availability, there is less than 30% of current availability which we would deem to be of ‘Grade A’ specification. A large proportion of current supply is considered to be functionally obsolete, due in the most part to tightening sustainability criteria and the fact that occupiers are typically seeking better quality accommodation in order to be able to encourage their staff back to the workplace.

The Council’s property advisors believe that only c.785,000 sq.ft is ‘Grade A’, with only a small percentage of this number being “best in class”.

‘Grade A’ availability has decreased by 9% over the past 12 months, and given the lack of any notable development pipeline and the continued ‘flight to quality’ from most occupiers, we expect to see the availability of ‘best quality office space’ tighten significantly over the short term.



THE CAPITOL BUILDING, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.8 ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE LIVING ENABLING PLAN

A City Centre Living Enabling Plan forms part of this City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

In 2021, Officers instructed the creation of a technical note supported by plans and case studies to inform the re-refresh of the Aberdeen City Centre Living Enabling Plan, and a supporting Joint Delivery Action Plan. The Joint Delivery Action Plan sets out the actions that will be put in place to deliver the strategic outcomes, together with indicators to measure success. Progress for the strategic actions will be monitored by the City Centre Living Strategic Working Group, with updates on progress being provided as part of the annual review of this recalibrated City Centre and Beach Masterplan. This ensures that the plan is a fluid document which can respond and react to changes in the city centre. It also allows for performance to be monitored and evaluated.

The city centre plays a major role in the commercial, economic, social, civic, and cultural life of Aberdeen and the wider North-East. It is an important regional centre providing a focus for employment and business interaction. It offers access to a wide range of goods and services, and it is a place where many people meet socially and choose to live and visit.

It is vital for the future prosperity of Aberdeen that the city centre is enhanced and promoted as a resilient, safe, attractive, accessible, and well-connected place which contributes to an improved quality of life. Living in the city centre is a positive way to ensure it has vibrancy, vitality and viability and support an economy based around day-to-day living. To achieve this there needs to be an increase in the number of people living in the city centre.

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan encourages City Centre Living and aims to add 3,000 new residents to the city centre by 2040. A mix of unit types and sizes would be supported through the emerging new Aberdeen Local Development Plan to ensure there is variety of living accommodation. Additional residential development and conversion of upper floors in the city centre, particularly where the property is underutilised, can help achieve this aim.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING WAIVER

An affordable housing waiver was introduced in September 2018 to stimulate delivery of housing in the city centre. Thus far, 736 housing units have been granted permission in the city centre since the introduction of the affordable housing waiver with 288 units pending a decision at the beginning of July 2022. Of these units, over 360 have been completed.

For comparison, before the affordable housing waiver was introduced, there was only one application for 37 units submitted between January-September 2018. There were two applications for 18 units in 2017, and one application for 42 units was submitted in 2016. The success of the waiver in bringing forward new development is reflected by the data above. Following the introduction of the waiver, a greater number of planning applications for residential development have come forward and been approved, with a number having been completed, others under construction and a considerable number pending planning permission.

This suggests that the waiver, as well as other market factors, have been successful in delivering more residential living opportunities in the city centre.

It is notable that during 2021 and 2022 there have been a larger proportion of applications for small residential developments. During 2022, 13 applications for residential development are valid and 8 of these are for fewer than 5 new residential units. This is notable because these applications would fall out with the developer

Action	Current Status
<b>Brand</b>	
Identify brand and target market in relation to city centre regeneration which includes city centre living.	The brand is being developed through the City Centre Masterplan.  Target market is to be developed.
Ensure Invest Aberdeen website is also a resource for new talent wishing to locate to the city, residents as well as investors which focuses on the city centre regeneration.	A new mini-site will set out the aims and objectives of city centre regeneration, the projects involved, the initiatives that are in place for both residents and developers and encourage interaction.
<b>Commercial Properties</b>	
Work with the private sector to encourage new development and conversion of vacant commercial premises into residential properties.	Continue to work with local agents and building owners.
Continue to engage with occupiers, stakeholders, developers, and local agents to ensure that commercial accommodation, suitable for current market trends are delivered in the city centre.	Continue to work with local agents and building owners.
<b>Empty Homes</b>	
Use Council Tax Second Homes Funds to recruit an additional Empty Homes Officer to provide additional focus on bringing long term empty residential properties in the city centre back into use.	The city centre has the highest number of long-term empty residential properties in the city.  Report to be submitted to City Growth & Resource Committee seeking approval for additional Empty Homes Officer in September 2022.  Operational action plan is to be developed in relation to tackling high volume of empty residential properties in the city centre.

obligations threshold regardless of the waiver. Based on the uplift in the number of applications, permissions and starts on site, as well as a number of permissions not being subject to developer obligation due to their size it is not considered necessary to waive further additional types of developer obligations in the city centre and continue to focus on affordable housing for applications of more than 5 units only. Developer obligations for all planning applications are considered on their merits and if further viability considerations are necessary to aid delivery, then this will be done on a case-by-case basis as is current practice.

#### JOINT DELIVERY ACTION PLAN

The tables below and to the left summarises the actions which will be taken forward to promote more City Centre Living.

<b>Empty Homes</b>	
Use Council Tax Second Homes Funds to recruit an additional Empty Homes Officer to provide additional focus on bringing long term empty residential properties in the city centre back into use.	The city centre has the highest number of long-term empty residential properties in the city.  Report to be submitted to City Growth & Resource Committee seeking approval for additional Empty Homes Officer in September 2022.  Operational action plan is to be developed in relation to tackling high volume of empty residential properties in the city centre.
<b>Transport</b>	
Continue to support the outcomes and delivery of CCMP, Beach Masterplan and a revised Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan to promote active travel to the city centre.	Refer to CCMP and Beach Report to Council in June 2022.
Implementation of a bike hire scheme across the city.	Discussions are ongoing with a provider of bikes.
Update and refresh Local Transport Strategy and Active Travel Action Plan to improve cycle network across the city.	Updated Local Transport Strategy is currently being prepared. Active travel infrastructure is also being taken forward in the Bus Partnership Fund programme.
<b>Developer Obligations</b>	
Extend the affordable housing waiver for a longer period.	Recommendation to Council to extend the affordable housing waiver until 31 December 2025. Further information below.

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.9 IMPACT OF OTHER MAJOR INITIATIVES ON ABERDEEN

There are a number of major initiatives in and around Aberdeen at various stages of development that may impact on the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. These are summarised below and are being monitored to understand how and what their impact may be.

#### GREEN FREEPORTS

Aberdeen City Council, alongside Aberdeenshire Council, Port of Aberdeen, Peterhead Port Authority and Aberdeen International Airport has lodged a bid to be considered as a green freeport area in Scotland. The 'zone' is expected to cover Peterhead to Aberdeen South Harbour including the Energy Transition Zone to the south of the city.

Due to the tax incentives available to areas that benefit from this status and the estimated £175 million of capital funding from the Scottish Government, a Green Freeport is expected to improve GVA in the northeast by £7.5 billion over the next 10 years. Limited information is available at this time on the true economic benefits of a Freeport however early indications have shown that approximately 30,000 extra jobs could be created with 14,000 being directly linked to the tax benefited sites within the Freeport itself, and the remainder in the wider region.

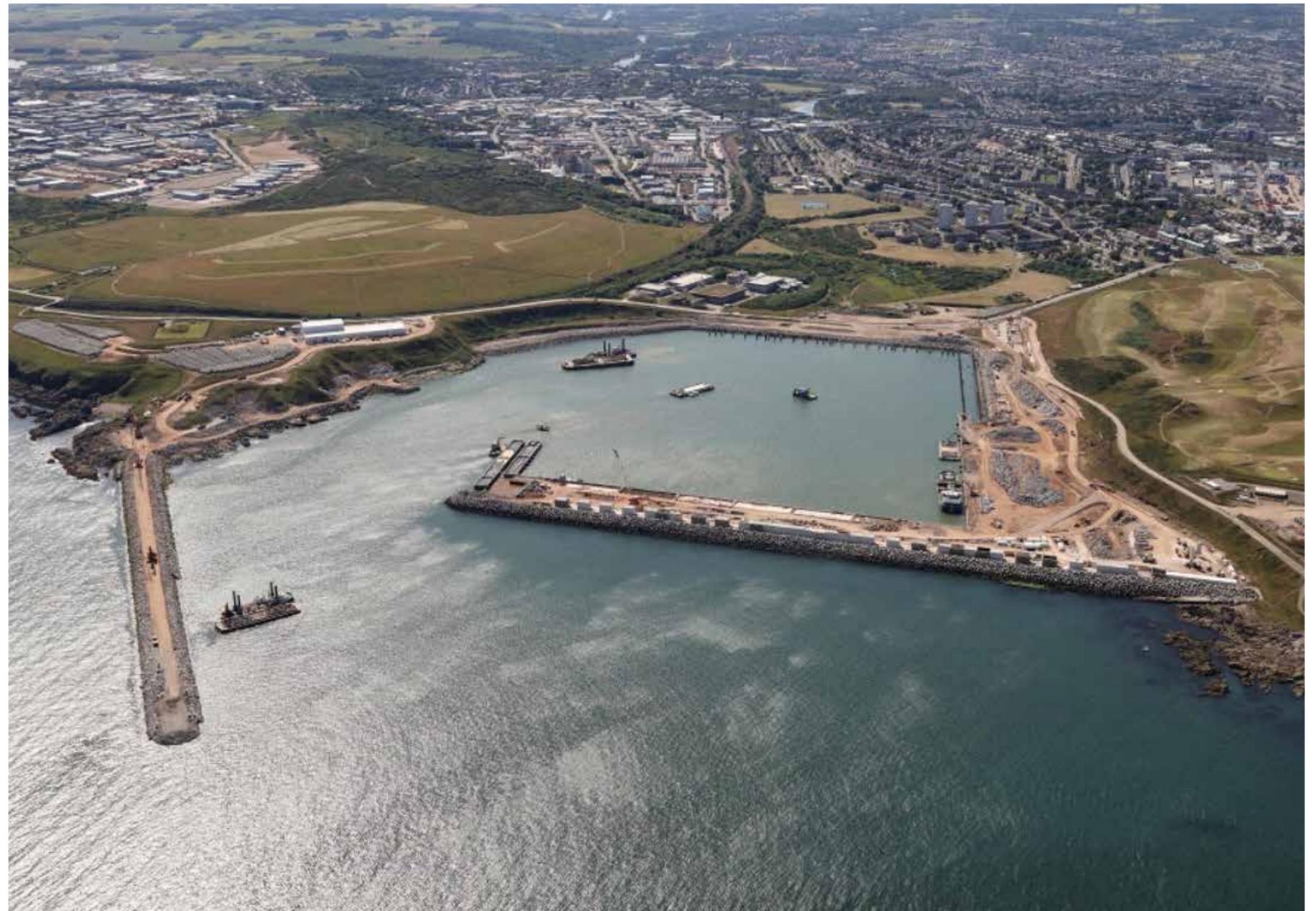
The levers available to the Green Freeport are only available to new investors of expanding companies and would not be approved if causing local displacement. Many of the skills already utilised by the energy sector are transferable to offshore energy and ambitious Green Freeport proposals aim to make the north east the Net Zero Capital of Europe and retain and attract talent to the city region for the next phase of offshore energy production.

Job security plays a key role in the demand for housing in the region and therefore a minor increase in demand for homes across the City and Shire is expected, particularly in areas close to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which would have access to the Green Freeport corridor. The impact on the City Centre and Beach Masterplan will depend on the range of jobs available and the salary level. For example, if younger workers are attracted then this may assist to reduce the number of flats on the market in the City Centre and enhance City Centre Living opportunities.

#### ABERDEEN SOUTH HARBOUR

The £400m South Harbour project will significantly increase opportunities in the energy, Cargo/logistics and cruise sectors due to the enhanced and future proofed harbour facilities it will provide.

Economically, this will bring many benefits to the City and encourage ongoing investment. The adjoining Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) will provide landslide infrastructure for a Net Zero energy cluster creating a centre of excellence for floating offshore wind and other renewables. The zone is expected to create 2,500 jobs and a further 10,000 energy transition related jobs across the region.



ABERDEEN SOUTH HARBOUR EXPANSION, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

# 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

## 4.10 EMERGING CITY TRENDS

In order for Aberdeen to maximise its success as a vibrant global city and a great place to live, the following future trends have been identified to ensure any development as part of this recalibration exercise is fully aligned with evolving market demand, creates a sense of belonging and community, and promotes a more sustainable ethos.

### THE 20 MINUTE CITY

The recent pandemic has forced people to use their neighbourhoods for a multitude of reasons – not least because travel had been reduced to essential trips only. Since shops have reopened, people have continued to support their local businesses demonstrating a renewed sense of community. Far from being a new phenomenon however, it is in fact a return to an ancient and organic way of urban life, where people live, work, play, thrive and survive all within convenient proximity.

The 20-minute city is a concept that defines cities by its neighbourhoods or districts. Instead of centralising provisions in city centre's or central business districts, services and facilities are dotted around a city according to where people live. Residents are able to obtain most of what they need to both live and work within a short trip from their home, ideally without the reliance on cars.

The Scottish Government have used the NPF4 (National Planning Framework) to establish a people-first hierarchy. This translates into three distinct outcomes; first, neighbourhoods are about quality and lifestyle; second, they operate at a human scale; and third, this builds resilient and sustainable local economies, which is far better for those invested in them.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept improves local liveability by focusing on compact areas of growth increasing density of future developments. This action will benefit individuals and communities by improving the accessibility of services and localising economic growth. A key element of this action is a commitment to building with nature by creating multifunctional blue and green networks, working with local climate action projects, and reducing vehicular traffic by creating active travel routes, such as dedicated pedestrian and cycle avenues.

### THE RETAIL SHIFT

Consumer shopping habits have evolved as online retailing has become more prominent, and this has been further reinforced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The UK Business Rates system, rising staff costs and heightened import tariffs due to Brexit have all added to significant pressures on occupiers across the country. These challenges were not a result of the pandemic, but it has accelerated these underlying trends.

Indeed, national retailers have been rationalising and shrinking their portfolio of stores with a large number of well-known high street names disappearing from the high streets across the country (Oasis, Laura Ashley, TM Lewin, to name a few).

Studies show that local people want to see more local businesses in the City Centre. There is a significant oversupply of retail units and this stream of closures leads to a stigma in the City and impacts some views on residing in the city centre. This challenge falls within the concept of the 20-minute city and re-purposing empty commercial space to create a vibrant, sustainable communities which encourage activity and footfall at all times of the day. Creating an active, safe community improves residents' views of the city centre and encourages them to want to live there.

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan addresses this shift by re-examining traditional retail experiences and re-focusing them toward local businesses. Commercial-minded projects such as the new Aberdeen Market, illustrate this response to changes in user preferences.

### SMART CITIES

SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timely) cities initiatives prioritise better connecting citizens with their local Council while seeking to improve energy efficiency and sustainability in the city. Citizens themselves are better informed, able to move around their city's more strategically, driven by data, and are encouraged to be active and healthy through promotion of user-friendly apps, such as GoABZ launched at the end of 2021.

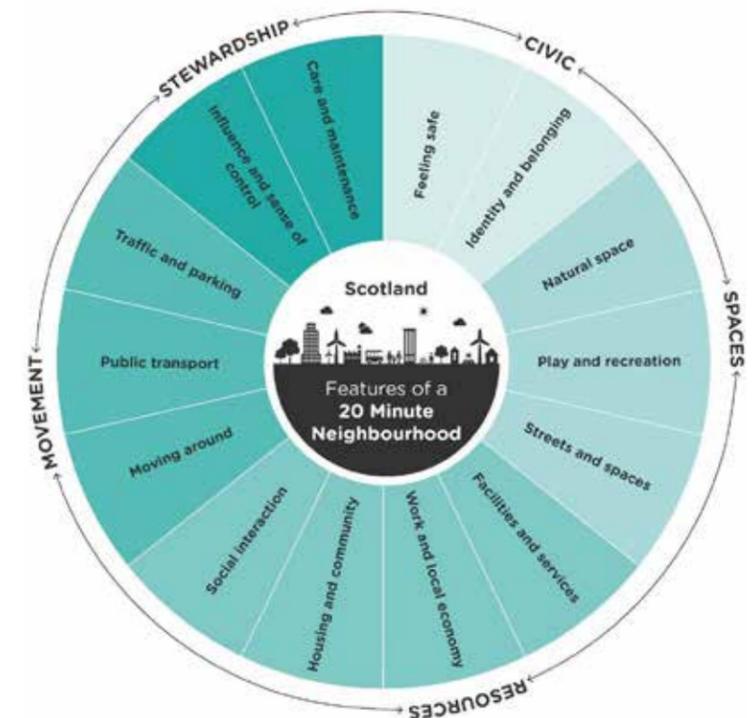
Officers will continue to work through the Aberdeen Smart Cities partnership to link strategic outcomes to specific themes and technologies identified as part of the City Centre Masterplan review the Smart City themes include cleaner and greener, connected communities, technology futures and data & AI. The partnership includes membership from across public and private sector.

The aim of the Smart Cities partnership is to link project delivery associated with the key themes to the concept of Aberdeen as a living laboratory geared towards driving innovation and attracting inward investment. Specific focus is being placed on working through the universities and schools to establish a career pathway for renewable energy skills ensuring that the City has high quality talent to service commercial demand. In addition, the development of digital and energy backbone initiatives will be used to address the challenges of digital poverty and energy poverty thereby ensuring equality of opportunity and access across the city.

Aberdeen City Council have engaged the services of the Connected Places Catapult (CPC) to baseline current smart city maturity for the Council and Aberdeen. Work to benchmark against peer cities to help compare and identify areas of potential learning from others that might benefit Aberdeen will also take place. CPC will work with key stakeholders through a series of workshops to define short list of recommendations and a defined roadmap. This work will inform the refresh of the Council's Smart City Strategy later in 2022.



20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD MOVEMENT HIERARCHY  
SOURCE: OURPLACE.SCOT



FEATURES OF A 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT  
SOURCE: OURPLACE.SCOT

## 4.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

### 4.11 PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES

Place is a key pillar of public policy and investment in Scotland, which has increased in importance in recent years. Aberdeen City Council has identified the importance of place-based approaches focused on collaboration to join up infrastructure, services, and partnerships to meet local needs more effectively and efficiently. A successful place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. This Masterplan is a place-based review of the City Centre and Beach to determine how best to transform these areas and promote positive future change.

Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them, and so a more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services, land and buildings across all sectors enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

There has been significant consultation with citizens and businesses of Aberdeen on their ideas for the future of the City Centre and Beach, including consultation around green spaces, accessibility, travel and transport. As a result, the Council has begun to invest in community and cultural assets via the Place Based Investment Fund and recognise that this just a first step in what is a long-term approach to Aberdeen the Place.

Moving forward, the aim of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan should be to complement the new Local Development Plan and maximise the impact of investment on the attractiveness of Aberdeen as a place to live, invest and work. This will include but not be limited to enhancing transport and digital connectivity, the natural environment and supporting the Regional Economic Strategy. The approach must build on the progress made in recent years and continue to concentrate on long-term priorities. It must put Aberdeen the Place at its heart and focus on the region's approach to sustainable, inclusive economic development and improved wellbeing.

Through a focus on place-based development, this Masterplan is an investment in Aberdeen's community and economy. The Place Principle has been adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA, and it promotes a better understanding of what gives a place an identity – including collaborative development across sectors, localising ownership and economic growth, and enables local flexibility to respond to issues.

Such a cross-sectional approach is illustrated by the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan. Key projects include improving public realm and civic spaces, as well as commercial locations. Related projects include multiple public realm improvements, such as Union Street Central, prioritisation of active travel routes, such as the Beach Boulevard, restoration of heritage buildings, such as the Union Street facade works, and enhancement of commercial nodes, such as the Aberdeen Market. The extent of the Masterplan reaches from the beachfront to the city centre and beyond, ensuring that the impact of the proposed improvements is experienced on a large scale. More information on the aforementioned projects can be found in Section 6 of this report.



A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING PLACE BASED OPPORTUNITIES  
SOURCE: OURPLACE.SCOT

# 5.0 MOVEMENT STRATEGY

## 5.1 ROADS HIERARCHY

Following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) in 2019, Aberdeen City Council and partners adopted a revised Roads Hierarchy for Aberdeen, the purpose of which was to support the effective and efficient distribution and management of traffic around the city, making best use of new infrastructure such as the AWPR and to facilitate delivery of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan by providing a means of reducing through-traffic in the city centre.

One of the key principles agreed for the Hierarchy was that the city centre should be a destination rather than a through-route for vehicular traffic and crossing the city centre by car should be discouraged. While the city centre will remain accessible to all vehicles, accessing and exiting the city centre should, as far as possible, be by the same route, with car parking signage reflecting this. This essentially means that traffic accessing the city centre from the north would be directed to a car park in the north of the city centre, and traffic accessing from the South would be directed to a southern car park. While it will still be possible to travel from the south of the city centre to the north of the city centre by car, this will involve using an appropriate bypass route, thus preserving the central core for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and supporting place-based aspirations for the city centre.

A revised network of priority, secondary and local routes for Aberdeen were identified, with:

- Priority routes - generally radial routes connecting the AWPR with key destinations and secondary routes, to allow movement around Aberdeen without using the city centre as a through-route (high movement function, low place function);
- Secondary routes - secondary movement corridors allowing access from priority routes to local routes (medium to high movement function); and
- Local routes - tertiary movement network serving local destinations, such as city centre car parks (low movement function, high place function).

In some cases, a formal reclassification of streets was undertaken, with city centre streets largely removed from the priority and secondary hierarchy. Guild Street, Union Street, Castle Street and the southern section of King Street, for example, were all reclassified from A-roads to unclassified roads, to reflect that these are no longer primary traffic routes. All priority and most secondary routes now stop at the outskirts of the city centre, from where key destinations and car parks can be accessed via local routes. This is to reflect the City Centre and Beach Masterplan's emphasis on the city centre as a place that prioritises people over vehicles.

By reclassifying City Centre streets to better emphasise their Place function, the City Council has been able to introduce general traffic restrictions in support of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan's aspirations. Following a temporary pedestrianisation of Union Street Central during the Covid-19 pandemic to enable physical distancing, the space re-opened to buses, taxis, cycles and service vehicles only in June 2022, with general traffic now permanently restricted.

In June 2022 the Council also approved the implementation of additional public transport priority measures around this central core, with the Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street 'loop' (which connects Union Street with the bus and rail station and ferry terminal) to be made bus, cycle, taxi and servicing access only from late 2022. This work forms part of the successful bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund where £12 million has been granted by Transport Scotland to Aberdeen City Council to work with partners in the North East Bus Alliance to develop and deliver bus priority interventions.

Any traffic movements through the city centre that are no longer possible as a result of City Centre and Beach Masterplan works will be redirected in accordance with the Roads Hierarchy. This is facilitated by improvements to the secondary corridors of South College Street (B983) and Berryden Road (B986) which enable the removal of significant traffic volumes from the city centre by addressing likely congestion hotspots which, if left untreated, could delay buses accessing the city centre, result in a hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and worsening air quality in these areas.

## 5.2 ENABLING WORKS

### South College Street Junction Improvements

The impact of traffic displacement from the city centre, as a result of City Centre and Beach Masterplan implementation, was assessed and complimented by traffic modelling, with the South College Street / Queen Elizabeth Bridge / North Esplanade West junction identified as a congestion pinch point due to the displacement of east-west routing traffic from Union Street and Guild Street conflicting with north-south traffic entering and exiting the city centre area.

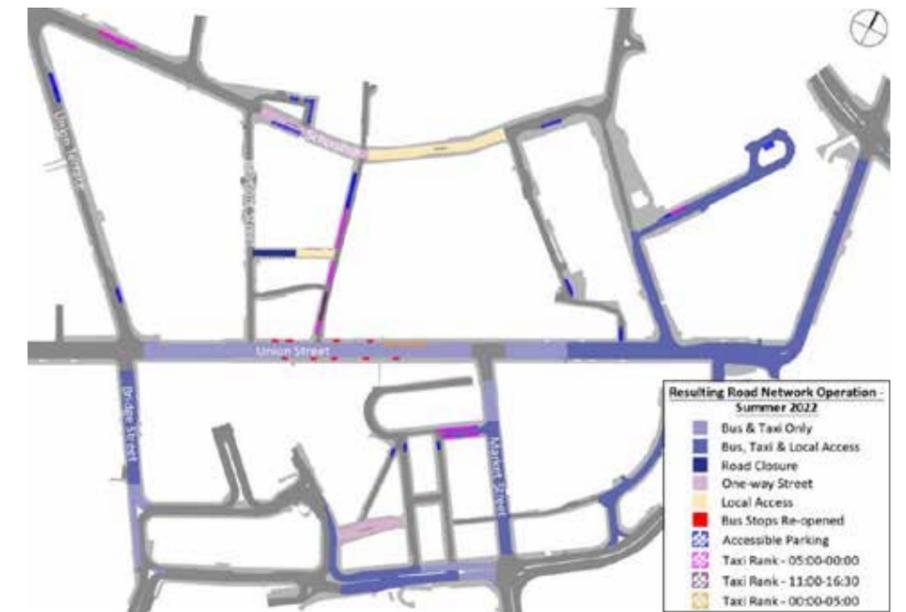
Road and junction operation improvements have therefore been identified to help alleviate this anticipated pinch point in the network and enable the delivery of the desired city centre bus priority.

Implementation of the first phase of the project commenced in June 2022.

### Berryden Corridor Improvements

The Berryden Corridor Improvements will provide substantial benefits across the north of the city including improved journey times, reduced congestion and improved pedestrian and cycle provisions.

Similar to the South College Street works, the Berryden Corridor Improvements will help to reduce conflict congestion pinch points in the network, which may have otherwise increase as a result of traffic displaced from the City Centre and Beach Masterplan measures. It is anticipated that the project will commence in the next 2 years and will take 2-3 years to complete.



CITY CENTRE ROAD NETWORK CHANGES (2022), SOURCE: ACC



CURRENT + FUTURE CYCLE ROUTES WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE AND BEACH MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY

# 5.0 MOVEMENT STRATEGY

## 5.3 ABERDEEN RAPID TRANSIT - BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND CORRIDOR STUDIES

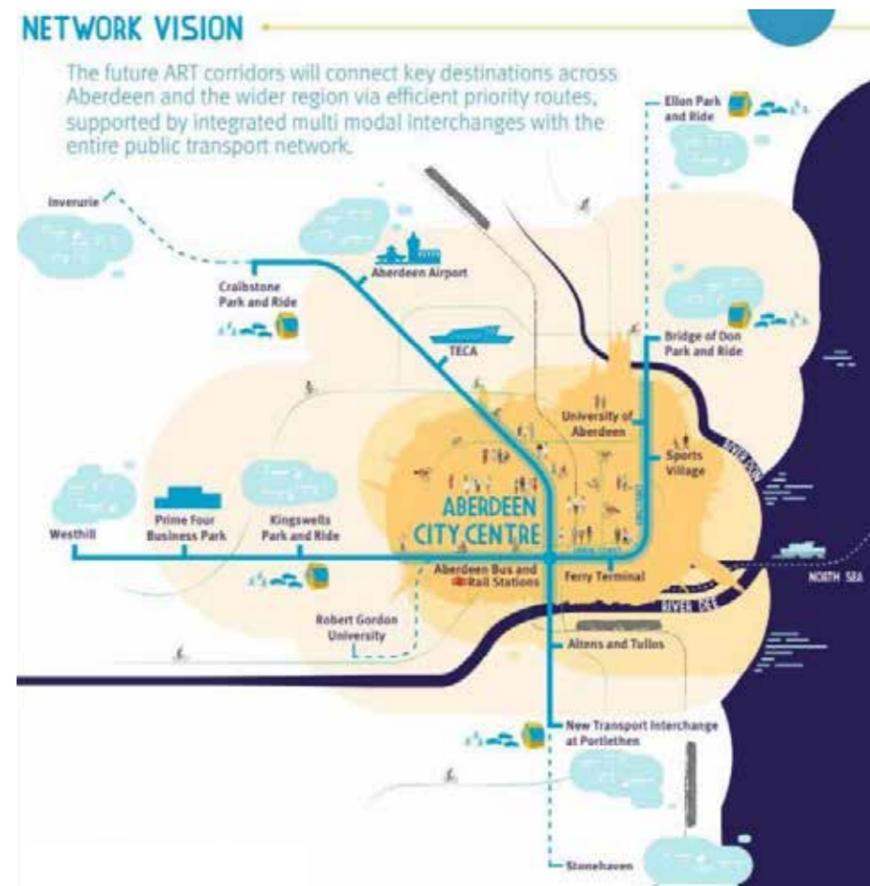
Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) is a vision, first noted in the revised Regional Transport Strategy Nestrans 2040, for a high-frequency, high-capacity public transport network in Aberdeen, with ART corridors connecting key destinations across the City and the wider region (including the city centre, major employment sites, universities) via efficient priority routes, supported by integrated multimodal interchanges.

The concept has since received national recognition in the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and the draft fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4), with feasibility and design of the network now progressing via the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) which looks to enable local transport authorities and bus operators to work together to develop and deliver ambitious bus priority schemes to tackle the negative impacts of congestion on bus services.

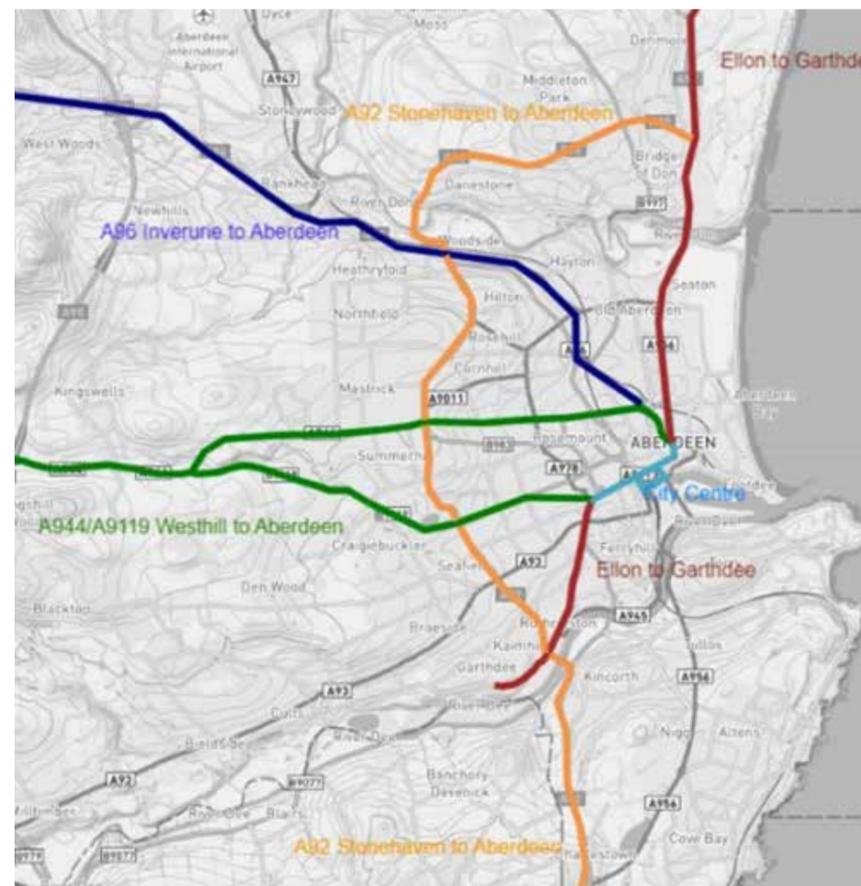
As part of the consideration of corridors which may be appropriate for ART, the Council is undertaking a series of studies to look at opportunities for ART (and other sustainable travel improvements) on key routes to, from and around Aberdeen. Along with the ART feasibility, and design work for bus priority (and active travel) measures on these corridors is also progressing via the BPF. These studies are developing in the context of the revised Roads Hierarchy which encouraged a change of perception of priority and secondary routes in that these should be viewed as 'movement' corridors rather than simply 'traffic' corridors.

Corridors under review as part of the BPF and considered appropriate for ART include: Ellon to Garthdee, A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen, A944/A9119 Westhill to Aberdeen corridor, A92 Stonehaven to Aberdeen, and the City Centre.

These corridor improvement strategies, therefore, as they move towards implementation, coupled with the realisation of the ART network to and through the city centre, will ensure that the city centre becomes a much more attractive and welcoming destination for trips undertaken by walking, cycling and public transport.



ASPIRATIONAL ART NETWORK  
SOURCE: NESTRANS



ABERDEEN BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND CORRIDORS  
SOURCE: ACC



DOUBLE DECKER HYDROGEN POWERED BUS - A WORLD FIRST, SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES



## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

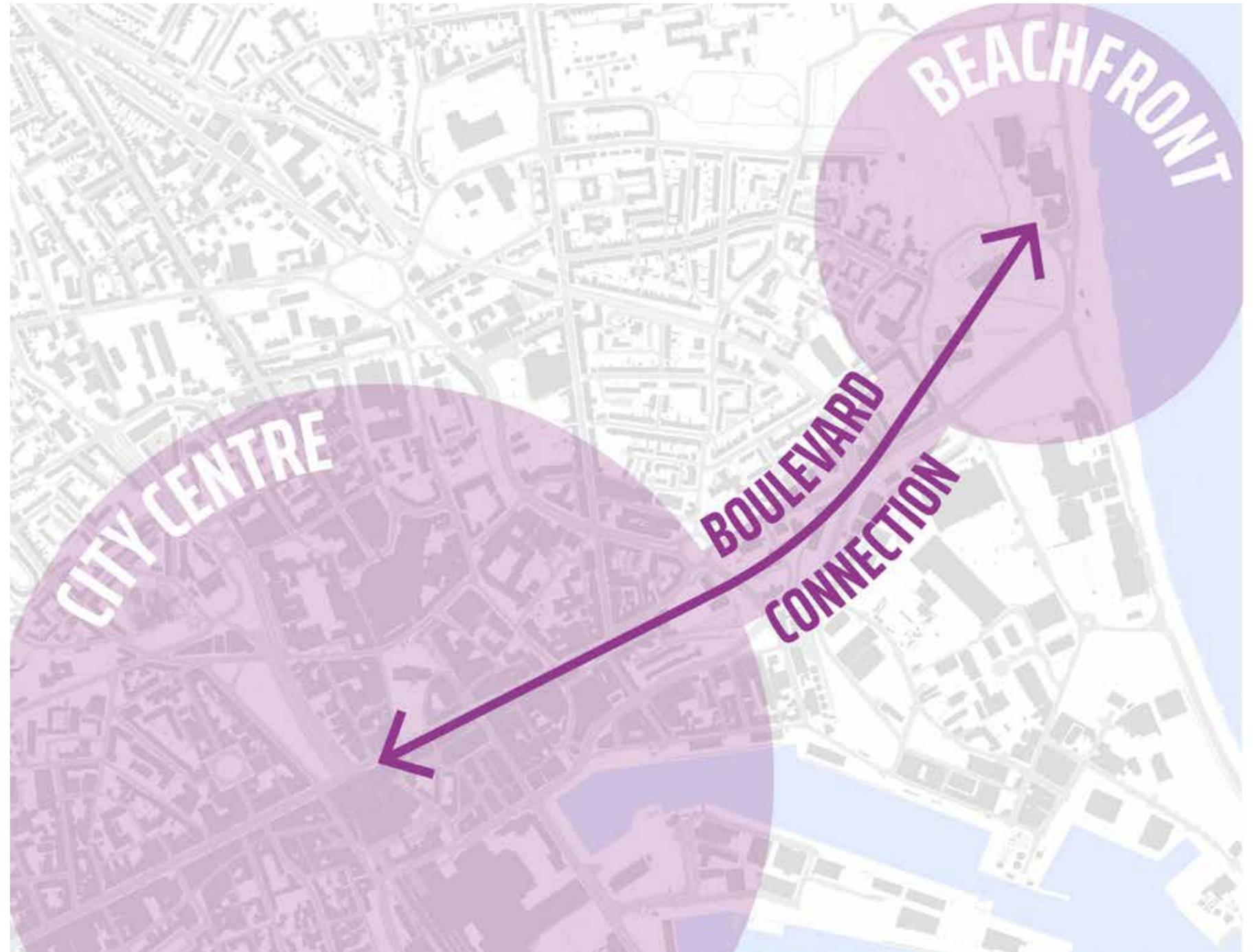
### 6.1 OVERVIEW

The development of Aberdeen's City Centre and Beach is driven by the global significance of Aberdeen as a metropolitan hub and the energy capital of Europe, but also recognises the need to ensure that the City Centre serves the needs and aspirations of local people. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan therefore takes a coordinated approach to future development across the city centre and beachfront areas which prioritises active travel and spaces for people, with a focus on environmental and economic sustainability.

The Masterplan strategy focuses on facilitating better connections by linking the city centre and beachfront via the Beach Boulevard, revitalising Union Street as a primary east/west connecting spine and creating an extensive programme of streetscape works proposed for key city neighbourhoods. These enhancements made to the public realm will support increased levels of active travel, such as walking and cycling, which promote healthier lifestyles and lower levels of emissions.

The proposed interventions in Aberdeen's City Centre and Beachfront have the potential to change the way that current and potential future residents and visitors experience and view the city. Key projects, as noted overleaf, will deliver a series of enhanced public realm areas, buildings, event and experience spaces that seek to revive the unique historic core of Aberdeen whilst creating a forward looking, distinctive and welcoming City. This will support economic recovery and growth following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and support the continued diversification from oil and gas-based industries to green infrastructure, emerging technologies and renewables.

This Masterplan will undoubtedly enhance the prosperity of the City Centre and beachfront areas, whilst improving the quality of life of those that live, work and visit. This can serve as a catalyst to increase visitor spend in Aberdeen's retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, and could encourage more people to live in and invest in the city.



CITY CENTRE AND BEACH CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

## 6.2 KEY PROJECTS

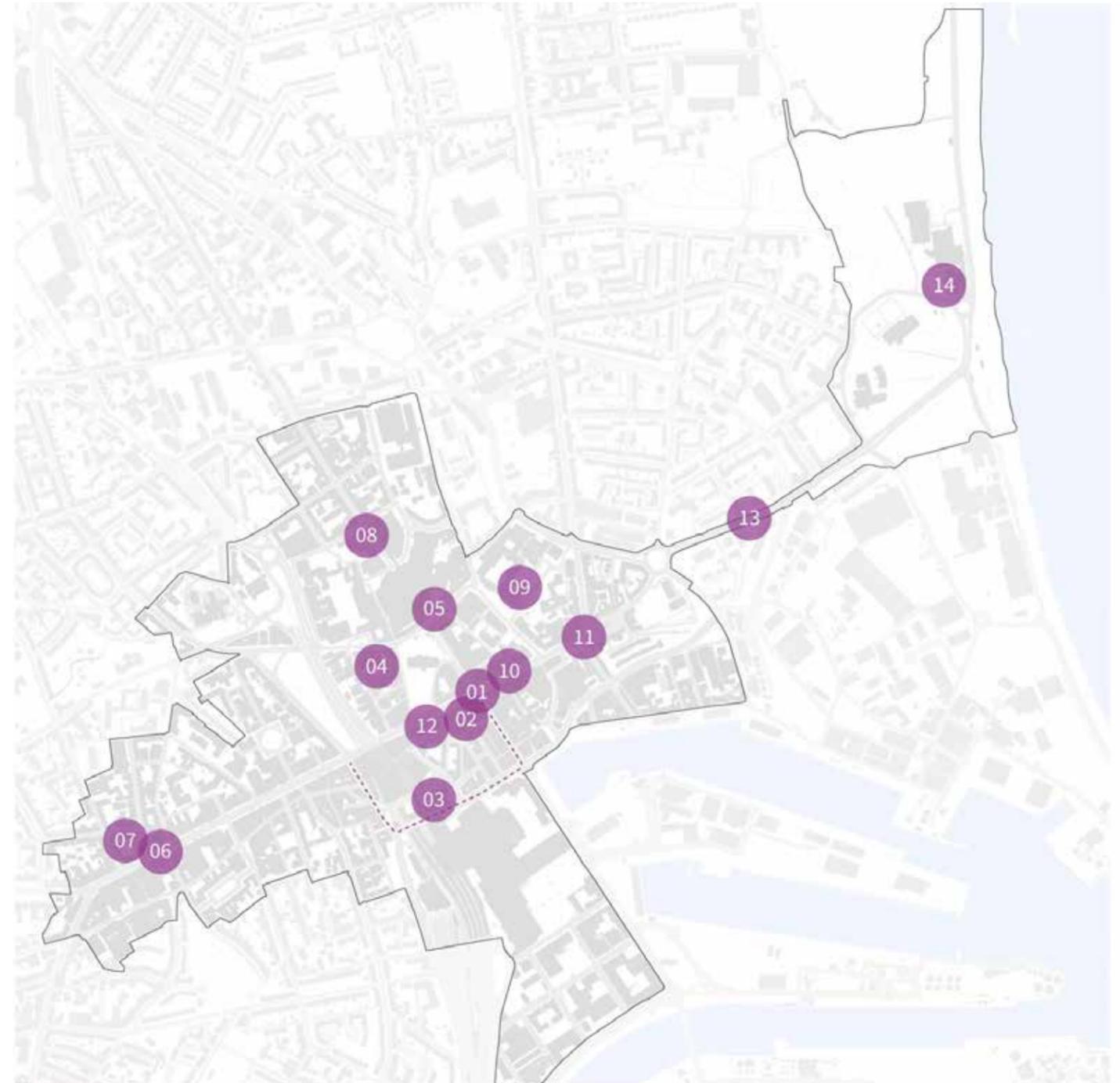
The City Centre and Beach Masterplan is defined by a number of key projects, each with their own character, uses, relationships, connections and contribution to the wider Masterplan. All have been identified following extensive public consultation and review against the overall Masterplan vision and SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely) objectives. These exciting projects are described over the following pages to explain their vision, qualities and current status of design and/or implementation.

The location of the key projects are shown opposite and are defined as follows:

- 01 Union Street Central Public Realm
- 02 Aberdeen Market
- 03 Aberdeen Market to Guild Street Public Realm
- 04 Belmont Quarter
- 05 Schoolhill + Upperkirkgate
- 06 Union Street West
- 07 West End
- 08 George Street
- 09 Queen Street
- 10 Union Street East
- 11 Castlegate
- 12 Union Street Facade Works
- 13 Beach Boulevard
- 14 Beach Projects

In addition to the list above, bus, taxi/private hire and cycle priority will be implemented on Bridge Street, Market Street and Guild Street to achieve the safe and efficient movement of active travel and public transport users through the city centre. These measures were approved by Aberdeen City Council in June 2022 and are planned for implementation later in 2022, subject to statutory processes.

--- Bus, taxi/private hire + cycle priority



KEY PROJECT LOCATIONS

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

## 6.2.1 UNION STREET CENTRAL PUBLIC REALM

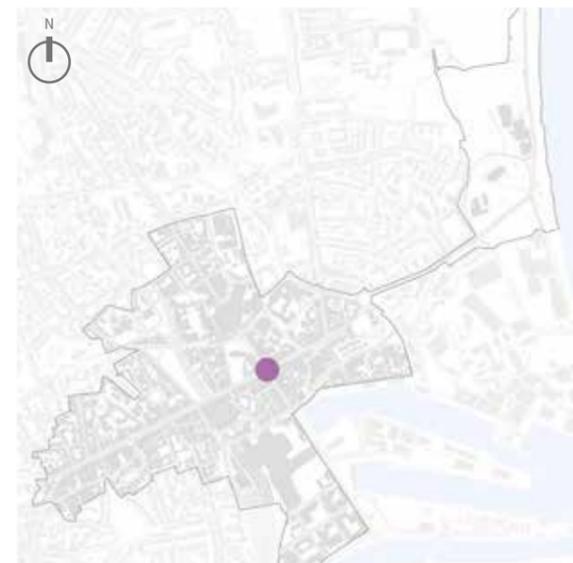
**STATUS: Full Business Cases currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

The programme of streetscape projects will deliver improvements to the public realm across the city centre and towards the beachfront.

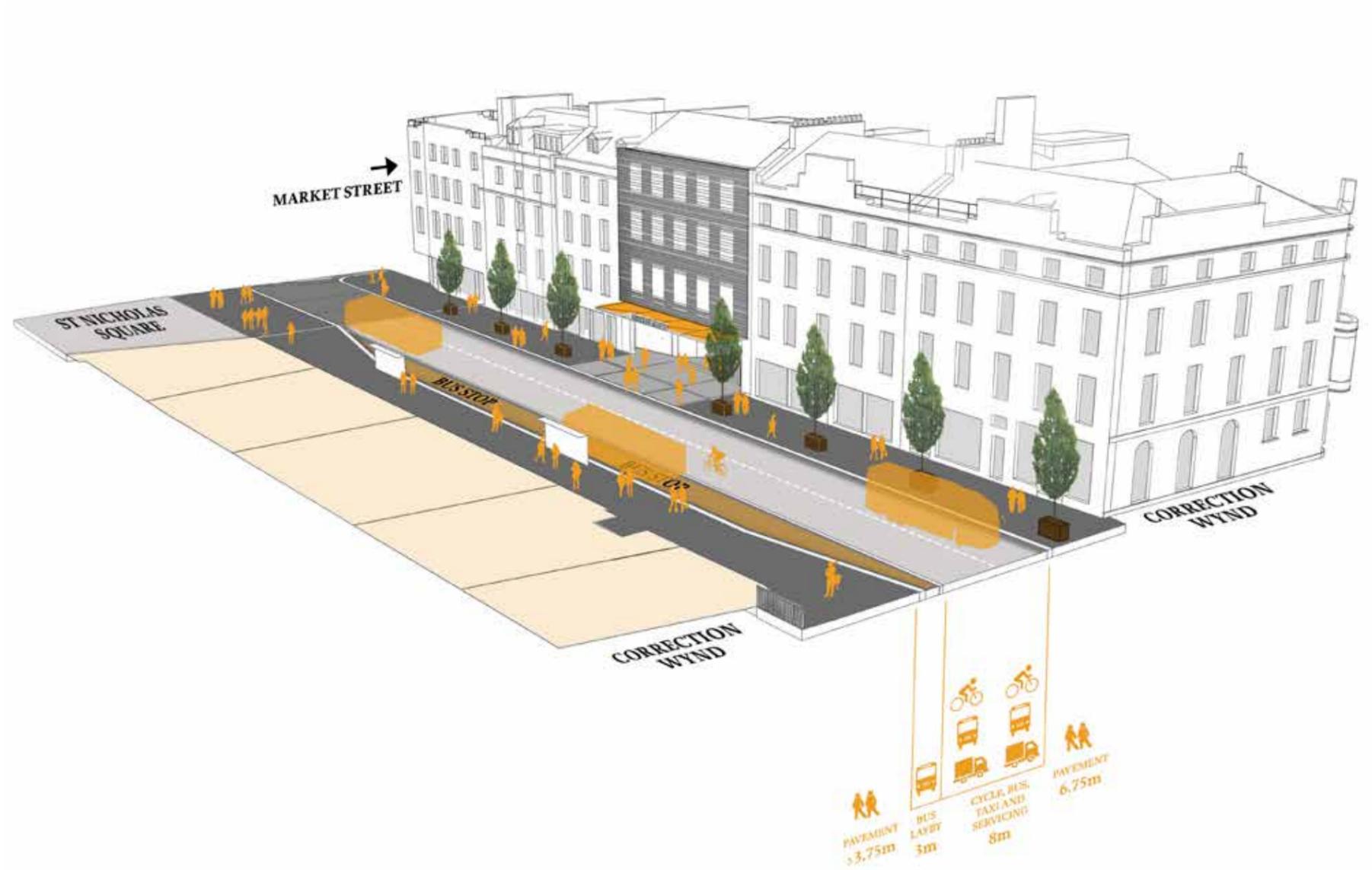
Following an Options Appraisal exercise, in June 2022 Aberdeen City Council decided to proceed with an option which included bus access to Union Street Central. The design will comprise of two lanes for cycle, bus, taxi and servicing access with intermittent lay-bys for buses in order to facilitate boarding and alighting. This will allow for pavement widening, the introduction of urban greenery and potential for street occupation. Crossing points will be incorporated to facilitate easy pedestrian movement north and south.

Street furniture will be placed adjacent to kerbs to maintain a clutter-free, safe-movement corridor for pedestrians and wheeled users. Feature paving will be used to highlight key architectural elements and buildings.

The Union Street Building Improvement Survey report issued in February 2022 identified a pilot project to prioritise improvement works to the area between Market Street to Bridge Street. This has been selected to complement the proposed works to Union Street streetscape, Union Terrace Gardens and the forthcoming new Aberdeen Market building. This will set the tone for the remainder of the street and give a clear indication to the occupiers, landlords and tenants of the properties on Union Street how improvements may be simplified, made more cost effective and set out what support Aberdeen City Council could offer to assist in the process. This is discussed further in Section 6.2.12.



LOCATION PLAN



PROPOSED STREETScape DIAGRAM BETWEEN ST NICHOLAS SQUARE + CORRECTION WYND

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.2 ABERDEEN MARKET

**STATUS: Planning permission approved in May 2022 (Application Reference 211517/DPP). Currently in RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design.**

The new Aberdeen Market will be a destination venue and new attraction in the heart of the city centre featuring an international-style food and drink outlet promoting local produce and goods alongside continental style delicatessens and cafés. A key element of the new Market building will be to improve connectivity and accessibility between Union Street and the bus and rail stations at Union Square. Frontage will be created on Union Street and will incorporate the infrastructure and streetscape works programme.

The design will feature a mixture of fixed indoor units of various sizes alongside event space for temporary and pop-up facilities allowing for increased variety and flexible to seasonal requirements. An external, canopy covered flexible space also features which could be used for music events or further market space. This will provide opportunities to develop and grow local businesses, particularly within the key food and drink sector.

Demolition of the old Market and BHS building is complete and the site is secure. Planning Approval, with Conditions, was granted on 17th May 2022, with RIBA Stage 4 design started in July 2022. Following a national search for an operator carried out by property advisors, a preferred market operator has been chosen by Aberdeen City Council to progress heads of terms discussions around the commercial aspects of the occupation and running of the new Aberdeen Market.

Construction of the Market will commence in 2023, and last for a period of approximately 98 weeks.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF THE ABERDEEN MARKET LOWER FOOD HALL

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.3 ABERDEEN MARKET TO GUILD STREET PUBLIC REALM

**STATUS:** Detailed design being developed in consultation with key stakeholders with results to be presented to Full Council in August 2022.

The area around Aberdeen Market and The Green retains much of its historical character and feel, whilst forging a strong identity as a centre for high quality street art. Currently, the market area and The Green are 'off the beaten track' and are more likely to be stumbled across when exploring the city than as key destinations. However, the redevelopment of Aberdeen Market will see a much greater footfall in the area, altering the existing character into a safe, vibrant and exciting area of Aberdeen City Centre.

The scope area is split into four projects which can be undertaken within different time-scales. The key project is creating the connection between Union Street, the Market and down to the station via Carmelite Street. This will improve the through-route from the Market across Hadden Street, down Carmelite Street onto Wapping Street, Guild Street and into the train and bus stations. The second project is the regeneration of Carmelite Lane, implementing street greening and enhanced lighting along with improved surfacing for ease of access. Rejuvenating Carnegie's Brae and the restoration of East Green also forms part of this phase.

The third phase will see Hadden Street and Market Street works progressed giving the Market building a civic presence to Market Street. The fourth project deals with the widening of footways and improvement of surfacing to allow easier accessibility on Correction Wynd. It will also deal with the rationalisation and coordination of various spill out spaces on The Green along with the re-conditioning of the Union Street staircase.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM WAPPING STREET TOWARDS THE MARKET, VIA CARMELITE STREET

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.4 BELMONT QUARTER

**STATUS:** Detailed design and delivery ongoing in conjunction with local stakeholders

Within the Belmont Street Quarter, the proposals rationalise the carriageway to allow for the permanent introduction of external spill-out spaces for cafés, restaurants and bars along with public seating whilst allowing for service vehicle access to be maintained.

Public seating is introduced at key locations within the streetscape which allow for people to rest, dwell or have lunch, whilst taking in the unique character and atmosphere of the area.

Spill-out spaces have been carefully curated to ensure that a degree of uniformity in keeping with the historic nature of the area is maintained throughout.

The proposals allow for the incorporation of play, public art and feature lighting at key locations in the area. Street greening is included in zones associated with the public seating and cafe spill-out areas.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF NORTH BELMONT STREET

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.5 SCHOOLHILL + UPPERKIRK\_GATE

**STATUS: Full Business Case currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

Located immediately north of the Union Street Central zone, Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate is an area of the city containing a number of landmark buildings and visitor attractions including the Kirk of St Nicholas and Aberdeen Art Gallery.

The Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate streetscape project will provide improved public realm which prioritises pedestrians with reduced vehicular access and enhanced experience for walking and wheeling. Where possible, carriageway widths will be reduced to allow footways to be widened. This will extend the implemented works around the War Memorial and Art Gallery and create a permanent space for street activities and public art at Upperkirkgate.

Upperkirkgate will be pedestrianised between Harriet Street and Flourmill Lane, with a plaza space created outside the Aberdeen Art Gallery at Schoolhill. Proposals to enhance the setting of the Gallery include public seating, space to allow for street spill-out including external cafe space and the civic and cultural activities associated with the Gallery, enhanced public realm, street greening and sustainable urban drainage in the form of a rain garden.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THE PROPOSED PLAZA FROM ABERDEEN ART GALLERY

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.6 UNION STREET WEST

**STATUS: Full Business Cases currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

The western end of Union Street forms a gateway to the city and has seen significant commercial investment with the construction of both the Capitol and Silver Fin office buildings.

The streetscape around Union Street West shall be improved through rationalising the carriageway and widening footpaths, with the opportunity to increase street greening and seating. This will maximise pedestrian space along the length of Union Street creating appropriate settings for safe on street activity.

The proposals will see the space within the existing streetscape reapportioned in favour of pedestrians and public transport, whilst still allowing for service vehicle access. Clutter-free plaza spaces are proposed at key locations, such as outside the Music Hall, to celebrate the City's rich heritage.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF UNION STREET WEST

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

## 6.2.7 WEST END

**STATUS: Full Business Cases currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

The proposals seek to enhance the unique character of the West End to create welcoming and comfortable spaces within which to dwell for extended periods of time. This will be achieved largely by reappportioning carriageway space within Rose Street, Thistle Street and Chapel Street to better respond to, and service the needs of the area.

Clear, unobstructed footways will be maintained, whilst space from the carriageways will be allocated to flexible 'service zones' either side of these. These flexible zones within the streetscape are designed to potentially accommodate cafe spill-out areas, disabled parking, taxi ranks and elements of street greening where appropriate.

The apportioning of space within the 'service zones' will be further considered through appropriate engagement during the next stages of the project.

In addition to the provision of space for external spill-out areas, the proposals seek to further enrich the public realm through the considered placement of planting and feature lighting within the streetscape. The designs propose the introduction of feature catenary lighting creating a 'ceiling of lights' over the streets, further enhancing the unique qualities of the area whilst bringing a human scale to the streetscape.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF WEST END ENTRANCE FROM UNION STREET TO CHAPEL STREET

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

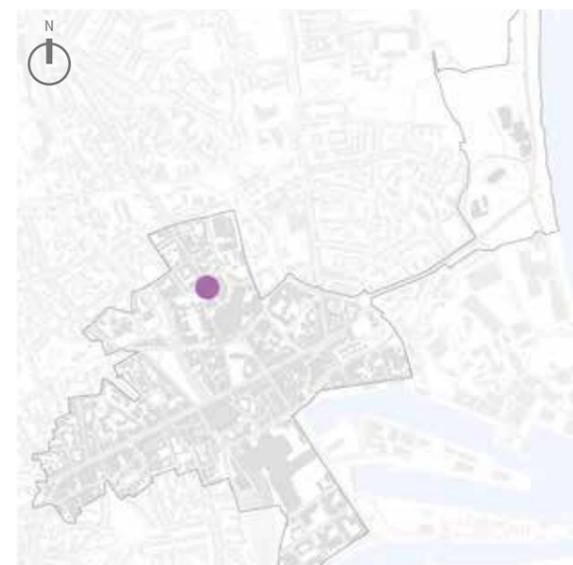
## 6.2.8 GEORGE STREET

**STATUS:** Draft George Street Mini Masterplan is currently being prepared and will be reported to Full Council in December 2022.

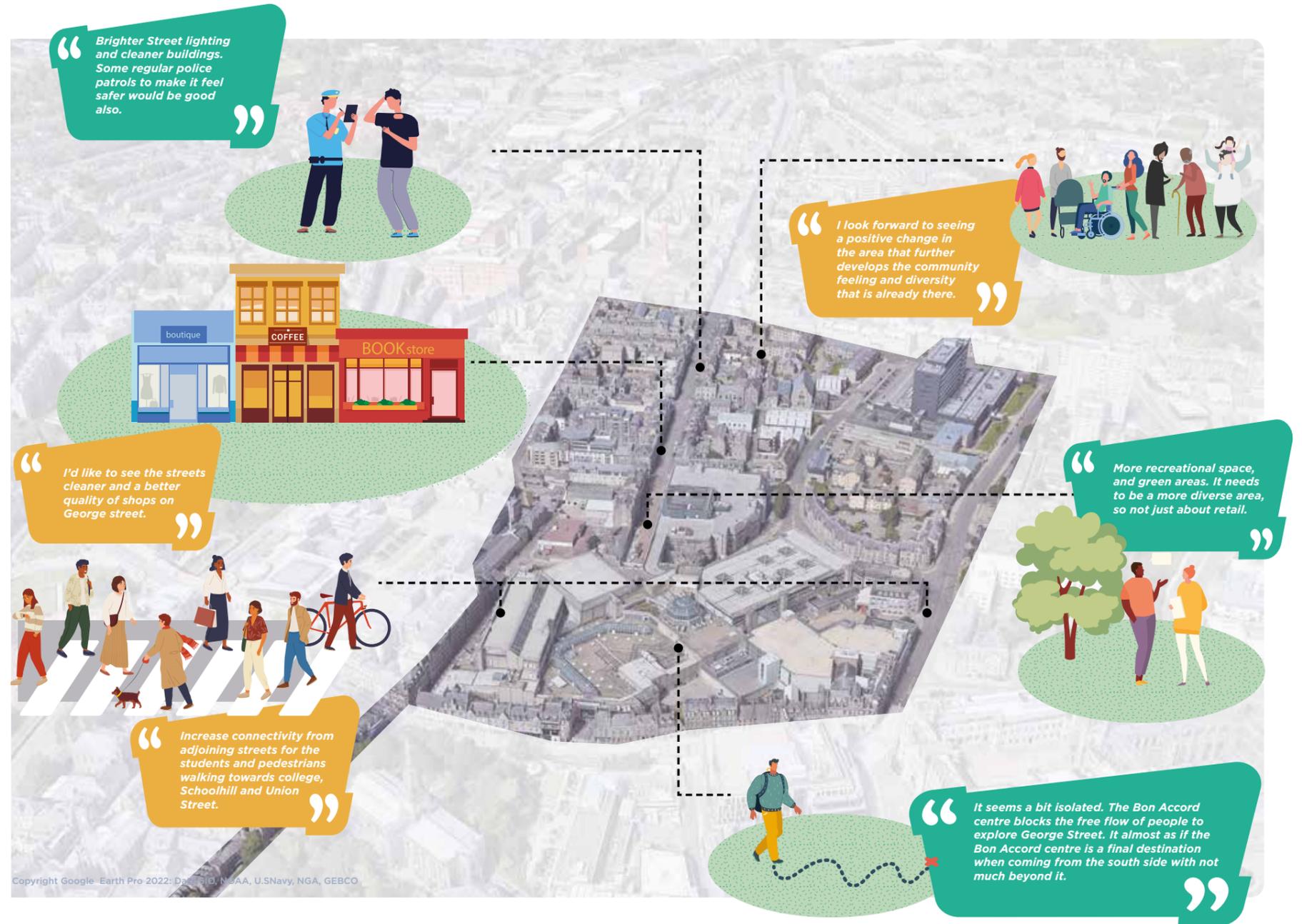
The George Street neighbourhood is located towards the northern boundary of the Masterplan zone. George Street itself runs North to South, forming a key link between the city centre core and areas to the north of the city. The area is dominated by the Bon Accord Centre and bounded to the West by Robert Gordon College.

The neighbourhood is a significant area of consideration with the context of the wider City Centre and Beach Masterplan, but given its distinct location and make up, will also be subject to its own Mini Masterplan exercise. To inform this Mini Masterplan a comprehensive engagement process was carried out by Aberdeen City Council in early 2022, to understand local stakeholder and community members views and aspirations for the George Street area. The aim of the consultation process was to encourage people to share ideas and experiences of George Street. The consultation exercise also invited comment on the area's key issues, it's strengths and perceptions of proximity to the city centre, in order to establish a picture of how the area functions on day to day basis and how the local and surrounding community use and interact with the place.

The feedback generated by the consultation exercise identified clear themes and areas for intervention from those who use and visit the area on a daily basis, such as revitalising the streetscape and improving the pedestrian experience. Further developing these themes will help set out a clear vision and objectives for the area as preparation on the Mini Masterplan continues.



LOCATION PLAN



ASPIRATIONS FOR CHANGE DIAGRAM

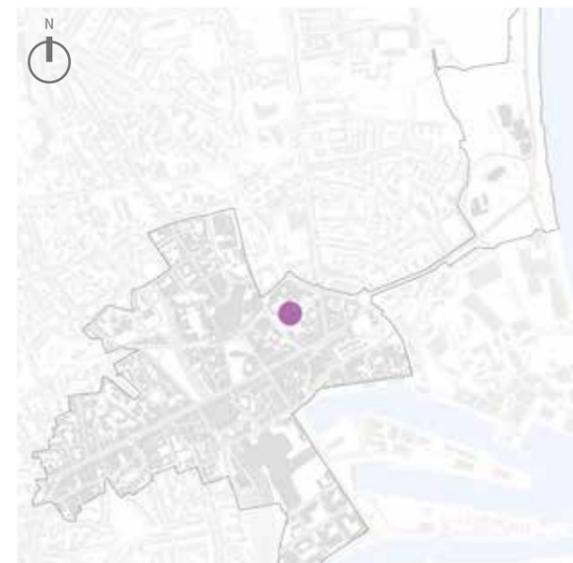
# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

## 6.2.9 QUEEN STREET

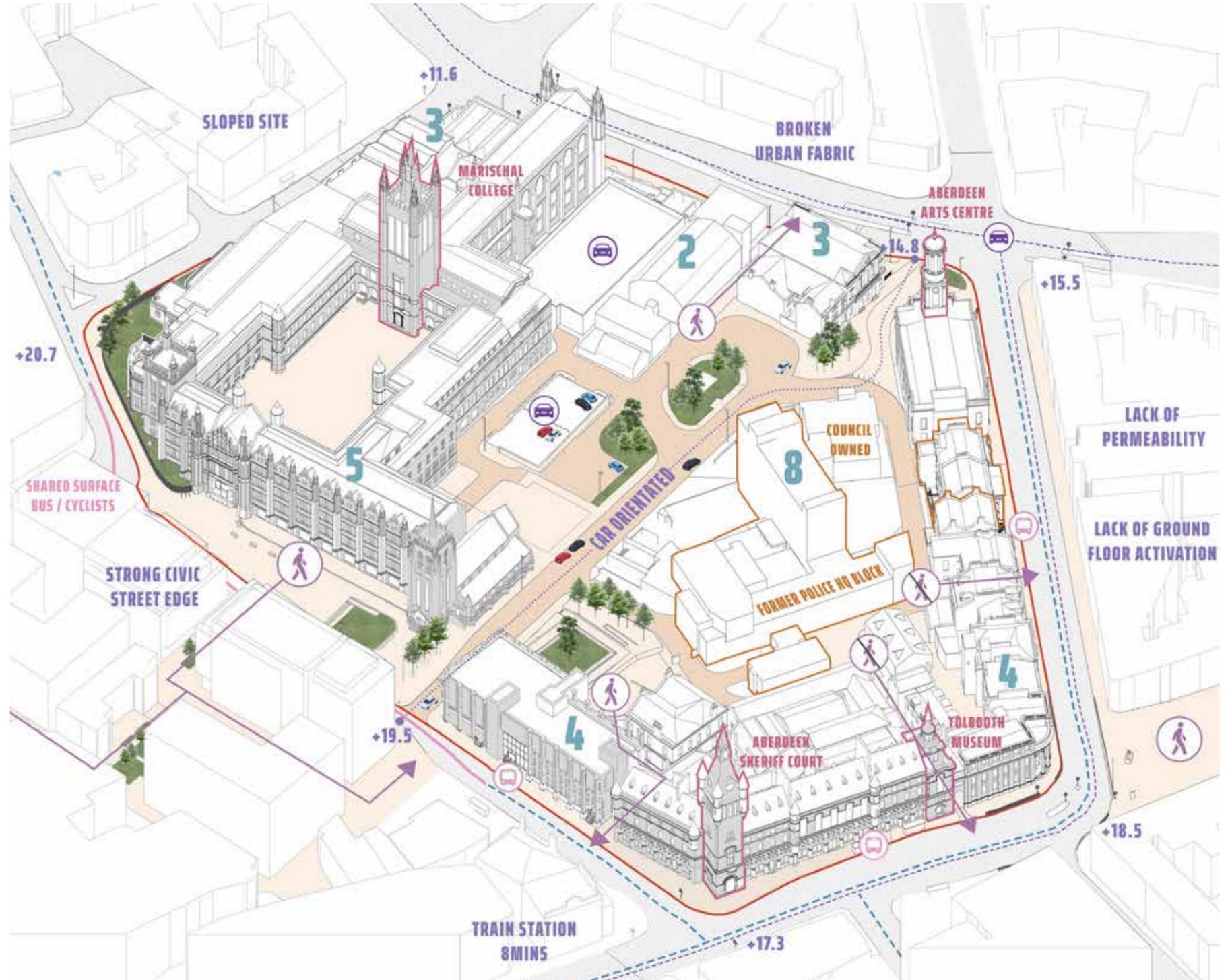
**STATUS:** An Options Appraisal is currently being progressed for the Queen Street Development Zone to inform a Strategic Business Case to be completed by December 2022.

The Queen Street neighbourhood, located to the east of the city centre, is defined by three key zones: the city's administrative centre at Marischal College, the Marischal Square mixed-use development and the cluster of buildings to the south of Queen Street. These zones form the edges to the recently completed Broad Street public realm. To develop this site as part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, the proposed initial actions are as follows:

- Revisit the Vision + Objectives for Queen Street, in light of market conditions and aligned to the City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- Develop a suite of overarching objectives for the appraisal
- Include or take cognisance of the Townhouse, Townhouse Extension, Archibald Simpson House, Arts Centre, SCTS Sheriff Court & Civil Annexe, Marischal East, Trinity Church, Lemon Tree, and Greyfriar's Church
- Estate rationalisation to include historic buildings in the periphery and the former Police HQ



LOCATION PLAN



SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.10 UNION STREET EAST

**STATUS: Full Business Cases currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

Union Street East's location to the east of the city centre provides immediate links to the Harbour and forms a gateway to the City when approached from the Beach via Castlegate.

The Union Street East streetscape project shall provide enhanced public realm along Union Street from Market Street to where it joins the Castlegate. The proposals will see the space within the existing streetscape reappropriated in favour of pedestrians and public transport whilst still allowing for service vehicle access. Where possible, carriageways have been reduced in width as to allow footways to be widened.

The proposed reappropriation of space within the street allows for the introduction of public seating at key locations along Union Street East which will offer welcoming amenity to all and opportunities for rest for the less able whilst encouraging a wide range of visitors to the city centre. The proposals allow for the incorporation of play, public art, and feature lighting at key locations along Union Street East. These proposals which will be developed at the next stage of the project will be carefully considered as to ensure a commonality of approach with respect to Union Street West, Central and East



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW EAST TOWARDS CASTLEGATE FROM CASTLE STREET / EXCHEQUER ROW

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.11 CASTLEGATE

**STATUS: Full Business Cases currently being prepared to be reported to Full Council in December 2022**

The proposals seek to create a flexible public space to connect Union Street to the Beachfront via Justice Street, and enhance the unique historic qualities of the area.

The proposal will create a clutter-free, flexible space at the heart of the square, which forms a setting to the historic Mercat Cross. This will be an inviting and comfortable place for people to occupy on a day to day basis, whilst being able to accommodate larger scale events, pageants and gatherings when required.

The square will incorporate Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) where possible, alongside trees and herbaceous planting to create shade and shelter, as well as a welcoming, habitable space for people to be in and enjoy.

Pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the Beach will be improved, along with the opportunity for increased public seating and spill out spaces to help animate the square.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF PROPOSED CASTLEGATE CIVIC SPACE

## 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

### 6.2.12 UNION STREET FACADE WORKS

**STATUS:** Currently engaged in dialogue with key project stakeholders. First phase interventions expected to commence early 2023.

In response to public feedback during the 'The Future of Aberdeen City Centre and the Beach' public engagement exercise in June-July 2021, a high-level façade inspection of properties on Union Street was instructed and completed. This survey includes recommendations for improvement measures, including costs, constraints, methodologies and an implementation programme. At Full Council on 28 February 2022, Officers were instructed to prepare a plan for the implementation of improvement works to buildings on Union Street, to prioritise the area between Market Street to Bridge Street and to report progress to Full Council in June 2022.

Following on from the full Union Street survey report issued in February 2022 a pilot project from 107-131 Union Street has been selected to complement the proposed works to Union Street streetscape, Union Terrace Gardens and the forthcoming new Aberdeen Market building. This will set the tone for the remainder of the street and give a clear indication to the occupiers, landlords and tenants of the properties on Union Street how improvements maybe simplified, made more cost effective and set out what support Aberdeen City Council could offer to assist in the process. This project provides an excellent opportunity to repair the historic fabric of the city as well as provide more attractive frontages to increase dwell time and retain tenants.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE VIEW OF PROPOSED UNION STREET FACADE WORKS PILOT PROJECT

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

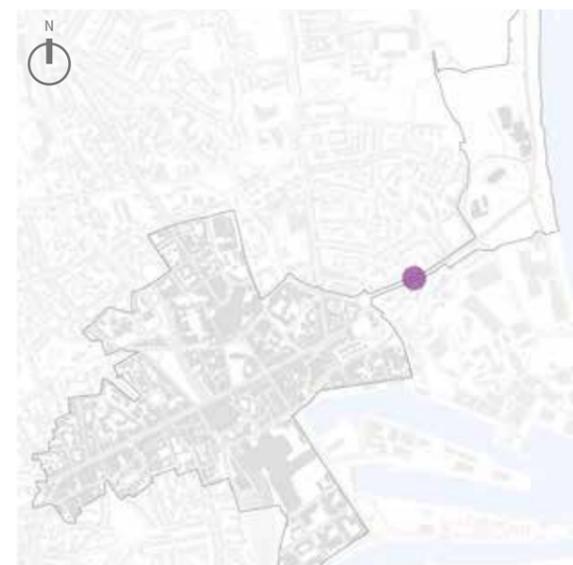
## 6.2.13 BEACH BOULEVARD

**STATUS: Outline Business Case to be presented to Full Council in Q1 2023.**

The Beach Boulevard is proposed as one of the main character areas of the Beachfront neighbourhood which runs from Links Road to the roundabout on the A956/Commerce Street. Options are currently being considered to reconfigure this route and to promote active travel between the beach and the city centre. Initial visioning work has been undertaken as part of the Beachfront Development Framework, which will connect the emerging Beach Boulevard with the Castlegate and Union Street East streetscape designs.

The reallocation of space along Beach Boulevard would improve both the ease and the quality of the journey between the city centre and the beach area, making it more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists and would provide environmental improvements through increased planting and improved water and air quality. This would positively impact on the area, including on surrounding buildings such as Hanover Street Primary School and the NHS Health Village on Frederick Street.

It is recognised that the development of the existing roundabout is inextricably linked to the emerging proposals for the Beach Boulevard and hence these projects will be developed as a coordinated piece of work. Currently, the existing roundabout at the west of Justice Street presents a significant barrier to pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the City Centre and the Beach. An Outline Business Case based on the redevelopment of the junction 'at grade' is now under development. In order to do this, work has started on the necessary technical studies which, combined with analysis of economic, social and environmental benefits, will be presented to the Council in Quarter 1 of 2023.



LOCATION PLAN



PROPOSED STREETScape WORKS TO BEACH BOULEVARD



INDICATIVE BEACH BOULEVARD VISION

# 6.0 MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

## 6.2.14 BEACH PROJECTS

**STATUS: Consultation on the Draft Beachfront Development Plan will take place in Autumn 2022, with a revised draft reported in December 2022.**

The Beachfront is an area unique to the city of Aberdeen and its development offers an exciting opportunity to create a transformational new waterfront destination for the City of Aberdeen.

The Beachfront forms a significant part of the City's public realm offer to residents and visitors. It is linked to the city centre primarily by the Beach Boulevard via the Justice Street Roundabout, and there exists significant potential to better connect these areas via active travel routes to Castlegate and Union Street beyond.

The 2022 'Beachfront Development Framework' sets out a vision and key design principles for a world class sport, leisure and tourism destination with an innovative landscape-led approach. Within the Development Framework area a series of distinct character areas have been identified including, the Beach Ballroom, Events Park + Field, Core Play Park, Esplanade and Beach, Beach Boulevard, Broad Hill, Potential Stadium and Leisure and Beach Village.

At the heart of the proposals is the redevelopment of the iconic Beach Ballroom, alongside an enhanced public realm setting, potential new Stadium and Leisure complex and a dynamic new Urban Park. This people-focused environment will be inclusive for all, creating a real community asset and bringing the 'wow' factor back to the Beachfront.



LOCATION PLAN



INDICATIVE CONCEPT VISUALISATION OF THE BEACHFRONT

# 7.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT + COMMUNICATION

An Engagement Strategy for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan has been prepared which will support ongoing design development and implementation of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

Engagement is an over-arching term and includes activity such as information giving, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering. The City Centre and Beach Engagement Strategy reflects the Council's overarching Engagement, Participation + Empowerment Strategy and will adopt other relevant Council policies e.g. in relation to inclusion and accessibility (such as using BSL and other languages/formats).

In June 2022, Council instructed the creation of a Stakeholder Forum to be a vehicle through which a range of stakeholders' views could be sought. In addition to the Stakeholder Forum, an ongoing programme of communication, consultation and collaboration will be implemented as individual elements of the Masterplan move from concept to design stage. This will build on engagement to date which has included:

- The city wide "The Future of Aberdeen City Centre and the Beach", consultation held in summer 2021.
- August 2021 – Beach stakeholder engagement event.
- City Centre Business Survey in September/October 2021.
- Focussed engagement with children and young people at key points throughout 2021 and 2022.
- Location and project specific engagement for example Belmont Quarter and Market Streetscape.

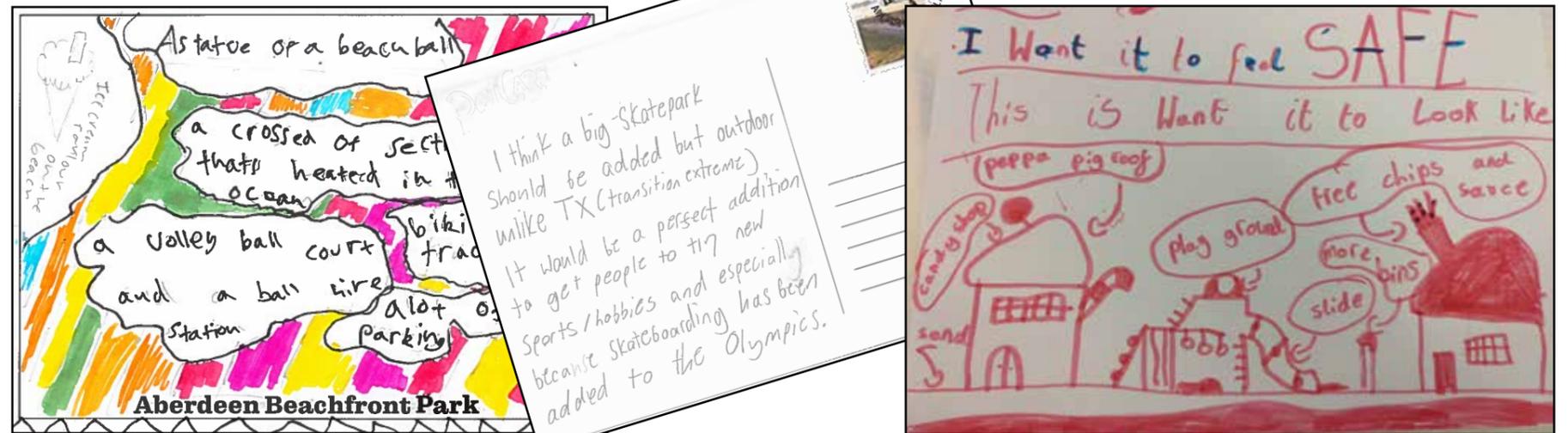
The summer 2021 "Future of Aberdeen City Centre and Beach" consultation received close to 8,000 responses and has helped the Council to prioritise its activities. The City Centre and Beach Engagement Strategy contains an ongoing programme of engagement which includes the following key activity for 2022/23.

- City Centre Streetscape projects – public consultation on Union Street, West End, Schoolhill, Upper Kirkgate and Castlegate over Autumn/Winter
- Beach Development Framework, Phase 1 public realm and strategic environmental assessment
- George Street – stakeholder engagement in relation to the preparation of a George Street Masterplan, following this public consultation on the Masterplan

A Children and Young People's (CYP) Engagement Strategy is being developed to support the Engagement Strategy for the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. The CYP Engagement Strategy will build on the proactive engagement with CYP that has been undertaken during 2021 and 2022 and expand the level of participation both in terms of age and location. The strategy will support children's and young people's rights and participation in planning, design and delivery of high quality places and will also align with and support the City's ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City. Engagement methodologies will be collaborative and innovative, ensuring active participation is inclusive regardless of age, abilities, socio-economic status, culture or language. The strategy will also reflect the ambitions of the new Aberdeen City Council's Partnership Agreement including promoting creativity, excellence and opportunities for learning and culture, active travel, safer cycling and safe and sustainable green spaces.



FILM STRIP WHICH ILLUSTRATES SOME OF THE STILLS TAKEN FROM THE FEEDBACK VIDEO PRODUCED. THE VIDEO IS 6.41 MINUTES LONG AND INCLUDES A NARRATION WHICH EXPLAINS HOW THE IDEAS RECEIVED FROM THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT HAS HELPED SHAPE DESIGNS.



SOME OF THE IDEAS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT UNDERTAKEN WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

# 8.0 DELIVERY PROGRAMME + PRIORITIES

## 8.1 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The adjacent, high-level Programme Summary shows the timeline and key stages through Business Case development to design and construction for the City Centre, Market, Beach and Queen Street Development Zone projects.

Key activity within the next 12 months can be summarised as follows:

### Union St Central

Start Design - Q3 2021  
End Design - Q1 2023  
FBC - Q4 2022  
Start Construction - Q2 2023

### Aberdeen Market (Streetscaping included)

Start Design - Q3 2021  
End Design - Q2 2023  
FBC (streetscape) - Q4 2022  
FBC - Q2 2023  
Start Construction - Q3 2023

### Belmont Street Area

Start Design - Q3 2021  
End Design - Q4 2022  
Start Construction - Q1 2023  
End Construction - Q2 2023

### Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate

Start Design - Q3 2021  
End Design - Q4 2022  
FBC - Q4 2022

### Union St East and Castlegate

Start Design - Q3 2021  
FBC - Q4 2022

### Union Street West and West End

Start Design - Q3 2021  
FBC - Q4 2022

### Beach - Leisure Centre

Start Design - Q2 2022  
End Design - Q3 2023  
FBC - Q3 2023

### Beach - Ballroom

Start Design - Q4 2022

### Beach - Public Realm (A)

Start Design - Q2 2022  
End Design - Q3 2023  
FBC - Q3 2023  
Start Construction - Q3 2023

### Beach - Public Realm (B)

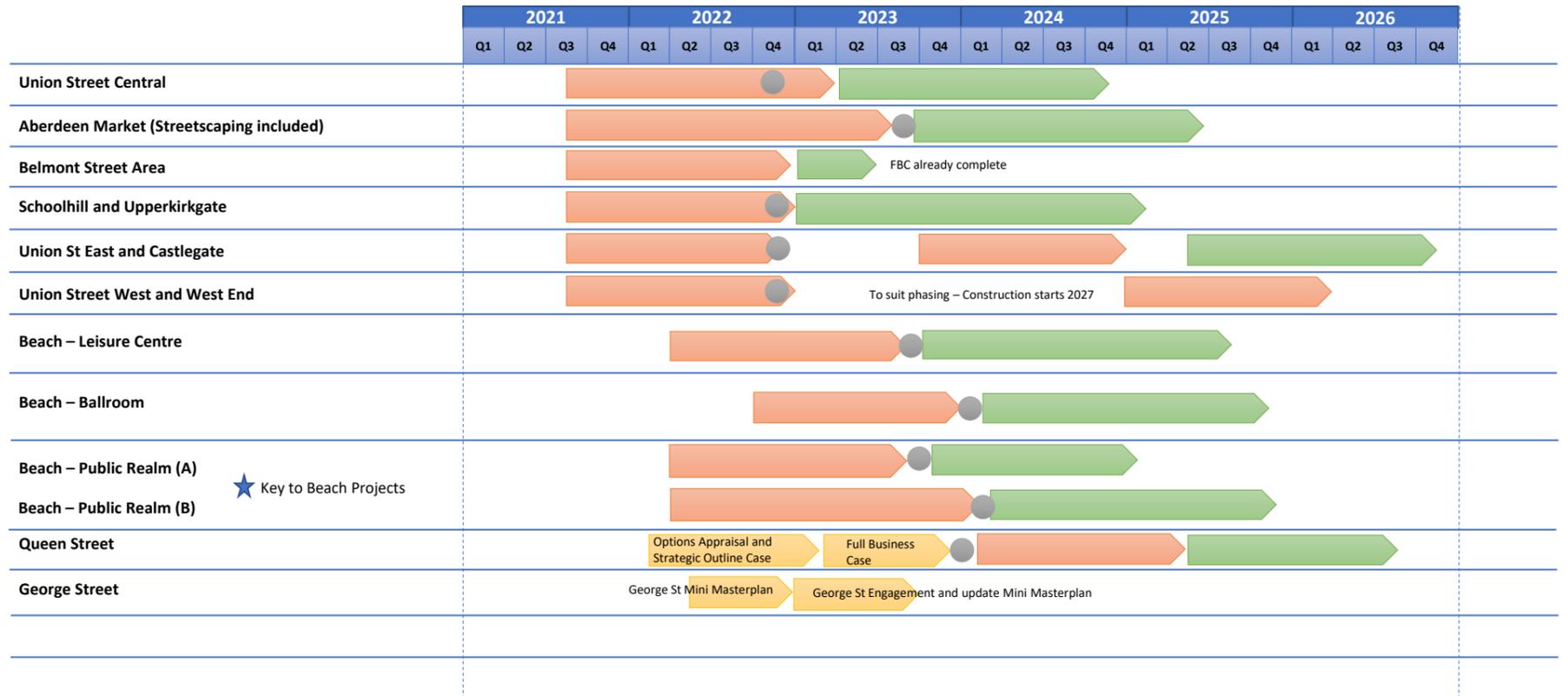
Start Design - Q2 2022  
End Design - Q4 2023  
FBC - Q4 2023  
Start Construction - Q1 2024

### Queen Street Development Zone

Start Options Appraisal and Strategic Business Case - Q2 2022  
End Options Appraisal and Strategic Business Case - Q4 2022  
Start Full Business Case - Q1 2023

### George Street Mini Masterplan

Start Preparation of Mini Masterplan - Q2 2022  
Report on Mini Masterplan - Q4 2022  
Engage on Mini Masterplan - Q1 2023



**KEY:**

Design

Construction

Strategic Support Services

● Full Business Case (FBC)

★ **KEY:**

**Beach Public Realm (A):** Events Field, Amphitheatre, Gateway Building, Broadhill and Sports Area, Pump Track, Part Play Parks

**Beach Public Realm (B):** Pedestrian Spine, Hub Building, Temp Landscaping, Canopies, Part Play Park, Beach Boulevard

INDICATIVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW  
N.B. This Programme should be treated as indicative and provides the current thinking on milestones/decision points for ACC and delivery of the key Masterplan projects. It is very much dependant on the Statutory Consent and Planning Application processes required, which both may impact on the timescales currently envisaged.

# 8.0 DELIVERY PROGRAMME + PRIORITIES

## 8.2 PROJECT TEAM

### CLIENT

Aberdeen City Council



### PROJECT + PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Hub North Scotland



### AGENT

Savills



### ARCHITECT + MASTERPLANNING

Keppie Design



### ARCHITECT (STREETScape)

Ryder



### COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

Morrison Media



### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

LDA



### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT + GEORGE STREET MASTERPLANNING

OPEN Optimised Environments



### PLANNING CONSULTANT

Keppie Design



### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Streets UK



### TRANSPORT CONSULTANT

Systra



**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**  
**CITY CENTRE AND BEACH MASTERPLAN 2022**



## APPENDIX 01

### SMART OBJECTIVES



**A01**

**ACC CITY VISION**  
**SMART OBJECTIVES**

Specific  
Measurable  
Achievable (or Accountable)  
Relevant  
Timely

OBJECTIVE	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	SPATIAL LEVEL	METRICS	BASELINE DATA	CURRENT DATA	FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING
<b>MASTERPLAN</b>							
City Centre population growth	More people live, work, and use City Centre facilities	City Centre	3,000S extra people living in the city Centre by 2040	Savills City Living Report February 2022	2020	Yearly	ACC
Increased GVA	Still having the highest GVA per head in Scotland	Local Authority	£s per annum	Real GVA per head	2019	Yearly	ACC
Reduction in crime (actual)	Offences and crime figures in a downward trend in the city Centre	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% fewer young people (12 to 17) charged with an offence and a crime by 2026</li> <li>2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026</li> <li>1 point increase (4.31 -&gt; 5.31) (/7) in the mean score for people who "Feel safe in the city Centre throughout the day and night" by 2026</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Convictions 2017-2018</li> <li>Reconviction rate</li> <li>Baseline City Voice 41: June 2017</li> </ul> From Gov.Scot & City Voice	2017/18 2018/19 Sept 2021	Yearly	ACC
Increased footfall in the city Centre	More locals, visitors and tourists visiting Aberdeen throughout the year	Local Authority	10% increase in daily average footfall in the city Centre by 2026	Centre for Cities 2019	Feb 2022	Monthly	ACC
Reduced Office vacancy rates in the city Centre	Less empty office space in the city Centre	Aberdeen Central	2% (13.99% ->11.99%) decrease in the office vacancy rate in the City Centre by 2026	Aberdeen Central: CoStar	Q1 2022	Quarterly	ACC
Reduced Retail vacancy rates in the City Centre	Less empty retail units in the City Centre	Local Authority	1% (6.39% -> 5.39%) decrease in the retail vacancy rate in Aberdeen City by 2026	CoStar	2022	Yearly	ACC

Increased journeys by walking and cycling into the City Centre	More active travel across all demographics	City Centre	75% of people walking and 25% cycling as part of their usual mode of transport into the City Centre by 2026	City Voice reports 41 - 45	Sept 2021	Yearly	ACC
Increased ease of walking and cycling around Aberdeen	More active travel across all demographics	City Centre	2-point increase in the mean (/7) (3.7 -> 5.7) of people who say they can easily walk and cycle around the City Centre using good quality routes.	City Voice reports 41 - 45	Sept 2021	Yearly	ACC
Increase in cycling in the City Centre	More active travel across all demographics	City Centre	30% (1,244 -> 1,617) increase in average daily cycling in the City Centre by 2026.	Department for Transport	2019	Yearly	ACC
Reduction in car journeys in the City Centre	Less cars in the City Centre	City Centre	20% reduction in average daily traffic flow by 2026	Department for Transport	2019	Yearly	ACC
Reduction in CO2 emissions	Ongoing reductions in CO2 emissions in the City Centre	Local Authority	By at least 61% by 2026 and NZC by 2045	Carbon Footprint (2015/16 base year)	2020/2021 Financial Year	Yearly	ACC
Reduction in NO2 (ug/m3)	Ongoing reductions in NO2 emissions in the City Centre	City Centre	Reduce NO2 to <35ug/m3 annual mean in the City Centre by 2026.	ACC: Air Quality Report	2019	Yearly	ACC
Increased educational attainment, skills, and life-long learning			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6% absolute increase in the number of people (16-64) receiving job related training in the last 13 weeks by 2026</li> <li>4% (52% -&gt;56%) increase in working age population (16-64) with NVQ4+ Qualifications by 2026</li> <li>3% (6.5% -&gt; 3.5%) decrease in working age population (16-64) with no NVQ Qualifications by 2026</li> </ul>	<p>APS (NOMIS):</p> <p>APS (NOMIS):</p> <p>APS (NOMIS):</p>	<p>Jan 2021 to Dec 2021 Baseline Year</p> <p>Jan 2020 to Dec 2020 Baseline Year</p> <p>Jan 2020 to Dec 2020 Baseline Year</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	ACC

	Improved Education outcomes	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 1% decrease (3.2% -&gt;2.2%) in the percentage of people aged 16-19 not participating in education, employment, or training</li> <li>To match or be under Scotland's density of skills gaps in each occupation groupings (High Skilled, Middle Skilled, Service and Labour Intensive) by 2026</li> </ul>	<p>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation</p> <p>Scottish Employer Skills Survey</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>2020</p> <p>-</p>	<p>Yearly</p> <p>Biannually</p>	
<b>CITY CENTRE INTERVENTIONS</b>							
Creation of new public realm space leading to increased satisfaction with the City Centre	Improved perception of City Centre from residents and visitors	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>62,559 m2 new public realm space</li> <li>Increased life satisfaction in Aberdeen - 1 point increase (7.21 -&gt;8.21) in the level of "Life Satisfaction" in Aberdeen residents by 2026</li> <li>Increased happiness in Aberdeen - 1 point increase (7.17-&gt; 8.17) in the level of "Happy" in Aberdeen residents by 2026</li> <li>Increased green space for city residents - 1 point (5.2 -&gt;6.2) increase in the level Aberdeen Central Residents score for "Can you regularly experience good quality natural space? This includes a wide variety of environments from parks and</li> </ul>	<p>City Centre</p> <p>Local Authority</p> <p>Local Authority</p> <p>City Centre</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>2020/2021</p> <p>2020/2021</p> <p>Sept 2021</p>	<p>On completion of construction works</p> <p>Yearly</p> <p>Yearly</p> <p>Yearly</p>	ACC (HNSL for new public realm)

			<i>woodlands to green space alongside paths and streets"</i>				
Creation of Construction jobs over the build period (Public Realm & Market)	Increase in construction jobs	City Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60 - 120 new Construction Jobs – Public Realm</li> <li>150 - 175 new Construction Jobs – Market</li> </ul>	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During construction period	HNSL
Creation of new jobs directly associated with the Market (catering, cleaning, management, and operations)	New jobs created in the City Centre	City Centre	250 new Market Jobs	Market Operator	2022	Yearly	ACC
Attracting regional and local businesses into the new Market	New businesses attracted to the City Centre	City Centre	20 – 40 new businesses	Directory of New Businesses	Feb 2021	Monthly	ACC
Reduction in city centre congestion	Bus journey times reduced, more buses on time etc	-	Buses generally on time 75% (64% -> 75%) of the time	Transport Scotland	2019	Yearly	ACC
Materials sourced from the local area	Greater use of locally sourced materials such as granite	-	30 - 50% of net Construction Costs to be local materials	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During Construction period	HNSL
Contractor's labour from the local area	Greater use of local labour pool	-	60% Local labour employed	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During Construction Period	HNSL
<b>Beach</b>							
Increased footfall and revenue at the Beach Ballroom and other Beach Leisure Facilities	Facilities are more popular, have greater footfall and generate more profits	-	100% Footfall and 100% revenue increases (Leisure and Ballroom only)	Current footfall and revenue for existing ACC facilities	2022	Yearly	ACC
Creation of free public realm and open park/play space, leading to increased satisfaction with the Beach area	Improved perception of Beach from residents and visitors	Local Authority	2,000 m2 Decrease in the average distance (m) for City Centre Residents to nearest Park, Garden or Playing Field.	ONS: Garden	2020	Yearly	ACC
Increased journeys by walking and cycling per annum	More active travel across all demographics		38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026	Beach Esplanade Average Daily			ACC

		-		Pedestrian/Cycling Levels C19 Monitoring Form	Dec 2021	Monthly	
Reduction in car journeys at the Beachfront	Less cars in the Beach front area	-	20% (12,552 -> 10,042) reduction in all vehicle journeys at the beachfront	No roads around the Beach monitored in C19 form	2019	Yearly	ACC
Creation of Construction jobs over the build period	Increase in construction jobs	-	200 new Construction Jobs	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During Construction Period	HNSL
Creation of new jobs directly associated with new Leisure offering at the Beach	Increase in jobs in Aberdeen	-	30 new Leisure Jobs by 2025	Mott McDonald	2022	Yearly	ACC
Materials sourced from the local area	Greater use of locally sourced materials such as granite	-	20 to 30% of net Construction Costs to be local materials	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During Construction Period	HNSL
Contractor's labour from the local area	Greater use of local labour pool	-	50% Local labour employed	HNSL TIER 1 Contractors	N/A	During Construction Period	HNSL

## APPENDIX 02

### CITY CENTRE + BEACH FUTURE MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

**A02**

# CITY CENTRE + BEACH FUTURE MASTERPLAN PROJECTS

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan sets out a vision for Aberdeen, including the delivery of several exciting short, medium and long term projects. The following projects have been identified following extensive public consultation in 2021 and throughout the last year and will contribute to the regeneration of the city centre and beach areas.

## LIGHT OF THE NORTH

- EN02 Guild St
- EN03 Justice Mill/Langstane Place/Windmill Brae
- EN04 Rose/Thistle/Chapel St
- EN05 Union Street [DIGITAL]
- EN06 Upper Kirkgate/Schoolhill
- EN07 Bon Accord Square
- EN08 Castlegate
- EN09 Golden Square
- EN11 Aberdeen in Colour [DIGITAL]

## CITY FOR PEOPLE

- City Centre Living [DIGITAL]
- CM01 Castlehill
- CM02 Queen St
- CM03 Torry Waterfront (South Bank) [DIGITAL]
- CM04 Regent Quay
- CM05 Woolmanhill
- CM06 Aberdeen Indoor Market
- CM07 Bon Accord Centre
- CM08 Independent Aberdeen [DIGITAL]
- CM09 St Nicholas Centre
- CM10 Trinity Centre
- CM11 Union St Cons. Area Improvement
- CM12 Union Square

## ENERGY + MORE

- EC02 North Dee Business Quarter
- EC05 Aberdeen Creative Space
- EC06 Aberdeen 365 [DIGITAL]
- EC09 Mither Kirk Project
- EC11 Aberdeen Works
- EC12 Hotel Academy
- EC13 Retail Academy

## THE CONNECTED CITY

- IN01 Walkable Aberdeen
- IN02 City Centre Parking
- IN03-05 City Centre Cycle Network
- IN06-07 City Centre Bus Network
- IN08 Aberdeen Station
- IN11-12 Resilient Utilities
- IN13 Underground Bin Storage

## BEACHFRONT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

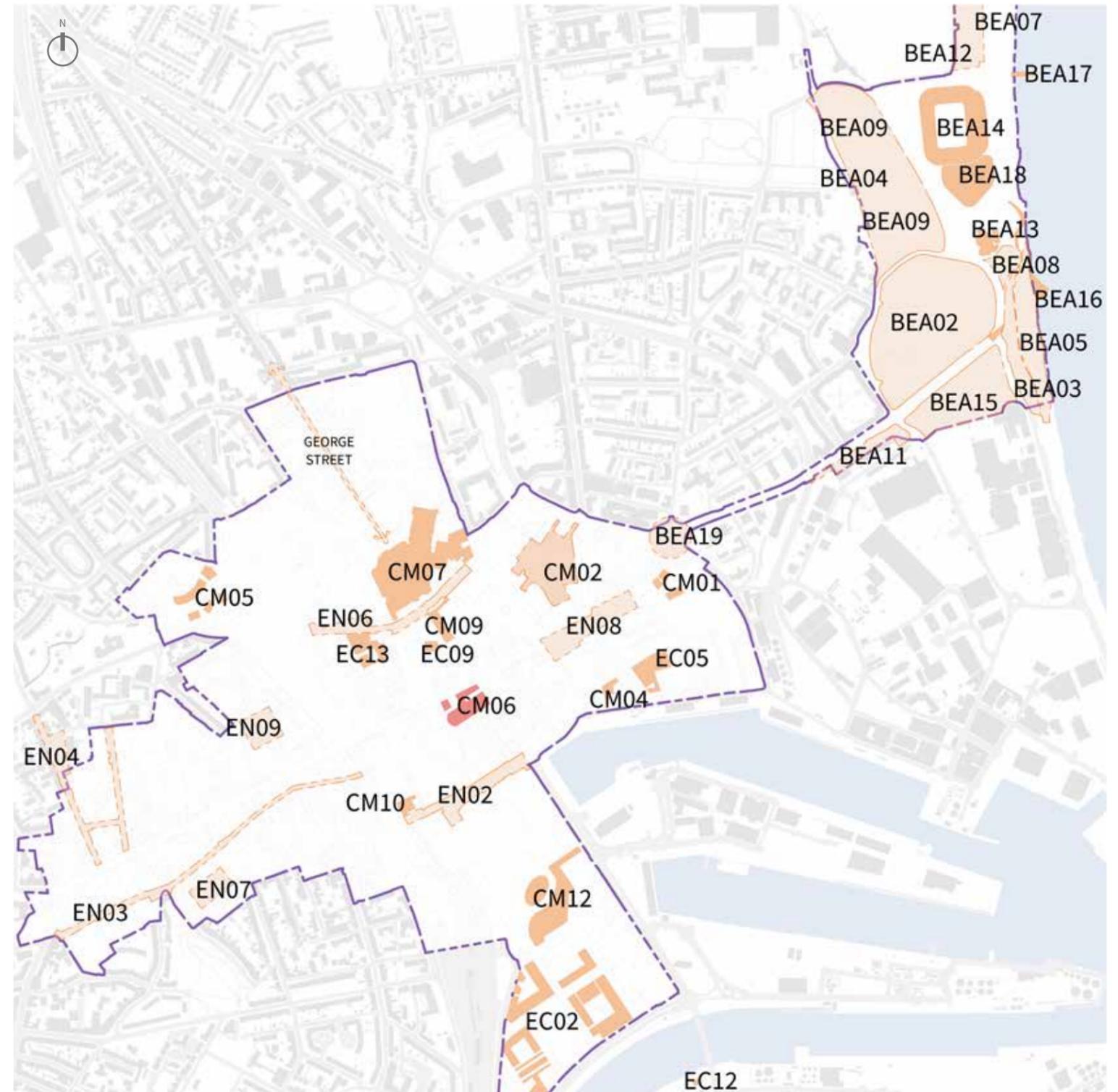
- BEA01 New Urban Park
- BEA02 Events Park
- BEA03 Landscape Mounding
- BEA04 Broad Hill (Public Realm + Landscaping)
- BEA05 Reconfigured Beach Landscaping
- BEA06 Beach Pavilion Building
- BEA07 New Canopy Features
- BEA08 Beach Ballroom Plaza
- BEA09 Broad Hill (Structures)
- BEA10 Pedestrian Spine
- BEA11 Beach Boulevard
- BEA12 Beach Village
- BEA13 Beach Ballroom
- BEA14 New Stadium
- BEA15 New Leisure Facility
- BEA16 Boardwalk
- BEA17 New Slipway
- BEA18 Energy Centre
- BEA19 Justice Street Roundabout

## GEORGE STREET MINI MASTERPLAN

Projects will be identified and included in the recalibrated Masterplan following stakeholder consultation and as completion of the George Street Mini Masterplan exercise (Autumn 2022). The draft George Street Mini Masterplan will be reported to Full Council in December 2022.

-  CITY CENTRE + BEACH MASTERPLAN
-  FUTURE PROJECTS
-  FUTURE PROJECTS - OUTDOOR SPACE
-  UNDER CONSTRUCTION

KEY



FUTURE MASTERPLAN PROJECTS MAP DIAGRAM