

THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

6.1 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Based on the preferred options previously discussed, the design team produced an indicative Development Framework Plan which can be seen in the image opposite. This sets out an aspiration, allowing more detailed proposals to be tested and come forward in the future. The following pages set out the key principles of the development framework structure which in turn will be further explored later in the document.



Development Framework plan

6.2 DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE

The Development Framework provides a basis for more detailed proposals to come forward in the future, however one of the principle aims of the Development Framework is to set out the key development structure to allow a coordinated and coherent approach for further design evolution over time. The key development structure is set out as a series of layers setting an appropriate level of spatial guidance to ensure the future development of the Beachfront area maximises its potential and responds best to its context. The identified layers are listed below and have been further explained in the following sections.

Development Framework - Principal Layers

- Arrival and Connections
- Character Areas
- Architectural Interventions
- Internal Movement Network
- Landforms
- Green Network
- Blue Network
- Civic Plazas

6.2.1 ARRIVAL & CONNECTIONS

The concept proposals look to improve the connectivity from the Beachfront to the city centre; from the Beachfront to the wider area in particular the surrounding neighbourhoods; and between the beach itself and the Beachfront area. The proposals seek to establish existing connections and supplement these with improved links and permeability from the local network into the site with the promotion of a pedestrian and cycle focussed approach.

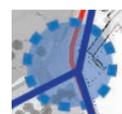
The removal of vehicles from the east section of Beach Boulevard across Queens Links to the Esplanade, and from the Esplanade between Codona's and Accommodation Road will allow for improved permeability across the Beachfront site. The removal of these two sections of roadway will also allow for ease of access to the beach which currently feels quite isolated.

The way people move to and from the site will change, which will ensure there is a more inviting and safer atmosphere for those arriving and using the Beachfront area, encouraging a sense of health and well-being. It is recognised there are several key arrival points to the Development Framework area, each of which has a role to play in being welcoming, clearly orientating, and facilitating the best active travel experience. These include:

1. Beach Boulevard west – Justice Street/City Centre
2. Beach Boulevard east – Links Road/Queens Links
3. Urquhart Road
4. Esplanade (from the south)
5. Esplanade (from the North)
6. Accommodation Road
7. Broad Hill South



Arrival & Connections diagram



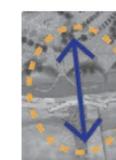
Arrival Points



Connections



Potential Enhanced Connection to Beach



Existing Connection to Beach

6.2.2 PROPOSED CHARACTER AREAS & OPEN SPACES

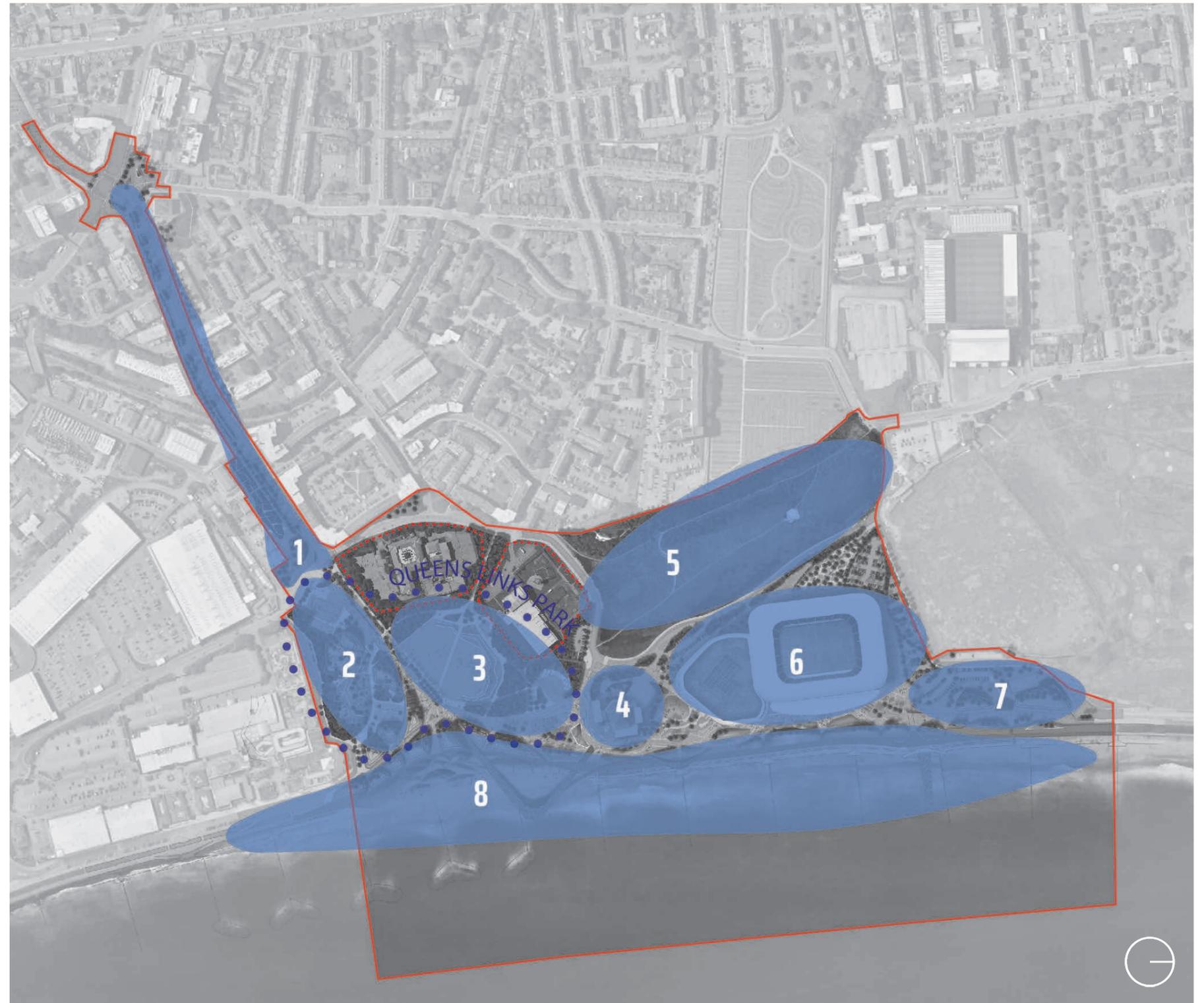
The proposed arrangement of the Development Framework area has resulted in an exercise of reorganisation of the open space provision within the masterplan area. These spaces have been developed with the aim of creating different characters and opportunities for people to enjoy the site. Whether this be a relaxing walk along the promenade surrounded by grasses waving in the breeze on the proposed dune landforms, a visit to the vibrant, colourful, and exciting play park or arriving at the grand and civic Beach Ballroom Plaza; the overall masterplan design aims to provide a variety of characters and spatial experiences.

It should also be recognised that the character of the park will change from day to day and at different times of year. Events or match days will change the character of some spaces, particularly spaces such as the Central Square, Beach Ballroom Plaza, and the Events Field area.

Each proposed character area will be expanded on further in Section 6.6.

Key

1. Beach Boulevard
2. Core Play
3. Events Park
4. Beach Ballroom
5. Broad Hill
6. Leisure and Potential New Stadium
7. Beach Village
8. The Beach and Esplanade



Proposed Character Areas & Open Spaces diagram



6.2.3 ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

The Beach Ballroom renovation and extension, Leisure facilities, and potential new Stadium are the key architectural works within the design proposals. However, the Design Team have also explored a number of complementary architectural opportunities within the wider Development Framework area. In these instances, there is potential for flexible structures to be integrated into the design. The items listed below represent the key architectural works proposed for the Beachfront area:

1. Beach Ballroom

The B-listed Beach Ballroom will sit at the heart of the concept masterplan and will be revitalised through the addition of potential extensions and a full renovation.

2. Leisure and Potential New Stadium

The potential new leisure centre, ice arena and football stadium will be a vibrant, accessible, and welcoming building.

3. Gateway Building

The Gateway Building acts as a sculptural landmark offering an enhanced sense of arrival to the Beachfront and offers key wayfinding for the proposed beachfront development.

4. Hub Building

The Hub Building is located in the central plaza area at the heart of the new Urban Park and provides an opportunity for a potential cafe and community spaces.

5. Beach Pavilion

The Beach Pavilion offers active frontage to the Beach Esplanade within a flexible structure which could be used for a variety of activities.

6. Lightweight Canopy Structures

A number of Lightweight Canopy Structures are located at key nodal points within the Urban Park offering seating and shelter.

7. Amphitheatre

The Amphitheatre offers a flexible external events space with integrated areas to gather and rest.

8. Boardwalk

The Boardwalk structure follows the sinuous route of the Rope Works and extends out to the North Sea.

9. Broad Hill Viewing Interventions

Geometric viewing platforms or seating walls taking advantage of views across the Beachfront.

10. Slipway

Providing access to the Beachfront below the Esplanade.

The conceptual Masterplan encourages a common architectural language applied across all development opportunities within the wider Parkland area, creating a cohesive scheme that has been considered and designed as a whole.



Architectural Interventions diagram

Phase 2 of the Development Framework offers additional opportunities to create a number of satellite WC/shower/changing facilities located along the beachfront, with a potential combined Club House at Footdee for Surf/Swim/Life Saving. This could include the provision of new public Beach Huts or similar.



6.2.4 LANDFORM

Landform can play a key role in creating usable spaces, helping to provide shelter and improve the microclimates across the site, increasing the comfort of visitors and dwell time. Enhanced microclimatic conditions can also assist with biodiversity and the creating of new habitats. Strategically across the Development Framework area new landscape mounding will aim to spatially redefine parts of the site, assisting with shelter and microclimate creation, while also adding significantly to the visual experience of the place, with new landform providing an opportunity to interact with the landscape. These mound features will also help to define and enclose spaces within the park, creating 'rooms' of different sizes which can accommodate the various programs of use.

The landforms will be carefully sited to frame and create views of existing and new interventions in and around the area. This could be creating choreographed views to the sea from the esplanade level in the park or setting up vistas to sculptures or interventions within the park. Through revealing and blocking views the mounds will also provide increased opportunities for exploration and discovery within the park.

Some of the landforms may be developed to contribute directly to the play value of the site. This may vary from informal elements such as mounds to run up and roll down or more formal elements such as the incorporation of slides or viewing points.

6.2.5 CIVIC PLAZAS

Civic plazas lie between the character areas of the site and are a key element in the definition and organisation of the core park area. These are large public spaces which form gathering places and key junctions in the internal network.

All these spaces relate to an architectural intervention or existing architectural feature, which acts as a landmark and assists in wayfinding.

These plazas are activated by water features, planting, furniture, and framed views, creating social spaces where people can come together. Some are large enough to host small scale events such as markets or pop-up food stalls.

1. Landform Mounds
2. Sunken Areas / 'Rooms'
3. Existing Landform (Broad Hill)
4. High Points



Landform diagram

1. Civic Plazas
2. Key Connections



Civic Plazas diagram

6.2.6 GREEN NETWORK

The green network within the site plays a key role in creating attractive spaces for people, as well as providing essential habitat for wildlife and increasing biodiversity.

Through the addition of strategic landform mounding, enough shelter is created to grow a variety of plant species. Additional tree planting is proposed throughout the site, and the green network aims to incorporate a variety of textural planting such as shrubs, wildflowers, and longer grasses. Large areas of lawn are proposed only where needed for amenity and events and should be species rich.

Consideration has been given to how the green network within the site connects outward into the wider landscape, creating green corridors for wildlife and overall enhancing biodiversity.

- 1. Green Connections 
- 2. Street/Parkland Trees 
- 3. Coastal Connections 
- 4. Species Rich Mixed Planting 
- 5. Woodland 
- 6. Species Rich Lawn 



Green Network diagram

6.2.7 BLUE NETWORK

Rain gardens and other surface water features could be created within the site, with the principle being applied that surface water will be dealt with at, or close to, source where this is possible. These features can be developed as attractive landscape features, enhancing the overall landscape design of the masterplan, increasing biodiversity in the area, and ensuring the blue and green infrastructure work together. For areas of hard surfacing on the ground, permeable surfaces can be explored, avoiding the need, where possible, to carry surface water in a piped system.

For areas of building roofs and impermeable surfacing to the north of the site, a surface water network making use of these same types of green and blue infrastructure features could be developed, but with a drainage outfall to sea, created through the existing underpass.

- 1. Potential Rain Gardens 
- 2. Site Drains to Sea 



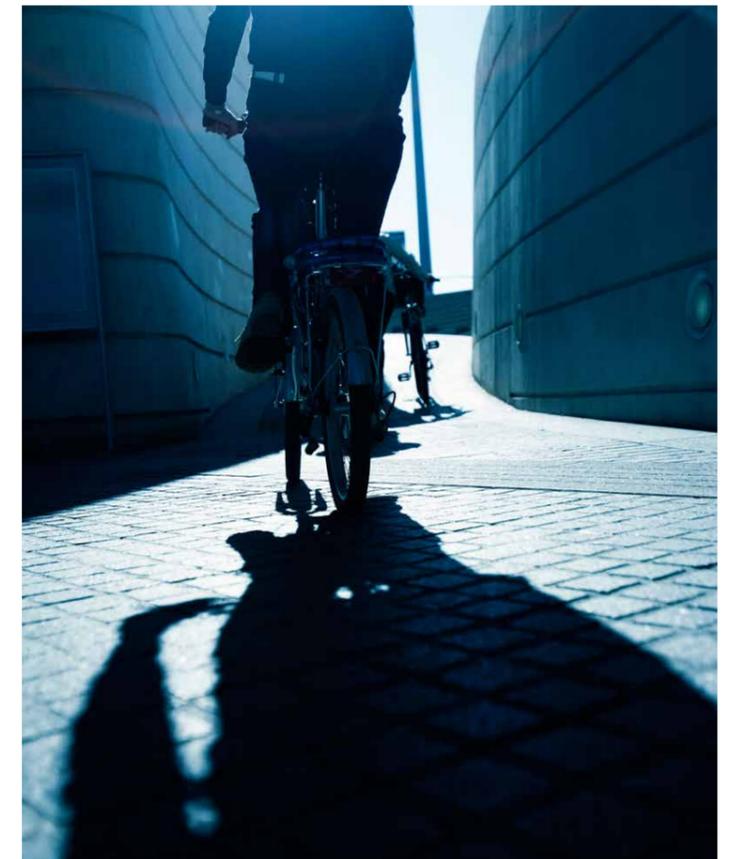
Blue Network diagram

6.3 PROPOSED MOVEMENT NETWORK

6.3.1 ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

The Framework proposes expansion and upgrades to the active travel network, capitalising on the proximity of the Beachfront to the city centre. It will prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists; a step-change from the current situation where opportunities for walking and cycling are shaped around a traffic-led environment. Measures include:

- Reconfiguration of the A956 / Beach Boulevard roundabout junction, overcoming severance and reducing the dominance of vehicular traffic. New crossings will better reflect the desire line between the city centre and the Beachfront. The reconfiguration will be consistent with City Centre Masterplan and reflects the reclassification of the A956 corridor to a 'secondary' route, as defined by the Roads Hierarchy.
- Reallocation of road space on Beach Boulevard in favour of active travel modes. The eastbound carriageway would become a two-way traffic link, calming traffic and reducing vehicle speeds. The westbound carriageway would be reconfigured to accommodate segregated pedestrian and cycle links, integrated with the reconfigured A956 / Beach Boulevard junction. Improved links would be set within a landscaped and well-lit environment.
- Development of a wayfinding strategy, with signage and mapping to aid users in their journey between the city centre and the Beachfront.
- The Beach Boulevard would be closed to traffic north of its junction with Links Road, significantly reducing levels of through-traffic and creating an environment which promotes active travel. Changes to local traffic priority present further opportunities to ensure safe and direct connections towards the urban park and beachfront.
- Pedestrian and cycle links around the edge of the park will create a space which is well-integrated to the adjoining streetscape. New and improved links will aid connectivity with the retail park, Constitution Street, Urquhart Road and Broad Hill, better connecting these areas to the park, waterfront, redeveloped Beach Ballroom and leisure uses located to the north.
- Active travel hubs will be incorporated to the urban park, with opportunities to provide information and aid wayfinding, offering rest and changing facilities, cycle hire outlets and safe spaces for cycle storage.
- The active travel strategy proposes 'park-mobility' initiatives to ensure that all users feel safe and comfortable within the park. This could include short-term hire of mobility aids.
- Reallocating space to active travel modes will address severance at the waterfront, making it easier to move between Queens Links and the Promenade.



Active travel

6.3.2 PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The park will include a network of links and paths to aid movement and exploration while catering for users of all abilities. The proposals promote access to the adjoining local catchment, prioritising pedestrian and cycle movement over general traffic and removing existing severance. New or improved pedestrian links will provide increased capacity, catering for the larger flows of people associated with sporting fixtures or events at the park. Conversely, some paths will reflect a more intimate scale, more conducive for exploring the park. A clear path/route hierarchy will help users to navigate the space, reinforced by a clear signposting strategy.

Suggested improvements to Justice Street, the roundabout, and Beach Boulevard aim to provide a direct, attractive and welcoming pedestrian environment between the City centre and the Beach. A key element of this will be the use of appropriate controlled or priority crossings, provision of step-free routes and the incorporation of seating and 'places to pause'.

Well-designed connections and crossings into the park from other arrival points will be a key consideration to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian access from throughout the wider Beachfront area, including the adjoining retail and leisure areas and the residential catchment to the north. As with the measures to connect the beachfront to the city centre, links to the north and south will form part of an integrated wayfinding strategy across the wider locality.



Pedestrian Network diagram

-  Primary Pedestrian Routes
-  Secondary Pedestrian Routes
-  Tertiary Pedestrian Routes
-  Vehicular Routes
-  New Junction (Configuration TBC)

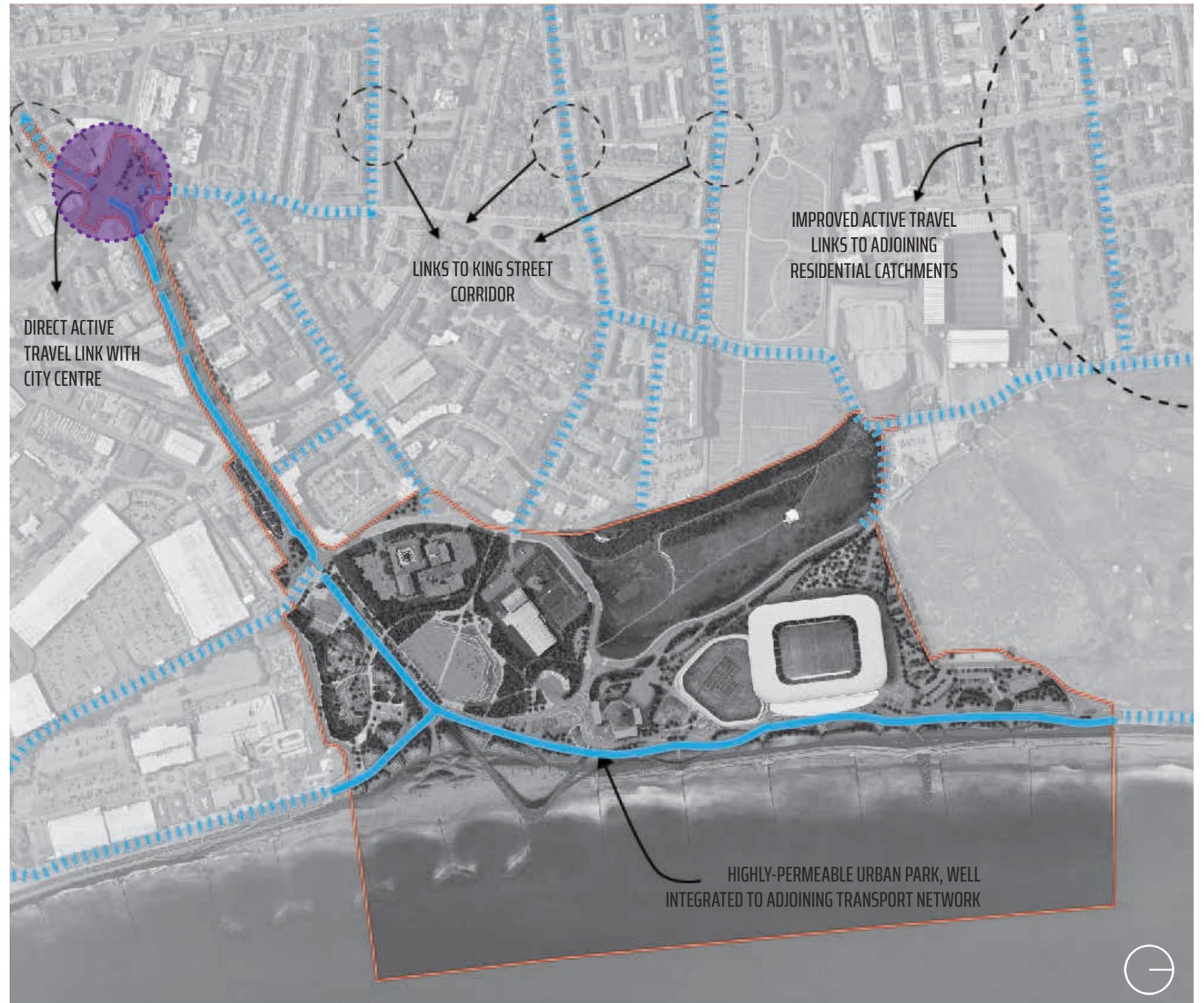
6.3.3 CYCLING NETWORK

The proposals encourage more cycling and wheeling activity. Consultation feedback emphasised the extent to which the area was used for recreation, but many respondents suggested that the area didn't feel safe or welcoming to cyclists.

Improving connectivity for cycling and wheeling is a key objective of the Justice Street / Beach Boulevard junction appraisal study. A segregated cycleway will extend over the length of the Beach Boulevard, limiting interactions between cyclists, pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

The Council is committed to exploring further options to implement physically segregated cycle tracks within the Development Framework area as proposals for the area develop. A STAG-based Options Assessment will be commissioned to ensure an appropriate balance between the needs of cyclists with those of other users, including vulnerable pedestrians; this assessment will consider the suitability of full cycle segregation. This will require further dialogue with Aberdeen Cycle Forum and other bodies.

The future cycle network will be aligned with the growing ShareBike cycle hire scheme and individual planning applications for buildings and spaces within the masterplan area will be required to provide secure covered cycle storage and suitable changing locker room facilities.



Cycling Network diagram

- ||||| Active Travel Desire Routes
- Two Way Cycle Lane
- New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.3.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Attractive and efficient public transport services and facilities will be central to the success of the Beachfront. The public transport strategy complements other measures to improve bus services across the city and throughout the region. The public transport strategy is summarised as follows.

The primary access route for buses will be via Beach Boulevard and Links Road, with stops located to meet key pedestrian links.

The Council will work with bus operators to encourage routes which pass through the area and those which terminate at the Beachfront, meeting the needs of adjoining residential catchments and providing direct access to new buildings and attractions.

A new bus waiting and turning facility should be considered, providing comfort facilities for drivers, space for buses to layover and suitable waiting facilities for passengers. This facility would be used by bus routes which terminate at the Beachfront.

A new road will be provided at the foot of Broad Hill between Links Road and Accommodation Road. The link will be for buses, local access and emergency use only. A suitable form of access restriction will ensure the link is not used as a through route by general traffic.

Bus priority measures should be incorporated, where possible, to aid service reliability and to demonstrate a commitment to attractive public transport.

An emphasis should be placed on high-quality services which are fully-integrated to the wider city bus network, including services to park and ride sites on the city's periphery.

Service frequency should be at a high level, helping to build user confidence and increasing the overall visibility of buses in the wider area.

There is potential for the Beachfront to be integrated into the emerging Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) network, either by extending ART services to the area or by delivering high-quality services which integrate to ART in the city centre.

Consideration should be given to the creation of a brand identity for buses which serve the beachfront area, ideally with vehicle destination screens displaying a clear 'Beachfront' message to market the destination overall and contribute towards increased patronage levels.

Taxi bays will be located in close proximity to key buildings and spaces. Indicatively, these might include Links Road adjacent to the Beach Ballroom and on the southern Esplanade, adjacent to the cafes.

Coach drop-off and parking facilities will be provided, recognising the importance of group travel for sports fixtures, events and other activities. Coaches could park within the northern portion of the Esplanade.



Mapping highlighting Indicative Public Transport Strategy

Beach Development Framework - Indicative Public Transport Strategy

-  Indicative Bus Stop Location
-  Potential Public Transport Link
-  Potential Bus Layover and Turning Area
-  New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.3.5 TRAFFIC AND NETWORK INTERVENTIONS

A key transportation consideration within the Development Framework is to maintain vehicular access to the area for users who may find active travel and public transport options impractical. To help achieve this, the proposals call for a significant reduction in the volume of through traffic from the Beachfront area.

The effects of these proposals have been tested using the Council's approved local and wide-area traffic models. The models enable detailed evaluation of changes to traffic priority, road closures and alterations to road space that are being considered, and they reflect other relevant local transport policies and interventions.

Model outputs demonstrate that Aberdeen's road network as a whole has the capacity to absorb changes in vehicle routing that result from the proposals. Vehicles which are making strategic through trips are likely to seek alternative routes which are defined in the city's Roads Hierarchy as more appropriate for such movements, with the Western Peripheral Route, North Anderson Drive and King Street all carrying some additional traffic.

The traffic and transport strategy anticipates that the delivery of complementary strategies, including the City Centre Masterplan, Low Emission Zone and Bus Corridor studies will reduce reliance on car-based trips in and around the city. The Development Framework proposes a proportionate package of measures to mitigate the impact of the proposals while ensuring that local connectivity is maintained.

A key part of the approach will be to carefully balance the performance of the road network with the delivery of an environment which is conducive to greater rates of pedestrian, cycle and public transport activity. For this to work, it is considered unwelcome for 'through' traffic displaced from the Esplanade to divert onto adjoining local roads.

The transport strategy proposes the following measures:

A package of measures to protect King Street from the effects of displaced through traffic. These will include traffic signal alterations and bus priority at key junctions on the corridor.

- A package of local traffic management interventions to protect local access to Golf Road and Park Road, while making them less attractive to through traffic and commuting trips.
- Modifications to the character of the roundabout junction at A956 / Park Street / Beach Boulevard to facilitate an uplift in active travel and public transport movements between the city centre and Beachfront.
- It is likely that a form of vehicular access along Accommodation Road will be maintained, with details of any necessary upgrades to this link being determined at a later date.

The interventions, which are summarised in the adjacent image, should be delivered in a manner which balances increased rates of active travel and public transport use with ongoing access to local residential and commercial land uses, including the beachfront retail park.



Mapping highlighting Indicative Mitigation to the Transport Network

Beach Development Framework - Traffic and Network Interventions

- Potential Bus Gate
- Potential Traffic Signal Alteration
- Potential Junction Upgrade for Active Travel
- Potential New Junction
- New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.3.6 FUTURE PARKING SITUATION

Parking was one of the most frequently discussed topics during the consultation process, with many participants seeking reassurance that they could still access the beachfront by car, and park there. The future access strategy promotes access to the Beachfront by a range of travel modes and, while the vision encourages increased rates of pedestrian, cycle and bus use, it fully recognises that a number of trips to the area will continue to be made by car. This is particularly important because some users, including watersports participants, will find it impractical to make their trip by other means.

Key aspects of the future parking strategy are described below and shown in the adjoining image.

- There will be some minor adjustments to parking arrangements immediately adjacent to the Urban Park, but the overall supply of parking spaces throughout the Beachfront area will remain largely unchanged.
- The strategy will further develop the Council's ongoing commitment to increase the number of accessible bays in the area, with a focus to ensure that spaces located closest to the Urban Park are available for those who most need them.
- The extended footway to the eastern edge of Queens Links play park, where habitual illegal parking takes place will be absorbed into the new public park. This area has no formal designation for parking and while its removal will displace some parking activity, those parking demands can be compensated for in the new layout, with new pocket parking areas being provided around the periphery of the Park.
- Clear signage and road markings will help all users understand how to access the area and where to park.

Proposed alterations to the local road network - including the closure of the Esplanade to through traffic - will mean that some users who wish to access the area by car may need to find alternative routes.

The Strategy ensures that those who require to park at the Beachfront can continue to do so. This includes users who have reduced mobility for whom other modes are less practical and users whose use of the beach area depends on the movement of equipment.



Mapping highlighting Indicative Parking Access Strategy

Beach Development Framework - Proposed Parking Strategy

-  Accessible Parking Bays
-  Private off-street Parking
-  Taxi Bays
-  Publicly Available off-street Parking
-  Publicly Available on-street Parking
-  New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.3.7 DELIVERY, SERVICING AND EMERGENCY ACCESS

Servicing and Deliveries

All necessary delivery, servicing and emergency functions to support buildings and spaces will be incorporated to the future Beachfront. In specific cases, this will involve exempted vehicles being permitted in spaces which are otherwise defined as 'traffic-free'. A summary of the managed access strategy is proposed, as follows:

- Vehicles will approach the area via the updated local road network. Access restrictions will prevent larger vehicles from using adjoining residential streets.
- Delivery and servicing functions can occur outside of core business hours; either early in the morning or in the twilight hours.
- A management strategy would be developed, setting out the circumstances in which vehicle movements are permitted in the urban park.
- Suitable 'gateway' treatments will be incorporated at entrances to the public park to regulate access by vehicles.
- The design of key links within the park will support movements by larger vehicles, but access would only be permitted under managed circumstances or in an emergency.
- On-site waste storage should be configured to minimise the number of refuse vehicle movements within the urban park each day.

Specific details relating to local access, traffic management, signage and road markings will be considered as the process evolves.

Emergency Access

The Council recognises the imperative need for emergency services, including fire, police, ambulance and HM Coastguard, to access the beachfront area and to ensure blue light vehicles can enter and move within the urban park, if needed.

Participants in the public consultation sought comfort that changes to the local road network would not hamper the ability of emergency services to perform their roles. Specific feedback centred around the need for rescue and emergency services to access the waterfront and the requirement for Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) crew members to access the lifeboat station at York Place.

The Council is fully committed to working with all relevant services to evolve the details of emergency access as subsequent stages of the process emerge. In particular, this includes the identification of suitable exemptions to ensure emergency vehicles can safely access areas which are not open to general traffic and a pragmatic approach which recognises the vital role played by RNLI staff who use private, unmarked vehicles to access the lifeboat station.



Mapping highlighting Beachfront Emergency Vehicle Access

Beachfront Emergency Vehicle Access

- ▲ Emergency Access Points
- Waste Collection, Deliveries, Event Access, Emergency Access
- ⋯ Permitted Emergency Vehicle Routes
- Existing Access Maintained
- - - Managed Access / Public Transport Route
- New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.3.8 FUTURE TRAVEL DEMANDS & BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

The Development Framework seeks to rejuvenate Aberdeen beachfront through a combination of new development and high-quality public spaces, with enhanced links to the city centre and adjoining catchments. From a transportation perspective, the Framework considers the movement of people - not vehicles - and sets an objective to grow rates of pedestrian, cycle and public transport activity while reducing rates of car use, consistent with local and national policy. Under current circumstances, car use in Aberdeen typically accounts for 63% of all trip-making (53% car driver and 10% car passenger) and data reveals that of all employment trips in the Hanover South ward, which includes the Beachfront, 72% are car-based.

While it is important to acknowledge that residents and visitors have varying travel requirements and preferences, the successful implementation of the Development Framework depends on a material reduction in rates of car use. The Framework recognises that a continuation of present-day travel patterns is not sustainable and would prevent the delivery of upgrades to pedestrian, cycle and bus facilities.

Formation of the urban park will require the closure of Beach Boulevard between Links Road and the Esplanade, and the removal of traffic from the central sections of the Esplanade. Local and area-wide traffic implications of this change to the local road network have been evaluated in a traffic model, the key outcomes of which are summarised in *Section 6.3.4*.

The framework presents an opportunity to positively influence the travel choices of those travelling to the Beachfront area. This can be achieved through the delivery of high-quality pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities, providing a more comprehensive and inclusive transport network. These changes to the local environment will help to address the negative effects of severance and traffic intrusion, making the area feel safer and better-connected and encouraging more users to make trips using active travel modes.

While a key objective is to reduce the overall share of trips which are made by car, the framework recognises that it is not practical for all users to make trips on foot, by bike or by bus. This is particularly the case where users have reduced mobility or where sporting or recreational activities require the movement of equipment. The Framework therefore sets out to support movement by all travel modes and to cater equitably for users of varying ages and abilities, with careful consideration given to the incorporation of accessible parking spaces in locations which are connected to key buildings and spaces via welcoming and step-free pedestrian links.

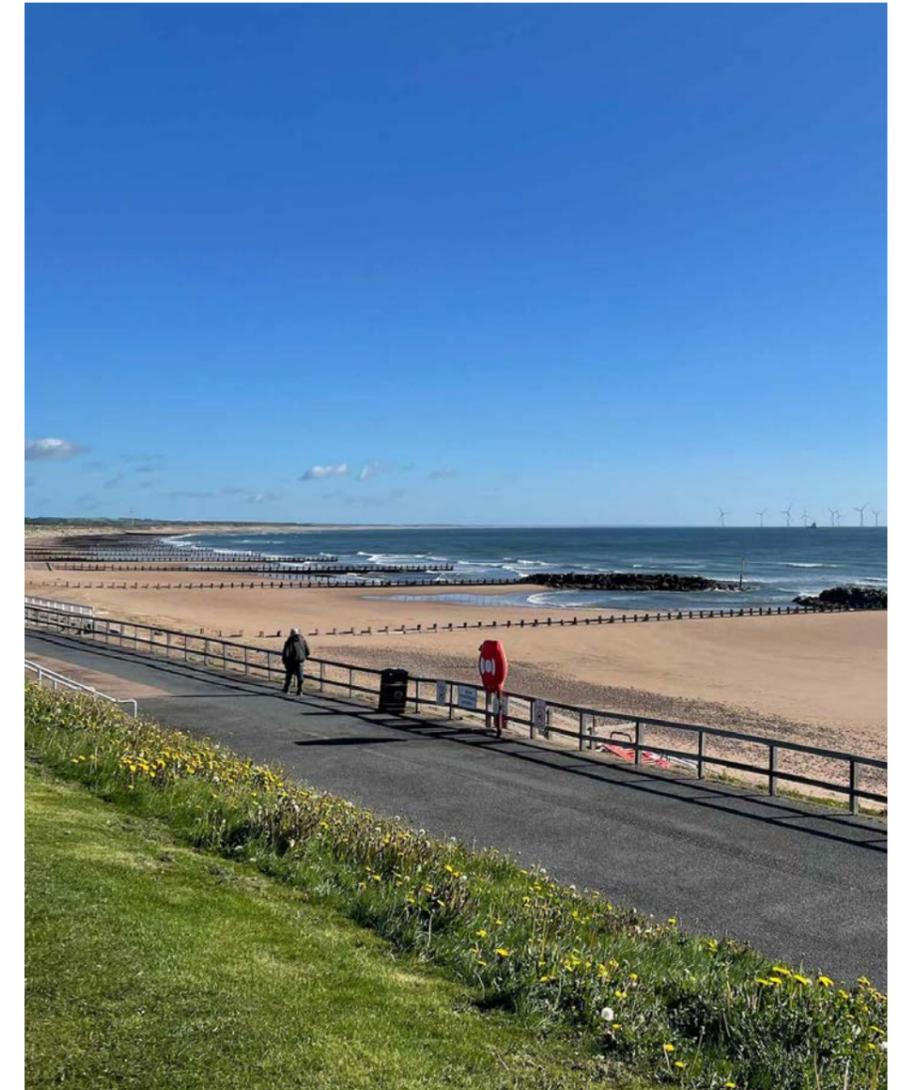
Together the changes proposed by the Development Framework will make a valuable contribution towards the formulation of Aberdeen's future transport network.



Aberdeen hydrogen powered First Bus



Electric vehicle charging points



Promoting pedestrian movement



Cycling in Aberdeen (Image courtesy of The Press and Journal)

6.4 LANDSCAPE INTENTION

As stated in the introduction to section 6.0, this is essentially a landscape led framework, setting the structure for a re-organisation of the Beachfront area, allowing existing and new buildings, structures, infrastructure, and spaces to come together within an exciting new framework.

The diagram opposite illustrates the desired landscape intention and feeling that the spatial framework should deliver as a result of the framework structure set out in the preceding sections.

The conceptual masterplan has been developed to provide a clear and legible spatial hierarchy across the site. This responds to the access and key nodal points within the site to ensure that there are appropriate gathering and meeting spaces in key locations. Through this spatial hierarchy an aspirational series of spaces of different scales, character and uses has been developed, all of which are easily accessible and identifiable.



Spatial hierarchy diagram

6.5 LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, NATURE & CONSERVATION

We are living in a time where public awareness of our natural environment is heightened like never before. Climate change and the related nature crisis is a very real threat to our planet. Around the world this is no more acute than in our coastal regions.

Aberdeen needs to lead by example. That is why this Development Framework and beachfront masterplan has been a landscape led approach to the regeneration of this vital interface between city and sea. Throughout this Development Framework document, the focus of all elements discussed, investigated, and explained has been the improvement of the environment at the beachfront. This means the creation of a more adaptive, responsive, and natural environment than is there presently, an environment that enhances habitat and biodiversity for wildlife while creating the opportunity for distinctive places to improve health and wellbeing. This is fully in line with emerging national policy set out in National Planning Framework 4.

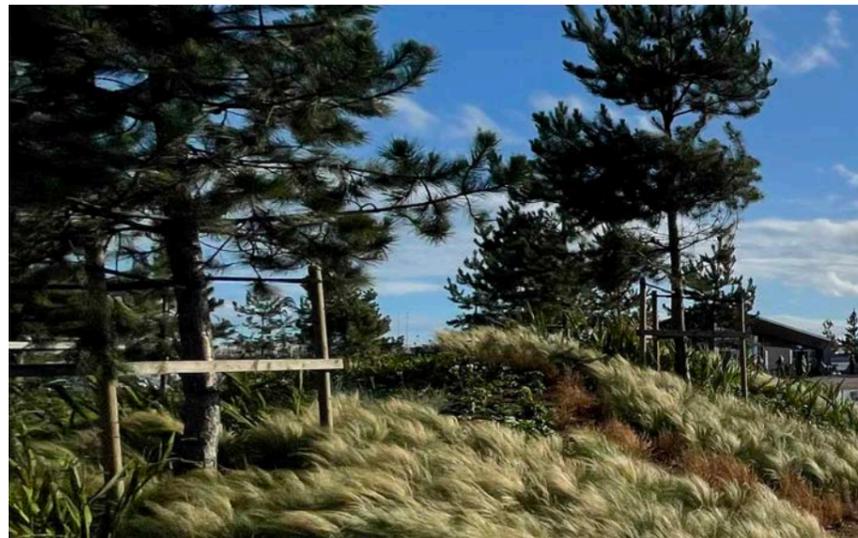
The design of the overall Beach front Development Framework looks to harness the natural environment and enhance it. The aim of this is multiple and interlinked just like nature itself.

Firstly, we need to work with coastal influence in a more harmonious way, using natural systems to protect the beach area while allowing people to enjoy the unique environment.

Secondly, we need to create shelter and develop micro-climates that not only offer usable spaces but create conditions for a more naturally diverse landscape, allowing new species to colonise and enhance biodiversity. Shelter and adaptive microclimates can be formed by natural topography and landforms (much like Broad Hill does now), and by creating the right conditions for tree planting and in particular afforestation by pioneer species. As a whole, for the betterment of our environment, we need to plant more trees. The images opposite highlight aspirational planting which could help create this microclimate and enhance biodiversity and is reflective of the design approach described throughout the Development Framework document.



View from Aberdeen beach towards North Sea



Indicative tree planting



Indicative wildflower planting



Indicative planting for pollinators



Indicative bird houses



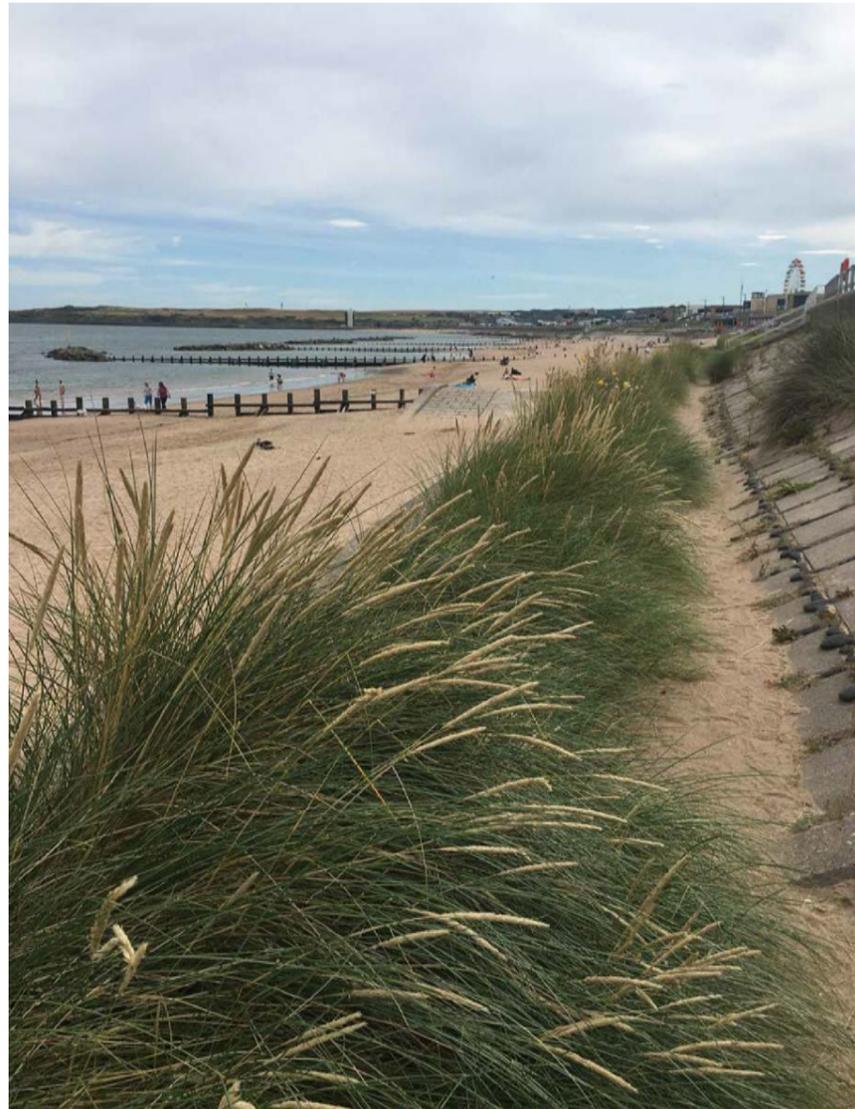
Indicative example of sustainable drainage

6.5 LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, NATURE & CONSERVATION

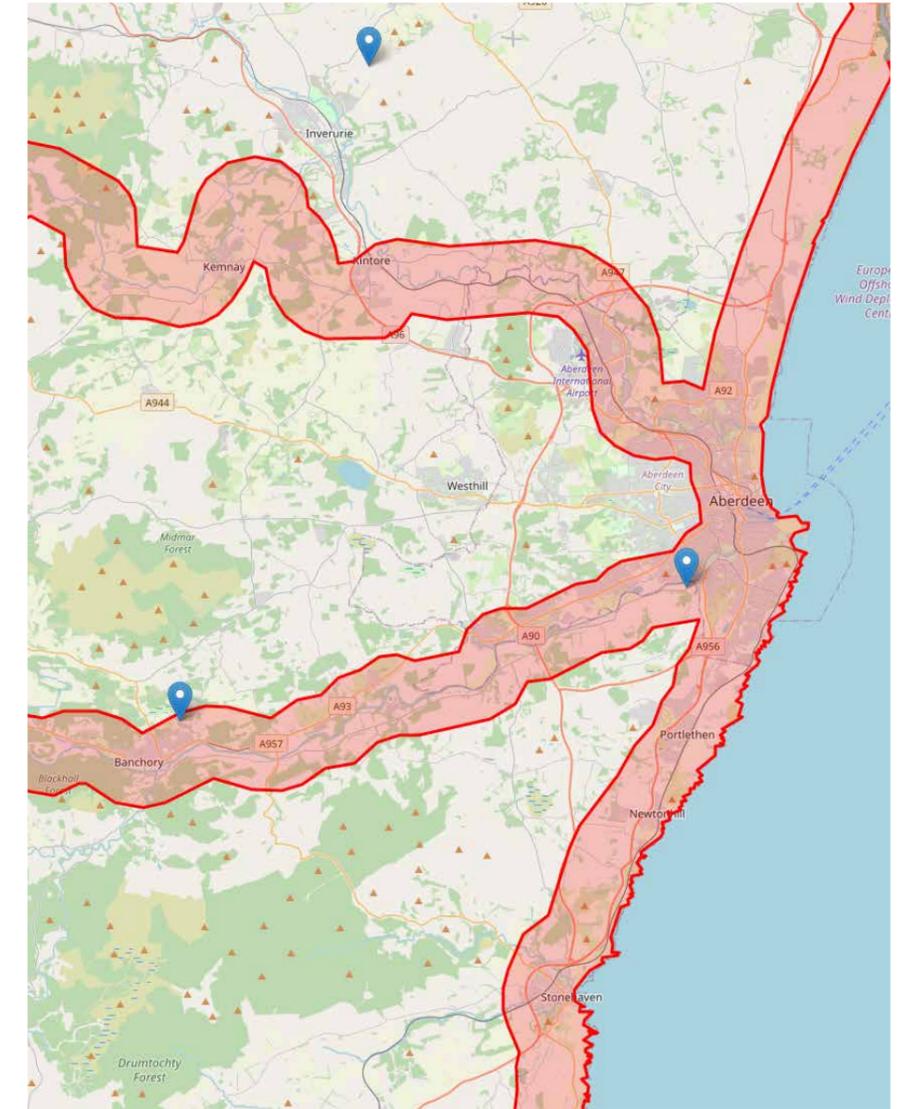
With enhanced landscape and increased biodiversity, we can start to respond to one of the toughest challenges we have in connection to our cities and development and that is flooding and drainage. With the 'working with nature' approach we can truly integrate sustainable drainage systems that become part of the landscape. 'Working with nature' will showcase the Beachfront concept masterplan as a working example of how to work harmoniously with our environment.

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken across the Development Framework site. This identifies the primary habitats and the flora and fauna found on the site. Through this landscape and nature led approach to the Development Framework, we can harness the baseline ecology of the site, work with local knowledge (residents and Aberdeen City Council environmental officers), respond to supporting emerging policies such as NPF4 (Sustainable, Liveable and Productive Places) and link in to other national and local organisations and initiatives such as B-Lines (connected networks enhancing invertebrate life throughout the UK – Don and Dee Valley, and Coastline a designated networks) to comprehensively set the regeneration of the beachfront area as an exemplar of how to approach the natural and built environment in the 21st century.

Proposals will be developed in partnership and consultation with Aberdeen City Council Operations, Environment, and Coastal and Flooding teams to ensure those that work with and understand this unique environment have the opportunity to share knowledge and shape the future of the Beachfront.



Coastal grasses colonising areas of blown sand



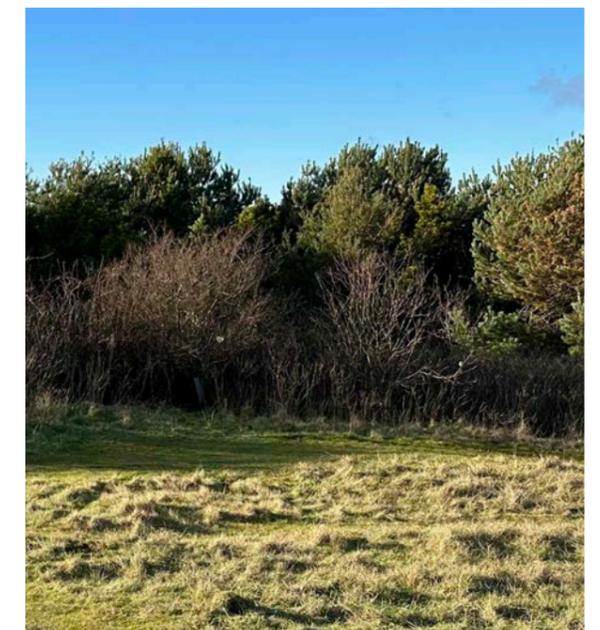
B-Lines Map (Copyright: Leaflet and OpenStreetMap)



Existing Broad Hill vegetation



Existing Broad Hill vegetation



Existing Broad Hill vegetation

6.6 PROPOSED CHARACTER AREAS

As previously mentioned, the spacial configuration exercise that was conducted for the proposed Development Framework area has resulted in a reorganisation of the open space provision within the masterplan area; reflecting the new priority of uses both in terms of open space and built. This has resulted in the definition of a new series of distinct character areas across the Development Framework area which reflect a variety of anticipated approaches and identities. These will be progressed and refined at subsequent masterplan phases. The following character areas have been established:

1. Beach Ballroom
 2. Events Park + Field
 3. Core Play Park
 4. The Beach and Esplanade
 5. Beach Boulevard
 6. Broad Hill
 7. Leisure and Potential New Stadium
 8. Beach Village Concept
- 2, 3 } Queens Links Urban Park

Each character area is set out in the following sub sections, in order to describe the key attributes of each in terms of design principles. They also look at approaches giving definition to the spaces whilst retaining flexibility to allow for the brief of each area to evolve with any future refinement or adaptation of the Development Framework document.

Through this refinement of the character areas, it is important to acknowledge that the overall Development Framework area has an overriding aim of being cohesive and a joined-up piece of urban and landscape design delivering an identifiable and exciting new place of the city of Aberdeen and the wider region.

Based on the preferred options previously discussed, the design team produced a Character Area Plan for the Development Framework, which can be seen in the image opposite.



Proposed Development Framework Character Areas

6.7 BEACH BALLROOM CHARACTER AREA

The Beach Ballroom is to be considered as a primary focal point in the new Development Framework proposals, due to its central position and its cultural significance.

6.7.1 BEACH BALLROOM CONCEPT

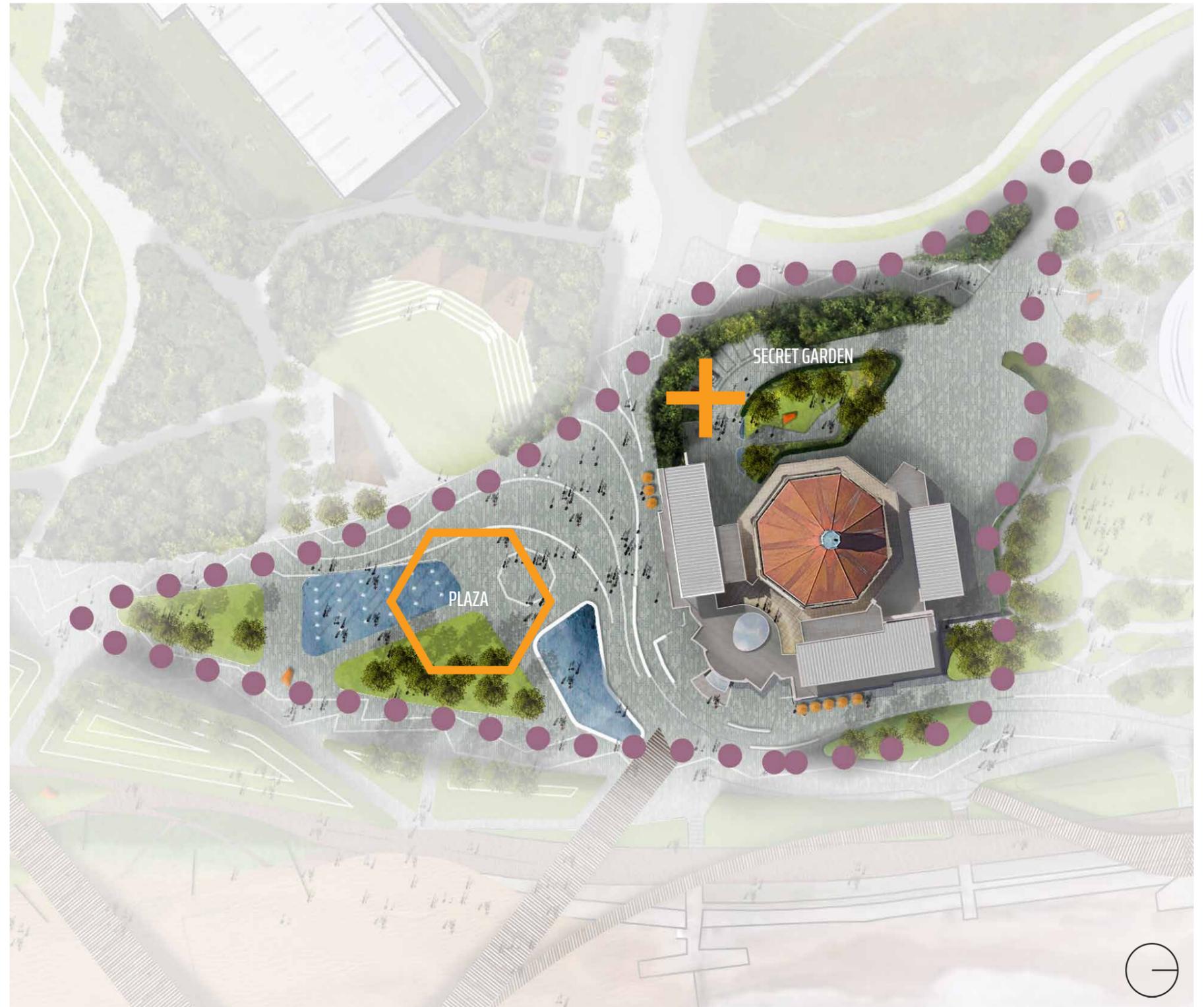
In addition to the renovation and reworking of the ballroom, there is the potential to create improved public spaces in the immediate vicinity, for example:

- A potential civic plaza space with water features forming a grand setting for the building and ensuring the buildings prominence on the main pedestrianised route through the site from Beach Boulevard to Esplanade. This civic plaza will provide a location for wider orientation, wayfinding and gathering within high quality public realm.
- A potential sunken garden area to the rear of the ballroom which would provide a dedicated external space for use by the ballroom and serve to link the wider public space between the ballroom and a potential leisure facility adjacent.

Any opportunity for the regenerating the Beach Ballroom and its environs would respect the heritage and memories to ensure it can continue to contribute to the lives of those who visit it.

Several site visits to the existing building including conversations with operation staff to understand the day-to-day requirements and mechanics of the ballroom have already been undertaken to inform the evolving design. Concurrently, the design would respond to business case studies which would allow the Beach Ballroom to become a self-sustainable, flexible and revenue positive component of the wider beach front area.

It should be noted that statutory approvals and discussions with relevant authorities, consultees and stakeholders have not yet been completed and these will contribute to the design direction moving forward. As part of any future planning applications, a heritage statement will be prepared to support the planning and Listed Building Consent submissions.



Concept plan - Beach Ballroom



6.7.2 BEACH BALLROOM PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed renovation and extension of the B-listed Beach Ballroom will seek to respect the heritage and memories defined by this iconic space to ensure to can continue to contribute to the lives of those who visit it. Those historic aspects of the interior and exterior of the building will be retained and revitalised through an extensive programme of renovation. As part of this renovation, an interior design strategy which promotes the buildings Art Deco heritage will bring a sense of grandeur back to the property. Potential new extensions to the building will be considerate and of an appropriate scale and style to compliment the Ballroom.

The Design Team have suggested a number of potential improvements/ study areas for the Beach Ballroom that will be explored in more detail moving forward:

- Celebration of Entrance - creating a grand setting for the building with a real sense of arrival and enhanced public realm
- Improve accessibility / wheelchair access and install lift core
- Upgrade & restoration of external impressive Art Deco façade
- Dome restoration / expose and enhance original feature ceiling
- Improved viewing gallery & enhanced hospitality offer (VIP / Premium seating)
- Utilise external balcony / roof areas to create bar / terrace taking advantage of spectacular views of Aberdeen Beach
- Potential for external break-out space, creating more intimate / sheltered private external space (Secret Garden)
- External feature lighting opportunities to showcase unique Art Deco architectural features on building façade
- Potential to remove star ballroom extension and replace with more complementary and lighter roof extensions

Key

1. Spanish City, Whitley Bay - precedent image
2. The Reel House, Glasgow - precedent image
3. Architecture and materiality precedents
4. Proposed new main entrance
5. Proposed exterior public realm
6. Proposed east Ballroom elevation



1. Spanish City, Whitley Bay - precedent image



2. The Reel House, Glasgow - precedent image



3. Architecture and materiality precedents



4. Proposed new main entrance



5. Proposed exterior public realm



6. Proposed east Ballroom elevation

The images above provide design inspiration for the Beach Ballroom and are indicative only.

6.7.3 BEACH BALLROOM - PLAZA

The Beach Ballroom Plaza will create a grand setting for the building. The main circulation routes of the site pass either side of the space ensuring that pedestrian movement to the potential new Stadium on match days is accounted for and that the Beach Ballroom is a key landmark and part of this journey.

The plaza space will not only frame the setting of the Beach Ballroom, but the space also itself will be defined to the east by earth mounding, integrating soft landscape while providing a sheltering interface to the beach and onshore winds. To the west it will be partly defined by the location of the Amphitheatre and integrated woodland planting and other soft landscape opportunities. This integration of soft landscape within a civic plaza offers the opportunity to enhance biodiversity in this key area, while still providing a distinctive civic function. The inclusion of the water features will add an additional level of interest and setting, bringing sound and animation to the space, providing opportunities of play whilst enhancing the grandeur of the building.

Due to the highly public function of the building all the public realm will be designed to be level access and step free, with plenty of opportunities for seating and longer dwell time in the space. A more open hard space will be designed to the north and west as approaching from the foot of Broad Hill, allowing for controlled VIP drop off to the front of the building and to allow controlled VIP access through to the front of the potential new Stadium.

6.7.4 BEACH BALLROOM SECRET GARDEN

The Secret Garden is a sunken formal space to the west side of the Beach Ballroom, between the building and Broad Hill. It carefully integrates accessible parking and centres on an enclosed garden area. This garden space could be utilised for outdoor drinks receptions or wedding photography, as well as providing a calm and sheltered setting to the accessible entrance at the lower ground level.

Although discreet and clearly part of the Beach Ballroom environs, the Secret Garden is part of the wider public space which links the Beach Ballroom to the proposed Leisure facility. The proposed landscape intervention works with the level differences to create an attractive southwest facing terrace, providing accessible pedestrian access to the Leisure facility.

The landscape itself will knit together with the materiality and colour strategies of the wider proposals to create a sense of drama and arrival to the area. By its very nature, the soft landscape element of the garden will be dominant, providing a greener and more natural interface with the Beach Ballroom than the south facing civic plaza which sits up at Esplanade level. The soft landscape material will be of suitable scale to create instant impact and allow appropriate related Beach Ballroom events from day one. The soft landscape also allows the potential to enhance the biodiversity in this part of the site, close to the diverse Broad Hill, enhancing green network connection to the wider Queens Links and Esplanade area.



Concept montage [All elements of detailed design and materials are indicative and for illustrative purposes only]



Beach Ballroom Plaza



Beach Ballroom Secret Garden

6.8 QUEENS LINKS URBAN PARK CHARACTER AREA

The heart of the open space provision within the Development Framework is focussed on the urban park, a central landscape space, approximately 5.5ha, designed to accommodate multiple uses. The Urban Park is composed of two main character areas, the Core Play, Park and the Events Park + Field, joined by the Pedestrian Spine (former Beach Boulevard east), with nodes of key civic plazas providing locations of orientation, wayfinding and gathering within high quality public realm areas.

6.8.1 QUEENS LINKS URBAN PARK CONCEPT

A public park must be accessible for everyone. The richness of the park will come in its form and uses. Play and games are an obvious part of this mix and creating the physical environment for this to flourish is key. The whole park should be seen as incorporating elements of play opportunity, with areas that are more focused and defined along with the more natural and incidental play integrated throughout the park.

Potential insertions within the urban park space include:

- Civic plazas.
- An external Amphitheatre with canopy located adjacent to the Beach Ballroom.
- A large events field capable of hosting events and day-to-day use.
- A gateway building located at entrance to Beachfront area giving sense of arrival.
- A hub building located at centre of site offering a place to engage and refresh.
- Canopy features offering shelter and seating across the site.
- Water features to bring drama and animation to spaces.

There are many other uses to be considered, and careful analysis of what is best is important as flexibility will be key in the evolution of a public park along with its functionality and flexibility to cater for yet unforeseen city uses.

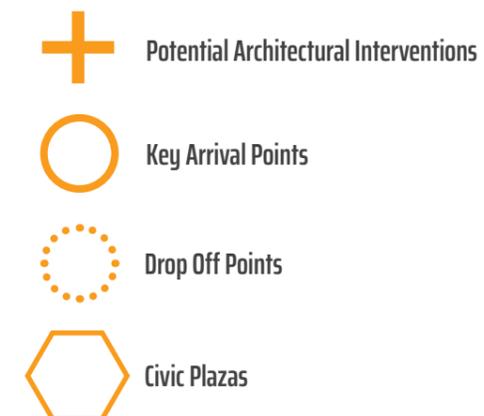
The park must create a strong sense of place which becomes a destination within the city. It should be unique and special, respecting its coastal location. The park should be inclusive and with activities for all to use.

The design must consider micro-climate and the provision of shelter so that it can be used 365 days a year. It must also be comfortable and welcoming for different sizes of groups including individuals, families, small gatherings, and large events. A variety of scales of space will be required to meet these requirements.

Movement through the park, whether to reach the Beach, the potential new Stadium or the Arcades must be a key consideration, ensuring that the park can cope with the movement of large groups of people. In designing these routes, desire lines must be catered for.



Concept plan - Urban Park



6.8.2 CORE PLAY PARK

The Core Play Park is approximately 2.5ha and sits between the Events Park + Field area and Codona's. Although this area has been termed the play and games zone it is not intended that opportunities for play will be constrained to this area of the site. The intention is that informal play opportunities will be present throughout the park. Equally the intention is that this area is a fully integrated part of the park landscape and is permeable and able to be explored as part of a visit to the park.

The Core Play Park will be enclosed to some degree by landforms/ tree planting to help create a suitable micro-climate and provide a comfortable year-round space. Equally the aim has been to provide some shelter from the wind which is particularly important for games such as table tennis and volleyball. The landforms in particular will be of such a scale to offer further natural opportunities for play as well as be a key component in spatial definition and character of the area.

A structure for the play and games zone has been developed which can accommodate a variety of play. At this point the content of the play parks is still being developed however approximate areas have been set aside for separate younger and older children's play areas in response to feedback through consultation with children and young people. This level of consultation will continue through the design development of the core play area and indeed the wider park. In line with the increasing detail required through the design development process the core play area will be refined both spatially and in terms of the content - refinement of play opportunities and equipment. This level of engagement throughout the process will continue to shape the design to the appropriate level in accordance with the stage of the project.

Other uses with a larger footprint have been included within the development of the plan to ensure space is allowed for these uses within the plan, these include a skate landscape/skate park, a basketball court and volleyball courts all of which were raised during youth engagement.

Other smaller uses have been indicated on the plan such as chess tables, table tennis tables etc. the final location of these elements is more flexible due to their smaller size.

The Core Play Park is a tremendous opportunity to create a significantly sized outdoor destination for the city in a unique context. The Core Play Park is part of the wider landscape masterplan that binds together many of the proposed and existing buildings and uses in the area, and importantly facilitates connections back to the city centre.

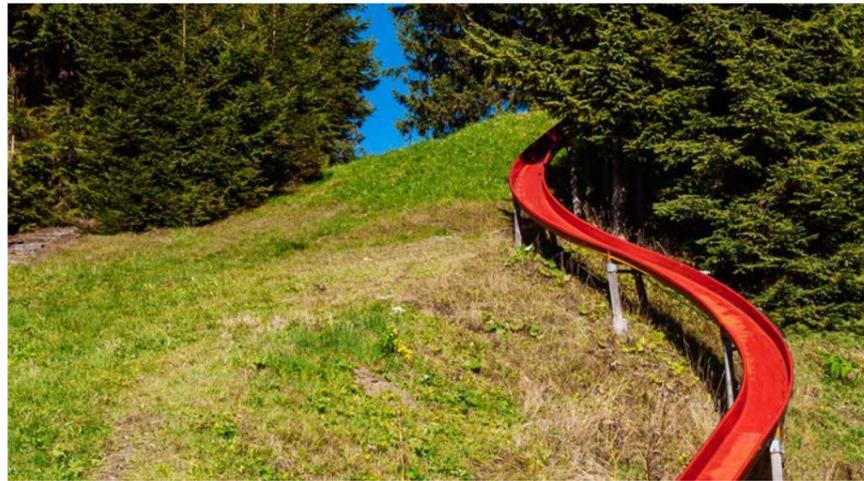
Furthermore, abundant elements of play and child/youth focussed spaces will assist to provide a public space worthy of Aberdeen's ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City.



Concept plan - Play Park

6.8.2.1 CORE PLAY PARK - ASPIRATION

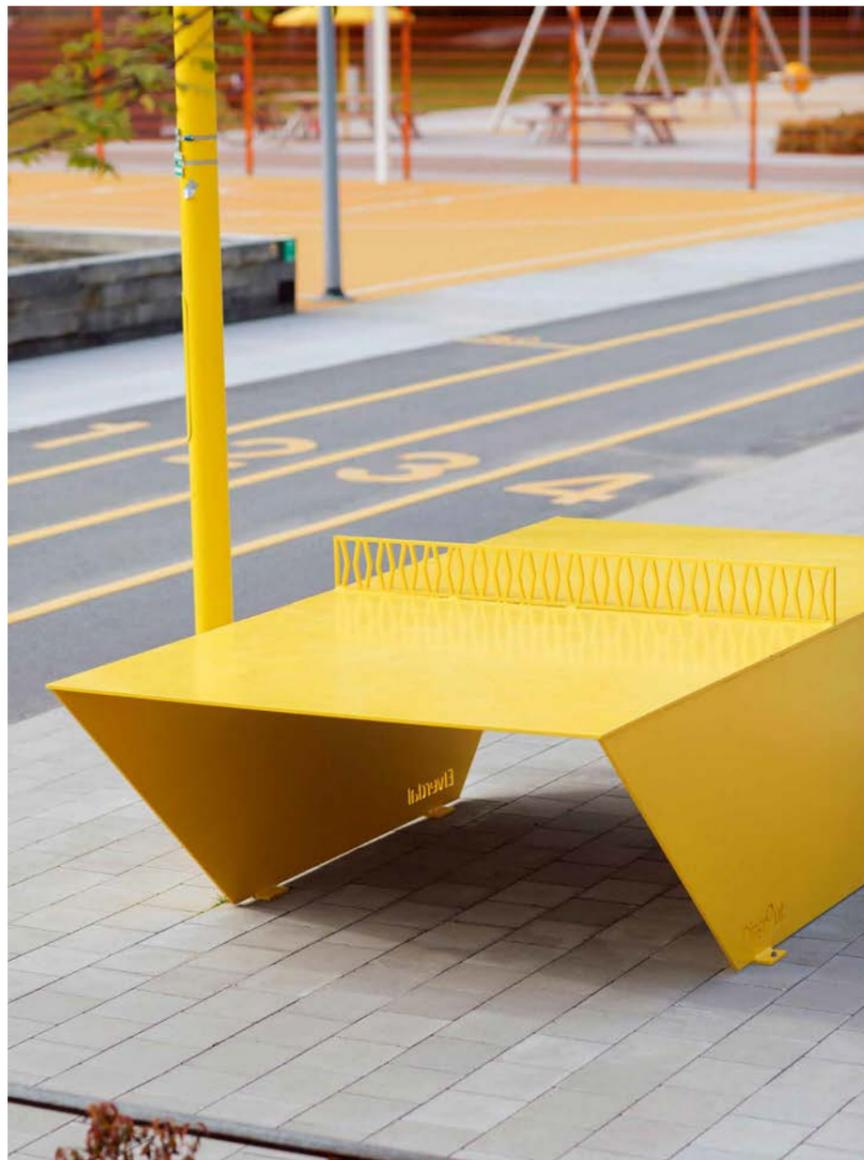
The below images provide visual inspiration for the Core Play Park and are indicative only.



Slide down landscape mounding features



Play and games space (Photo courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)



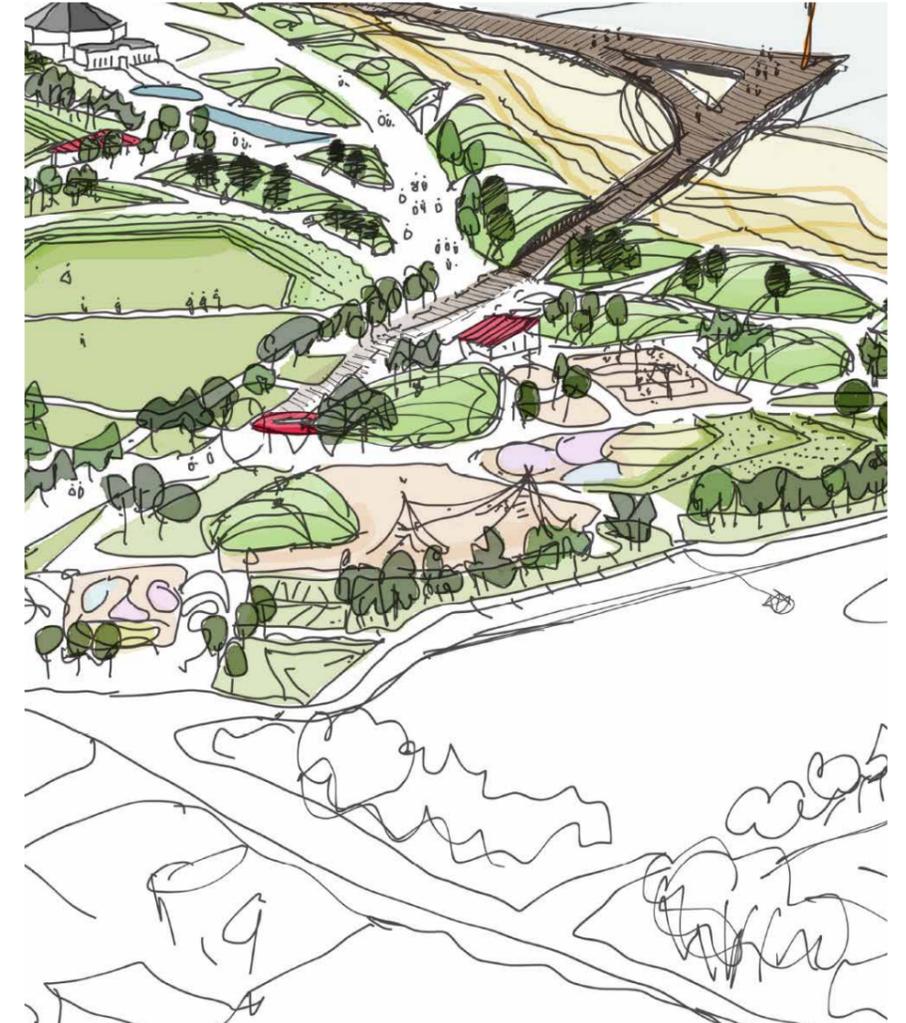
Play and games Space (Photo courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)



Architectural Interventions



Play and games space (Photo courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)



Aerial sketch of Core Play Park



Skate landscape

6.8.3 EVENTS PARK & FIELD

The Events Park & Field is an area of approximately 2.5ha and has been designed as a flexible space capable of holding events, festivals, larger concerts etc. but also to provide a large, grassed area for day-to-day use including informal sports and games such as football, touch rugby, ultimate Frisbee, and passive recreation such as picnicking.

It is currently bordered to the west by adjacent land uses that effectively turn their back on the area. It is proposed that this interface is further reinforced by additional mounding and tree planting, creating a strong green, ecologically rich edge to the overall Events Park & Field, enhancing the green network opportunities from Broad Hill further in and around the overall site. This gives a backdrop of trees and landforms, focussing attention away from adjacent land uses and out into a wider events and performance area.

The wider Events Park & Field will not only include large grass areas (both amenity and wild flower), but also utilise natural landforms to create intimate events/concert, theatre and outdoor cinema spaces. Its location closer to the Beach Ballroom offers opportunity for co-joined activities. The amphitheatre creates the opportunity to embed localised accessible toilet facilities adjacent to the accessible parking on the West part of the site into its mounding.

Taking advantage of the existing site topography/ levels, the location for the Amphitheatre naturally shields the adjacent buildings to the West, whilst the orientation of this space provides natural screening and acoustic benefits which can be enhanced with strategic planting to provide an additional level of privacy to the space.

Additional space is also provided by the adjacent hard landscaped public spaces, such as the repurposed Beach Boulevard forming a new Pedestrian Spine and Esplanade sections making them suitable for more intensive 'street' and civic type uses both independently and in support of any programmed events with the Park & Field.



Concept plan - Events Park & Field



Concept events plan: Festival



Concept events plan: Market



Concept events plan: Fireworks

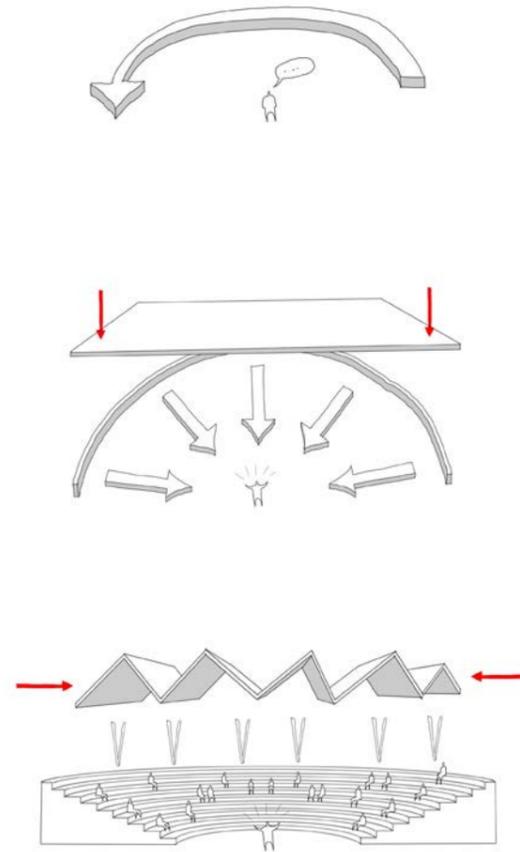
6.8.4 AMPHITHEATRE

Within the Urban Park area, the opportunity to create a more intimate outdoor venue, suitable for music, theatre, outdoor cinema, or screenings is provided with the creation of a small external amphitheatre located adjacent to the Beach Ballroom.

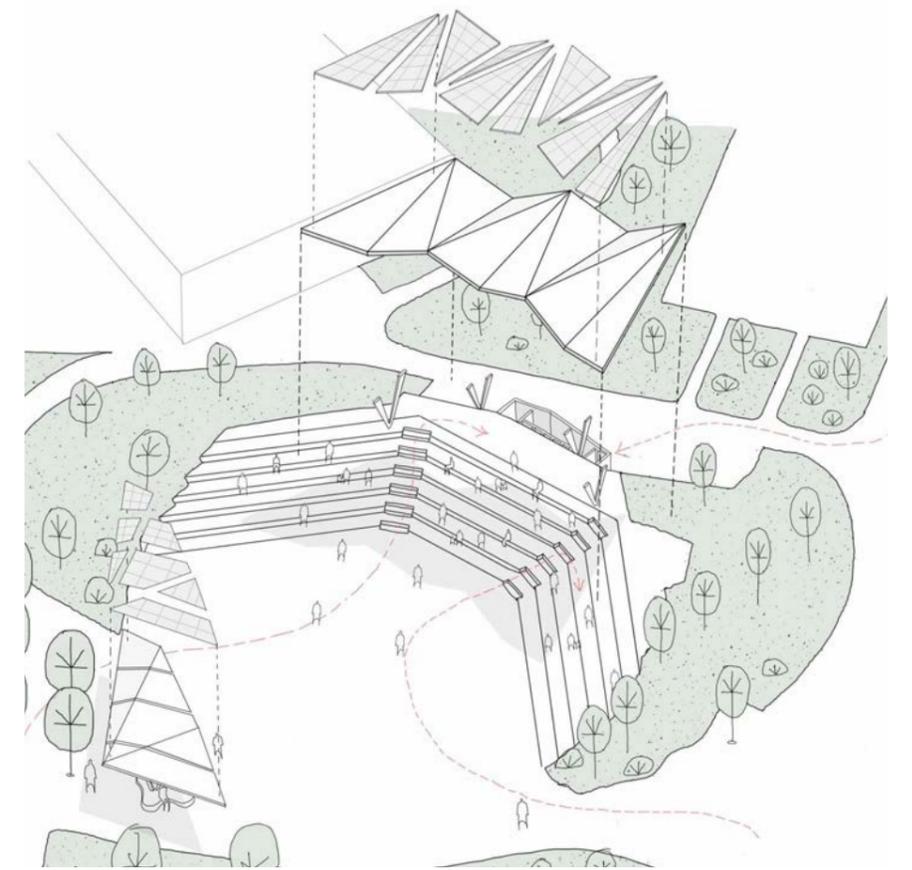
The proposed Amphitheatre is supported with a lightweight angular canopy structure, tying in with the sculptural roof forms of the wider Masterplan. This roof form provides an element of shelter to the seating area. Below the tiered Amphitheatre there is the opportunity for localised accessible toilet facilities adjacent which would be sited close to the accessible parking to the north of this space.

The vision for this space is to create a flexible, intimate external events space with the potential to tie in with larger events hosted at the Beach Ballroom/Stadium and Events Field which is located adjacent.

The following images provide visual inspiration for the Amphitheatre and are indicative only.



Amphitheatre concept diagram



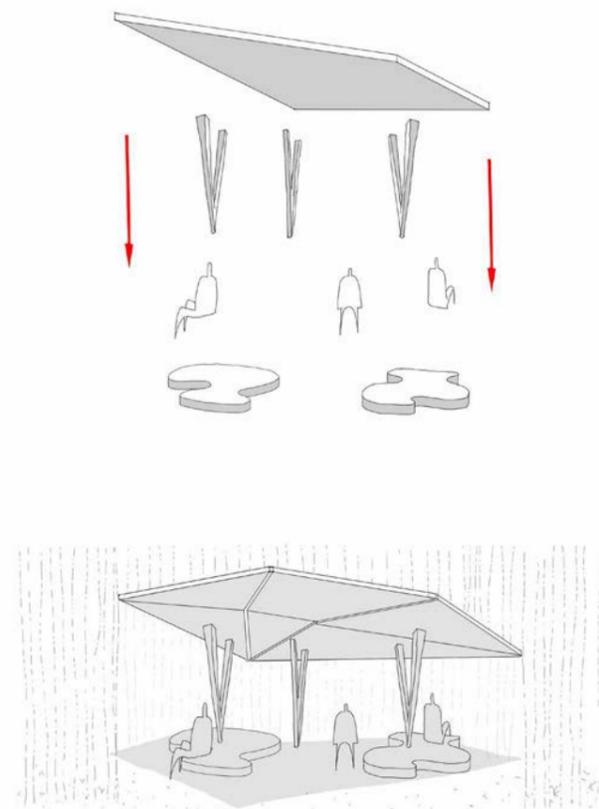
Amphitheatre isometric sketch view

6.8.5 CANOPY FEATURES

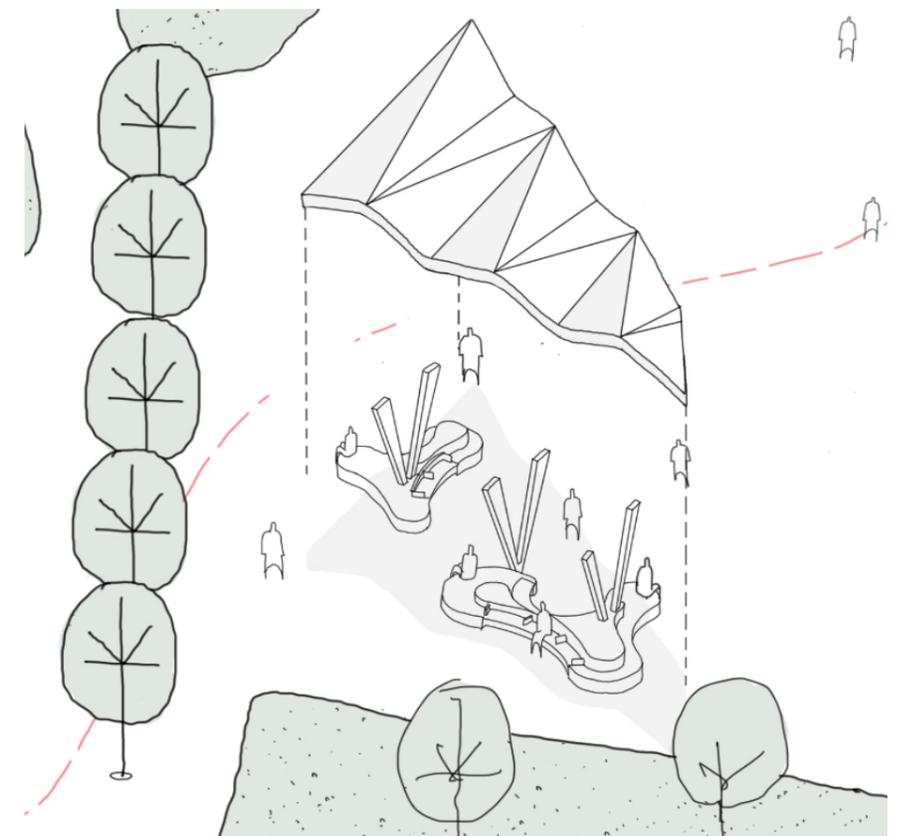
Several canopy structures are proposed at key nodal points within the Urban Park to aid orientation on the Beachfront journey. The angular roof structures proposed will provide shelter from the elements and seating areas for rest and reflection.

A variety of seating, including back and arm rests will be provided, as well as accessible spaces for wheelchair users. These flexible structures offer opportunity for social/meeting points, picnic areas, recycling points, individual seating, and quiet areas.

The following images provide visual inspiration for the Canopy Features and are indicative only.



Canopy Structure concept diagram



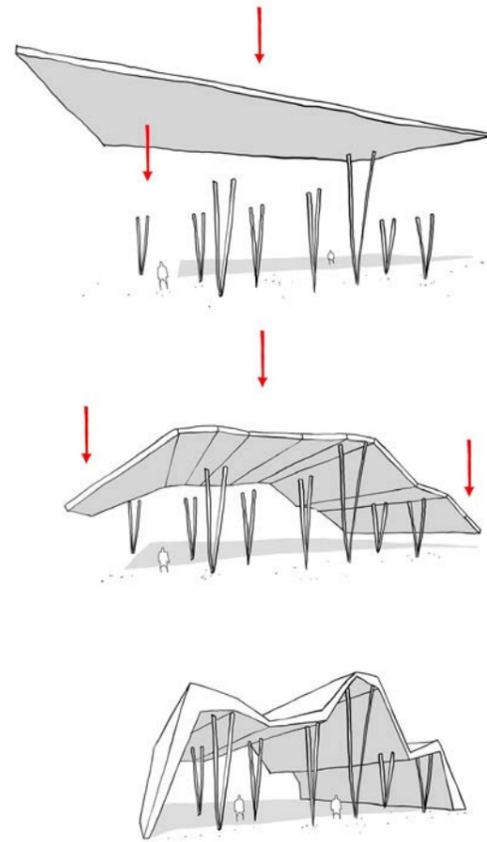
Canopy Structure isometric sketch view

6.8.6 GATEWAY BUILDING

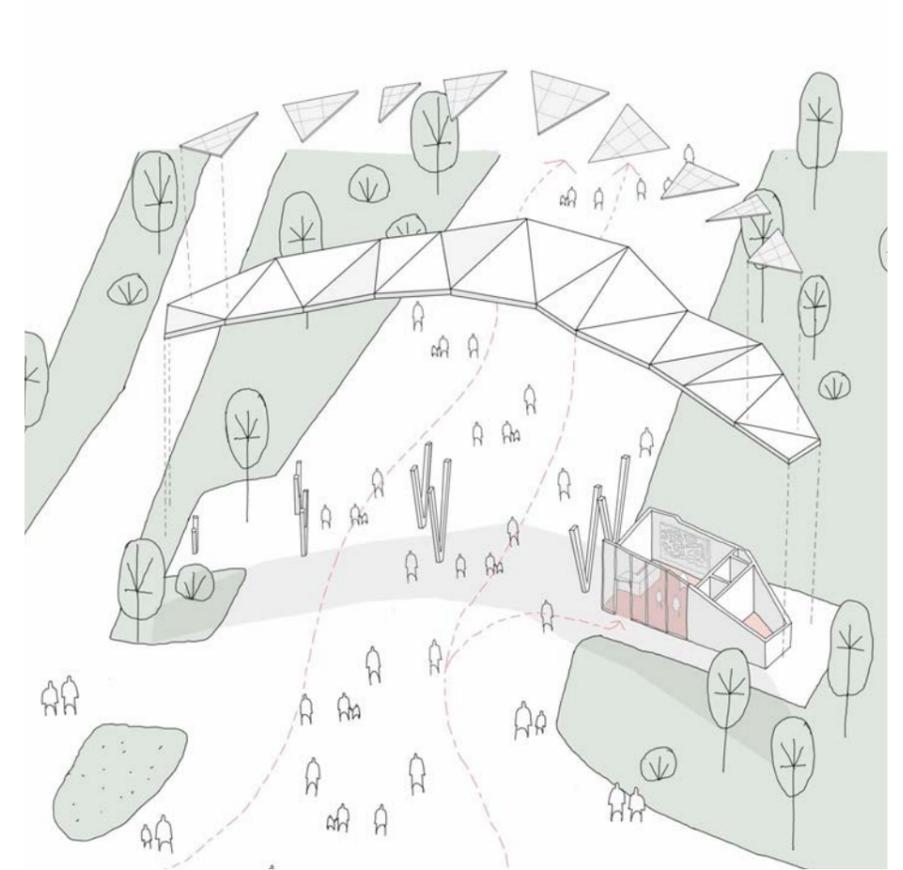
The Gateway Building is positioned at the foot of Beach Boulevard to act as a sculptural landmark at the entrance to the Core Play area, signalling arrival from the city to the Beachfront. The Gateway building is the first architectural intervention visitors will encounter when arriving at the Beachfront, its main function is being a point of first contact where users can obtain information regarding services located in the new Urban Park and any events that may be taking place on the chosen day of their visit.

The strategic positioning and form of the building is intended to enhance the sense of arrival whilst serving as transitional space that orientates users towards the new Urban Park and Beachfront.

The following images provide visual inspiration for the Gateway Building and are indicative only.



Gateway Building concept diagram



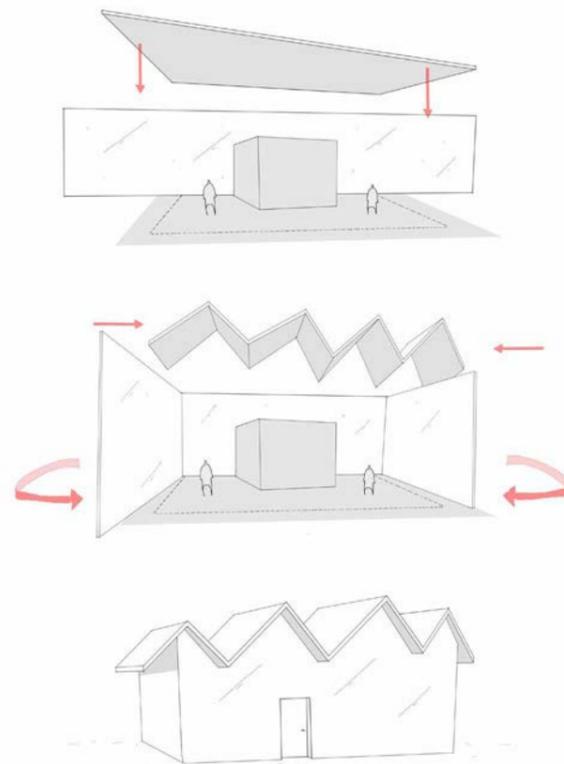
Gateway Building isometric sketch view

6.8.7 HUB BUILDING

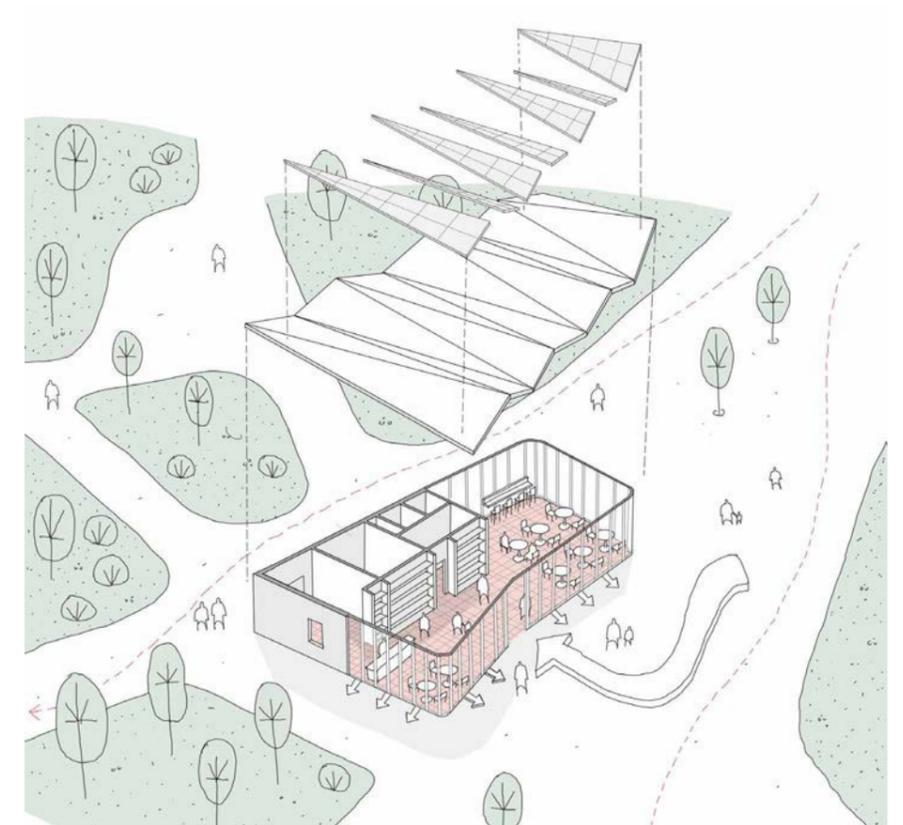
The Hub Building, positioned centrally within the Beachfront proposals, will create a focal point at the heart of the new Urban Park. The positioning of the building at a key nodal point on the main pedestrian route from Beach Boulevard, will capitalise on footfall from visitors to the site heading through the revived landscape in most directions.

The primary purpose of the Hub Building is to create a place to pause, engage and refresh along this primary desire route, therefore it is proposed that a potential cafe will be incorporated as the main element of the pavilion. Internal and external seating will be provided with visual links to the Core Play area, Events Park and Pedestrian Spine offering parents and visitors the chance to rest and observe key areas of the Beachfront Park.

The following images provide visual inspiration for the Hub Building and are indicative only.



Hub Building concept diagram



Hub Building isometric sketch view

6.9 THE BEACH AND ESPLANADE CHARACTER AREA

A key aspiration of the Development Framework is the removal of vehicles (except maintenance/ emergency/ permitted vehicles) along a section of the Esplanade between Codona's and Accommodation Road. This would seek to create a people-focussed environment and would allow the park to connect directly with the beach and to improve the association between the two.

6.9.1 THE BEACH INTERFACE AND ESPLANADE CONCEPT

The intention at the Beachfront is to enable a more accessible transition between the beachfront park and the beach. Initial ideas are to investigate modifying the levels across this transition area while maintaining the sea defences. The aim is to create better visual and physical connectivity between the park and the sea.

The modification of the landform in this 'upper' beach and esplanade area, facilitated by the removal of the road, will play a key role in heightening the relationship between the beach, the park, and the city. It is important that the humanising of this interface is a priority, while maintaining the necessary coastal defences. Some early ideas include incorporation of the lower sea defences in the design, thereby leaving them intact, and designing a new series of physical components allowing easier access and interface with the beach. The improved access is also important for maintaining and improving the general amenity value of the beach.

Proposals are being developed by the design team in consultation with Aberdeen City Council Flooding and Coastal Team in order to ensure there is a healthy connection between the Esplanade level and Beach level. A number of investigative studies and surveys will be carried out to identify feasibility of the proposals and the condition of the sea defences. Suitable access between these areas is essential for water sport activities and for access to potential satellite changing/shower and W/C provisions which may come forward.



Concept Plan - Esplanade North - Existing esplanade and sea wall are enhanced with planting and landform



Concept plan - Esplanade south - Reshaped beach and sea wall

 Potential Architectural Interventions

6.9.2 BOARDWALK

The proposed Boardwalk allows for the creation of an enhanced beach frontage with opportunities for views towards the sea. This new structure will become a focal point at the Masterplan's periphery, forming a new key public space and creating a threshold between Beach Boulevard, the Esplanade and the North Sea.

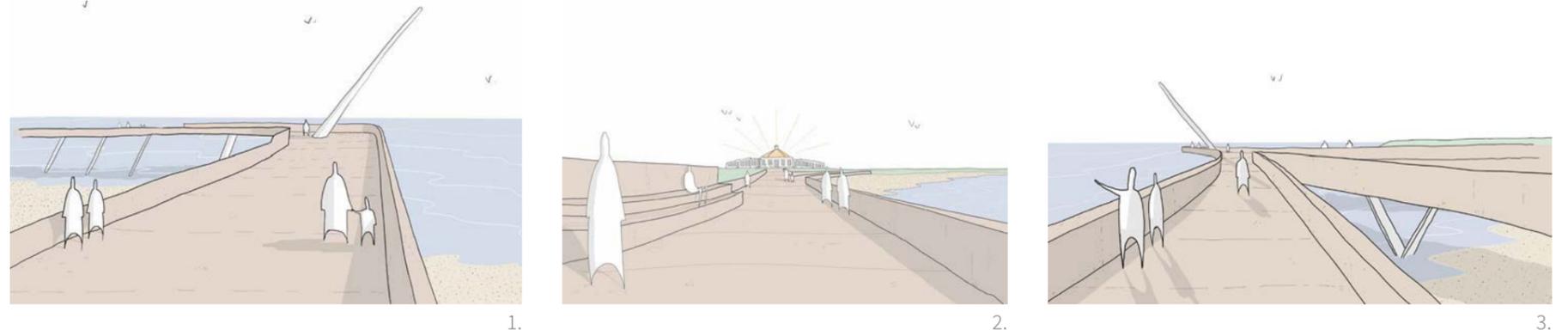
Formed as an extension of Beach Boulevard, the Boardwalk enhances the fundamental relationship between the boulevard and Beach Ballroom. These two principal paths are joined through the creation of a centrepiece at the nose of the Boardwalk in the form of a sculpture with a key light element to symbolise the Aurora (Northern Lights). This sculptural element could be designed in collaboration with a local artist, consistent with the overall Masterplan concept.

To ensure protection of the elements, the structure slopes up outwards towards the sea. It further provides the opportunity for level change in order to ensure accessibility to the beach.

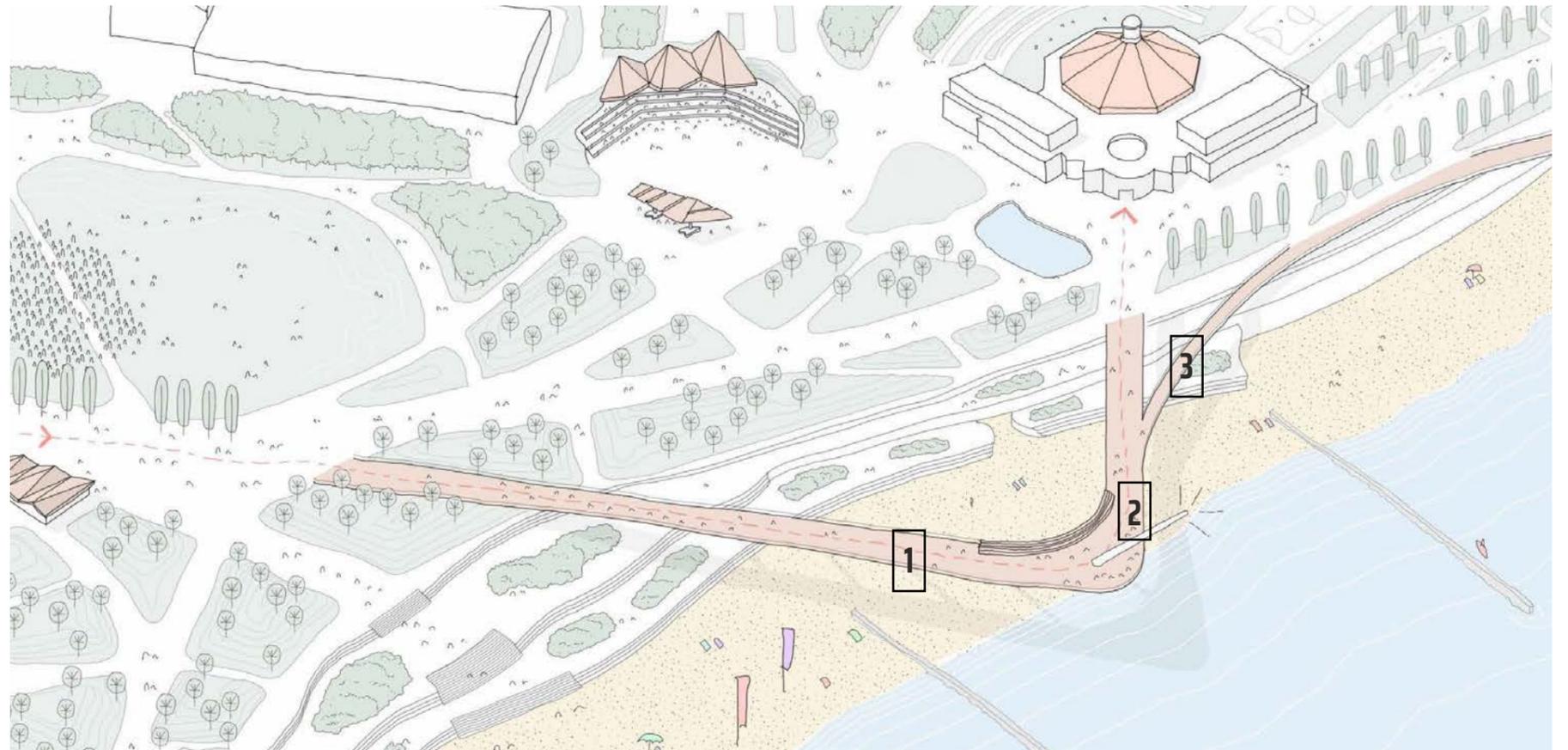
Any future proposals for the Boardwalk, where it may project over the beach or water, will need to be designed with awareness of locations of concern for suicide risk.

There is an opportunity for animation along the Boardwalk through the incorporation of landscaping and seating. Perforated mesh or glazed balustrades will also be considered in order to create a sense of openness towards the sea.

For information regarding emergency vehicle accessibility throughout site, please refer to Section 6.3.6: Delivery, Servicing and Emergency Access.



Boardwalk concept sketches



Isometric sketch view

The images above provide visual inspiration for the Boardwalk and are indicative only.



Aspirational image of Vancouver waterfront boardwalk



Potential boardwalk structure (Photo courtesy of Wilkinson Eyre)



Variety of routes (Photo courtesy of Steven Kroodsm)

6.10 BEACH BOULEVARD CHARACTER AREA

The Beach Boulevard main character area runs from Links Road to the roundabout on the A956/Commerce Street and will be reconfigured to provide the main active travel between the beach and the city centre, prioritising those on foot, bike and wheeling, while incorporating vehicles.

6.10.1 BEACH BOULEVARD CONCEPT

This section of Beach Boulevard is approximately 500m long and is approximately 27.5m wide. Roughly 67% of this is currently dedicated to vehicles therefore reconfiguration is a key aim within the Development Framework to allow the redistribution of available space to increase the allocation for pedestrians, cycles, SUDS, planting, and seating whilst maintaining vehicle and public transport access. The reallocation of space along Beach Boulevard will 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.

Traffic surveys and detailed layouts are required to develop and test these proposals further in relation to their possible impacts on the wider network.

6.10.2 BEACH BOULEVARD ROUNDABOUT

Several different concept options have been investigated to determine how best to improve the connection from the city to the Beach. Of the options developed it is believed that an 'At Grade' solution has the potential to create the most effective solution.

In the adjacent image, highlighted within the dashed circle, an indicative illustrative option shows a potential reconfiguration of the roundabout for further exploration. The concept option have not been tested in relation to geometries or traffic modelling however it aims to illustrate an aspiration for how the roundabout could be transformed improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity, extending the character of the city centre, and creating a new into a new public space.

Further studies will be undertaken in line with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) to identify a future junction arrangement. Detailed STAG evaluations will be underpinned by a range of objectives, including the Council's Road User Hierarchy, helping to arrive at a layout which facilitates increasing rates of sustainable and active travel trip making.



Concept plan - Beach Boulevard



New Junction (Configuration TBC)

6.10.3 BEACH BOULEVARD WEST - ACTIVE TRAVEL

The section (right) illustrates the current space allocation along Beach Boulevard. Most of the space is allocated to cars and does not contribute to a pleasant pedestrian or cycle environment.

The section (right) shows what could be achieved where space is relocated along Beach Boulevard. This could provide space for bus stops, additional soft landscape or seating, cycle lanes and cycle parking. This could provide space for legible pedestrian routes, seating areas. SuDS and soft landscape, and cycling infrastructure.

The north side of the corridor is defined by a mix of residential within the Constitution Street area, and some significant mature tree planting in places providing a green edge and is permeable to the pedestrian. These connections into the surrounding neighbourhood, along with the mature trees, should be maintained and enhanced where possible.

The interventions illustrated for Beach Boulevard have still to be tested in relation to geometries and traffic modelling. The aim is to illustrate an aspiration for how these spaces could be transformed enhancing a memorable journey to and from the Beach and city centre utilising the following aims:



Example of Segregated Cycle Lane

- Increasing pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the city and the Beach;
- Improving the appearance and experience of walking or cycling to the beach;
- Improving legibility of the journey;
- The delivery of a segregated cycling route, to be developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including DEP, and walking and cycling groups;
- Increasing soft landscape and biodiversity;
- Accommodating SuDS.



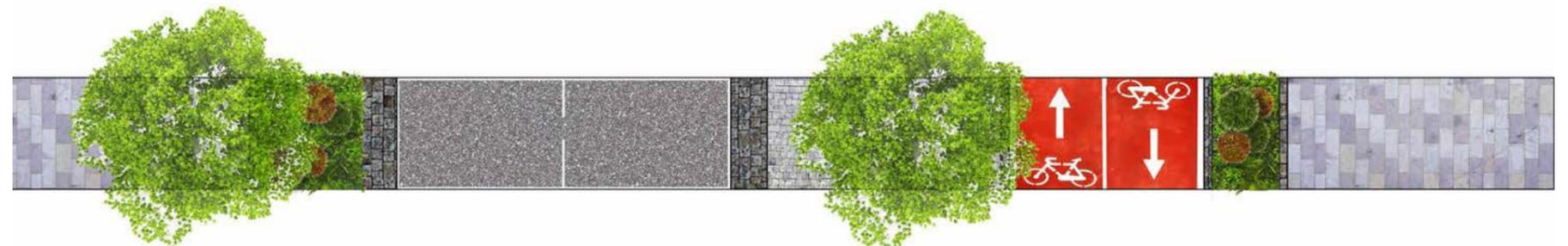
Pedestrian Footpath

Existing Dual Carriageway

Existing Dual Carriageway

Pedestrian Footpath

Beach Boulevard as existing



Pedestrian Footpath

Planting

Reduced Carriageway

zzzzz/
Planting

New Segregated Cycle Lane

Pedestrian Footpath

Beach Boulevard as proposed

6.10.3.1 BEACH BOULEVARD WEST - ACTIVE TRAVEL

The below images provide visual inspiration for the Beach Boulevard and are indicative only.



A potential view of Beach Boulevard with a new segregated cycleway and soft landscape



Mix of planting (Photo courtesy of Sheffield City Council)



Activated streetscapes (Photo courtesy of Sheffield City Council)



Hard and soft landscaping and wayfinding (Photo courtesy of Sheffield City Council)

6.10.4 BEACH BOULEVARD COMMUNITY GARDEN

At the bottom of Beach Boulevard, the space widens. This could be an opportunity to create community gardens with a smaller, more intimate scale than within the main body of the park.

These gardens could include sensory elements such as herb gardens, coloured light and sound features and promote use and enjoyment of the gardens by all. They could incorporate small elements of play and interaction as well as opportunities for social seating arrangements and quieter areas to relax. They could include community growing and fruit trees.

The below images provide visual inspiration for the Beach Boulevard (Community Gardens) and are indicative only.



Sound and light within a community garden



Aromatic planting within a community garden



Social seating arrangements



Concept Plan - Beach Boulevard Community Garden

Key

- 1. Aromatic garden
- 2. Sound garden
- 3. Light garden
- 4. Orchard garden

6.11 BROAD HILL CHARACTER AREA

The conceptual approach to Broad Hill is one that looks to conserve the natural form and condition of this environment. This could be described as a lighter touch nature-based intervention approach. Any interventions must be respectful of this existing environment and comply with any stand-offs or restrictions necessitated by the presence of protected species on Broad Hill.

It is likely that Broad Hill is already the most biodiverse part of the Development Framework area, however the aim will be to further look for ecological enhancements through additional tree planting especially along the leeward side of the hill, expanding the pine woodland, grassland management and providing a nature led stabilisation program for the steeper eroding east slopes. This enhancement of the ecological resource will offer a key biodiverse catalyst and generator for the rest of the Development Framework area and the creation of wider green networks. The enhancement and management of the biodiversity provides opportunities for more sensitively located seating and educational information.

Other interventions on Broad Hill will look to be light touch, with improvements to the existing path network that criss-crosses the hill at present, with 2 or 3 opportunities explored for viewpoints/resting places, possibly sculptural in form but with minimal impact on the land. These interventions will maximise the expansive views available to the sea and city, as well as commanding views of the new Beachfront park, leisure, and potential new Stadium, offering opportunities for wayfinding and educational interpretation.



Concept plan - Broad Hill

 Potential Architectural Interventions

6.11.1 BROAD HILL VIEWING PLATFORMS

There is opportunity for three viewing platforms on Broad Hill, taking advantage of spectacular unobstructed views across the Beachfront. The indicative form of the platforms consists of a base structure with integrated seating areas to pause, rest and reflect along the popular walking route.

To coincide with the other Masterplan interventions and create a common aesthetic throughout the Urban Park, design consistency will be maintained with the Broad Hill viewing platforms. To offer shelter from the elements, potential canopy structures are also proposed at strategic points.

Informative directional signage and/or sculptures pointing to specific landmarks are proposed, with accompanying observational stand binoculars. There are also opportunities for public art installations in collaboration with local artists, potentially being integrated within the geometric concrete structures.



Viewing Platform/Seating Wall



Aspirational imagery of Seating Platform



Location plan

6.12 LEISURE AND POTENTIAL NEW STADIUM CHARACTER AREA

Aberdeen City Council will require the Beachfront developments to become a new destination in their own right, be of exceptional architectural quality and have the 'wow factor'.

The proposals will also embrace the principles of active design that promote activity, health, and stronger communities through the way we design and build our towns and cities.

There are three key functions to be provided within the Leisure and potential Stadium Character Area:

- Leisure Centre
- Ice Arena
- Stadium

The aims and objectives of the sport and leisure facility and potential Football Stadium and are to place sport, physical activity, health, and well-being at the very heart of the community in Aberdeen. Each facility would help activate the city, increase opportunities for people to participate in physical activity and sport, invest in the City's infrastructure of people and places and be inclusive to provide the opportunity to become and stay active, as well as helping to improve physical and mental well-being.

The potential new facilities would offer the opportunity to participate in sport, leisure, recreation, and community activities within a comfortable, modern, and safe environment. The potential leisure facility would be open to casual visitors to the beach area who simply wish to enjoy the seafront and observe rather than participate in the wide range of activities. The facility would be an attraction in its own right and act as a hub for visiting other parts of the beach area.

The potential new stadium would provide a new home for Aberdeen Football Club of which that the supporters, players, and staff could be proud. The potential new Stadium would offer a great experience for both home supporters and away fans, wherever they are sitting and in line with current initiatives and expectations within the sport. The Stadium would also seek to support the local, national, and international strategies that the Aberdeen F.C Trust are involved with that address the importance of increasing physical activity, and tackling issues such as poverty, inequalities, and well-being.



Concept [plan - Leisure and potential new Stadium

 Potential Architectural Interventions

6.12.1 POTENTIAL NEW STADIUM TRAVEL STRATEGY

If taken forward, a new stadium would be located less than 500m from Pittodrie Stadium, equating to less than a ten-minute walk. Established travel patterns associated with Pittodrie can be built upon without the creation of additional car-based trips. Aberdeen Football Club has set out ambitious sustainability targets and aims to be net-zero by 2040 and reflecting its role within the wider city context, the club seeks to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030. These objectives will play a key role in shaping a future stadium access strategy.

Examination of the 2016 Pittodrie supporter travel survey demonstrates that just less than half of Aberdeen Football Club (AFC) season ticket holders travel to Pittodrie on foot, by bus or by taxi. Of all the supporters who arrive in the city centre by coach or train, more than 90% walk the 2.2km distance to access the stadium. While many supporters revealed that they travelled to the stadium by car, they typically do so in groups of 2, 3 or 4 and that they are prepared to walk up to 30 minutes to access the stadium.

Season ticket holders were also asked about how their match-day travel patterns might change in the event that AFC relocated to Kingsford. Car and pedestrian trips were forecast to fall by 6% and 12%, respectively, but bus use was expected to increase by 18%. While these values relate to the Kingsford site, they demonstrate that supporters are willing to change their travel behaviour if a new stadium was built. The Beachfront offers considerable potential to grow both pedestrian and bus-based trips while reducing car use.

Through the Development Framework, the potential exists to promote partnership working between Aberdeen City Council, the football club and relevant transport providers to influence and manage event and match-day travel choices. In the first instance, this would include an expansion of the existing scheme whereby season ticket holders are entitled to travel ticket discounts for match day attendance. Through a well-designed travel plan, it would be possible to directly engage with supporters' groups or those promoting events at the stadium to share positive messages around mode choice, group travel opportunities, use of park and ride facilities etc.

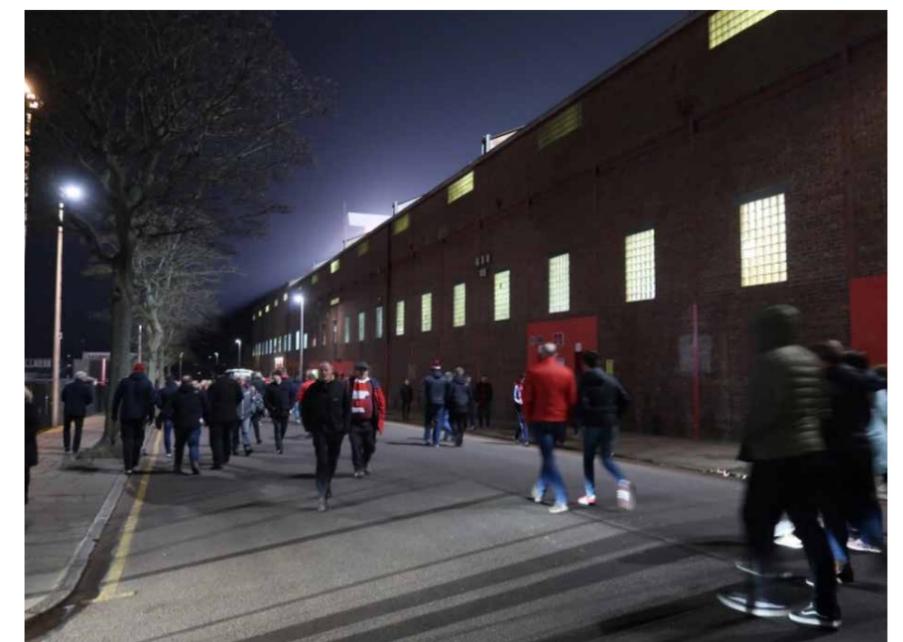
Successful incorporation of the stadium will depend upon the influence of travel behaviours through well designed public space, the incorporation of effective and attractive public transport and a well-considered package of strategies to manage and coordinate activities.



Aberdeen team bus (Image courtesy of The Press and Journal)



Aberdeen team with First Bus (Image courtesy of Aberdeen F.C.)



Walking to stadium (Image courtesy of Hans Henrik Appel)

6.12.2 LEISURE AND POTENTIAL NEW STADIUM CONCEPT

Site Context

The Leisure and Potential New Stadium Character Area benefits from a flat open area set at a level approximately 3.5m lower than the beach Esplanade to the east. Behind the site to the west is Broad Hill which rises 25m above the site and offers a striking escarpment in an otherwise relatively flat coastline. The ambition for development in this area is to express the forms of the key functional spaces which appear wrapped in individual envelopes and which allow elements of the development to be delivered during different phases.

Broad Hill also provides a backdrop to the rear of the development and a great vantage point for views across the adjacent coastline. The height and massing of development in this Character Area must ensure these important views, particularly to the North Sea from Broad Hill, are protected and not obstructed. The public realm between the Leisure and potential new Stadium buildings must also be carefully considered and created as a 'valley' park encouraging public access and community use rather than being limited to a back of house/service corridor.

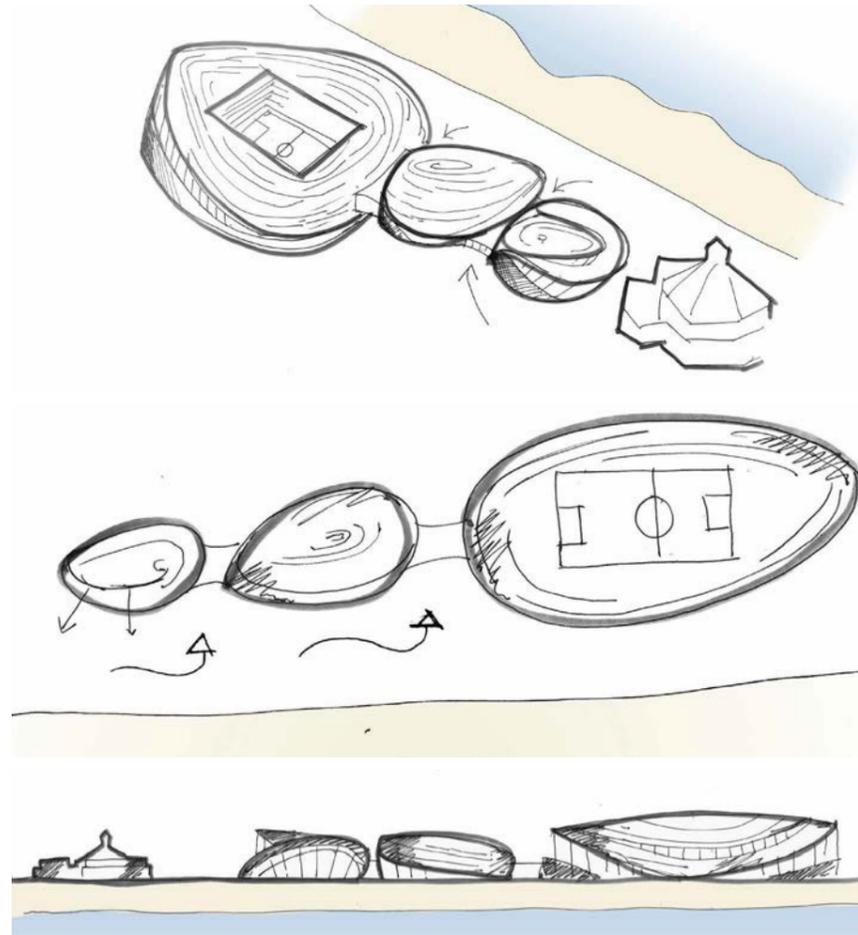
The Beach Ballroom sits at the southern edge of this Character Area. The existing leisure centre and ice arena are also located here but it is intended that these facilities be replaced by the new sport and leisure development. It is proposed that the existing Kings Links outdoor sports area is relocated elsewhere in the city at a location suitable for those that use it for organised sports, should the Leisure facilities and potential new Stadium be realised as shown. Indeed, increased cricket pitch provision has already been provided at Inverdee.

Design Principles

The Leisure and potential new Stadium concept embrace the Rope Works masterplan concept and key principles that are inspired by Aberdeen's shipbuilding industry.

As they develop, the leisure and potential new stadium proposals will be required to:

- Be of a high architectural and urban design quality, using materials appropriate to site location;
- Ensure the setting of the adjacent Beach Ballroom is enhanced and not detrimentally affected;
- Incorporate an organic network of pedestrian focused desire routes and meandering pathways;
- Include a study to determine the best ways to integrate the potential stadium, leisure and outdoor facilities together, visually and, where possible, physically;
- Consider how best to upgrade the Esplanade and include elements of active frontages;
- Incorporate high quality hard and soft landscape and public realm proposals;
- Incorporate natural landforms to offer protection from the elements, such as dune formations to provide shelter from north easterly winds; and,
- Integrate with Broad Hill and ensure that views from Broad Hill are not interrupted.



Shell concept sketches

The project requirements for the leisure facilities and potential new Stadium are in the process of being developed and the detailed design will be subject to these overarching needs, however, two alternative design inspirations for the Leisure and Potential New Stadium Character Area have been considered as follows:

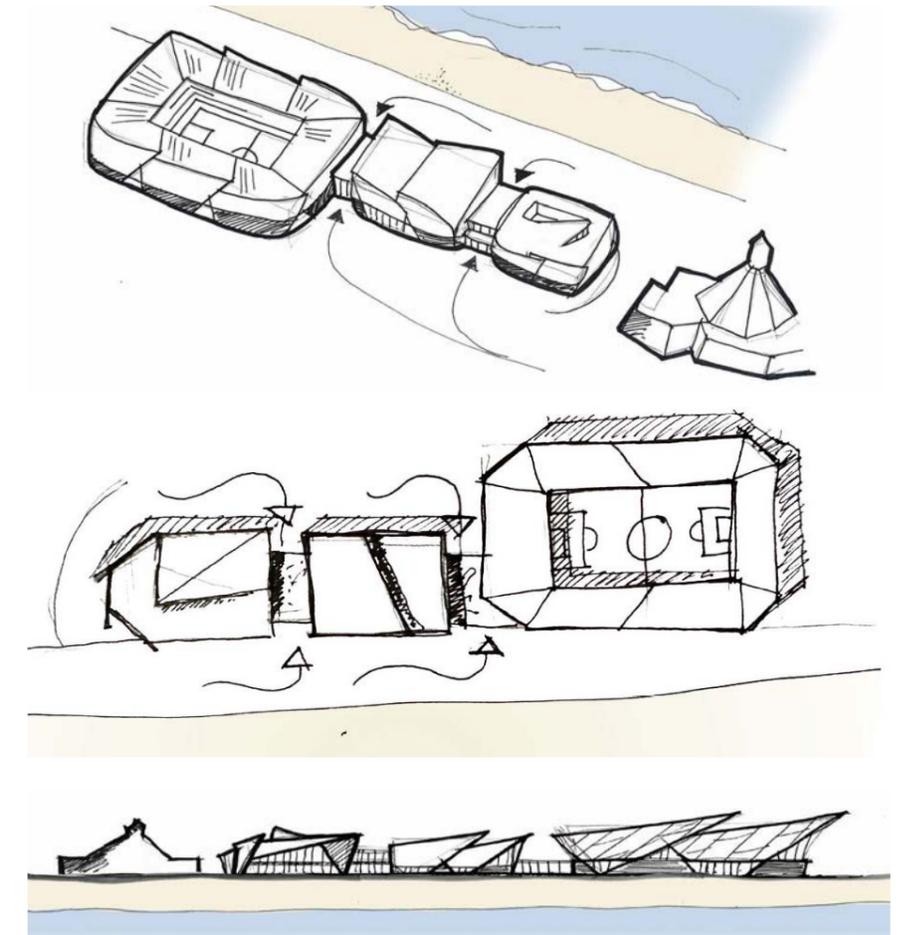
Shells

The design inspiration of shells comes from a group of shells found on the Aberdeen coastline such as mussels. These organic forms lend themselves to roofing the large span spaces as well and adding a visual interest to the form of the vertical cladding.

Sails

The design inspiration of sails comes directly from Aberdeen's shipbuilding history. Aberdeen became Scotland's leading shipbuilding port in the latter part of the 18th century and produced tall and fast clipper ships powered by sail. The triangular sail offers a distinct and recognisable architectural motif that can also lend themselves to the form, massing and elevational treatment of the potential Stadium and Leisure elements.

Under both concepts, and any others which may emerge, the Leisure development will be designed as a singular development with primary functional spaces which appear individually wrapped, whilst still



Sails concept sketches

allowing for independent operation of separate uses within. This approach will also extend to the Beach Ballroom which, although will continue to stand as a separate structure, will be able to operate together with the new sport and leisure facilities.

It is recognised that the Beach Ballroom is a Category B- listed building and has significant historical and emotional importance in the city. The potential new Stadium and leisure developments will balance their heights, massing, and form so as not to overpower the Ballroom and to ensure its setting is not detrimentally affected.

The intent for the massing of the new development is twofold: firstly, to align the seaward side of the new development with the front façade of the Beach Ballroom to create much needed active frontage to the Esplanade; and secondly, respecting the scale of the Beach Ballroom to step up the massing of the forms from the lower height and narrower footprint of the Leisure facilities up to the higher roof and wider footprint of the potential new Stadium.

6.12.3 POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS

Other design options may come forward in the future in response to the evolving brief for these facilities. Any alternative design concept or proposal will require to be reflective of the Rope Works concept, the beachfront location and the Design Principles noted above.

6.12.4 LEISURE AND POTENTIAL NEW STADIUM CONCEPT

Materials and Operations

The harsh coastal environment means that a palate of high quality yet robust materials and detailing will be essential. The scheme must look to choose materials and fixings that do not easily corrode in the salty damp air. Any painting of steelwork equally needs to be marine grade and considered on the longevity. Overall, the choice of materials that will weather well in this location avoiding regular cleaning or painting will be important.

Although glazing will be an essential part of the project for the amazing views out over the sea, this should be optimised at higher levels due the need to regularly clean and should include easy access strategy. Glazing at street level will be readily easy to access on a day-to-day basis so will be more liberally distributed. Glazing at street level will contribute to active frontages.

The split level of the site allows the servicing to the development to be located at the lower less-prominent area behind the Esplanade. Building maintenance considerations will form part of any future design process, but every effort will be made to ensure any physical requirements are accommodated in the least intrusive manner possible. Exterior lighting to the new developments will also be considered.

All internal plant areas should have stair access and additionally lift access to at least the level below but ideally to the same level. All lighting and AV systems over the large span areas, where it will be difficult to always access from mobile platforms from below, will require access gantries to provide safe regular access. Exterior lighting to the new developments will also be considered.

As noted in Section 6.3 Active Travel, public transport and existing parking opportunities surrounding the site will be optimised rather than the creation any large new dedicated car parking areas for these facilities. Additional well-located accessible parking spaces will be provided.



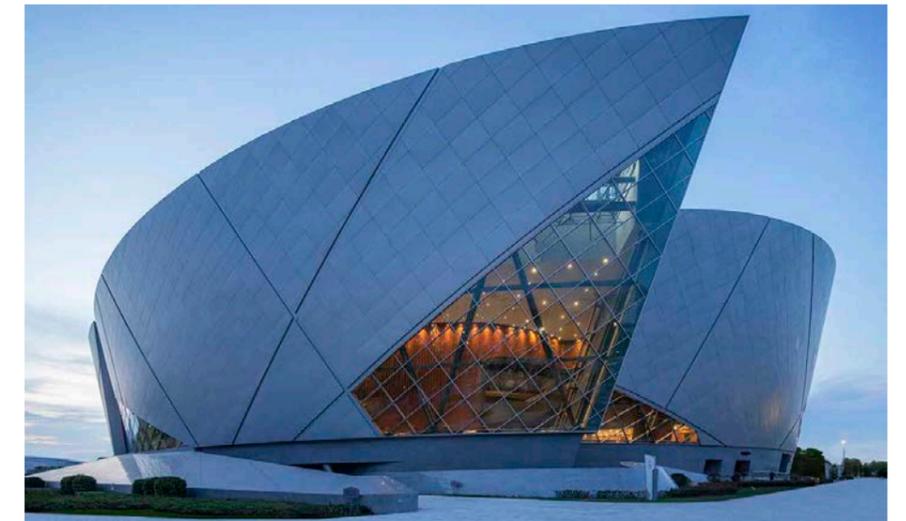
Aspirational imagery of leisure facility concept

6.12.4 LEISURE AND POTENTIAL NEW STADIUM - ASPIRATION

The below images provide visual inspiration for the Leisure and potential New Stadium character area and are indicative only.



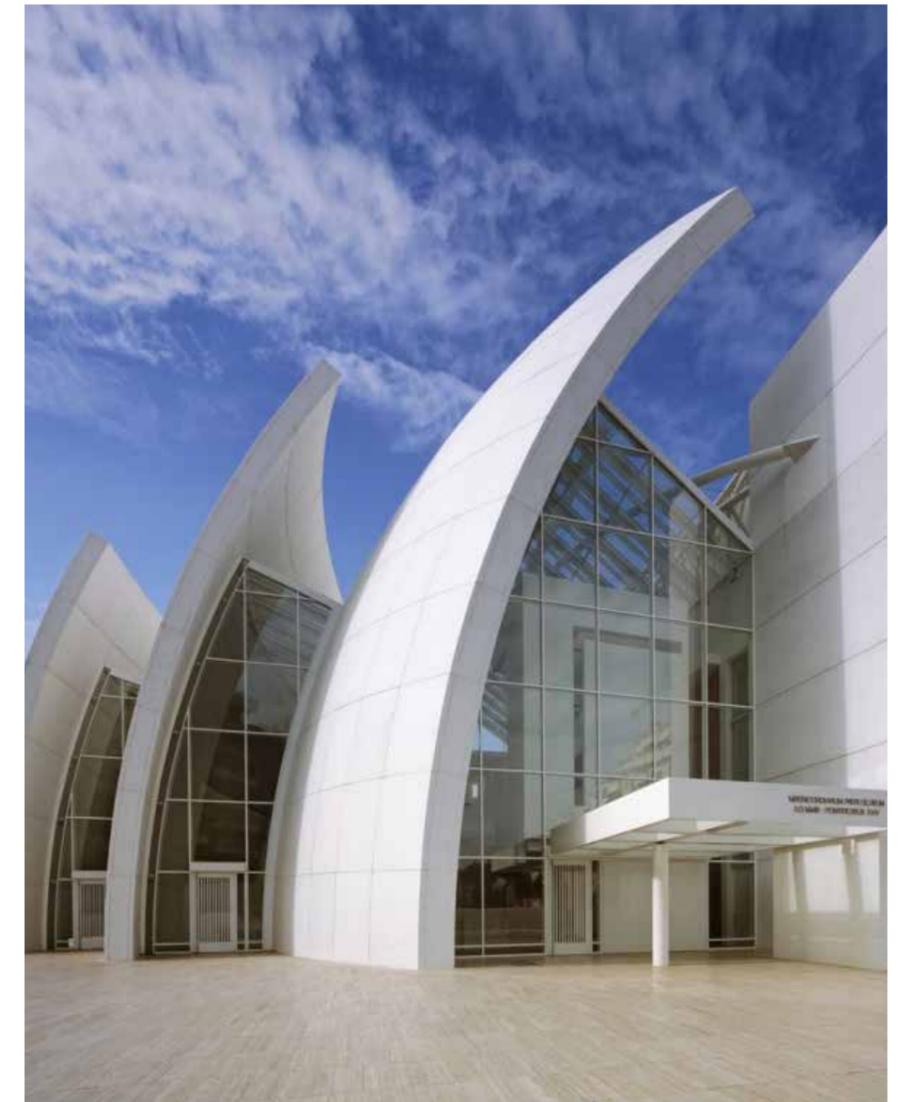
Kilden Performing Art Centre, Norway



Zhengzhou Grand Theatre, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, China



Public realm tied to Potential Stadium



Jubilee Church, Italy

6.13 BEACH VILLAGE CHARACTER AREA

The potential Beach Village is envisaged as an area which can form a centre for a variety of Beachfront activities, such as, wild swimming, sailing, and kayaking, by providing facilities for hire, changing, general welfare and include areas for parking.

Within the Development Framework Phase 2, locations are under consideration for an extension of the Beach Village character area to incorporate satellite intervention locations, for changing and W/C provisions, along with a potential Water Sports Club House located at Fittie. This could include the provision of new public Beach Huts.

6.13.1 BEACH VILLAGE CONCEPT

A potential Beach Pavilion building would offer a flexible layout that can be used to support these different Beachfront activities.

An associated Slipway to assist in facilitating a wide range of uses within the Beach Village, would be accessible via the existing underpass route which would be maintained and enhanced, giving direct access to the Beach. The slipway proposal will require to be assessed in relation to its impact on the natural coastal processes and beach development.

The Beach Village could also serve as an extension of the Leisure and Potential New Stadium proposals to allow an expanded offer of activities to be developed.

A future Phase 2 of the Development Framework may also bring forward additional facilities outwith the Phase 1 area which will similarly allow for an expanded offer of activities.



Concept plan - Beach Village

 Potential Architectural Interventions

6.13.2 BEACH PAVILION

The exact location of the Beach Pavilion needs to be carefully considered. Notionally it is located adjacent to the existing underpass and proposed new slipway. In response to the safety concerns highlighted by the Aberdeen Water Safety Group, it is proposed that rather than encouraging water/beach use at this location, the pavilion could instead offer a flexible layout that can be used to support different activities, such as informal play and flexibility for larger gatherings as well as having a safety focus First Aid provisions.

The Beach Pavilion offers a flexible layout that can be used for a variety of different Beachfront activities. The building provides active frontage to the Beach Esplanade which could potentially house Sports Clubhouse, and other complementary uses. First Aid provision and equipment storage areas would also be accommodated.

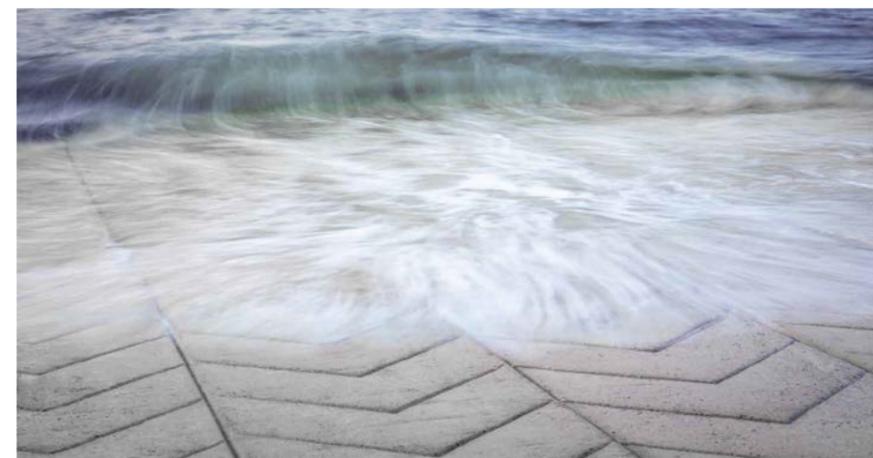
The building will be in close proximity to suggested accessible parking and will be fully accessible with ramped access integrated into the landscape design. The Pavilion could form part of a wider Beach Village or potentially be utilised for future extreme sports facilities, linking into the Leisure Centre and potential new Stadium.

The adjacent images provide visual inspiration for the Beach Pavilion Building and are indicative only.

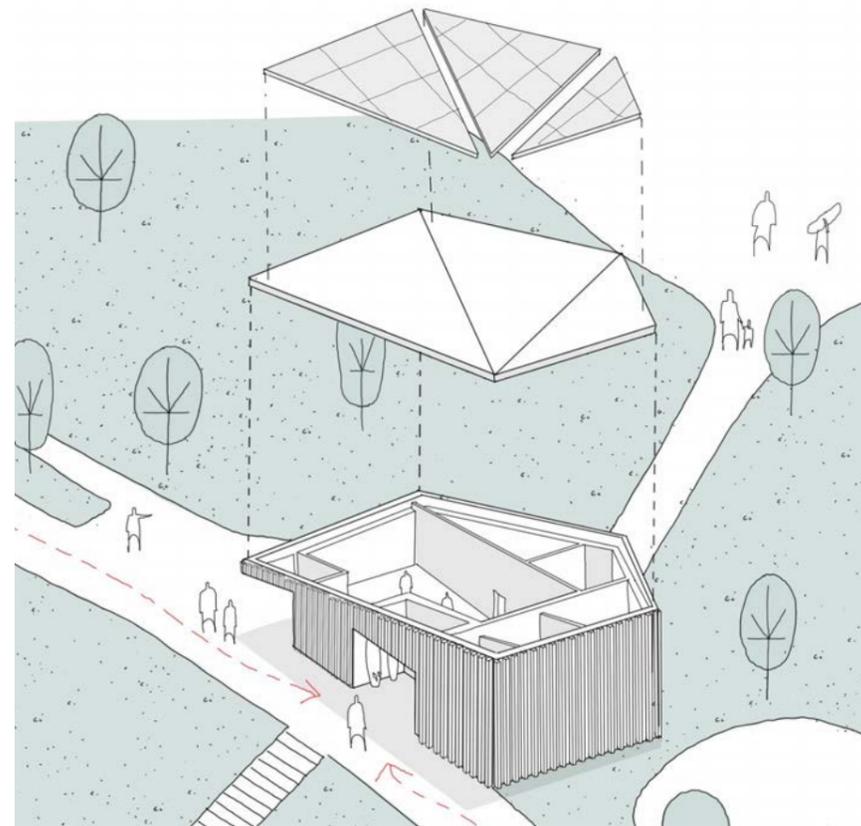
6.13.3 SLIPWAY

Located in close proximity to the proposed Beach Pavilion, the associated Slipway will be accessible via the existing underpass route which will be maintained and enhanced, giving direct access to the Beach. The Slipway could form part of a wider Beach Village, potentially being utilised for future extreme sports facilities, linking into the wider satellite intervention facilities, Leisure Centre and potential new Stadium.

In line with proposals for other structures within the wider Masterplan, locally sourced larch timber could be utilised, suitable for a marine environment.



Slipway Materiality



Aspirational isometric sketch view

6.13.4 BEACH VILLAGE - ASPIRATION

The below images provide visual inspiration for the Beach Village and are indicative only.



Indicative landscape mounding



Summer Island BUGA, Heilbronn, 2019 by LOMA



Active water activities

PHASING & DELIVERY



7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

The proposals documented within the Development Framework are still at an indicative stage however the adjacent phasing diagrams illustrate the desired direction of growth as currently envisaged. As advised in the Introduction, there are elements of the Development Framework proposals that can be progressed by the Council under their statutory 'permitted development' powers, mainly the public realm and urban park areas. That is because these are works which are for the maintenance, improvement and alteration of Council land for the existing purposes of function of that land, namely existing public parks and open recreational spaces. However, any buildings within these areas would likely still require planning and associated permissions. As such, it is anticipated that the public realm-related developments will be the items to come forward first.

Phase 1 - Queens Links Park

Phase 2 - Broad Hill

Phase 3 - Beach Boulevard

Phase 4 - Beach Ballroom

Phase 5 - The Beach & Esplanade

Phase 6 - Leisure & Potential New Stadium

Phase 7 - Beach Village

A key consideration of the developing phasing & delivery strategy will be attempting to mitigate any disruption to the Council's existing events schedule and the current on site or neighbouring facilities operation as much as possible.

This phasing is only indicative and there are likely to be elements of work, be that Character Area-specific or across a number of Character Areas, which will be carried out concurrently or to enable certain other works to be undertaken.



7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

Phase 1 - Queens Links Parks

Phase 1 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- A large core play park area with diverse range of play and games opportunities.
- An external Amphitheatre with canopy located adjacent to the Beach Ballroom.
- A large events field capable of hosting events and day-to-day use.
- A gateway building located at entrance to Beachfront area giving sense of arrival.
- A hub building located at centre of site offering a place to engage and refresh.
- Canopy features offering shelter and seating across the site.
- Water features to bring drama and animation to spaces.

Phase 2 - Broad Hill

Phase 2 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Additional tree planting and nature-based intervention.
- Improvements to the existing path network.
- Two or three opportunities explored for viewpoints/resting places.



Phase 1 - Queens Links Park



Phase 2 - Broad Hill

7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

Phase 3 - Beach Boulevard

Phase 3 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Reconfiguration of available space to increase the allocation for pedestrians, cycles, SUDS, planting and seating whilst maintaining vehicle and public transport access.
- Community gardens located at the bottom of Beach Boulevard where the streetscape widens.
- A potential reconfiguration of the Justice Street roundabout to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity.

Phase 4 - Beach Ballroom

Phase 4 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Proposed renovation and potential extensions of the B-listed Beach Ballroom.
- A potential plaza space with water features forming a grand setting for the building.
- A potential sunken garden area to the rear of the ballroom which would provide a dedicated external space for use by the ballroom.



Phase 3 - Beach Boulevard



Phase 4 - Beach Ballroom

7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

Phase 5 - The Beach & Esplanade

Phase 5 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Modifications to beach edge improving visual and physical connectivity between the park and the sea
- New dune landforms created
- Potential Boardwalk structure formed



Phase 5 - The Beach & Esplanade

Phase 6 - Leisure and Potential New Stadium

Phase 6 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Leisure facility and potential new Stadium developed
- Associated landscaping works installed



Phase 6 - Leisure and potential new Stadium

7.0 PHASING & DELIVERY

Phase 7 - Beach Village

Phase 7 of the Beachfront proposals would see the following elements developed:

- Formation of the Beach Village landscape and forms
- Creation of Beach Pavilion building
- Creation of potential new slipway



Phase 7 - Beach Village

160 WEST REGENT STREET GLASGOW G2 4RL
KEPPIEDESIGN.CO.UK 01412040066

