
To: Leadership Board

On: 18 September 2019

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Cultural Infrastructure Programme Update

1 Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19 September 2018, the Leadership Board authorised the Chief Executive to progress the projects associated with the approved capital investment in venues and public realm, building capacity and infrastructure which will deliver the Council's cultural regeneration ambitions for Paisley and the wider Renfrewshire area.
- 1.2 This report provides the latest in a series of updates for Members on the progress of particular aspects of the cultural regeneration plan, specifically St James playing fields (and the reprofiling of this project), Paisley town centre public realm and Paisley Arts Centre.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Leadership Board:
- (i) notes the progress on the projects outlined in the report, and in doing so, approve the revised scope of the original project at St James playing fields as outlined in paragraph 3, and the transfer of resources relating to the Paisley Arts Centre as outlined at paragraph 5;
 - (ii) approves the principle of a loan of £200,000 to Kilbarchan Amateur Athletics Club towards the cost of their proposed new athletics facility at ON-X, Linwood as detailed in paragraph 3.13, and delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to conclude the terms of the legal contract between the parties;
-

3. St James Playing Fields – Update and Revised Proposals

- 3.1 At the Council meeting of 28 September 2017, the proposed scope of the St. James Playing Fields was approved, as part of the wider Cultural Infrastructure Programme. The project was originally outlined as development of the sports facilities at St. James Park, considering requirements for outdoor space to accommodate large scale events, aligned initially to the City of Culture bid. The scope of the project included upgrade of the St. James playing fields site and the pitch at Ferguslie Sports Centre, provision of an area for temporary staging, new pavilion with events café space, roads and parking improvements and utility infrastructure upgrades.
- 3.3 The project was initiated, and the Project Brief developed to respond to strategic requirements, an assessment of need from local stakeholders, consultation with national sports bodies and a review of existing facilities and demand. The scope of the proposals was defined to include:
- football pitches / rugby pitch and changing facilities;
 - a water-based hockey pitch,
 - closed -circuit cycling / running track,
 - new pavilion and storage facilities,
 - road repairs and new car parking,
 - ground improvements over the events zone and
 - a fully serviced events hardstanding area.
- 3.4 At the time of the update to the Leadership Board on 19 September 2018, the concept design for the St James Playing Fields site was approaching completion and site investigation reports were being analysed. Works to replace the Ferguslie Sports Centre artificial pitch had already progressed as a separate contract and completed in June 2018.
- 3.5 The initial results from ground investigations in summer 2018 (including boreholes, trial pits, ground material sampling and ground water monitoring) confirmed concerns identified in the earlier desktop exercise. The bearing capacity of soils, levels of ground water and considerable liquidity of the surface at the Playing Fields all represented very poor conditions for new development. Whilst poor ground conditions had been factored into the original project budget estimates, further assessment indicated considerable additional measures would be required to alleviate the ground problems (to allow development to take place) and guarantee a sustainable future for the new facilities. Foundations, road bases and hard-standings would all be affected and require specialist solutions which would require significant additional budget to fund.
- 3.6 As part of the intrusive surveys undertaken at St James, the consultants also identified potential contamination issues in relation to the soil at the existing football pitches. Further analysis was undertaken, and this was reviewed by independent consultants. The conclusion reached by both sets of consultants was that the St James site was safe for the public in its current use ie. without disruption to the soil of the existing playing fields.

- 3.7 Due to the new evidence in terms of ground conditions, officers began to consider alternative solutions for elements of the proposed facilities planned for St James Playing Fields, for consideration by elected members.
- 3.8 Officers recommendations for a proposed revised scope for the project are now outlined in the paragraphs below for members review. These have been developed in collaboration with Renfrewshire Leisure and are designed to further support the Renfrewshire Sports Strategy. The revised scope aims to meet the original expectations of what was anticipated to be delivered in the brief for the St James site.
- 3.9 The updated proposals retain the requirement to provide football facilities at St. James and proposes the continued use of existing pitches. The revised proposals for the St James site also includes: -
- Demolition of the existing pavilion and replacement with new modular changing facilities to meet modern requirements;
 - Four existing grass pitches will continue to be maintained and serviced in line with current operations;
 - An improved hardstanding area for parking;
 - Access road repairs and resurfacing, with improved signage and wayfinding;
 - Creation of a new gravel-surfaced park path, along the north-west boundary, linking the site access road to the local footpath network on Greenock Road;
 - A secure staff area and compound and improved temporary facilities infrastructure.
- 3.10 The investment in the new artificial surface at Ferguslie Sports Centre has proven to be a great success. However, the existing changing facilities are outdated and no longer provide suitable accommodation for mixed gender-groups and age-groups. The two grass football pitches at Ferguslie remain popular and it is therefore now proposed to upgrade the changing facilities to maintain and expand the usage, as part of the revised project scope.
- 3.11 In addition, an upgrade of the existing sand-based hockey pitch at On-X Linwood (to provide the water-based pitch in the original project brief) would align with local and national sports strategies. Hockey is played predominantly on sand based / filled pitches. Sand-dressed is a viable surface for school and district level hockey but not for national or international standard competition. There are two full size, sand-based pitches suitable for hockey in Renfrewshire but there is no water-based pitch. Four clubs are based in Renfrewshire; two of these clubs currently play outside of Renfrewshire in order to access suitable pitches. Kelburne and UWS Hockey both play in Glasgow. Kelburne have expressed an ambition to return to facilities in

Renfrewshire, if they become available. The ability to host competition-standard matches is a key requirement and redeveloped facilities at ON-X would offer all the necessary support and infrastructure.

- 3.12 Development of a closed-circuit cycle / running track would also be a suitable complementary sports facility at ON-X, to similarly enhance the campus, enabling multi-sports (e.g. triathlon) events, training and competition. It is anticipated that a closed road cycling circuit would offer safe training facilities and allow novice cyclists to build confidence. Closed road circuits also provide a facility for a wide range of sports in a safe controlled manner.
- 3.13 Finally, in line with ON-X's role as a community sports campus, Kilbarchan Athletics Club have recently announced plans to develop an indoor sprint track and gym adjacent to the existing outdoor athletics track at ON-X. The development will take place on land leased to the Club by Renfrewshire Council. The Council has previously agreed to provide grant support for this project of £0.5m as part of the Club successfully developing a funding strategy to support the delivery of the facility. In recent months the Club have been in ongoing dialogue with HMRC with regards the ability of the Club to reclaim VAT incurred on the project build costs. HMRC have confirmed that unfortunately VAT will not be reclaimable as the Club had originally anticipated. The impact of this is to increase the net build costs for the project by £0.2m, creating an unexpected funding gap for the Club. The Club have approached the Council to explore options to address this gap. Recognising the funding support already committed by the Council to the project, officers have explored with the Club an offer in principle of an interest free loan which would be repayable over the lease term. Working in partnership with officers, the Club have agreed based on their projected income that a loan facility of this nature is affordable and sustainable. As part of the loan agreement, the Council would require to take security over the new facility for the period of the loan to protect the long term interest of the Council.
- 3.14 The original project budget was agreed as £7.5 million. The revised proposals outlined above, at St James, Ferguslie and ON-X, can be delivered within the existing budget allocation and are now recommended for approval by members. It should also be noted by members that £250,000 of the overall budget has already been spent on the upgrade to the sports pitch at Ferguslie Sports Centre.

4. Public Realm and Gateway Improvement - Update

- 4.1 In September 2018, Leadership Board approved investment proposals for development of key public realm and gateway junction improvement projects in Paisley Town Centre as part of the overall Cultural Infrastructure Programme.
- 4.2 Initial public consultation (including engagement with key stakeholders, public consultation events in the Town Centre and an online survey) took place between January and March 2019. These consultations were held to better inform the Council about how people currently use County Square, Abbey

Quarter and the four gateway junctions approved for investment and how they would like to see them developed in the future.

The key findings from respondents to the consultation included:

- Public support for the efforts to improve public spaces in the town;
- belief that the Abbey Quarter should enhance the current vistas and heritage of the area;
- County Square should make the area work better for events and provide more of an impact on arriving in the town;
- The gateway junction improvements were welcomed if they improve access to the town and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.3 The procurement of an external design team for both of the principal public realm investment areas has been completed and their appointment approved at the Finance and Resources Board on 4 September 2019. The procurement of the design team for the Gateway junctions has commenced and it is expected to be finalised this month. Further stakeholder consultation is planned on the design proposals when they are available.

5. Paisley Arts Centre Update

- 5.1 The key components of the approved upgrade to the arts centre were the complete replacement of the Arts Centre's ageing mechanical and electrical installations and enhancement of the customer experience at the venue.
- 5.2 A concept design for the arts centre has now been developed in collaboration with Renfrewshire Leisure, which delivers on the project requirements and also maximises the potential of the future operation of the venue, whilst delivering visible improvements for customers and users. The anticipated budget required to deliver the proposals has been confirmed as £2.8 million, which is £300,000 in excess of the original project budget estimate, and the Board are asked to approve the virement of £300,000 to the Arts Centre project budget from the public realm budget, which is manageable within the overall financial resources for the programme.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The costs outlined in this report, for the Cultural Infrastructure Projects, are within the overall budget agreed by Council in September 2017.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning** –

Community Care, Health & Wellbeing – The proposals contained within this report are part of the Council's strategy to encourage healthier lifestyles by providing higher quality public spaces for local people and through

enhancements to walking and cycling routes to encourage the use of alternative travel modes.

Jobs and the Economy – The planned investments in Paisley Town Centre will generate jobs during the construction phases of the project. Beyond that, the new revitalised cultural venues will generate permanent employment and trigger investment by the private sector and other organisations into Paisley that will, in turn, generate further employment opportunities and spending into the local economy.

4. **Legal** – None.
 5. **Property/ Assets** – None.
 6. **Information Technology** – None.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** – The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individual's human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. The projects and criteria have been developed to provide opportunities across equality groups.
 8. **Health & Safety** – N/A
 9. **Procurement** – All necessary contracts to fulfil the projects outlined in this report will be progressed using the agreed Council procedures.
 10. **Risk** – Risks relating to the individual projects will be assessed at a project level.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – N/A
 12. **CoSLA Policy Position** – N/A
 13. **Climate Risk** -
-

List of Background Papers

- 1 Report to Council: 28 September 2017, "Investment in 2021 Venues and Town Centre Infrastructure"
- 2 Report to Leadership Board: 21 February 2018, "UK City of Culture 2021 – The Bidding Legacy"
- 3 Report to Leadership Board: 12 September 2018, "Cultural Regeneration – Legacy Programme Update"

The foregoing background papers will be retained within the Chief Executive's Service for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

Author Neil Watson; Cultural Infrastructure Programme Director x6167