

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment, Infrastructure & Economic Development Committee

31 May 2023

PERTH CITY OF LIGHT ACTION PLAN UPDATE 2023

Report by Head of Planning & Development

(Report No. 23/172)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the City of Light Action Plan which was approved in 2016 and initial works commenced in 2017. The report reviews the outputs and outcome of the work undertaken to date, relative to the original objectives, and outlines works which have not yet been committed within the Framework Contract linked to the current pause on spend on the Lighting Strategy capital programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- notes the content of this report and appendices which provide the Committee with information on the background to the City of Light Action Plan, outputs and outcomes achieved and
 - notes remaining proposed lighting at St John's Kirk, City Gateways, Perth Vennels and required maintenance costs which have yet to be committed
 - considers the remaining proposed projects and refers any decision on future spend to Finance and Resources Committee.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background/Main Issues
 - Section 5: Proposals
 - Section 6: Conclusion
 - Appendices

4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 In 2016, Perth and Kinross Council launched an ambitious vision for the City of Perth – the City of Light as part of the private and public sector led [Perth City Plan](#) (2015-2035) aiming to support growth of the city and its economy. The Perth City Plan developed via the Perth City Development Board, was

approved by the Council in February 2016 (Report 16/71 refers) ¹. The ^[redacted] of life. The Plan promotes cultural regeneration as a critical part of economic development activity involving both the development of new cultural assets and ^[redacted] in lighting, improved sustainability, and use of lighting infrastructure to animate the city, improve the visitor experience, support the hospitality sector and evening economy.

- 4.2 The subsequently commissioned [City of Light Action Plan](#)² outlined objectives to inform the development of lighting projects and prioritisation of investment:
- support development of the evening economy.
 - provide opportunities for businesses to benefit from enhanced turnover through increased visitation.
 - develop innovative approaches to lighting design which deliver safety and assists with orientation for both pedestrians and road users.
 - prioritise lighting designs that will reduce energy use, cost, and minimise light pollution.
 - develop and augment Perth's character.
- 4.3 The Action Plan provided more detail on potential lighting projects and costs based on these objectives. It also included a methodology of procuring design linked with investment in low carbon street lighting, enhanced use of lighting infrastructure for digital use and interaction, and lighting projections.
- 4.4 At the Council meeting on 22 June 2016, capital funding of £8.9 million was allocated to placemaking and £5 million to the lighting strategy (Report No.16/277 refers) ³ to support both the City Plan and the City of Light Action Plan.
- 4.5 The resources for projects within the Placemaking and Lighting capital programmes were agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in April 2017 (Report No.17/153 refers) ⁴
- 4.6 Following approval of funding, a new Framework to deliver the City of Light Action Plan was set up through Public Contracts Scotland following discussions with procurement, legal and other internal stakeholders. The Framework sought to award a competent, qualified, and experienced Architectural/ Lighting Designer, either through one company or a collaboration of companies, who could be used to develop plans proposed within the City of Light Action Plan from design to installation and commissioning.
- 4.7 The Framework was established to allow the Council flexibility in delivering different projects in the Action Plan. This was due to the co-dependency with the delivery of other related capital investment in the public realm and buildings, as well as time to acquire leaseholds/legal agreements with different owners where required. The implementation programme was in effect paused for an 18-month period as a result of restrictions/capacity during the

pandemic, however design and purchase of equipment continued to be progressed.

- 4.8 Expenditure has been regularly monitored and reported as part of the capital budget reporting process, albeit without full detail of the lighting project designs.
- 4.9 Placemaking and lighting resources within both capital programmes were aligned and moved to the cultural investment programme to consolidate resources and accelerate investment in the surrounding public realm, routes linking cultural venues and creative lighting. This increased the capacity for the integration and development of public art with enhanced use of surrounding space and routes, for events and markets, along with the improvement and animation of adjacent buildings.
- 4.10 From the original £5m Light Action Plan budget, £500k was wired in 2018 to meet the costs of external lighting of Perth Museum and surrounding public realm (SP&R Report No. 18/285 para 3.3.3 refers). In 2018 £65k was also wired to support wider works to the regeneration of St. Paul's Square.
- 4.11 By the end of the financial year 22/23 total project spend, including the virements to other projects, was £3.253m. A further £963k of agreed and committed works are currently underway for delivery in 2023/24. These were committed before the freeze on the capital programme agreed at Finance and Resources Committee on 30 November 2022, and the continued freeze for the Lighting Strategy agreed as part of the capital budget setting in March 2023. Full details of all projects are identified in the Appendix. This leaves a balance of £784k for works which have been identified but not yet committed.
- 4.12 The impact of lighting projects implemented to date has generated some of the highest levels of local engagement through social media and achieved global international reach and recognition because of renowned international lighting artists involved in installation and lighting projection content. Equally, business benefits in driving footfall to the city centre have been assessed and quantified as part of lighting events indicating growth in visits, dwell time and expenditure in hospitality businesses in the winter months. It is acknowledged, however, that there is strong opinion that lighting investment should not be a priority in the current economic climate because of cost and environmental considerations. To allow objective consideration of these issues, local benefits, and those from established lighting investment in national and international comparators are highlighted in the Appendix along with details of relatively low operational and running costs from technological improvements in lighting projects which have been implemented.
- 4.13 It should also be noted that the implementation of lighting projects is linked with wider place-based investment plans. The Sustrans Community Links Plus programme, applied for in 2019, to deliver the Perth People Place (PPP) project, is now progressing to design stage. This includes resources of £11.083m from eligible projects identified in the Placemaking and Lighting capital programmes to use as match funding towards construction costs.

- 4.14 Funding through Transport Scotland is currently being investigated to ascertain if the PPP project can be financially assisted as it offers 100% contribution towards construction costs. This would negate the need for match funding.
- 4.15 Should the funding through Transport Scotland be secured, then this may remove the reliance on Sustrans match funding. It could create opportunities to lever further funding from Creative and/or Event Scotland or business sponsorship to sustain further investment in lighting as part of capital project delivery.
- 4.16 The programme for lighting projects is formalised around one year in advance to allow design and equipment to be ordered via the Framework to ensure the spend can be met that following year. At present, the majority of spend for 2023/24 is committed, in line with the agreed freeze on spend in this area. However, we require at this point to be commissioning the remaining planned projects that would finalise spend for 2023/24 and those that would be due to be delivered in the final year 24/25 to complete the Plan.
- 4.17 The Appendix covers full context, budgetary information, economic impact, evaluation, reach and impact, costs of running lighting, summary of benefits, projects completed/ in progress and due to be completed this year.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Investment in lighting to aid the regeneration and repurposing of city and town centres to complement cultural investment and animate the city at night remain important. This is with particular reference to encouraging increased use and extending dwell time to sustain the evening economy and hospitality sector, given the impacts of two years of Covid restrictions, the knock-on impacts of the war in Ukraine and cost of living crisis. Those places with good food and drink offers and an experience that welcome and excite customers and visitors are those that are most likely to be able to sustain activity and support future growth.
- 5.2 As well as installing feature and architectural lighting, the use of forms of lighting or lighting structures to create cultural attractions that aim to stimulate, raise social interaction and activity are a core delivery requirement with a view to the creation of a permanent night-time light art trail. This would make Perth the first UK city to have this as a cultural attraction within its city centre.
- 5.3 Several installations are complete (which have had significant coverage through media) and would be considered marketable as 'Creative Lighting' schemes including those at Perth Bridge, St. Paul's & Fergusson Gallery, and 'Light Art Installations' in Cutlog Vennel and Burt's Close. However, officers consider that these alone would not be considered enough to market Perth with a 'permanent light art trail.'

- 5.4 Once we have completed other Light Art installations that are currently underway and due for installation over the next 10 months in Guard Vennel, High Street, the Art Gallery & Skinnergate, awareness of the trail would be promoted through online channels and an app and marketing and promotion with VisitScotland. This will promote not only lighting works but other cultural attractions in the city, particularly the opening of Perth Museum.
- 5.5 The remaining uncommitted works, costed at £784k from the original allocated budget take the City of Light Project as a whole to its completion are for; Gateway features, planned at Dunkeld Road, Glasgow Road, Dundee Road and within the City Centre as part of works to The Golden Route (£450k). Upgraded and enhanced architectural lighting at St. Johns Kirk (£120k). Light art installations within City Vennels, planned at Oliphants, Baxter's Close, Watergate & Fleshers (£129k) and £85k funding set aside to cover maintenance of the lighting asset. Programme completion would allow a comprehensive lighting experience to be promoted to sustain and support growth of the evening economy.
- 5.6 The Committee is asked to consider these remaining works and refer any views back to the Finance and Resources Committee for decision. Officers will continue to seek to secure alternative resources to sustain activity and complete the works which have yet to be committed to through:
- (i) integration of funding for lighting within existing capital programme and revenue capital grant fund allocations for improvements in city and town centres and
 - (ii) business sponsorship and external funding bids to Creative and/or Event Scotland.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Perth was originally the only city in Scotland looking to support the evening economy through an enhanced permanent night-time offer through lighting investment, although recently Aberdeen and Dundee have committed spend in these areas.
- 6.2 Further investment in lighting will encourage residents and visitors to visit the city in the evening and support development of the night-time economy.
- 6.3 Lighting is shown to improve well-being and enhance the quality of life for city residents by improved safety, reduced crime and vandalism. Lighting enhances the visitor experience and highlights the unique qualities of the city; helping to create a more cosmopolitan, vibrant, and interesting city.
- 6.4 As part of the recovery of the city, with resident and tourism volume and value still not back to pre-pandemic levels, officers consider that the city requires an offer that sustains existing business and supports growth. In that respect officers consider a proactive approach to investment is needed to encourage increased use of the city centre as a place for social interaction, greater dwell time in the evening and increased use by visitors and locals alike.

- 6.5 A comprehensive, sustainable well-lit city with creative and architectural lighting would have a USP and would complement the wider investment in cultural attractions and help to develop Perth as a more appealing destination not just for day visitors but for overnight and longer stays. The progress and benefits of current work implemented through the City of Light Action Plan should be noted and efforts made to sustain activity through consideration of funding for previously agreed work via the capital programme and/or integration within agreed capital projects, revenue capital grant assistance, business sponsorship and external funding support.
- 6.6 At a time when the High Street and city centre is facing significant challenges and change, completion of proposed lighting investment delivers a comprehensive and unique offer for Perth and, in particular, supports the development of the night-time economy.

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Communities)	22 May 2023

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Perth City of Light Updated Information May 2023

REFERENCES/REPORTS

- ¹ [Report 16/71](#) (The Perth City Plan 2015-2035)
- ² [City of Light Action Plan](#)
- ³ [Report 16/277](#)
- ⁴ [Report 17/371](#)
[Perth City Plan Edition 3 \(2019-2040\)](#)

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	n/a
Strategic Environmental Assessment	n/a
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	n/a
Legal and Governance	n/a
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report supports priorities within the Community Plan 2022-27.

- (i) *Reducing Poverty (including child poverty, fuel poverty and food poverty)*
- (ii) *Mental and physical wellbeing*
- (iii) *Digital participation*
- (iv) *Skills, learning and development*
- (v) *Employability*

Corporate Plan

1.2 This report supports the objectives within the draft new Corporate Plan: -

- (i) *Children and young people grow up safe, respected, well-educated, and confident in their ability to realise their full potential;*
- (ii) *People and businesses are increasingly able to prosper in a local economy which support low carbon ambitions and offers opportunities for all;*
- (iii) *People can achieve their best physical and mental health and have access to quality care and support when they need it;*
- (iv) *Communities are resilient and physically, digital, and socially connected.*

- (v) *Perth and Kinross is a safe and vibrant place, mitigating the impact of climate and environmental change for this and future generations.*

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications as a result of this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

3. Assessments

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) and has been assessed as not relevant for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt, or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

- 3.5 The proposals have been considered under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit and will contribute to the sustainable development of Perth and Kinross where it supports promotion of.

Legal and Governance

- 3.6 No issues as the proposals use established contract measures.

Risk

- 3.7 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process where the Council is the lead on individual projects.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Legal and Governance and Head of Finance were consulted in preparation on reports that lead to City of Light Action Plan funding.

External

- 4.2 Initial proposals were considered and supported as part of the consultation with the public and businesses on the Perth City Plan.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Communications promoting opportunities for participation will be undertaken via PKC and Perth City Centre Management media channels.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 Papers are linked within the body of the main report.