



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 30 APRIL 2024**

SUBJECT: CULTURAL QUARTER: DELIVERY PLAN AND MAPPING

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of two reports, as shown in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**, commissioned as part of the Cultural Quarter Full Business Case. These reports support the strategic, commercial and financial case for the Cultural Quarter Project and propose solutions for the implementation of the project in the context of wider cultural regeneration in Elgin and Moray and seek delegated authority in relation to funding opportunities.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (2) to exercise the statutory functions of the Council in relation to economic development in terms of paragraph 171 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1984.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **consider and note the content of both reports as providing valuable supporting information for the strategic case and proposed implementation of the Cultural Quarter project as part of the Moray Growth Deal; and**
- (ii) **delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to submit priority packages of connecting routes and public realm from the Cultural Quarter Delivery Plan as shown in Appendix 1 to external funding opportunities as they become available. In the event match funding is required, existing approved project funding will be utilised.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Full Deal document for the Moray Growth Deal (MGD) was signed on 20 December 2021. The Growth Deal includes 8 projects, 4 of which are led by the Council. Outline Business Cases (OBC) were approved for each project as part of the Full Deal signing. The Cultural Quarter (CQ) is one of the four MGD projects being led by Moray Council. In order to be approved for delivery and the release of Grant Funding a Full Business Case (FBC) must be developed for each project.
- 3.2 The Cultural Quarter is focused on the redevelopment of Elgin Town Hall, Grant Lodge, the spaces/connections in between, and a long-term ambition to leverage investment in for a new hotel for Elgin. The aims of the MGD include increasing the population of young, working age, people in Moray, increasing tourism and establishing Moray as a destination of choice. The CQ aims to increase the culture, leisure and night-time economy offer in Moray. To contribute to these aims, it will bring increased visitor numbers and footfall to Elgin Town Centre which will in turn contribute to positive outcomes for other City Centre regeneration projects.
- 3.3 All MGD projects must progress through the Government Green Book Business Case process. In the period since the approval of the OBC there have been significant changes in the social, economic, and commercial environment within which the project will be delivered. As part of the development of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Cultural Quarter it was necessary to review the proposed approach for the delivery of the project. This involved undertaking further detailed work on proposals for how the project would be managed, implemented, and operated on completion of capital works.
- 3.4 Due to the scope and complexity of the project wide research, consultation, engagement, and the procurement of specialist services was required to work through the options which would deliver a sustainable and viable project to meet the objectives of the MGD and the CQ. The CQ Delivery Plan, as shown in **Appendix 1**, and the Culture Sector Mapping Report, as shown in **Appendix 2**, provide two important pieces of supporting information and present proposals for the implementation of the CQ which is cognisant of the results of research, consultation and wider public engagement.
- 3.5 The CQ Delivery Plan (**Appendix 1**) proposes a series of packages to create the physical setting in which the ambitions for the Cultural Quarter can be delivered.
- 3.6 The Mapping Report (**Appendix 2**) helps outline opportunities for the CQ to support and develop the Cultural Sector and enable Moray as a region to harness the social, well-being and inclusive growth potential of this identified growth sector.

- 3.7 While approval of the FBC and its constituent parts is a matter for Council, provision of delegated authority to apply for funding in line with the Delivery Plan and Mapping Report is a matter within the remit of this Committee, noting that any final changes made relating to the content of these documents in the approved FBC would be adjusted in the grant process to align as required.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Moray Growth Deal projects will contribute to the Corporate Plan priority of building a stronger, greener vibrant economy, whilst meeting the LOIP vision of raising aspirations, reducing inequalities in educational attainment, providing access to employment, expanded choices for residents, and improved livelihood and well-being.

(b) Policy and Legal

Each growth deal project has been developed to meet local, regional and national policy agendas in line with legal requirements where relevant. The Moray Council Grant Policy requires that any applications made for grant funding are only done so for Projects that have received Committee approval. Delegated authority is being sought to apply to external funding opportunities associated suitable for the delivery plan.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. Approval would enable officers to seek external funding for priority projects which are not already funded by the MGD Investment.

(d) Risk Implications

All the projects in the MGD are governed through their own project board and report into the Growth Deal project board and therefore financial spend, commitments and forecasts are considered on a monthly basis to ensure projects stay within approved budgets and forecasts. There is no financial risk associated with the information and recommendations in this report, however, approval for prioritised packages from the CQ Delivery Plan would provide a possible finance route for some of these plans to be realised for the benefit of Elgin Town Centre and the long-term vision of the MGD and the Elgin City Centre masterplan.

(e) Staffing Implications

This will be carried out by officers within Economic Growth and Development.

(f) Property

The Cultural Quarter project includes plans to refurbish and bring into use prominent Council owned buildings, including Grant Lodge in Cooper Park and Elgin Town Hall. This project must be progressed to improve the outcomes of these buildings and the surrounding area for the community and avoid further dilapidation.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Equalities and Socio Impact Assessments for each project will be updated as part of Full Business Case development.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

As a requirement of the Moray Growth Deal all projects will address carbon reduction, improved environmental performance and a just transition to net zero as a central part of their development. A whole life carbon assessment will be completed for each project within the CQ development.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer, Strategic Planning and Delivery Manager, Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) and the Climate Change Officer have all been consulted and any comments incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The report sets out key pieces of information developed during the progression of the Cultural Quarter Full Business Case.

5.2 The report asks Members to consider and note this information which forms a key part of the strategic, commercial and financial case for the Cultural Quarter and contributes to other Elgin City Centre regeneration proposals.

5.3 The report seeks delegated authority for the Head of Economic Growth & Development for the submission of projects to appropriate external funding opportunities, utilising the existing approved budget to satisfy any match funding requirements.

Author of Report:

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Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Elgin Cultural Quarter Delivery Plan, RIBA Stage 2, Oberlanders and LUC Architects, Jan 2024

Appendix 2: Culture Sector Mapping, Moray, Helen Avenell Heritage Associates and Moray: Arts Development Engagement, Feb 2024

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