

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Communities and Transformation
to Cabinet
of 27 August 2024**

Subject: Accessible Ayr Phasing

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the Accessible Ayr project and to seek approval for officers to undertake Stage 4 technical design work on a phased basis in line with current funding scenarios.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agrees support for the proposal to focus Stage 4 design work on areas to the south of the River Ayr as an initial phase of the project under revised funding programmes.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Accessible Ayr is an ambitious project which is seeking to make significant improvements to the infrastructure and public realm in Ayr Town Centre and key surrounding areas. This project provides the opportunity for investment in the town centre, making it a vibrant and more attractive place for people to visit and enjoy, as well as make it easier to access by pedestrians and cyclists. The aim is that public investment within the town will support private investment, leading to economic growth and a greater quality of life for those in and around the town of Ayr.
- 3.2 Accessible Ayr has been a project in development since 2019 and has grown from an initial public realm improvement project to a wider accessibility project. By adopting this approach, as opposed to focusing solely on public realm improvements, new avenues of funding have been committed to the project, in this case Sustrans Places for Everyone funding.
- 3.3 Sustrans Places for Everyone provides 100% of project development costs, including all design fees.
- 3.4 The project is progressing in coordination with the development of the Ayr Town Centre Framework and is highlighted as one of the 10 key projects for driving transformational change.
- 3.5 Stage 3 Design work concluded in January 2024 and in February 2024 Cabinet approved a preferred design option in terms of alignment and level of provision, subject to further isolated optioneering such as John Street, Barns Street and Pavilion Road.

- 3.6 A funding application for circa £1.3M to conclude Stage 4 technical design work was submitted to Sustrans. Confirmation of funding has been delayed due to the Scottish Government making changes to the way it funds programmes, i.e., on an annualised basis, and in April 2024 officers were verbally informed that the full requested amount would not be available. In July 2024 Sustrans confirmed an offer of £778,780 for 2024/2025 via a legal addendum to South Ayrshire Council.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Given the revised funding scenario, and as agreed with Sustrans, the design team (Sweco) were instructed to identify options for delivery and it is proposed that the Stage 4 funding focus initially on an area broadly to the South of the River Ayr (see [Appendix 1](#)), which would enable delivery of priority town centre infrastructure and regeneration works whilst also linking to wider active travel networks. This approach is consistent with feedback received through consultation, whereby there has been consistent support for investment in the town centre's public realm.
- 4.2 Detailed design work on areas largely to the North of the River (see [Appendix 2](#)) would be deferred but still remain part of the wider project – ie as the project evolves, and future funding scenarios defined this would be brought forward. This would enable more time to address challenging issues involved with large scale infrastructure – for example, Station Road, Holmston Road and John Street stakeholders and groups.
- 4.3 The above approach was approved by the Active Travel Member Officer Working Group in May 2024.
- 4.4 Accessible Ayr to be transferred to Ayrshire Roads Alliance for delivery from August 2024, with the existing Design Team being given the opportunity to continue their appointment.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report. Though any future works identified would be subject to tender rules and procedures and subject to approval.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no revenue implications arising from this report. Sustrans is 100% funding the current design work under their Places for Everyone programme. This funding is provided at risk by Sustrans and there is no clawback provision, should the Council not proceed or proceed with a reduced scheme.
- 6.2 Further details of funding implications and sources for match funding will be set out in an update paper that will be presented to Cabinet in regard to any future scheme considered for funding.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 The risk associated with adopting the recommendations is that a successful outcome of the submission for funding may increase the capital programme of the Council. This is mitigated through an understanding that the Council may wish to consider the overall extent of works to take forward any future funding would be subject to approval.
- 8.1.2 A risk register will be prepared and maintained by the project team once detailed designs have been agreed.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 The risk associated with rejecting the recommendations is the missed opportunity to obtain substantial external funding to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits associated with significant investment in the town centre.
- 8.2.2 Rejecting the recommendations may impact on the reputation of the Council as a trusted partner of Sustrans.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 As part of the design proposals an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken reaching out to accessibility groups, hard to reach groups and people with protected characteristics.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - The Scottish Government Gateway will be contacted during the detailed design phases, at which point potential environmental impacts can be properly quantified and requirement for SEA considered.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An option appraisal has been carried over stage 3 of this project and aligns with key areas within Ayr – for example, Ayr Town Centre Framework currently in development.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 3 of the Council Plan: Civic and Community Pride/ Pride in South Ayrshire (Outcome 1).

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been significant public consultation over the course of the Accessible Ayr project and has been previously reported, most recently summarised in 14th February 2024 Cabinet Report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Bob Pollock, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Communities and Transformation will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

Implementation	Due date	Managed by
Accessible Ayr to be transferred to ARA from August 2024	August 2024	Assistant Director Communities / ARA
Implement the recommendations within this report and proceed with Stage 4 detailed design based on the preferred option	March 2025	Assistant Director Communities
Report to Cabinet in regard to any future scheme considered for funding, and associated costs and programme	March 2025	Assistant Director Communities

Background Papers Report to Cabinet of 20 June 2023 – [Accessible Ayr Update](#)

Report to Cabinet of 14 February 2024 – [Accessible Ayr Update](#)

Person to Contact Jane Bradley, Director of Communities and Transformation
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 612045
E-mail jane.bradley@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

George Hunter Assistant Director Communities
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone: 01292 612994
Email: George.hunter@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

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Appendix 1: Proposed Phase 1



Appendix 2: Proposed Phase 2

