

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	29 June 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard and Marc Cole
TITLE OF REPORT	City Centre Masterplan Project EN01: Broad Street
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/114
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the results of the key stakeholder and public consultation undertaken for the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) Project EN01: Broad Street as instructed by Council on 11 May 2016. The report also details the recommended next steps.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Note the results of the key stakeholder and public consultation;
- ii) Agree that the preferred option for public realm intervention for Broad Street is Option 2 (buses, cycles and pedestrians only);
- iii) Instruct officers to work with Muse regarding the detailed design for Broad Street and to report back to the first appropriate committee; and
- iv) Instruct officers to commence the necessary legal procedures of preliminary statutory consultation for the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as described in this report. Instruct officers to then progress with the public advertisement and report the results of both the preliminary statutory consultation and public consultation to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure in November 2016.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The detailed design of the Broad Street public realm intervention will be accommodated from the £1.12M set aside within the contract with Muse for public realm works. The TRO and detailed design costs will be absorbed within this budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If statutory objections are received through the TRO process this may trigger delays due to the need for a Public Inquiry. This could take a further 18 months. We may receive statutory objections for any option but officers anticipate that it is more likely that statutory objections may be received for Option 3 (pedestrians and cycles only).

5. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Reference is made to the decisions of the Council on 11 May 2016 regarding the report entitled 'Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects'. The Council agreed that the City Centre Masterplan can be accommodated on the road network through the establishment of a new roads hierarchy and suitable enabling measure being introduced. An optimum phasing of the four key city centre transport proposals was also agreed by the Council, with Broad Street identified as the starting point. The Council instructed officers to undertake public consultation and to report back the responses from the consultation.

- 5.2 Reference is also made to the decision of the Council on 24 June 2015 in regard to the report entitled 'Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme', which was agreed unanimously. It was further resolved that each project will be subject to detailed scrutiny and the normal development control processes and to agree in principle the interventions set out in the CCMP. It was also noted that due diligence will be undertaken in relation to the financial, legal and all other implications on each project or programme of activity contained within the CCMP and that it falls to the Council to deliver, with the results of this due diligence being reported to committee ahead of any decision being taken to proceed.

- 5.3 This report provides details of a full consideration of the options, including the outcomes of the key stakeholder and public consultation. It also details the recommended next steps.

- 5.4 This report is complemented by the report entitled 'Independent Analysis Report' (please see Appendix A) which sets a summary of the responses to the consultation. The report has been prepared by an independent analyst, TONIC Consultants, and officers accept fully their analysis of the comments received.

5.5 Public Consultation

- 5.5.1 The consultation ran from May 16, 2016, to June 12, 2016. It presented indicative designs for the three Broad Street options. People were asked to comment on the benefits and challenges associated with each. They were also asked to comment on how new public realm space on Broad Street might be used; and on the pedestrian prioritisation across the wider city centre as envisaged by the CCMP. A draft version of the consultation survey was shared with all political group leaders, for comment on its design, before being issued.

- 5.5.2 Respondents could complete the survey online or by filling in a hard copy. Forms were made available at Marischal College, libraries and community centres. The consultation was also publicised on the Council's home page. It was promoted through ACC social media channels and in the media. Stakeholder groups were asked to promote the consultation through their own channels and networks. Display boards were mounted in the Marischal College Customer Service Centre. An officer was in attendance for the first two weeks to answer questions from the members of the public. A contact number for questions was posted.
- 5.5.3 In total, 1,067 responses were received, with the vast majority (83%) of these coming from city residents. Please note, when the deadline was reached the tally was 1,062. Some returns posted over the final weekend were later added to the total.
- 5.5.4 Analysis was carried out by TONIC, which has over 10 years' experience in the field and has analysed over two million responses to public consultations for Government, organisations and councils.
- 5.5.5 The analyst reports that 'there was virtually no negative feedback about the consultation process' and described the quality of responses as 'impressive'.

5.6 Public consultation methodology and findings

- 5.6.1 The aim of the public consultation was not to vote on a preferred option, but to gather feedback on the benefits and challenges of all three options, as outlined by officers, to help inform the process.
- 5.6.2 Common themes were identified and the percentage of respondents mentioning that issue was recorded.
- 5.6.3 There was a high level of support for some sort of pedestrian priority, in terms of it being a better and safer space with improved air quality, as well as through the creation of a civic space that could be used for new and interesting activities and events that would improve the overall attractiveness and vibrancy of the city.
- 5.6.4 There were some concerns raised about the perceived impact of pedestrian priority on limiting traffic routes, causing congestion in other areas and limiting access to public transport.
- 5.6.5 The section below details the option analysis, which details what the respondents identified as likes and dislikes about the three options.

5.7 Option analysis

5.7.1 Option 1 – Open to all traffic – 'status quo'

5.7.1.1 Description

- Broad Street remains open to all traffic;
- Potential for bus stops to be relocated away from public space;
- Existing space in front of Marischal College retained; and
- Pedestrian crossing would remain.

5.7.1.2 Public consultation outcomes

5.7.1.2.1 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they liked about Option 1:

- Overall benefits to private vehicles;
- Maintains the current level of traffic flow;
- Maintains the route options available to drivers;
- Not a sufficiently convincing reason to change the system;
- Provides good access to Broad Street and city centre workers and those with limited mobility; and
- Maintains the status quo.

5.7.1.2.2 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they disliked about Option 1:

- Does not provide a useable space for the public and events;
- Does not alleviate traffic congestion from Broad Street;
- Doesn't encourage walking and cycling, or make Broad Street a safer place;
- Doesn't improve air quality or tackle pollution;
- Merely maintains the status quo and is a missed opportunity;
- Traffic is unpleasant and noisy;
- Does nothing to benefit historic Marischal College; and
- Only benefits traffic, not users of the space.

5.7.2 Option 2 – Buses, cycles and pedestrians only

5.7.2.1 Description

- Broad Street only open to buses, cycles and pedestrians;
- Potential to relocate the bus stops;
- Opportunity to temporarily close off Broad street to all traffic increasing the usable civic space from 1910 sq. m. to 3510 sq. m.;
- Reduce traffic and shared surfaces giving priority to pedestrians; and
- Upperkirkgate traffic island removed to increase footway widths and improve pedestrian crossing spaces.

5.7.2.2 Public consultation outcomes

5.7.2.2.1 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they liked about Option 2:

- Overall benefits to public transport;

- Bus routes remain as currently operated;
- Reduction in the amount of traffic on Broad Street;
- Creates more usable public spaces;
- Maintains the provision of bus routes;
- Better for pedestrians;
- Improvement in air quality and pollution;
- Better for cyclists;
- Benefits to Marischal College and Marischal Square;
- Allows Broad Street to be closed for temporary events;
- An improvement over Option 1;
- Encourages use of public transport; and
- Safer.

5.7.2.2.2 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they disliked about Option 2:

- Should also be closed to buses;
- Increases traffic congestion elsewhere;
- Buses still prevent better use of the space;
- Limits driver's route options;
- Buses still very noisy and polluting;
- Buses are dangerous and cause safety issues;
- An impractical compromise; and
- Should also be closed to cyclists.

5.7.3 Option 3 – Pedestrians and cycles only

5.7.3.1 Description

- Broad Street fully pedestrianised;
- Civic space increased from 1675 sq. m. to 3510 sq. m.;
- New civic space with increased landscaping; and
- Unrestricted movement for pedestrians.

5.7.3.2 Public consultation outcomes

5.7.3.2.1 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they liked about Option 3:

- Overall benefits to pedestrians;
- Creation of civic space;
- Improvement in air quality;
- Fully pedestrianised – cycle and people friendly;
- Calmer, quieter and nicer;
- Benefits to Marischal College and Provost Skene's House;
- Increased safety;
- Creates a pedestrianised space Aberdeen is lacking compared to other cities;
- Opportunity to introduce art, exhibitions and landscape features;

- Possibility of increased tourism and benefits to businesses; and
- Sends a positive message about the direction Aberdeen wishes to move in.

5.7.3.2.2 The following points were mentioned when respondents were asked what they disliked about Option 3:

- Impact on traffic flow and route options;
- Impact on times and routes of buses;
- Challenges for those with mobility issues in accessing Broad Street;
- Concerns that the space may not be sufficiently utilised;
- Cyclists still allowed after pedestrianisation, causing safety issues; and
- Concerns that Broad Street is an inappropriate space for pedestrianisation, and that there are other more suitable spaces with less shortcomings.

5.7.4 Summary

5.7.4.1 The sections below show the justifications for Option 2 (buses and cycles only) being the recommended, preferred option.

5.7.4.2 City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme

5.7.4.2.1 On 24 June 2015, Council unanimously agreed the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme, which was developed following extensive public consultation and won majority support. Within this document it lists Broad Street as a project stating 'EN01 Broad Street: the space between Marischal College and the Marischal Square development will retain bus movements on a day to day basis but will be designed in a manner so that it can be transformed into an event ready space on special occasions.'

5.7.4.3 Benefits of Option 2

5.7.4.3.1 The following benefits have been recognised, by officers, for Option 2 and are considered to out-weigh the net benefits associated with Options 1 and 3:

- Improved environment from reduced traffic and an attractive route for cyclists;
- Access to public transport enhanced;
- Opportunity to close Broad Street for larger temporary events;
- Opportunity for innovative and entertaining landscape feature, such as water, art, lighting;
- Significantly improving the setting of Marischal College;
- Setting and entrance to the City Centre Masterplan Queen Square area;

- Can control how long buses wait in the area;
- Supports aim to reduce cross city centre journeys;
- Makes cycling and walking more attractive;
- Likely to contribute to localised air quality improvements; and
- Helps deliver the agreed vision of the masterplan.

5.7.4.4 Transport Implications

5.7.4.4.1 It was agreed at the Council meeting on 11 May 2016 that intervention (Option 2 or 3) on Broad Street is a key infrastructure project to facilitate the ongoing investment and future development of the city centre. The following rationale was also agreed:

- Interventions have minimal impact on the rest of the network and do not require a traffic demand reduction to be able to operate;
- Bus, cycle and pedestrian only has the least impact on the travelling public;
- Cycles and pedestrians only will impact significantly on bus users.

5.7.4.4.2 The modelling previously undertaken and noted by Councillors, shows that Broad Street is the natural start point for the City Centre Masterplan transport proposals because it has the least impact on the strategic road network and the displaced traffic can be accommodated on the wider city centre road network.

5.7.4.5 Public consultation outcomes

5.7.4.5.1 While there is no definitive answer to what option the respondents preferred for Broad Street, certain themes emerged. These being a desire for:

- Improved air quality;
- Less traffic congestion;
- Creation of public events space; and
- Improved pedestrian and cyclist's safety.

5.7.4.5.2 In response to the question about general pedestrian priority across the city centre, a desire for the following was noted:

- Improvement in safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- More relaxing, quieter and friendlier spaces; and
- Improved air quality.

5.7.4.5.3 Option 2 (buses, cycles and pedestrians only) was described by some respondents to be a 'successful compromise' that still allowed public transport access and benefited the public space.

5.7.4.6 Air Quality Management

5.7.4.6.1 An assessment on air quality was undertaken by transport consultants, AECOM, in 2014. The assessment showed that buses, cycles and pedestrians only was predicted to lead to a larger number of properties experiencing a decrease in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particles (PM₁₀) concentrations than an increase. A full closure of Broad Street predicted a larger number of properties experiencing an increase in concentrations than a decrease.

5.7.4.6.2 It should be noted that both a full closure and a part closure (buses, cycles and pedestrians only) predicted a deterioration at the King Street / East North Street junction where current levels exceed the national and European air quality objectives. A deterioration in air quality at this location will make compliance with the air quality objectives more challenging. However, the implementation of other interventions in the life time of the masterplan and the existing Air Quality Action Plan, together will support the improvement of air quality across the city centre. It should also be noted that there has been an improvement in air quality over the past two years across the city centre area.

5.7.4.7 Economic Benefits

5.7.4.7.1 The following economic benefits were recognised in the CCMP, for Project EN01: Broad Street:

- Improved perception amongst investors – business and developers;
- Greater footfall leading to an increase in business turnover;
- Increased investor confidence; and
- Increase in visitor numbers and spend.

5.8 Proposed Timeline for Delivery

5.8.1 If the Council agrees that Option 2 (buses and cycles only) is the preferred option, the following table shows the proposed outline project plan for the delivery of the public realm intervention:

Task	Date
Traffic Regulation Order	
Preliminary statutory consultation	30 June – 4 August 2016 (35 days)
Public consultation	11 August – 8 September (28 days)
Officer time to consider objections / comments received	30 June – 30 September 2016
Report to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure	1 November 2016
Detailed Design	
Prepare detailed design	July / August 2016

Report to the first appropriate committee	August / September 2016
Construction	
Appointment of contractor	December / January 2017
Construction finished	June / July 2017

5.8.2 Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

5.8.2.1 The Traffic Regulation Order process can be started on 30 June 2016. Officers will follow the normal process for TROs of a statutory preliminary consultation followed by a public consultation. Any objections received during the preliminary stage will be held over until the wider public advert and considered with any other objections received. We will then report to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure (CH&I) on 1 November 2016 on the TRO with the consideration of the comments and objections received through both the preliminary statutory consultation and public consultation.

5.8.3 Detailed Design

5.8.3.1 Officers will work with Muse regarding the detailed design throughout July and August. The responses ACC received from the key stakeholder and public consultation will be taken into consideration when drafting the detailed design. The detailed design will then be reported to the first appropriate committee once it has been completed.

5.8.3.2 Through the public consultation, respondents were also asked to share how they would like to see public realm space on Broad Street used, the following suggestions were made:

- Markets;
- Farmers' Market;
- Art exhibitions and installations;
- Music concerts;
- Cafes and restaurants with outdoor dining;
- Green space;
- Seating;
- Performance space;
- Cultural events;
- International market and festival;
- Street performers;
- Christmas / winter village;
- Educational and informative displays, and tourist information;
- and
- Pop-up cafes, food retailers, and other businesses.

5.8.3.3 These suggestions will be taken into consideration when working with Muse on the detailed design for the public realm intervention.

5.8.4 Construction

- 5.8.4.1 Officers will engage with Muse once the detailed design has been approved by the appropriate committee. Muse will procure a contractor, with work commencing early 2017.

6. IMPACT

6.1 Improving Customer Experience:

- 6.1.1 The contents of this report and the recommendations relate to the delivery of the CCMP, which is aimed at improving the City Centre for all those who live in, work in and visit it. This would include the following benefits:

- Quality of life – Residents, workers and visitors increasingly demand a high standard for the places they are in. Under the proposals, they could feel more content in a more attractive and vibrant environment; as reported in other competing cities with similar projects.
- Health – with more people walking in the area there could be a reduction in inactivity-related illness.
- Environmental - positive impact on air quality due to a reduction of emissions from vehicles in the area. Noise levels would be lower too.

- 6.1.2 The proposals will also have a positive impact on the Council's business customers – city centre employers themselves, and also those operating in the retail, tourism and leisure sector. For Aberdeen to be globally competitive, the quality of the 'place', the commercial space and the public realm around it all have a role. Developers and subsequent occupants / employers base their location decisions on being able to attract the best talent and skills to work in their businesses, and they recognise the positive correlation between their business competitiveness and the quality of the public realm.

6.2 Improving Staff Experience:

- 6.2.1 A defined, fully resourced programme of delivery for the CCMP with key stage decision making, committed to by the Council, will enable staff, with stakeholders and the public, to confidently and timeously realise the Masterplan. The recent appointment of the City Centre Director, Programme Manager and Engagement and Communications Officer will assist this process.

6.3 Improving our use of Resources:

- 6.3.1 Internal resources and partnership working with developers have already been identified to continue to deliver the instructions of Council in December 2015 and March 2016. Further resources will continue to be required for the wider delivery of the transport network plan to

support the successful delivery of the CCMP, which has identified a range of benefits for citizens and business across the City. Internal resources will also be used to undertake the TRO for Broad Street and to inform and support the design process and implementation.

6.4 Corporate:

6.4.1 Positive decision making informing the progressive implementation of the CCMP directly supports a range of policies and strategies including:

6.4.2 Aberdeen – the Smarter City vision:

- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.
- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We will provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote bio-diversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside.
- We will invest in the city where that investment demonstrates financial sustainability based on a clear return on investment.
- We will encourage cycling and walking.
- We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.

6.4.3 Regional Economic Strategy

6.4.3.1 “Securing the Future of the North East Economy – A 20 Year Vision for the Well-being of the Place & Our People” was approved by the Council in December 2015. A key objective of the Investment in Infrastructure Programme is to enable the city to realise the development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan. These proposals, and development of a 21st Century public realm are a vital component of the ‘development mix’. High value jobs and skills are globally mobile, and competing for these high value ‘clusters’ of activity is a key part of the Strategy, and the Council’s inward investment plans. In doing so, it becomes easier for Aberdeen to maintain and attract world class talent and business, which in turn delivers positive indirect and induced impacts across the city economy as spend supports jobs in retail, tourism, leisure and other services.

6.4.4 Strategic Infrastructure Plan:

6.4.4.1 Stakeholder engagement which informed this Plan revealed that the ‘poor state’ of the City Centre is one of a number of issues identified as a common theme *‘In terms of the attractiveness*

and marketing of the city to attract workers, visitors and investment...'. This Plan also states that 'A high quality of life is integral to attracting and retaining the talent and investment needed to grow the economy. This sense of place, with a key emphasis on the city centre, is crucial in underpinning economic growth and essential in underpinning the necessary infrastructure requirements.' One of the key goals of this Plan is City Centre Regeneration and the delivery of the CCMP will contribute significantly to achieving this. Specific wider benefits would include:

- Improved safety as a result of less road traffic;
- Improved access - as a result of easier access and parking for cyclists, bus passengers, pedestrians and the vehicles that remain on the roads in the area, the cumulative reduction in journey times would be used more productively elsewhere.
- Economic growth - The project could provide a more pleasant environment which would increase the footfall in the area increasing retail sales, spending, employment and the number of businesses operating in the city centre, and, in due course, increasing residential opportunities in the city centre.

6.4.4.2 This Plan also recognises that a range of traffic management and transport network improvements in and around the City Centre would aid the delivery of improved air quality, road safety and economic benefits and also support the key strategic priority around City Centre Regeneration. The development and delivery of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for the City Centre, as part of the wider Masterplan, are also recognised as key to improving accessibility to all, increasing walking and cycling opportunities and improving public transport.

6.4.5 Local Transport Strategy

6.4.5.1 The vision of the agreed Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy (LTS) is to develop 'A sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy, facilitates healthy living and minimises the impact on our environment.'

6.4.5.2 The aims of the LTS are:

- A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods;
- A safe and more secure transport system;
- A cleaner, greener transport system;
- An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system; and
- A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living.

6.5 Public

6.5.1 The contents of this report are likely to be of public and media interest as it relates to the City Centre, a significant economic asset for the City and Region. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme presented to Council on 24 June 2015. A Privacy Impact Statement is not required for this report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

7.1 The risks inherent in not addressing the regeneration of the city centre are set out in the Strategic Infrastructure Plan. In view of the fact that the regeneration of the city centre is widely supported, there is a reputational risk to the Council if no improvements are made.

7.2 Traffic modelling identified Broad Street as a natural starting point for the City Centre masterplan's four major transport proposals. There is a risk that the Optimum Delivery programme, which identified this start point, would have to be reviewed.

7.3 If statutory objections are received through the TRO process this may trigger delays due to the need for a Public Inquiry. This could take up to a further 18 months. It is possible statutory objections could be received if Option 2 is agreed by Council but it is more likely statutory objections will be received if Option 3 is preferred.

7.4 Officers have been made aware that the contractors need a 52 week lead in time to deliver the public realm works for the scheduled completion of the Marischal Square development in July 2017. If a decision is not made to pursue one of the three Broad Street options by July 2016 then there are the following risks:

- Reputational risk – the public/ stakeholders could perceive that the Council is unable to deliver improvements to the city centre on time or deliver the projects within the Masterplan;
- Cost of delivery – although the £1.12M is safeguarded for works on Broad Street it would cost more and take longer to work through an agreement with another contractor at a later date;
- Reduced tenancy levels – the lack of a decision on Broad Street and how this will tie in with the Marischal Square development could lead to a risk of spaces not being let, and so undermine the Council's investment in Marischal Square;
- Traffic disruption – traffic disruption in the city centre, during later works, is likely to be worse because Marischal Square will be in use; and
- Aesthetics – when Marischal Square is opened, Broad Street will look as it does at the moment as there will have been no improvements to the public realm.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Independent Analysis Report

Appendix B – Benefits and Challenges of Options

Report to Council – 11 May 2016 – Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects – CHI/16/061
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s56493/Transport%20Implications%20City%20Centre%20Masterplan%20Projects.pdf>

Report to Council – 2 March 2016 – Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects – CHI/16/006
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s54704/Transport%20Implications%20-%20City%20Centre%20Masterplan.pdf>

Report to Council – 16 December 2015 – Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects – CHI/15/299
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s52773/Transport%20Implications%20-%20City%20Centre%20Masterplan%20Projects.pdf>

Report to Council – 24 June 2015 – Aberdeen City Centre masterplan and Delivery Programme – OCE/15/021
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s48645/City%20Centre%20Masterplan%20and%20Delivery%20Programme.pdf>

Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme -
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/shaping_aberdeen/City_Centre_Masterplan.asp

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