

Urgent Business Committee

ABERDEEN, 7 July 2023. Minute of Meeting of the URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Yuill, Convener; Councillor Allard, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake, Greig, Malik, Massey (as substitute for Councillor Houghton) and McLellan (as substitute for Councillor Radley).

Also in attendance – Councillor Boulton.

The agenda associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent Council minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DETERMINATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1. In terms of Section 1.3 of the Committee Remit and in accordance with Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Committee had to determine (1) that the item on the agenda was of an urgent nature; and (2) that the Committee required to consider the item and take decisions thereon.

The Convener informed the Committee that he had received advice from officers and the decision had been taken to call a meeting of the Urgent Business Committee to ensure that the city centre project remained on programme, noting that officers had advised that there would be a cost implication were the item to be delayed by approximately seven weeks to the next meeting of Council. Officers had further advised that the design teams would also be stood down and might not be available when the project was ready to recommence

The Convener moved as a procedural motion, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee agree that the item was of an urgent nature and required to be considered this day to enable members to consider the matter at the earliest opportunity for the reasons outlined above.

On a division, there voted:- for the procedural motion (4) - Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Greig and McLellan; against the procedural motion (3) - Councillors Blake, Malik and Massey.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree that the item was of an urgent nature and required to be considered this day for the reasons outlined by the Convener above.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

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2. The Convener advised for reasons of transparency that he was a member of both Cycling UIK and the AA but that he did not consider this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the item.

CITY CENTRE SIX MONTHLY UPDATE - STREETSCAPE PROGRAMME - RES/23/209

3. The Committee had before it, by way of referral from the Finance and Resources Committee of 5 July 2023, a report by the Director of Resources which provided a six-month update on progress with the city centre streetscape programme (Union Street Central, Market to Guild Street and Schoolhill / Upperkirkgate), agreed by Council at its meeting on 14 December 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress update and instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to present an update report to the Finance and Resources Committee pending completion of Financial Close of the Union Street Central project;
- (b) agree the inclusion of a segregated cycle lane in Union Street Central consistent with emerging proposals for Union Street East and Union Street West; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to continue engagement with key stakeholders in the development of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 4 Technical Design.

Members asked a number of questions of officers in relation to the report.

Councillor McLellan, seconded by Councillor Greig, moved:-

That the Committee –

- (a) approve the recommendations contained within the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to continue to engage with stakeholder groups as the detail of the bus stop crossing design develops and is implemented on street, including involving them in monitoring and evaluation during first year of operation; and
- (c) agree the inclusion of any necessary underground infrastructure to accommodate the future erection of a signalised crossing should it be deemed appropriate following the post completion monitoring and evaluation.

Councillor Malik, seconded by Councillor Blake, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee –

- (a) note the decision of the Finance and Resources Committee to refer the matter to Full Council;
- (b) note a meeting of the Urgent Business Committee will be called by the Chief Officer - Governance on the instruction of the Chief Executive where the Chief

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- Executive and the Convener are satisfied that the relevant business is urgent, noting that the Chief Officer, the Chief Executive or the Convener did not state on 5 July at the Finance and Resources meeting that there were special circumstances which meant the matter was a matter of urgency;
- (c) agree that at both the procedural vote and the substantial vote on the City Centre Streetscape programme on 5 July at Finance and Resources Committee not one person, Officer or Elected Member said before, during or after the vote that there were special circumstances which meant the matter was a matter of urgency;
 - (d) note Councillor Allard's comments in 2022 on Twitter where he said in comment about the need for 45 Councillors to make decisions, "this is why we are where we are. Democracy must return to Aberdeen.";
 - (e) agree these words are at best insulting to the 38 members he now wishes to exclude from these proceedings and / or at worst hypocritical given his decision to agree to this meeting today;
 - (f) agree the paper that went to Finance and Resources Committee, referred to Council and now to this Committee could have been heard by full Council today at this time as per Section 50B 4(b) of the Local Government Scotland Act 1973 as amended had the Administration wished to do so; and
 - (g) agree recommendations 2.1 and 2.3 and agree that full pedestrianisation of Union Street Central more fully meets with the City Centre Masterplan, and instruct officers to develop plans around pedestrianisation alongside the inclusion of a segregated cycle lane in Union Street Central consistent with emerging proposals for Union Street East and Union Street West.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (4) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors McLellan and Greig; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Blake, Malik and Massey.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the motion.