

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Town House,  
ABERDEEN, 8 February 2024

MINUTE OF MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Sederunt:

Lord Provost David Cameron, Chairperson;  
Depute Provost Steve Delaney; and

COUNCILLORS

GILLIAN AL-SAMARAI  
NURUL HOQUE ALI  
CHRISTIAN ALLARD  
ALISON ALPHONSE  
KATE BLAKE  
JENNIFER BONSELL  
MARIE BOULTON  
RICHARD BROOKS  
HAZEL CAMERON  
DONNA CLARK  
JOHN COOKE  
NEIL COPLAND  
WILLIAM CORMIE  
BARNEY CROCKETT  
DEREK DAVIDSON  
EMMA FARQUHAR  
GORDON GRAHAM  
ROSS GRANT

MARTIN GREIG  
DELL HENRICKSON  
MICHAEL HUTCHISON  
GRAEME LAWRENCE  
SANDRA MACDONALD  
NEIL MacGREGOR  
ALEXANDER McLELLAN  
CIARAN McRAE  
JESSICA MENNIE  
ALEX NICOLL  
MIRANDA RADLEY  
MRS JENNIFER STEWART  
KAIRIN VAN SWEEDEN  
LYNN THOMSON  
DEENA TISSERA  
SIMON WATSON  
and  
IAN YUILL

Lord Provost David Cameron, in the Chair.

The agenda and reports 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 minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS**

1. The Lord Provost advised that any declarations of interest or transparency statements made at yesterday's meeting would be applicable for today's meeting, therefore they did not require to be stated again.

Councillor Yuill advised that the transparency statement he had made in terms of his membership of Cycling UK in respect of item 5.1 on yesterday's agenda also applied to item 9.6 (City Centre Streetscape Update).

## **BEACHFRONT SHORELINE REGENERATION (PHASE C) - OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE UPDATE - COM/24/037**

2. With reference to Article 19 of the minute of its meeting of 14 December 2022, the Council had before it a report by the Chief Officer - Commercial and Procurement which provided an overview of the prepared Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) Outline Business Case (OBC).

**The report recommended:-**  
that the Council -

- (a) note the update from the Chief Officer - Commercial and Procurement on progress of the Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) OBC;
- (b) refer all projects relating to the Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) to the capital planning and budget process for future years' delivery; and
- (c) subject to the outcome of the budget process, instruct the Chief Officer - Commercial and Procurement to progress the Beachfront Shoreline Regeneration (Phase C) work to the completion of a Full Business Case (FBC) to Council, reporting back to the October 2025 meeting (on the short-medium interventions) and June 2026 meeting (on the medium-long interventions).

**During the course of questions, Councillor McRae advised that he had a connection in relation to the matter by virtue of being an employee of blue light services, a crew member of RNLI and as a substantive member of the Aberdeen Bar Safety Group, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.**

Councillor McLellan moved, seconded by Councillor Greig:-  
That the Council approve the recommendations.

Councillor Boulton moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stewart:-  
That the Council -

- (1) agree recommendation (a);
- (2) refer all of the Beach projects to the budget process, including the implications of cancelling the Beach Park, Phase A, contracts that are already in place.

**During the course of debate, Councillor Yuill advised that he had a connection in relation to the matter by virtue of his appointment by the**

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

**Council to the Board of NHS Grampian, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.**

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (33) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Ali, Allard, Alphonse, Blake, Bonsell, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Crockett, Davidson, Graham, Grant, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, Lawrence, Macdonald, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden, Thomson, Tissera, Watson and Yuill.

For the amendment (4) - Councillors Boulton, Brooks, Farquhar and Mrs Stewart.

**The Council resolved:-**

- (i) to adopt the motion; and
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer - Commercial and Procurement would liaise with Councillor Brooks outwith the meeting with regard to the financial breakdown of getting the six projects to Full Outline Business Case and in terms of data for usage of existing cycle lanes at the beach.

**In accordance with Article 4 of the minute of the Council meeting of 7 February 2024, Councillor Grant left the meeting for the following item of business having declared an interest.**

**CITY CENTRE STREETSCAPE UPDATE - RES/24/039**

3. The Council had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided progress updates on streetscape business case updates for Union Street East, Castlegate, Union Street West/West End, Market to Guild Street Phases 2 and 3, together with the cycle infrastructure options for Market to Guild Street Phase 1 and an overall programme update.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Council -

- (a) agree Option 3 in the updated Streetscape Full Business Case (Appendix A and as illustrated in Appendix B);
- (b) agree the Market to Guild Street Phase 1 preferred route identified in Appendix C;
- (c) refer the projects highlighted in recommendations (a) and (b) to the capital planning and budget process for future years' delivery;
- (d) pending the outcome of the budget process, instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to monitor projects through the capital planning process reporting progress to the Finance and Resources Committee;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to formally approach potential funding partners for future years' capital funding contributions toward delivery of all streetscape projects in relation to active travel;

## Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

- (f) recognising that segregated cycle facilities were now planned along the length of Union Street, agree that proposals for a Queens Cross to City Centre cycle route be re-absorbed into the wider Westhill to Aberdeen Active Travel Route Outline Business Case (OBC), and instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to report the OBC to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee later in 2024; and
- (g) note the animation work that had been undertaken to promote the themes within the overarching City Centre and Beach Masterplan, Local Development Plan and Net Zero Aberdeen strategies to children and young people (Appendix D), and thank the young people who had been involved in the project to date.

Councillor McLellan moved, seconded by the Depute Provost:-  
That the Council approve the recommendations.

Councillor Ali moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Watson:-  
That the Council -

- (1) note with regret the decision by M&S to close its St. Nicholas Street store in spring 2025;
- (2) agree this decision by M&S has been made easier by the nonsensical decision of the Administration not to embrace pedestrianisation within the middle section of Union Street and by their introduction of bus gates, without pedestrianisation which is putting people off using the City Centre;
- (3) agree the decision by the Scottish Government not to use the Barnett consequential to replicate the 75% business rate relief for the hospitality industry matching England means that businesses in Scotland remain uncompetitive compared to the rest of the UK;
- (4) agree recommendation (f) would complement the approved segregated cycle facilities along the whole of Union Street and agree recommendation (g) of the report matches the ambition set out by the previous Administration's Education Convener when he proposed Children and Young People should be engaged in the Council's Net Zero strategy; and
- (5) agree pedestrianisation of the middle section of Union Street complements business and citizens requirements as well as the new Market proposal agreed by the previous Administration, therefore instruct the Masterplan Manager to bring forward detailed costs of delivering the much needed pedestrianisation of the middle section of Union Street before the SNP kills of all hope of a recovery within our city centre.

Councillor Boulton moved as a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stewart:-

That the Council -

- (1) agree in principle to redesign the central section of Union Street removing the dedicated cycle lane; and
- (2) refer all of the City Centre Streetscape projects, including the central section of Union Street, to the budget process.

Councillor Brooks moved as a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Farquhar:-  
That the Council -

- (1) agrees not to move forward with proposals for cycle lanes;

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

- (2) believes that bus gates have made it harder to get across the City Centre and therefore deters visiting the City Centre, which has been detrimental to businesses and will be so even with an improved streetscape;
- (3) therefore, instructs the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to withdraw the Experimental Traffic Order, ahead of its review deadline, which implemented the bus gates because of the current and future damage to Aberdeen's City Centre; and
- (4) subject to referring the financial implications to the Budget process given its close proximity.

**During the course of debate, Councillor McLellan advised that he had a connection in relation to the matter by virtue of his appointment by the Council to the Board of Our Union Street, however having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.**

There being a motion and three amendments, the Council first divided between the amendment by Councillor Boulton and the amendment by Councillor Brooks.

On a division, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor Boulton (1) - Councillor Boulton.

For the amendment by Councillor Brooks (3) - Councillors Brooks, Farquhar and Mrs Stewart.

Declined to vote (32) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Ali, Allard, Alphonse, Blake, Bonsell, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Crockett, Davidson, Graham, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, Lawrence, Macdonald, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden, Thomson, Tissera, Watson and Yuill.

Absent from the division (1) - Councillor Grant.

The Council then divided between the amendment by Councillor Ali and the amendment by Councillor Brooks.

On a division, there voted:-

For the amendment by Councillor Ali (9) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Crockett, Lawrence, Macdonald, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

For the amendment by Councillor Brooks (4) - Councillors Boulton, Brooks, Farquhar and Mrs Stewart.

Declined to vote (22) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

Absent from the division (2) - Councillors Graham and Grant.

The Council lastly divided between the motion and the amendment by Councillor Ali.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (22) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment by Councillor Ali (11) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Crockett, Graham, Lawrence, Macdonald, Mrs Stewart, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

Declined to vote (3) - Councillors Boulton, Brooks and Farquhar.

Absent from the division (1) - Councillor Grant.

**The Council resolved:-**

- (i) to adopt the motion; and
- (ii) to note that the Masterplan Manager would arrange for a functioning link to be circulated with regard to page 6 of Appendix A.

**Councillor Grant declared an interest in relation to the following item of business by reason of his employment by Aberdeen Inspired and withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the item.**

**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLORS ALLARD AND YUILL**

4. The Council had before it a joint notice of motion by Councillors Allard and Yuill in the following terms:-

This Council:

1. Notes with regret the decision by M&S to close its St. Nicholas Street store in spring 2025.
2. Welcomes M&S decision to invest £15 million to create a new and modern 70,000 square foot department store in Aberdeen city centre due to open in spring 2025.
3. Welcomes the commitment from M&S that all permanent staff employed at the St. Nicholas Street store will retain their jobs.
4. Notes that the St. Nicholas Street store building is owned by M&S.
5. Notes that Aberdeen City Council, public and private sector partners, and M&S are committed to working together to find a new use for the St. Nicholas Street building.
6. Instructs the Chief Officer - City Growth to report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 8 May 2024, subject to the requirements of

## Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

commercial confidentiality, on developments relating to the St Nicholas Street building.

Councillor Yuill moved, seconded by Councillor Allard:-  
That the Council approve the joint notice of motion.

Councillor Ali moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Watson:-

That the Council -

- (1) note with regret the decision by M&S to close its St. Nicholas Street store in spring 2025;
- (2) note that in 2021 the Press and Journal reported that the then Marks and Spencer Manager, Neil Hansell, stressed the importance of pedestrianisation to helping city centre businesses. Note that, in the [article](#) stated:
 

*Neil Hansell, manager at Marks and Spencer, also believes speed is of the essence and believes that swift change should be achievable. "The proposal we are putting forward really isn't a new approach, as it is in the city masterplan," he said. "We believe that making a small stretch of Union Street pedestrianised would help all business benefit in the city."*
- (3) agree this decision by M&S has been made easier by the nonsensical decision of the Administration not to embrace pedestrianisation within the middle section of Union Street and by their introduction of bus gates, which is putting people off using the City Centre;
- (4) agree the decision by the Scottish Government not to use the Barnett consequential to provide business rate relief which matches businesses in England means that businesses in Scotland remain uncompetitive compared to the rest of the UK;
- (5) agree the previous Administration brought forward the City Centre Masterplan as well as the plans to develop the old BHS Building into an Aberdeen Market;
- (6) agree that by abandoning the pedestrianisation plans and by introducing bus gates this SNP Administration has given up in the city centre and in Aberdeen itself; and
- (7) instruct the Chief Officer - City Growth to report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 8 May 2024, subject to the requirements of commercial confidentiality, on developments relating to the St. Nicholas Street building.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (23) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Boulton, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment (10) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Crockett, Farquhar, Graham, Lawrence, Macdonald, Thomson and Watson.

Absent from the division (4) - Councillors Brooks, Grant, Mrs Stewart and Tissera.

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

**The Council resolved:-**

to adopt the motion.

**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ALLARD**

5. The Council had before it a notice of motion by Councillor Allard in the following terms:-

That Council:

- (1) Acknowledges that the Partnership, comprising the SNP Group and Liberal Democrat Group, hold a majority of seats within the Aberdeen City Council chamber.
- (2) Acknowledges that as per Standing Order 47.9, *“Council will set the membership for each Committee and in doing so should have regard to the political composition of the Council.”*
- (3) Agrees to amend the number of elected members on all committees as detailed below.

Committee	Partnership	Labour	Conservative	Independent (x4)	Total
Anti-Poverty and Inequality	5	2	2	0	9
Audit, Risk and Scrutiny	5	2	2	0	9
Communities, Housing and Public Protection	5	2	1	1	9
Education and Children's Services	8	2	2	1	13
Finance and Resources	5	2	2	0	9
Licensing Committee	5	2	1	1	9
Net Zero, Environment and Transport	5	2	1	1	9
Pensions	5	2	1	1	9
Planning Development Management	5	2	1	1	9



## Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

Committee	Partnership	Labour	Conservative	Independent (x4)	Total
Staff Governance	5	2	1	1	9
Urgent Business	4	2	1	0	7
Integration Joint Board	3 (plus 2 subs)	1 (plus 1 sub)	0 (plus 1 sub)	0	4 (plus 4 subs)
<b>Total:</b>	60 (plus 2 subs)	23 (plus 1 subs)	15 (plus 1 sub)	7	105 (plus 4 subs)

Councillor Allard moved, seconded by the Depute Provost:-  
That the Council approve the notice of motion.

Councillor Blake moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Macdonald:-  
That the Council -

- (1) notes the proposals contained within the notice of motion, remembers when the previous Administration introduced the exact same size of committees as Councillor Allard is now proposing, the SNP and Lib Dems accused the previous Administration of being undemocratic;
- (2) agrees that in line with Standing Order 47.9, and to better reflect the political composition of the Council, the SNP Group and Liberal Democrat Group should be accounted for separately when determining Committee Places; and
- (3) agrees to the proposals with the exception of the Finance and Resources Committee and the Education and Children's Services Committee, where Labour should have 3 places on the Finance and Resources Committee and 2 places on the Education and Children's Services Committee with the Conservatives having 1 place on the Finance and Resources Committee and Independents having 2 places on the Education and Children's Services Committee as per the table appended.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (22) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Nicoll, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment (13) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Boulton, Brooks, Crockett, Farquhar, Graham, Grant, Lawrence, Macdonald, Thomson and Watson.

Absent from the division (2) - Councillors Mrs Stewart and Tissera.

**The Council resolved:-**

Council Meeting, Thursday, 8 February 2024

to adopt the motion.

- **DAVID CAMERON, Lord Provost.**

DRAFT