

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	05 July 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	City Centre Six Monthly Update – Streetscape Programme
REPORT NUMBER	RES/23/209
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandy Beattie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.15 scrutinise the progress and delivery of capital projects against the approved business cases

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides 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 their meeting on 14 December 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the progress update and instruct the Chief Officer (Capital) to present an update report to this Committee pending completion of Financial Close of the Union Street Central project.
- 2.2 Agree the inclusion of a segregated cycle lane in Union Street Central consistent with emerging proposals for Union Street East and Union Street West.
- 2.3 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.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Council, at their meeting on 14 December 2022 (Item 16, report RES/22/290) agreed the Streetscape Full Business Case and instructed the Director of Resources, following consultation with the Chief Officer - Commercial & Procurement and Chief Officer - Capital, to proceed with the negotiation and execution of contracts for delivery of the following programmes in the first

instance and to report progress to the Finance and Resources Committee on a 6 monthly basis from the date of this report:

- a) Union Street Central
- b) Market Streetscape Phase 1
- c) Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate.

3.2 The projects will be delivered under the Territory Partnering Agreement between Aberdeen City Council and Hub North Scotland Limited, who are a strategic development partner for the planning, procurement and delivery of community-based infrastructure projects across the north of Scotland.

3.3 Procurement of the Tier 1 Contractor for Union Street Central (USC) has developed through a market validation exercise and appointment of the preferred contractor status to target Financial Close by year end 2023. The Public Utilities Strategy and associated risk ownership profile for USC is being developed for agreement and will be reported as part of the recommendations around Financial Close.

Design Evolution

3.4 At the same Council meeting in December 2022, officers were instructed to develop proposals for a segregated cycle lane on Union Street East and Union Street West. As proposals for the cycle lanes emerged east and west in tandem with the developing design for the central section, an option emerged to develop a continuous cycle link along the entire length of Union Street, including Union Street Central.

3.5 In addition, officers were asked to ensure that the designs for Union Street Central were “future proof” and could both accommodate any future possibility of an Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) system and potential pedestrianisation at some point in the future. The RIBA Stage 3 design work presented to Council was therefore developed further to incorporate these various instructions.

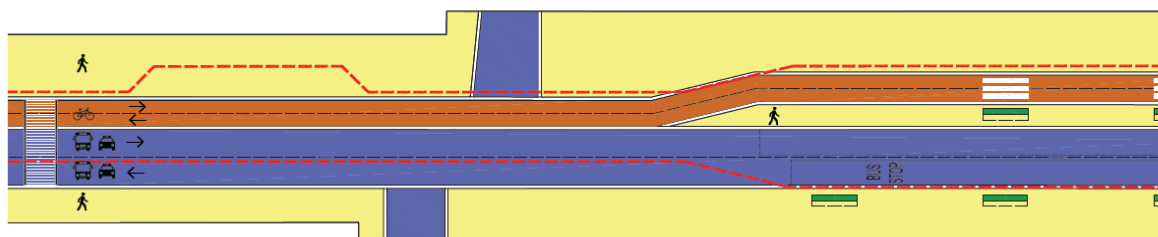
3.6 As noted above, flexibility in design has influenced the RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design process, giving rise to the opportunity to include a segregated cycle lane in Union Street Central. This has the following benefits:

- (i) Consistent movement conditions along the length of Union Street to aid legibility and understanding of interaction points and crossings.
- (ii) Reduce the impact of loss of pedestrian space in bus laybys by removing them and employing kerbside access,
- (iii) Introduces kerbside access for public transport to enable ART in the future,
- (iv) reduce the potential costs for any future conversion to pedestrianisation,
- (v) provide safe segregated cycle route through the heart of the city centre.

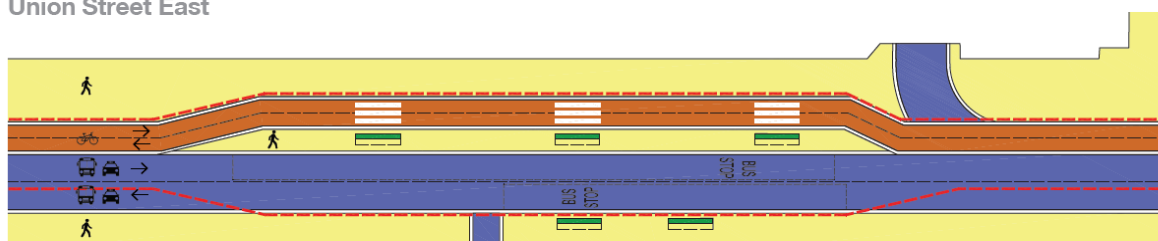
3.7 Initial discussions have taken place with key stakeholders including public transport operators and the Disability Equity Partnership. At a workshop held on 24 May 2023, the following proposal emerged as a preferred option for cycling on East and West Union Street:

Bi-directional cycle lane on the north side of the street.

Union Street West



Union Street East



Location plan



The illustration above indicates a 3m cycle lane segregated by 0.5m raised kerb line on either side. This results in a minimum footway width of 3.3m (plus kerb) at the narrowest points of Union Street. Bus stop locations shown above are for illustration purposes only and will be staggered north and south to ensure effective bus movement.

This layout is the preferred segregated cycle route possible within the constraints of Union Street and will employ various design methods to ensure safety between cyclists and pedestrians at bus stop locations, with changes in level, materials, width and crossing points all means of ensuring cyclists give way to pedestrians.

The illustrations and table below highlight pros and cons of the solution:

Union Street West

Union Street East



Pros	Cons
Cycling segregation at all times	Localised footway narrowing behind bus stops
Bus boarder areas give space for boarding /alighting buses	Pedestrians cross cycle lanes to access bus boarding areas
Space for bus shelters	Two lanes results in vehicles only stopping on carriageway meaning servicing and buses will require strict management
Some pavement widening possible	
Minimal conflict between cyclists and vehicles	
Interaction between cyclists and pedestrians limited to one side of the street	
Some space for street greening and furniture	

3.8 The Disability Equity Partnership (DEP) has expressed specific concerns regarding people with protected characteristics being able to safely cross an active cycle lane to access bus stops and the importance of a consistent design in the streetscape. At a further workshop with members of the group, potential mitigation measures were agreed with DEP which include, but are not limited to:

- Crossings to access bus stop locations to be extra wide and centrally located where there are two bus shelters at the bus boarding areas,
- The cycle lane could be narrowed at crucial points to slow cyclists,
- Rumble strip on cycle lane to alert cyclists to a changing environment and create noise to alert pedestrians,
- Contrasting colours in cycle lanes and at crossing points,
- Chicanes on the cycle lane approach to bus stops to slow cyclists,
- Cycle track raised at bus stops to provide a level crossing for pedestrians,
- Kerb and pavement detailing to guide people to the crossing points,
- Scale of bus islands to enable comfortable congregation (standing, wheelchair users, buggies etc and seating),
- Explicit signage (e.g. for cyclists countdown signs to bus stop 3,2,1),

- Commitment to extensive behaviour change and public information to be shared in advance of completed works,
- Commitment to make our own best practice
- Commitment to ongoing engagement with DEP throughout the remainder of the technical design stage.

DEP has also requested that a full-scale mock-up of a typical cycle lane/bus boarding area be set up to enable their members to better understand the spatial arrangements. It was agreed with DEP that this be set up temporarily with tape markings, or similar, in a location such as Marischal College quad.

- 3.9 In order to enable a consistent and understandable condition for movement along the entire length of Union Street, the technical design recommends implementing the same cycle lane principle in Union Street Central. This will enable consistent signaling, bus boarding and segregation along the length of Union Street. In order to accommodate for both ART and potential pedestrianisation options in future, it is recommended that bus laybys are replaced with kerbside boarding, reducing the risk of laybys being unable to accommodate an ART system and reducing as far as practicable future material changes and costs in conversion to a pedestrian environment.
- 3.10 Where the cycle lane interacts with bus boarding, mitigation measures, such as but not limited to, chicane, changes in level, reduced width and potentially different surface finishes will ensure that cyclists understand to give way to pedestrians when they require to board or alight public transport. As technical design and construction develop, such an intervention will require significant public information to be shared to demonstrate both physical and expected behavioural changes in the city centre.



Union Street Central as proposed in December 2022



Union Street Central incorporating segregated cycle lane

3.11 Approval and instruction around the principle of a full length segregated cycle lane is critical for the programme delivery of the RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design for Union Street Central and for the further development of the Full Business Case for Union Street East and West.

3.12 The next stages of the programme are broadly as follows:

- Complete necessary site investigation works,
- Progress the technical design work,
- Continue engagement and dialogue with key stakeholders,
- Market test work packages within set budgets,
- Agree and award construction contract for:
 - Union Street Central
 - Market Streetscape Phase 1
 - Schoolhill & Upperkirkgate
- Undertake stone procurement process to seek local supply where possible,
- Develop Full Business Case updates for remaining streetscape projects.

3.13 In addition to the above, Hub North Scotland Limited (hNSL) and the Council will:

- Undertake Value Engineering & sustainability / carbon review on design,
- Integrate the outcome of the cycle lane studies into the technical design,
- Agree Public Utility strategy & associated risk ownership,
- Progress development of Public Utility design.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The overall project budget was approved at Council in December 2022 and included in the Council's Capital Programme. Finalising the technical design will enable financial close on the project budget by the December 2023 and will be reported to Finance and Resources Committee at that time.
- 4.2 Taking cognisance that the design works are still ongoing there is a high expectation that leading up to and in advance of Financial Close, there will be need to incur significant expenditure for the placing of advance orders, such as, but not limited to, material orders and statutory undertaker payments.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As project proposals progress through to RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design, they are being examined and managed within the professional scope of construction industry accepted standards, ensuring all due diligence exercises and pre-contract enquiries are complete and satisfactory.

All changes to vehicular movement on the road network are subject to statutory processes.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The City Centre and Beach Masterplan are screened through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. This screening process will be circulated to the consultation authorities (Nature Scot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland (for Scottish Ministers)) and be informed by both the Local Development Plan Environmental Report and the ongoing production of the Beach Development Framework Environmental Report.
- 6.2 Every effort is made to minimise the carbon footprint of the project including undertaking a sustainability/carbon review on the design, possible re-use of existing materials and local supply of new materials wherever possible.
- 6.3 The introduction of a cycle lane on Union Street supports the implementation of the Low Emission Zone by enabling people to make different choices on how they move about the city.
- 6.4 Encouraging active travel is supported by the developing studies on cycle corridors to access the city centre. Union Street Central will be the first phase of delivery in an active travel connection between Union Street and the Beachfront, connecting our major assets together. Active travel has the benefit of improving health and well-being in people and providing a segregated route will create the opportunities for cyclists of all ages and abilities to access the city centre.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to proceed with project impacts on wider city commitments and economic targets	Continue to work collaboratively to achieve masterplan delivery and wider advantages.	M	Yes
Operational	Project scope changes	Seek preferred option agreement with ACC at appropriate stage and progress agreed design to avoid abortive work.	M	Yes
Financial	Removal of reduction in anticipated funding streams	Continual engagement and monitor of ongoing funding applications	M	Yes
Financial	Inaccurate/ uncharted underground service and utility survey information leads to increased costs.	Ensure thorough & adequate surveys undertaken prior and during the development phase. Service detection, trial pits, historical review / detailed desk top review undertaken. Ensure project contingencies are sufficient to cover possible unexpected costs.	H	Yes
Financial	Budget Pressures due to current market volatility.	Robust budgets established based on market intelligence. Independent budget reviews with PMO and supply chain are regularly held.	M	Yes

		Appropriate inflation allowances made in cost plans.		
Financial	General lack of material and resource availability	Early identification of material types and advanced discussions with supply chain on availability.	M	
Reputational	Created / perceived congestion on surrounding networks due to construction and phasing of works	Review phasing and impact on road networks in the interim phases. Use advance publicity to advise public on works.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Carbon footprint of non-indigenous materials	Early engagement and advanced discussions with supply chain on availability.	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p><i>Deliver safe pedestrian areas in our city</i></p> <p><i>Maintain bus and taxi access to Central Union Street</i></p> <p><i>Vehicles and pedestrians don't share the same surface.</i></p> <p><i>Contribute to shared vision of making Aberdeen a cyclist friendly city</i></p> <p><i>Improve cycle and active transport infrastructure, including by integrating safe, physically segregated cycle lanes in new road building projects</i></p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>13. Addressing climate change (local materials, reduction in emissions)</p> <p>14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026</p>

<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	<p>The report supports the priorities in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) investment in infrastructure, regenerating our city centre, unlock development potential, improve the deployment of low carbon transport, to enable Aberdeen to realise development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The report supports the National, Regional and Local Transport Strategies, particularly the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which prioritises the needs of those walking, wheeling and cycling above other road users, and the 4 pillars identified in the recent Regional Transport Strategy, Nestrans 2040: Equality, Climate, Prosperity and Wellbeing.</p> <p>It also supports the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, both of which seek to improve conditions for people walking and cycling in Aberdeen, particularly to, from and within the City Centre, through the provision of more and safer infrastructure.</p> <p>Measures to reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic in the City Centre will support the Air Quality Action Plan, Climate Change Plan, Net Zero Action Plan and Low Emission Zone by contributing to emissions reduction.</p>
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p>Integrated Impact Assessment</p>	<p>An IIA for the City Centre Masterplan was included in the report to Council in December 2022 (Appendix F). A project specific update IIA has been prepared and highlights where pedestrians have to cross the cycle lane to access the bus boarding areas a number of measures will be required to employed to manage behaviour of all users, some of which are expressed in section 3.8 in this report.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that such a proposed streetscape environment does not exist at present and will be challenged for some users to become both familiar and comfortable with, so it is intended to continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure all appropriate design tools and measures may be used to ensure comfort and</p>

	<p>safety for all users as far as possible within the constraints of the street.</p> <p>Given Union Street is a busy city centre environment, ensuring clear footways, introducing segregated cycle lanes and managed crossing points reduce the risk of “shared spaces” where users with protected characteristics may feel uncomfortable will enable clarity of movement and create a generally more appealing environment.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA Screening Questions completed. Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 City Centre Update Report to Council, 14 December 2022
<http://councilcommittees/documents/s138824/City%20Centre%20Update%20Report%20to%20Council.pdf>

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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