

NET ZERO, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
11 JUNE 2024

THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL (CITY CENTRE, ABERDEEN) (TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) (EXPERIMENTAL) ORDER 2023 – STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of City Regeneration and Environment which set out the objections and comments received during the consultation process for “The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023”.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the benefits highlighted, to date, by the bus operators, and recognise the measures would support continuing improvements. Similarly, noting the measures supported active travel by way of walking or cycling. Collectively, the measures were a vital component of the City Centre Masterplan for establishing an attractive and vibrant city centre, with an environment that was conducive to encouraging footfall. Furthermore, choice remained in terms of access, with car parks and on-street parking capacity unaffected, and a network of appropriate distributor roads available, whether for access or through traffic;
- (b) approve the making of “The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023” as a permanent Order, albeit with continued monitoring in terms of the ongoing City Centre Masterplan; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to commence the procedure for the Order to be made permanent.

Members asked a number of questions of officers.

In accordance with Standing Order 16.1, Councillor Mrs Stewart addressed the meeting and spoke against the recommendations in the report.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-

That the Committee:-

- (a) agree the recommendations subject to (b) and (c) below;
- (b) in the context of the ongoing construction works on Union Street and around the New Market development, instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to introduce a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) to suspend the Bus Gates on Union Street (westbound only) / Market Street (southbound only), between its junctions with Adelphi and Hadden Street; this allowing all classes of vehicle to turn left from Union Street onto Market Street, thereafter restricting general traffic to a left only turn at the bottom of Market Street onto Trinity Quay (Virginia Street), this to

- aid continued access and servicing of the businesses on Market Street and Shiprow throughout the remaining period of construction;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Operations to report to this Committee in 18 months' time on the operation and impact of this city centre traffic management regime and to make any recommendations for modifications he considers appropriate.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) notes that in 2016 the Labour led administration brought forward the City Centre Masterplan, which was agreed unanimously by all political parties;
- (b) notes the Masterplan document speaks about pedestrian(s) and pedestrianisation 73 times within the document and mentions Bus Gates twice;
- (c) agrees that the Masterplan document was designed with people in mind and that Bus Gates would be installed at key intersections on the periphery of the city centre to ensure buses are not impacted by congestion during weekday peak hours;
- (d) agrees that decisions taken by the SNP administration risk turning Aberdeen Union Street into a ghost town;
- (e) agrees businesses right across the city are angry and disappointed with the SNP Administration at Aberdeen City Council for killing footfall in our city by introducing bus gates without actually introducing pedestrianisation of the central part of Union Street;
- (f) agrees that pedestrianisation of the central section of Union Street is the way forward for our city; and
- (g) instructs the Chief Officer - Operations to report back on the rescinding of The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023, including financial impact, and report back to Full Council.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (6) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Henrickson, Nicoll and van Sweeden; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Ali, Blake and Massey.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would investigate whether data was available for Council-run car parks to show if there had been any drop in uptake of parking;
- (ii) to note that officers would provide information to Members outwith the meeting in relation to footfall data from other cities, and the comparison with Aberdeen;
- (iii) to note that officers would contact Police Scotland to ask if there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour in the city centre since last summer and the closure of Union Street to general traffic, and to further note that a report was due to the next meeting of Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on this issue; and

- (iv) in relation to the query as to how many people were now travelling into the city centre on public transport, including the number of people going in and out of the bus station, to note that officers would contact Stagecoach and First Group to ask if more detailed data could be provided on this; and
- (v) to adopt the motion.

In terms of Standing Order 34.1, Councillor Ali intimated that he wished the matter to be referred to full Council in order for a final decision to be taken. He was supported in this regard by Councillors Blake and Massey.