

Councillor Yuill moved as a procedural motion, seconded by Councillor Allard:-  
That the Council suspend Standing Order 40.2 to enable the meeting to continue beyond 6 hours until the conclusion of this item.

On a division, there voted:-

For the procedural motion (38) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Ali, Allard, Alphonse, Blake, Bonsell, Boulton, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Crockett, Cross, Davidson, Fairfull, Farquhar, Graham, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, Kuszniir, Lawrence, Macdonald, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Malik, Massey, Radley, van Sweeden, Tissera, Thomson, Watson and Yuill.

Against the procedural motion (1) - Councillor Nicoll.

Absent from the division (3) - Councillors Bouse, Grant and Mennie.

**The Council resolved:-**

to adopt the procedural motion.

Councillor Yuill moved, seconded by Councillor Henrickson:-

That the Council -

- (1) note that the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 was implemented to achieve the safe and efficient movement of active travel and public transport users through the city centre, and that the measures originated from the City Centre Masterplan 2015 Movement Strategy;
- (2) note that at the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee in February 2021, Committee instructed officers to submit a bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund, and included specific instructions to:-
  - (a) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, that in the context of the corridor options within the bid terminating in the City Centre, and in light of the recommendations from the Economic Policy Panel and ongoing transport projects, to seek to accelerate the City Centre elements of the bid. This should include any necessary enabling works for approved schemes, for example South College Street and Berryden, to help drive recovery, improve the transport system and ensure integration of current transport projects; and
  - (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, to explore options to improve access and integration of the Aberdeen bus station as part of the bid, to help improve the customer experience;
- (3) note that at the Council meeting in June 2022, all Members of Council present either explicitly voted for the inclusion of bus priority measures contained within the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023, or proposed an amendment that would have also resulted in the measures being included;
- (4) note that, as instructed by Council in July 2024, additional work has been undertaken by officers to investigate the feasibility and impact of

reopening Bridge Street to all vehicles in one or both directions; and, the feasibility and impact of removing the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct (Appendix 1);

- (5) note that the output of the additional work referenced in recommendation 2.4 (above) does not provide officers with sufficient certainty that amending bus priority measures on Bridge Street and Union Terrace would not prejudice the further delivery of key projects within the City Centre & Beach Masterplan 2022;
- (6) note that the output of the additional work referenced in recommendation 2.4 (above) does not provide officers with sufficient certainty that amending bus priority measures on Bridge Street and Union Terrace would guarantee there would not be a need in the near future for the measures to be reintroduced as traffic levels begin to rise once more;
- (7) note that, according to Scotland's 2022 Census Data, 30.7% of households in Aberdeen do not have a car or van in their household;
- (8) note that, in February 2023, Aberdeen City Council added its voice to the growing number of local authorities around the world to have responded to the global climate change and nature loss crises by declaring a climate and nature emergency;
- (9) agree that, in accepting grant funding from Transport Scotland for the South College Street project, there was an expectation from Scottish Ministers that bus priority measures would be installed within the city centre and, should this not be the case, the conditions of the grant award letter explicitly provide for Transport Scotland to recover funding from the Council (Appendix 2);
- (10) note that, should the various bus prioritisation measures implemented following the South College Street improvements change, there is risk that Transport Scotland will seek to recover funding they have provided for the project. The Chief Officer - Finance advises that a contingent liability will have to be recorded in the Council financial performance reports until clarity from Transport Scotland is received, with an expectation that if this is not resolved by 31 March 2025 a provision will have to be included in the Council's 2024/25 draft Annual Accounts for the repayment of grant funding;
- (11) note that the level of financial risk associated with removal of the bus priority measures contained within the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 would not be consistent with the Council's risk appetite as set out in the updated Risk Appetite Statement, as approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in February 2024;
- (12) therefore, agree, subject to the removal of the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct, to approve the making of The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023 as a permanent Order, with continued monitoring in terms of the ongoing City Centre Masterplan. The cost of undertaking these works is estimated to be approximately £3,000 and is to be funded from the General Fund Capital Programme contingency budget in 2024/25. Noting the Chief Officer - Finance's advice above there is a risk of up to £8m of Bus Partnership Fund grant being reclaimed by Transport Scotland and agreeing if this has to be repaid (in part or whole)

the capital grant will have to be replaced by borrowing at a cost to the General Fund Revenue Budget of up to approximately £480,000 per annum for the next 30 years, which will increase the budget gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy from financial year 2025/26;

- (13) instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to commence the procedure for the Order to be made permanent;
- (14) in recognising that the ability sits with Council to use Bus Lane Enforcement surplus to assist city centre businesses so long as doing so also supports the delivery of the Local Transport Strategy, agree to instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Conveners of the Net Zero, Environment & Transport and Finance & Resources Committees, to use Enforcement surplus monies (capped at £200,000) to reinstate a Night Bus service from the city centre to key destinations across the city and into Aberdeenshire;
- (15) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to work with Aberdeen Inspired to determine what, if any, additional city centre focused projects the Bus Lane Enforcement surplus could be used for, and report a list of competent projects to a future Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee within the next six months; and
- (16) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to work with the Chief Officer - Operations to explore opportunities to enhance the accessibility of wayfinding in the city centre for people with disabilities.

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

That the Council -

- (1) notes the contents of the report;
- (2) agrees officer recommendations 2.16 to 2.18;
- (3) agrees to support the many businesses who have been calling for common sense proposals from the Council and therefore instructs the Chief Officer - Operations to withdraw the elements of the Experimental Traffic Order which businesses and residents have been calling for the withdrawal of under the Common-Sense Compromise proposals (namely the removal of bus gates at the Adelphi and Market Street, removal of the bus gates on Bridge Street and removal of the right turn ban on Union Terrace) because of the current and future damage to Aberdeen's City Centre. The cost of undertaking these works is estimated to be up to £250,000, and is to be funded from the General Fund Capital Programme contingency budget in 2024/25;
- (4) notes that the Labour Group opinion is that politically there is zero chance of what officers are suggesting coming to fruition with regard to risk of grant funding being reclaimed. However, in the highly unlikely event of Transport Scotland reclaiming the funding from the Bus Partnership Fund, in whole or part, note the advice of the Chief Officer - Finance is that the capital grant will have to be replaced by borrowing at a cost to the General Fund Revenue Budget of up to approximately £480,000 per annum for the next 30 years, which will increase the budget gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy from financial year 2025/26; and
- (5) concludes that 2.8 and 2.9 of the officer recommendations lend support to the view that pedestrianisation is the best way forward for Union Street Central.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (21) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment (15) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Brooks, Crockett, Cross, Farquhar, Graham, Kuznir, Lawrence, Macdonald, Massey, Tissera, Thomson and Watson.

Declined to vote (2) - Councillors Alphonse and Nicoll.

Absent from the division (4) - Councillors Boulton, Grant, Malik and Mennie.

**The Council resolved:-**  
to adopt the motion.