

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 March 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/006
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report advises Members of progress to date on the various instructions of Council on 16 December 2015 relating to the transport implications of a number of the City Centre Masterplan projects.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Members:

- i) Note the contents of this report, and
- ii) Agree the designs as detailed in this report for options for Broad Street for public consultation, and
- iii) Agree the time and format of the public consultation, and
- iv) Agree the timeline of reporting relating to the wider transportation implications of the City Centre Masterplan, and
- v) Instruct officers to report back to the Council in May 2016 on the outcomes of the Broad Street options public consultation, and
- vi) Instruct officers to report back to the Council in May 2016 on the outcomes of the wider transportation assessment of the City Centre Masterplan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The design of the Broad Street options for the purposes of public consultation has been accommodated from the £1.12M set aside within the contract with Muse for public realm works. The public consultation costs have been absorbed within existing budgets. The on-going transportation assessment of specific and wider implications of the City Centre Masterplan continues to be funded from the Non Housing

Capital allocation for Central Aberdeen Transport infrastructure, supported by contributions from the Nestrans programme.

- 3.2 Further financial implications will be included in future reports as new information becomes available.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The 'place' to be created in Broad Street may be subject to planning permission if there are engineering works due to the setting of Marischal College as a listed building. The involvement of the public and stakeholders such as Historic Scotland would be part of the planning process.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Reference is made to the report entitled 'Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects' reported to Council on 16 December 2015, wherein the following resolution was made:

- (i) *to note the outcomes of the transportation assessment and traffic modelling undertaken for the City Centre Masterplan interventions for Broad Street, Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate, Golden Square, Bon Accord Square, Schoolhill Pocket Park, Castlegate and Queen Street;*
- (ii) *to instruct officers to revoke with immediate effect the temporary traffic order stopping traffic from Virginia Street entering Guild Street and adjust traffic light sequences as necessary;*
- (iii) *to instruct officers to revoke with immediate effect the temporary traffic order stopping traffic on Broad Street and adjust traffic light sequences as necessary;*
- (iv) *to instruct officers to engage with Muse with a view to developing detailed designs for the layout of Broad Street, on the basis of:-*
 - (a) *status quo (full vehicle access)*
 - (b) *public transport and bicycle only access*
 - (c) *full pedestrianisation;*
- (v) *to agree that all of the above options be designed with the opportunity for Broad Street to be closed so it may be transformed into an event ready space for special events/occasions - and report back to the Council meeting on 2 March 2016 for approval. All options will be subject to public consultation;*
- (vi) *to agree that a structured approach to city centre public realm works is required and that full traffic modelling is required for all public realm works identified in the Masterplan before any decision of full/part pedestrianisation is taken by Council; and to instruct officers to report back with traffic modelling, timelines and options to the Council meeting on 2 March 2016; and*

(vii) to agree that all pedestrianisation options go out for full public consultation before final decisions are taken by Council.

This report provides an update on progress in relation to each of the above instructions.

- 5.2 The temporary traffic regulation orders defined in (ii) and (iii) of the Council resolution were revoked at 1900 hours on Friday 18 December 2015.
- 5.3.1 Designs have been prepared to demonstrate what the space could look like for each option, showing a revised design with space for traffic limited to two lanes with no space for bus waiting, public transport and bicycle only access, and full pedestrianisation, respectively. Due to the time constraints meeting this instruction, designs will be displayed to Members on the morning of the Council meeting (2 March 2016) in the Council Chamber at 09:30.
- 5.3.2 The designs for Broad Street also identify the space available for events/ special occasions (including access to Marischal Square Quad to connect to events at that location) and this has been informed by knowledge and experience of events planning across the City in terms of public circulation, emergency access, different types of events and their space requirements. The permanently available events space on Broad Street remains much the same for all options. Limited additional temporary events space could be created on specific occasions via temporary road closures for options that maintain vehicular traffic in some way, subject to emergency access requirements. The types of events/ special occasions that could be considered for this space on Broad Street includes seasonal markets, concerts, significant cultural events i.e. tying in with events inside Marischal College Quadrangle, new annual festivals and sporting events.
- 5.3.3 The public has previously been consulted on what sort of place the area between Marischal College and Marischal Square can be. It is suggested that consultation at this stage should be to inform how the space is to be used (e.g. status quo, part-pedestrianisation and full pedestrianisation). The public can also make comment on what they think is appropriate with regards to the detail of the space such as: the materials, soft and hard landscaping, street furniture and any public art installations that might be included should the space be transformed in any way from the status quo. It is recommended that the consultation is undertaken on-line, and for those without internet access, an exhibition be installed at the Marischal College reception to maximise public engagement. It is anticipated that the consultation will take place for four weeks from Friday 4 March until Friday 1 April 2016.
- 5.3.4 It is therefore recommended that Members approve the designs for public consultation which will be undertaken on-line, or in person, as specified above, with the outcomes being reported back to Council in May 2016.

- 5.4.1 In accordance with the instruction from Finance, Policy and Resources Committee in September 2015, that the outcomes of Broad Street and Schoolhill/ Upperkirkgate were reported to full Council in December 2015, and Union Street/ Guild Street to full Council in March 2016, a programme of traffic modelling was agreed with consultants.
- 5.4.2 The full Council decision of December 2016 necessitated a review of this modelling programme due to the broader requirements requested by Members. Following discussion with the consultants early in 2016, a new schedule of traffic modelling was developed which would enable compliance with the December 2016 instruction to undertake '*full traffic modelling ... for all public realm works identified in the Masterplan*'. This programme, however, would not enable completion of the modelling in time to report back to full Council in March 2016.
- 5.4.3 This revised programme includes modelling of each public realm option within the Masterplan as separate entities, followed by the modelling of various combinations of the key projects, the outcomes of which will inform a structured approach to the optimal sequence of project delivery including mitigation at locations to offset traffic displacement.
- 5.4.4 At the time of drafting this report, testing has been completed on the individual public realm projects within the Masterplan and a programme of testing a range of combined projects is now underway. It is anticipated that these tasks can be completed with robust evidence in time for the next Council meeting on 11 May 2016.

6. IMPACT

6.1 Improving Customer Experience:

The contents of this report and the recommendations relate to the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, which is aimed at improving the City Centre for all those who live in, work in and visit it. Further consultation with the public on options for Broad Street runs the risk of 'consultation fatigue' and may result in a negative customer experience. This could be mitigated by expanding this consultation to enable the public to help shape what the space could look like and its future use.

6.2 Improving Staff Experience:

A defined, fully resourced programme of delivery for the City Centre Masterplan with key stage decision making, committed to by the Council, will enable staff, with stakeholders and the public, to confidently and timeously realise the City Centre Masterplan. The recent appointment of the City Centre Director will assist this process.

6.3 Improving our use of Resources:

Internal resources and partnership working with developers have already been identified to continue to deliver the instructions of Council in December 2015. Further resources will continue to be required for the wider delivery of the transport network plan to support the successful delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, which has identified a range of benefits for citizens and business across the City. Internal resources will also be used to undertake the public consultation for Broad Street.

6.4 Corporate:

Positive decision making informing the progressive implementation of the City Centre Masterplan directly supports a range of policies and strategies including:

Aberdeen – the Smarter City vision:

- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.
- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We will provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote bio-diversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside.
- We will invest in the city where that investment demonstrates financial sustainability based on a clear return on investment
- We will encourage cycling and walking.
- We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.

Single Outcome Agreement:

The 2013 Single Outcome Agreement has been informed by a range of public engagement exercises, including the 'City Voice' questionnaires, one of which reflected that *'61% of respondents stated that things had got a bit or much worse in relation to an 'attractive city centre'*. Delivery of the City Centre Masterplan will aim to address this.

Strategic Infrastructure Plan:

Stakeholder engagement which informed this Plan revealed that the 'poor state' of the City Centre is one of a number of issues identified as a common theme *'In terms of the attractiveness and marketing of the city to attract workers, visitors and investment...'*. This Plan also states that *'A high quality of life is integral to attracting and retaining the talent*

and investment needed to grow the economy. This sense of place, with a key emphasis on the city centre, is crucial in underpinning economic growth and essential in underpinning the necessary infrastructure requirements.' One of the key goals of this Plan is City Centre Regeneration and the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan will contribute significantly to achieving this.

This Plan also recognises that a range of traffic management and transport network improvements in and around the City Centre, delivery air quality, road safety and economic benefits and support the key strategic priority around City Centre Regeneration. The development and delivery of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for the City Centre, as part of the wider Masterplan, is also recognised as key to improving accessibility to all, increasing walking and cycling opportunities and improving public transport.

6.5 Public:

The contents of this report are likely to be of public and media interest as it relates to the City Centre, a significant economic asset for the City and Region. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme presented to Council on 24 June 2015. A Privacy Impact Statement is not required for this report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

7.1 The risks inherent in not addressing the regeneration of the city centre are set out in the Strategic Infrastructure Plan. In view of the fact that the regeneration of the city centre is widely supported, there is a reputational risk to the Council if no improvements are made.

7.2 There is also a risk in not delivering the public realm works on Broad Street for the completion of Marischal Square in July 2017. Officers have been made aware that the contractors need a 52 week lead in time to deliver the public realm works for the scheduled completion of the development. Therefore, a decision must be made by July 2016.

7.3 If a decision is not made then there are the following risks:

- Reputational risk – undermines the Council investment into Marischal Square and the public/ stakeholders could perceive that the Council is unable to deliver improvements to the city centre on time or deliver the projects within the masterplan;
- Cost of delivery – although the £1.12M is safeguarded for works on Broad Street it would cost more and take longer to work through an agreement with another contractor at a later date;
- Attractive investment – there may be some risk in letting the spaces with the lack of a decision on the public realm and how this will tie in with the development;

- Traffic disruption – works at a later date will cause traffic disruption in the city centre and this is likely to be worse with Marischal Square in use; and
- Aesthetics – when Marischal Square is opened, Broad Street will look as it does at the moment as there will have been no improvements to the public realm.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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