

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	28 October 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Update on Spaces for People Interventions
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/196
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REPORT AUTHOR	Gale Beattie / John Wilson / Mark Reilly
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the temporary urban realm works completed to date through Spaces for People in relation to the Councils response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- 2.1 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to monitor the current interventions and report the findings back to the 3 February 2021 City Growth and Resources committee including any implications for ongoing capital works or corridor studies;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to write to Sustrans/Transport Scotland to seek clarification on the date by which the funding must be spent, in the context that National Health Services (NHS), Scottish and UK Government advice suggests that the current pandemic conditions are likely to remain in place throughout the winter, and report back to the 3 February 2021 City Growth and Resources Committee for direction on the removal of the interventions;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with Sustrans on Sustrans request to undertake a case study of the works undertaken in Aberdeen including the parklets and bus stops for the benefit of other local authorities throughout the UK; and
- 2.4 Note that, as detailed in Appendices 4 and 5, further ongoing engagement with stakeholders has continued throughout which has led to some refinement of the original intervention proposals.

3. BACKGROUND

National Context

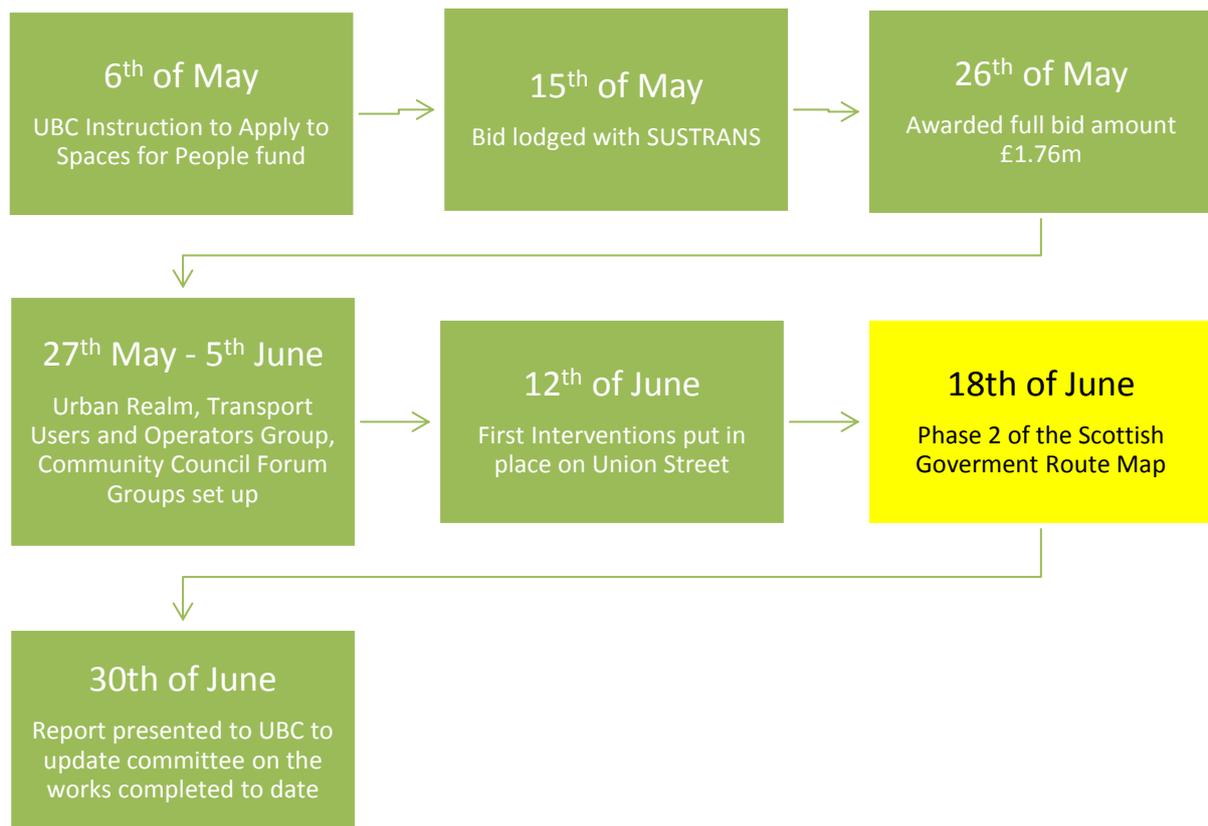
- 3.1 As a result of the existing and impending health risk (at that time) from the COVID-19 pandemic the UK Government announced on 23 March 2020 that people must stay at home and some businesses had to close. The announcement included a small limited number of reasons for people to leave their homes, such as necessary shopping, travel to work if they could not work from home.
- 3.2 The critical aspect of this initial strategy, was to limit the opportunities and frequency when people were in direct contact with one another to try and control the risk of spreading the virus.
- 3.3 During this initial lockdown period, (April 2020) Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, launched the Scottish Government's Spaces for People (SfP) programme. The aim of the programme is to support Local Authorities in reallocating road space using temporary infrastructure to enable physical distancing amongst members of the public for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic; to further encourage walking, cycling and wheeling; and to make it safer for people who choose to walk, cycle or wheeling for essential trips or for exercise.
- 3.4 It was recognised that the levels of people using active forms of travel had greatly increased since the beginning of the nationwide lockdown and this was compounded by advice from the Scottish Government not to use public transport except where absolutely necessary and the recommendation to walk or cycle when possible.
- 3.5 There was therefore a need to both encourage more active travel movement within the existing network and to create additional temporary active travel network where possible – but critically in normal “crowded” areas of the city to do so with physical distancing of 2 metres.
- 3.6 Current Government guidance states that walking and cycling are the best forms of travel for ensuring physical distancing and reducing the risks of further transmission of COVID-19.
- 3.7 Bearing this in mind, with many people wary of using public transport, and services having to operate at reduced capacity, it is preferable that any displaced people movements switch from public transport to active travel rather than the private car to protect road space for those most in need.
- 3.8 The clear instruction from both the UK Government and Scottish Government was and still is, for the public not to undertake longer than necessary journeys.
- 3.9 In accordance with the above, the Scottish Government produced a document setting out a Route Map which in simple terms sets out the progressive incremental steps to ease the initial COVID-19 Lockdown Phase to a state of normality (Phase 4). Throughout this phased approach the Scottish Government have issued guidelines and regulations to direct and instruct what

can and cannot be done. This framework for decision making is shown in Appendix 1.

- 3.10 It should also be noted that as Scotland began to move through these phases to re-start the economy it was critical that physical distancing measures were in place to allow people to safely move and access businesses.
- 3.11 This was occurring during the UK national lockdown. At this juncture there was no understanding what “coming out of lockdown” would be like because the world had never experienced a global pandemic along with the measures that were in place.
- 3.12 In fact it can be seen from recent events that decisions being taken must then be revisited to deal with the virus and how it spreads amongst the population. It is clear that almost any measures taken today will have to be constantly reviewed, assessed and consequently changed as we learn more about how the virus is spreading but more importantly in the context of how people behave.
- 3.13 Finally, as the local Spaces for People measures were to protect the people of Aberdeen and their health, as well as our National Health Service, Public Health were made a formal member of the group set up to look at the works to ensure that the proposals were adequate and proportionate. These works and “predictions” were done while in a National lockdown on the guidance from the Scottish Government.

Timeline

- 3.14 In recognition of the clear direction from the Scottish Government, an Urgent Business Committee was held on the 6 May 2020, whereby officers were instructed to apply to the Scottish Governments fund SfP with the Committee resolving: -
 - (7) *to agree that Aberdeen City Council should participate in the “Spaces for People” Initiative providing it is 100% funded by Sustrans Scotland;*
 - (8) *to instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to submit bids to the Spaces for People initiative in conjunction with the Council’s Transport spokesperson Councillor Macdonald and report the outcome of those bids to the Urgent Business Committee on 30 June 2020;*
- 3.15 The timeline for this is set out below;



- 3.16 On the 15 May 2020, 9 days after the UBC committee instruction, officers submitted an application to the SfP fund.
- 3.17 The initial Bid document set out the principle of interventions across the city but given the tight timeframe Sustrans agreed that the submission would be accepted (from all local authorities) as a high-level document with high level cost estimates.
- 3.18 In advance of the award, taking consideration of potential road space interventions some initial feasibility and concept design work was undertaken by officers with regard to what measures could be introduced in the City Centre in advance of the 18 June 2020. This was the indicative date of the Scottish Government's Route Map from moving from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and the description for safe distancing moved from "Socially Distancing" to "Physical Distancing".
- 3.19 It is important to note that throughout the Scottish Government's publication 'Coronavirus (COVID-19):Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis' (May 2020), that **"Physically distancing requirements are in place"**, is a requirement from the first initial Lockdown Phase through to and inclusive of Phase 3. Only the last Phase (Phase 4), recognises that "physical distancing requirements will be updated on scientific advice." The current Scottish Government advice states we are still currently at Phase 2.
- 3.20 The 18 June 2020 was the initial date on which Scottish Government expected to announce the move from Phase 1 into Phase 2 of the Scottish Governments

Route Map. This would have seen retail units, outdoor markets, and restaurants and pubs with outdoor seating, allowed to reopen.

- 3.21 At that time council officers were still restricted from going onto site and all office-based officers were working from home, where possible. This is still the current protocol which is being followed. This itself provided a major challenge for officers.
- 3.22 It is worth reminding the committee that at this point in the timeline the country had been in lockdown for almost 3 months. As the programme progressed it was evident that it was virtually impossible to follow normal consultation protocols with the entire country being instructed to remain in their home other than for personal exercise, shopping or if you were classed as a key worker.
- 3.23 The assessment of where to undertake works was therefore, generally based on where officers had historic data that showed high footfall where people tended to congregate or move around. There was also the large queues that were witnessed in certain areas as physical restriction measures were introduced (for example, supermarkets).
- 3.24 Finally, it was quite clear that the programme of works would have to be agile in terms of how it would need to be adapted once the general public were allowed more freedoms in terms of moving around the city. Officers were aware of the need to put in place some form of survey, data gathering and monitoring such that this information could then be provided to elected members to allow them to make an informed decision on the need for the continued interventions going forward rather than reacting to anecdotal evidence.
- 3.25 The data collection has been hampered due to the local lockdown that was placed on the city in August and again with further restrictions being introduced recently, not just locally but across the country. Both these interventions have been implemented by the Scottish Government to combat the spread of the virus. The underlying reason given is that where people are in close contact the virus has the opportunity to spread further, and more alarmingly at a rapidly increasing rate of infection.
- 3.26 It is therefore proposed that the programme of works will be further monitored over the coming months and a further report will be brought to the City Growth and Resources Committee on 3 February 2021 for the committee to make a decision on how they wish the programme to proceed. In drafting the report, NHS Grampian's Director of Public Health will be consulted in order to establish the level of transmission of the virus within the city, and the Local Police commander will be consulted in order to establish local levels of compliance with the public health measures in order to inform whether the existing measures are adequate.

Planning Guidance to support Businesses

- 3.27 On the 25 May 2020 the Chief Planner and the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, wrote to local planning authorities encouraging them to take a;

“supportive, pragmatic and flexible approach to temporary developments and changes of use which would enable businesses to diversify or adjust the way they operate as the lockdown eases and many people can get back to work.”

- 3.28 In support of this through SfP Planning, Licensing and Environmental Health services produced guidance for business explaining the temporary relaxation being offered by the Scottish Government and Aberdeen City Licensing Board and setting up a process by which businesses could apply, including a dedicated email address for businesses across the city. To date over 80 business have applied through this process.

Bid Award

- 3.29 On the 26 May 2020, 11 days after submitting the bid, Sustrans awarded the council a £1.76million grant to take forward the Spaces for People measures.

- 3.30 Following the announcement of the award the next steps involved setting up a system of governance to oversee the implementation of the projects outlined within the bid document. Leading up to 5 June 2020 the following number of groups and structures were put into place. These included:-

- Preparation of the terms of reference.
- Setting up the Governance Group (with meetings twice a week) – NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, NESTRANS, and Directors and Chief Officers across Capital, SPP and Operations.
- Setting up the Transport Users and Operators Group – Disability Equity Partnership, three local cycle groups, NESTRANS, First Bus and Stagecoach.
- Setting up the various officer working groups
- Engaging with the Chief Officer City Growth on linking up with the economic recovery plan.

- 3.31 At the Urgent Business Committee held on the 30 of June 2020, officers reported back to committee on the success in relation to the application for funding, the works completed to date and an outline of future works. Again, there was consensus to the extent that the committee was praising officers for their work:

- to thank the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning and her team, and colleagues from NHS Grampian for the work undertaken to date;
- to approve the recommendations contained in the report;
- to note that these are temporary, flexible active travel infrastructure measures to better enable people and businesses to comply with physical distancing requirements during the Covid-19 public health emergency, and to encourage

people back into the city centre and neighbourhood shopping districts by providing a safe environment for all;

- to note the uncertainty of how long physical distancing will remain a key part of life as lockdown restrictions are eased and that this will be determined by NHS and Scottish Government guidance;
- to note that a week-long consultation has been launched on the Beach Active Travel Corridor to allow members of the public to help shape plans for that area; and
- to note the high level cost estimate of developing, implementing and maintaining the temporary measures (excluding schools and public buildings) and instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord, Chief Officer – Finance and the Chief Education Officer, to submit a bid or bids, as appropriate, to the Spaces for People fund to cover costs associated with maintaining existing measures over a longer period of time, adding further required measures to allow safe access to public building and facilities (particularly when schools return), and removing measures as and when they are no longer required.

4. ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

Context

- 4.1 As National Health Service Scotland (NHS) and Public Health Scotland tackled the COVID-19 public health emergency, it is accepted that there was and continues to be an immediate need for Aberdeen City Council, as the local Roads Authority & Traffic Authority, to support the Scottish Government's physical distancing requirements. This will enable people to move safely around the city, whilst mitigating the consequences to transport network.
- 4.2 The Council's response "Creating SPACE to MOVE in Aberdeen" Spaces for People programme, was developed at pace to address the Scottish Government's guidance on travel and physical distancing as the nation emerged from a long period of social and physical restrictions (Phase 0: Lockdown) to control the pandemic.
- 4.3 Consideration of the Aberdeen City context shows that pedestrian and cycling numbers had increased greatly since the beginning of lockdown (Phase 0), by an average of 85%, with certain areas such as the beach seeing numbers rise by 256%. At the same time traffic levels had dropped by over 60% and bus patronage dropped dramatically.
- 4.4 Travel behaviour observed during and post-lockdown suggests significant latent demand for better active travel facilities should be catered for in order to help the Council achieve a range of health, equalities, environmental and transport objectives. As such there is a requirement for the Council to improve and increase active travel infrastructure to support physical distancing, mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the road network, and ensure all citizens have the opportunity to travel in as safe and healthy a manner as possible.

Physical Distancing (2m)

- 4.5 Tragically, over 2,500 people who tested positive for Covid-19 have died in Scotland with Scottish Government and NHS guidance on fighting the pandemic placing physical distancing as one of the most important and effective ways of combating the spread of the virus and avoiding a second wave. The Council is committed to supporting the NHS and the NHS's Public Health service in this regard and helping our residents to physically distance where possible.
- 4.6 Although a gradual easing of lockdown has commenced, with activities resuming in line with the Scottish Government's route map, this resumption of activity, and its associated transport requirements, is taking place in a context where 2 metre physical distancing remains the current advice from the Scottish Government. This has, and will continue to have, significant implications on transport services and the transport network.
- 4.7 The message from both the UK Government and Scottish Government is that people should aim to walk and cycle as much as possible for short journeys, both to protect roadspace and public transport capacity for those making essential, and perhaps longer, journeys, and in recognition that these are the best way of ensuring physical distancing while travelling.

Spaces for People (SfP) Objectives

- 4.8 To address the Scottish Government's instructions on travel and physical distancing the Aberdeen SfP programme's desired outcome is to allow the public to move about safely and travel efficiently, on the public road network.
- 4.9 To enable this to be achieved the SfP programme has the following objectives:
- Provide sufficient capacity to allow the city to function as the Scottish Government's COVID-19 restrictions & guidance alter (physical distancing);
 - Enable safer use of the network by all modes;
 - Enable citizens to pursue a healthy lifestyle;
 - Enable economic recovery;
 - Provide equality of access to the network;
 - Manage ACC exposure to COVID-19 associated risks;
 - Ensure interventions are so far as reasonably practical aligned with the objectives of the Local Transport Strategy (LTS).

5. HIGH LEVEL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 Taking cognisance of overarching Scottish Government guidance, a number of high level design principles were then developed for SfP intervention concept design purposes. A selection of scenarios, with physical distancing consideration is set out in Appendix 2.

- 5.2 To aid the detailed design of the SfP interventions, taking cognisance of any local constraints, a list of indicative design requirements was then considered. Refer to Appendix 3.
- 5.3 This led to the City/district centre and active travel interventions which have been implemented.

6. CITY CENTRE / DISTRICT CENTRE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Introduction

- 6.1 In the case of the busier city/district centre locations, taking account of the high level design principles, and indicative design requirements as set out in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively, the overriding design rationale was to provide sufficient space for walking and queueing pedestrians to observe physical distancing guidance.
- 6.2 This was achieved primarily through enabling safer use of the road carriageway by pedestrians. The committee should also bear in mind that this consideration and decision-making was carried out when the country was in full lockdown.
- 6.3 This inevitably required the temporary extension of the footway into the road carriageway.
- 6.4 The design development of the key implemented interventions is set out in Appendix 4.

Parklets and Street Furniture

- 6.5 Across the City Centre work with the Disability Equity Partnership (DEP) saw the introduction of Parklets/Footway Extensions/Bus Stop Platforms. The development and reasoning for their introduction is laid out in Appendix 5.
- 6.6 The Committee should note that Sustrans have supported the inclusion of the parklets to aid physical distancing and recognise the other benefits which they afford. They have been very complimentary of the approach adopted by the Council, such that they are currently seeking to undertake a case study on the parklets, the intention being to share this information with other local authorities across Scotland.

7. ACTIVE TRAVEL AND RECREATION INTERVENTIONS

Introduction

- 7.1 In the context of paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 above the Council has a duty to ensure that the people encouraged to cycle by the Scottish Government can do so safely.

- 7.2 Improving active travel provision is the optimum solution to the safe and efficient movement of people while physical distancing remains the default Scottish Government guidance. There are a limited small number of high-quality, comprehensive cycle routes in the city.
- 7.3 To address this, the Spaces for People programme looked to deliver a series of continuous, high-quality temporary active travel corridors linking key origins and destinations which allowed people (including children and novice cyclists) to cycle safely and in accordance with the Scottish Government physical distancing guidelines.
- 7.4 Aside from potentially encouraging an increase in car usage, the risks of not improving cycle facilities are that people are instead forced to cycle on busily trafficked roads, which some may not be equipped to navigate, thus putting themselves and others in danger.
- 7.5 Not providing adequate infrastructure could also encourage people to cycle on footways, resulting in conflicts with pedestrians, especially the vulnerable, and inappropriate distancing.
- 7.6 To offset these risks corridors were identified for the introduction of measures. This was based on current and potential demand both recreational and commuting, including an analysis of the origins and destinations of short trips (< 5 miles) into and out of the city which could in many cases be undertaken by active travel.
- 7.7 The active travel interventions are set out in Appendix 6.

8. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- 8.1 From the outset both within the bid application and the committee report to UBC in June 2020, it was noted that consultation, in the way it is traditionally undertaken by the council would not be possible. This was due to the speed at which the Spaces for People measures had to be delivered to help address the national public health emergency and to align with the Scottish Government's COVID Route Map. **It should be again noted that at this point the country was in complete lockdown.**
- 8.2 Prior to the UBC meeting on 30 June 2020, cognisance was taken that the Scottish Government Route Map showed the planned move from Phase 1 to Phase 2, was expected to be announced on 18 June 2020. National Records of Scotland data shows that as at 21 June 2020, 4,119 deaths had been registered in Scotland where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate. It was against this background that officers were working to implement Spaces for People measures.
- 8.3 Recognising the tight timeline and that public health safety was paramount, advance consultation was difficult, and in some cases, impossible. This led to the position where post installation engagement was used to refine or alter the implemented Space for People measures. Indeed given the infection data

available at the time normal consultation was simply inappropriate as it could have potentially risked the health of people and also breached Scottish Government guidance at the time.

- 8.4 In all cases the interventions were shared with the Emergency Services, Transports Users and Operators Group and discussed separately with the Transport Operators.
- 8.5 In summary, throughout the period since grant award, three levels of consultation/engagement have been undertaken to date for the SfP work.

City Centre Engagement

For the City Centre interventions, extensive consultation was impossible in advance and engagement took the form of modifying the interventions once they had been installed. This was achieved through engagement with business and the community council.

Rosemount, George Street and Torry

For Rosemount, George Street and Torry engagement was possible in advance to varying degrees with the Community Council, traders and local ward members.

Active Travel Corridors

For the active travel corridors, Bridge of Don to the City Centre (Beach) and Hazlehead to the City Centre a public consultation was possible showing the intervention options and allowing feedback to be gathered. These were online consultations and were publicised on social media and in press releases.

- 8.6 In addition to the site-specific consultation/engagement there has been an extensive amount of information shared with Group Leaders and Councillors. This was delivered through a series of regular weekly meetings.
- 8.7 Where time allowed the engagement was conducted using a number of methods such as;
- Sustrans map-based portal
 - Citizens Space Survey
 - Community Council Forum
 - Virtual Community Council meetings
 - Virtual meetings with Local Trader Groups
 - Specific engagement with bus operators
 - Specific engagement with taxi operators
 - Aberdeen Inspired (City Centre)
 - Dedicated email addresses were set up for businesses and stakeholder groups
 - Extensive use of the dedicated SfP email address for lodged inquires and responses.

- 8.8 The announcement by the Scottish government on 18 June 2020 to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2, allowed more site visits and face to face meetings (whilst still maintaining 2 metre physical distancing) to be conducted. This took the form of meeting with the general public, business owners and community Council representatives.
- 8.9 Gathered information was shared and communicated using.
- Press Releases
 - Social media
 - The Council website showed updated maps but not limited to blue badge, bus stops, taxi rank, school drop off and pick up
 - Count information such as vehicle, pedestrian and cycle
 - Letter drops
 - City Event Team
- 8.10 Following implementation of the SfP measures, engagement has continued during the monitoring phase, through feedback from stakeholders along with arranged walkabouts at specific locations.
- 8.11 Following further consideration this engagement has helped refine each of the interventions where they could benefit business without impacting on the primary goal of protecting public health and supporting the NHS in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. WORKS

- 9.1 Each of the Spaces for People measures have required changes to road infrastructure throughout. Predominantly these temporary measures have included the use of traffic cylinders which are a non-invasive measure and provide a robust and durable alternative to traffic cones. Where possible new traffic signs have been installed on existing infrastructure, however when this has not been possible temporary bases have been utilised in the carriageway and retention sockets have been installed in footways. The retention sockets will minimise removal costs whilst also providing an asset for potential future requirements.
- 9.2 It is worth noting that officers experienced serious difficulties to procure additional materials due to the Scottish and National shortage of such materials, in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic and that nationally all Local Authorities were all looking for them at the same time.
- 9.3 Where considered unnecessary and a potential barrier to physical distancing pedestrian guardrail has been removed, retention sockets have similarly been installed at each of these locations to facilitate the quick reinstatement when the physical distancing measures are removed.

- 9.4 The introduction of footway extensions across the city centre has required the installation of additional temporary traffic signal poles, heads and push button with nearside indicators.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The table below shows the financial position as at the end of Quarter 2 2020/21.

Gross Budget	Spend to Date
£1.760m	£0.865m

Further details of expenditure incurred are included in Appendix 7.

- 10.2 Grant funding of £0.511 million has been received because of the first claim submitted to Sustrans. A second claim of £0.319 million is being prepared for submission.
- 10.3 Committee instruction 2.2 of this report will be crucial in ensuring the future spend complies with the instruction of the UBC committee in June 2020 not to exceed the funding awarded for Spaces for People.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 While there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report, the funding will be required to be spent in accordance with the legal agreement for the grant award. To date Sustrans have confirmed their satisfaction with the projects that the grant has been spent on and have paid the first invoice. Sustrans are being kept up to date with all progress and expenditure.

12. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Public harm, allowing the COVID-19 virus to spread with the associated high risk of death through contacting the virus.	H	The majority of interventions are now in place working within the funding envelope. A task force group has been set up to manage the programme with daily meetings to monitor progress and address any issues – drawn from senior staff across the Council.

	Failure to deliver the Socio-Economic Rescue Plan 2020/21	H	Close collaboration across other Clusters.
Compliance	Officers breach grant conditions.	L	The majority of the interventions have now been completed within the scope of the original grant award. Funds for maintenance and removal have been held back.
	Failure to comply with national Covid-19 legislation and guidance	L	Comply with legislation and guidance.
Operational	Insufficient staff to undertake the full programme.	L	The majority of the interventions are in place the risk is now limited to maintenance and removal.
Financial	Maintenance and removal cost exceed remaining budget.	L	Costs will be monitored on a regular basis.
Reputational	Programme not delivered.	L	Working within the budget envelope the maximum number of interventions have been delivered.
Environment / Climate	Air quality deteriorates and carbon emissions increase as more people start to travel, using the car more often due to advice to minimise use of public transport which will have reduced capacity for some time.	M	Performance of the road network will be closely monitored, including reviewing air quality data that is collected locally.

13. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	In addition to responding to the current public health emergency and imminent easing of lockdown requirements, this programme of temporary Covid-19 public health measures supports the delivery of the Economy Policy Statement 4. Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens Place Policy Statements 2. Support efforts to develop the Energetica corridor 3. Refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review; promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport 5. Commit extra funding to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city. The temporary Covid-19 public health measures actively support and encourage active and sustainable travel, in and across the City Centre and support maintenance and safe operation of the strategic road network enabling people to comply with physical distancing requirements.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The programme of temporary Covid-19 public health measures supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 1 – 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026, and Stretch Outcome 2 – 90% of working people in living wage employment by 2026 by supporting the lockdown easing measures which will enable the economy to recover and people to get back to work where they cannot work from home. The temporary Covid-19 public health measures will enable people to move around by walking and cycling where possible, while protecting access to public transport and enabling compliance with physical distancing requirements.</p> <p>The temporary Covid-19 public health measures will also support businesses re-opening by providing additional space for customers and create space, where possible, for outdoor seating and leisure activities.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The programme of temporary Covid-19 public health measures within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 11 – Healthy life expectancy is five years longer by 2026. The

	<p>temporary Covid-19 public health measures actively support and encourage active and sustainable travel and help reduce environmental pollutants which are harmful to human health. The temporary Covid-19 public health measures are also designed to enable physical distancing while moving around, thereby minimising the risk of Covid-19 transmission and the likelihood of a second wave of the disease.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The temporary Covid-19 public health measures support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 14 – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate, and Stretch Outcome 15 - 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026. The temporary Covid-19 public health measures improve and/ or create active and sustainable travel infrastructure.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	<p>The temporary Covid-19 public health measures support the delivery of the Regional and Local Transport Strategies, Strategic and Local Development Plans, Regional Economic Strategy and Action Plan, Health and Transport Action Plan, Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Air Quality Action Plan and Powering Aberdeen by encouraging more people to walk and cycle to work, health care and other services and destinations and as a result of the public health emergency, to be able to do this whilst also complying with physical distancing requirements. This is particularly important due to the imminent lockdown easing which will see more people travelling to work and other destinations as businesses start to re-open. Although bus travel will remain significantly reduced for some time, the temporary Covid-19 public health measures also help to ensure that this mode can still be used safely too.</p>
<p>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</p>	<p>The measures directly contribute to Public Health and Scottish Government requirements and legislation relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and in particular support physical distancing in public spaces. They will also support businesses as they start to re-open in accordance with the lockdown easing phases. The temporary Covid-19 public health measures will also contribute towards the</p>

	delivery of the Scottish National Transport Strategy (NTS 2), the UK and Scottish legislation on Air Quality Standards and Objectives, and Climate Change Acts.
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14. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

16. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: COVID-19 – Framework for Decision Making

Appendix 2: High Level Design Principles

Appendix 3: Design Factors

Appendix 4: City/District Centre Interventions

Appendix 5: Parklets

Appendix 6: Active Travel Interventions

Appendix 7: Financial Breakdown

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APPENDIX 1 COVID-19 – Framework for Decision Making

‘Scotland’s route map through and out of the crisis’

The route map can be accessed by clicking on the link below;

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

Primary Legislation

- Coronavirus Act 2020
- Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020

Secondary Legislation

Main Regulations

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020

Additional Temporary Measures Regulations

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020

Aberdeen City Regulations

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Aberdeen City) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Aberdeen City) Amendment Regulations 2020

Previous Main Regulations (Now Revoked)

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2 – No.13) Regulations 2020

International Travel

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2 – No. 18) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for Passengers Travelling to Scotland) Regulations 2020

Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax

- The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus Reliefs) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Amendment (No. 3) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus Reliefs) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020

Commencement and Expiry of Provisions

- The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Commencement No. 1) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Acts (Early Expiry of Provisions) Regulations 2020
- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Acts (Amendment of Expiry Dates) Regulations 2020

Planning and Land

- The Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Supplementary Provision) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- The Town and Country Planning (Emergency Period and Extended Period) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

Education

- The Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Education (Deemed Decisions) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020

Social Work and Care

- The Adults with Incapacity (Ethics Committee) (Scotland) (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2020
- The Social Care Staff Support Fund (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Care Homes Emergency Intervention Orders (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 (Suspension: Adults with Incapacity) Regulations 2020

Local Government

- The Local Government Finance (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Directions by Local Authorities) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

Elections

- The Representation of the People (Absent Voting at Local Government Elections) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
- The Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

Housing

- The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment (Coronavirus) Order 2020
- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 (Eviction from Dwelling-houses) (Notice Periods) Modification Regulations 2020
- The Rent Arrears Pre-Action Requirements (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

APPENDIX 2: High Level Design Principles

Scottish Physical Distancing Guidance

Current Scottish Government advice is members of the public should distance themselves from one another by a minimum of 2 metres when in public places, known as Physical Distancing.

Pedestrian Movement and Queueing

The absolute minimum corridor width required for an able-bodied pedestrian is 750mm. The Scottish Government's Spaces for People design guidance states a 3m minimum footway width is required to maintain physical distancing for two people passing each other. If 2m Physical Distancing is taken as centre to centre of two people passing each other the absolute minimum footway width requirement is 2.5m for two-way single file flow, assuming some kerb overhang.

Queueing Pedestrians

Scottish Government's Spaces for People design guidance states additional space will be required to facilitate queueing outside shops. The same principle applies for any queueing such as, but not limited to bus stops, and hospitality/business entrances and key road crossing points.

For the scenario where there is single queueing along a building façade with space to allow Physical Distancing for people passing each other in opposite direction, this will require a 5m width of footway. If 2m Physical Distancing is taken as centre to centre of two people passing each other, the absolute minimum footway width requirement is 4.5m for two way single file flow, assuming some kerb overhang.

If queueing away from a building façade is to be considered the addition of segregation width to traffic for comfort and perceived safety will need to be considered. This would require the temporary extension of the footway into the road carriageway.

Cycle Movement

The Scottish Government's Spaces for People design guidance states that where with-flow cycle lanes are used, lanes should be as wide as possible and be an absolute minimum width of 1.5m excluding any separation feature.

The Scottish Government's Spaces for People design guidance states that where bi-directional cycle tracks are used, lanes should be as wide as possible and be an absolute minimum width of 3 metre excluding any separation feature plus an additional 250mm if traffic lane delineators (cones/cylinders) are used as a separation feature.

To deliver this outcome a range of design factors were considered, and these are laid out in Appendix 3 for all the interventions that the programme has to date implemented.

APPENDIX 3 Design Factors

To aid development of the SfP people interventions, taking cognisance of the local constraints and Scottish Government guidance the following list of indicative design requirements were considered:

Carriageways: Traffic flows/speeds and routing choice

- Approaches routes to city centre, reduce the speed and volume to through traffic
- Make city centre and adjacent centres the destination rather than a through route whilst maintaining access to retail, residents and business.
- Restrain motor vehicle flows; modal filtering restricted route choice/ banned turns
- Restrain motor vehicle speeds; speed limit reductions, traffic calming
- Retail and hospitality areas, reduce the speed and volume of traffic passing through and provide additional space:
- Busiest retail and hospitality areas, (north/ south shopping centre axis) reduce the speed and volume of traffic passing through and provide additional space:

Footways

- Widen existing footways by occupying the road carriageway and designating additional pedestrian areas with lining and/or traffic cylinder demarcation
- Improve carriageway crossing points by creating queueing space, and
- Consider full pedestrianisation.

Bus Stops

- Busy bus stops provide additional space for waiting and spread the demand:
- Close congested stops
- Increase areas for waiting by widening existing footways by occupying the road carriageway and designating additional pedestrian areas with lining and/or traffic cylinder demarcation
- Spread the bus services over additional stops to separate busy services

Active Travel

- Improve cycle access within the city centre
- Provide pedestrian and cycle only zones
- Provide additional cycle parking
- Provide additional cycle servicing stations

Public Transport

- Maintain access to efficient public transport
- Additional bus stops for diverted services

- Maintain or improve kerb upstand height at bus stops
- Retain adequate availability of taxi waiting areas

Parking Requirements

- Loading and unloading
- Maintain an adequate level of disabled parking

Other General Factors

- Maintain equality of access to the road network
- Protect existing footways from obstruction
- Maintain pedestrian crossing infrastructure (tactile paving/ push buttons) where expected
- Use suitable contrasting materials for temporary infrastructure;
- Legible understandable design
- Improve waiting opportunities

APPENDIX 4: City/District Centre Interventions

1. City Centre

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Centre has two axes for shopping, east and west along Union Street, and north and south between the Bon Accord and Union Square centres. These axes cross at the mid-section of Union Street between Bridge Street and Market Street. This section links directly to areas of pedestrian priority including the Green, Belmont Street/ Back Wynd and St Nicholas Street. It sees the peak flows of pedestrians within the City Centre. Footways are narrow in relation to the volume of pedestrians expected in the area, with queuing at bus stops, retailers and pedestrian crossing points adding to the conflict.
- 1.2 The pedestrianisation of this section of road addresses those concerns and provides space for citizens to move safely about the area.
- 1.3 Within Aberdeen City, local and national bus services travel through and to the City Centre. Public transport provides necessary transport opportunities for essential journeys supporting the return of the economy and education. It is also the only form of transport for a third of the City's households who don't have access to a car for journeys that are too long to walk and where cycling is not an option. With a limited number of alternative routes and a recognised demand for public transport it was important to maintain access to public transport in the City Centre therefore routing was diverted only where the pedestrianisation was put in place.
- 1.4 Bus, taxi and authorised vehicle restriction was introduced on Union Street to the east of Market Street to remove unnecessary through traffic from Union Street and to facilitate the bus route diversions and the relocation of bus stops onto Market Street.
- 1.5 For the section of Union Street, west of Bridge Street to Holburn Street additional space was set aside for pedestrians by allowing their occupation of the outer lanes of road carriageway. This meant buses and general traffic are required to share one lane with little additional space for passing stopped vehicles. Right turn bans were installed to reduce any holdups to public transport and to reduce the desirability of the route for those travelling through the surrounding area. With access to off street parking maintained around the City Centre, the need to drive through it is minimised, allowing more space for pedestrians.
- 1.6 There are implications of introducing these changes and one which was recognised was vehicles transferring from Union Street to the Justice Mill Lane/ Langstane Place corridor. A point 'no entry' was installed to restrict west to east movement along the corridor whilst maintaining access to the area.
- 1.7 As well as enhancing the pedestrianised feel of the area, the extensive array of hospitality venues within the Belmont Street/ Back Wynd area approached the Council seeking if they could expand their businesses onto sections of carriageway throughout the site. In order to accommodate this, it was necessary to remove all but essential traffic from this area, which is usually a restricted traffic environment in any case. This meant the relocation of a taxi

rank, disabled parking and changing access arrangement to private off street car parks.

- 1.8 Schoolhill runs between the two parts of Bon Accord centre and forms a key link in the north/ south retail axis in the City Centre. The existing crossing point is narrow and restricts the flow of pedestrians. The pedestrianisation of the section of Schoolhill between Flourmill Lane and Back Wynd allows pedestrians coming Union Street, safe and freeflowing options to walk through St Nicholas Street or the Belmont Street area without conflict with vehicles. Access is maintained for deliveries outwith hours and a loading bay was provided to the west of Back Wynd to assist businesses in the vicinity, particularly those expanding delivery options for their customers. To provide the additional footway space and loading area, the majority of the route was made one way eastbound further reducing vehicular conflict.
- 1.9 A one-way restriction has been introduced onto Chapel Street within the west end reducing carriageway space requirements and creating opportunity for further footway widenings, alterations to the parking and loading restrictions were also introduced in the west end to create opportunity to physically distance in these areas.

2. George Street

- 2.1 George Street is a key walking corridor from the north to the city centre, busy retail area, heavily residential and is in close proximity to the North East Scotland College, located at the Gallowgate.
- 2.2 The intervention focus was to provide extra footway width for walking and queuing at the retail and catering venues. Queuing was also observed at bus stops and the food bank.
- 2.3 On street parking was maintained due to the limited-on street parking provisions within the area and the importance to business. Once additional parking, queuing and walking space was identified the remaining carriageway was too narrow to accommodate two lanes of traffic therefore a one way southbound with a contraflow cycle lane northbound was introduced between St Andrews Street and Spring Garden.
- 2.4 Two-way traffic was maintained on the section between Spring Garden and Hutcheon Street as parking was relocated to side streets. Maberly Street footways were widened as this is a popular pedestrian route to Skene Square School.
- 2.5 The route was made one way eastbound to accommodate the extra pedestrian space whilst maintaining access from the west to the lower section of George Street.
- 2.6 These changes required a reallocation of parking/loading permissions along the length under consideration.

3. Rosemount

- 3.1 Rosemount Place is a contained local retail area, serving a surrounding substantive residential area and nearby schools. It has a high volume of small footprint shops, with limited access, which meant that queuing frequently occurred, therefore footway widening was the focus.
- 3.2 The introduction of footway widening meant that normal two-way traffic flow could not be accommodated along its full length due to existing carriageway width constraints. The solution was to introduce a one-way section eastbound combined with a contraflow bus and cycle lane running westbound.
- 3.3 These changes required a reallocation of parking/loading permissions along Rosemount Place which includes a section of vehicular parking at the east end between the cycle lane and the running carriageway.
- 3.4 As noted since implementation, post monitoring and further engagement has continued which has led to some refinement of the original proposals.

4. Torry

- 4.1 The section under consideration was along Victoria Road between Grampian Road and South Esplanade West which was identified as a key walking and cycling route to/from the city centre combined with a local busy retail centre
- 4.2 This busy pedestrian route with high volume bus stops and local supermarkets was provided with footway widenings, loading bays and enabled a short southbound cycle lane to be added through the SfP area.
- 4.3 To accommodate the changes a small amount of vehicular parking was removed in the immediate area.

APPENDIX 5: Active Travel Interventions

1. City Centre to Bridge of Don Active Travel Corridor (via the Beach Esplanade)

Ellon Road

- 1.1 As part of the development of the Beach active travel corridor a number of different options have been considered for the Ellon Road section. The closing of the infrastructure gap between the end of the current shared cycle track on Ellon Road, at Hucheon Gardens, and the new bi-directional cycle lane on the Esplanade has been the focus.
- 1.2 Two alternative arrangements with the introduction of cycle lanes have been reviewed and modelled using traffic signal junction simulation software by Consultant Siemens.
- 1.3 The modelling showed that any benefits would be short term and recognising the increasing volumes of traffic, there would be poor junction performance leading to extensive queue lengths in the near future.
- 1.4 For this reason any further intervention was stopped along this section.

Beach Esplanade Section

- 1.5 The Esplanade has seen a significant increase in recreational cycling, including young and novice cyclists. To support physical distancing requirements and cater for this recreational demand, new cycle lanes were provided predominantly beside the current footway, by taking space from the road, and making them usable in both directions with minimal interaction with general traffic.
- 1.6 The arrangement is commonly referred to as a bi-directional mandatory lane.
- 1.7 In general, opportunities to park a car along the Esplanade are not being removed but relocated from the kerbside to alongside the new cycle lane. The new agreement still allows access to the beach by car as before and an improved safer experience for those who walk and cycle along the Esplanade.

Beach Boulevard to Links Road

- 1.8 For parking on the section between Beach Boulevard and Links Road, to preserve the angled parking, including a number of disabled bays, the bi-directional lane is placed on the city side of the road.

- 1.9 Due to the remaining width and length of this section the road was made one-way southbound to ensure the efficient flow of traffic. Southbound was selected as it is the route for a public bus service.

Beach Boulevard

- 1.10 As the route forms a connection along a dual carriageway upgrading the existing with-flow advisory cycle lanes to mandatory lanes with targeted segregation was the most appropriate solution. No parking opportunities have been removed as part of the project.

2. A9119 Active Travel Corridor (Hazlehead to City Centre)

- 2.1 The A9119 (formerly B9119) corridor between the Hazlehead Roundabout and the City Centre (via Queens Road and Carden Place) is identified as a priority route in the revised Roads Hierarchy. As a priority route, it should function as a safe and efficient corridor for all modes of transport.
- 2.2 A number of route options were considered taking account of recent historical studies, new surveys, consultation with various stakeholders and linkage with schools along the route. The preferred route option is currently at design stage awaiting implementation
- 2.3 The intervention would see the introduction of new cycle lanes either side of the existing carriageway along most of the corridor length extending from Kings Gate along Queens Road, Carden Place, and Skene Street to Rosemount Viaduct.
- 2.4 Further consideration is currently ongoing on whether this intervention should be implemented.

APPENDIX 6: Parklets

- 1.1 The introduction of the coned areas of carriageway in the city centre to increase the width of what are historic and often narrow footways provided a larger pedestrian area for necessary social distancing. Whilst able-bodied people could use both the existing and extended footway areas our advice, through the Disability Equity Partnership (DEP), was that people with mobility issues should continue to use the footways with the existing crossing points maintained.
- 1.2 Following implementation it was noticeable that the majority of people were not confidently using the claimed area of carriageway as a footway, which would be a challenge to traditional behaviour in environments where traditionally vehicles took precedence, as well as the coned areas being used by some cyclists who should have remained in the operational carriageway.
- 1.3 The concept of the timber parklets, as multi-purpose footway extensions, was introduced to provide an at grade extension to the footway so that anyone moving away from others could on occasion step onto them, rather than to step down onto the claimed carriageway, and that short sections of bench and greenery were introduced in the city centre to make places more operationally attractive.
- 1.4 In some locations the parklets provide opportunities for temporary pavement café-style seating clear of the existing footways in order to support some businesses re-opening and signalling that some commercial activity was returning after the first lockdown restrictions eased.
- 1.5 The design and installation of the timber parklets was undertaken in-house and with the Chair of the DEP as a critical friend in order that the simple module worked in different settings. Manufacturing was undertaken locally, latterly using Building Services apprentices, and with the timber decking, anti-slip and planting procured in challenging lockdown circumstances.
- 1.6 Following the phased introduction of the parklets DEP representatives worked with the Council's Spaces for People team in trialling the parklet module as a temporary bus boarding platform, with the results showing the parklet module as a more successful alternative to installing metal ramps. Thereafter, the roll-out of the temporary bus boarding platforms and associated totem signage on Union Street ensured the same suite of temporary street furniture in design and materials making the infrastructure clearly recognisable and user-friendly.
- 1.7 From early July until mid- August, 146 No. parklets have been installed in clusters along Union Street to the King St junction, at the 'west end' in Rose, Chapel and Thistle Streets, as well as in Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate where their functionality, as well as grouping with new bicycle stands, to add value to the city centre in the context of changing operational circumstances.

- 1.8 A very small number of parklets have been re-located following further consultation, however following the first phase installation requests were received from traders and feedback on their use is positive. Sustrans, as Spaces for People funder gave approval for the principle of the parklets and have, following installation, requested that a case-study of them and other measures introduced in the city, is made to share nationally as innovative practice.
- 1.9 Following the uplift of the Spaces for People temporary measures it is planned that the parklets are re-used in locations across the city where their different modules can be used to support a number of community-based initiatives.

APPENDIX 7 Financial Breakdown

1. Additional Financial Information

- 1.1 The Spaces for People funding is available to pay for design, installation, maintenance and removal of measures in support of the objectives outlined in section 4.9 of the report.
- 1.2 Costs incurred to date include the design works for measures, purchase of the equipment and materials required and the staff time involved in installation and maintenance. The project has required input and support from officers in Strategic Place Planning, Capital and Operations and Protective Services.
- 1.3 The financial position of the project as at the end of Quarter 2 2020/21 can be represented as:

<u>Spaces for People</u>	Budget	Actual	Further	
	£'000	Expenditure	Committed	Uncommitted
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Programme Management (includes Design)	275	234	0	41
Parklets - Purchase & Installation	300	135	169	(4)
Miscellaneous	115	0	78	37
Traffic Management Works	550	495	50	5
Maintenance Measures (including winter)	300	0	300	0
Contingency & Project End Costs	220	0	0	220
Position as at 8 October 2020	1,760	865	597	298

- 1.4 Programme Management covers the technical staff time from all services.
- 1.5 The expenditure for the Parklets includes design, procurement and installation.
- 1.6 Miscellaneous expenditure includes spend for Cycle Stands and Data Collection.
- 1.7 Traffic Management works includes all costs related to the installation of the measures involved, including Labour, Plant and Materials. Significant items of material expenditure includes (but are not limited to):
- (barriers £25k, bollards & traffic cylinders £90k, signage & poles £32k and traffic signals £37k)