

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance & Resources
DATE	10 February 2026
EXEMPT	Appendix 2 is exempt under paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	City Centre Lighting and Wayfinding
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/26/021
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Claire McArthur
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress a programme of projects in the City Centre to be delivered using net surplus from Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the funding received from Transport Scotland via Tier 2 of the Bus Infrastructure Fund in July 2025 to deliver additional bus stopping points and improved passenger facilities at bus stops on Guild Street;
- 2.2 Agree the use of £300,000 of Bus Lane Enforcement surplus funding approved by the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in June 2025 be focused on improvements to Carmelite Street as a way to compliment the public transport focused improvements on Guild Street and improve the pedestrian experience (journey and wayfinding) between Union Square and Union Street;
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer - Capital to progress all necessary approvals, permissions, licenses, agreements, and consents required to develop and implement the Carmelite Street proposals as outlined in Appendix 1;
- 2.4 To further improve wayfinding in this area, agree the £200,000 Bus Lane Enforcement surplus funding approved by the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in June 2025 be focused on illumination around the new Aberdeen Market building – specifically Carnegie's Brae and East Green; and,
- 2.5 Approve the illumination proposals for Carnegie's Brae and East Green at Appendix 2, and instruct the Chief Officer – Operations to deliver the project once resurfacing works to Carnegie's Brae have been completed.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. The Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) fund is generated from the net surplus of penalty charge notices from bus lane offences after operational costs have been covered. This surplus can only be used for projects identified as helping to meet the objectives of the Local Transport Strategy, as per the requirements of the Bus Lane Contraventions (Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.
- 3.2. In June 2025 the Net Zero, Transport and Environment Committee approved BLE surplus for the following projects:
 - An initial allowance of £300,000 to allow officers across Strategic Place Planning, Capital and Operations to determine what interim measures could be taken forward to enhance the pedestrian environment around Guild Street in particular, and to improve journeys and wayfinding between Union Square and Union Street. This could also include exploring additional bus stops on Guild Street.
 - An initial allowance of £200,000 to be released for officers to work with partners on investigating and developing suitable lighting projects in the city centre.
- 3.3. In agreeing these projects, Committee noted that project proposals would subsequently be reported to the relevant Committee for consideration prior to any works taking place. This report to the Finance & Resources Committee provides an update on progress and to seek approval to progress towards delivery.

Project Proposals

- 3.4. The Guild Street area has benefitted from additional road capacity for buses through the introduction of recent bus priority in Aberdeen City Centre. This has enabled additional bus stopping at this high demand area. The bus stops on Guild Street provide direct access to Union Square and Aberdeen Rail and Bus Stations and also support interchange and access to health with connections to the Foresterhill Health Campus, as well as a range of other destinations across the city.
- 3.5. In July 2025 Transport Scotland announced funding to all local authorities from Tier 1 of the Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF). The BIF is the Scottish Government's primary fund for the development, design and construction of bus infrastructure, with Tier 1 funding awarded on a per capita basis based on levels of transport poverty. Aberdeen City Council was awarded £50,000 from BIF Tier 1 for the 2025/26 financial year, and an additional £995,000 was awarded to the North East Bus Alliance for wider regional improvements under BIF Tier 2. Officers in the Council's Passenger Transport Unit are, through discussions with bus operators, utilising this funding to enable the provision of additional bus stopping points and improved passenger facilities at bus stops on Guild Street.

3.6. The works to enhance bus stopping provisions are detailed below and are expected to be complete by the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

- North Side (Tivoli Side) – The current shelter will be replaced with a shelter reallocated from Union Street Central. On installation this will be installed to the east of the current location, to be more central between Stirling Street and Exchange Street, which will allow for improved two buses stopping and boarding/alighting at one time at either side of the shelter. A bus stop pole is also planned for the north side, which would be located around 15m east of Exchange Street to allow further bus stopping.
- South Side (Bus Station Side) – The current shelter will be relocated a couple of metres to the east of its current location. This is to ensure a sufficient gap for a new stop. A second bus shelter (bus stop) will be located to the west of the existing stop, which will provide two bus stops also on the south site. A shelter already removed from Union Street Central will be installed as the second stop.

3.7. In order to compliment these improvements, a proposal has been developed under the Territory Planning Agreement with Hub North Scotland Ltd to consider options to best utilise the Bus Lane Enforcement surplus funding of £300,000 approved by the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in June 2025 to enhance the pedestrian environment and improve journeys and wayfinding in the area. The proposed project focuses on early activation works to improve the pedestrian experience and wayfinding on Carmelite Street, one of the primary routes identified to better connect Guild Street / Union Square and Union Street within the City Centre Masterplan streetscape improvement programme (as approved at the February 2024 Council meeting).

3.8. The proposals are contained in Appendix 1, and consist of the following:

- Carmelite Street (North Section only)
 - Repairs / cleaning to existing planters, enhancing existing planting
 - Repairs to paving surfaces
 - Catenary lighting
 - Enhanced wayfinding

3.9. Advantages of these proposals include:

- Provides a clearer linkage from Guild Street and Union Square to the new Market and Union Street
- Street furniture can be moved / relocated if more permanent works come through in future phases of streetscaping
- Avoids intrusive works, e.g. to below ground services and utilities
- Proposals remain sympathetic to the approved Masterplan
- Would avoid significant disruption to the surrounding network relative to the size of the project

- 3.10. In relation to the additional £200,000 released at the June 2025 Net Zero, Transport and Environment Committee meeting specifically for lighting improvements, it is proposed to focus on illumination around the new Aberdeen Market building – specifically Carnegie's Brae and East Green. If agreed, the works would complement the works to Carmelite Street detailed above and help deliver a more attractive pedestrian route between Union Street, East Green, and the Market development.
- 3.11. The proposal includes installing new energy-efficient lighting along Carnegie's Brae and East Green, removing redundant fittings and repainting the tunnel ceilings to enhance aesthetics and the impact of new lighting equipment. The lighting design would allow flexibility for colour changes and timing adjustments to support local cultural venue operations and city centre events, creating a vibrant and welcoming environment aligned with the City Centre Masterplan. The works would also align with the intention from Officers in Operations to undertake resurfacing works in this area. This resurfacing is programmed for spring / summer 2026, once repairs to the columns supporting St Nicholas Street have been completed. The resurfacing works will be delivered via external funding from Transport Scotland (Tier 1 Active Travel Infrastructure Fund).
- 3.12. The Council's City Centre Manager has engaged with businesses in the local area on the proposed improvements, and feedback from business has generally been supportive. Police Scotland are also supportive of the addition of enhanced lighting in the area, and the Council's Community Safety officers are also broadly content with the proposals, with evidence consistently showing that well-designed lighting improvements help reduce opportunities for antisocial behaviour and crime, while also improving feelings of safety for those using the area after dark. Liaison with Aberdeen Inspired has also taken place, with their view being that the West End of the city would also benefit from the introduction of additional decorative lighting.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The report CR&E/25/140 – Bus Lane Enforcement and Low Emission Zone Project 2025/26 to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in June 2025 confirmed that the amount of BLE surplus that had been generated by the end of the 2024/25 financial year was just over £2.6 million. Funds are available to support the £0.5 million investment in the two city centre measures outlined.
- 4.2 Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF) grant funding from Transport Scotland is only in place until the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Tier 1 Active Travel Infrastructure Fund grant funding is allocated to local authorities from Transport Scotland on an annual basis as a direct award.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Any work that is recommended to property not owned by the Council will require effective dialogue and the owner's consent before it can commence. Other local

authority consents, such as planning permission and listed building consent, may also be required for works to buildings.

- 5.2. Any changes to vehicular movement on the road network are subject to statutory processes.
- 5.3. The Bus Lane Contraventions (Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 require that any net surplus arising from BLE penalty charge notices, once scheme operational costs have been covered, must be used by the local authority to facilitate the achievement of policies in that authority's Local Transport Strategy.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Projects within the BLE programmes have a focus on improving conditions for sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport) and look to encourage more usage of these forms of transport. More people travelling sustainably means fewer carbon emissions and less air pollution from transport.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Level Risk	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Delivery of projects approved through the BLE support a number of strategic priorities, in terms of a sustainable economy, a sustainable transport system, the continued health and prosperity of our citizens, reductions in	Approve the projects for BLE spend as detailed in this report. Continue to work collaboratively to achieve City Centre Masterplan delivery and wider economic advantages.	M	Yes

	<p>carbon emissions, improved air quality and a high-quality environment. Failure to deliver measures where there is evidence of their effectiveness could undermine the Council's ability to realise these aspirations.</p>			
Compliance	<p>There are risks that the Council would not be complying with the requirements of the Bus Lane Contraventions (Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 if surplus income was not applied to Local Transport Strategy improvement projects.</p>	<p>Approve the projects for BLE spend as detailed in this report.</p>	L	Yes
Operational	<p>Potential impact on existing services due to resource constraints.</p>	<p>Resource review ongoing.</p>	M	Yes
Financial	<p>There is a risk that some projects overspend their allocation.</p> <p>Spend may not be directly linked</p>	<p>Contingency allowed for in the programme.</p> <p>Close project monitoring.</p>	M	Yes

	to approved activity.	Projects required to submit evidence of expenditure as part of monitoring and reporting.		
Reputational	As the BLE income is managed by the Council and used to implement projects which contribute to achieving LTS objectives, failure to deliver undermines the Council's commitments to improving the lives of those who live, work and visit Aberdeen.	Approve the projects for BLE spend as detailed in this report.	M	Yes
Environment/ Climate	The BLE programme supports sustainable and active travel improvements, therefore not implementing these could result in increased carbon emissions and air pollution.	Approve the projects for BLE spend as detailed in this report.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following commitments within the policy statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improving cycle and active transport infrastructure, including by seeking to integrate safe, physically segregated cycle lanes in new road building projects and taking steps to ensure any proposal for resurfacing or other long-term investments consider options to improve cycle and active transport infrastructure.</i> • <i>Continue to move the City Centre and Beach Masterplan forward</i>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The projects identified in this report support the delivery of the following Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p><i>11. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 - Active and sustainable travel are known to improve a number of health conditions, potentially increasing life expectancy. The projects proposed include measures to support, encourage and increase active travel in the city centre.</i></p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The projects identified in this report support the delivery of the following Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p><i>13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.</i></p> <p><i>14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</i></p> <p>The projects proposed include measures to support, encourage and increase active travel in the city centre contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>

Regional and City Strategies	The projects proposed will support the Regional Transport Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy, Local Transport Strategy, Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan, LOIP, Air Quality Action Plan, Local Development Plan and Aberdeen Net Zero Vision.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	None.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Bus Lane Enforcement and Low Emission Zone Projects 2025/26 (CR&E/25/140) ([Net Zero, Environment & Transport Committee, June 2025](#)) (Item 13)
- City Centre Streetscape Update (RES/24/039) ([Full Council, Adjourned Meeting, February 2024](#)) (Item 3)

11. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Carmelite Street (North) Proposals
- Appendix 2 – Carnegie’s Brae and East Green Illumination Proposals (Exempt)

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Claire McArthur
Title	Acting Chief Officer / Policy & Strategy Manager
Email Address	CMcArthur@aberdeencity.gov.uk