

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 15 June 2023

George Street and First New Town – Operational Plan and Project Update

1. Recommendations

1.1 Transport and Environment Committee is asked to:

1.1.1 Approve the updated principles of the proposed George Street and First New Town (GNT) Operational Plan (Appendix 1), which are key to preparing the statutory road orders required to construct the final George Street project;

1.1.2 Note that, subject to approval of the Operational Plan, work will commence to progress preparation of final statutory road orders for George Street, with outcomes of the statutory process reported to the Licensing Sub-Committee (if required);

1.1.3 Note that additional engagement will be undertaken with residents, businesses and stakeholders prior to finalising specific detailed designs and operational changes relating to North Hanover Street, Frederick Street and North Castle Street with final proposals reported to Committee for approval; and

1.1.4 Note the project design and programme updates provided, including the outcome of the recent stakeholder design workshop relating to landscaping and central spaces on George Street.

This was agreed, with the Administration & Green addendums and 1-3 of the LibDem amendment

Addendum by the Administration

Adds:

1.1.5 Welcomes the progress made since the last update to Committee.

1.1.6 Notes with concern the rise in costs, and agrees the impact on the wider Active Travel Investment Programme should be considered carefully when it comes to committee before the end of 2023.

1.1.7 Notes the ongoing concerns from the Edinburgh Access Panel regarding the accessibility of George Street for disabled people who rely on licensed taxis.

1.1.8 Agrees that dialogue on licensed taxi access for people with disabilities should continue and that any related decisions should be paused until an update is provided to Committee at its September meeting.

1.1.9 Agrees that the discussions should draw on the experience of disabled people accessing similar streets and areas elsewhere in the UK

Addendum by the Green Group

Adds after 1.1.3:

1.1.4 Recognises that turning George Street into a safe, welcoming space where pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists take priority and cars are treated as 'guests' is a central objective of the project.

1.1.5 Further recognises that creating too many exemptions for motor vehicles threatens this principle, and expresses concern over granting exemptions to coaches at all time of the day.

1.1.6 Reaffirms the Council's commitment to ensuring accessibility throughout the project and welcomes work by officers to mitigate any impacts on disabled people to date.

1.1.7 Agrees to continue to explore how the plan can deliver genuine priority for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists while also ensuring accessibility for disabled people and present results to committee prior to final approval of the plans.

Moved by: Cllr Jule Bandel

Seconded by: Cllr Chas Booth

Amendment by the Liberal Democrat Group

Delete recommendations and insert:

Committee;

1. notes the report and reiterates its support for the principal objectives of the George Street / First New Town project.
2. notes that, even with substantial external funding, a further capital allocation of up to £10 million will now be required from the Council to deliver the project.
3. believes there remains considerable uncertainty over how this additional funding would be provided, its impact on the delivery of active travel projects in other parts of the city, and whether the committee would continue to prioritise George Street / First New Town over other projects for such funding.

4&5 below not agreed

- 4. accordingly believes it is inappropriate to ask officers to spend additional time and resource on developing the project further when such uncertainty remains over the financial viability of implementation.*
- 5. therefore agrees to continue this report until the revised Active Travel Programme Investment Update is tabled to the committee in autumn 2023 and further clarity is received regarding future Scottish Government active travel funding.*

Moved by: Councillor Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Seconded by: Councillor Kevin Lang