

Integrated Impact Assessment

The purpose of Aberdeen City Council is to protect the people and the place of Aberdeen from harm, enabling them to prosper and supporting them in the event of harm happening.

The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment is to evidence that Aberdeen City Council are making decisions in an informed way, and that the impact of decisions made is understood and accepted. The legislation that is considered within this assessment are:

- Section 2 [Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics](#)
- Section 3 [Socio-Economic](#)
- Section 4 [Human Rights](#)
- Section 5 [Children and Young People’s Rights](#)

The term ‘policy’ is used throughout this document and applies to policies, proposals, strategies, provision, criteria, functions, practice, budget savings and activities that includes delivery of our services.

1. About the Policy

1.1 Title
The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 – Statutory Public Consultation
1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?
This report considers objections and comments received during the consultation process for “The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023”. The traffic management (TM) changes include bus gates and lanes on Union Street, Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, and other TM changes to support these measures.
1.3 Is this a new or existing policy?
This is an implementation phase supporting the City Centre Masterplan’s (CCMP) proposals for Union Street central which has been previously reported to Council. See “City Centre Masterplan Update” (Council Report No. RES/22/137) and associated Integrated Impact Assessment .
1.4 Is this report going to a committee?
Yes
1.5 Committee name and date:
Net Zero, Environment and Transport 11 th June 2024
1.6 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number:
CR&E/21/1/69

Impacts

This section demonstrates the considerations that have been made in relation to the policy - and that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted.

2: Equality Act 2010 - Protected Characteristics

Aberdeen City Council wants to ensure everyone is treated fairly. This section identifies the [protected characteristics](#) that the policy potentially affects and records the impact and mitigating steps.

2.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Protected Characteristic	What is the impact?				
	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Age			X		
Disability			X		
Gender Reassignment				X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership				X	
Pregnancy and Maternity			X		
Race				X	
Religion or Belief				X	
Sex				X	
Sexual Orientation				X	

2.2 In what way will the policy impact people with these protected characteristics?

The report explains that there have been multiple responses from older and mobility impaired people who have concerns about the traffic management changes. These stem from worries that they cannot drive directly onto the streets affected. They are also wary of driving around a changed network, having to follow new signs and learn new approaches to their preferred venues or car parks. While there is no impact in terms of access to existing city centre Car Parks and on-street parking bays, concerns in the context of drop off / pick up have been raised about the changes increasing the walking distance to city centre shops/ hospitality venues.

2.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

The data was collected over a 6-month open consultation period. Responses were provided by the public and businesses affected or those interested in the changes.

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

The City Centre Masterplan and the individual elements have been developed across multiple teams and with support from external agencies working on behalf of the Council (Hub). Planning, Capital, Media, and Roads have had key roles.

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy (e.g. citizens, community groups, or other people/groups)?

The Experimental Traffic regulation Order was subject to a 6 month open public consultation process through the Consultation Hub, supported by stakeholder consultation / meetings with relevant bodies including Disability Equity Partnership, cycling groups, public transport providers, taxi representatives, business representatives (through Aberdeen Inspired and other events) and emergency services. The statutory component of advertising the consultation, in accordance with legislation, was a press advertisement and street notices on the roads concerned, while it was additionally highlighted through

news updates, media releases, and social media. The information was also available through paper copies, which could be arranged for viewing by way of visiting the Council offices. Likewise, if an alternative format was requested, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Team would have arranged for this. Additionally, officers would have offered an in-person meeting should that have been a preferred option.

For information, there were 500+ direct objections to the experimental Order received during the consultation, these coming from individuals and businesses. While further input was provided via Aberdeen Inspired and Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

More people taking the bus, more often, is expected to lead to a better, more cost-effective service with greater frequency and reliability and reduced journey times. This will lead to a quieter overall road network.

There has already been growth in bus use (almost 10% by late 2023), particularly among younger, older people and students since the bus priority measures came into force. Supported by free travel for those in qualifying groups.

The scheme was developed with mitigations whereby disabled parking is provided as close to venues such as the new market development and Union Street as possible.

It should be noted that whilst parking was not permitted on the streets affected prior to the changes being made, dropping off and picking up was. This appears to be a significant concern for some.

Dropping off and picking up can still be done for those travelling by bus, taxi or private hire, and there are access routes available for private vehicles to turn close to the bus gates and lanes to allow drop off and pick up without impacting on the enforced measures.

Media releases and publicity on the Aberdeen City Council website have been shared with businesses and partners to try to assure the public, in particular nervous drivers, of the accessibility of the city centre and the best routes to take to access certain areas.

Access to all existing car parks and on-street parking bays has been maintained.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?

High	
Medium	
Low	X
Negative Impact Removed	

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

This section is used to consider the impact of the policy on people who might be **unemployed, single parents**, people with lower **education** or **literacy**, **looked after children**, those with **protected characteristics** as examples.

Use this guide to understand more on socio-economic inequalities: [The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Group	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Low income / income poverty – those who cannot afford regular bills, food, clothing payments.				X	
Low and/or no wealth – those who can meet basic living costs but have no savings for unexpected spend or provision for the future			X		X
Material deprivation – those who cannot access basic goods and services, unable to repair/replace broken electrical goods, heat their homes or access to leisure or hobbies			X		X
Area deprivation – consider where people live and where they work (accessibility and cost of transport)			X		X
Socio-economic background – social class, parents' education, employment, income.			X		X

3.2 In what way will the policy impact people in these groups?

The objections received from the public to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order state alarm at the impact the changes will have on the viability of the existing retail and hospitality provisions in the city centre. In this way, they have raised concerns about employment in the retail and hospitality trades which supports many low-income households.

The counter to the above is the measures work towards to establishing a modern welcoming city centre that is vibrant and pleasant to negotiate by walking or wheeling, and where people want to spend time, whether that be for shopping, visiting cafes / restaurants, or entertainment. Likewise, recognising the value of an enhanced environment for those that live or work in the core city centre. Accordingly, the measures could support the retail and hospitality trades by consolidating and increasing footfall in the city centre, and where successful also encourage new retail / hospitality investment; similarly so, when considering office and residential opportunities.

There is a positive benefit when considering transport choices, for those using public transport, walking, and cycling as low-cost travel options these are prioritised on the network and services improved.

3.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Economic data has been collated over the operation of the measures. This considers pedestrian footfall within the centre. It also reviews the UK wide data on the changes to high street spending habits. The following is presented within the report.

3.29 In terms of measuring footfall, Aberdeen Inspired has a contract with Springboard which provides weekly footfall counts at specific sites in the city centre; this data is then shared with Aberdeen City Council. The sensors concerned count people as they pass, and there will be a significant element of double counting; the consequence being it will overstate the number of individuals visiting. Therefore, Aberdeen City Council will report on the percentage trend, as opposed to stating the actual number of pedestrians.

3.30 When comparing the period of 27 August 2023 to 22 April 2024, this following the commencement of the Bus Gates / Lanes operation, against the exact same 2022/23 timeframe, there is a 4.6% drop in footfall. (Of note, this is based on sensors that were collecting data at the same specific point on the pavement / footway; that is to say, if a sensor has been shifted it has been excluded, as the data is rendered unreliable.)

3.31 The difficulty in interpreting this data is it is not 'black and white' where anyone could simply state it must be a drop because of the Bus Gates / Lanes. There are a range of factors that could have contributed to this fall: -

- a long-term decline in footfall experienced in towns and cities across the UK. Between 2015 and 2020 there was a decline of 5% in footfall in major English town centres. A similar trend has been observed in Aberdeen, Scotland, and UK as a whole pre-pandemic, with footfall falling each year between 2017-19. This trend has continued in 2024 across all three locations.
- this more general trend in the decline of city centre footfall is likely caused by the shift to home working and increased online purchasing. Additionally, the contraction of retail and hospitality offerings in many cities, coupled with economic challenges stemming from the EU Exit, global supply chain issues, the cost-of-living crisis, and the downturn in the oil and gas industry, may have further influenced these patterns.
- the storms experienced in the North-East from October 2023 to January 2024 (with a fall of 250,000 pedestrians in October 2023 compared with October 2022; there being a 3-day period in October 2023 in which Storm Babet pummelled eastern Scotland, and where similar patterns were observed for other storm periods).

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

The City Centre Masterplan and the individual elements have been developed across multiple teams and with support from external agencies working on behalf of the Council (Hub). Planning, Capital, Media and Roads have had key roles. As have Aberdeen Inspired.

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy? citizens, community groups, or other people/groups impacted by this policy?

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was subject to a 6 month open public consultation process through the Consultation Hub, supported by stakeholder consultation / meetings with relevant bodies including Disability Equity Partnership, cycling groups, public transport providers, taxi representatives, business representatives (through Aberdeen Inspired and other events) and emergency services. The statutory component of advertising the consultation, in accordance with legislation, was a press advertisement and street notices on the roads concerned, while it was additionally highlighted through news updates, media releases, and social media. The information was also available through paper copies, which could be arranged for viewing by way of visiting the Council offices. Likewise, if an alternative format was requested, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Team would have arranged for this. Additionally, officers would have offered an in-person meeting should that have been a preferred option.

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

An overarching aim of the bus priority measures is to reduce traffic congestion and lower air pollution within the core city centre, improving population health.

Reducing traffic while ensuring our city centre is still accessible, through better public transport and active travel, is at the heart of the ambition to make Aberdeen's city centre a more attractive place in which to live, work and spend leisure time.

Giving more priority to buses in the city centre improves traffic flow, reduces pollution and removes the barriers that deter people from making the switch to public transport.

More people taking the bus, more often, will lead to a better, more cost-effective service with greater frequency and reliability and reduced journey times.

The changes have been made to support the resurfacing and reallocation of space along Union Street to pedestrians, cyclists, and buses. This aims to create a better environment for those using Union Street for retail, recreation and living. It supports businesses by providing a high-quality environment and space for outdoor hospitality on the adjacent network.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?	High	
	Medium	
	Low	X
	Negative Impact Removed	

4: Human Rights Impacts

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000

The Act sets out our human rights in a series of 'Articles'. Each Article deals with a different right.

Use this guide to understand more about [Human Rights](#).

4.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 6: Right to a fair trial		X	
Article 7: No punishment without law		X	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence		X	
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 10: Freedom of expression		X	
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association		X	
Article 12: Right to marry and start a family		X	
Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms		X	
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property		X	
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education		X	
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections		X	

4.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

It does not impact Human Rights.

4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

5: Children and Young People’s Rights Impacts

The United Nations Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Children’s rights apply to every child/young person under the age of 18 and to adults still eligible to receive a “children’s service” (e.g. care leavers aged 18 – 25 years old).

The Conventions are also known as the “General Principles” and they help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. They are:

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interest of the child (Article 3)
3. Right to life survival and development (Article 6)
4. Right to be heard (Article 12)

You can [read the full UN Convention \(pdf\)](#), or [just a summary \(pdf\)](#), to find out more about the rights that are included.

5.1 What impact could this policy have on the rights of Children and Young People?

UNCRC and Optional Protocols	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 1: definition of the child		X	
Article 2: non-discrimination		X	
Article 3: best interests of the child		X	
Article 4: implementation of the convention		X	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities		X	
Article 6: life, survival and development		X	
Article 7: birth registration, name, nationality, care		X	
Article 8: protection and preservation of identity		X	
Article 9: separation from parents		X	
Article 10: family reunification		X	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		X	
Article 12: respect for the views of the child		X	
Article 13: freedom of expression		X	
Article 14: freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 15: freedom of association		X	
Article 16: right to privacy		X	
Article 17: access to information from the media		X	
Article 18: parental responsibilities and state assistance		X	
Article 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect		X	
Article 20: children unable to live with their family		X	
Article 21: adoption		X	
Article 22: refugee children		X	
Article 23: children with a disability		X	
Article 24: health and health services		X	
Article 25: review of treatment in care		X	
Article 26: social security		X	
Article 27: adequate standard of living		X	
Article 28: right to education		X	
Article 29: goals of education		X	
Article 30: children from minority or indigenous groups		X	

Article 31: leisure, play and culture		X	
Article 32: child labour		X	
Article 33: drug abuse		X	
Article 34: sexual exploitation		X	
Article 35: abduction, sale and trafficking		X	
Article 36: other forms of exploitation		X	
Article 37: inhumane treatment and detention		X	
Article 38: war and armed conflicts		X	
Article 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		X	
Article 40: juvenile justice		X	
Article 41: respect for higher national standards		X	
Article 42: knowledge of rights		X	
Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure			

5.2 In what way will the policy impact the rights of Children and Young People?

There is no impact on the rights of Children and Young People

5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

6: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?

An overarching aim of the bus priority measures is to reduce traffic congestion and lower air pollution.

Reducing traffic while ensuring our city centre is still accessible, through better public transport, is at the heart of the ambition to make Aberdeen's city centre a more attractive place in which to live, work and spend leisure time.

Giving priority to buses in the city centre improves traffic flow, reduces pollution and removes the barriers that deter people from making the switch to public transport.

More people taking the bus, more often, will lead to a better, more cost-effective service with greater frequency and reliability and reduced journey times.

There's already been growth in bus use (almost 10% by late 2023), particularly among younger, older people and students since the bus priority measures came into force.

The future changes to Union Street streetscape which is enabled by these traffic management changes will provide improved conditions for walking and wheeling within the city centre. It also improves active travel provisions by creating a segregated route for cyclists.

Overall summary of changes made as a result of impact assessment.

There are no changes made to the report as a result of this assessment.

Outline of how impact of policy will be monitored.

The report covers the objections to an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which has been in place for 6 months plus an extended period of assessment whilst the data has been reviewed and collated. It is expected that the report will enable the Committee to decide on the future of the measures implemented within the ETRO and that it will then be made into a permanent Traffic Regulation Order, either in full or part.

If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.

The negative points raised within the consultation responses raise concerns about the signs and road markings used to guide drivers round the network. As drivers may be infrequent visitors to the city centre, it may take some time for new driving patterns to become learned and understood. These driving patterns will however settle down in time and those using the city centre in its revised form will benefit from an improved environment, particularly once all the physical streetscape changes have been concluded.

Among those to benefit will be the more vulnerable as reduced traffic pressures make the city centre a more welcoming environment for walking, wheeling, and enjoying.

All in all, when taking account of all the city centre interventions, so inclusive of the central section of Union Street, First Aberdeen have stated that there has been a benefit provided to circa 12 million bus passenger journeys and bus running speeds have improved by 25%.

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