

Additional Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday 25 January 2018

Present

Councillors Macinnes (Convener), Doran (Vice-Convener), Barrie, Child (substituting for Councillor Arthur), Booth, Bruce, Burgess, Cook, Douglas, Gloyer and Key.

1. Redevelopment of Picardy Place

1.1 Deputations

The Committee agreed to hear three deputations in relation to the report by the Executive Director for Place on the redevelopment of Picardy Place.

1.1.1 Picardy Place Residents' Group

The deputation highlighted the following:

- The constraints which would be placed on any future improvements to the design of the area by implementing a gyratory system.
- The negative impact the proposed gyratory would have on the character of the area and space available for public realm.
- The gyratory design was not suitable for a World Heritage Site as it did not focus on place making but rather the needs of traffic.
- Recognition that the Growth Accelerator Model (GAM) placed constraints on the Council's options for the design however these should be investigated further and measures taken to mitigate the impact of the constraints.
- The proposed design contradicted the Council's policy which intended to reduce traffic and support a modal shift towards active travel and public transport.
- Recognition of the improvements made on the initial proposal however there remained room for further improvements and consultation with the local community and stakeholders.
- The possibility that the central island site set aside for public realm would not be used to its potential due to being surrounded by traffic.
- Opposition to the removal of the left-turn at York Place and Broughton Street.

The deputation requested the Committee considered the following:

- Exploration of alternative options to the gyratory traffic system which would be more suitable for pedestrians and cyclists.
- That the design not be approved until further work had been undertaken to address residents' concerns.

1.1.2 St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral Parish Council

The deputation highlighted the following:

- Appreciation of Council officers and Elected Members for their work and for taking their views into account.
- The Cathedral was a busy parish with multiple masses taking place each day but which also provided a place of quiet and refuge and this should be protected in the design.
- While recognising the design had been improved since the initial proposals, there remained concerns over the reduction in available disabled parking spaces for parishioners attending the Cathedral.
- The Cathedral was a place of worship for a large area of Scotland as part of the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh as well as a cultural building in Edinburgh, and that the setting of the Cathedral in its surroundings should reflect its importance.

The deputation requested the Committee consider the following:

- Further work should be done to investigate the possibilities for disabled parking on Little King Street and to ensure the roads were wide enough to allow blue badge holders to park on double yellow lines.
- That assurance was given that sufficient space would be provided for wedding and funeral corteges, but it was recognised there had been no specific details of this yet.

1.1.3 Spokes

The deputation highlighted the following:

- Recognition that the design presented was an improvement on the design which was proposed initially and on the current design of the area.
- Their opposition to the gyratory design and the unnecessary amount of road space given to vehicles.
- A revised design which did not include a gyratory would be more attractive to and more easily accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Concerns that the island space marked for public realm would not be used to its full potential as it would be surrounded by traffic.
- Recognition that the GAM had caused an obstacle for proposing an alternative to the gyratory however the agreement should be revisited.

- Leith Street was too narrow for cyclists to be allowed sufficient room by cars while travelling up a steep slope which would discourage cycling on the route.
- The cycle route ended at the Omni Centre and it was not clear where cyclists would be directed thereafter.
- The design should be flexible and adaptable in the future.
- Consideration should be given to a twin platform design for the potential tram stop as opposed to an island design which would allow public transport to pass over the tram lines for the tram stop to also be used as a bus stop creating a more efficient interchange.

The deputation requested the Committee consider the following:

- An alternative design to the gyratory should be proposed.
- That the plans for Leith Street be revised to prevent cars from travelling downhill, remove one lane of traffic and a wider pavement and a cycle lane provided in order to give more room to cyclists and pedestrians.
- The potential for the creation of a twin tram platform.
- The decision should be continued for further revisions to the design which would better satisfy residents and stakeholders.

Councillor Joanna Mowat spoke to the Committee as a Ward Councillor and made the following points:

- Councillor Mowat thanked Councillor Macinnes for her decision to put a stop to the process and start a new consultation process.
- There had been some movement in the plans and the public space sat outside the Cathedral where it was needed.
- The junction/crossroads/gyratory had 4 routes that converged on this point. Lothian buses had 100,000 people through this junction every day, as well as high numbers of pedestrians.
- What was in place at the moment in the area was dangerous for cyclists, and what was in the plans would potentially improve things significantly for cyclists.
- The time had come to take a decision on this and it should not be delayed any further.
- It was important that traffic was not restricted through the Leith Street junction.
- People living in residential side streets should not have to take the burden of the traffic that could be potentially diverted due to traffic restrictions through Leith Street.

1.2 Report by the Executive Director of Place

Approval was sought for a revised design proposal which reflected the views expressed by elected members, stakeholders and members of the public throughout the consultation process undertaken throughout October to December 2017.

The redevelopment was to be delivered as part of the Growth Accelerator Model (GAM) which was agreed by Council in June 2016 to provide public realm and tram proofing works at Picardy Place. The proposals aimed to encourage active travel and public transport usage, cater for the potential tram extension and provide appropriate space for public realm while ensuring that the junction was efficient in keeping traffic moving.

Motion

- 1) To endorse the revised design (produced as Appendix 4 to the report).
 - 2) To note that a separate report would be presented to Full Council regarding the financial implications of the revised design (prior to authorisation by the Chief Executive).
 - 3) To note that the Chief Executive intended to authorise the revised design in terms of existing Delegated Authority.
 - 4) To discharge Councillor Booth's motion of 10 August 2017 relating to Picardy Place.
- moved by Councillor Macinnes, seconded by Councillor Doran

Amendment

- 1) To welcome the improvements in the current proposals for the redevelopment of Picardy Place compared to previous plans, in particular:
 - 1.1. the increase in segregated space for cyclists and the decrease in shared space.
 - 1.2. the increased public space.
 - 1.3. the commitment not to undertake permanent development in the central space, which could potentially allow for revisions to the junction to make the space more people-friendly at some point in the future.
 - 1.4. the revised designs appeared to have addressed many of the concerns raised as part of the public consultation by local people and key stakeholders, and thanked council officers and others who had worked hard to bring forward revised proposals for the junction layout.
- 2) To note Nonetheless that the design presented was a gyratory which prioritised motor traffic movement over pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, contrary to the council's own policies; further notes that a majority of consultation responses, including from key stakeholders, such as Spokes and Living Streets remained opposed to the gyratory design layout.

- 3) To therefore agree that the Convener and Vice-Convener would urgently request a meeting with TH Real Estate and the Scottish Government to agree amendments to the GAM and associated legal agreements to allow a revised junction design to be brought forward as soon as possible which prioritised Place Making, pedestrians, cyclists & public transport and was consistent with the council's own policies and with the principles of the City Centre Transformation Project, and to report back to the next meeting of Transport and Environment Committee with revised proposals for the junction layout.
 - 4) To agree to consider a draft order proposal at the next meeting of Transport and Environment Committee to prohibit all vehicles with the exception of cycles, buses, taxis and emergency vehicles, on Leith Street between Waterloo Place and Calton Road, pending the outcome of the City Centre Transformation project recommendations; and agreed that the revised road layout on Leith Street should include a segregated cycle route southbound as a minimum, and preferably both ways, between the revised Picardy Place junction and Waterloo Place.
 - 5) To agree to consider a report within three months examining the feasibility of introducing a weight restriction on Broughton Street Lane, to reduce the traffic pressure on this narrow, largely residential lane which was likely to be impacted by changes to the Picardy Place junction layout.
 - 6) To note that the process of bringing forward detailed junction designs would have involved no significant public consultation on the junction layout had it not been for the August 2017 decision of the Transport and Environment Committee to go to public consultation as soon as possible, and agreed that the redesign of a significant city centre junction should have incorporated public consultation as a matter of course, and therefore refers the report, and all previous reports made to this Committee and to Full Council on this subject, and to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee to allow them to consider whether the process and governance had been appropriate and to make any other inquiries they saw fit into the probity of the process whereby the Picardy Place proposals emerged.”
- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Burgess

Voting

For the motion - 9 votes
 For the amendment - 2 votes

(For the motion – Barrie, Bruce, Child, Cook, Doran, Douglas, Gloyer, Key and Macinnes.

(For the amendment – Councillors Booth and Burgess.)

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Macinnes.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

Declaration of interests

Councillors Booth and Key declared non-financial interests in the above item as members of Spokes.