

COVID-19 – Measures to enable physical distancing post-lockdown noted - Spaces for People funding accepted – Instruction to officers.

3 There was submitted a report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Sustainability regarding measures that the Council was progressing to enable physical distancing in the city centre, local neighbourhoods and on the wider road network once the current lockdown was relaxed, advising

- (1) that as we moved towards a relaxation of the lockdown, it was important that the Council considered what measures it needed to take to manage the road network differently to facilitate physical distancing, help prevent a second wave of COVID-19 and allow the city economy to start to recover;
- (2) that it was anticipated that physical distancing would be needed for a significant period of time post-lockdown and that there might be reluctance from the public to use public transport and the Council would therefore need to consider short-term measures to support physical distancing to help combat COVID-19 infection and a medium to longer term approach to enable sustainable travel choices;
- (3) that those measures were likely to include making more space for pedestrians both in the City Centre and at heavily trafficked local shopping areas and in the medium to longer term, the Council would review how it could facilitate and promote cycling and walking as a commuting choice, with expansion of the school car-free zones across the city also needing to be considered, together with local measures to discourage rat running;
- (4) that it was essential that the Council focused on measures that would be most effective in preventing the spread of disease and would therefore be working with Sustrans and other local authorities to develop an over-arching strategy that all local authorities could apply and on 28th April 2020, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity announced a £10m funding package for temporary walking and cycling measures, which would be administered by Sustrans, with the Council having made a successful bid of £3.5m to this 'Spaces for People' fund;
- (5) of the objectives of the Council's strategy together with an action plan, including specific actions in the city centre and in neighbourhoods, together with options for temporary active travel routes in the wider road network, all as detailed in the report;
- (6) of the development of a communication and engagement strategy and the legal process for implementation of these measures; and
- (7) that a number of obstacles needed to be overcome in order for these measures to be implemented timeously, including, funding, procurement and availability of materials, with discussions being on-going to resolve these, and a medium to long-term benefit of providing temporary measures to facilitate physical distancing might be that some could become permanent and that active travel became the preferred choice for more people.

After consideration, the committee

- (1) noted the contents of the report;
- (2) approved the acceptance of the £3.5m 'Spaces for People' funding from Sustrans;
- (3) instructed officers to proceed to roll out the measures identified in the report; and
- (4) agreed that all temporary measures implemented under this scheme should be evaluated with a view to making them permanent where possible and with full local consultation and that a further report be submitted to the appropriate committee evaluating where this was possible before any relevant Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and other temporary measures expired.