

Transport and Environment Committee will meet on Thursday

When the Transport and Environment Committee meets on Thursday at the City Chambers it will be six months since any committee met to discuss any of these matters.

The March meeting was held under the previous administration and the convenership of Cllr Lesley Macinnes who has now moved from Transport to Finance.

Councillors were scheduled to meet online on 18 August, but Convener Cllr Scott Arthur adjourned that meeting with support of most other members in support of the council workers' strike action.

The agenda for today's meeting is both lengthy and the details are often complex.

Today one of the items on the agenda will consider Travelling Safely measures – previously known as Spaces for People. These terms refer to changes to the roads made during lockdown with £5.25 million emergency funding from The Scottish Government through a scheme funded and proposed by the UK Government.

This money was used to install segregated pedestrian routes and cycle lanes in certain areas where the council already planned to do so or where space was needed for pedestrians during the pandemic. Some have been ripped out – for example on Forrest Road where there is already a scheme approved and progressing through the statutory processes. It is not possible to have the SfP scheme extended while a second process on the same street is progressed.

Deputations

Several transport lobbying groups have lodged deputations to be heard or read by the councillors. This shows the way in which the deputation system has developed over the last few years. Deputations were previously only ever heard in person at the meeting in the City Chambers. The people involved would have ten minutes to put their views across to the councillors who would then have ten minutes to ask questions before the deputation would return to their seats in the public gallery. Now the written deputations for today's meeting run to 114 pages.

Those wishing to speak on item 7.7 which is the Travelling Safely Update include Blackford Safe Routes who had lobbied for the Meadows to Greenbank Quiet Route, Keep Morningside Moving, Spokes Edinburgh, and South West Edinburgh in Motion (a written deputation of some 105 pages in length alone).

The rules around hearing Deputations were changed to allow these to be heard during Virtual Meetings when no committees met at the City Chambers and all were held online using Microsoft Teams. Special [Interim Standing Orders](#) were drawn up to cover the situation, but it must have been hard to envisage that a deputation would have so much to say it would take more than 100 pages of text and diagrams. But such is the division of ideas and opinions on what should happen on our roads.

Travelling Safely Update

The administration has lodged its own [amendment](#) to the report on item 7.7 produced by council officers. The ruling Labour group recommend action in relation to several contentious areas such as Comiston Road and Braid Road, and backs the list of areas where 18 month trial schemes could be installed.

If the council agreed to simply remove all of the Travelling Safely schemes and reinstate what was in place before then the cost to the council would be £1 million.

The members of the Transport Committee are: Cllr Scott Arthur (Convener), Cllr Danny Aston (SNP), Cllr Jule Bandel (Green), Cllr Christopher Cowdy (Cons), Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie (LD), Cllr Margaret Graham (Lab), Cllr Kevin Lang (LD), Cllr Claire Miller (Green), Cllr Marie-Claire Munro (Cons) and Cllr Norman Work (SNP). Cllr Macinnes is still noted as a member of the committee but will be replaced by Cllr Finlay McFarlane who represents the city centre ward. And Cllr Stephen Jenkinson (Labour) appears to be the second Labour member.

The deputations for Thursday's meeting can be found [here](#). There is also a late request from Ratho and District Community Council to make a verbal deputation to the meeting about the First Bus services numbers 20,63 and 68 being discussed at item 9.1. and which appear to be at an end of their contracts.

Watch the Transport & Environment Committee online [here](#).



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