

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 3 June 2014

Tables and Chairs Summer Festival Trial in George Street

Item number	7.20
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	11 – City Centre

Executive summary

On 29 October 2013, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a report on “Building a Vision for the City Centre”. A key measure of success was that a more attractive city centre environment would be developed for those living in, working and visiting the area. An emerging café culture in the city would be supported.

On 29 April 2014, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a year-long trial which includes the introduction of additional pedestrian space, a dedicated cycle route and a one way system for motor vehicles on George Street.

This report outlines that a number of businesses on George Street would like to animate some of the newly-created space outside their premises by providing tables and chairs for customers. For eleven months of the year, outwith the Festival in August, these tables and chairs permits will be until 10pm, requiring no change to policy.

Links

Coalition pledges	P24 , P28 , P31
Council outcomes	CO19 , CO20
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO4

However, during the summer Festivals these businesses would like to be able to provide table and chairs and serve their customers until midnight. This would require a change in the current Table and Chairs Permit policy as well as the appropriate liquor license. A number of businesses have already submitted applications, to vary their liquor licences to serve alcohol until midnight in the table and chairs spaces outside their premises.

This report seeks approval to vary the existing Table and Chairs Permit policy for a trial period to enable permission to be given to businesses on George Street to use tables and chairs outside their premises until midnight as part of a monitored trial period, during the Edinburgh Summer Festival 2014. The outcomes of the trial will be reported back to Committee, with recommendations on the suitability or otherwise of extending the hours of tables and chairs permissions on George Street and across the wider city centre during future Festivals.

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Transport and Environment Committee:
 - 1.1.1 agrees to extend the operating hours of the current Tables and Chairs permit system on a trial basis;
 - 1.1.2 agrees that this trial will take place on George Street between 31st July and 25 August 2014, the duration of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe;
 - 1.1.3 agrees that, for the duration of this trial, businesses on George Street may apply for permission to use tables and chairs until midnight instead of 10pm (noting that it is the responsibility of businesses to apply for the appropriate complementary License and that this report does not seek to fetter the discretion of the Licensing Board or Regulatory Committee);
 - 1.1.4 agrees to accept a report on the outcomes of this trial; and
 - 1.1.5 while the trial arrangements will be tested only on George Street in 2014, the report on outcomes will consider extending the trial to other areas of the city during the Festival in future years.

Background

- 2.1 On 29 October 2013, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a report on “Building a Vision for the City Centre”. A key measure of success was that a more attractive city centre environment would be developed for those living in, working and visiting the area.
- 2.2 On 29 April 2014, the Transport and Environment Committee approved a year-long trial which includes the introduction of additional pedestrian space, a dedicated cycle route and a one way system for motor vehicles on George Street. A number of businesses on George Street would like to animate some of the space outside their premises by providing tables and chairs.
- 2.3 Any business seeking to occupy the roadway or pavement areas requires a tables and chairs permission. This process is managed by the Council’s Roads Services, with permissions being sought through applications to the Council which are made via the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. A report to the City of Edinburgh Council on 20 December 2007 entitled “A review of Permits for Tables and Chairs” set out the policy and application framework. While the Council reserves the right to provide permissions up to 11pm without requiring a change in policy, the norm is that tables and chairs latest trading hour is currently 10pm in the city centre.

- 2.4 In addition to a tables and chairs permission from Roads Services, any business seeking to serve alcohol to customers occupying outdoor tables and chairs must also apply for a liquor license. That is the remit of the Licensing Board. This report concerns only the matter of tables and chairs timings. It does not seek to fetter the discretion of the Licensing Board, and businesses in George Street have been advised that they must apply separately for variation of their liquor licenses if they wish to take part in this proposed month-long trial.

Main report

- 3.1 A number of businesses on George Street would like to animate some of the space outside their premises by providing tables and chairs. For eleven months of the year, outwith the Festival month of August, these tables and chairs permits will be until 10pm, requiring no change to policy.
- 3.2 However, the report recognises that the summer Festival is a unique global event, which attracts significant numbers of tourists to Edinburgh. It also attracts a number of pop-up venues. These include facilities adjacent to the Assembly Rooms.
- 3.3 Pop-up venues have been successful, in some cases, in being given permission to serve alcohol outside on George Street until midnight. That has been perceived as a disparity by some businesses on George Street, which are seeking a level playing field for operating hours and conditions during the Festival.
- 3.4 This report recommends giving parity to existing George Street businesses, allowing them to apply for permission under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to use tables and chairs outside their premises until midnight as part of a monitored trial period during the Edinburgh Summer Festival 2014. These conditions would apply equally to businesses serving alcohol and to cafes which do not serve alcohol. Issues that will be monitored will include:
- the level of crime figures and complaints, including noise complaints;
 - the nature of any complaints and crimes;
 - how the level and nature of complaints or crimes compares to the previous year on George Street; and
 - how the level of complaints or crimes on George Street in 2014 compares to levels in other areas of the city used heavily by the Festival (such as at Bristo Square and the Pleasance).

Measures of success

- 4.1 The outcomes of the trial will be reported back to Committee, in line with paragraph 3.4. That report will make recommendations on the suitability or otherwise of extending the hours of tables and chairs permissions on George Street and across the wider city centre during future Festivals.
- 4.2 The introduction of this trial on George Street will result in a more attractive city centre environment for those travelling to, living in, working and visiting the area during the Edinburgh Festival, and bring parity to businesses in the street.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost for reviewing the impact of the proposal will be contained within the Services for Communities budget.
- 5.2 Businesses seeking to participate in the trial will need to apply for a tables and chairs permission and a liquor license at their own expense.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The proposals are consistent with the outcomes identified in a report to the Transport and Environment Committee on 29 October 2013 “Building a Vision for the City Centre- Consultation Outcome”.
- 6.2 A report will be brought to Transport and Environment Committee outlining the results of the trial and will make recommendations to either retain the existing tables and chairs policy position, or to make recommended changes based on the trial outcomes.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) has been carried out and is ongoing for the duration of the wider George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) project, which will run until September 2015.
- 7.2 The layout of the street has been influenced by consultation feedback from a wide variety of equalities groups, to ensure ease of access could be maintained for all equalities groups. This was previously reported to Committee on 29 October 2013 and 29 April 2014.

- 7.3 In the proposed layout, buses and taxis continue to run on George Street, street crossings remain unchanged for pedestrians, and all existing types of parking have been maintained on each block of the street. There are still the same numbers of disabled parking bays, residents' parking bays, motor cycle bays and city car club bays. Cycling parking has recently been increased on the street and this will be maintained. Pay-and-display bays have been retained at broadly existing levels along all four blocks of the street. Ramp access will be provided by all businesses who seek to introduce decking onto the carriageway.
- 7.4 Crime, air quality levels and vehicle numbers and speeds on George Street and surrounding streets are being monitored as part of the research package which will run for a year alongside the proposed George Street trial. Local residents' groups have been included in specifying the research package, to help ensure the right information is captured, recorded and analysed.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The delivery of improvements in the city centre will help improve pedestrian and cycling activity in the area. In addition to introducing a café culture, the wider George Street trial should reduce carbon emissions in the street. Sustainability impacts, including air quality and traffic movement in the street and the surrounding area, will be assessed as part of the evaluation of the trial project.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 An extensive round of consultation on permits for tables and chairs last took place in 2007, being reported to the City of Edinburgh Council on 20 December 2007. This evidenced that a majority of members of the public supported extensions of permit times, and a significant majority (90%) of permit holders supported an extension.
- 9.2 The intention with this one-month long trial is to monitor and report back on a time limited test. Should the outcomes support a recommendation to change the existing 10pm curfew for future Festivals, that recommendation will include a requirement for a full public consultation.

Background reading/external references

[Building a Vision for the City Centre, Transport and Environment Committee, 19 March 2013](#)

[Building a Vision for the City Centre- Consultation Outcome, Transport and Environment Committee, 29 October 2013](#)

[A Review of Permits for Tables and Chairs, The City of Edinburgh Council, 20 December 2007](#)

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Links

Coalition pledges	<p>P24 – Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events.</p> <p>P28 - Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic well being of the city.</p> <p>P31 - Maintain our City’s reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure.</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO19 – Attractive Places and Well Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.</p> <p>CO20 – Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens.</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO1 – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.</p> <p>SO4 – Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.</p>
Appendices	None