

Future of M8 Motorway – Motion, as adjusted, approved after division.

15 Bailie Mearns, seconded by Councillor Millar, moved that:-

“Council acknowledges that car-centric transport design has created many significant negative impacts on quality of life for communities across Glasgow and the West of Scotland, particularly those bordering the M8 motorway, including ongoing physical barriers, unattractive and unsafe routes for walking, wheeling and cycling, and increased noise and air pollution.

Council notes that the construction of the M8 motorway tore through established residential communities of Glasgow, and to this day acts as a scar in the urban fabric of the city, with a deeply damaging impact on the city centre’s placemaking and creating severance between the city centre and localities to its north and west.

Council notes that transport is Scotland's biggest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions; that car and van use accounts for over half of these emissions; that uncontrolled access to roads creates more vehicle traffic through induced demand; and that negative impacts are not evenly distributed as around half of Glasgow's households do not own a car, yet dominant road infrastructure and excessive car-use affects those experiencing poverty and inequality the most.

Council reaffirms recent commitments made in Glasgow's Strategic Plan 2022-2027 to reduce the impact of the M8 on the city centre and to explore longer-term replacement options; as well as commitments in Glasgow's City Centre Transport Plan to achieve a 30-40% reduction in peak-hour private car traffic in the city centre by 2030 as part of wider commitments in the Glasgow Transport Strategy to reduce car vehicle kilometres in the city by at least 30% and to "offer a more liveable, people friendly urban environment [which] uses its space and streets differently". Council notes that reversing the long-standing dominance of car use in favour of people-friendly environments is a significant challenge, however it is absolutely necessary in order to reduce health inequality, address climate change and to support a sustainable economy.

Council notes that repair works and the propping up of the Woodside Viaduct alone will cost upwards of £100 million and last until at least the end of 2024 - one year and £65 million over original estimates; and that recent Freedom of Information requests have revealed that Transport Scotland are currently not assessing all immediate mitigation measures, including lower speed limits, which could address traffic volumes, air and noise pollution, as well as the number and cost of collisions.

Council believes that the public cost of maintaining an ageing motorway is so significant as to warrant further investigation of possible alternatives, including but not limited to, full replacement; and that public money should be spent on achieving incremental change and not simply maintaining the status quo. This will require close collaboration with external partners and an urgent commitment to work jointly to move forward these objectives.

Council further believes that it is time to reconsider whether a city centre motorway – very much a transport solution of the 1960s – is the right solution for the 2030s

and beyond. Council notes that other cities around the world have in recent decades rethought their approach to major urban roads infrastructure, and considers that Glasgow may be able to draw learnings from experiences elsewhere.

Council further recognises the opportunity to review options to mitigate the M8's impact on the city centre in the short term, as well as to re-imagine its longer-term future, including to potentially re-engineer or downgrade the city centre stretch of the M8 over the longer term with a view to replacing this stretch with a boulevard- or avenue- style road in its place. Council notes the theoretical potential for a non-motorway road to maintain a key transport route but with significantly decreased amenity impacts; the provision of active roadside uses, development and public space; and substantially improved cross-connectivity and reduction of severance.

Council considers that these principles could potentially also be extended to other major roads infrastructure within Glasgow over the longer term, in alignment with our sustainable transport aspirations and strategic planning, with a future potential transformation of the Clydeside Expressway and the Shieldhall Overpass meriting consideration, for example.

Council notes that the M8 is a national asset in the ownership and strategic control of Transport Scotland, and recalls that the recently approved City Centre Transport Plan mandates the Council to engage with Transport Scotland around its future. Council therefore notes that any discussion around the future of the M8 must be taken forward in partnership with Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government and any other relevant stakeholders as well as wider civic society.

Council further acknowledges that any change to the operation or infrastructure of the city centre stretch of the M8 would require detailed transport modelling and business case development, and recognises the importance of ensuring any changes to the M8 or other roads infrastructure support the Council's wider sustainable transport objectives, including contributing to car vehicle kilometre reduction targets and ensuring traffic impacts on other streets and areas are limited within this context.

Council understands that, in line with the approved City Centre Transport Plan, and the Council's Strategic Plan for 2022-27, which was developed on a cross-party basis, the Convener for Climate, Glasgow Green Deal, Transport and City Centre Recovery has recently issued correspondence on behalf of the Council to Scottish Ministers, seeking to take forward a wide-ranging conversation over the future of the M8. Council notes that the Convener has sought engagement to scope out actions which could be taken forward over the short, medium and longer terms to address the impact of the city centre stretch of the M8 and support its future transformation.

Council notes that requests made by Glasgow City Council of the Scottish Government include:

- consideration of short-term mitigations to address carbon emissions and air pollution within the city centre M8 corridor and consideration of a trial of lower speed limits within the city centre stretch of the M8;
- Scottish Government participation in and funding support for research over the M8's future in the short term, with commitment to more detailed transport modelling and business case development over the medium term;
- and Transport Scotland support for transport modelling, business case development and identification of funding opportunities for the potential transformation of existing heavy roads infrastructure in Glasgow such as at Shieldhall and the Clydeside Expressway.

Council further notes that at present legislation providing for Low Emission Zones may not apply to non-local authority managed roads, but notes that the modelling for Glasgow's LEZ nevertheless sought to take account of air pollution impacts from the M8 corridor. Council notes that it has requested Scottish Government support for an intensification of air quality monitoring within the M8 corridor. Council further believes that the role of the M8 within Glasgow's Low Emission Zone should be considered, including relevant powers and scope, between Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council as part of review of its implementation.

Council acknowledges that, having sought to initiate a conversation with the Scottish Government, the dialogue and engagement being sought would be wide-ranging and over a number of distinct timeframes.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to ensure that a paper is brought to the relevant committee upon receipt of return correspondence or within six months, setting out progress on this broad dialogue and specific actions requested, as well as identifying next steps.

Council requests the City Convener write to the newly appointed Transport Minister to welcome them to their post, update them on previous correspondence on these issues and the outcome of this Council motion, and invite them to attend a cross-party meeting to discuss the issues raised."

Councillor Ahmed, seconded by Councillor Docherty, moved as an amendment that:

- (1) after the third paragraph insert the following:

"Council also notes the significant investment, through the Glasgow City Region Deal, to begin that culture change toward people-friendly environments, such as the Avenues programme, and the new Sighthill Bridge which seeks to repair the connection between that area and the city centre, and to provide safe, easy and sustainable access across the M8.";

- (2) at the fifth paragraph after "full replacement;", add the following:

"that this investigation should provide a preliminary cost-benefit analysis for the Glasgow City Region, including the cost of ongoing maintenance of the asset and the potential health and economic benefits of further reducing

unnecessary private car usage, freeing up additional space for development and connecting communities;”; and

(3) from “To this end...” to the end be deleted and the following inserted:-

“Council notes the findings of the Connectivity Commission, specifically that the South Clyde Growth Corridor represents “some of the biggest traffic generators and strategic economic assets in the city region, but it also parallels the most congested section of the M8”. Council therefore notes that the development of a Clyde Metro can, and will, allow a significant reduction in traffic and congestion across the M8, including the city centre junctions”

Therefore, Council resolves to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and the Minister for Transport (or their successors), to:

- formally request Transport Scotland’s involvement in, and a funding contribution towards, Glasgow City Council’s research into reducing the impact of the M8 on Glasgow city centre;
- express its disappointment that the delivery plan for STPR2, which included Clyde Metro, has not yet been published, and urge Ministers to publish the delivery plan at the earliest opportunity; and
- express its belief that the speedy delivery of the first leg of Clyde Metro is an important component in a strategic plan to repair the damage done by the M8, deprivileging private car usage and giving public space back to people, which would allow reductions of the speed limit on city centre sections of the M8.

Council further resolves to bring a report on existing air quality monitoring taking place along the motorway to the relevant city policy committee within six months.”

Bailie Thomas Kerr, seconded by Councillor Daly, moved as an amendment to delete all and replace with the following:

“Council notes that the M8 motorway is a key part of Glasgow and Scotland’s road which connects people and businesses in our country.

Council believes that proposals to close the M8, introduce a Low Emission Zone on the M8 or to reduce the speed on the M8 to 30mph are not practical and would likely damage the city’s economy and the jobs which people in our city rely on.

Council notes that many of those who undertake shift work, disabled people, those in trades and others rely on private vehicles as part of their day to day lives.

Council agrees that all steps should be undertaken to ensure that this Council supports the move towards electric and other alternative energy vehicles which will reduce the air quality impact from vehicular traffic particularly on key trunk and motorway routes and the areas which surrounds these.

Council further agrees that a report should be brought to the relevant committee about what steps can be taken to ensure that the streetscape of communities which adjoin the M8, M77 and M74 is discussed with those communities and potential improvements (and how these would be funded) are brought forward.”

Bailie Mearns, with the approval of her seconder, accepted the amendment by Councillor Ahmed resulting in the following adjusted motion:

“Council acknowledges that car-centric transport design has created many significant negative impacts on quality of life for communities across Glasgow and the West of Scotland, particularly those bordering the M8 motorway, including ongoing physical barriers, unattractive and unsafe routes for walking, wheeling and cycling, and increased noise and air pollution.

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Council also notes the significant investment, through the Glasgow City Region Deal, to begin that culture change toward people-friendly environments, such as the Avenues programme, and the new Sighthill Bridge which seeks to repair the connection between that area and the city centre, and to provide safe, easy and sustainable access across the M8.

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Council believes that the public cost of maintaining an ageing motorway is so significant as to warrant further investigation of possible alternatives, including but not limited to, full replacement; that this investigation should provide a preliminary cost-benefit analysis for the Glasgow City Region, including the cost of ongoing maintenance of the asset and the potential health and economic benefits of further reducing unnecessary private car usage, freeing up additional space for development and connecting communities; and that public money should be spent on achieving incremental change and not simply maintaining the status quo. This will require close collaboration with external partners and an urgent commitment to work jointly to move forward these objectives.

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setting out progress on this broad dialogue and specific actions requested, as well as identifying next steps.

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On a vote being taken electronically and by roll call, 2 members voted for the amendment by Bailie Thomas Kerr and 80 for the motion as adjusted which was accordingly declared to be carried.