PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on recent progress in respect of the Bus Priority Programme, the Salford - Bolton Network Improvement Programme and the Bus Shelter for the Future project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the progress which has been made on the Bus Priority schemes in recent months.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS


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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Bus Priority Programme (Cross City Bus and Busway), the Salford – Bolton Network Improvement Programme and the Bus Shelter for the Future project.

1.2 Subsequent to providing a summary of the key benefits that have been delivered by the Better Bus Area Fund Programme in the last report, in March, the Programme has been closed and is no longer included within this report.

2. Cross City Bus Package Current Position and Recent Progress

2.1 Since March 2016, significant progress has been made on the delivery of the bus priority works in the Regional Centre and along the Oxford Road corridor in conjunction with Manchester City Council (MCC).

2.2 In the Regional Centre priority access for buses, cycles, hackney carriages (taxi) and emergency vehicles on the section of Portland Street between Minshull Street and Aytoun Street; changes to traffic flow direction on surrounding streets; the introduction of strategic sections of bus lanes (for example on London Road); and pedestrian and cycling improvements have been fully implemented and are generally working well. Two remaining areas of work are the establishment of four new bus stops on Princess Street between Mosley Street and Portland Street which will be completed in parallel with Metrolinks Second City Crossing works and some limited resurfacing works on Dale Street.

2.3 Monitoring of the impacts of the measures above on general traffic and bus movements is on-going as part of wider network monitoring across the Regional Centre.

2.4 Construction works in relation to packages of enabling measures on Upper Brook Street and Princess Street are now complete. These works, delivered in advance of the main Oxford Road scheme, are assisting in managing traffic flows during, and ultimately post construction of the Oxford Road scheme.

2.5 On the Oxford Road Corridor, construction of the main works, by Manchester Contracts, under the supervision of MCC, began in November 2015.

2.6 Works to date include:

- upgrading the Central Manchester University Hospital frontage, which includes site clearance, footway renewal, essential tree felling and replacement tree planting;
• the introduction of a bus gate at the junction of Hathersage Road and Oxford Road which restricts access between 6am and 9pm to buses, cyclists and hackney carriages (taxi) only in a northbound direction. This is being enforced by MCC as of 12 September 2016;

• The creation of six new accessible bus boarding platforms, each accommodating two bus stops, between Moss Lane East and Booth Street. The stops include cycle bypass lanes which are being opened in phases, with four opened in the period;

• The creation of circa 2km of kerb-segregated cycle lanes between Moss Lane East and Brunswick Street;

• Significant improvements to pedestrian facilities including footway widening and surface upgrades, including the provision of York Stone paving in key locations;

• Implementation of a new signalised pedestrian crossing adjacent to the junction of Denmark Road, complete with pedestrian count-down timers;

• Full carriageway resurfacing between Moss Lane East and Grafton Street and between Whitworth Street and Portland Street, complete with final carriageway markings;

• The permanent closure of Great Bridgewater Street at its junction with Oxford Street to create a new bus stop boarding platform; and

• The upgrade of Whitworth Street, Portland Street and Dover Street junctions with Oxford Road, complete with the installation of pedestrian count-down timers at all locations.

Oxford Road between Hathersage Road and Grafton Street

2.7 A comprehensive communication strategy, developed jointly with MCC, is in place to raise awareness of the ongoing work, so that people are aware of how the construction work will affect them day-to-day; the changes and benefits that result and the behaviour change that is required as they are completed. Typically, messages and information have been made available through highway signage, both fixed and variable message, to promote the use of alternate routes for traffic seeking to access the city centre, press releases, travel bulletins, Corridor Partner emails, TfGM website updates, posters on stops and buses, the production of bespoke maps and the use of social media.
2.8 As more of the permanent measures are put in place communications messages will become increasingly focused on ‘behavioural change’ requirements: Drivers, that they must observe the bus gate and use alternative routes between 6am and 9pm; bus passengers and cyclists that they must look out for each other when using the new-style bus stops; and local businesses/residents, that their access arrangements will be changed.

2.9 Next steps include further carriageway resurfacing work to coincide with quieter traffic periods, including October half-term and over the Christmas period, subject to Manchester City Council approvals. Outside of these periods, work will continue to construct the segregated cycle lanes and bus stop platforms, mindful of the need to minimise impacts on pedestrian, traffic and bus movements during the busiest period for the Oxford Road Corridor.

2.10 Much of the remaining work, including at Oxford Road’s junctions with Charles Street, Booth Street and Cavendish Street have direct interfaces with other major third party works, including the redevelopment of the former BBC site. These interfaces have the potential to constrain the scheduling of the Oxford Road works and so close liaison with Corridor Partners will be essential to ensure that works are appropriately coordinated to maintain completion timescales.

2.11 Following the summer resurfacing work, the intention is to introduce two-way operation on Oxford Street, between Whitworth Street and Portland Street, in late November. This will be subject to MCC approval, and take into account any other planned network constraints, such as third party works.

2.12 It is anticipated that these works will be substantially completed in winter 2016/2017, subject to gaining the necessary network management approvals to complete the remaining resurfacing works along Oxford Road and implementation of the associated temporary traffic management measures, balancing the impact of the works on the adjacent highway network and also on key stakeholders such as the Universities and Central Manchester Hospitals Foundation Trust. This is later than originally envisaged due to managing the start of the works to minimise disruption to the public on the approach to Christmas 2015 and in light of other unforeseen events, such as the MCC Cycle Review and the sewer collapse on Mancunian Way, which placed significant constraints on traffic management approvals for Oxford Road.

2.13 Regular Corridor Working Group meetings continue to be held with key stakeholders including: Corridor Manchester; Manchester University; Manchester Metropolitan University; and the Central Manchester Hospitals Foundation Trust. These meetings provide an important forum for discussion around delivery challenges and the timing and communication of works in key areas along the corridor. These meetings are crucial in ensuring the effective coordination of the Oxford Road works and other developments along the Corridor.
2.14 A comprehensive communications strategy is in place, working closely with MCC, for all these works to ensure the public and key stakeholders are kept informed of the works and any temporary disruption to traffic flows that may arise. The strategy is wide ranging and has involved an updated video flythrough of the scheme, targeted media briefings and specific leaflet drops to all residents and businesses advising of the works, when they are starting, changing, and in what order the works will be undertaken.

2.15 Works on the A580, between Frederick Road and Newearth Road, were completed in March 2016, in advance of the opening of the new Park and Ride facility beneath the M60, as part of the commencement of Busway services. The system used to control traffic signals in urban areas (SCOOT) is an adaptive system that responds automatically to fluctuations in traffic flow through the use of embedded detectors in the road resulting in reduced congestion was implemented in July 2016. General traffic journey times are being regularly monitored along the A580 and early indications show that in the morning peak period these have returned to similar pre-construction levels in 2013, whilst also accommodating significant traffic flow growth across the network and a number of enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities along the A580.

2.16 This monitoring of the performance of the A580 between Frederick Road and Newearth Road, particularly in the peak periods, will continue, in conjunction with Salford City Council, to ensure the delivered improvements are optimised.

2.17 On the A664 scheme, the works carried out by MCC and Rochdale Council are now complete. Monitoring and evaluation along this corridor is on-going and will inform a wider Programme wide monitoring and evaluation report, once the overall Bus Priority Programme is completed.

3. The Busway Scheme Current Position and Recent Progress

3.1 The Busway service between Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley, Salford and Manchester was officially launched on 3 April 2016, following the substantial completion of the construction works along the 4.5 mile guided section and an intensive period of driver training. There are seven pairs of stops along the guided section all of which are fully accessible and are equipped with CCTV, lighting, emergency help points, real time passenger information, shelters and covered cycle parking facilities.

3.2 The service operates from 4am Monday-Friday and continues until midnight seven days per week, with a peak frequency of eight journeys per hour east of Tyldesley formed by four departures per hour, each from Leigh and Atherton. Whilst services are terminating in Manchester at present, the same service level will be provided once the extension to Oxford Road becomes available following completion of the required infrastructure and when traffic conditions associated with the Metrolink
Second City Crossing and Oxford Road projects allow. This frequency is considerably higher than previously provided.

3.3 The service is operated by First using 20 new double deck low emission hybrid buses. These vehicles are specified to a high level including plush seating, tables on the top deck, free Wi-Fi, USB charging points and on-board ‘next stop’ audio and visual announcements, all of which improves the attractiveness of the service offered to the passenger. The service has been named and branded by First with TfGM’s agreement as Vantage.

3.4 Patronage on the service has been strong from the outset and has grown to the current peak level of approximately 42,000 passengers per week having started at approximately 28,000 at service start.

3.5 Fares are aligned with those on the standard First network allowing the service to be branded as a ‘premium service at everyday prices.’

3.6 Overall journey times of 50 minutes between Leigh and the Regional Centre are consistently being achieved or bettered which compares favourably with those that could be achieved regularly prior to the introduction of the Guideway and the priority infrastructure on the A580. Previous inconsistencies in journey time of between 20-30 mins have been largely removed.

3.7 Of the three Park and Ride sites that have been constructed as a part of the scheme at East Bond Street in Leigh, at Astley Street in Tyldesley and on the A580 near Swinton, both of the former sites are being very well used, again being ahead of expectations. Whilst take up in the A580 site has been slower as predicted, usage continues to increase and further promotion is planned once additional capacity on the services is available early in the new year as a result of the purchase of additional vehicles.

3.8 In addition the scheme provides a 4.5 metre wide multi-user path for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians alongside the Busway and this was completed and fully opened at the end of April 2016. Since opening the path has proved to be an important community amenity, being used as a recreational route, as well as facilitating access for passengers by foot and bicycle to each of the stops along the Busway from the surrounding area. At key points along the path information display boards have been erected providing historical and local information about the route. On 7 August 2016 the path was used for a community event hosted by TfGM and Wigan Council to encourage the local community to walk and cycle more and make the most of the new facility. A similar event is now being planned for 2017.

3.9 In advance of the opening of the Busway a community woodland of up to 25,000 trees was planted on a site at Higher Folds, Leigh, owned by the Forestry Commission. This woodland was planted with the assistance of community groups, local schools and volunteers from within organisations
involved in the delivery of the Busway scheme and was supported by the local MP Andy Burnham.

3.10 Prior to the introduction of the busway service, a bespoke customer satisfaction survey was carried out by TfGM on the services which would most probably be duplicated or replaced by the new Busway service and it was decided to repeat the original survey to assess the immediate impacts of the introduction of the Busway service, 3 months into operation.

3.11 The survey received a very positive 89% return rate and whilst further analysis will be carried out in the coming weeks, the results are very encouraging, especially when compared to Passenger Focus’ satisfaction which produced outputs for the GM network. The headline results for the survey are:-

- 95% of passengers are satisfied with the length of time their journey takes – a 20% increase on the levels recorded in the ‘pre’ survey;
- 94% of passengers appreciate the reliability of services on the route – a 26% increase;
- 93% of passengers are satisfied with the availability of seating or space to stand – a 9% increase; and
- 96% of passengers are satisfied with the frequency of services on the route – a massive 32% increase.

3.12 The 2015 Bus Passenger Survey for Greater Manchester witnessed a significant decline in customer perceptions of value for money, with two-thirds (66%) saying they are satisfied. However, 89% of passengers on the Guided Busway are satisfied with the value for money on that service.

3.13 94% of passengers are satisfied with the travel information provided at the bus stop; which is considerably greater than the GM results from the Bus Passenger Survey (67%). The same proportion is also satisfied with the travel information provided inside the bus e.g. Audio Visual announcements.

3.14 Over a third of respondents (36%, 1,399) claim that they could have made their journey that day by driving a car, suggesting evidence of behavioural change. Overall, 98% were satisfied with their bus journey that day, a 12% increase on the overall satisfaction levels when compared to the previous survey.

3.15 Full analysis of the recent survey will be presented to TfGMC’s Bus Networks and TfGM Services Sub Committee. TfGM will be undertaking further passenger surveys in 2017/18 and 2019/20 to cover the Cross City Package and Busway. In addition First will undertake customer satisfaction surveys on an annual basis.

3.16 Since opening, the Busway scheme has won two Regional Transport Awards: the Transport Policy, Planning and Implementation award at the
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) North West Awards; and the award for sustainability at the 10th annual North West Construction Awards. It has also been shortlisted in the National Transport Awards and the North of England Transport Awards. In September TfGM hosted a technical visit from Bus Rapid Transit UK, to the Busway, with visitors from across the UK keen to see the infrastructure and service in operation. The same group is also hosting their annual conference in Manchester later this year with a focus on the scheme being delivered on Oxford Road.

3.17 A number of off-line works are being progressed in parallel with daily operations including closing out minor defects and snagging.

4. **Salford – Bolton Network Improvements (SBNI)**

4.1 Work has continued in conjunction with local authority partners Bolton Council and Salford City Council, in relation to a number of proposed bus priority / traffic management and pedestrian and cycling improvement schemes which are being promoted as part of the Salford – Bolton Network Improvements Programme (SBNI). SBNI involves the introduction of a package of local network interventions within Salford and Bolton focussed on the following primary objectives:

- Strengthening links within and links in and out of the area to high employment / health / education and leisure locations (with emphasis on employment);
- Supporting the economic vitality of the district centres of Farnworth, Walkden, Swinton and Pendleton;
- Promoting active, healthy lifestyles and making active sustainable travel safer and easier to use and an attractive alternative to the private car; and
- To substantially improve the punctuality, regularity and reliability of bus services operating through the defined study area, and help to enhance highway network performance where possible.

4.2 The SBNI programme is included within the Greater Manchester Local Growth Deal, the funding arrangements for which were confirmed by Government during the first half of 2014.

4.3 Subsequent to the Government announcements in relation to the Growth Deal schemes, TfGM has been working in conjunction with the relevant local authority partners to develop this programme. Conditional Approval of the SBNI Programme Business Case was awarded in February 2016 in line with the governance arrangements for the Local Growth Deal agreed with Government.
4.4 Following Conditional Approval progress has been made on schemes in both Bolton and Salford. In Bolton, this work has included securing Full Business Case approval in advance of the delivery of highway/junction improvement schemes at the junctions of Higher Market Street / Long Causeway and Manchester Road / Raikes Lane which are aimed at improving vehicle capacity and journey times through the junctions and also pedestrian and cycling facilities. Full Business Case approval has also been secured to upgrade a series of bus stops within Bolton to current standards. The scheme at Long Causeway was delivered in accelerated timescales in order to provide increased network resilience during the planned closures of St Peters Way in Bolton to facilitate resurfacing works. In addition, schemes are being developed at Green Lane, Egerton Street and Loxham Street in Moses Gate, for delivery in early 2017 and at Farnworth as part of wider town centre regeneration proposals.

4.5 In Salford, scheme development has continued across a range of relatively minor traffic management and highway proposals across the programme area. Following engagement on scheme designs with local Ward Members work is being undertaken to finalise the initial package of interventions, a tender process will follow and subject to the granting of necessary approvals, works are expected to commence on the Salford programme in 2017. In addition work is progressing on the development of proposals for Pendleton town centre in the context of the wider regeneration proposals for the area, which are being progressed by Salford City Council.

4.6 An update on the proposals for both Farnworth and Pendleton is included within the wider Interchange Programme Update report also included on this meetings’ agenda.

4.7 Further updates in relation to the above schemes will be brought to this Sub-Committee in due course.

5. **Bus Shelter for the Future**

5.1 The Bus Shelter for the Future scheme has involved the development and construction of a ‘super’ bus shelter showcasing the latest in technology and urban design, in conjunction with JC Decaux and RATP.

5.2 The shelter, which formally opened on 11 September 2016, is a £300,000 pilot scheme which has been entirely funded by the Department for Transport.

5.3 The state-of-the-art bus shelter located on Piccadilly, in close proximity to Manchester Piccadilly rail station, features free charging points for phones and other mobile devices; free wifi; plus travel and city information via digital touchscreens, keeping passengers connected while they wait. In addition it has a planted roof which absorbs pollution and contributes to a greener city.
The shelter – a first for the UK - creates a more attractive public space by using different materials and lighting and offers passengers a higher level of comfort and weather protection than offered through conventional shelters as well as the latest technology to enhance bus passengers’ overall journey.

The shelter’s modular design means it can be adapted to fit other sites in Greater Manchester and offer different services if required. In addition, the digital advertising opportunities offer the potential to generate income for Transport for Greater Manchester which would be reinvested into public transport. Over the coming months views will be sought from passengers on the new facility.

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 Please see front sheet of report.

**Peter Boulton**

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