TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Sub Committee: Capital Projects and Policy
Date: 01 December 2017
Subject: Bus Priority Update
Report of: Head of Projects Group

PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

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) and the Salford – Bolton Network Improvement Programme.

2. Cross City Bus Package Current Position and Recent Progress

2.1 Since the last update to this sub-committee on 1 September 2017, all planned physical works on the Oxford Road Corridor have been completed with the exception of several interfaces with third party frontages. In addition, in conjunction with Manchester City Council (MCC), camera enforcement at the Oxford Road bus gates has commenced. A summary of the works completed since September 2017 is provided below. This includes:

- The completion of the University of Manchester Students’ Union steps, and associated footway works;
- The installation and commencement of camera enforcement at multiple locations along the Oxford Road corridor;
- The installation of additional signage to support camera enforcement along the Corridor; and
- Snagging to remedy defects identified upon completion of the main physical works.

2.2 There are a small number of snagging items and defects remaining on Oxford Road, these are expected to be completed during the next few months.

2.3 Due to multiple third party developments, there are small areas of the Oxford Road corridor which will remain incomplete within the core Bus Priority Programme timescales. The areas affected include the final footway surfacing outside the Circle Square and Mable Tylecote re-development sites, as well as the footway and segregated cycle lane adjacent to the University of Manchester Business School redevelopment. It has been agreed that these residual works will be completed by the respective third party developers through the creation of a series of Section 278 Agreements between MCC and the third party developers.

2.4 The introduction of the permanent measures have been accompanied by a ‘behavioural change’ strategy which included the roll out of a bespoke animation, educating users of Oxford Road on the changes and how they affect each mode, which has now received over 110,000 views on ‘YouTube’ since its launch in April. This campaign was further invigorated in early September, as students arrived back at University for the start of
the new academic year. This was supported by a programme of events with Corridor Partners and other key stakeholders re-enforcing the message that drivers must observe the bus gates and use alternative routes between 6am and 9pm. Work will continue with key stakeholders to re-enforce messages to all users of the corridor and any lessons learned will be picked up as part of the wider programme evaluation and monitoring exercise that will be completed over the next few years.

2.5 Regular dialogue with bus operators has mostly transferred to operational colleagues as the infrastructure is now fully embedded and is generally working well.

2.6 In the Regional Centre further improvement measures are being progressed at the junction of London Road / Fairfield Street and Major Street / Princess Street, in conjunction with MCC, to ease the levels of congestion experienced at peak times at these junctions. It is anticipated that these works will be delivered during the current financial year.

2.7 The Cross City Bus Package was officially launched in September 2017 at an event hosted at The Contact Theatre on Oxford Road. The overall Bus Priority Package was recently recognised at the National Transport Awards winning the category of Improvements to Bus Services. In addition it has been shortlisted in the Northern Transport Awards in the category of Transport Project of the Year.

2.8 Monitoring and evaluation of the Cross City Bus Package has commenced now the overall Bus Priority Programme is complete. A series of activities relating to the Cross City Bus Priority Programme has been planned and an early findings report is due to be issued in summer 2017, with a further report to be published in 2022.

3. **The Busway Scheme Current Position and Recent Progress**

3.1 The Busway service (V1 & V2) between Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley, Salford and Manchester was officially launched on 3 April 2016. All V1 and V2 services now operate at a frequency of 8 buses per hour during the daytime via Princess Street and Oxford Road to the Central Manchester Hospital site.

3.2 In its first full year the Busway carried in excess of 2.1 million passengers, a significantly higher level than had been originally envisaged. It is anticipated that this figure will be surpassed in the second year of operation with the current demand for the service being over 50,000 passenger journeys per week.

3.3 The East Bond Street and Astley Street Park & Ride sites are normally full by the end of the morning peak and TfGM is investigating enforcement measures to prevent them being used by non-Busway users. Wigan Council completed construction of a 40 space car park immediately north
of Astley Street Interchange in September and this is being regularly used throughout the working day. Despite the construction of this car park the Astley Street Park & Ride continues to operate at full capacity. While not full, demand at the A580 Park & Ride site continues to increase. The feasibility of additional Park & Ride sites continues to be investigated with local authority partners.

3.4 Such has been the success of the service, during peak times, a lack of capacity has become an issue for some passengers; particularly those wishing to board on the A580. Whilst the necessity to fit guide wheels to the vehicles limits the amount of additional resource that can be readily deployed, discussions are ongoing with the operator - First Manchester - to ascertain what can be done to resolve these issues.

3.5 A key element of the Busway scheme was the creation of a multi-user path alongside the track. Surveys have recently been carried out on the path at six locations to assess the level and type of usage. Surveys of over 1,000 users of the path indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the path, at 95% (with only 2% dissatisfied). Among users, 84% feel the path has encouraged them to adopt a more active lifestyle and 58% of the overall sample of users said that the impact on their lifestyle had been significant. Suggestions were made for improvements to the path, including better lighting and a smoother surface.

3.6 Having taken account of survey evidence of how long users were on the path for and the typical pattern of cycling and walking across the year, it is estimated that there are 160,000 pedestrian trips and 60,000 cycle trips on the path each year.

3.7 TfGM continues to work with the main contractor for the Busway scheme to rectify a small number of residual construction issues whilst minimising operational disruption.

3.8 The evaluation of the Busway will be undertaken in conjunction with the Cross City Bus Package.

4. Salford – Bolton Network Improvements (SBNI)

4.1 Work has continued in conjunction with local authority partners Bolton Council (BMBC) and Salford City Council (SCC), 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 11 packages 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 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 both locally and with Government.

4.4 In Bolton there are six scheme Delivery Packages. Following Conditional Approval, the following junction improvement schemes in Bolton have been completed: Delivery Package 1: Raikes Lane; Delivery Package 2 (Phase 2a): Green Lane/Manchester Road; and Delivery Package 3: Higher Market Street / Longcauseway. All of these schemes have improved vehicle capacity and passenger journey times through the junctions and have also enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities.

4.5 Work has also commenced on Delivery Package 2b: Loxham Street / Egerton Street / Manchester Road. This scheme involves an upgrade of the Loxham Street / Manchester Road (A575) and Egerton Street / Bolton Road (A6053) junctions. The works will address congestion and safety issues as well as significantly enhancing pedestrian and cyclist facilities. The completion of the Egerton Street works has been delayed due to the collapse of the Network Rail bridge at Moses Gate station in August 2017. It had originally been intended that the junction works would be completed by the end of 2017, however, it is now anticipated that the works will not be completed until spring 2018, following the completion of Network Rail’s works.

4.6 Full Approval has also been received for Delivery Package 7: Bus Stop upgrades. BMBC and TfGM are now progressing with these works, including raising kerb heights, the introduction of level boarding platforms and the installation of bus shelters and bus stop clearways where appropriate. It is anticipated that these works will be completed in early 2018.

4.7 Proposals have been advanced with BMBC for Farnworth town centre and in particular Farnworth bus station, as part of the wider town centre regeneration proposals. A Planning Application was submitted to the Council in early June and approval was granted in July 2017. Following detailed design and a Contractor procurement exercise, the scheme is now
progressing through the final approvals process and subject to these approvals being granted, it is anticipated that work will begin in spring 2018, with the improvements to the bus station scheduled to be completed during summer 2018. The remaining town centre works will be subject to a separate contractor procurement exercise ahead of works commencing in summer 2018. These works are anticipated to be completed in winter 2018.

4.8 The remaining Bolton scheme Delivery Package 6, involves the introduction of bus priority and junction improvements along the A666 corridor. The design of this scheme is being progressed in coordination with SCC, due to the corridor spanning both local authority areas. Works are planned to start in 2018, subject to securing all the necessary powers and consents.

4.9 TfGM and BMBC are currently exploring options to utilise savings achieved on the delivery of Bolton schemes to date in order to bring the priority reserve Manchester Road Gateway scheme back into scope. Initial design development activities are being undertaken to understand the proposed benefits of the scheme before formal approval is sought to progress detailed design activities.

4.10 All of these works are being delivered by BMBC as the local highway authority.

4.11 In Salford, there are five scheme Delivery Packages. The first involves a range of relatively minor traffic management and highway proposals within Walkden and Pendleton. This includes three junction improvements at Manchester Road East / Hilton Lane, Eccles Old Road / Langworthy Road and Seedley Road / Langworthy Road; bus stop enhancements; and the improvement of the public realm and pedestrian environment in the vicinity of Walkden railway station. Work commenced on the construction of these schemes in June 2017 and is progressing well, being overseen and managed by TfGM and SCC’s Delivery Agent, Urban Vision. The schemes are being delivered in a phased manner with all works due to be completed by the end of 2017.

4.12 The remaining delivery packages, including proposals for the A6 through Walkden and Swinton; along the A666; and within Pendleton town centre, are currently progressing through design and development. This work is being progressed in partnership with SCC and on completion of the development phase, each of the individual schemes will be subject to consultation and community engagement in advance of progressing with any required powers and consents and moving into construction.

4.13 The proposals for Pendleton town centre are being developed in the context of the wider regeneration proposals for the area, which are being progressed by SCC. The Salford City Council Executive Lead Member has been briefed on the proposals for Pendleton town centre and wider
engagement with local stakeholders, including elected ward members, will take place in early 2018.

4.14 In addition to the design and development work which is currently taking place to enhance the passenger experience at Pendleton, TfGM will continue to work with SCC with a view to identifying potential funding opportunities for a new dedicated bus station in Pendleton over the longer term.

4.15 Elected Member briefings on the remaining Delivery Packages will take place over the coming months as the schemes are developed in sufficient detail. Given that the schemes being developed for Pendleton town centre, the A6 through Walkden and Swinton and the A666 are in relatively close proximity to each other, there will be a need for careful coordination of the delivery of the works in order to minimise any disruption during construction.

4.16 Works to upgrade a selection of bus stops within the Salford programme area will take place as part of Delivery Package 5 and subject to securing all powers and consents, works are due to start on this Delivery Package in spring 2018.

4.17 Work on the construction of the Pendleton town centre scheme and the A6 interventions is expected to commence in summer 2018 with the A666 schemes to follow, subject to securing the necessary powers and consents.

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

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

5. Recommendations

5.1 Please see front sheet of report.

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