PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

13 April 2018 and 27 July 2018.

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to primarily provide an update on Salford – Bolton Network Improvement Programme and the Bus Priority Programme (Cross City Bus and Busway). In addition a brief section on future bus priority schemes, with particular focus on the Stockport Housing Infrastructure Fund proposals is also included.

1.2 This follows on from the last update in relation to these initiatives that was provided to this Sub-Committee in July 2018.

2. Salford – Bolton Network Improvements (SBNI)

2.1 Work has continued in conjunction with local authority partners Bolton Metropolitan Borough 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
- Substantially improving the punctuality, regularity and reliability of bus services operating through the defined study area, and helping to enhance highway network performance where possible.

2.2 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.

2.3 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 Loxham Street/Green Lane/Manchester Road; Delivery Package 3: Higher Market Street / Longcauseway; Delivery Package 4a Farnworth Bus
Facility; Delivery Package 4b Farnworth town centre; and Delivery Package 7: Bus Stop upgrades. All of these schemes have improved vehicle capacity and passenger journey times through the junctions and have also enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities and bus passenger waiting facilities.

2.4 Following the outcome of a modelling and appraisal exercise and Bolton Council’s decision to nominate the A666 as their key cycling and walking corridor, the remaining core Bolton scheme, Delivery Package 6, A666 has been reviewed and will now not be delivered through the SBNI Programme. Because of this change in focus towards cycling and walking any proposals along this corridor will be pursued via the Transforming Cities Fund.

2.5 TfGM and BMBC are now looking to utilise savings achieved on the delivery of the Bolton SBNI schemes to date to bring the Council’s priority reserve scheme, Delivery Package 5: Manchester Road Gateway, back into scope. Design development and traffic modelling activities continue to be undertaken to understand the proposed benefits of the scheme before formal approval is sought to progress detailed design activities. This includes taking cognisance of the recent changes to the highway layout in Bolton town centre associated with the delivery of Bolton Interchange and ensuring the scheme aligns, wherever possible with the emerging cycling and walking policy agenda.

2.6 In addition consideration is also being given by BMBC as to what other schemes could be delivered, including improvements to Kearsley Roundabout and Bradford Road. These schemes would need to be formally accepted into the SBNI Programme.

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

2.8 In Salford, there are five scheme Delivery Packages. The first involved a range of relatively minor traffic management and highway proposals within Walkden and Pendleton. This included 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. These works were completed in November 2017.

2.9 The remaining Delivery Packages include proposals for the A6 through Walkden and Swinton; along the A666; and within Pendleton town centre. These initiatives 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.
2.10 As part of the recent GM wide engagement on cycling by TfGM and the Cycling and Walking Commissioner, SCC has designated the A6 as their key route for cycling and walking infrastructure improvements. This has led to a review of the A6 interventions (Delivery Package 2) to determine any additional cycling measures that could be included within these schemes should additional funding be secured through the Transforming Cities Fund and the original SBNI objectives be maintained. This review continues in both Walkden and Swinton to develop the optimum scheme.

2.11 In relation to Delivery Package 3: the A666 Corridor, public consultation was undertaken with the local community in summer 2018 in advance of the formal advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Orders required for the scheme, which is due to take place later this autumn. The feedback has been utilised to inform the design development wherever possible. Lead Member briefings have been provided on this scheme. Subject to securing the necessary powers and consents the scheme will be procured and works are anticipated to commence in summer 2019.

2.12 With regard to Delivery Package 4: Pendleton, the design and development process has taken longer than planned due to the shopping centre owner (Praxis) refusing to support the scheme in its original and preferred form, due to commercial and car parking considerations. The original scheme aimed to improve pedestrian access across Rossall Way as well as improving and formalising the on-highway bus passenger waiting provision, however the scheme is currently being re-designed to avoid the need to amend the access to suit Praxis and this will mean that pedestrian access arrangements in this area will largely remain as per existing. Following this design development the necessary powers and consents will be sought by SCC.

2.13 In parallel TfGM will continue to work with SCC regarding aspirations for a longer term bus facility at Pendleton.

2.14 Works to upgrade a package of 95 bus stops within the Salford programme area are included within Delivery Package 5. These works are currently on site and are anticipated to be completed in spring 2019.

3. Cross City Bus Package Current Position and Recent Progress

3.1 Since the last update to this sub-committee in July 2018 the works that have been carried out associated with the Cross City Bus Programme have related to:

- The completion of a minor junction improvement at Portland Street/Charlotte Street within Manchester city centre, has resulted in journey time and reliability benefits for bus passengers and also improved crossing times for pedestrians. Up to 270 buses per hour
utilise this junction and the additional junction capacity has been welcomed by bus operators;

- The completion of the segregated cycle lane adjacent to the University of Manchester Business School redevelopment by the developer on Oxford Road; and
- The remediation of all minor defects identified upon completion of the main physical works on Oxford Road. These works have been carried out by Manchester City Council (MCC).

3.2 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 are now limited to the final footway surfacing outside the Circle Square and Mable Tylecote re-development sites. It has been agreed that these residual works will be completed by the respective third party developers through a series of Section 278 Agreements between MCC and the third party developers.

3.3 The TfGM/MCC Oxford Road and Wilmslow Road schemes recently received an award for Excellence in Cycling and Walking at the National Transport Awards.

3.4 With regard to the enforcement of the bus priority measures, 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.

3.5 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 2019.

4. The Busway Scheme Current Position and Recent Progress

4.1 The Busway service (V1 & V2) between Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley, Salford and Manchester was officially launched on 3 April 2016. All V1 and V2 services operate at a frequency of 8 buses per hour during the daytime and up to 12 per hour during peak, via Princess Street and Oxford Road to the Central Manchester Hospital site. This service frequency has recently been increased with the addition of a further 2 peak time V1 services (from Leigh), 4 peak time V3 services and 5 morning peak V4 services, with particular focus on addressing passenger demand along the Salford A580 section of the route into the Regional Centre. This now means that
between 07:00 and 09:00 there are 35 buses scheduled to arrive in the Regional Centre.

4.2 Patronage continues to grow on the service, building on the success of the first two years of operation with passenger trips in late September and October averaging over 63,000 per week, which is 11,000 more trips a week than this time last year. Based on the passenger surveys previously carried out this means 12,500 fewer cars journeys being made every week compared to before the Busway service commenced.

4.3 TfGM continues to work with the main contractor for the guided busway to rectify a small number of residual construction issues whilst minimising operational disruption.

5. **Future Bus Priority**

5.1 TfGM is currently supporting Stockport Council (as lead authority), Cheshire East Council, Manchester City Council and Manchester Airport Group in the early stages of development of Stockport’s Housing Infrastructure Fund bid and business case submission. A significant element of this bid is likely to focus on how bus priority and bus rapid transit infrastructure can be used to help unlock major housing sites in the area and provide enhanced connectivity between these sites and Stockport and Manchester Airport. Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 Please see front sheet of report.

**Alex Cropper**

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