PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update to Members on recent progress in respect of the Bus Priority Programme, the Better Bus Area Fund Programme and the Bolton – Salford Quality Bus Network Programme in Greater Manchester.

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 progress which has been made in relation to the Bus Priority Programme (Cross City Bus and Busway), the Better Bus Area Fund Programme and Bolton-Salford Quality Bus Network Programme (BSQBN), since July 2015.

2. **Cross City Bus Package Current Position and Recent Progress**

2.1 Since July 2015, work has progressed with the two local authorities: (Manchester and Salford), to continue to develop and deliver the scheme proposals. This has included finalising the designs and delivery strategies for each corridor, taking into account a range of interfaces with other proposals, meeting with key stakeholders, progressing with the work necessary to secure powers and consents and continuing construction on all of the corridors.

2.2 On the Oxford Road Corridor, following the securing of all powers and consents required to deliver the scheme, construction work has been completed on the trial bus stop area to the south of Hathersage Road. This trial is aimed at finalising the detail of the bus stop cycle bypass arrangements for the remainder of the scheme and will be the subject of a full evaluation, followed by refinement where necessary.

2.3 The evaluation of the trial bus stop was conducted over a three week period and focused on three main areas; general public surveys; video monitoring; and key user group evaluation sessions.

- During the general public survey, TfGM data collectors were on site from 7am-7pm seeking views from bus passengers, pedestrians and cyclists on the new bus stop and cycle bypass lane. In total 517 bus questionnaires, 366 pedestrian questionnaires and 318 cycle questionnaires were collected.

- Video monitoring of the trial site focused on:
  - Cyclist/pedestrian - behaviours and interaction at the zebra crossing;
  - General interaction between cyclists and pedestrians crossing the cycle lane; and
  - Bus passenger waiting behaviours on the bus platform.

2.4 In addition, 20 hours of qualitative analysis will provide an overview of interactions between different users at various times of day.

2.5 On site evaluation sessions were arranged with key user groups who were invited to the trial bus stop to test the facilities and give feedback. User groups included: Local Councillors; bus operators; Corridor
Partners; the RNIB; the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner; Visually Impaired Steering Group; the Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG); Guide Dogs for the Blind; Cycle Campaign Groups, Living Streets and Transport Focus.

2.6 An evaluation report has been commissioned and will form the basis of the evaluation workshop, which has been planned for mid-November. Representatives from the user groups invited to the trial will be sent the report and asked to attend a workshop to discuss and agree the final findings of the trial.

Oxford Road: Trial Bus Stop

2.7 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 have been invaluable in providing a forum to shape and agree the scheme. Now that the Oxford Road proposals are moving closer to the construction phase these meetings will provide an important forum for discussion around delivery challenges and the timing and communication of works in key areas along the corridor. These meetings will be crucial in ensuring the effective coordination of the Oxford Road works and other developments along the Corridor, such as the redevelopment of the UoM Business School.

2.8 Construction works in relation to a package of enabling measures on Princess Street are now complete. The primary effect of these works is to open Princess Street to two-way traffic, enabling Upper Brook Street to provide access to the City Centre once access restrictions are introduced on Oxford Road. The works will also enhance access to the Village and Chinatown by providing an alternative route from the south along Princess Street and into Major Street. This route will be available when there are access restrictions to Sackville Street on Friday and Saturday nights.
2.9 Construction of these measures has been carried out by Manchester Contracts under the supervision of Manchester City Council (MCC) and Princess Street opened to two way traffic on the 1 November 2015. An extensive joint communications strategy (MCC and TfGM) was implemented as part of this major highway network change which included highway and pedestrian signage and promotional and awareness campaigns.

2.10 Construction of the Regional Centre scheme commenced in March 2015. The scheme involves sections of Portland Street in the vicinity of Aytoun Street being limited to access for buses, cycles, hackney carriages (taxi) and emergency vehicles only, general changes to traffic flow direction in surrounding streets, the addition of bus lanes, cycle lanes and improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities. This is all part of the delivery of the Transport Strategy for Manchester city centre. The scheme is being delivered by Manchester Contracts under the supervision of MCC.

2.11 Completion of these works was anticipated by the end of 2015, however as a result of unforeseen events, such as the sewer collapse on Mancunian Way and the continued closure of Cross Street to buses which have added to the level of disruption to road users across the Regional Centre, the timescales and phasing of some of the Regional Centre works is being reviewed to try and minimise the overall level of disruption, and therefore some works will continue into the first quarter of 2016. It has been agreed with MCC that in order to minimise disruption on the lead up to Christmas that the introduction of restrictions for general traffic on Portland Street will now not come into effect before Christmas as originally intended, but will be introduced as part of the remaining works. The area that is likely to be suspended until the New Year relates largely to the Parker Street bus station area, the vast majority of all other works will be completed by mid-November.

2.12 A comprehensive communications strategy has been put in place 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, specific leaflet drops to all residents and businesses advising of the works, when they are starting and in what order we will undertake the works, we have also held a small number of drop-in sessions, met with key stakeholders in the Village and Chinatown and continue to undertake face to face door knocking exercises informing individuals directly, where appropriate.

2.13 Works on the A580, between Frederick Road and Newearth Road, are being delivered by Salford City Council (SCC). These works are now in their final phase and will be completed by the end of the year. Key works that have been completed in the last few months include:
• The upgrade of the remaining three bus stops on the A580 near Moorside Road and Barton Road, and creation of two pairs of new bus stops near Walkden Road and the A580 park and ride site;

• Site clearance, earthworks, drainage, street lighting, traffic signs, vehicle restraint barriers, secondary surfacing works and lining along the central reserve between Moorside Road and Walkden Road;

• Upgrading and commissioning the traffic signals at the A580/Walkden Road junction which allows more efficient traffic movements and better caters for pedestrians and cyclists;

• Completion of works to introduce a new traffic signalised junction at the A580/Old Clough Lane junction which allows for a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A580. This will particularly benefit local school children in the area. The traffic signals will be commissioned once all of the temporary traffic management is removed in this area before the end of the year; and

• Removal of temporary traffic management and the opening of all lanes to traffic on the A580 east-bound carriageway between the Newearth Road junction and Walkden Road junction and in a westbound direction between the Loopline bridge and Walkden Road.

2.14 The contractor is part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme and is audited throughout the life of the construction phase. The contractor has been audited twice and scored 38 on the first visit and an improved score of 42/50 on the recent audit undertaken in August 2015. There were two areas that were identified as exceptional; health and safety, and community engagement. The contractor has to date completed over 130,000 safe working hours, since scheme inception, with no accidents reported, an excellent achievement. The auditor acknowledged the excellent community engagement and commented "the volume of community works for this value of project was exceptional" and "the amount of community work that has been carried out for this medium-sized project could be considered as innovation".

2.15 The remaining works to be completed include work to the central reservation between Old Clough Lane and Moorside Road, works at two new signalised junctions at the Park and Ride site and the M61 off-slip. Once completed this work will allow the bus lane between Walkden Road and Lancaster Road to become operational. A new pedestrian crossing near Barton Road will also be commissioned. The SCOOT network between the Park and Ride site and Lancaster Road, which allows efficient traffic flows through signalised junctions at peak times, will start to be validated. There will also be some existing bus stops on the A6 Chapel Street that need minor works to accommodate the new Busway service.
2.16 TfGM and Salford City Council (SCC) continue to work together to mitigate, wherever practicable, disruption to traffic flows on the A580 due to the construction works and will continue to manage the communication of these works and their impact on users of the A580 and the wider general public.

2.17 The A580 Park and Ride scheme, which complements the A580 scheme, will be delivered in a coordinated manner with the A580 Bus Priority scheme. Works on this scheme have progressed well over the last few months and will be completed by the end of the year to facilitate testing and commissioning in advance of commencement of Busway services.

2.18 On the A664 scheme, the works carried out by MCC and Rochdale Council are now complete, and post completion surveys are underway to inform a wider Programme wide monitoring and evaluation report, once the overall Bus Priority Programme is completed.

2.19 Work continues on the development of the Quality Partnership Scheme (QPS) to ensure that the benefits delivered by the infrastructure investment (Cross City Bus and the Busway) can be realised and secured for bus users, local authorities and bus operators. Public consultation was undertaken in the summer and the comments received are being considered.

2.20 Subject to the satisfactory completion of all infrastructure, operational workstreams and the outcomes of the consultation, the QPS is scheduled to commence in 2016.

2.21 It is anticipated that the majority of the Cross City Bus Package will be completed and brought into operational use by the end of 2015. The only exception will be the Oxford Road corridor and works deferred in the Regional Centre (para 2.11). Subject to commencement of works later this year the Oxford Road proposals will be completed by the end of 2016.

3. The Busway Scheme Current Position and Recent Progress

3.1 Following the appointment of the Principal Contractor in spring 2013 to deliver the Leigh to Ellenbrook Guided Busway, detailed design and construction has progressed.

3.2 Bulk earthworks are now complete with all soil forming material moved to the Forestry Commission site at Higher Folds. The Higher Folds site has also now been prepared, using organic material, for the planting of a community woodland which will be commenced by the Forestry Commission in early 2016. Drainage works and secondary earthworks are also now largely completed along the route.
3.3 Works to facilitate the busway alignment crossing key road junctions are largely complete with the exception of traffic signal installation. Resurfacing works at Sale Lane, Holden Road and East Bond Street have recently been completed. The works to realign Well Street are ongoing with signal installation due to take place in December 2015. Works have also progressed well in relation to landscaping and bus stop works along the route.

3.4 Since July, significant progress has been made in relation to the construction of the guideway track with this operation now fundamentally complete. The remaining work in relation to the track is the achievement through grinding of the required gauge tolerances. It is expected that this element of work will be complete by the middle of November. Once this has been completed a further round of testing can commence in parallel with the completion of the remaining construction activities such as finishing the bus stops, surfacing of the multi-user path and completion of landscaping works.

![Completed Guided Busway Track](image)

3.5 Most of the construction work will be completed this year, followed by a period of testing and commissioning in advance of working with First Manchester with regard to the launching of services during the first quarter of 2016.

3.6 Communications work has continued in relation to the scheme, including: regular meetings with Wigan Council and SCC; and proactive liaison with residents and businesses along the corridor. This includes providing timely information about specific construction activities and planned works, the distribution of project newsletters, holding weekly open meetings at the site office and regular community engagement events at key strategic locations. The Contractor has also provided a dedicated Public Liaison Officer who continues to respond to concerns and requests for information from residents, businesses and other key stakeholders. To date, during the works, over 84,000 letters have been issued throughout the local community.
3.7 In addition to the work being progressed on the guided section of the route in conjunction with Wigan Council TfGM has recently completed a package of bus priority and associated highways measures within Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley town centres. These works have included junction improvements, new pedestrian crossing, cycling and bus priority infrastructure and the creation of a new and improved public square within Tyldesley town centre.

3.8 The bus-only section of the Tyldesley town centre works on Stanley Street will become operational when the busway service opens to the public. This is expected in early 2016.

3.9 The A577 works, undertaken by Wigan Council, have been completed with the exception of some existing bus stops that need minor works to accommodate the new guided bus.

3.10 The busway scheme also includes improvements to Leigh Bus Station which will form a terminus for the busway services. These improvements include the enhancement of the passenger waiting environment in the vicinity of the Busway stand and throughout the bus station, including the Travelshop and the toilet facilities and enhanced cycle parking facilities in the form of a cycle hub, which has been delivered as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme. These works were completed in September and were “opened formally” by Andy Burnham MP, Councillor Aldred and Councillor Fender on 2 October 2015.
Leigh Bus Station ‘Opening’ Event

3.11 In January 2015, TfGM announced that First had been awarded the contract to operate the Busway services. First has placed an order to purchase the new buses to operate the services and has recently undertaken a consultation in relation to some of the aspects of the bus interior with the local community. Work continues to develop the branding of the vehicles in conjunction with First, as well as progressing a detailed programme of activities leading into operational readiness.


4.1 Since the award of the £5 million BBAF funding in spring 2012, a programme of works has been progressed in conjunction with the ten Greater Manchester local authorities and bus operators. All works have now been completed.

5. Bolton-Salford Quality Bus Network (BSQBN)

5.1 In addition to the progress being made in relation to scheme delivery on the above bus priority projects, development work has continued to take place, in conjunction with local authority partners Bolton Council and SCC, in relation to a number of other proposed bus priority / traffic management and pedestrian and cycling improvement schemes which are being promoted as part of the BSQBN Programme. BSQBN involves the introduction of a package of local network interventions in the Bolton – Salford Corridor focussed on the following primary objectives:

- To substantially improve the punctuality, regularity and reliability of bus services operating through the defined study area, and aim to increase bus speeds where possible;
• 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; and

• Promoting active, healthy lifestyles and making active sustainable travel safer and easier to use and an attractive alternative to the private car.

5.2 This work has included the identification of issues and opportunities with local key stakeholders; identifying preferred scheme options and benefits at a strategic and local level; and prioritisation of schemes to maximise benefits across the network. This work has been progressed within the context of the wider regeneration proposals for various town centres, within the designated area, which are being progressed by the relevant local authorities, including Farnworth and Pendleton, for which updates were provided to Members last month as part of a wider Interchange Programme Update report.

5.3 The BSQBN 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.

5.4 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, with a view to a business case being submitted shortly to GMCA in line with the governance arrangements for the Local Growth Deal agreed with Government.

5.5 Following approval of the business case design, detailed consultation on the schemes and work to secure powers and consents will be progressed by the local authority partners, in line with project delivery timescales and taking into account the many scheme interfaces.

5.6 Further updates in relation to the development work for the above schemes will be brought to this Sub-Committee in due course.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Please see front sheet of report.

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