

Executive Decision Report

Aylestone Quality Bus Corridor Scheme

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 8 January 2013

Lead director: Andrew Smith



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Aylestone, Castle and Freeman
- Report author: Mark Wills
- Author contact details: 01162528933
- Report version number: v3

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek the City Mayor's approval to construct the Aylestone Quality Bus Corridor Scheme and to contribute £1.542m of city council capital funds to the cost of the scheme.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The City Mayor is recommended to approve construction of the highway infrastructure improvements as detailed on the scheme drawings.

2.2 The City Mayor is recommended to approve the city council's contribution of £1.542m to the scheme from the transport capital programmes as detailed in the financial section of this report.

2.3 The City Mayor is recommended to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) required to implement the scheme.

2.4 The City Mayor is recommended to authorise the City Solicitor to enter into an agreement with Leicestershire County Council to jointly fund the scheme.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Background

3.1 In December 2011 the Department for Transport (DfT) made £50 million available under the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF). The BBAF was intended to support those local authorities who take a partnership approach to bus services in congested urban areas where increasing bus occupancy and achieving modal shift can free up valuable road space and reduce carbon emissions. Projects had to demonstrate they would increase bus usage by making bus services more reliable and boost the economy and improve the environment by reducing congestion.

3.2 The decision to submit a Better Bus Area Fund bid was taken by the Deputy City Mayor and the County Council Lead Member at the start of this year. The successful Aylestone Project bid (Appendix A) was announced on 23rd March 2012 with the DfT contributing £2.56m towards the total estimated project cost of £4.99m. Match funding for the project is being provided by Leicester City Council (£1.542m), Leicestershire County Council (£0.596m) and Arriva (£0.290m).

3.3 Overall the project will deliver:

- Reduced and more predictable journey times and improved reliability for buses.
- Increased bus patronage as a result of the journey time improvements, quality improvements, information provision and marketing.
- Reduced congestion as a result of the junction improvements and mode shift to public transport.
- Reductions in carbon emissions as a result of the reduced congestion.
- Reduction in accidents at Lutterworth Rd/Soar Valley Way
- Benefits to the businesses of better journey time reliability for both employees and delivery vehicles.
- Improved access to work and training.

3.4 The scheme extends from the A426 Blaby Bypass roundabout through to the junction of Oxford Street with Newarke Street and comprises a range of bus route improvement proposals along the A426 from Blaby into Leicester City Centre. Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure improvements are also being proposed. The project consists of the following three main components.

a. Bus Infrastructure Improvement (bus lanes, bus lane traffic signal controls, bus lane enforcement, junction improvements and highway maintenance).

b. Information and Behaviour Change (bus route and timetable information, smart ticketing, personalised travel planning and travel to work grants).

c. Quality Improvements to Existing Bus Services (bus stop improvements, real time passenger information, refurbished and clean buses and improved management).

Consultation

3.5 A comprehensive consultation exercise has been undertaken on this project running between the 1st and 26th October 2012, the full details can be found in Appendix B.

3.6 The consultation included leaflet distribution (to approximately 11,000 households along the A426 corridor as well as 1,200 leaflets to bus users). The questions in the table at paragraph 3.8 of this report were included on a prepaid reply card attached to the 12,200 consultation leaflets distributed and in the online web form. Consultation also included static displays, a project webpage hosted on the County Council website with a link from the City Council website and public exhibitions. A number of meetings with residents and representative bodies were held.

3.7 Statutory consultee responses are separately detailed in the consultation report (Appendix B). In addition all comments received were reviewed and the issues raised were collated and analysed. Responses to these comments can be found in (Annex 3 of Appendix B). In total there were just over 1000 replies to the consultation by a variety of methods including; response card, email, letter, online form and telephone.

3.8 Summary of results;

Q1. Do you; support the scheme, not support the scheme or support the scheme with modifications?		
	Support	355
	Support with modifications	111
	Do not support	529
	Blank	21
Q2. Do you use the existing bus services along the A426; yes or no?		
	Yes	592
	No	290
	Blank	134
Q3. Will the proposals encourage you to increase your bus use or to consider it as a new user; yes or no?		
Q3	Yes	267
	No	579
	Blank	170

3.9 The responses to Q1 broken down according to administrative area can be found on page 5 of Appendix B and is reproduced in the table below. The responses to Q1 were further analysed to determine the effect on response levels following the distribution of the Glen Parva Parish Council newsletter on or about the 16th October 2012. The analysis shows that prior to the 16th October the response rates were 60:40 in favour of the project and after the 16th October the response rates changed to 75:25 against the project. The overall result of the consultation was approximately 50:50.

Q1 responses by administrative area

	City Residents	County Residents	Unknown	Total
Support the proposals	246	94	15	365
Support the Proposals but with modifications	65	35	11	111
Do not support the proposals	111	302	116	529
No comment	9	3	9	21

3.10 It is notable that around 25% of those who replied to the consultation stated that they would increase their bus usage as a result of this project based only on the information available during the consultation. The behavioural change initiatives such as Personalised Travel Planning and bus marketing that form part of this project would be expected to raise this figure and thus the patronage levels on the buses will increase as a result of this project.

3.11 During the consultation period two petitions were initiated, as detailed in the consultation report (Appendix B). Analysis of the paper petition handed to the County

Council on the 26th October 2012 showed 400 of the 1404 signatories not living along the corridor or on adjacent streets.

3.12 When presented to the County Council on 6th December the paper petition held a further 2937 signatories. The online petition, which ran from the 16th October to 6th December 2012, contains 166 signatories.

3.13 A further petition was handed to the Lead Member for Environment and Transport at the County Council on 23rd November 2012 at a meeting held with GPAAG representatives. This petition was from Glen Hills Primary School pupils and contains 160 signatories.

Highway Improvements and Highway Maintenance Proposals

3.14 Following consultation on the preliminary design proposals and design review the design options to be implemented on the scheme are included on the scheme drawings (Appendix C) which are briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

3.15 Drawing Number BBAF.002/H2/12/3 Woodbank Road to Hillsborough Road (County) - includes outbound bus lane with carriageway widening and signalling the junction at Woodbank with bus priority. It is also proposed to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph as shown on drawing TM 3991(2)//2/2012.

3.16 Drawing Number BBAF.002/H2/12/2 Hillsborough Road to Red House Road (County) - includes inbound bus lane with carriageway widening and new pelican crossing near Red House Road. It is also proposed to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph as shown on drawing TM 3991(2)//2/2012.

3.17 Drawing Number BBAF.002/H2/12/2 Red House Road to Lutterworth Road (City) - includes inbound bus lane with carriageway widening and Soar Valley Way junction improvements with separate right turn lane inbound from Lutterworth Road to Glenhills Way and two lanes able to turn right from Lutterworth Road into Soar Valley Way. It is also proposed to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph as shown on drawing TM 3991(2)//2/2012.

3.18 Drawing Numbers HD/100018/931/1 and 930/1 Lutterworth Road to Paigle Road (City) - includes inbound bus lane, Middleton Street junction improvements and extension to outbound bus lane. The scheme includes carriageway maintenance between Soar Valley Way junction and Middleton Street junction.

3.19 Drawing Numbers HD/100018/926/1, 927/1 and 928/1 Aylestone Road to Saffron Lane (City) - includes inbound and outbound bus lanes and on-carriageway cycle lanes in both directions. It is proposed that the residents of the "gas" houses have dedicated parking on the inbound side. At present they have to alternate parking on the inbound and outbound sides in the evening and morning peaks. A single inbound lane for all traffic will remain in this section.

3.20 Drawing Numbers HD/100018/921/1, 922/1, 924/1 and 925/1 Aylestone Road to Almond Road and Oxford Street to Newarke Street (City) - includes inbound bus lanes opposite Tigers Rugby Ground and fronting Leicester Royal Infirmary and signalisation of Carlton Street junction to also include new pedestrian phase. Widening of existing bus lane to 4 metres between Saffron Lane and Almond Road. Includes removal of pelican crossing on Carlton Street and Oxford Street between Bonners Lane and

Newarke Street. Includes improvements to Bonners Lane/Oxford Street junction. At Infirmary Square the area is redesigned to provide 3 ahead lanes and no bus lane. Discussions have been held with the Infirmary to make the slip road at Infirmary Square emergency vehicles only. This will provide ambulances with a dedicated route to Accident and Emergency and rationalise vehicle entry to the LRI. The on street parking would be removed. The footway is widened alongside the Infirmary to improve facilities for pedestrians and bus users at this busy interchange area.

3.21 Bus Lanes - the bus lane operation times throughout the corridor are proposed to be for 24 hours, 7 days a week (subject to the Traffic Regulation Order process). Bus Lane Enforcement is planned to be introduced from March 2014. The detailed specification of the enforcement methodology will be the subject of a further report.

3.22 Speed Limit – it is proposed to revise the existing speed limit from 40mph to 30mph from Soar Valley Way junction towards Glen Parva (subject to the Traffic Regulation Order process).

3.23 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) - The route will have RTPI installed. This will take advantage of GPS and GPRS capability on bus ticketing machines (supplied through the Councils' operational smart ticketing programme). A hosting system will collect data, interpret and transmit data to net and mobile based applications and to a limited number of on street displays at key locations. The system will be wireless. The RTPI system will also be capable for working with the Councils' traffic signal system to give bus green lights at junctions. Together these advances in technology will provide quicker and more reliable bus services. The detailed specification of the system will be the subject of a further report.

3.24 Personalised Travel Planning (PTP) - The scheme will include PTP. This is a generic term covering a range of targeted marketing techniques aimed at encouraging people to switch some of their car trips to walking, cycling or public transport.

3.25 The City Mayor is recommended to approve construction of the highway infrastructure improvements as detailed on the scheme drawings.
The City Mayor is recommended to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) required to implement the scheme.

Project Funding

3.26 The project is being funded from Better Bus Area Fund grant, the County Council, City council and Arriva. Detail of funding is provided at section 5.1.

3.27 The City Mayor is recommended to approve the city council's contribution of £1.542m to the scheme from the transport capital programmes as detailed in the financial section of this report.

The City Mayor is recommended to authorise the City Solicitor to enter into an agreement with Leicestershire County Council to jointly fund the scheme.

Project Programme

3.28 Public utility diversion works - start January 2013

Construction of highway improvement works - February to September 2013

Real Time Information on corridor – by March 2014

Bus Lane Enforcement – by March 2014

Marketing and promotion – September 2013 onwards

4. Details of Scrutiny

4.1 An informal meeting of the Transport and Climate Change Commission and Aylestone, Castle and Freeman ward councillors to discuss the project proposals was held on the 13th December 2012.

4.2 The County Council's Scrutiny Commission considered the project at its meeting on 10th December 2012.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 The improvement scheme to the A426 bus corridor has a total value of £5m. The funding for this scheme was identified in the BBAF bid as follows:

Overall Funding:	£'000
Better Bus Area Fund (DfT)	2,562
Arriva	290
County Council	596
City Council	<u>1,542</u>
Total Scheme cost	<u><u>4,990</u></u>

5.1.2 It is proposed that the City Council funds its contribution as follows from the following lines in the capital programme:

City Council Contribution:	2012/13	2013/14	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Policy Provisions:			
Congestion and Carbon	97	403	500
Immediate Starts:			
Capital maintenance	50	717	767
Accessibility	30	245	275
			<u> </u>
Total City Council contribution	<u>177</u>	<u>1365</u>	<u>1,542</u>

5.1.3 A value for money assessment was carried out and included in the bid document to the DfT. The assessment was carried out in accordance with DfT guidance and concluded that the benefit cost ratio for the package is greater than seven implying that the package will deliver high value for money.

Colin Sharpe , Head of Finance

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 To implement the scheme Traffic Regulation Orders will need to be introduced and others amended.

5.2.2 Legal advice should be sought concerning the agreement to be entered between the City Council and Leicestershire County Council, referred to in paragraph 2.4, and this should be entered in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules (to the extent they are applicable).

Jamie Guazzaroni and Greg Surtees, Solicitors

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

5.3.1 Carbon emissions from transport make up just under 20% of city-wide carbon emissions and is therefore an important area to target actions at. The proposals for a quality bus corridor along the A426 should help to improve the bus service, which in turn should help encourage people to shift their transport choices from car to the bus. Reducing the number of cars travelling into the city will help to reduce carbon emissions and improving the general traffic flow along the A426 will also help reduce the additional carbon that is generated when traffic is constantly stopping and starting. As well as the reductions that will be seen in carbon emissions by shifting journeys from cars to buses there should also be knock on benefits in a reduction in air pollution.

Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

5.4.1 The County Council officers undertook an Equality Impact Assessment for the scheme in July 2012, highlighting positive impact for all relevant groups. The summary is as follows:

- Improving access to key services by public transport, walking and cycling, and promoting social inclusion will benefit disabled users. However, mobility scooter and wheel chair users are more reliant on cars or taxis than public transport.
- Improving access to key services by public transport, walking and cycling, and promoting social inclusion will benefit younger and older age groups and may benefit low income users.
- Maintaining / improving facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users will benefit disabled users and may benefit different ethnic groups, women, some age groups and low income users.

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

No other implications

6. Background information and other papers:

Appendix A - A426 Quality Bus Corridor, A partnership bid to the Better Bus Area Fund from Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council.

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A - A426 Quality Bus Corridor, A partnership bid to the Better Bus Area Fund from Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council.

Appendix B - A426 BUS CORRIDOR PROJECT - CONSULTATION REPORT

Appendix C – Bus Infrastructure Improvements and additions (scheme drawings)

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

9. Is this a “key decision”? Yes

10. If a key decision please explain reason The scheme covers three wards