

Executive Decision Report

Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme Phase 1

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 30 March 2015

Lead director: Andrew L Smith



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Fosse, New Parks
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- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the City Mayor to construct the Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme Phase 1.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The City Mayor is recommended to:

- i. approve construction of the Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme Phase 1 highway infrastructure improvements, within the city boundary, as detailed in the report.
- ii. note that the funding for the scheme will come from the Government's Local Growth Fund (to be approved as a separate Executive Decision) together with contributions from the City Council (as included in the 2015/16 capital programme) and the County Council, as described in the financial implications section.
- iii. authorise the City Solicitor to enter into an agreement with Leicestershire County Council to jointly fund and deliver the scheme.
- iv. delegate authority to the Strategic Director City Development and Neighbourhoods to sign relevant contracts to deliver the scheme.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Background

3.1 The Leicester and Leicestershire Transport Board (LLTB), comprising the City and County councils and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, was established to oversee devolved Government funding for local major transport schemes. The Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme was prioritised by the LLTB for funding through 2015/16/17/18. An Assurance Framework requires the LLTB to assess and approve final scheme business cases prior to release of funding for each phase. A LLTB board meeting to consider approval of the phase 1 project business case is being arranged for May 2015.

3.2 The aims of the Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme are to:

- a) Increase the use of sustainable modes including walking, cycling and public transport;
- b) Maintain and improve accessibility to and within the area;
- c) improve access to jobs;
- d) improve movement of labour, materials and goods, to and from key

- employment sites;
- e) provide a transport system that is less susceptible to the disruptive impacts of incidents on the network (i.e. improved resilience);
- f) reduce traffic impacts on less appropriate routes within the City and County;
- g) Minimise impacts on congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions;
- h) Co-ordinate public investment so as to maximise benefits.

3.3 The first phase of the Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme includes improvements to the A50 County Hall Roundabout, the A50 New Parks Way Roundabout and the junction of A563 with Aikman Avenue. It also includes provision of new and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities along the A50 corridor from Blackbird Road to the County Hall Roundabout, this includes new and improved crossing facilities at the roundabout and junctions included in Phase 1 of the scheme.

Consultation

3.4 A comprehensive consultation exercise has been undertaken on this phase 1 project between the 27th November 2014 and the 5th of January 2015. A summary of the consultation responses is provided below. The consultation responses included 98 questionnaire replies. Based on their home post codes 67% lived within the county, 25% within the City and 8% did not provide a post code. Of those within the county 32 (33%) replies came from residents of the properties on Leicester Road fronting the proposed bus lane to the Station Road (County Hall) roundabout. A further 16 (16%) were from Station Road, Faire Road and other adjacent streets.

3.5 In addition to the questionnaire responses, 34 comments were received via correspondence from residents, statutory consultees and other interested parties. The majority of comments were from county residents regarding the proposals within the county. City residents generally supported the proposals and a majority agreed the proposals would improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in particular. Two comments were made in respect of the cycle lane (Groby Road) including the loss of verge/parking and potential conflict with pedestrians and cars.

3.6 Ward Councillors from Fosse Ward raised no objections to the scheme and stated a preference for cycle routes to be segregated.

3.7 Leicester Inclusive Design Advisory Panel was presented with the proposals at their meeting of December 10th 2014. Members of the panel were concerned that further conversion of footways to shared cycle/ pedestrian routes could mean a higher likelihood of conflicts and excludes many disabled and older people who no longer feel safe on footways, sending out a message that cycling on footways is encouraged.

3.8 The Local City Access Forum and Leicester Cycle Workshop have made comments regarding the proposals. The Cycle Workshop raised a number of detailed matters concerning possible collisions with cyclists using the footpaths while vehicles were exiting private accesses, the need for a consistent side road entry treatment along the length of the cycleway and to ensure there is sufficient width on the footpaths to accommodate two way cycling and pedestrian movements.

Highway Improvements and Maintenance Proposals

3.9 Following consideration of the consultation responses on the phase 1 project design proposals and subsequent design review revised scheme proposals are

summarised below and shown on the scheme drawings (Appendix 1-5). Planned maintenance, funded from the council's capital maintenance programme that is due to take place around the same time will be co-ordinated and included in the scheme where appropriate.

3.10 The plan at Appendix 1 shows improvements to the County Hall roundabout on the A50. Traffic signals will be placed on the junction (there are none at present) with facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A50, Station Road and Gynsill Lane. The roads as they approach the roundabout will be widened to increase the numbers of lanes from 2 to 3. There will be new cycle connections to link the County Hall roundabout with the New Parks Way roundabout. A bus lane had been considered on the A50 between the New Parks Way and County Hall roundabout, from Faire Road to the roundabout. This was removed from the scheme following consultation.

3.11 The plan at Appendix 2 shows the proposed walking and cycling improvements on the A50 from the County Hall roundabout to Glenfield Hospital. These include a shared use footway/cycleway on the south side of the A50 (changed from segregated following consultation), and segregated cycle and footpath on the north (Glenfield Hospital) side.

3.12 The plan at Appendix 3 shows improvements to New Parks Way roundabout and New Parks Way through to Dillon Way. New traffic signals are to be provided with new controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision of new pedestrian and cycle links across the roundabout itself. Approach lanes are to be widened to increase traffic capacity. The existing pedestrian crossing at the Dillon Way junction is to be upgraded to a cycle friendly crossing across New Parks Way.

3.14 The plan at Appendix 4 shows the proposals for the length of the A50 between New Parks Way roundabout and the Blackbird Road junction. Cycleways are to be provided along the entire length of this road on both sides. The existing pedestrian crossing next to Mary Road is to be up-graded to a Toucan crossing. On the northern footway, the cycleway will be segregated and on the southern side it is to be shared use. Segregated was originally proposed on the southern side but has been changed to shared due to the available width of the footway. Footway widening near to the Blackbird Road junction, utilising adjacent highway verge, is required to provide facilities of the correct width.

3.15 The plan at Appendix 5 shows improvements to the New Parks Way and Aikman Avenue junction. These include new controlled pedestrian and cycle traffic signals. The approach road is widened to increase capacity through the junction. The right turns from New Parks Way into the side roads are to be separately signalled as an accident reduction measure.

3.16 The main construction contract will be let by the County Council using the Midlands Highways Alliance Medium Schemes Framework 2. Within the city boundary this contract will include the improvement and maintenance works at, and adjacent to, New Parks Way roundabout and the New Parks Way/Aikman Avenue junction. City Highways will carry out the improvement and maintenance works associated with the footway and cycleway works between Blackbird Road and New Parks Way roundabout.

Project Funding and Value for Money

3.17 The estimated cost of Phase 1 is £7.685m. The target cost of the main contract works is being determined with the appointed contractor for the 'Early Contractor Involvement' phase of the scheme prior to letting of the main contract. The project is being funded from the Government's Local Growth Fund and the County Council and City Council capital programmes. Detail of funding is provided at Section 5.1.

3.18 The scheme business case has been developed in accordance with DfT guidance and indicates that the benefit cost ratio for the scheme is 3.8 implying that the scheme will deliver high value for money. The phase 1 business case is being assessed by independent consultants as required by the LLTB Assurance Framework process and is due to be considered for final approval at an LLTB meeting planned for May 2015.

Project Programme

3.19 Construction of highway improvement works are programmed to take place between July 2015 and Summer 2016 (to be confirmed with the main contractor following appointment).

4. Details of Scrutiny

The Leicester North West Project has been considered by the Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission as part of the Economic Action Plan.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 The overall scheme is estimated to cost £19m (spread over the 3 years from 2015/16 to 2017/18) of which £16.1m will be funded by the Government's Local Growth Fund. The remaining £2.9m is match funding, split between Leicester City Council (£1.5m) and Leicestershire County Council (£1.4m). The original spending profile includes £4.5m for 2015/16 (£3.5m of LGF and £0.5m from each Council). The estimated cost of Phase 1 is £7.685m. Phase 1 has been revised to include the Aikman Avenue improvements, for which delivery would be more advantageous/economic carried out alongside other improvements originally planned in phase 1.

5.1.2 The City Council's £0.5m contribution for 2015/16 is included in the capital programme immediate starts. The £3.5m LGF is to be added to the immediate starts via a separate Executive Decision to accept and commit the LGF.

5.1.3 There is a risk, albeit thought to be very small, that a future government could adjust subsequent years' LGF allocations. A contract of circa £7.5m will need to be awarded by the County Council, resulting in a commitment to expenditure of £3m more than the LGF funding identified for 2015/16. In the unlikely event that future years' funding ceases to be available through the LGF, £1.9m could be covered from the remaining identified council match funding for the subsequent phases of the scheme which would be unlikely to proceed. However, the balance of £1.1m would need to be shared between the two councils (likely to be from other planned match funding freed up due to any other LGF schemes also not progressing).

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 In order to jointly deliver the project it is necessary to enter into an agreement with Leicestershire County Council to:

- effect the agreements and understandings between both parties for the funding of the Scheme and all associated costs in respect of the project, establishing a disputes resolution procedure;
- undertaking of the functions of the Employer under the project and agree any other costs, liabilities and other expenses incurred under or by virtue delivering the project along with any other principal contract for implementing work to deliver the outcomes;
- acknowledge that once physical transport interventions have been constructed and associated maintenance periods have been completed to an agreed standard, the maintenance responsibility will refer back to either Leicester City Council or Leicestershire County Council dependant upon which administrative area the transport intervention is located.

5.2.2 In order to achieve the objectives set out above the Councils will enter into a memorandum of understanding. This will be drafted by the legal departments of both Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council.

5.2.3 Traffic Regulation Orders are required as part of the scheme and the statutory procedures will be followed and the outcomes of consultation reported separately in the usual manner.

Kamal Adatia, City barrister and Head of Standards

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

5.3.1 The scheme is designed to improve the capacity through the A50 corridor from the County A46 Leicester Western Bypass through to City at Blackbird Road, In addition capacity improvements will be achieved on New Parks Way from the A50 to Glenfield Road. The increases in capacity will result in reduced congestion and therefore less pollution.

5.3.2 The scheme also promotes modal shift to walking and cycling through improvements to cycle/footways along the A50 and improved crossing facilities along this corridor and on New Parks Way. Modal shift to more sustainable travel reduces congestion and subsequent pollution.

Louise Buckley, Environmental Consultant

5.4 Equalities Implications

5.4.1 An Equality Impact assessment was undertaken for the junction improvements proposed for A50/New Parks Way junction and the New Parks Way/Aikman Avenue junction. This was signed off by the Departments Equality Officer on the 5th February 2015.

5.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment for the cycling and walking improvements is in preparation.

Irene Kszyk, Head of Corporate Equalities

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

None

6. Background information and other papers:

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT LEICESTER
NORTH WEST TRANSPORT PROJECT - County Council Cabinet Report 16th March
2015

Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 -5 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 project will involve significant works to be implemented within two wards, Fosse and New Parks