

# Report to Scrutiny Commission

Economic Development, Transport and Tourism

Date of Commission meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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## **COVID 19 Transport Recovery Plan**

Report of the Director of Planning Transport and  
Development

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Leicester  
City Council

**Useful Information:**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Andrew Smith Director Planning Development and Transportation
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**1. Summary**

This report outlines the ongoing work to deliver the COVID 19 Transport Recovery Plan available at <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/186689/covid-19-transport-recovery-plan-may-2020.pdf>

**2. Recommendation to scrutiny**

Scrutiny is asked to note the contents of this report and comment on progress on delivery of the Transport Recovery Plan.

**3. Supporting Information****1. Background:**

The Transport Recovery Plan was published on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and sets out the approach the council and its transport partners planned to take in response to the recovery and business/shop reopening phases set out by the Government.

(NOTE: Transport issues associated with the additional lockdown measures announced on 29<sup>th</sup> June will be reported verbally at the meeting)

**2. Transport trends**

Following the initial dramatic fall in travel as set out in the Recovery Plan the following trends have been seen.

- Traffic levels remain relatively low at around 60-70% of normal levels. A small one-off upturn was observed on the reopening of non-essential shops on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. Car parking occupancy increased by around 5% in the week following 15<sup>th</sup> June but maximum occupancy is still only around 20%. The city's road network continues to function well. Localised pinch points usually reflect local incidents. There does not appear to be any significant traffic concerns where pop up cycleways and local centre pavement widening has been carried out. Area Traffic Control officers have been adjusting signals to reflect the new conditions.
- Bus patronage remains low at around 75% down on normal levels but continues to rise slowly at around 5% growth per week. Highest peak to date was Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. Footfall within the bus stations is within manageable levels in terms of maintaining social distancing.

- Cycling and walking has seen a general upward trend during the recovery phase with significantly more activity in outer areas reflecting leisure cycling in parks etc and in the city centre particularly on 15<sup>th</sup> June where city centre footfall was up 49% on the previous Monday, reflecting the reopening of non-essential shops.

### 3.0 Implementing the Transport Recovery Plan

A number of actions have taken place or are planned to be delivered by the Council and its transport partners as outlined below.

#### 3.1 Cycling and Walking

The Transport Recovery plan committed to a mile a week of **pop-up cycleways and paths** over 10 weeks. The table in **Appendix 1** outlines progress made to date with 6.5 miles (in addition to 0.5m at Aylestone Rd/Saffron Lane key worker corridor) delivered in 4 weeks as at 26<sup>th</sup> June.



Hinckley Road



London Road



Belgrave Road



Granby Street

As the schemes are developed and implemented through a rolling programme officers have sought to engage and notify ward councillors, businesses, residents and other stakeholders wherever possible including through media releases. In respect of the pop-up cycleways this has focussed on notifying emergency services, bus operators, businesses and residents where removal/relocation of parking may cause concerns. On the path widening schemes in local shopping centres notices are posted on lamp posts and through doors, local business groups and leaders are contacted where they

are known and ward councillors have assisted with engaging businesses to address concerns. Frequently asked questions on the council's website are also signposted to businesses. <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/coronavirus/cycling-and-walking-pop-ups/>

The local centre schemes are subject to phased implementation:

- Phase 1 – initial set up of highway infrastructure (cones, signs etc) to create space and alter travel behaviour – See Appendix 1
- Phase 2 – Refinement of schemes following issues raised by stakeholders and rationalisation/replacement of highway infrastructure e.g. replacing cones with wands.
- Phase 3 - Landscaping/softening of schemes to make them more attractive and user friendly once scheme layout is fixed. This will include introduction of tree and low ivy planters, use of stencils to encourage people to use the new spaces, bike parking, seating areas for cafes etc. Ongoing business engagement will help to establish these areas and consider whether there is scope to make some changes permanent over time.



The pop-up schemes are being funded largely through the DfT Emergency Active Travel Funds. The council has submitted its bid for an initial Tranche 1 allocation of £363k and received confirmation that £405k has been awarded due to the strength of our bid. We will shortly receive guidance on submitting a case to secure a phase 2 allocation. The Local Shopping centre programme will be available to support businesses during the recovery phase e.g. costs of additional pop up seating, shop front improvements etc. ERDF European funds will also support some business activities including promotional materials.

The delivery of **permanent cycleway infrastructure** at Belgrave Gate North, St Matthews Way and Lancaster Road has been accelerated – See Appendix

1. Works at Mansfield Street bus station link are due to complete in August allowing the early interim pedestrianisation of Haymarket/Churchgate.

The **Widen My Path** web site has been adopted by the council to invite local people to identify improvements they would like to see for cycling and walking in the city. <https://www.widenmypath.com/leicester/#14/52.6350/-1.1351>

The council continues to make **loan bikes** available, particularly focussed on NHS and care workers. Some 280 bikes have been issued and 500+ **maintenance sessions** delivered.

The city centre **Bike Park** was opened w/c 8<sup>th</sup> June as planned to support the reopening of the city centre shops on 15<sup>th</sup> June and numbers of users are growing each day.

The **Street Design Guide** has been published - <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/186708/leicester-street-design-guide-first-edition.pdf>

Work is ongoing to **support schools** to welcome their students back, with travel advice and guidance and also cycling and walking infrastructure as appropriate.

### 3.2 Public Transport Rail

EMR increased their services from Monday 18th May. Services are at around 80% of a "normal" weekday. Rail patronage remains at a fairly stable low level. Face coverings were made compulsory on board trains from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **Buses**

National Express has confirmed a 1<sup>st</sup> July return to service with a reduced timetable and capacity on board.

Bus companies are operating at reduced service frequencies up to 80% of normal services. Buses have reduced capacity due to the need for social distancing at around 20-25% of normal capacity. Face coverings were made compulsory on board buses from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. Compliance has been lower than expected and we are encouraging the bus operators to support stronger reinforcement of this requirement. Signage and service information is available in our bus stations and posters are deployed in stations and shelters.

Both St Margaret's and Haymarket bus stations remain fully operational. A plan is in place to manage unacceptable levels of footfall including disembarking before the stations and potentially relocating services should the need arise.

**Bus Lane Enforcement** - Bus lane enforcement restarted from 1<sup>st</sup> June as planned.

**Real Time Information** - Real time information was re-established on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May.

### **3.3 Park and Ride**

Services recommenced from 1<sup>st</sup> June as planned from Meynell's Gorse and Enderby. Birstall is currently wholly occupied by a COVID 19 testing facility. NHS/Care Workers travel free. Normal concessions apply. Regular fares were reduced to £3.00 to minimise use of loose change. Accelerated delivery of an upgrade to accept contactless payments commenced from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. Park and cycle facilities are now being promoted.

### **3.4 Car Use**

**Car Parks** – City Council car parking restarted in full on 1<sup>st</sup> June as planned for both on street and off street with normal charging except for NHS/Care Workers. Cashless payments are encouraged and Newark Street reopened with Autopay from 1<sup>st</sup> June as planned. NCP car parks are charging as per normal with the exception of NHS and care workers who park for free.

**CEOs** – Continue to be focussed on advice and guidance role but also returning to a normal service to manage parking. Currently issuing warnings for illegal parking offences, but looking to move to full PCN fines on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Have also started issuing residents parking permit renewals. Full Business as usual from 4<sup>th</sup> July.

**Air Quality** – At lockdown a dramatic drop in NO2 emissions was seen of around 50% of normal levels. NO2 levels have fluctuated since but the latest position is they remain around 50% of levels at the same time last year.

## **4. Financial, legal and other implications**

### 4.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from this update report. However as stated in the report, £405k has been awarded from the DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund for cycling and walking initiatives, alongside £318k of ERDF funds for reopening high streets safely. Bus operators are receiving funding directly from DfT to maintain services with significantly fewer passengers, whilst the Council has continued to fund concessionary travel at pre-Covid levels.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, tel. 0116 454 4081

### 4.2 Legal implications

While there are no direct legal implications arising from this briefing, it should be noted that the Council owes a general duty of care to ensure the safety of road users. The Council also has an obligation to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

John McIvor, Principal Lawyer, tel. 0116 454 1409

### 4.3. Climate Change implications

UK government figures show that transport was responsible for around 25% of all carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 tackling these emissions is a vital part of our ambition for Leicester to reach carbon neutrality.

As noted in the report, Covid-19 and the subsequent measures taken to address it have had a massive impact on travel patterns in the city, reducing vehicle use and therefore carbon emissions significantly. Many of the measures in the Transport Recovery Plan will help to further reduce carbon emissions through encouraging greater use of active travel, including work to expand and improve cycling routes and bike parks, provide bike loans, support schools and make changes to the Park and Ride Service.

However, it should also be noted that unless opportunities are taken to preserve and expand positive impacts as part of a wider 'Green Recovery' for the city, emissions will potentially return to their previous levels over time. As such opportunities to continue and expand programmes should be explored wherever practical in the future. In particular further work is likely to be needed to support public transport, when appropriate, to avoid a long-term fall in passenger numbers.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, tel. 0116 454 2284

### 4.4 Equality Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 also requires that reasonable adjustments be made so that disabled people are not excluded from places that serve the public, including publicly accessible open spaces. This duty is on-going and anticipatory and, therefore, reasonable and proportionate steps should be taken to overcome barriers which may impede people with different kinds of disabilities.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager, tel. 0116 454 5811

#### 4.5 Other Implications

None

**5. Background information and other papers:**

Transport Recovery Plan - <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/186689/covid-19-transport-recovery-plan-may-2020.pdf>

**6. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1- Pop Up Covid19 Safe Pedestrian Zones & Cycleways (Social Distancing & Safe Active Travel) Implementation Programme for initial setting out of schemes

**7. Is this a private report?**

N/A



## Appendix 1

### Pop Up Covid19 Safe Pedestrian Zones & Cycleways (Social Distancing & Safe Active Travel) - Implementation Programme for initial setting out of schemes

Location/Route	Details	Length (Miles)	Implementation Timeline
London Road (In)	Inbound Cycleway utilising bus lane and road cones	1.20	<b>Completed</b> 21st June
London Road (Out)	Outbound Cycleway – road markings and red/white wands	1.70	Est w/c 20 <sup>th</sup> July tbc
A47 & Hinckley Road (In)	Inbound Cycleway utilising bus lane and road cones	1.60	<b>Completed</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> June
A47 & Hinckley Road (Out)	Outbound Cycleway – road markings and red/white wands	1.10	Section One <b>Completed</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> June Section Two Est w/c 13th July tbc
Glenfield Road (Out)	Outbound cycleway – cones	0.60	Est w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> July tbc
Abbey Park Road (Belgrave Circle to Park Entrance)	Westbound pedestrian zone and cycleway utilising nearside lane up to park entrance	0.25	<b>Completed</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> May
Queens Road	Footway widening to support social distancing, advisory 20mph zone with narrow lanes	0.20	<b>Completed</b> 30 <sup>th</sup> May
Aylestone Road	“Wandering” of existing cycle lane markings to segregate from live traffic	1.00	<b>Completed</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> June
Pocklingtons Walk	Prohibit right turn from Belvoir St to support safe walking and cycling, reduce traffic flows on Granby St/Belvoir St	0.05	<b>Completed</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> May
Belgrave Road	Nearside lane closures <u>both sides</u> (0.45miles per side) to create safe pedestrian zone	0.90	<b>Completed</b> 28 <sup>th</sup> May
Green Lane Road	One-way scheme and widening footways to create safe pedestrian zone	0.35	<b>Completed</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> June

Location/Route	Details	Length (Miles)	Implementation Timeline
Braunstone Gate "Mini-Holland"	Safe pedestrian zones, left turn prohibition from Western Blvd, 20mph advisory	0.15	<b>Completed 10<sup>th</sup> June</b>
Mill Lane Bridge	One way eastbound over bridge to create safe cycling and walking link between DMU campus and Bede Park	0.06	<b>Completed 11<sup>th</sup> June</b>
Beaumont Leys Lane / Abbey Lane / Parker Drive / St Margaret's Way	Segregated Outbound Cycleway on Beaumont Leys Lane, Two-way shared use on Parker Drive footway (west). Two-way shared use on Blackbird Road footway (east), Segregated Outbound cycleway on St. Margarets Way (Ravensbridge Drive to Devonshire Road)	1.80	Beaumont Leys Lane Est w/c 29 <sup>th</sup> June tbc
Granby St	Layby closures / cycle lane protection measures using cones and wands.	0.20	<b>Completed 12<sup>th</sup> June</b>
Narborough Road	Layby closures to create safe pedestrian areas	0.35	Est 6 <sup>th</sup> July – 31 <sup>st</sup> July tbc
Belgrave Gate cycleway scheme	Accelerated completion	0.40	Est by 31 <sup>st</sup> July tbc
Lancaster Road cycleway scheme	Accelerated completion	0.85	Est completion 3 <sup>rd</sup> July tbc
Central Ring Road cycleway scheme	Accelerated completion	0.35	Up to Wharf St only by 31 <sup>st</sup> July tbc
Haymarket/Belgrave Gate	Rerouting of traffic via Mansfield St and pedestrianizing Haymarket/Churchgate	0.15	Est 6 <sup>th</sup> July – 31 <sup>st</sup> July tbc
Existing marked cycleway network (e.g. Spencefield Lane)	Targeted "wandering" of cycle lanes	5.00	Est 6 <sup>th</sup> July – 31 <sup>st</sup> July + tbc