

Report of the NGT Project Manager

Report to the Director of City Development

Date: 27th February 2015

Subject: New Generation Transport (NGT): Deputations from The North West Leeds Transport Forum and Martin Fitzsimmons to Full Council

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Implications city wide, but with direct impacts on City and Hunslet, Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Hyde Park & Woodhouse, Headingley, Weetwood, Adel & Wharfedale and Middleton Park Wards.		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. Deputations in opposition to the New Generation Transport (NGT) scheme were made by Martin Fitzsimmons and representatives from the North West (NW) Leeds Transport Forum to the Full Council meeting of 12th November 2014. Copies of the speeches that were made by the deputations are attached at Appendix 1.
2. In the speeches a number of points were made in relation to the NGT project proposals. Responses to the points raised are set out in detail below.

Recommendations

3. The Director of City Development is requested to note the responses to the key points made by the deputations from NW Leeds Transport Forum and Martin Fitzsimmons.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the key points raised by NW Leeds Transport Forum and Martin Fitzsimmons in their deputations to the Full Council meeting of 12th November and to provide a response to these points.

2 Background information

- 2.1 West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Council are joint promoters developing a trolleybus system for Leeds known as NGT. The NGT project is seeking to provide a step change in public transport provision that will help to support the growth of the Leeds' economy and improve the local environment by helping to address congestion.
- 2.2 The promoters' vision for NGT is to create a modern, reliable and integrated transport system for Leeds and the City Region.
- 2.3 As one of the city's key transformational projects, the NGT trolleybus system is key to creating an integrated rapid transport network for Leeds to support the city's future development, transform public transport and offer a real and attractive alternative to travel by car.
- 2.4 NGT will be modern, accessible, energy efficient and clean, offering passengers improved journey times and a frequent, punctual service. It will connect people to key employment sites, education, health and leisure facilities, acting as a catalyst and driver for economic growth and regeneration. Once the core scheme has been established, it will be capable of further expansion on other routes across the city.
- 2.5 The NGT objectives have informed the selection of corridors and vehicle technology, the approach to system specification and procurement as well as details of the design.
- 2.6 The scheme objectives are:
 - Maximise growth of the Leeds economy by enhancing its competitive position and facilitating future employment and population growth;
 - Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of Leeds, recognising the importance of its city centre to the future economy of the Leeds City Region;
 - Support and facilitate targeted regeneration initiatives and economic growth in the more deprived areas of Leeds;
 - Improve the efficiency of the City's public transport and road networks;
 - Reduce transport emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases;
 - Promote quality of life through a safe and healthy built and natural environment; and

- Contribute to enhanced quality of life by improving access for all to jobs and services.

- 2.7 NGT is an integral element of the third West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP), Leeds City Council's UDP and the Leeds City Council's Core Strategy, part of the Local Development Framework. The West Yorkshire LTP was adopted by the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority in April 2011. The Local Development Framework is the statutory land use plan for the Leeds district.
- 2.8 NGT will comprise a North Line of 10km in length, running from Holt Park district centre (north Leeds) via Bodington, West Park, Headingley, the University of Leeds and through the city centre to Leeds Bridge in the south. The 5km long South Line will continue from Leeds Bridge, through the Leeds Dock area, Hunslet and Belle Isle to Stourton in the south. The majority of the NGT route will be either dedicated to public transport only or for the exclusive use of trolleybuses.
- 2.9 Safe and secure car parking will be provided for NGT customers at two park and ride sites. On the North Line up to 850 spaces will be located at Bodington on the A660 Otley Road adjacent to the Leeds Outer Ring Road. A second park and ride site would be provided on the South Line at Stourton, adjacent to junction 7 of the M621 and Middleton Ring Road. At Stourton, the parking spaces will be delivered in phases; the first phase will provide circa 1,700 spaces, with the subsequent phases expanding the site to 2,300 spaces.
- 2.10 A fleet of trolleybuses will operate along the route serving NGT stops with step free access to the vehicles, shelters and passenger information screens. The trolleybus vehicles will be powered by electricity from overhead wires, fed by ten NGT sub-stations.
- 2.11 Analysis has shown that NGT could generate around 4,000 long term jobs, both in Leeds and the wider City Region in addition to generating a £160m per annum economic boost for the City Region. In addition around 1,000 jobs would be created during the construction phase.
- 2.12 As would be expected for any complex major scheme, the Government directed that a Public Inquiry into the NGT scheme should be undertaken. This Inquiry, which was chaired by an independent Inspector, commenced on 29th April 2014 and was closed on 31st October 2014, having sat for a total of 72 days.
- 2.13 The Inquiry, which was required in order to gain 'powers' to construct and operate the system, represented an opportunity for the NGT promoters, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Council to present the benefits of the scheme through a series of expert witnesses who presented evidence in a number of technical areas. In addition the Inquiry has also provided an opportunity for those individuals and organisations who have submitted an objection to the scheme to present their case, either in writing to the Inspector or by appearing to give evidence at the Inquiry. Throughout the duration of the Public Inquiry many detailed questions have been asked and answered.

- 2.14 In closing the case for the NGT promoters, Mr Cameron referred to evidence heard at the Inquiry demonstrating almost universal agreement that there is a need for improved public transport on the NGT corridors. As a result, doing nothing is not considered to be an acceptable option.
- 2.15 There was also widespread agreement that NGT will bring about improvements in public transport, in particular in its reliability and punctuality.
- 2.16 The Inquiry heard that any action, in the form of a public transport intervention, should be consistent with the relevant policies, funded and deliverable. NGT has such consistency with the development plan, emerging, and national planning policy, local transport policies, and local economic policies.
- 2.17 Also it was demonstrated that NGT is funded and deliverable. There is no other funded, realistic and deliverable alternative means of addressing the acknowledged need and meeting the scheme objectives. An abandonment of NGT at this stage, would inevitably lead to a lengthy delay in terms of delivering a comparable alternative on sit, because of the lengthy development, design, consultation and procurement processes involved.
- 2.18 Although during the Inquiry references were made to electric buses, emerging technologies, platooning and other suggestions, no coherent case was presented by objectors to establish how the acknowledged need could be met by any alternative scheme which is consistent with policy, funded and deliverable.
- 2.19 The business case for the NGT scheme was debated in detail during the Public Inquiry. The business case was originally developed in 2009 and subsequently updated in March 2012 and was subject to rigorous examination by DfT and HM Treasury officers. In awarding Programme Entry Approval to the NGT scheme in July 2012, the DfT have accepted that the business case is robust. More recently a comprehensive review of the business case has been undertaken and this was published in January 2014.
- 2.20 The Inquiry Inspector, Martin Whitehead indicated that he expected to take until May 2015 to deliberate the findings and prepare his recommendations for the Secretary of State for Transport and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who will assess the inspector's recommendations and subsequently announce a decision. This decision is anticipated to follow in late 2015, based on the above timescales.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A summary of the main issues raised by the A660 Joint Council deputation to Full Council is provided below, along with responses to these issues. Copies of the speeches that were made by the deputations from Martin Fitzsimmons and representatives from the NW Leeds Transport Forum are enclosed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Points raised by The NW Leeds Transport Forum;

- 3.2.1 “Our opposition arises from its failure to fulfil or support the principles of the Core Strategy. Specific points are:- According to the Promoter's own submissions traffic congestion will increase, emissions will increase, door-to-door journey times could easily increase for some users. All of these are contrary to the tenets of the Core Transport Strategy as defined in Para 4.9.5.”
- 3.2.2 The core strategy specifically mentions NGT and includes the propose route on Map 9 and on the key diagram. NGT is consistent with and supported by the core strategy which was approved by Full Council on the 12th December.
- 3.2.3 It is acknowledged that there will be a slight increase in vehicle mileage and associated vehicle emissions, however this is as a result of giving priority to public transport at junctions. This is due to some relocation of road capacity to provide public transport priority as well as improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. This reallocation is a combination of both physical reallocation of road space as well as the priority that will be afforded to public transport and pedestrians at traffic signals. With no reduction in traffic flow, as road journey times would become longer, some road users may choose to use alternative longer routes. However, the journey times, punctuality and quality that NGT will offer means that it will be attractive to road users and some will choose to use NGT for the entirety of their journey, or as part of a Park and Ride journey. This transfer can offset or even outweigh any disbenefits that may occur due to reallocation of road space.
- 3.2.4 There is predicted to be a very small net increase in carbon emissions (0.1% of total transport related emissions within Leeds) due to the introduction of NGT. There are a number of factors affecting changes to emissions. The first is that NGT will have zero greenhouse gas emissions at the point of power consumption and while carbon is produced in electricity generation, as electricity generation is a fully carbon traded sector, in economic terms the net carbon impact is deemed to be neutral and so is not taken into account in the appraisal. The second is that the introduction of NGT is assumed to result in fewer diesel powered buses operating in the NGT corridors and this results in lower carbon emissions. The third effect is that NGT attracts users who would otherwise travel by car for their entire journey and this results in a transfer from a carbon emitting mode (car) to a carbon free one (NGT). These three effects are offset by the extra distance travelled by private vehicles and goods vehicles (and hence additional emissions) in the NGT scenario compared to the do-minimum. The overall result is a small net increase in emissions.
- 3.2.5 Whilst journey times could increase for a small minority of users the majority will benefit from the reduced journey times and service reliability offered by NGT.
- 3.2.6 “Service quality on the trolleybus will undoubtedly be worse than current and future buses because of the predominance of standing passengers on the trolleys”.
- 3.2.7 The provision of suitable seating is only one aspect of the quality criteria, however the internal configuration of the trolleybus and ratio of passengers seating and standing has not yet been determined.

- 3.2.8 “Additionally Para 4.9.6 calls for "securing the promotion and delivery of a fully integrated transport system which includes a high quality public transport system". The current NGT plans fail to meet these requirements. Its route serves many areas in the northern sector but few, if any, of these need regeneration - again failing to meet Para 4.9.6 requirements”.
- 3.2.9 Interchange between bus services has been considered in the design and has been specifically provided for at key points along the route such as: Holt Park, Hospital Lane, Bodington, Lawnswood, Headingley Centre, Headingley Hill, Woodhouse Lane, University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Civic, City Square, Trinity, Penny Hill, Belle Isle, and Middleton Road where NGT stops are provided in close proximity to Bus stops. On a large portion of the route up to 20 buses per hour run in each direction and therefore it would not be possible to combine the bus stops with NGT as this would lead to delays and congestion at these stops.
- 3.2.10 NGT will increase the attractiveness of those areas which it serves as places to live and work. Whilst most of the regeneration potential is around the city centre and southern areas there are opportunities in the northern sector including Headingley Girls School site, Bodington Hall residential development and Holt Park.
- 3.2.11 “The NGT plan is not proper use of £250m - and probably increasing - funds.”
- 3.2.12 The Department for Transport in considering the Business Case for NGT has determined that NGT is proper use of £250m and that the promoters have demonstrated in the Statement of Case that the costs associated with the construction, operation, maintenance and renewing NGT are affordable and financially sustainable.
- 3.3 Points raised by Martin Fitzsimmons (All of these points were raised by Mr Fitzsimmons and dealt with at the Public Inquiry);
- 3.3.1 “The trolleybus scheme costs in 2009 were given as £250m for the work to start in 2013. However, work is not expected to start until 5 years later. Yet the costs remains at £250m. How can this be?”
- 3.3.2 Inflation costs have been built into the estimates from the outset to take into account the long lead in period for major transport projects such as NGT. Throughout the development of the scheme the promoters have critically reviewed and where necessary made amendments to ensure that the project remains affordable.
- 3.3.3 “The trolleybus is going through the Whitfield Estate. It will be far too near the houses and puts children at high risk of being involved in accidents”.
- 3.3.4 Along Whitfield Square 2m footway width will be provided between the Trolleybus-only carriageway and the boundary fences/walls of the adjoining properties. This is the standard width for footways. As this area is considered a pedestrian dominated environment a 15mph speed restriction would be imposed.

- 3.3.5 “Stourton Park and Ride raises questions on health and safety. Although Mott MacDonald has carried out some tests and there is still more work to do before any final health and safety issues can be fully resolved”.
- 3.3.6 It is not clear what health and safety issues are being referred to here but during the detail design the scheme will be developed further ensuring safety audits are undertaken and relevant health and safety requirements addressed.
- 3.3.7 “The proposed route of the trolleybus will go through the middle of the roundabout at Belle Isle Circus which means the loss of green space and trees”.
- 3.3.8 NGT will include appropriate mitigation to compensate for any loss of green space. Environmental Improvements are planned for Belle Isle Circus including the planting of additional trees and landscaping.
- 3.3.9 “After a maximum of 8 years, the NGT will not be responsible for any costs or expense so responsibility for this will fall on all the council tax payers of Leeds”.
- 3.3.10 NGT is forecast to achieve an annual operating surplus which would benefit the promoters including the Council.
- 3.3.11 “Transport for the Leeds area urgently needs sorting out, but the Trolleybus is such a bad scheme that it needs to be abandoned before we waste any more money”.
- 3.3.12 The business case for the NGT scheme has been subject to significant scrutiny by the DfT and HM Treasury and will be scrutinised further as the scheme progresses through future funding approvals. While some parties at the Inquiry have put forward options for alternative solutions, there is no evidence that these have been developed in enough detail to present a realistic and robust alternative to the identified transport problems on the NGT corridors. NGT is an integral part of the Transport Strategy for the city.
- 3.3.13 To reject NGT in the hope that something better might come along would be wholly inconsistent with the policy framework and would deprive Leeds of a much needed rapid transit system and the step change in public transport that is required.
- 3.3.14 NGT is funded and deliverable.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Extensive public consultation has previously been carried out on the NGT proposals and the results of this were reported to the Executive Board in October 2009. Consultation undertaken in Summer 2009 showed a positive reaction to NGT with 77% of all respondents supporting/ strongly supporting the proposals. In May 2010 a separate public consultation event was held at Holt Park which showed that 65% of respondents supported the proposed NGT extension from Bodington Park and Ride to Holt Park District Centre, 46% of whom strongly supported the project.

4.1.2 Following the reinstatement of Programme Entry Approval in July 2012 a number of consultation and stakeholder engagement activities have taken place. These have included:

- Distribution of an NGT update leaflet to all properties within 600 metres of the NGT route (approximately 45,000 properties)
- 12 public drop-in sessions have been held at venues along both the northern and southern arms of the route.
- Updates have been taken to LCC Area Committees along the routes in addition to ward member briefings.
- All landowners who are directly affected by the proposals have been sent an introductory letter and one-to-one meetings are currently being set up.
- General briefings have taken place with various stakeholder/interest groups.
- TV and radio coverage to publicise events and raise awareness.
- Further consultation events are planned

4.1.3 Detailed briefings and presentations also continue to be given to Members, and Area Committees as requested.

4.1.4 Detailed briefings on the project have also been provided to the Chamber of Commerce, Leeds General Infirmary, the two Universities, local public transport operators as well as key interest and community groups.

4.1.5 The recent Public Inquiry also provided an opportunity for those individuals and organisations who have submitted an objection to the scheme to present their case, either in writing to the Inspector or by appearing to give evidence at the Inquiry.

4.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion, and Integration Screening was carried out on the 14 January 2013 and a full impact assessment was carried out to support the TWAO submission in September 2013 a copy of which is available .

4.2.2 The key findings are:

4.2.3 Overall, the provision of a new and frequent public transport service in the form of a trolleybus network will improve access to a whole range of social and economic resources along the route including the City Centre, Leeds' two universities, a major hospital, and a whole range of other facilities from shops to places of worship.

4.2.4 The construction (and to a lesser extent operational) phase may have a negative effect on a range of local socio-demographic groups and communities, restricting access to a range of local facilities and services.

- 4.2.5 Implementation of the scheme is also likely to cause changes to traffic levels, amenity, and severance (because of road closures and diversions). These changes have the potential to reduce accessibility, negatively impacting people.
- 4.2.6 The plans for a number of areas along the route include proposals for 'shared spaces'; this may provide benefits to some users but presents challenges to others, particularly those with visual impairments. The shared space concept has been considered in the context of disabled user groups and this will continue at detailed design.
- 4.2.7 The proposed NGT scheme meets many equality goals and objectives. As such it contributes to the equality goals of local and national government and particularly of the Local Transport Plan.
- 4.2.8 The proposed scheme has been designed to be Equality Act 2010 (and therefore DDA) compliant, and will be fully accessible to people with mobility impairments. The development process for the NGT has included various opportunities for members of different equality groups to comment on the Plans.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The NGT proposals support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan and contribute to the delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan objectives for transport and those of the Vision for Leeds in terms of economic growth. The scheme will make a major contribution to improving the attractiveness and quality of travel by public transport and is predicted to encourage a switch from private car to public transport, thereby alleviating congestion on the NGT routes.
- 4.3.2 Progress will be reported to the Executive Board at the key stages in the delivery process. Oversight of the scheme is provided by a Project Board chaired by the Director of City Development. The Board also includes the Director of Resources from Leeds City Council and the Chief Officer Highways and Transportation.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The approved capital programme makes provision of £20.6m as the Council's remaining contribution towards the NGT scheme. Throughout the development phase of the scheme, costs are continually scrutinised to ensure that the scheme promoters are securing value for money. Some elements of the development work are sourced externally whilst others are provided internally.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications directly related to this report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The delivery of the project is managed by a joint WYCA/LCC Project Board which will ensure the Executive Board of the Council and the Combined Authority are informed of any significant changes to the proposals.

5 **Conclusions**

- 5.1 Deputations in opposition to the New Generation Transport (NGT) scheme were made by Martin Fitzsimmons and representatives from the NW Leeds Transport Forum to the Full Council meeting of 12th November 2014. The responses to the issues raised by these deputations are set out above.

6 **Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of City Development is requested to note the responses to the key points made by the deputations from Martin Fitzsimmons and representatives from the NW Leeds Transport Forum

7 **Background documents¹**

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Copies of the speeches that were made by the deputations from Martin Fitzsimmons and representatives from the NW Leeds Transport Forum.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.