



Report of the Director of City Development

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 16 October 2007

Subject: **A65 QUALITY BUS CORRIDOR**

Electoral Wards Affected:

Kirkstall, Hyde Park and Woodhouse,
City and Hunslet



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

Further to the item concerning this scheme considered at the September meeting of the Board this report provides further information about the proposed scheme in terms of background to the development of the scheme; past, present and future consultation; and the relationship between the scheme and other developments along the A65 corridor.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides additional information about the A65 Quality Bus Corridor major scheme.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) granted Programme Entry status to the Council's bid for the A65 Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) major scheme in June 2006 at an out-turn cost of £20.746 million. In addition, the Executive Board has approved £834,000 costs for the preparation of detailed designs and contract for the scheme costs which the DfT require the scheme promoters to meet.
- 2.2 Previous to the above approval, detailed development of a scheme for the A65 corridor commenced in 1999 leading to the submission of a major scheme business case to the Government in the summer of 2000 as part of the first Local Transport Plan 2001-06. Provisional Approval (now "Programme Entry") was granted to the scheme in December 2001 at a forecast out-turn cost of £20.9 million.

- 2.3 Subsequently it became clear during 2003 as the early development of the detailed scheme proposals progressed that a number of issues were likely to influence the final design option, including:
- Creating a design for the Kirkstall Road section (Inner Ring Road to Willow Road) that was capable of accommodating a “boulevard” approach and the flexibility needed for the design to accommodate newly emerging aspirations for the comprehensive regeneration of sites south of the road.
 - Requests to minimize the requirements for property acquisition particularly in the Burley area and at Kirkstall. A wish was expressed by Ward Members and planning officers to safeguard existing local shops and businesses.
- 2.4 In view of these early design responses, these matters were reviewed as part of the scheme development process along with an examination of the opportunities to simplify the proposals and, at the same time, reduce the impacts on public utilities.
- 2.5 As a result of the review modifications to the scheme design were made to reflect the feedback and views received, which were then discussed with the Department for Transport in terms of the scheme approval. An update to the approved business case was then submitted to the DfT in September 2003.
- 2.6 In summary the modifications to the scheme were as follows:
- Inner Ring Road to Willow Road – conversion of the proposed separate busway into a general traffic carriageway resulting in a more conventional dual carriageway layout with with-flow bus lanes in each direction, thereby facilitating a boulevard effect and also allowing for the future improvement of junctions to accommodate anticipated redevelopment.
 - Willow Road to Haddon Road – removal of outbound bus lane from the scheme thus allowing the retention of the existing retail premises at Burley.
 - Haddon Road to Kirkstall centre – limited changes to the entry exit points of the bus lanes thus allowing retention of existing retail premises at Kirkstall.
- 2.7 Subsequent to the scheme update, in April 2004 the DfT requested the submission of a revised major scheme business case and further advised in December 2004 that the scheme was to be “remitted to the region”. Thus the final decision on the scheme was not made until June 2006 following the establishment of the Regional Transport Board and their first advice to Ministers regarding regional transport priorities.
- 2.8 The major scheme forms part of an overall quality bus corridor for the entire A65 corridor within the Leeds district. The overall principle behind the programme is the effective management of traffic congestion and queues to achieve a step change in the journey time and reliability of the bus services using the corridor. Elements of the QBC programme are as follows:
- City Centre to Kirkstall – A65 QBC major scheme, as described by this report
 - Kirkstall to Horsforth – Abbey Road bus priority scheme now completed
 - Horsforth to Guiseley – future stages to be progressed, preparatory upgrades to the Council’s transport model now in process

2.9 The indicative programme for completing the scheme subject to concluding the preparatory work and securing full scheme approval from the DfT is as follows:

Winter 2007/08	First stage tenders for Early Contractor Involvement
2008	Finalise detailed design, contract documents, statutory procedures and complete contract documents
Winter 2008/09	Second stage tenders and appointment of works contractor Submission for DfT Full scheme approval
Spring 2009	Start of works
Summer 2011	Completion of works

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 At this Board's September meeting additional information concerning public consultation and the relationship of the cumulative development along the A65 corridor to the scheme proposals was requested.

Public consultation and engagement

Development of the scheme has involved an extended period of public consultation as follows:

1999 onwards, extended period of engagement including the following:

- Winter 1999, Ward Member briefing
- February 2000, survey of current bus users
- July 2000, public consultation on scheme proposals
 - 17,000 leaflets distributed to residential and commercial premises
 - Three staffed public exhibitions in Burley, Kirkstall and Horsforth
 - Attendance at Kirkstall Festival
 - Consultation with community groups (5 groups participated)
- Autumn 2000, displays in local libraries along the corridor
- Summer 2002, Ward Member briefing
- September 2002, Kirkstall Forum briefing

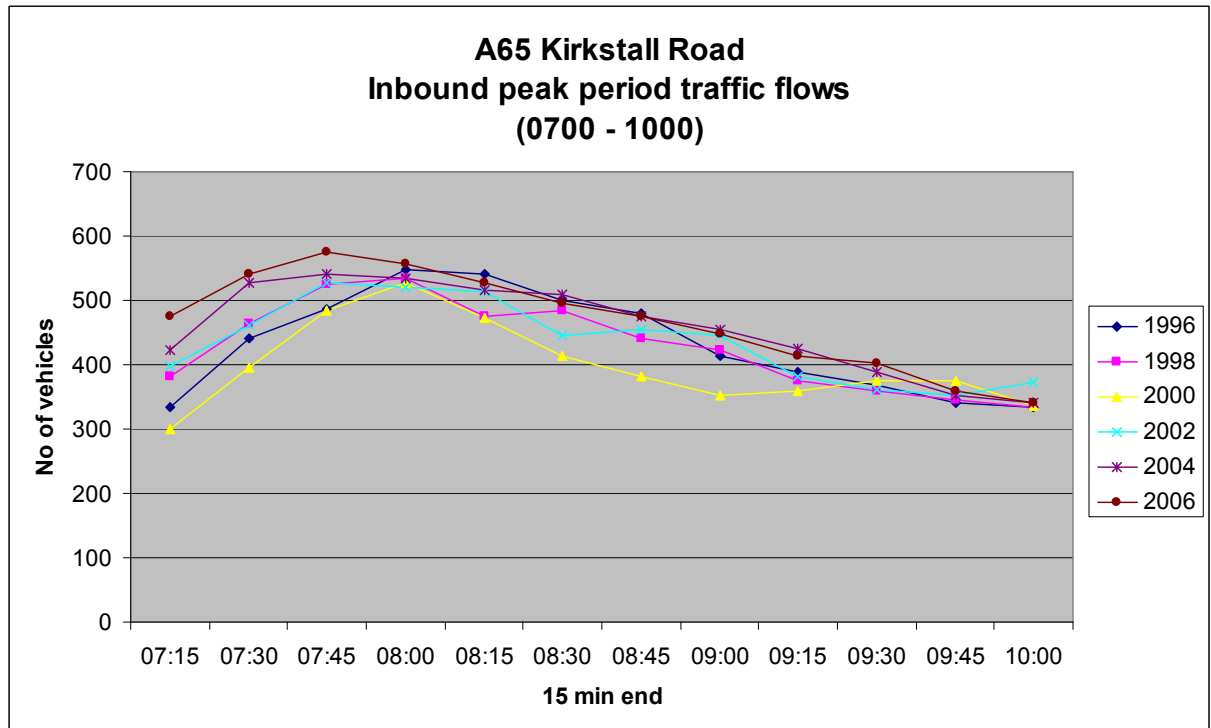
2003 to 2005, during this period the scheme was effectively on-hold pending agreement of the design modifications with DfT and agreement on the route forward.

2006 onwards, establishment of the project and Project Board to oversee the work. Present activities to fully inform Members and residents and the public include:

- September 2006, Ward Member briefing following Department for Transport decision to grant programme entry.
- September 2006, report to Executive Board
- Autumn 2006: A65 Kirkstall Road web page updated to reflect the new status of the scheme.
- Winter 2006/07: Briefing for Kirkstall/Burley Forum and display of plans for Inner North West Area Committee.
- Spring/Summer 2007: An article included in *About Leeds* regarding the scheme.
- July 2007, Ward Member briefing
- Summer 2007: A leaflet distributed to the 8,000 residences within 650 metres of the proposed scheme and to passengers using the A65 bus routes.
- Autumn 2007: three staffed exhibitions will be held along the route of the scheme:
 - Milford Rugby Club, Beecroft St, Tuesday 16th October.
 - Kirkstall Valley Primary School, Argie Road, Wednesday 17th October.
 - Burley Liberal Club, Burley Road, Wednesday 24th October.
 - September/October, consultation with the 140 immediate residential frontagers along the line of the scheme including officer visits as necessary
- Winter 2007/08: Second newsletter updating progress and containing more detailed information about programming and the process for appointing a contractor.
- Spring/Summer 2008: Third newsletter providing an update on progress

Implications of cumulative impacts of development on the scheme proposals

- 3.2 As explained in section 2 of the report the principle of the scheme is one of utilising queue management techniques for the control of traffic flows in a way that effectively allows buses to bypass traffic congestion and the associated queues along the busiest sections of the A65 route into Leeds.
- 3.3 Bearing in mind that the section of road concerned has operated at capacity for many years during the centre of the peak period the scheme has been designed to accommodate this factor. Primarily this is achieved by ensuring that the lengths of bus priority lane provided within the scheme are adequate to accommodate the forecast traffic queues thereby ensuring that buses can gain free flow access to the bus lane. A profile of traffic flow levels over the last ten years is included below.



- 3.4 The above figure illustrates that traffic flows during the high peak period have remained largely stable over the last ten years. In terms of the design of the scheme, local traffic counts and data are being used by Urban Traffic Control to plan the detailed specification of the traffic control proposals within the scheme.
- 3.5 Traffic flow along the route is a function of the development along the corridor and within its hinterland including recent developments. The scheme case did not need to explicitly include an analysis of cumulative development impacts, rather it is based on the observed traffic flows and future forecast flows on the lengths of road at which the scheme is targeted. A multi-modal transport model was used to forecast the modal transfer from car to bus expected from the scheme.
- 3.6 In terms of cumulative development impacts along the A65 route, development proposals have been assessed on an individual basis as they are brought forward to the Council. This takes the form of an assessment of the site traffic impact/transport appraisal submitted in the course of the planning application process, in accordance with established practice.

4 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 This report does not raise any issues for Council policy and governance other than those already considered by the Board at their 18 September meeting.

5 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 This report raises no specific legal and resource implications.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report has outlined the approach to consultation being pursued to ensure public engagement in the final detailed scheme for the A65 Quality Bus Corridor. It has

also provided the background context to the scheme design in terms of traffic flows and the relationship to past and future development decisions along the route.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Members are requested to note and comment on the contents of this report.