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## Report of the Director of City Development

### Executive Board

13 May 2009

### Response to the City Development Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into the A660 Corridor Transport Issues

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Hyde Park and Woodhouse  
Headingley  
Weetwood**

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent City Development Scrutiny Board inquiry concerning A660 Corridor Transport Issues and specifically proposals for improvements at the Woodhouse Lane junction with Clarendon Road. The report describes how the Director proposes to respond to these recommendations and seeks the Board's approval to the proposed response.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Executive Board are recommended to approve the proposed responses to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent City Development Scrutiny Board inquiry concerning A660 Corridor Transport Issues and details how the Director proposes to respond to these recommendations. The report asks the Board to approve the proposed response.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 In January 2009 the Scrutiny Board (City Development) considered a request for scrutiny from the North West (Inner) Area Committee. The Committee was concerned at proposals by the Chief Highways Officer to carry out improvements in the vicinity of the junction of Clarendon Road and Woodhouse Lane. This would include new controlled facilities across the Clarendon Road leg of the junction as part of a potential programme of improvements to be carried out along the A660.
- 2.2 The report makes four recommendations for action. The Director of City Development has considered and accepted these recommendations and actions are underway or planned to address them. The Director has also acknowledged the importance of learning from the issues that this inquiry has raised, in terms of ensuring that consultation with Elected Members and others is conducted in such a way as to ensure that a clear, and unambiguous understanding of the views of consultees is secured.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Below, each of the Scrutiny Board's four recommendations are listed along with a response from the Director of City Development.

### Recommendation 1:

*That the Chief Highways Officer review the current consultation process to ensure that at the very least consultees and particularly Elected Members are encouraged to respond to requests and how a nil response to invitations to comment may be interpreted as no objections received or support for a particular scheme or project.*

- 3.2 The process for consultation has been reviewed in order to encourage responses. As at present the formal consultation process will involve the sending of a letter to all Members for the ward affected by the proposals and, where the scheme straddles or is adjacent to a ward boundary, the Members for that ward also. Consultation letters will in the future re-emphasise the value and importance of securing a formal record of member views, in order to present accurate and balanced information when decisions and approvals are being sought. Consultation letters will indicate the expected timetable for decision making and will provide Members with a minimum period of 15 working days for response.
- 3.3 In the circumstances that a nil response is made by consultees this will be reported. However, the response to consultations is a decision for individual members and officers would not wish to interpret the meaning of such a response. For the avoidance of doubt it is therefore intended to advise Members at the time of consultation that nil responses would be reported as such and could not be considered as an objection unless advised otherwise.
- 3.4 All managers will be re-briefed on the importance of effective scheme consultation, which for larger schemes often involves several rounds of consultation. In addition,

at the initial project assessment stage a review of potential issues will be included within the project brief in order that scheme designers can be aware and plan for these through proactive consultation and face to face briefings with Members.

Recommendation 2:

*That the Chief Highways Officer review the process by which highways schemes are reported to Area Committees and particularly those that affect more than one ward in order to ensure proper consultation and feedback from all Members of Area Committees on proposed highways schemes.*

- 3.5 In the light of this inquiry these arrangements have also been reviewed. It is important that the consultation process is proportionate to the scheme and that it is meaningful for Members and officers alike. In this regard it is important to identify schemes that are likely to be of wider interest and impact than purely the local Ward. Currently, at the outset of each financial year Area Managers are notified of the anticipated programme for highway maintenance works. From April 2009 this notification will also include the programme of Local Transport Plan integrated transport schemes.
- 3.6 Where a scheme is adjudged to have a more than local significance, the local Member consultation described above would be supplemented by the inclusion of the Area Committee Chair in the consultation process. The significance of a scheme is a subjective matter but would generally include most schemes identified as Key Decisions and some Major Decisions. This would take account of the scale, extent and transport impact of proposals, together with neighbourhood impacts for which advice from area management officers would be sought.

Recommendation 3:

*That the Chief Highways Officer review the traffic modeling for the proposals at Clarendon Road to ascertain what alternative solutions, if any, are available including options for using the existing road space to make bus lane provision where it is needed.*

- 3.7 Following the feedback from the North West (Inner) Area Committee and other responses concerning the initial scheme proposals for the A660 Woodhouse Lane/ Clarendon/ Road junction, further analysis of the options developed for this site has taken place. This has included a further examination of the modelling used to determine the design of the traffic signal proposals. As a result of this work an alternative scheme has been prepared. This scheme has a neutral impact on traffic capacity and bus delays whilst providing for the provision of a new controlled pedestrian crossing of Clarendon Road. The proposals have been presented for initial consideration at the March meeting of the Inner North West Transport Sub-Group.
- 3.8 Subject to feedback on the process and proposals for bringing forward revised scheme proposals at this location, further formal consultation with Elected Members and other parties will be progressed in the normal way, including provision of an report to update the Area Committee, prior to finalising the scheme and seeking approval to detailed proposals.

Recommendation 4:

*That the Chief Highways Officer ensure that early consultation is carried out in respect to options for making early improvements to the A660 and that this shows*

*the overarching strategy for the corridor to ensure that schemes are not considered in isolation.*

3.9 Subsequent to the December North West (Inner) Area Committee meeting, the Regional Transport Board meeting on 23 January 2009 endorsed a bid for additional funding of £98.8 million for the Leeds New Generation Transport scheme. Together with the £150 million previously approved, this means that the region has now prioritised sufficient resources from the Regional Funding Allocation to progress the full NGT proposals, which include the A660 corridor.

3.10 A briefing on the NGT scheme is planned for the next round of Area Committees. This will include the provision to Members of the wider strategic context for the scheme. At the present time the detailed timetable for the preparation and delivery of this scheme is still being worked up. However, in view of the new funding scenario for the scheme the potential for early win schemes capable of implementation and providing value for money benefits ahead of the major scheme works is being revisited.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance. The consultation arrangements described in Section 3 are designed to build on existing practice to assist the clarity and transparency of decision making procedures.

#### **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 There are no specific legal and resource implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The Director of City Development has considered the Scrutiny Board and has accepted the four recommendations. Actions are underway or planned to address them, with a commitment to ensuring consultation takes place in such a way as to ensure that a clear and unambiguous understanding of the views of consultees is achieved. Proposals for improvements at the Woodhouse Lane/ Clarendon Road junction are being reviewed and an alternative option is being prepared for further consultation.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Executive Board is recommended to approve the proposed responses to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations.

#### **8.0 Background Papers**

8.1 There are no specific background papers relating to this report.