

Report of the New Generation Transport team (City Development)

South (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 23 June 2009

**Subject: Emerging proposals for the New Generation Transport (NGT) Scheme:
Current position and Public Consultation**

<p>Electoral Wards Affected: City & Hunslet Middleton Park</p> <p>Plus various others throughout the City</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Women <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disabled people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

The report outlines progress on the development of the New Generation Transport scheme for Leeds, and updates Members on the ongoing consultation process.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- To inform Members of the current position on the development of the New Generation Transport (NGT) scheme
- To provide Members with details of the second phase of the consultation process which commenced on the 8th June

2.0 Background Information

Metro and Leeds City Council are working in partnership to develop a bus-based rapid transit system for Leeds known as New Generation Transport (NGT). The project management board consists of senior officers from both organisations. The NGT scheme represents a major investment in the City of Leeds aimed at providing a high quality transport system to support the ongoing growth of Leeds' economy, to improve the local environment and relieve congestion. It aims, along with other transport and public transport measures, to provide a step change in the way public transport operates within the City.

Following the withdrawal of funding for the Leeds 'Supertram' in November 2005 by the Secretary of State for Transport, Leeds and Metro were encouraged by the Department for Transport to consider more economical and flexible bus based systems rather than a tram network. The New Generation Transport "NGT" scheme is being developed in response to this advice. The aim is to provide a new, high quality transport system to transport people into Leeds City Centre and along key radial routes. Dedicated lanes and priority at junctions would make journeys from park and ride sites at the City's edge and key destinations faster and more reliable.

The vehicle options for NGT are at the evaluation stage and have not been finalised. The Project Team's preferred option is electric Trolleybuses with rubber tyres powered by overhead wires (sometimes referred to as 'Light Trams'). This gives the mode closest to a Tram with a significant cost savings and advantage of more flexible use. The next best and low cost options of diesel – electric hybrid buses and high quality diesel buses with the latest low emission technology are also being appraised under central government NATA (New Approach to Appraisal) guidelines.

£250 million has been allocated to the scheme in the Regional Funding Allocation. This figure, supplemented by the required 10% local contribution will allow for the initial development of a core 3 line network at an overall cost in the order of £280 million. A Major Scheme Business Case is in preparation for submission to the Department for Transport in autumn 2009. With DfT approval the process would move forward to a Transport and Works Act submission in 2010 and a Public Inquiry in 2011. Subject to DfT approvals construction could start on site in late 2013, with services commencing in 2015 at the earliest

The attached plan shows the proposed routes being developed which incorporate a central loop around the City Centre and the three radial routes:

- North Leeds through Headingley along the A660 to a park and ride site at Bodington
- South Leeds through Hunslet to a park and ride site at Stourton
- East Leeds to St James's Hospital

There is also scope for future extensions and alignments to the Easel and Aire Valley areas as well as west Leeds, although these do not form part of the current funding allocation and design work.

3.0 NGT Strategic Fit

Early on in the development of the NGT proposals there was a need to demonstrate how the scheme fits into the wider strategic context for Leeds. A technical piece of work was therefore commissioned to consider existing and future transport needs in Leeds, based on existing data sources. This analysis considered the main radial road and rail routes into Leeds and recommended the appropriate type of transport intervention required on each route in order to address existing and future problems. These interventions included a combination of NGT, enhanced bus services, TramTrain and improvements to the rail network across the City and City region. This work has clearly demonstrated the strategic case for a rapid transit system to serve the routes identified and has been "signed off" by the Department for Transport.

A summary document, entitled “Investing in Public Transport - A Framework for Leeds” which sets out the findings of this technical strategic fit work has now been prepared for use in stakeholder discussions in the run-up to the Major Scheme Business Case submission. Copies of this document will be available at the meeting.

4.0 The South Route

The South route leaves the City Centre Loop at the junction of Boar Lane with Briggate and crosses the river at Leeds Bridge before passing through a redesigned junction with Hunslet Road and Meadow Lane. It then turns left onto Bowman Lane and along the northern side of the Brewery site, where some land-take of the existing car park would be required (this is being taken into account in the early pre-application development discussions for the site). The line then passes Clarence Dock (with a stop for the Royal Armouries) on Chadwick Street before cutting a new NGT only route through vacant industrial land and car park areas to South Accommodation Road. The route then takes advantage of a segregated section carriageway to the east of Hunslet Road (originally reserved for the Tram), and then on under the new Inner Ring Road viaduct. Just after the viaduct the line would cross Hunslet Road to the west side. This offline section on Hunslet Road will run in existing highway grass verges and redundant highway carriageway.

At a point in front of St Joseph’s Primary School the line diverts through a landscaped area and part of the school car park (which will be relocated), onto Whitfield Way and Whitfield Square before running through the District Centre in front of the Job Centre Plus and library. This area, while still adopted Highway, is pedestrianised and the opening up for NGT only is recognised as a sensitive issue. It is the preferred option however for a number of reasons:

- Better journey times and reliability for NGT (compared to continuing on Hunslet Road)
- A more direct link to the Hunslet District Centre and to a greater number of residential dwellings, which offers a real opportunity to help rejuvenate this part of the District Centre
- The alternative option running adjacent to Hunslet Road would partially remove an existing landscape buffer creating significant environmental disbenefit to the residents of Whitfield Way

The Morrisons store, whilst an important local facility, has in effect turned its back on this part of the District Centre. In order to overcome this problem and mitigate the impact of NGT through this area and provide a safe and attractive environment for all users, a ‘shared space’ area is envisaged. This would comprise of improved surfacing, tree planting & landscaping with a focus on good urban design to create a high quality plaza and NGT stop. Part of the NGT project advisor team includes an Urban Design team whose remit is to reduce the impact of NGT through mitigation measures and improving the design quality of the whole scheme. NGT vehicles would be limited a low maximum speed (15kph) through such ‘shared space’ areas and appropriate options for restraint measures to prevent other vehicles gaining access are being considered. Throughout the NGT scheme the proposed shared space areas will be designed on a site by site basis and also in accordance not only with good practice and the emerging LCC Street Design Guide but taking into account the needs of more vulnerable and disabled users, by for example the use of low kerbs, tactile strips, and pedestrian ‘safe’ areas with clear delineators that can be followed by the blind

and partially sighted. The NGT team will be consulting with various internal and external Access groups and the intention is to set up a Working Group involving such interests – this approach was very successful under the previous Supertram scheme in identifying access issues and the means to resolve them.

The preferred option alignment continues from the District Centre onto Church Street, and then heading south again onto Balm Road over the railway bridge. At this point NGT would divert down the embankment to run along disused railway sidings, across Pepper Road (at level), continuing alongside the railway to just before the large gyratory forming Junction 7 of the M621. This gyratory would be crossed to gain access to the designated Park and Ride site at Stourton just south of the motorway junction. The P&R facility would be clearly visible from the motorway and accessed directly by vehicles from the junction so as to be as attractive for commuters and other visitors to Leeds.

The north bound alignment follows the same route with journey times from the Stourton P&R estimated to be approximately 11 minutes in the peak period.

5.0 Public Engagement on the proposed scheme

A two-stage approach to public engagement on the NGT project is being implemented. The first phase in late 2008 concentrated on high level issues and has been completed. A more detailed phase 2 consultation on the specific scheme proposals along each of the routes started on the 8th June this year.

Phase 1 of NGT public engagement commenced with a series of public exhibitions held jointly with the Transport for Leeds project in Leeds City Centre in November 2008. The purpose of these exhibitions was to raise awareness of the emerging NGT proposals and to seek feedback from the public on certain key attributes of the scheme. The exhibitions were extremely well attended with over 1,000 people visiting over a four day period.

In addition an NGT leaflet and questionnaire was distributed at the public exhibitions for people to complete during the event or to be taken away and returned via a freepost envelope. Consultation packs (containing a leaflet, questionnaire and freepost envelope) were also made available at a number of public libraries and One Stop Shops along the proposed NGT routes.

An NGT project website was also launched in November 2008 to provide general information about the project and to provide an online facility for people to complete the NGT questionnaire. The NGT website can be found at www.ngtmetro.com. Work is now ongoing to further develop the NGT website which will include the provision of project updates, useful links and downloadable versions of key project reports.

The key findings of the first stage of public consultation can be summarised as follows:

- Over 95% of respondents thought that public transport in Leeds could be improved;
- The improvements that respondents most wanted to see were: more reliable services, cheaper fares, more frequent services, more bus lanes and less crowded services;

- 85% of respondents thought that bus vehicles could be improved and on-board information was the most commonly suggested measure. Over one third of the sample also asked for cleaner and more environmentally friendly vehicles; and
- There was a positive response to the NGT proposals and respondents welcomed the fact that they involve high quality public transport improvements and Park and Ride. The issue of quality was important and the results show a desire for a scheme that is more than a 'typical bus'.

The full analysis of the NGT questionnaires has now been made available to the public through the NGT website.

The current second phase of the public engagement involves more extensive public consultation along the proposed routes and is aimed at raising awareness of the scheme amongst local residents. This major twelve week consultation phase started on June 8th this year and will include high profile events along the three routes and City Centre – see table below. A large trailer has been hired that will be fully manned and will display various information panels. This trailer will visit set locations for periods of two to four days at a time. An information leaflet and questionnaire have been produced, copies of which will be available at the meeting.

In addition there is scope for the NGT team to attend other planned community events in order to inform and take comments from residents, local workers and businesses and any other interested parties. Representatives of the NGT team have already met with Members in City & Hunslet Ward.

NGT Summer 2009 Consultation Events

ROUTE	VENUE	DATES	TIMES
SOUTH	Penny Hill Centre	Thurs 18 – Sat 20 June 2009	Thurs: 12:00 – 20:00 Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 Sat: 11:00 – 16:00
NORTH	St Chad's Centre	Thurs 25 – Sat 27 June 2009	Thurs: 12:00 – 20:00 Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 Sat: 11:00 – 16:00
HEADINGLEY	St Columba's Church	Mon 29 – Tues 30 June 2009	Mon: 12:00 – 20:00 Tues 10:00 – 16:00
CITY CENTRE	Victoria Gardens	Weds 1 – Sat 4 July 2009	Wed: 12:00 – 18:00 Thurs: 10:00 – 20:00 Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 Sat: 11:00 – 16:00
HYDE PARK	Cinder Moor (Woodhouse Moor)	Thurs 9 – Sat 11 July 2009	Thurs: 12:00 – 20:00 Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 Sat: 11:00 – 16:00
EAST	St James's Hospital (Nightingale PH)	Thurs 16 July – Sat 18 July 2009	Thurs: 12:00 – 20:00 Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 Sat: 11:00 – 16:00

The consultation events have been publicised by a variety of means. Teams went out in the week preceding the events and on the days themselves handing out leaflets in the locality to businesses and passers-by. Posters have been posted in prominent public locations and community venues. Various community groups have been informed through the 'Leeds Voice' umbrella group and LCC Equality team, with adverts in the local press. The trailer itself will be highly visible from passing pedestrians and motorists with clear NGT branding. Email alerts with an attached flyer are being used to inform Business contacts as well as community groups / resident networks established by the Area Teams and Ward Members. Where required or requested such groups will be offered the chance for separate briefings. The consultation process has been designed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the adopted Local Development Framework document 'Statement of Community Involvement.'

The NGT Project Team is also undertaking specific consultation with the public transport operators and a city centre open business seminar has been arranged for the 9th July.

The NGT team would welcome the views of Committee Members at this stage on any further public consultation that they consider is appropriate. It should be noted that the NGT team envisage a period of ongoing consultation, both formal and informal with residents, business and interested parties from this point onwards leading up to the Transport and Works Act submission in spring 2010 and the Public Inquiry in 2011.

6.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

The scheme is in line with the following headline Council objectives set out in the Strategic Plan: improving the local economy for the benefit of all residents; improving connectivity for local neighbourhoods; providing a sustainable environment; and engaging local people in decisions about their neighbourhood.

The NGT proposals are being incorporated within the emerging Local Development Framework and Area Action Plans.

7.0 Legal and Resource Implications

A joint LCC and Metro project team is developing the scheme, with a Project Board consisting of senior officers at Directorate level from both organisations meeting on a regular basis.

Scheme development costs are currently being met jointly by Metro and Leeds City Council, but once the Major Scheme Business Case is approved by the Department for Transport a significant proportion of scheme costs will become rechargeable to the Department.

8.0 Recommendations

Area Committee Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and in particular the on going public consultation on the New Generation Transport scheme

- Provide feedback to the Project Team on the preferred form and content of future consultations with the Committee
- Provide any general feedback on the overall scheme, preferred route alignment, potential impacts and required mitigation measures.

Background papers

None