



**Report of the Director of Development**

**Inner North West Area Committee**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

**Subject: QUALITY BUS INITIATIVE PROPOSALS**

<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b>  All	<b>Specific Implications For:</b> Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/>  Women <input type="checkbox"/>  Disabled people <input type="checkbox"/>  Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>
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report

**Executive Summary**

This report provides Members with information regarding present and future plans for the development of Quality Bus Initiatives and investment in bus infrastructure particularly in the Inner North West area.

The key plans for the North West area relate to:

- A65 Quality Bus Initiative major scheme
- Yorkshire Bus Initiative programme of infrastructure investment, covering the provision of fully accessible bus stops and bus priorities which includes in the North West area:
  - Burley Road, bus priorities and stop upgrades
  - Meanwood Road, bus priorities and stop upgrades
  - A660 stop upgrades for serve existing services
- Local Transport Plan capital programme; and
- Bus Rapid Transit system proposals (successor scheme to Supertram)

Investment in this programme will come from the Local Transport Plan and estimated at £7.7 million between 2006-11 plus complementary funding from Metro for new and replacement bus shelters and potential investment by bus operators in new vehicles.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 To advise Members regarding proposals for Quality Bus Initiative measures and other proposals intended to improve bus travel in the Inner North West area.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The new Local Transport Plan 2006-11 (LTP2) which has been adopted as the Council's transport policy from 1 April this year (replacing the first Local Transport Plan 2001-06) sets out programmes of measures designed to improve the provision made for buses. A core target of the LTP is to increase bus patronage across West Yorkshire by 5% by 2010/11.
- 2.2 An integrated approach to the future provision of quality bus measures both within the Leeds District and across West Yorkshire is being progressed under the Yorkshire Bus Initiative (YBI). Yorkshire Bus is a collaborative initiative between the West Yorkshire Councils, Metro and bus operators. Its objective is to deliver a progressive step change in the quality of bus services on all the main core corridors served by high frequency routes (typically ten minutes or less).
- 2.3 The YBI programme is identified, and is being largely funded from, within the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport minor works budget. Over the full period of LTP2 anticipated expenditure of £17 million has been earmarked for the introduction of bus priority measures and other bus infrastructure improvements.
- 2.4 In addition to the LTP2 programmes, following the Government's decision on the Leeds Supertram project work is taking place with Metro to identify the basis for proceeding with an alternative Bus Rapid Transit major scheme.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

### Overview

- 3.1 In overall terms the LTP2 programme includes the following key initiatives designed to develop the role and contribution of bus use to the delivery of LTP targets:
- Bus infrastructure measures to deliver improvements to 1000 bus stops on core routes across the city making them fully accessible to modern low floor buses. This work includes raising kerbs to permit level boarding, the provision of Clearway measures to allow buses access to stops and the provision/replacement by Metro of bus shelters at major stops.
  - Bus priority measures on key routes that will provide approximately 5.4 km of new bus lanes, including:-
    - Burley Road
    - Abbey Road
    - Chapeltown Road
    - Hunslet Road
    - Dewsbury Road
    - Leeds-Bradford Corridor (proposals in development)
    - Meanwood Road
    - Wellington Road (on-site to complement Tong Road already introduced)

- 3.2 As part of the above, a package of integrated measures is currently being prepared to support the introduction of the First Group “ftr” concept bus onto Route 4 which links Pudsey – Leeds City Centre – Whinmoor. As well as the physical improvements to bus stops and the provision of additional bus lanes, this corridor will also pilot the use of automatic vehicle location technology to provide additional priority for buses through traffic signals (this system also provides real time passenger information through the “yournextbus” link). The Route 4 package will also include improved ticketing arrangements.
- 3.3 Through the Yorkshire Bus Initiative Steering Group the Council is working with Metro and the bus operators to ensure that where, for example new investment in vehicles is proposed, the respective investments are co-ordinated to maximise the benefits for passengers.

#### Specific projects in the North West area

- 3.4 Within the North West area a number of projects are being pursued as follows:

##### *A65 Quality Bus Initiative (and Abbey Road bus priority scheme)*

This major scheme was first proposed in LTP1. A revised scheme was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2004 which has subsequently been reviewed and identified as a priority scheme for the new Regional Funding Allocation for transport. Currently a final decision is awaited from the DfT, although at the time of writing no indication has been given as to when this will be forthcoming.

The scheme itself will provide comprehensive bus priority measures to bypass all the main points of congestion along the route from the Inner Ring Road to Kirkstall at an estimated cost of £21.6 million. Subject to DfT approval and the completion of statutory procedures it is expected that design and construction of this scheme could be completed during 2010/11.

Additional bus priority is to be provided on the section of route from Kirkstall to Horsforth as part of the separate Abbey Road quality bus scheme. This scheme has now been substantially designed and is expected to proceed to construction later this year at an estimated total cost of £1.5 million.

##### *Burley Road Quality Bus Corridor*

- 3.5 A scheme to provide an outbound bus lane on Burley Road from Park Lane to Cardigan Road is currently in the final stages of preparation for implementation later this year. The scheme will provide around 1 km of dedicated bus lane together with improvements at the junction with Cardigan Road. Also being progressed in tandem with this scheme is a rolling programme of schemes to upgrade the 200 plus bus stops used by the routes serving this corridor. The estimated total cost of this package is £4.5 million.
- 3.6 Earlier investigation also looked at the possibility of extending the bus priority measures further out on this corridor to include measures on Burley Road west of the Cardigan Road junction and also at the Kirkstall Hill/Morris Lane junction. Options for these sites need further detailed appraisal of their feasibility before they are included in the LTP forward programme.

### *A660 Corridor*

- 3.7 At the present time this corridor is being reconsidered in detail as part of the process for determining the post Supertram strategy which is expected will be built around the alternative of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) technology.
- 3.8 Whilst the details are yet to be worked through, in overall terms the approach being taken at the present time assumes a core BRT network which will serve a strategic park and ride site on the M621/M1 and link to the city centre with connections through to Leeds University and St James's Hospital. It is envisaged that this core network will be augmented by extensions through the East and South East Leeds (EASEL) regeneration area to Seacroft and along the A660 corridor either to the Bodington park and ride site (earmarked for Supertram) or potentially extended beyond this to serve the needs of the outer suburbs. Ultimately a BRT scheme would also offer the potential to be extended to serve other areas of the city, where the levels of demand justify the required investment.
- 3.9 A key factor in determining the ability to provide a BRT corridor along the A660 will be the ability to provide rapid transit times that are comparable to those that would have been delivered by the Supertram scheme. It is clear in this regard that the ability to provide the necessary priority through central Headingley will be crucial to achieving this.
- 3.10 It is recognised that it will take some time to deliver a new BRT scheme along the A660 corridor and therefore some provision has been made for investment to address the present access requirements for the core bus services using this corridor. The LTP programme has therefore identified future funding of £300,000 for improvements to the 60 bus stops along the A660 corridor from the city centre to Cookridge/Holt Park.
- 3.11 The outcome of the BRT review and development work will dictate the approach taken in terms of the A660. Irrespective of this it is recognised that as a minimum a package of measures to improve conditions for buses will be required in order to adequately serve the demand for local trips along the corridor. This will need to consider the extension of bus lanes where possible, provision of traffic signal bus priority (over general traffic) and other complementary measures such as improved vehicles and measures to speed up boarding times (with particular emphasis on pre-paid ticketing arrangements). Bolder approaches to tackling the wide 'rat-running' opportunities through the Headingley area will also need to be considered to improve safety, amenity and the environment for local people.

### *Meanwood Road Corridor*

- 3.12 A scheme to provide bus priority measures on this corridor on the inbound/outbound approaches to the Grove Lane junction has been identified in the LTP programme. Detailed design of the scheme is currently programmed to commence in 2007 with planned implementation of a scheme in 2008/09. Similar to the other corridors covered in this report a package of bus stop improvements, covering around 40 sites, will also be programmed to complement this scheme. The estimated cost of this package is £1.4 million.
- 3.13 At the northern end of this corridor the options for improving the degrees of priority afforded to buses using the busy junctions between Stonegate Road and King Lane and at the A6120 are being examined.

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

4.1 This report carries no specific implications for policy and governance.

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

5.1 This report carries no specific legal and resource implications.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 This report has detailed the proposed measures that it is planned to introduce on the core bus routes passing through the Inner North West area. Investment of £7.7 million in bus priorities and accessibility improvements to bus stops is planned over the life of the Local Transport Plan between 2006-11. The report also notes that a decision is still awaited from the Government regarding the A65 Quality Bus Initiative proposals and that work is proceeding to develop alternative Bus Rapid Transit proposals following the cancellation of the Supertram project.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

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