

## Report of UTMC

### Report to the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Subject: Approval to progress a Section 8 legal agreement with Highways England to operate and maintain traffic signals at M621 J7**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Are specific electoral wards affected?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Hunslet & Riverside, Middleton Park                 |   |  |
| Has consultation been carried out?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Will the decision be open 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

### 1. Main issues

- The Park and Ride site currently being constructed at Stourton as part of LPTIP includes traffic signal installations at the site entrances and exit as well as on other nodes of the wider junction including the A639 approach. Immediately upstream of the A639 entry to the roundabout, at the bottom of the M621 motorway off-slip, there is an existing traffic signal installation operated and maintained by Highways England.
- It has been proposed (and agreed in principle by Highways England) that Leeds City Council operates and maintains all proposed traffic signal installations at the roundabout upon completion of the LPTIP P&R scheme at Stourton. As a consequence, operation and maintenance of the existing Highways England asset would transfer to Leeds City Council.
- Maintaining additional asset will increase pressure on the existing LCC traffic signals maintenance budget. However, there is a significant operational benefit as bus priority can be implemented more effectively across the junction which will maximise benefit to the Park and Ride service.

## **2. Best Council Plan Implications**

- This proposal support the Best Council Plan objective of improving transport connections, particularly with regard to reliability.

## **3. Resource Implications**

- This proposal will have an implication on resource.
- Due to the LPTIP P&R scheme introducing new traffic signal asset nearby, there will be no additional standard fee added to the maintenance contract, over and above the impact of the LPTIP scheme, resulting from taking on maintenance of the existing Highways England asset.
- Maintenance of traffic signals equipment on the motorway slip road does incur an additional traffic management cost. A conservative estimate for works (i.e. once per annum) is £682 per annum at current maintenance rates.
- The expected additional maintenance costs will be funded from the existing UTMC traffic signal maintenance budget.

## **Recommendations**

The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Give approval to negotiate the terms of, and enter into an agreement with, Highways England to take over operation and maintenance of the existing traffic signals asset at M621 J7 upon completion of the LPTIP P&R scheme at Stourton, under the provision of Section 8 of the Highways Act 1980.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To explain the background to the M621 J7 traffic signals proposals including the benefits to Leeds City Council operating and maintaining all of the proposed traffic signals.
- 1.2 To request approval in principle to take over operation and maintenance of the existing Highways England traffic signals asset at the bottom of the eastbound motorway off-slip.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The Park and Ride site currently being constructed at Stourton includes traffic signal installations at the site entrances and exit as well as on other nodes of the wider junction including the A639 approach. Immediately upstream of the A639 entry to the roundabout, at the bottom of the M621 eastbound motorway off-slip, there is an existing traffic signal installation operated and maintained by Highways England.
- 2.2 Initial discussions have taken place between representatives for Highways England and Leeds City Council regarding the operation and maintenance of the traffic signals around the junction with the consensus being a preference for a single organisation to operate and maintain all the traffic signals. This is preferable as it ensures that there is no confusion regarding ownership of asset in terms of

maintenance, that coordination between different signal installations is as effective as possible and that responsibility (and hence accountability) for the performance of the junction lies with a single organisation.

- 2.3 It has been proposed (and agreed in principle by Highways England) that Leeds City Council operates and maintains all proposed traffic signal installations at M621 J7 and thus takes over operation and maintenance of the existing Highways England traffic signals installation upon completion of the LPTIP P&R scheme at Stourton.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 Maintaining the additional traffic signal asset will increase pressure on the existing UTMC maintenance budget but to a smaller degree than the other proposed signal installations at M621 J7.
- 3.2 There is a benefit, in terms of maintenance, to all traffic signal asset being maintained by a single organisation as it prevents any confusion regarding responsibility for responding to faults.
- 3.3 There is a benefit to LCC, in terms of operation, resulting from all traffic signal installations at M621 J7 being operated by LCC. Coordination between the nodes of the junction can be achieved more easily and, fundamentally for the Park and Ride scheme, bus priority can be implemented via the LCC UTMC systems to minimise delay to the Park and Ride service through the signals.

### **4. Corporate considerations**

#### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Internal consultation has taken place with colleagues in Highways and Transportation Services.

#### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 A screening document has been prepared and an independent impact assessment is not required for the approvals requested.

#### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 This proposal support the Best Council Plan objective of improving transport connections, particularly with regard to reliability. This will be achieved by providing green signal extensions for buses through the traffic signals to minimise delay.

##### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 This proposal contributes to Climate Emergency objectives by promoting a sustainable transport mode. It will also help to achieve improved coordination at M621 J7 that will have a beneficial impact on emissions for all traffic.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The charges resulting from adding the existing Highways England traffic signal asset to the maintenance contract would ordinarily be £483 per annum at current

rates. However, it should be noted that, since the LPTIP P&R scheme is already introducing new traffic signal asset nearby, there is already an impact on the traffic signal maintenance budget. The way that costs are accounted for in the maintenance contract means that taking on maintenance of the existing Highways England asset would not incur an additional standard maintenance fee over and above the LPTIP impact.

- 4.4.2 If works are required on the motorway slip road to maintain traffic signals equipment then additional traffic management costs are £682 at current maintenance rates. However, based on existing motorway sites, it is not expected that this would occur more than once per annum, as a conservative estimate, and would therefore result in a total increase of £682 per annum in maintenance costs.
- 4.4.3 The expected additional maintenance costs will be funded from the existing UTMC traffic signal maintenance budget.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 This report is not subject to call-in and there are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential with the Council's Access to Information Rules.
- 4.5.2 Approval of the proposals in this report will be subject to satisfactory negotiations with Highways England regarding the Section 8 legal agreement.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 There is a potential reputational risk for Leeds City Council if sub-optimal operation of the traffic signals at this location causes delays on the network, regardless of which organisation operates and maintains the traffic signals. However, it is considered that the UTMC expertise within LCC will provide the best possible solution and that, if Leeds City Council does not operate the junction, there is a greater risk of not being able to effectively implement bus priority, with a subsequent negative impact on LPTIP objectives.
- 4.6.2 Highways England has requested a slip road queue clearance strategy to prevent queuing onto the M621 mainline. This will be implemented during the configuration of the signal operation but there is a risk that Highways England operatives could cause increased delays on the local network by overriding the junction operation too frequently. It is proposed that this would be mitigated by ensuring that, during LCC control room hours, clearance strategies would have to be reviewed by LCC officers before implementation.
- 4.6.3 There is a risk that LCC will inherit traffic signal asset that is not to standard. The requirement for a site survey prior to taking on maintenance will be added to the Section 8 legal agreement.
- 4.6.4 The risk of not approving the recommendations of this report are that the signal operation at M621 J7 will be sub-optimal and that bus priority will not be implemented. This will impact on the LPTIP objectives and also present a reputational risk for LCC.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 It is important that the various traffic signal installations that will be constructed as part of the LPTIP Park and Ride scheme at M621 J7 are operated and maintained by a single organisation.
- 5.2 If LCC takes responsibility to operate and maintain the traffic signals then the existing UTMC systems that LCC has in place to provide bus priority across the network can be utilised to maximise benefit to buses. Optimal coordination between the nodes of the junction can also be achieved to minimise delay to all traffic.
- 5.3 Taking on additional traffic signal asset will introduce an additional budget pressure of £682 per annum based on existing maintenance contract rates.
- 5.4 In order for LCC to operate and maintain all the traffic signals, a Section 8 legal agreement is required to be negotiated between LCC and Highways England regarding the existing Highways England traffic signal installation at the bottom of the eastbound M621 off-slip.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Give approval to negotiate the terms of, and enter into an agreement with, Highways England to take over operation and maintenance of the existing traffic signals asset at M621 J7 upon completion of the LPTIP P&R scheme at Stourton, under the provision of Section 8 of the Highways Act 1980.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Appendix 1

### Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- The relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- Whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

|                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Directorate: City Development</b> | <b>Service area: Transport Policy</b> |
| <b>Lead person: Joel Dodsworth</b>   | <b>Contact number: 3788128</b>        |

|  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Title: Approval to progress a Section 8 legal agreement with Highways England to operate and maintain traffic signals at M621 J7</b> |   |                                       |
| Is this a:   |   |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> |
| <b>If other, please specify</b>  |   |                                       |

|   |
|---|
| <b>2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening</b>  |
| The screening process relates to LCC taking over operation and maintenance of the existing Highways England traffic signal installation at M621 J7. |

|  |
|--|
| <b>3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration</b>   |
| All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a |

greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

| Questions   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?  | X   |    |
| Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?   |     | X  |
| Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?   |     | X  |
| Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?  |     | X  |
| Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment</li> <li>• Advancing equality of opportunity</li> <li>• Fostering good relations</li> </ul> |     | X  |

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity; cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The proposal would result in improved bus priority being provided to the Stourton Park and Ride. Enhancing the bus service will contribute to improving equality by providing a viable alternative to car journeys into the city centre. This will help to reduce traffic levels into the city centre and thus facilitate active travel aspirations that support those who do not own a car.

- **Key findings**

**(think about** any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

Improved bus priority may have a slight negative impact on general traffic using the junction but this would be offset by improved coordination that operating all the signals asset facilitates.

• **Actions**

**(think about** how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

The negative impact will be offset by the benefits of one organisation operating all the signals at M621 J7. The positive impact can be quantified using data from the bus priority system and used to promote the benefits resulting from this proposal.

**5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:                         | N/A |
| Date to complete your impact assessment                                | N/A |
| Lead person for your impact assessment<br>(Include name and job title) | N/A |

**6. Governance, ownership and approval**

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

| Name           | Job title    | Date       |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| Joel Dodsworth | UTMC Manager | 21/08/2020 |

**7. Publishing**

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to [equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk) for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to <b>Governance Services</b>                              | Date sent: |
| For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate <b>Directorate</b> | Date sent: |

All other decisions – sent to  
[equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)

Date sent: