

# Transforming Cities Fund – Leeds City Centre Cycling Improvements; Southern Gateway Phase One

Date: 16 November 2022

Report to: Chief Officer of Highways & Transportation

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## What is this report about?

### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- Leeds City Council has an ambition to deliver a safe and coherent network of cycling and walking infrastructure across the city, to help encourage sustainable active travel in line with the priorities of the Best Council Plan 2020-2025.
- The TCF (Transforming Cities Fund) offers local authorities the opportunity to deliver modern accessible transport infrastructure which allows people to make active travel choices and to reduce the dependence on the private car.
- As part of Leeds City Council's successful TCF bid a package of four projects has been developed to provide cycling and walking infrastructure around the city centre to link many of its recent high-quality projects together to form an accessible and coherent network to facilitate active travel around the city.
- This project package (including this scheme) has already been approved in an executive board report in June 2021 and is listed in Appendix B.
- These projects will encourage safe and sustainable travel in line with the ambitions and priorities of the city and remove barriers to cycling as a choice for short and medium length journeys.
- This report covers phase one of the implementation of cycling infrastructure along the southern gateway to the city, covering Meadow Road & Victoria Road and is the final project within the TCF / CCC package.

## Recommendations

- a) Note and approve the proposed layout of Phase One of the Southern Gateway Scheme as shown on the attached drawing TM/05/855/GA/01.
- b) Give authority to issue the works and construct the scheme as shown.

- c) Note that phase one of this scheme, valued at £1m, is to be funded entirely from the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities Transforming Cities Fund ( CCC scheme ) as previously approved by Executive Board.
- d) Note that phase two of this scheme will be subject to a further report and approval.
- e) Request the City Solicitor to advertise Traffic Regulation orders as detailed on drawing TM-05-855-TRO-01 and, subject to no objections being received, make and seal the orders as advertised.
- f) Approve with reference to the powers contained in Section 66(4) of the Highways Act 1980, that the relevant lengths of footway shown on attached Drawing No TM/05/855/GA/01 as proposed cycle tracks are removed and that following the removal of the footways, cycle tracks are constructed under the powers contained under the provisions of section 65(1) of the Highways Act 1980 for segregated or shared joint use by pedal cyclists and pedestrians.

### **Why is the proposal being put forward?**

- 1 Leeds City Council has a long-standing ambition to increase and improve safe cycling infrastructure across the city. This includes an ambition to have 800 kilometres of cycle tracks and lanes which can be accessed by all users.
- 2 This ambition contributes to several established aims, including reducing carbon emissions, increasing sustainable transport use, improving access to jobs for all and encouraging active healthy lifestyles.
- 3 Active travel including cycling and walking offers several benefits to both the individual and to the wider community. Government recommendations are that all adults should be active and should engage in at least 2.5 hours of moderate physical activity per week to maintain health.
- 4 Active travel has also been shown to improve the mental health of the individual with daily physical activity reducing the risk of depression and dementia by 20-30%.
- 5 In 2019 Leeds City Council declared a Climate Emergency, which resulted in an increased focus on its efforts to reduce carbon emissions as part of future highway projects. Cycling and other active travel modes can make a major contribution to this work by replacing private cars for short to medium length journeys.
- 6 High quality cycling infrastructure creates opportunities for road users to make these short to medium length journeys by bicycle instead of car, and to do so with a good level of confidence that their journey will be safe, direct, and comfortable. This is a major element of the modal shift that supports the reduction in carbon emissions and will achieve the goals set out in the Climate Emergency declaration.
- 7 The Transforming Cities Fund is a national funding opportunity and aims to improve productivity and spread prosperity through investment in public and sustainable transport in some of the largest English City Regions.
- 8 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority, on behalf of the Leeds City Region, submitted proposals to the Department for Transport for a package of improvements designed to deliver a transport network which is “more accessible, affordable and attractive”. Its proposals aim to create “realistic alternative(s) to the car and the choice to make journeys

that are sustainable, healthier, and that ultimately enable our towns and city centres to be re-shaped with people at their heart.” On 11th March 2020 central Government announced that Leeds City Region had successfully secured £317 million to deliver this package of transformational projects.

- 9 This proposal included £7.06M for cycling infrastructure improvements in and around Leeds City Centre, designed to facilitate and further encourage active travel to, from and through the city centre, and forms the basis for the proposal outlined in this report.

**Wards Affected:** Beeston & Holbeck and Hunslet & Riverside

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 10 This scheme will create a major route into and out of the city centre from the south, linking several existing/proposed routes including existing City Connect 3 Infrastructure and to the ongoing works at Leeds City Station.
- 11 The phase one proposal includes a segregated route on Meadow Road/Victoria Road, with phase two continuing across Victoria Bridge ultimately connecting the City Connect 3 project from Elland Road to the south, the Leeds Liverpool Canal towpath to the west, and the Leeds Train Station/City Square to the north.
- 12 The scheme also enables the development of cycling provision in and around the South Bank area, supporting city centre growth and future projects in this area.
- 13 The scheme introduces several improvements for pedestrians, with new formal crossings, widened footways and Copenhagen style junction treatments along the length of the scheme making it safer and more convenient to traverse the city centre by foot.
- 14 The scheme will also remove the existing glass-plated wind baffles on the eastern side of Great Wilson Street.
- 15 In order to meet the required start date for this project, and to allow for additional traffic modelling to take place at the junction of Neville Street/Sovereign Street, it has been split into two phases. Phase two of this project will be presented for approval in a separate report.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 16 The package of all six Transforming Cities Fund Schemes was approved by the Director of City Development and Leeds City Councils Executive Board in June 2021, although this has been reduced to four schemes due to inflationary pressures.
- 17 Consultation with Beeston & Holbeck and Hunslet & Riverside Ward Councillors was undertaken in February 2022, and no adverse comments were received to the proposals.

- 18 Consultation with emergency services and bus operators was also undertaken in February 2022, with no adverse comments received regarding the proposals.
- 19 A consultation was completed through the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities Your Voice platform in January/February 2021, a summary of which is appended to this report, with the headline findings of:
  - A majority of users considered that at least part of the cycling experience in these locations was poor or very poor
  - A majority of respondents agreed that the proposals in this report would improve cycling around the city centre
  - A minority of respondents considered that the proposals would not encourage them to cycle more
- 20 Direct consultation will take place with affected frontages as the projects move towards delivery. This approach has worked well on previous projects and ensures that residents, businesses, and others have direct sight of the specifics of each scheme to ensure that their comments can be reflected in the final project.
- 21 User groups have been consulted during development of the schemes and will continue to be involved as the detailed designs are finalised. This includes Leeds City Council's Cycle Forum and WYCA's TCF Quality Board.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 22 The Transforming City Centre Cycling Project that this proposal forms a part of is funded entirely by Transforming Cities Fund grant, allocated by WYCA.
- 23 An outline business case has been approved for the project, and a full business case was approved in principle by WYCA on 24th March, subject to tendered costs remaining within the funding envelope.
- 24 The TCF City Centre Cycling project is valued at £7.06M, and will be delivered using Leeds City Council's framework contracts which have been competitively awarded.
- 25 The cost of phase one of the scheme outlined in this report is £1.0m, with a further £800,000 allocated for the completion of phase two.
- 26 The detailed design and project management of the scheme's delivery rests with Leeds City Council and will be carried out by the Traffic Engineering section, with the funding provided by the Combined Authority through the TCF / CCC package. The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) will be responsible for the overall implementation of the project.
- 27 Recent projects, including the City Connect 3 works and other routes have demonstrated that the design and delivery method outlined here will ensure a high-quality project with sufficient flexibility to ensure that the project reflects both user needs but also the needs of residents and businesses who are on or are adjacent to these routes.
- 28 Construction of phase one of the project is expected to start in January 2023, with completion expected around eight months after this date.
- 29 Maintenance of the new infrastructure will be undertaken as part of Leeds City Council's ongoing annual maintenance programmes as all new infrastructures will form part of the

adopted public highway. Winter maintenance will be carried out as per the established practices for previous cycleways and will utilise existing equipment.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 30 A Traffic Regulation Order is required to support the delivery of this project the details of which detailed on attached Drawing No TM-05-855-TRO-01 and comprises:
- A No Motor Vehicle Parking or Loading on Footway on Cycle Track restriction on all parts of the new infrastructure;
  - A prohibition of motor vehicles (point closure) on City Walk, at its junction with Meadow Road.
  - The banning of the left turn from Water Lane into Neville Street
- 31 The scheme includes the installation of segregated cycle tracks along its entire length, and these tracks are physically separated from the footway and carriageway. Cycle tracks within the public highway will be created under authority of sections 65 and 66 of the Highways Act 1980.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 32 The project estimate includes funding for risk and contingency and the project team will continually review the project against the funding envelope to control costs. Specialist resources have been secured to assist with this process.
- 33 The works will be delivered through a framework contract utilising early contractor involvement to identify any potential risk areas and therefore minimise risk during the delivery phase.
- 34 Extensive consultation and engagement have taken place to develop support for the project and this is considered to minimise reputational risk to the project from negative publicity.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth                       Health and Wellbeing                       Climate Emergency

- 35 These projects make a major contribution towards Leeds City Council's response to the Climate Emergency. Cycling is a key alternative to the use of the private car for short-and medium-term journeys, and the provision of safe cycling infrastructure has been proven to increase cycle journeys on those routes.
- 36 The proposals contained in this report contribute to the Leeds target of next zero carbon emissions by 2030 by improving facilities for cycling close to the city centre, facilitating linkages to further develop the cycle network, and to encourage these transport choices as an alternative to short (and longer) car journeys.
- 37 This ambition contributes to several established aims, including reducing carbon emissions, increasing sustainable transport use, improving access to jobs for all and encouraging active healthy lifestyles. This lifestyle has been shown to improve the mental health of the individual with daily physical activity reducing the risk of depression and dementia by 20-30%.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **a) What other options were considered?**

- 38 The scheme has been designed from first principles in line with Local Transport Note 1/20; Cycle Infrastructure Design which lays out how cycling infrastructure should be designed and delivered which has shaped much of the layout of the schemes.
- 39 As part of the design process, several different considerations and layouts were considered, particularly at signalised junctions, to ensure the safety, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of what is being delivered. The layouts that have been chosen to reflect the balance between these three factors, with providing high-quality and direct cycling infrastructure being paramount within the design.
- 40 The other option would be to not deliver this project and leave the area as it is currently. This would not deliver the benefits that are outlined within this report and would leave gaps between other pieces of cycling infrastructure in key strategic locations on approach to the City Centre.

### **b) How will success be measured?**

- 41 The TCF fund offers an opportunity to provide high-quality segregated cycling projects, alongside similar pedestrian improvements which will make a major contribution towards Leeds City Council's ambition to deliver a comprehensive, city-wide cycle network.
- 42 The success of this project would create modern, sustainable infrastructure allowing residents to choose alternative travel choices away from private vehicles helping to achieve the goals of the Climate Emergency, Best Council Plan and helping create a healthier city.
- 43 Dedicated monitoring has been established using specialist equipment and baseline cycle use of the route has been established. The uplift of cyclists using this route will be measured against this to determine the scale of the benefits delivered by the scheme.

### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 44 Construction of this scheme will be expected to start in January 2023, with completion expected eight months following this date.

## **Appendices**

- 45 Appendix 1 - Exec Board Report June 2021
- 46 Appendix 2 - Drawing TM-05-855-GA-01
- 47 Appendix 3 - Drawing TM-05-855-TRO-01

## **Background papers**

- 48 None.