



Report of the Director of City Development

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 22 October 2009

Subject: A65 Quality Bus Initiative

<p>Electoral Wards Affected: Kirkstall</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

On the 6 July 2006, the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the A65 Quality Bus Initiative had been granted “programme entry” to the LTP major schemes programme as part of the first round of Regional Funding Allocation approvals at a total cost of £20.746 million.

The proposed scheme will provide the following:

- 4 kilometres of new bus lane
- Improvements and bus priority measures at two major junctions and bus priority pre-signals at the exit points from the new bus lanes
- New pedestrian and cycle facilities including cycle lanes
- Improvements to bus passenger and information facilities along the route

Benefits from the scheme include:

- Bus passenger journey time improvements of 4-6 minutes in the peak periods and up to 3 minutes in the off-peak periods
- A projected increase of 9% in bus patronage

On 20 September 2006 the Executive Board approved the scheme development costs of £834,000 to cover detailed design fees, procurement planning, and the preparation and consultation costs necessary to secure the statutory approvals for the scheme.

On 4 April 2007, the Executive Board approved the acquisition of this third party land and gave authority to make a compulsory purchase order should negotiations fail. On 1 April 2009, the Executive Board approved up to £2.5 million to acquire the third party lands.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update, to members of the area committee, on progress with the design and procurement of the A65 Quality Bus Initiative. It will focus on the key issues, mainly the decision of the Secretary of State on the CPO Public Inquiry, the current scheme layout, and the current programme regarding approval and ultimately construction of the scheme.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The A65 Quality Bus Initiative scheme is part of a comprehensive project to establish the A65 route as a Quality Bus Corridor serving the North West of the Leeds District.
- 2.2 The Quality Bus Corridor is divided into three sections, covering the A65 corridor from Leeds city centre to Aireborough as follows:
- i) A65 QBI – Inner Ring Road to Kirkstall Lane (the subject of this report);
 - ii) Abbey Road bus priority scheme – Kirkstall Lane to A6120 Horsforth Roundabout. Scheme and funding of £1,500,000 previously approved by Executive Board and was completed on site in March 2007; and
 - iii) A65 Rawdon Road scheme – A6120 Horsforth Roundabout to Guiseley. Proposals deferred subject to finalisation of the strategy for the A6120 and options for highway links to the airport. Further detailed evaluation of the options for providing improved bus priority to be evaluated.
- 2.3 A scheme for the A65 QBI was submitted to the Government as part of the Local Transport Plan 2001-06 submission and was Provisionally Approved in December 2001. Subsequent discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) led to the submission of a revised scheme proposal which was developed to take on board the emerging redevelopment proposals for the Kirkstall Road corridor and further minimise the need for future land acquisition.
- 2.4 This revised scheme was remitted for regional advice on transport priorities by the DfT in December 2004 and subsequently was identified as a priority in the Regional Transport Board's submission to the Secretary of State in January 2005.
- 2.5 The proposed scheme is illustrated on the attached draft newsletter, which includes:
- i) a total of 4 km of new bus lanes covering inbound and outbound journeys;
 - ii) bus priority signal arrangements at two major junctions;
 - iii) provision of additional pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities and cycle lanes;
 - iv) pre-signal arrangements to give buses priority at the exits from the bus lanes; and
 - v) improvements to bus passenger facilities including new shelters and information displays (in real time at the busiest stops).
- 2.6 Scheme benefits predicted for bus and other users are as follows:

- i) reductions in bus journey times in the order of 6 minutes in the morning peak; 4 minutes in the evening peak and 3 minutes in the off-peak periods;
- ii) a forecast increase of 9% in bus patronage; and
- iii) improvements in the safety and movement of pedestrians, cyclists and traffic.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 In October 2008, a previous report was presented to the Inner North West Area Committee giving an update on progress with the A65 QBI.

3.2 The key points in that report were:

- i) The existing public consultation that had taken place and the pending Newsletter No.2
- ii) The completion of the Public Inquiry over third party land;
- iii) Ongoing consultation with Developers of the sites to the south of Kirkstall Road;
- iv) The appointment of a Contractor to work with the LCC design team in finalising the design; and,
- v) The current programme at that time, including the approval process.

3.3 As mentioned above, a Public Inquiry was held over the Compulsory Purchase of two parcels of third party land required to construct the scheme proposals. This was held in October 2008 with a decision expected in early 2009. This decision was not confirmed by the Secretary of State until September 2009 which has had a significant effect on the scheme proposals and overall programme.

3.4 At the Public Inquiry in October 2008, an alternative scheme which required less land was put forward by an objector. The government inspector who presided over the Inquiry recommended to the Secretary of State that a modified order be confirmed which was consistent with the objector's alternative proposal.

3.5 During the time period when deliberations were ongoing with the CPO decision, detailed design was progressing which included further consultation with statutory undertakers. As part of this consultation, previously unidentified diversions of extra high voltage cables were identified at the western end of the scheme, coming out of the wildflower garden. These had an estimated cost of £1.5 million with the potential for a two year lead in time for any diversion.

3.6 Due to the prohibitive cost, and programming issues with these potential electric diversions, coupled with the decision on the modified CPO area, changes have been made to the western end of the scheme. These changes move the existing bus stop, and controlled pedestrian crossing to appoint in advance of the third party lands. The outbound bus lane has been shortened by approximately 50 metres and the pre-signal arrangement simplified.

3.7 At the eastern end of the scheme, consultation has continued with the Developers to the south of Kirkstall Road not only on the scheme as a whole but more specifically on

how they interface with the scheme proposals and also with regard to the effect of the traffic regulation order. Due to the current economic climate, and the adverse effect on the property market, the pace of these developments has slowed significantly to the point where the Developers are looking at intermediate uses of these sites to maximise permitted use in their existing state. The Developers have made representations to the Council concerning the proposed scheme and its suitability for the present permitted use of their sites. In view of these circumstances, and the need to safeguard these sites and their future development potential, a decision has been agreed by the A65 Project Board to modify the scheme in this area.

- 3.8 The modifications include the provision of an additional priority right turn and “U” turn facility to allow full access egress from the proposed dual carriageway to the existing developments. Under the original proposals, it was envisaged that an enhanced version of this facility would ultimately have been provided under development proposals. When future development plans are progressed this facility has been design to be capable of modification as part of any future planning and highway requirements.
- 3.9 In conjunction with the above, to ensure the effective operation of the turning facilities it is proposed that the inbound carriageway should be widened to 2 x traffic and 1 x bus lanes. This is an extra single lane length of 700 metres compared with the approved scheme. Apart from the additional carriageway construction, no other additional works or costs arise from this change since the public utility diversions are required irrespective of this modification.
- 3.10 It was previously reported that the second stage of approval – conditional approval (CA) – would be sought early in 2009. This required all the statutory procedures to be complete which included the acquisition of land. With the delay in the CPO decision, conditional approval could not be sought.
- 3.11 In order to mitigate delay, draft condition approval documentation was submitted to DfT in August 2009 with a meeting being held shortly after. The DfT understood the difficulties that LCC had experienced with the CPO and long delay in getting the Order confirmed, albeit in a modified form.
- 3.12 Despite the lack of a formal CA submission, the scheme design has continued to programme with the LCC design team working in conjunction with the appointed contractor. This will result in Final Target Cost for the construction of the works being produced in November this year. The production of the final target cost is the key difference between the conditional approval and full approval. DfT have agreed to initially consider the draft CA which can then be converted into a full approval submission once the Final Target Cost is established.
- 3.13 This should lead to a decision on full approval being given in December 2009. Subject to full approval, it is programmed to commence construction on site in February 2010 for approximately two years.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 The A65 QBI is an integral part of the Local Transport Plan which contributes to the delivery of the Council’s corporate objectives for transport and those of the Vision for Leeds. The scheme will make a major contribution to improving the attractiveness and quality of bus travel and will significantly increase bus patronage and public transport mode share. The scheme will also improve cycling and pedestrian facilities and therefore ultimately improve the air quality.

4.2 All the bus stops throughout the scheme are to be provided with raised kerbs to make access to and from buses easier for disabled groups in line with Disability Discrimination Act.

4.3 The proposals are consistent with the Council's Environmental Policy and provide encouragement for the use of public transport and cycling.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 There are no legal and resource implications to report.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The catalyst for the next round of communication was the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport on the confirmation of the CPO following public inquiry in October 2008. Although expected in early 2009, a modified Order was not confirmed until 4 September this year.

6.2 Following the decision, Newsletter No.3 has been drafted and this is expected to be distributed at the end of October.

6.3 During the latter stages of the detailed design, changes have been made to the scheme. The western end, has been changed as a result of the modified CPO being confirmed and also as a result of identifying major diversions to extra high voltage electric cables. At the eastern end, changes have been made due to accommodate the existing use of the adjacent development sites because of the changing pace of redevelopment resulting from the current economic recession.

6.4 Despite the above, progress is being made and through discussion with DfT, full approval is expected in December 2009 which will allow construction to commence in February 2010 lasting for approximately 2 years.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the content of this report and make comment as necessary.

Background Papers: None