



Report of the New Generation Transport Team (City Development)

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 9 December 2009

Subject: New Generation Transport (NGT) Scheme: Current Position and Public Consultation Results

Electoral Wards Affected:
Various throughout the City

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

The report outlines progress on the development of the New Generation Transport scheme and provides Members with feedback from the summer consultation process and recent Major Scheme Business Case submission. The next stage and proposed timeframe for submission of the Transport and Works Act Order are outlined.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- To provide an update on NGT progress
- To provide a timeline / anticipated forward programme for the scheme
- To provide a summary of key headlines from the Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) submitted to the Department for Transport on 30 October 2009
- To report back the results of the summer formal consultation and ongoing discussions / consultation
- To outline the current approach to key issues raised by Members and the public during the consultation process
- To outline the Transport and Works Act Order procedure including the Request for Information process

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. The preferred option is for the scheme to operate using electric trolleybuses running on rubber tyres and powered from overhead wires.

£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. The local contribution (and any overrun cost) is a joint liability between Metro and Leeds City Council. The Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) outlines how this local contribution will be accounted for:

- Provision of Leeds City Council & Metro owned land – approx £13m
- Allowance for development costs (including some incurred from the predecessor Supertram scheme) – approx £14.5m

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. The extension to Holt Park is a key aspiration that has been included within the MSBC with powers likely to be sought at the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) stage. The current funding does not allow for this £11m extension but should certain high risk costs reduce then it may be possible to integrate this extension into the northern route from the start.

3. Investing in Public Transport – A Framework for Leeds

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 (NGT) to serve the three routes identified and has been

“signed off” by the Department for Transport. A rapid transit intervention is most appropriate on the busiest and crowded bus corridors, experiencing congested highways with significant peak delay and high levels of public transport journey time unreliability.

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. Copies of this document will be available at the meeting.

The Strategic Fit document highlights existing bus and rail network enhancements together with improved park and ride facilities as the potential transport solutions to the west of Leeds. The ‘Transport for Leeds’ study being undertaken by Metro and Leeds City Council is looking at ways of tackling congestion in Leeds through investment in better transport systems and may result in a major bid to the Governments Transport Innovation Fund. The Leeds City Region Strategic Transport Plan and Leeds Bradford Corridor Strategic Framework will be key in moving transport schemes forward in the medium to long term. In addition the Council and Metro are committed to major schemes contained within the Local Transport Plan and smaller schemes such as the proposed improvements to the A647 HOV Lane.

It should be noted that the improvement to existing bus services in West Leeds does not preclude the upgrade and future conversion of the main bus corridors to an NGT rapid transit scheme should the funding become available. This aspiration was reflected in the consultation material used over the summer.

4.0 NGT Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC)

This document is the application to Department for Transport (DfT) for NGT Programme Entry status and was formally submitted on 30 October 2009. The Leeds City Council Executive Board approved a draft MSBC document at their meeting on 14 October 2009, confirming the Council’s commitment to the scheme and requirements for the local contribution towards the total scheme cost.

Programme Entry is the next step in the process for confirming funding for NGT which allows the Promoters to go forward to seek approval for the required powers to construct and operate the system. The Promoters have confirmed through this submission that they will fund the £27m local contribution. Programme Entry status is an indication that the Government regards the NGT proposals as value for money and are minded to provide the Regional major scheme funding allocation of £250m. The DfT has indicated that given the tight scheme programme it will endeavour to approve Programme Entry (if minded to do so), by the end of January 2010. The DfT has indicated that this quick turn-around should be achievable as a result of the detailed consultation and input that has taken place between the Promoters and DfT prior to MSBC submission.

The document fulfils DfT’s requirements for a MSBC submission. It sets out NGT’s:

- Strategic Case
- Value for Money Case
- Delivery Case
- Commercial Case

- Financial Case

The Strategic Case sets out the scheme context and includes a description of the problems and issues which NGT will help to resolve. It sets out the scheme objectives and describes how the Preferred Trolleybus Option was developed. The Strategic Case demonstrates that NGT will make a strong contribution to meeting national, regional and local policy objectives.

The Value for Money Case demonstrates the economic worth of the project. This includes a Cost Benefit Analysis which shows that with a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.6:1 the scheme represents strong value for money and will deliver a high level of benefit against the investment made. The scheme meets the Government's criteria for funding support.

The document concludes with a summary of the appraised NGT options outlining the many benefits of NGT and demonstrating the strong contribution that it will make to the future transport network in Leeds. It highlights the positive impact the scheme will have on encouraging modal shift and more sustainable travel, whilst helping to maximise the Leeds economy by enhancing its competitive position and facilitating future employment and population growth. Finally, the section highlights the contribution NGT will make to improving accessibility from some of the more deprived areas of Leeds to enable improved access to opportunities and an improved quality of life.

The costs input into the Business Case are based on the 'Design Freeze 2' consultation plans dating from July 09. However, the initial Limits of Deviation (extent of land required for works) for the Transport and Works Order submission have been drawn to give flexibility to the ongoing design modifications which will continue to be amended and refined up until and beyond the Transport and Works Act Order application next year.

5.0 Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)

The next stage in the process of securing powers, approval and full funding for the NGT scheme is the Transport and Works Act Order (1992) application. This package of plans and reports, in essence is similar to a large planning application, is submitted to the Local Planning Authority but then 'called in' by the Secretary of State.

The TWAO seeks to obtain the powers required to:

- compulsorily purchase land
- designate roads
- operate a trolleybus system
- procure the trolleybus vehicles and operate them
- deliver enforcement strategies including Traffic Regulation Orders and cameras
- remove trees and relocate utilities
- implement mitigation measures (to offset the negative impacts of the scheme)

In conjunction with the TWAO process the Promoters will be seeking:

- deemed planning consent for the whole scheme
- approval of the required Conservation Area and Listed Building applications

The deemed planning consent is comparable to an Outline planning consent with the principle of the extent of works (limits of deviation) approved, along with indicative proposals but with the very detailed measures conditioned. The responsibility of discharging these conditions then lies with the Local Planning Authority.

The TWAO package will contain among other items:

- formal request for the S.90 direction (deemed consent)
- consultation report
- proposed planning conditions
- various plans at different scales and detail
- Design Statement
- Transport Assessment
- full Environmental Statement including Sustainability Appraisal
- Planning Statement

The application will result in local advertisement, local notices and a 42 day period for members of the public and other interested parties to inspect the application and make representations to the Secretary of State, with the probability that these will then be referred to a public local inquiry. All documents will be made available to view at Leeds City Council / Metro offices with a version accessible on-line.

Prior to the TWAO submission further approval will be sought from the Leeds City Council Executive Board, following on from the current consultation with Ward Members and the public including the local Area Committees.

The current anticipated TWAO timetable is as follows:

- June 2010 – TWAO application made
- June to August 2010 – formal objection period
- January-February 2011 – Public Inquiry
- December 2011 – Secretary of State decision

6.0 Public Engagement on the proposed scheme

A two-stage approach to public engagement on the NGT project has been implemented. The first stage in late 2008 concentrated on high level issues. A more detailed consultation on specific scheme proposals ran for 12 weeks starting on 8th June this year.

The initial period 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.

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. This website is kept

up-to-date with project progress, key reports and future milestones including full reports from both consultations periods.

The summer 2009 consultation consisted of six public exhibitions each lasting two to four days across Leeds including evenings and Saturdays with nearly 1400 people attending. Information was also available on the internet, in libraries, to local groups and distributed to members of the public on-street. Nearly 19,000 consultation packs were distributed to the public and feedback was sought via a questionnaire which over 2,500 people completed. The questionnaire responses showed a positive reaction to the proposals and 77% of all respondents supported/strongly supported them. The main reasons for such support related to:

- Reduced car use/congestion;
- Environmental reasons;
- Provision of reliable/ quick/ good quality, modern public transport; and
- Positive impact of the scheme on Leeds.

A similar level of support was shown for the use of trolleybuses, which were primarily supported due to environmental reasons. Over 70% of all respondents supported/strongly supported the introduction of Park & Ride sites at the end of the North and South routes; such support was even higher amongst car owners. The feedback questionnaire asked about potential use of NGT and 88% of those living within a ten minute walk of one of the routes said they would consider using it. 42% of car owners responding said they would consider using one of the Park & Rides.

A number of comments and suggestions were received in relation to the NGT proposals. Common themes from all responses included the following:

- A desire for more NGT routes and wider coverage across Leeds;
- The need for low fares to encourage use;
- The need for competitive Park & Ride pricing to encourage car drivers;
- Concern about how NGT would integrate with existing bus services – some feel it is not necessary if existing services are improved; and
- The impact of the scheme on traffic, with some concerns that NGT would create additional congestion.

6.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

The scheme is in line with headline Council objectives set out in the Strategic Plan for 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 Regional Funding Allocation.

8.0 Recommendations

Area Committee Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report
- Provide any feedback on the consultation / objection management process
- Advise the Leeds City Council NGT Coordinator if further information or briefings are required