

Meeting: **JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND  
TRANSPORT**

Date: **23 MARCH 2012** Agenda item number:

From: **JOINT OFFICERS STEERING GROUP**

## **TRANSPORT ISSUES UPDATE**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To update the Committee on key transport issues for the Greater Nottingham area.

### **Consultation on Devolving Local Major Transport Schemes Decision Making**

2. On 31<sup>st</sup> January the Department for Transport (DfT) published a consultation document on proposals for a new model for local major transport scheme prioritisation and investment for the next Spending Review period (2015 to 2019). Currently Major Schemes (defined as over £5m) are subject to Government assessment and prioritisation based upon the submission of substantial business cases, prepared and funded at risk by the promoting local authority. Following the abolition of the regional bodies last year no mechanism for seeking a local view exists in this prioritisation process.
3. The Government intends the new system to ensure the best outcomes for economic development whilst meeting carbon reduction objectives, and transfer power to local communities enabling more responsive decision-making based on local economic conditions.
4. The proposals include:
  - The establishment of democratically accountable Local Transport Bodies involving Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) and local authorities which will be responsible for establishing a prioritised programme of schemes for investment;
  - A population based formula to allocate funding. This is the Government's preferred option; other potential options could include economic contribution in terms of employed earnings and some measure of transport need;
  - A locally led assessment process for prioritising schemes;
  - The removal of the £5million major scheme threshold.

5. Decisions on prioritising investment will be devolved to the Local Transport Bodies but the responsibility for delivery will remain with the promoting local authority. A number of models are proposed on how the LEPs could be involved ranging from advisory to full decision-making; this will need to be locally determined. The Local Transport Body will be responsible for deciding who holds the funding; this could be a single local authority, a number of authorities or the LEP itself.
6. Consortia of Local Transport Bodies comprising neighbouring LEPs could be established to manage decision-making across LEP boundaries for some larger major schemes, however this will be discretionary. Such schemes could potentially include locally important improvements to the trunk road network not included in the Highways Agency's programme with their approval.
7. Scheme assessment will still be recommended to follow the Transport Business Case Framework and be appraised in line with DfT's webTAG guidance on transport scheme appraisal and evaluation, but will be assessed locally to inform investment decisions. However, Local Transport Bodies can develop their own assessment framework, if sufficient robustness can be demonstrated, to deliver assurances equivalent to the Transport Business Case approach.
8. In return for devolution the Government will require assurances regarding effective governance arrangements, financial management, transparent decision-making and meeting value for money criteria. This could provide Transport Bodies with a high level of autonomy subject to demonstrating that appraisals are robust and value for money criteria are being met.
9. The consultation proposes the following timetable:

Consultation deadline on process	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2012
Publication of LEP area indicative allocations	August 2012
Submission of Local Transport Bodies' proposals for governance, financial management, accountability and meeting and testing value for money	December 2012
Local Transport Bodies agreed programme of prioritised schemes for delivery after 2015	April 2013
Major scheme business case preparation	2013 - 2015

## **City Deal**

10. Negotiations are continuing to take place with Government with regards unlocking barriers to growth through the City Deal process. Initiatives are being developed on a LEP wide, Core City and City Council basis as appropriate. Included in the Nottingham Deal are a number of transport asks including:

- Intercity rail: Midland Mainline speed up improvements and electrification: commitment to 'Nottingham in 90 minutes' outcome and further line straightening plus improved Core city connections with Birmingham and Leeds (LEP wide ask).
- Funding for Nottingham/Nottinghamshire Strategic Transit and Growth Plan Review: new partnership with Network Rail, Highways Agency, local transport providers and NET to develop new joint strategic sub-regional transport proposals to connect Core City, south Notts expansion sites, Nottingham East Midlands Airport, potential High Speed Rail station and other local communities (Core City ask).
- Local Transport Funding: enhanced funding for local transport which reflect the City Council's Growth plans - including new major infrastructure/programme to support development and growth opportunities (City Council ask).
- Further Quality Bus Partnership working: enhanced 'Better Bus Fund' Bid and better enforcement of quality standards (City Council ask).
- Increased Powers to manage traffic and tackle congestion: extended control over illegal traffic manoeuvres (eg ignoring banned turns/yellow boxes to improve traffic flow and public transport reliability (City Council ask).

11. It is expected that the Nottingham City Deal will be signed off by the end of April.

## **Local Sustainable Transport Fund update**

12. Progress with year one delivery of the £5 million Key Component elements of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund continues. Examples of early project delivery include:

- Kangaroo monthly season ticket product now available for multi operator tram, local train and bus travel.
- Targeted travel assistance for approximately 1,500 16 to 19 year old college students operational.
- Tender process to appoint organisation to operate pilot Community Smarter Travel Hub in Bulwell underway.

- Relaunch of Big Wheel Business Club travel planning resource tool targeted at employers to take place at Greater Nottingham Transport Forum event on 21<sup>st</sup> March.
  - Ucycle project being expanded to Further Education colleges.
13. The bid partnership submitted a Full Business Case for the £11 million Large Scale Bid on 20th December. An economic benefits assessment took place in January followed up by an assessment discussion in front of an expert panel in February. Announcements on successful bids are due to be announced in July 2012.

### **A453 (M1 to Nottingham) widening scheme**

14. The decision in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 29th November 2011 to accelerate the A453 for delivery has been welcomed by both businesses and commuters locally. The County Council offered the government £20 million contribution to bring the scheme forward and the campaign to widen the road gained support from the local business community and other local councils, including a pledge of £500,000 towards the scheme from Rushcliffe Borough Council last year.
15. The scheme is now awaiting the Secretary of State's decision on the Orders following the public inquiry. The Highways Agency advise that subject to a favourable decision from the Secretary of State on the Statutory Orders (which is expected imminently) then advanced site clearance and accommodation works will commence in Summer 2012 with the main civil engineering works set to commence in Winter 2012. The aim is to complete the improvement scheme in late 2014 / early 2015.

### **Nottingham Express Transit Phase Two**

16. The contract to build and operate the extended tram network to Clifton via Wilford and Chilwell via Beeston (NET Phase Two) and to take over the operation of the existing tramline (NET Line One) was let to Tramlink Nottingham on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Works commenced on site in early January 2012, with services on the new lines planned to start in late 2014.
17. The works to date have concentrated on site clearance, and particularly the felling of trees as this work needs to be carried out before the bird nesting period in the spring. Utility diversions commenced in mid February in a number of locations. Over 400 plots of land have been possessed in order to build the scheme.
18. Communications and marketing activity has been primarily focused on informing those who are immediately affected by the works. The City Council communications teams and the Concessionaire have been working

closely to plan and manage the long-term communications programme. This will help to reduce some of the current criticism that early works are taking place with short notice to local residents.

19. A new operating website for NET Phase Two has been launched ([www.thetram.net/PhaseTwo](http://www.thetram.net/PhaseTwo)) and further work is underway to build an interactive section to help communicate the construction of Phase Two. A number of drop-in sessions will take place in late February and in March at which an invitation to community groups to help establish neighbourhood liaison groups will go out. Further details can be found on the website.

### **Workplace Parking Levy update**

20. The City Council's Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 requiring all businesses to hold a WPL license without charge. Since January 2012 communications activities have been focused around encouraging employers to renew their licenses by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Targeted communications activities are also taking place aimed at those businesses using workplace parking places that aren't licensed.
21. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 charging for the Workplace Parking Levy will commence with organisations legally obliged to hold a valid WPL licence and make payments (if they hold 11 or more liable workplace parking places).

### **Recommendation**

22. It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report.

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