

Meeting:	JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
Date:	11 December 2020
From:	Joint Officer Steering Group

Transport Update

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the transport related issues across the Greater Nottingham conurbation. The report gives an update on the transport effects of the COVID – 19 crisis as well as information regarding the D2N2 Local Cycling and Walking Plan and recent funding awards.

2 BACKGROUND

Covid 19 Transport Update

In the August joint committee meeting it was reported that the city council had been monitoring the transport network to understand the effects of the restrictions on travel brought in to control the Covid 19 outbreak. This monitoring has continued over the autumn appendix 1 of this report contains a chart showing key events and how they have affected the transport network. Using the data collected during this period we can report the following:

- Over July, August and September traffic flows remained at around 85- 90% of their pre-Covid levels.
- Throughout this period Public Transport patronage grew slightly with Bus patronage peaking in mid to end of September at around 50% of pre-covid levels. This period also coincides with the return of School pupils and University students.
- Cycling remained above pre-covid levels throughout the summer and continues to peak at weekends.
- Restrictions started to be reintroduced at the end of September with pubs and restaurants closing at 10pm. Traffic flows started to fall at this point and have dipped to almost 50% of pre-covid level following the introduction of the recent lockdown in November.
- Tram and bus passenger numbers have also fallen to around 10% (tram) and 30% (bus) of normal levels
- East Midlands Rail are reporting passenger levels at between 15% and 20% of pre-covid levels.

D2N2 Local Cycling and Walking Plan

In 2017, as part of the Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS), Central Government called on all highway authorities in England to produce an LCWIP as a pipeline of cycling and walking infrastructure improvements. This is part of its long-term approach to developing comprehensive local cycling and walking. The D2N2 transport authorities decided to make a joint bid, primarily because the main capital funding source for cycling and sustainable transport over several years had been from the LEP's Local Growth Fund and which still might be source of funding. The partners considered it as a continuation of other cooperative successful bids such as the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Access Fund, Local Growth Fund and European Regional Development Fund. It was also felt it would help develop cross boundary routes. All four authorities are keen to enhance active travel, particularly in relation to tourism and the visitor economy.

The Plan is to be in three main parts:

- 1 - A network plan for cycling and walking identifying preferred routes;
- 2 - A prioritised program of infrastructure for future investment for a 10 to 15 year period – including a list of preliminary designed schemes, that whilst not “shovel ready” should have a robust cost estimate.
- 3 – An overarching report, which sets out the underlying analysis and provides a narrative, which supports the identified improvements. This should include how the LCWIP will be integrated into local policies and ensuring it supports the Strategic Economic Plan, with the investment in walking and cycling supporting jobs, growth, the visitor economy and housing. It should also promote cross boundary connectivity and improved air quality and health.

To reflect the diverse nature of the D2N2 area the partners decided to prioritise the cycling network and schemes based on three zones:

- i) Derby and Nottingham and urban connections
- ii) The Northern Urban Area (Chesterfield/Ashfield/Mansfield)
- iii) The remaining market towns and rural areas of the two counties

The initial draft D2N2 LCWIP was submitted to Department for Transport (DfT) by the end on November 2019 deadline. The DfT did not give any formal feedback, as our document was not complete. However, informally they told us that it was one of the better ones.

From December 2019 to July 2020 the partners and its nominated consultant undertook further work on the draft plan funded by Government and the partnership to improve the scoring system, produce an economic appraisal of the program and to improve the appearance of the document. Partners produced a short summary document for more general consumption and wider engagement. The key feature of the summary are the plans showing the top priority schemes for each of the three D2N2 zone. Each authority set out their top 5 priority schemes for the zones they have an interest in.

The economic appraisal gave a strong rate of return for the overall program - ‘high’ and ‘very high’ depending on inclusion of tourism benefits, with a maximum cost/benefit ratio of 8.

The draft final D2N2 LCWIP was submitted to DfT in August 2020 to support the Emergency Active Travel Fund tranche 2 bids by the four partners with a note that the document had still to be signed off politically.

The D2N2 LCWIP has been produced to be an evolving document. In the first instance, it will need to take on board input from LEP and relevant responses from stakeholder and the general after public consultation. (A report was taken to the LEP Place Board on the 9th December). The document will then be approved by each partners’ political bodies. It will be revised over time to reflect changing political, financial and social circumstances.

E-Scooter Launch

The City Council has launched a trial of an electric scooter hire scheme. More than 200 electric scooters will be available to hire in Nottingham as part of a 12-month trial which started at the end of October.

The City Council has partnered with Wind Mobility to provide the scheme. The scooters will be placed in on street location around the city and will be made available to rent on a short term “by the minute” basis via the use of a mobile phone App.

The aim of the scheme is to test the new form of transport to see how they will operate in practice and to see if the scooters could offer a practical new form of greener transport. As part of the Covid 19 response the Department for Transport (DfT) has made changes that allow the scooters to be used on public roads using the same road space as cyclists. These changes only apply to DfT approved areas. It will still be illegal to ride any other e-scooter on public roads.

A number of safeguards on the use of the scooter have also been put in place, including 'geo-fencing', which will restrict where e-scooters can be used, and will limit e-scooters to 4mph in pedestrianised areas in the city centre and Bulwell for the safety of riders and pedestrians. This technology also means the e-scooters won't operate outside Nottingham City Council boundaries and in other key locations, such as Old Market Square

Active Travel Fund

The Department for Transport recently announced allocations for Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund. Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund was initially announced in May 2020 and was intended to fund temporary schemes that enabled travelers to use active travel (cycling and walking) as an alternative to the car.

The City Council received £2.04m and the County Council have received £2.178m. These allocated funds are different to the amounts that were bid for originally. Therefore, a review of the Active Travel program will be required in both Authorities.

All schemes have been targeted in areas where we believe significant benefit can be derived in response to restart and recovery, as well as being deliverable within the timescales for ATF. We have also ensured that the schemes and measures put forward draw upon the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire elements of the D2N2 wide LCWIP, and complement the work we have begun to deliver through the Transforming Cities fund (TCF).

Clifton Bridge

Highways England contractors continue to work to repair Clifton Bridge. On Sunday the 8th November an additional lane was opened. The current arrangement is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1; Current Clifton Bridge Traffic Layout

Highways England have also reported that they intend to open a further lane in the coming months, however as a result of further investigations to the bridge structure the scope of the work to the structure has now widened. This now means that the work is likely to continue on the bridge until Autumn 2021.

Access East Midlands Airport

The County Council is awaiting the outcome of the Rural Mobility Fund bid which is due to be assessed in December 2020 which includes Improved service provision to EMA/SEGRO site. The County also continues to engage with the City on Transforming Cities proposals for improved service provision as well as working with SEGRO on the implementation of their Public Transport Strategy.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report be noted.

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