

# Transforming Cities Programme - Progress Update

## 1. Background

- 1.1. In November 2017, the Government launched a £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme. Focused on intra-city connectivity, the programme aims to improve productivity and prosperity through investment in sustainable transport, improving transport links and supporting local growth.
- 1.2. Nottingham and Derby City Councils were jointly successful in securing £8.3 million from Tranche 1 of the TCF to deliver 'quick win' measures, which supported the longer-term investments that would be delivered under Tranche 2 of the programme. Spend in Nottingham was approximately £7 million and included the upgrade of the Derby and Nottingham/Nottinghamshire Traffic Control Centre systems, which enabled the extensive programme of signal upgrades delivered in Tranche 2, alongside delivery of smart public transport payment systems and the upgrade of tram ticket machines, to enable contactless payments and the purchase of the Robin Hood multi-operator tickets via smart phones, strengthening the smart ticketing elements in Tranche 2. Tranche 1 funding also supported the delivery of initial phases of investment in real-time information screen upgrades, electric vehicle charge point installation and active travel improvements.
- 1.3. Following submission of a Strategic Outline Business Case in November 2019, the Councils were also successful in securing £161 million from Tranche 2. The Nottingham/Derby submission was the only bid to receive the full amount requested from the Department for Transport (DfT). The main TCF programme focused on four key themes: City Centre Connectivity (focused on rail/bus stations, public realm and interchange facilities), Strategic Nottingham-Derby-East Midlands Airport connectivity (bus and active travel), and separate Nottingham and Derby urban growth corridors (wide-ranging packages of sustainable transport measures).
- 1.4. Delivery of the main programme was approved at Executive Board in June 2020, with works commencing on site shortly after. The Nottingham programme initially comprised of 35 different projects, including:
  - Extensive areas of city centre public realm in the Broad Marsh area and improvements to routes linking to Nottingham Station, as well as a new East-West, fully segregated, cross-city centre cycle route.
  - A large public transport package, including bus priority at key junctions, new bus lanes, upgrading of bus stations, hospital roadworks to accommodate larger buses, renewal of real-time information, supporting the rollout of contactless ticketing and increasing the number of parking spaces at tram park and ride sites.
  - An active travel package, including cycle corridor improvements and upgrading cycle links between Nottingham, Derby and the East Midlands Airport growth area, infrastructure to support new public e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes, cycle parks and a new bridge over the River Trent.
  - The expansion of the D2N2 electric vehicle charge point network and Workplace Travel Service sustainable transport grants for employers.

## **2. Programme Changes and DfT Assurance Process**

- 2.1. There have been a number of challenges associated with the delivery of the TCF programme, including impacts from the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which had a significant impact on material supply, energy and construction costs, as well as delivery timescales. This resulted in the need to review some of the proposals that were originally approved by the Executive Board.
- 2.2. The original TCF bid included car park expansions at the Hucknall and Phoenix Park tram terminals, with a combined increase of 800 spaces. The Covid pandemic, however, significantly impacted on the use of public transport, with changes to working patterns and a greater uptake of hybrid working resulting in people commuting less frequently, reducing the overall demand for park and ride. It was therefore agreed with the DfT to remove these projects from the programme, allowing the reallocation of funding to other projects where delivery costs had increased.
- 2.3. The original programme also included improvements to cycle connections between Nottingham and Derby along the A6005 and A453 corridors towards East Midlands Airport. Following some initial development work, Nottinghamshire County Council determined that improvements could not be delivered in their area within suitable timescales. It was therefore agreed with the DfT to remove both of these routes from the programme. The budget was redistributed to deliver additional phases of active travel schemes already within the programme, and to provide additional contingency for the programme as a whole.
- 2.4. The TCF programme was originally due to finish in March 2023, however, due to some of the pressures stated above, the DfT commissioned a national independent assurance review across all the TCF delivery areas. The review was undertaken between January and April 2023, with the programme team providing evidence setting out key issues, delivery confidence and the management approach to the programme. Following this review, the DfT confirmed that the programme had formally been extended through to March 2024 and the programme was divided into sub-tranches based on delivery confidence:
  - Sub-Tranche A: schemes that were complete or nearing completion
  - Sub-Tranche B: projects with a high level of delivery confidence for completion by March 2024
  - Sub-Tranche C: projects that will run beyond the March 2024 deadline and required ongoing monitoring
- 2.5. The DfT continued to support the development of the projects in Sub-Tranche C, however, these were subject to an independent assurance Gateway Review to ensure the projects continued to demonstrate value for money, affordability, commercial viability and deliverability. There were three schemes in the Nottingham programme that were taken through this process – Wigman Road/Beechdale Road cycle corridor improvements, Thane Road bus lane

and the new Waterside pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Trent. Following completion of these reviews, the DfT confirmed their ongoing support for all three schemes, subject to good progress on delivery continuing to be maintained.

### **3. Overview of Progress**

- 3.1. Following the above changes, the Nottingham City-led programme was revised to 33 projects, with a total allocation of £92.6 million. To the end of August 2024, £71.1 million of the city's grant allocation has been spent and a further £3.8 million contractually committed, with 21 schemes within the programme having been completed so far. The programme is now in the final year for the majority of works, with many benefits already being delivered.
- 3.2. In the city centre, the investment has led to a much-improved environment around Nottingham Castle, the Broad Marsh area and Carrington Street, where 18,850 square meters of public realm enhancements have been delivered. This includes the newly opened Green Heart area linking Collin Street and Lister Gate, Collin Street itself including a new play area outside the new Central Library and Sussex Street improvements adjacent to the new Nottingham College. The footways on Trent Street leading to Nottingham Station have also been upgraded, as well as a new area of public realm created on Queensbridge Road.
- 3.3. The Broad Marsh area is now also connected by a brand-new segregated, East-West cross-city centre cycle route between Castle Boulevard, via the Island Site through to Manvers Street and Daleside Road. Additional segregated sections on Station Street and London Road provide further connecting links to and from the Station and the Lace Market area.
- 3.4. Bus passengers have benefited from 62 junction upgrades along the A610, A60, A609 and A453 corridors with new smart technology sensors, which can react to traffic levels and help late-running buses move more quickly through the network. Bus reliability has been further enhanced through a new 0.3km bus lane on the A610 at Cinderhill Island. Bus users have also benefited from resurfacing at Victoria Centre Bus Station and the complete redesign of Bulwell Bus Station, making the site more accessible for those with different mobility needs alongside improved efficiency for bus operators. The design incorporates energy efficient passenger waiting facilities and solar-powered bus shelter lighting, reducing both operating costs and carbon emissions.
- 3.5. In terms of ticketing, the programme has furthered the delivery of Nottingham Contactless, which is the first Oyster-style contactless, multi-operator ticketing system in the country outside of London. This has included the upgrading of 118 tram stop ticket machines. The programme also enabled provision of new Robin Hood fare products on mobile phones to support a variety of journey choices, including more variety of 'pay as you go' options.
- 3.6. A comprehensive upgrade of the Nottingham-Derby real-time information back-office system has been delivered, along with the replacement of old

hardware and installation of 285 new colour bus stop displays in the city centre and along main bus corridors within the city boundary, which is also being extended to the main corridors in Greater Nottingham, where a further 262 screens have recently been installed.

- 3.7. For active travel, in addition to the city centre, corridor improvements have been constructed along Hucknall Road and Carlton Road – along with other connections to the Ring Road, Nottingham Trent University Clifton Campus and the National Cycle Network. These have delivered users with protected space on busy road corridors and improved access to major employers, including the City Hospital and onward connections to the city centre.
- 3.8. Off-road, multi-user paths have been upgraded within Colwick Park, Woodthorpe Park and the Embankment to make them accessible all year round to walkers, cyclists, scooters, wheelchair and pushchair users travelling within and through these green spaces. In total, over 30km of paths and cycle routes have been upgraded. To support public e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes, over 200 new parking corrals have been installed. A new smart phone entry system for 20 cycle parks across the city, with lighting and CCTV, has been installed to improve security. A huge mural has also been painted onto the walls of the new Broad Marsh cycle park to brighten up the space.
- 3.9. Over 120 new D2N2 network electric vehicle charge points have been installed, including new charging hubs with solar canopies and battery storage at the Clifton and Toton Lane tram terminals, and on Trowell Road. In total, 81 of the charge points (powered by 720 solar panels) were installed in the new Broad Marsh multi-storey car park, a new charging hub was put in on University Boulevard and the first 150Kw super-rapid charger installed on Castle Boulevard.
- 3.10. Grants of up to £25,000 for sustainable transport infrastructure to employers has been delivered through the Workplace Travel Service. This has delivered green travel measures such as electric vehicle charging points, bike shelters, changing facilities and pool bikes at sites across the city. A total of 87 grants to employers have been awarded.

#### **4. Remaining Programme Delivery**

- 4.1. Delivery of the schemes in Sub-Tranche B are largely complete, however, there are eight schemes where some elements are still to be finished. Five are due for completion imminently – these are the real-time back-office system and screen installation scheme, the final phase of the strategic cycle links, and the last phase of installations for the cycle hire corrals and Hucknall Road/Arnold Road junction improvements. Three further schemes are scheduled to complete in quarter 3 – the final phase of Queens Drive cycle corridor was postponed due to nesting birds, and campus road improvements at the City Hospital and new electric vehicle charge points are awaiting installation at Bulwell Station.

- 4.2. Of the three schemes included in Sub-Tranche C, works to deliver the segregated cycleway on Beechdale Road and Hollington Road are nearing completion. This involves the construction of 2.8km of segregated cycle track and the removal of the central refuge. Significant improvements to the Beechdale/Ring Road junction are also being made. Delivery of the Thane Road bus lane scheme has been split into two phases. The first phase was to reconfigure the Thane Road junction with Abbeyfield Road and Lenton Lane to improve traffic flow, which was completed in July. The second phase of works will deliver a 0.7km eastbound bus and the upgrading of the existing cycle lane on Thane Road, including the re-siting of street lighting columns.
- 4.3. The final scheme is the new Waterside pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Trent. Balfour Beatty have been appointed as the main contractor and have progressed design work, environmental surveys and securing of Planning Permission. The next steps are for a report to the Executive Board to progress entering into the construction contract to allow works to start in early 2025.