



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Cate Jockel,
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Report of: Edward Highfield
Report to: Councillor Jack Scott
Date of Decision: 30th August 2017
Subject: Bus Hotspots scheme on Handsworth Road adjacent to Asda

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:- Yes No N

- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000 N
- Affects 2 or more Wards N

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? - Transport and Sustainability

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? - Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes Y No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? - EIA1019 which covers the Bus Hotspots programme

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No N

Purpose of Report:

To approve implementation of a 'bus hotspot' highway scheme on Handsworth Road adjacent to Asda in order to improve bus reliability as well as general traffic flow.

The report sets out the background to the scheme, consultation comments, modelling of bus and traffic benefits, as well as some additional work which will be progressed separately.

Recommendations:

That the scheme be implemented.

Background Papers: none.

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Julie Curry – 12/07/17
	Legal: Richard Cannon – 11/07/17 Equalities: Annemarie Johnston – 11/07/17
2	EMT member who approved submission: Laraine Manley
3	Cabinet Member consulted: Councillor Jack Scott
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: Cate Jockel Job Title: Senior Transport Planner
	Date: 25/08/17

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 **Background:** the proposed scheme is part of the Sheffield Bus Hotspots programme funded by Better Bus Area (BBA) funds (held by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) for Sheffield). The schemes in this programme aim to improve bus journey times and their reliability. The location of this scheme, on Handsworth Road, is part of the 'Woodhouse Key Bus Route', served by the 52/52A bus, one of the main cross-city routes.

- 1.2 **Issue:** all traffic is delayed at this location where two lanes of traffic along Handsworth Road meets traffic out of Richmond Park Road and is then immediately squeezed into one lane when there is a bus at bus stop 22747 – which is on-street and very well-used. The stop is located just before the Asda junction signal controlled stop line so this reduces the capacity of the road across that stop line. Delays continue through to the Parkway roundabout and it is not possible, with the existing layout of junctions, to use the traffic signals to pick up and boost late-running buses. Bus journey time is variable (between this stop and the next) - during much of the day, it varies between 25 and 100 seconds, but significant numbers of journeys take much longer, some up to 11 minutes. A similar pattern will apply to all traffic.

- 1.3 **Proposal:** the scheme that has been developed to reduce delay to buses on the 52 bus route and help general traffic involves moving the bus stop

to the other side of the Asda junction into a new semi lay-by which will accommodate two buses. This will make sure that two running lanes are available at all times along Handsworth Road between Richmond Park Road and the Parkway junction and also, crucially for buses, allows bus calls to the signals at the two junctions (Richmond Park Road and Asda access road) using real-time detection, to help buses to move into the correct lane when moving off from the stop. See Plan at Appendix A.

- 1.4 Modelling of scheme benefits: traffic modelling has been carried out to assess the improvement to bus journey times at morning and afternoon peaks – this showed benefits from the scheme throughout the day but particularly in the afternoon peak. As expected, in the morning peak, the extent of benefit depends on the queueing back from the Parkway junction. In the afternoon peak, the modelling shows an average reduction in bus journey times of around 1 minute 20 seconds with similar average reductions in journey time for general traffic.
- 1.5 Morning peak: Urban Traffic Control officers have consistently observed that significant numbers of drivers avoid queueing on the Parkway by “slipping” off the Parkway and then immediately back on at this junction. This reduces the gaps on the roundabout for Handsworth Road traffic, without any benefit to the Parkway overall. This behaviour was also raised by members of the public during the scheme consultation as something that should be tackled. As a result, some additional traffic modelling was carried out to assess the impact of a set of part-time signals on the Parkway south-westbound exit slip. This showed that significant improvement in morning peak journey times on Handsworth Road was possible with this additional measure, so that will be progressed as a separate scheme.
- 1.6 Summary: the recommendation is to implement the consulted scheme. This is to proceed as quickly as possible so that it can tie in with the Streets Ahead Core Investment Programme for highway maintenance over summer/autumn 2017 and so limit disruption.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 Schemes which improve bus reliability, especially along Key Bus Routes which carry the most frequent buses and the highest numbers of passengers, improve the reliability of access to jobs, education, training and all other facilities. This will also apply to general traffic too. This Key Bus Route has previously seen a project to improve all bus stops to enable people with mobility difficulties to get on and off more easily, so measures to improve bus reliability along this route will have social inclusion benefits too.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Consultation: many people travel along this part of Handsworth Road and this bus stop is also well-used. Consultation was carried out in April/May 2017 with large signs erected on-site to direct people to a scheme page on the Council's website. Information was also put up at the existing bus stop so that passengers who use the stop were aware of the proposal.
- 3.2 Frontage: the only frontage directly affected is Asda which was contacted directly and a site meeting held. The new setting for the bus shelter requires legal agreement with Asda: this is progressing positively.
- 3.3 Consultation summary: 24 responses were received during the consultation, 19 in support (some very strongly), 2 neutral and 3 not in support. Those in support included Councillor Rooney. A full summary of the responses is attached, together with officer comments, as Appendix B. Subsequently Councillor Wood has also expressed support.
- 3.4 Pedestrian issue: Clive Betts MP has raised concern about the additional pedestrians who will need to cross the three legs of the Asda entrance/exit to get to the bus stop. The need to cross here if coming from the direction of Richmond Park Road – as well as having a longer walk - was also raised by two of the respondents to the consultation. There are pluses and minuses in this respect as people living on the Oakley Road side of Handsworth Road will have a slightly shorter and more direct route. All these crossings already incorporate controlled pedestrian facilities.
- 3.5 Scheme monitoring: all substantial highway schemes are the subject of a Road Safety Audit shortly after construction (Stage 3) and again (Stage 4) after they have been in operation for over a year. Officers will ensure this includes looking at any accident reports for the Asda junction.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Overall there are no significant differential, positive or negative, equality impacts. The project is a general traffic management schemes which gives some priority to buses over other traffic. There is a minor positive impact on all who use public transport, but particularly on those groups which disproportionately use public transport.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 Capital: this scheme is funded by Better Bus Area (BBA) funding (2012-2017) granted by the Department for Transport to SYPT for schemes to improve bus reliability in Sheffield.
- 4.2.2 Revenue: the commuted sum estimate for future maintenance is £493.88. This has been provided by the City Council's New Works team and is subject to agreement with Amey and any final design amendments prior to issuing the scheme for construction. This will be funded from LTP funding for Bus Hotspots.

4.2.3 As stated at para 1.6, the recommendation is to implement the consulted scheme as quickly as possible to tie in with the Streets Ahead Core Investment Programme (CIP) for highway maintenance in summer/autumn this year – and this has been agreed with CIP officers. The priced Bill from Amey of £202,080 for Works (which includes traffic management) has been put together on the assumption that the scheme will not be ready to tie into the CIP, so is a worst-case scenario and includes some milling, resurfacing and Traffic Management costs which would not be incurred if the scheme were ready to tie in with the pre-CIP window of opportunity. In addition, there are Statutory Utility costs of £5,600. The Full Business Case was approved to progress to construction by the TNC Transport Sub-Board on 10/07/17 with final sign-off and Contract Award to follow on from a revised priced Bill.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The City Council, as Highway Authority for Sheffield, has powers under Part V of the Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to implement the improvements requested in this report. In making its decision the Council must also be satisfied that the approved scheme will secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians). Provided the Council is so satisfied, it is acting lawfully and within its powers.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 Setting the new bus shelter within land at the back of the footpath requires agreement with Asda: this is progressing and does not affect the delivery of the carriageway work.

4.4.2 Works will be carried out between 1900 and 0700 and should tie in with CIP works (see above) to minimise disruption.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Do nothing option: would not improve the existing situation.

5.2 An alternative option which involved constructing a bigger lay-by, with more land from Asda and a retaining wall, was considered. It also involved moving a BT box at an estimated (Stage C3) cost of around £70K. It was not progressed as it was not considered to be value for money.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The scheme will reduce delay and journey time variability for buses and all traffic. Schemes which improve bus reliability, especially along Key Bus Routes such as this one, improve access to jobs, education, training and all other facilities.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix A – scheme plan
Appendix B – summary of consultation responses.