PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on recent progress in respect of the Salford - Bolton Network Improvement Programme and Bus Priority Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the progress which has been made on the Bus Priority schemes in recent months.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10 February 2017, 21 April 2017, 1 September 2017 and 1 December 2017.

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Salford – Bolton Network Improvement Programme and the Bus Priority Programme (Cross City Bus and Busway).

1.2 This follows on from the last update in relation to these initiatives that was provided to this Sub-Committee in December 2017.

2. Salford – Bolton Network Improvements (SBNI)

2.1 Work has continued in conjunction with local authority partners Bolton Council (BMBC) and Salford City Council (SCC), in relation to a number of proposed bus priority / traffic management and pedestrian and cycling improvement schemes which are being promoted as part of the Salford – Bolton Network Improvements Programme (SBNI). SBNI involves the introduction of 11 packages of local network interventions within Salford and Bolton focussed on the following primary objectives:

- Strengthening links within and links in and out of the area to high employment / health / education and leisure locations (with emphasis on employment);
- Supporting the economic vitality of the district centres of Farnworth, Walkden, Swinton and Pendleton;
- Promoting active, healthy lifestyles and making active sustainable travel safer and easier to use and an attractive alternative to the private car; and
- Substantially improving the punctuality, regularity and reliability of bus services operating through the defined study area, and help to enhance highway network performance where possible.

2.2 Conditional Approval of the SBNI Programme Business Case was awarded in February 2016 in line with the governance arrangements for the Local Growth Deal agreed both locally and with Government.

2.3 In Bolton there are six scheme Delivery Packages. Following Conditional Approval, the following junction improvement schemes in Bolton have been completed: Delivery Package 1: Raikes Lane; Delivery Package 2 (Phase 2a): Green Lane/Manchester Road; and Delivery Package 3: Higher Market Street / Longcauseway. All of these schemes have improved vehicle capacity and passenger journey times through the junctions and have also enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities.

2.4 Work has also progressed on Delivery Package 2b: Loxham Street / Egerton Street / Manchester Road. This scheme involves an upgrade of the Loxham Street / Manchester Road (A575) junction which has now been
completed and improvements to the Egerton Street / Bolton Road (A6053) junction. The works will address congestion and safety issues as well as significantly enhancing pedestrian and cyclist facilities. The completion of the Egerton Street works has been delayed due to the collapse of the Network Rail bridge at Moses Gate station in August 2017. It had originally been intended that the junction works in this location would be completed by the end of 2017, however, it is now anticipated that the works will not be completed until later this spring, following the completion of Network Rail’s repair works.

2.5 In regard to Delivery Package 7: Bus Stop upgrades. BMBC has now completed all of these works with the exception of the introduction of bus stop clearway markings and signs. Consultation on these markings has been undertaken by BMBC and it is anticipated that the outstanding works will be completed later this spring.

2.6 Delivery Package 4: Farnworth Bus Station and Farnworth Town Centre received Full Approval in January 2018. The town centre works on Market Street and King Street are being delivered by the Council, in parallel with the bus station scheme. Following a competitive tender exercise, the contract for the town centre measures has been awarded to George Cox and Sons Ltd and works are anticipated to be completed in summer 2018.

2.7 In addition, Bolton Council is undertaking urban realm improvement works on Brackley Street which are also anticipated to be completed in 2018. Together with the SBNI improvement works, the combined redevelopment represents a significant investment in Farnworth Town Centre.

2.8 The remaining Bolton scheme, Delivery Package 6, will focus on improvements along, and in the vicinity of the A666 corridor. The scope of this Delivery Package is currently under review, with a view to identify the optimum level of network improvements that could be provided in this area.

2.9 TfGM and BMBC are currently exploring options to utilise savings achieved on the delivery of Bolton SBNI schemes to date in order to bring the Council’s priority reserve scheme, Delivery Package 5: Manchester Road Gateway scheme back into scope. Initial design development activities continue to be undertaken to understand the proposed benefits of the scheme before formal approval is sought to progress detailed design activities. This includes taking cognisance of the recent changes to the highway layout in Bolton town centre associated with the delivery of Bolton Interchange.

2.10 All of these works are being delivered by BMBC as the local highway authority.

2.11 In Salford, there are five scheme Delivery Packages. The first involves a range of relatively minor traffic management and highway proposals within Walkden and Pendleton. This includes three junction improvements at Manchester Road East / Hilton Lane, Eccles Old Road / Langworthy Road
and Seedley Road / Langworthy Road; bus stop enhancements; and the improvement of the public realm and pedestrian environment in the vicinity of Walkden railway station. Work commenced on the construction of these schemes in June 2017, was overseen and managed by TfGM and SCC’s Delivery Agent, Urban Vision and was completed in November 2017.

2.12 The remaining delivery packages include proposals for the A6 through Walkden and Swinton; along the A666; and within Pendleton town centre. These initiatives are currently progressing through design and development. This work is being progressed in partnership with SCC and on completion of the development phase, each of the individual schemes will be subject to consultation and community engagement in advance of progressing with any required powers and consents and moving into construction.

2.13 Elected Member briefings on the remaining Delivery Packages will take place over the coming months as the schemes are developed in sufficient detail. Given that the schemes being developed for Pendleton town centre, the A6 through Walkden and Swinton and the A666 are in relatively close proximity to each other, there will be a need for careful coordination of the delivery of the works in order to minimise any disruption during construction.

2.14 Works to upgrade a selection of bus stops within the Salford programme area will take place as part of Delivery Package 5 and, subject to Salford City Council approvals, works are due to start on this Delivery Package in summer 2018.

2.15 Work on the construction of the A6 and A666 interventions is expected to commence in late 2018 with the Pendleton town centre scheme to follow, subject to securing the necessary powers and consents.

2.16 An update on the bus operations and passenger waiting facility proposals for both Farnworth and Pendleton town centres is included within the wider Interchange Programme Update report also included on this meetings’ agenda.

2.17 Further updates in relation to the above schemes will be brought to this Sub-Committee in due course.

3. Cross City Bus Package Current Position and Recent Progress

3.1 Since the last update to this sub-committee on 1 December 2017, the following works have been carried out associated with the Cross City Bus Programme:

- Snagging to remedy defects identified upon completion of the main physical works on Oxford Road;
- A new yellow box at the junction of London Road / Ducie Street, as part of the Regional Centre scheme, and;

- Traffic signal improvements, including a new right turn lane on London Road / Fairfield Street to help ease congestion and improve bus journey times and reliability.

3.2 There are a small number of snagging items and defects remaining on Oxford Road, the majority of these items have been completed by MCC and the remaining few are expected to be completed during the next few months by the Council.

3.3 Due to multiple third party developments, there are small areas of the Oxford Road corridor which will remain incomplete within the core Bus Priority Programme timescales. The areas affected include the final footway surfacing outside the Circle Square and Mable Tylecote re-development sites, as well as the segregated cycle lane adjacent to the University of Manchester Business School redevelopment. It has been agreed that these residual works will be completed by the respective third party developers through a series of Section 278 Agreements between MCC and the third party developers.

3.4 With regard to the enforcement of the bus priority measures, work will continue with key stakeholders to re-enforce messages to all users of the corridor and any lessons learned will be picked up as part of the wider programme evaluation and monitoring exercise that will be completed over the next few years.

3.5 In the Regional Centre, further improvement measures have been completed at the junction of London Road / Fairfield Street and Major Street / Princess Street, in conjunction with Manchester City Council (MCC), to ease the levels of congestion experienced at peak times at these junctions. The works at London Road/Fairfield Street have involved the reconfiguration of traffic islands and traffic lanes to facilitate the introduction of a dedicated right turn lane from London Road into Fairfield Street. The works also included upgraded pedestrian crossings including the provision of new countdown timers.

3.6 In addition, works will be progressed over the coming months to further improve traffic flow, and in particular bus flows to and from the Parker Street bus station, at the junction of Portland Street and Charlotte Street. These works will be progressed in conjunction with MCC and delivered over the summer to minimise the impact upon bus operations.

3.7 Monitoring and evaluation of the Cross City Bus Package has commenced now the overall Bus Priority Programme is complete. A series of activities relating to the Cross City Bus Priority Programme has been planned and an early findings report is due to be issued in summer 2018.
4. **The Busway Scheme Current Position and Recent Progress**

4.1 The Busway service (V1 & V2) between Leigh, Atherton, Tyldesley, Salford and Manchester was officially launched on 3 April 2016. All V1 and V2 services operate at a frequency of 8 buses per hour during the daytime via Princess Street and Oxford Road to the Central Manchester Hospital site.

4.2 In its first full year the Busway carried in excess of 2.1 million passengers, a significantly higher level than had been originally envisaged. In its second year of operation this figure has been exceeded by around 0.5 million passengers, with total passengers reaching approximately 2.6 million, as the service has continued to go from strength to strength. The current demand for the service being approximately 55,000 passenger journeys per week. In the weeks running up to Christmas 2017 passenger demand regularly exceeded 60,000 passengers per week.

4.3 Park and Ride facilities along the Busway continue to be well used and are often full. TfGM is in the process of implementing an enforcement regime to prevent the Park and Ride sites being used by non-Busway users. While not full, demand at the A580 Park & Ride site continues to increase. The feasibility of additional Park & Ride sites continues to be investigated with local authority partners.

4.4 TfGM continues to work with the main contractor for the guided busway to rectify a small number of residual construction issues whilst minimising operational disruption. In this regard it is planned that some of the final remedial works will be undertaken during April and these works will necessitate the full closure of the Busway for one weekend and potentially a closure of a short length of the Busway between Astley Street and Sale Lane for three following consecutive weekends. Services will continue to operate during these periods of closure using the highway and pre-planned alternative stopping arrangements. In advance of the closures posters will be placed at stops and Passenger Information Displays will be updated to give Busway users sufficient notice of changes to their service.

5. **Recommendations**

5.1 Please see front sheet of report.

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