

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION/INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Capital Projects
DATE: 2nd July 2010
SUBJECT: Results of the Cross City Bus Consultations
REPORT OF: Interim Bus and Rail Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform Members of the results of the 12-week public consultation undertaken on the Cross City Bus Package and endorse the proposed amendments to the scheme;

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the proposed changes to the scheme, made as a result of the public consultation exercise, are noted.
2. It is recommended that approval be given to GMPTE, in conjunction with officers from Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, to continue to develop the Cross City Bus Package proposals as far as possible within revised Government Major Scheme guidance, and funding constraints to move the scheme towards Full Approval.
3. The Committee is asked to note that further mini-consultations on the proposals within Manchester are being carried out to enable further comments to be made by the public prior to further Traffic Regulation Orders being advertised.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Report to Policy and Resources Committee dated 20 November 2009, entitled Greater Manchester Transport Fund – Delivery Programme Update.

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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report details the findings of the public consultation exercise on the proposed Cross City Bus Package which was undertaken between 2nd October and 24th December 2009. The scheme is designed to implement bus priority measures that would enable bus operators to provide cross-city bus services across Manchester city centre. This will open up significantly improved opportunities for access to employment and services, in particular the education and healthcare opportunities afforded in the Oxford Road area.
- 1.2 The proposals will create the potential to run cross-city services using three of Greater Manchester's busiest bus corridors:
 - Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road – from Parrs Wood in Didsbury to Manchester City Centre.
 - East Lancashire Road (A580) – from the Boothstown area just past the M60 junction to Manchester City Centre
 - Manchester New Road/Rochdale Road (A664) – from Middleton to Manchester City Centre.
- 1.3 In addition to these corridors, the proposals include a series of bus priority measures in Manchester City Centre itself, designed to enable bus services to travel between the three corridors above as quickly and efficiently as possible with reliable journey times. GMPT, bus operators and highway authorities are all of the view that this reliability of operation, throughout the day, is critical to ensuring that high quality bus services are able to operate on cross-city routes.
- 1.4 The scheme is being promoted as part of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund and developed by Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, in partnership with the relevant highway authorities; namely Manchester City Council, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council and Salford City Council. The consultation was designed and delivered by specialist independent consultants, who were commissioned by GMPT.
- 1.5 Programme Entry was achieved in March 2010, to be followed by a Conditional / Full Approval submission in summer 2010. Further to the announcement of the Government spending review this will be deferred until at least October 2010.
- 1.6 The consultation was carried out during the twelve week period prior to Christmas with a further four week period until 22nd January being utilised to allow local MP's and Ward Councillors to make further representations on behalf of their constituents. The consultation engaged with local residents, businesses and road users with 74,281 brochures being delivered to properties within 400m of the Cross City

Bus Package routes. 1898 responses were received, detailing the public's issues, views and priorities for improvement.

2 THE CONSULTATION

2.1 The aims of the consultation were to:

- Raise public awareness of the proposals
- Give information on the proposals
- Provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment on the proposals
- Identify areas where there were likely to be pockets of objection
- Yield information from local knowledge that would usefully inform the final design of the scheme

2.2 The consultation was designed with reference to the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation (Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008) with the aim of engaging with as wide a spectrum of local interests and stakeholders as possible. With this in mind, a range of communication media was used and these are detailed in the Appendix 1 to this report.

2.3 Results

2.4 1,600 feedback forms and online questionnaires were completed and returned to GMPTE. A further 151 emails, 87 letters and 60 text message responses were also received. The consultation website received a total of 20,670 page views from 4,894 visitors during the 12-week consultation period.

2.5 The total of 1,898 feedback forms, emails, letters and text messages represents a robust number and provides a firm basis for drawing conclusions from the consultation and formulating potential amendments to the scheme. Overall it corresponds to a response rate of approximately 2.5%, which is similar to previous bus priority consultations that GMPTE has carried out.

2.6 The total of 1,898 feedback forms, emails, letters and text messages yielded 2,295 individual 'comments' which have been analysed and are informing the detailed design of the proposals.

2.7 In terms of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the results indicated:

- 97% of respondents lived close to the route. 3% owned a business close to the route

- An approximately equal gender balance was evident amongst respondents
- A significant number of responses were received from all age groups. However, more responses were received from older people, with 32.7% of respondents aged over 60, and 56.6% over 45.
- The majority of respondents (56.1%) indicated that the bus was their most commonly used mode of transport along the affected routes
- Most respondents stated that their most common reason for travelling along the route to be either travelling to work (37.5%), accessing district/city shopping and leisure facilities (27.7%) or accessing shops, businesses and amenities along the route (18.2%)
- 1,511 of the 1,600 feedback form respondents indicated which of the four affected routes they used most frequently. Approximately half of these (49.4%) indicated that they most frequently used the Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road corridor. The remaining 50.6% was split approximately equally between Manchester City Centre (19.0%), A580/A6 (17.4%) and A664 (14.2%).

2.8 Of the 2,295 individual comments, 1,024 concerned specific locations along the routes. These can be broken down between the four routes as follows:

- 107 comments were made along Manchester New Road/Rochdale Road (A664)
- 586 comments were made about Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road
- 148 comments were made along East Lancashire Road (A580)
- 183 comments were made about a number of locations within Manchester city centre

The broad themes arising from the consultation overall were:

- Concern over existing levels of congestion. **184 comments.**
- Specifically supporting the overall scheme. **98 comments.**
- Lack of existing bus services. **81 comments.**
- Concerns over parking issues along the routes. **79 comments.**
- Issues over the interaction between buses and cyclists along the dedicated cycle lane on Oxford Rd. **34 comments.**
- Outright opposition to the scheme. **21 comments.**
- Concerns about the negative impact of vehicles 'rat running' through residential areas. **13 comments.**

In addition to the direct consultation responses, 95 responses were received via Graham Stringer MP saying: 'I am very concerned about the Cross City Travel Proposals and believe that the consultation period should be extended for two months and that full traffic impact assessments should be carried out on every community that is likely to be affected by the proposals'. A further ten letters were received through Graham Stringer's constituency office dealing mainly with the consultation period and the potential for rat-running.

The number and spread of responses demonstrated that the consultation process was effective in communicating the proposals across the affected areas. As the public consultation was designed in accordance with the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation it was not appropriate to extend the public consultation beyond the twelve week period. The points made in the ten letters have been taken into account in the ongoing design development of the scheme and are the subject of further public consultations.

The route specific comments are considered in more detail below.

Manchester New Road/Rochdale Road (A664)

- 2.9 Of those 107 comments made about specific locations on the A664 route, the majority (96) were concerned with locations north of the Factory Lane/Moston Lane junction. A large proportion of these referred to concerns regarding potential congestion and loss of parking.
- 2.10 Representations were also received from Graham Stringer, MP for Manchester Blackley, regarding a number of concerns he holds about the proposals on Rochdale Road. These centred on concerns regarding loss of parking, the potential diversion of traffic to parallel residential streets and the regulatory arrangements for bus services. Mr Stringer also forwarded around 200 pro-forma style responses slips from his constituents expressing similar concerns. The Executive has engaged in separate correspondence with Mr Stringer with a view to addressing these concerns.

Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road

- 2.11 Of those 586 comments concerning the Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road route, the majority focused on specific issues on Oxford Road (196 comments) or in Rusholme (178 comments). These most commonly highlighted specific junction locations and roads that respondents felt would need to be considered, traffic flow/congestion issues and safety measures for cyclists.
- 2.12 The proposals for a bus lane between Cotton Lane and Palatine Road in Withington resulted in some concerns being expressed during the consultation. Further to this, discussions were also undertaken with Withington Civic Society. The Society expressed the view that there

are some concerns within the community in Withington that the area is already heavily congested, that Wilmslow Road has insufficient capacity to accommodate a bus lane, and that the changes would result in disproportionate negative effects on traffic flow.

- 2.13 A small number of comments also raised concerns about the potential for through traffic to divert from the Oxford Road corridor to Lloyd Street, through Moss Side. Representations were also received on this issue from Tony Lloyd, MP for Manchester Central, and a number of local Councillors. Separate meetings with Mr Lloyd and local Members have taken place and a scheme has been designed to address these concerns.

East Lancashire Road (A580)

- 2.14 Of the 148 comments made about specific locations on the A580/A6 route, the majority (115) concerned the section of the A580 between the M60 and the A6. Many of these comments referred to cycle facilities and bus lanes.

City Centre

- 2.15 The 183 comments made about specific locations in Manchester city centre were wide ranging and many did not relate specifically to the Cross City proposals. The majority (106) concerned roads in the southern part of the city centre, particularly Princess Street, Whitworth Street and Sackville Street. These often focused on the need to consider improvements to help the city centre deal with increased traffic flows from Upper Brook Street.
- 2.16 A number of concerns were raised by residents of Sackville Street that the proposals will increase levels of traffic on Sackville Street, and in particular the impact that this could have in terms of traffic noise due to the poor road surface on Sackville Street.
- 2.17 The remainder of the 2295 individual comments concerned issues which were not location specific. These can be broken down as follows:
- 473 of these were classed as general comments regarding the proposals which were not specific to a particular location
 - 798 were comments relating to bus services and the facilities currently provided for bus passengers. These included 60 comments received by text message.

3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The issues raised in the consultation have been discussed with the highway engineers within the Districts who are responsible for the

scheme design on behalf of GMPTE. A number of changes are proposed as a result of this process and are detailed below:

3.2 In response to the issues raised by Graham Stringer MP and local residents on Rochdale Road, the following amendments to the proposals have been made along the Rochdale Road corridor:

- Removal of the central reservation on Rochdale Road between the Hilldale Avenue and Victoria Avenue junctions. This will enable the proposed northbound bus lane to be accommodated whilst retaining the existing parking provision on the footway on the western side of the road.
- Reductions in the length of a number of bus lanes on Rochdale Road
- Providing some additional marked parking bays

3.3 In order to offset the slight reduction in the scheme benefits which results from the above amendments, Manchester City Council is currently reviewing two further junction improvements to provide additional capacity:

- At the Rochdale Road/Factory Lane/Moston Lane junction; and
- At the Rochdale Road/Victoria Avenue junction

3.4 In both cases, these additions to the scheme will increase capacity at the junctions concerned, thus improving journey times for both buses and general traffic, providing additional benefits to the scheme and maximising the value for money which it delivers.

3.5 The majority of comments received regarding the East Lancashire Road related to deficiencies in the existing bus service and potential additional congestion that could be caused by the Cross City proposals. The proposals on the A580 have previously been the subject of a widespread public consultation as part of the Leigh – Salford – Manchester Busway proposals and concerns and comments raised as part of that consultation had already been incorporated into the scheme prior to the Cross City consultation. The concerns regarding congestion have been modelled and the proposed widening, junction improvements and improved traffic management of the corridor as a whole will result in no significant increases of congestion on the A580 as a result of the Cross City proposals. The concerns around the level of the existing bus service are addressed through the Cross City bus package which will result in a significantly improved bus service on this corridor. There are no significant changes to the proposed measures on the A580 as public concerns have been addressed during the previous consultation on these proposals.

- 3.6 Further to the concerns raised by Tony Lloyd MP and local councillors in Moss Side, a meeting has subsequently been held with Mr. Lloyd and the local Councillors to discuss their concerns. This has resulted in the preparation of a traffic calming scheme to be implemented as part of the Cross City proposals on Lloyd Street in Moss Side between the junctions with Hart Road and Denmark Road. The scheme includes additional 20mph speed restrictions, gateway features, pedestrian crossings, formalised parking provision, speed cushions and kerb build outs. These measures will complement existing measures on Lloyd Street, and provide a traffic calmed area of approximately one mile in length. Traffic modelling forecasts that, with the full Cross City package in place, including the additional traffic calming measures, levels of traffic on Lloyd Street can be restricted to 2006 levels.
- 3.7 Following the receipt of a number of concerns from residents in Withington, and the Withington Civic Society, regarding the proposed bus lane on Wilmslow Road between Cotton Lane and Palatine Road, this is no longer proposed to be constructed and this will have no material impact on the scheme benefits.
- 3.8 Consultation with the Corridor Manchester Partnership has emphasised the importance of improving east-west pedestrian connectivity in the Higher Education Precinct (HEP). As a result of this, additional opportunities have been taken to increase pedestrian permeability of Oxford Road through improved pedestrian crossing provision in the HEP.
- 3.9 In response to concerns raised by residents on Sackville Street in the city centre, it is now proposed to resurface the complete length of Sackville Street as part of the Cross City package.
- 3.10 Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) have been advertised by Rochdale MBC detailing those of the above changes taking place in Rochdale. Any further responses to these will be considered. In the case of those measures that fall in Manchester, Manchester City Council is proposing to conduct a series of mini-consultations to ensure that residents have the opportunity to comment further on the revised proposals before TRO's are advertised. These consultations are currently ongoing. Salford City Council has considered responses from the public consultation in relation to the A580. The proposals for the A580 have previously been in the public domain when the TRO's were first advertised in 2002 and consequently no further changes are proposed as a consequence of the Cross City consultation.
- 3.11 The above amendments have been specifically targeted at those aspects of the scheme regarding concerns which were expressed by a number of respondents and which previously delivered the least benefit. Thus, the proposed revised scheme delivers high value for money, whilst addressing the principal concerns raised at the consultation.

- 3.12 A full set of plans detailing the proposed changes will be on display at the meeting, together with the Cross City Bus Package Consultation Summary, and electronic copies will be made available to members on request.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The public consultation exercise regarding the Cross City Bus Package was carried out over a twelve week period between October and December 2009. A further four week period followed this initial consultation to allow for local MP's and Ward Councillors to make further representation on behalf of their constituents. The level of response to the consultation was good, with a total of nearly 1,900 responses being received via a variety of media. In addition to this, the consultation website took close to 5,000 hits, leading to over 20,000 page views during the consultation period.
- 4.2 It is considered that this level of response indicates that the approach adopted to the consultation was appropriate, and that a large number of local people and organisations were able to have their say regarding the proposals.
- 4.3 The consultation was not intended to seek people's view on the merits of bus priority in general, but to identify areas of concern so that any problems could be minimised before designs were finalised. The feedback received has therefore been extremely helpful in this regard.
- 4.4 A number of specific changes to the scheme are proposed as a result of the successful public consultation exercise. These amendments are described in section 3 of this report. They respond to the feedback received at the consultation and have been designed to maximise the value for money obtained from the scheme.
- 4.5 Since the completion of the consultation, GMPTE has been successful in obtaining 'Programme Entry' status for the Cross City proposals from the Department for Transport. GMPTE is now proposing to develop the scheme proposals as far as necessary within revised Government Major Scheme guidance to progress the scheme towards Full Approval, pending the Government spending review.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

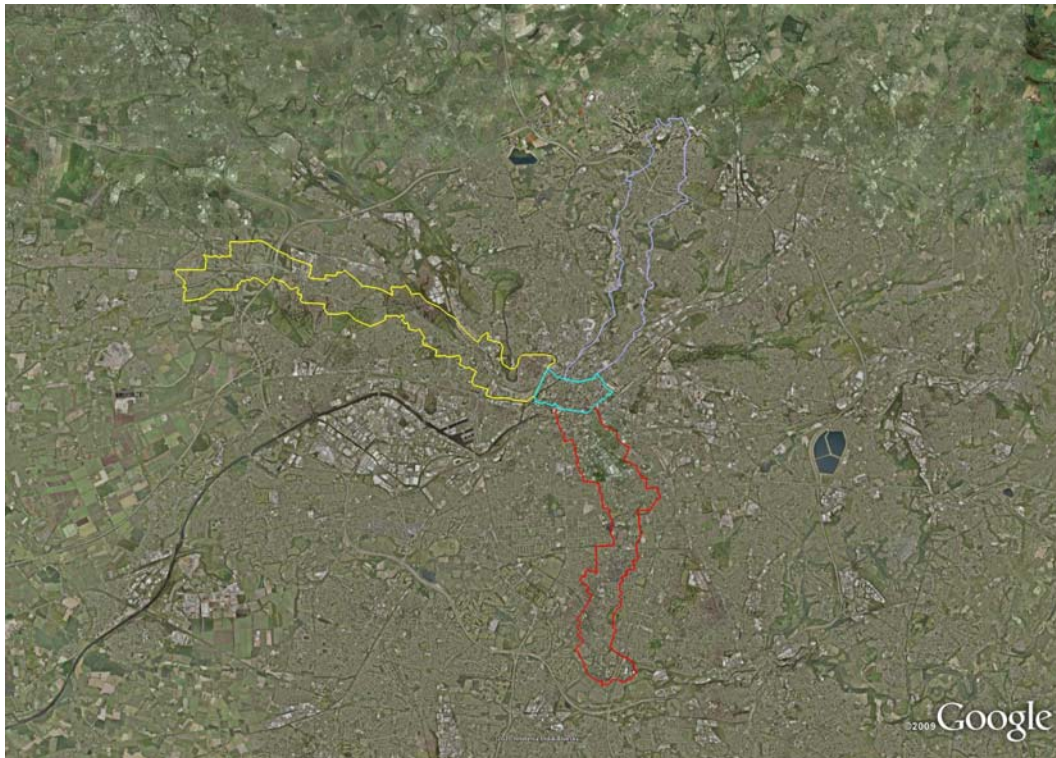
- 5.1 Please refer to list of recommendations on the report cover sheet.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Bus and Rail Director

Appendix 1: Details Of Consultation Media

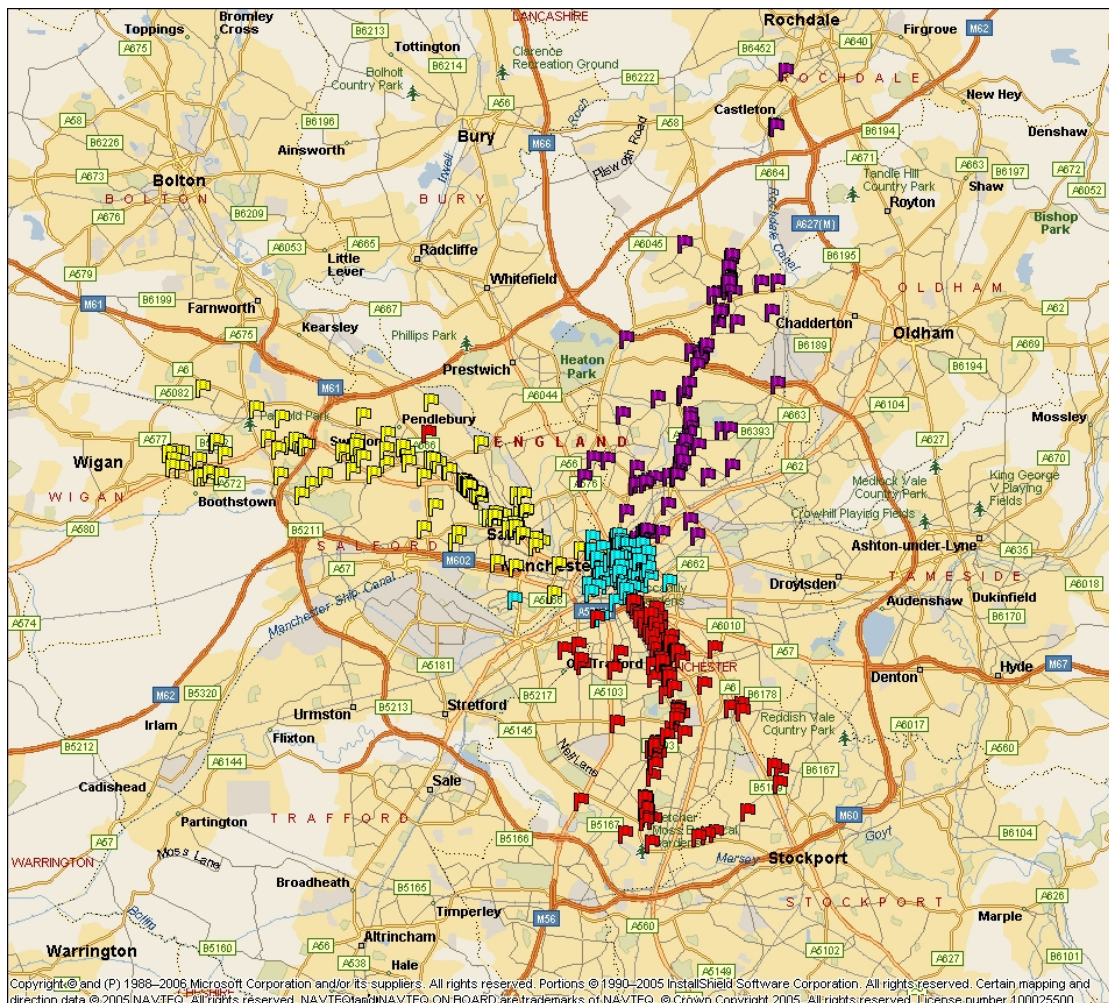
- Consultation booklets and feedback forms, distributed to 74,281 properties within approximately 400m of all three routes within Manchester city centre. This distance is consistent with previous consultations undertaken by GMPTE regarding bus and Metrolink proposals. A plan of the distribution area is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Plan of leaflet distribution area



- A short film was produced introducing the proposals. A DVD of this film, as well as copies of the consultation booklets, were sent to local councillors and were available to the public on request. The film was also available on the consultation website (see below).
- 400 Community Access Points (approximately 100 for each route and 100 for Manchester city centre). These were carefully selected local shops and amenities in the area, and were provided with copies of the information booklets and response forms. A plan of the locations of the Community Access Points is shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Locations of Community Access Points



- A website (linked from www.gmpte.com/haveyoursay) which provided further information about the consultation, gave the opportunity to view the short film of the proposals, and the opportunity to view more detailed plans and complete an online response form.
- A community email newsletter, detailing the consultation, was sent to 224 local community groups.
- 5,000 consultation leaflets for bus passengers, which included the feedback form, were made available on local bus services travelling along all three routes and within Manchester city centre.
- Eight staffed exhibitions (two close to each route and two within Manchester city centre), where the public had the opportunity to talk to members of the project team about the proposals, were held between 20th October and 5th November.
- Two Video Booths were available at each exhibition so that visitors could watch the film and record their feedback electronically.

- A freephone telephone information line (0800 917 8808) was provided during office hours throughout the consultation period.
- A text message service was provided, predominantly intended for bus passengers to comment by text message about any issues they experience using the buses on the routes affected by the proposals.
- On-street advertising was used, consisting of:
 - 20 (1m x 2m) advertising posters displayed at strategic points along all three routes and in Manchester city centre;
 - 50 exterior bus advertisements; and
 - 85 interior bus advertisements on local buses on all three routes.
- A 30 second advertisement was produced and played on five radio stations.
- Two quarter page advertisements were placed in the Manchester Evening News (MEN) and Metro newspapers, as well as three other local newspapers. An online advertisement was also in place on the corresponding newspaper websites for the final 5 weeks of the consultation period.
- A series of consultation meetings was held with a number of key stakeholders. In particular, the Corridor Manchester Partnership, a number of hotels on Great Portland Street, bus operators, NCP, cycling groups and a number of automotive dealerships on Upper Brook Street.