

Transforming Cities Tranche 2 – briefing for Members October 2019

Headline summary

- **Department for Transport (DfT) Transforming Cities Fund could provide the opportunity to invest up to £85m in sustainable travel in Sheffield over the next four years**
- **As a mix of active travel (cycling and walking) and public transport (bus) in defined corridors**
- **Huge opportunities – and risks including the challenging timelines set by DfT**

Background

Sheffield City Region (SCR) is invited to submit a business case in competition for a share of £1.2 billion of Department for Transport funding, over the financial years 2019/20 to 2022/23.

The Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) aims to drive up productivity through improved connections between urban centres and suburbs. Specifically, the fund is to invest in infrastructure to improve public and sustainable transport connectivity. This presents a fantastic opportunity to deliver on a number of key sustainable transport projects that support the city's economy, environment and equalities priorities as set out in the adopted [Sheffield Transport Strategy](#)

Additionally, the Fund aims to support wider cross-cutting priorities:

- Improving access to work and delivering growth
- Tackling air pollution and reducing carbon emissions
- Delivering more homes
- Delivering apprenticeships and improving skills.

SCR submitted a draft Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in June this year which received positive feedback from DfT. The final SOBC has to be submitted by 28 November. The full City Region ask will be for the sum of £215 million, of which £85 million is allocated to projects in Sheffield. A report is going to the Combined Authority on 18 November.

These are all indicative sums at the moment. SCR and the Districts will hear back from DfT about the success of the bid in March 2020 and it is likely that substantial funding will be available, although not to the full extent of the bid.

At this point, detailed scheme proposals are not well advanced. However corridors for intervention, with at least 50% funding for active travel, were agreed through SCR before the June draft SOBC.

The active travel interventions are being developed largely using the SCR's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). That was prepared by Sheffield on DfT advice, and using the Propensity to Cycle (PCT) tool; leading up to March 2019. SCR intends to roll it up into the Active Travel Implementation Plan which is currently in preparation.

All cycling infrastructure will be designed to a high standard, to be agreed with the SCR Active Travel Director and the Active Travel project governance.

Public transport interventions are being developed using delay data provided by SYPTE, the bus operators and linked to SCC Network Management experience.

The following summarises Sheffield's proposals which are still under development. This is a competitive bid and subject to the final DfT funding settlement the scale of the programme may change.

All proposals will be subject to ongoing engagement and communications starting in November and leading up to formal scheme consultation, from summer 2020. There is more information on this later in this briefing note.

How and why these areas were selected

Sheffield Transport Strategy, adopted by March 2019 Cabinet, took a long term view (to 2035) of how the city's transport network should respond to the challenge of growing Sheffield in a sustainable and equitable way. This evidence led approach, showed the need to link together areas of existing residential and housing growth to employment opportunities in the city centre and across the Lower Don Valley. A series of key corridors were identified for interventions to deliver new mass transit and safe cycling routes. TCF criteria to deliver better connectivity were a good strategic fit with the work already carried out.

Sheffield proposals – 1) active travel

- **Lower Don Valley cycling improvements**

Development of a core cycle route connecting city centre to Advanced Manufacturing Park corridor, including spur to Olympic Legacy Park, with supporting measures in surrounding streets to ensure comfort and safety of cyclists feeding into core route from adjacent residential and employment areas.

- **Nether Edge 'Wedge' cycling improvements**

Development of a core cycle route connecting Nether Edge to the city centre, with supporting measures in surrounding streets to ensure comfort and safety of cyclists feeding into core route from adjacent residential and employment areas.

- **Housing Zone North walking & cycling improvements**

Two elements –

- Creation of active travel route from Sheffield City Centre to Neepsend, to deliver first part of Upper Don Valley route and to build upon infrastructure proposed / under construction under Sheffield City Region Infrastructure Fund (SCRIF) and Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and support housing growth.
- Improved walking route from Abbeyfield Park through to the city centre via Pitsmoor and Burngreave. The routes will require interventions to improve and protect footways and crossing points.

- **Cross-city cycling improvements**

Development of a core cycle route link across the city centre, connecting the three corridors described above and enabling cross-city cycling trips.

- **Magna – Tinsley – Meadowhall cycling connectivity**

Development of core routes connecting to Meadowhall and linking with RMBC's proposals on Bawtry Road and Sheffield Road (envisaged to consist of separate cycle tracks), with supporting measures where required to ensure comfort and safety of cyclists feeding into core route from adjacent residential areas, notably in Tinsley.

Rationale

The proposals deliver parts of the top three priorities identified for cycling in Sheffield both in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Sheffield's Transport Strategy. These identify core routes (as is required by the DfT's LCWIP approach) but also include substantive works in surrounding 'feeder areas', ensuring cycling can be made safer door-to-door and the benefits are felt in local communities.

The routes have been prioritised based on likely uptake of cycling by ordinary people (as opposed to the narrow demographic that might currently cycle) and, in particular, where this is likely to result in reduction in car usage.

The walking intervention is the priority route identified in the LCWIP, Burngreave being an area of multiple deprivation and with lower levels of walking to work despite proximity to City Centre and relatively high level of unemployment. In addition, place making work has been already carried out along parts of the corridor (although it is not consistent) and there is an opportunity to link to Parkwood Springs development.

Sheffield proposals – 2) public transport

- **Cross-city bus improvements**

Improved priority and stops for buses in the city centre, as a first phase of the public transport box, again a key component of the Transport Strategy. This will focus on the west, south and east sides of the 'box' (the north side along High St/Church St/West St, shared with the tram, will necessarily be longer-term). It is envisaged that this will include works along Rockingham Street, Arundel Gate and Eyre Street, with consequential service alterations. We are working closely with other SCC officers involved in Heart of the City, Future High Street Fund bid and counter-terrorism etc. to bring as much synergy as possible between projects – for example, whether the package of works could facilitate reducing traffic on Pinstone Street by the Peace Gardens.

- **AMID / 52 route bus improvements**

Bus priority measures on the 52 and X1 corridors through Attercliffe and Darnall and towards Meadowhall. This is envisaged to include restrictions on access to the bus route by through traffic, with facilitating works on diversion routes (e.g. the removal of a redundant bridge on Brightside Lane).

- **Housing Zone North bus corridor**

Public transport priority and infrastructure works, and busstop enhancements, to expedite bus services through Kelham and Neepsend and support housing growth. Conceptually, a revised one-way system in Neepsend to provide a prioritised route through area for buses, separate from most motorised traffic is envisaged. Also to include complementary works to enhance pedestrian access to, and quality of, bus stops.

- **South west bus corridor improvements**

Public transport priority and infrastructure works, to expedite bus services between residential areas to the south west of Sheffield, and employment areas in the city centre, AMID, AMP & Sheffield Business Park. The focus would be on Abbeydale Road/London Road and could include Ecclesall Road too.

Rationale

Joined together, the improvements are intended to result in faster, more reliable and improved bus services between the South West, Housing Zone North, City Centre and AMID and address:

- High levels of car usage from the South West for trips into and across the city centre, with its attendant adverse consequences (in particular congestion, pollution);
- Existing issues of poor bus service speed and reliability;
- In the case of the city centre, existing issues regarding congestion of buses but also supporting a better quality of environment and walking and cycling. We are exploring funding opportunities via TCF for a trial electric bus service to ensure that public transport is available in the core of the city centre for those who need or desire to use it

SYLTE and the bus operators have had some initial input to ensure support for the bid. As proposals develop, it is intended and expected that they will be willing to make improvements which have synergy with them.

Rotherham proposals pertinent to Sheffield

As part of their indicative allocation, Rotherham MBC is proposing four schemes that would assist passengers to/from Sheffield. These are

- A new park and ride site at the existing Parkgate tram-train stop;
- A new tram-train stop with park and ride at Magna;
- A new cycle route linking Rotherham to Meadowhall via Sheffield Road; and,
- A new cycle route linking Sheffield Business Park, Brinsworth to Meadowhall via Bawtry Road.

Programme opportunities and risks

The TCF bid provides an opportunity for major investment in sustainable travel and, in particular, develop cycling infrastructure to an extent not seen previously in the city and city region.

Because of the timescales laid down by the DfT, feasibility work on potential interventions will need to be initiated in the current financial year (2019/20).

At this early stage detailed proposals are not yet developed but it should be noted that through the community engagement and scheme option development process that there may be options developed that impact on sensitive issues, including kerbside parking, street trees and vehicle access. Where this occurs it will be considered with the full involvement of affected parties and stakeholders to determine the best overall approach. In this sense there are also likely to be opportunities related to these issues.

Timescales will be stretching throughout the programme and, of course, there will be those who object to elements of it or feel that there are better alternatives. Due to these timescales, the ability to make changes, as interventions develop, are likely to be limited. It is therefore important, so far as possible, to get things “right first time” – hence the need for excellent engagement throughout the process – early involvement of key stakeholders and working closely with communities, alongside ongoing communication leading up to formal consultation.

This should help to gain broader understanding and support for schemes and help bring proposals to fruition so that programme benefits are captured. To that end, a Communications Plan is in development

and input from Members will be invaluable. Key to TCF communications will be a focus on the “bigger picture” of benefits from such multi-million pound investment in local communities. Proposed messages focus on

- Reducing inequality by minimising impact of car use on poorer parts of the city
- Addressing climate change and improving air quality
- Better quality of life in neighbourhoods

These will be fine-tuned to reflect the local priorities in the TCF areas which emerge from early engagement.

The key elements in delivering these messages will be

- Emphasis on “why” we are doing these schemes (as above)
- Immediate engagement with key stakeholders to try and win over third party advocates living / working in the scheme areas and to keep them briefed as schemes unfold
- Utilisation of most appropriate channels to disseminate location specific information including for onward use by supportive individuals and groups

In relation to the declared Climate Emergency, this programme represents an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions by a small amount, providing positive improvements to less carbon-intensive forms of travel. Programme delay and/or failure could damage our credibility with DfT when bidding for future funding streams and thus the investment that the city needs to decarbonise.

[TCF Scheme Area Engagement by Ward – please see map overleaf](#)

