



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Individual Cabinet Member Decision

Report of: Executive Director, Place

Date: 17 November 2015

Subject: North Sheffield Better Buses – Spital Hill

Author of Report: Ian Taylor / James Burdett

Summary:

The North Sheffield Better Buses project comprises 15 individual schemes between Ecclesfield and the City Centre. It aims to address problems for buses and other traffic along the route, reducing journey times and improving bus reliability.

Two of these schemes are on Spital Hill where buses and other road users are frequently delayed. In an outbound direction, buses at the bus stop in the main carriageway prevent other traffic from continuing ahead. In an inbound direction the bus lane approaching Savile Street is not functioning as intended and is leading to lane-changing, vehicular conflict and imbalanced queuing.

Schemes to address these issues have been developed and were consulted upon in July-August 2015. There were no objections and no issues remain outstanding.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The revised scheme described in this report will contribute to improving journey times and reliability for bus services along this route, as well as reducing congestion and providing improved pedestrian facilities.

The scheme is being designed in detail with funding available to allow construction to start in 2015/16 and be completed in 2016/17, should programmes permit.

Recommendation:

Approve and implement the schemes as shown in Appendices A and B, subject to any required re-confirmation of costs after detailed design (including any commuted sums).

Inform the respondents accordingly.

Background Papers:

Appendix A – Spital Hill / Hallcarr Street, Bus Stop Re-Location

Appendix B – Spital Hill / Savile Street, Bus Lane Removal

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
Cleared by: Gaynor Saxton
Legal Implications
Cleared by: Paul Bellingham
Equality of Opportunity Implications
Cleared by: Annemarie Johnston
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
Burngreave
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Councillor Terry Fox
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

NORTH SHEFFIELD BETTER BUSES – SPITAL HILL

RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SUMMARY

The North Sheffield Better Buses project comprises 15 individual schemes between Ecclesfield and the City Centre. It aims to address problems for buses and other traffic along the route, reducing journey times and improving bus reliability.

Two of these schemes are on Spital Hill where buses and other road users are frequently delayed. In an outbound direction, buses at the bus stop in the main carriageway prevent other traffic from continuing ahead. In an inbound direction the bus lane approaching Savile Street is not functioning as intended and is leading to lane-changing, vehicular conflict and imbalanced queuing.

Schemes to address these issues have been developed and were consulted upon in July-August 2015. There were no objections and no issues remain outstanding. The schemes are therefore recommended for approval.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE?

The scheme will help to reduce delays for buses and other vehicles, improving journey times and reliability. All these benefits contribute to making the City a Great Place to Live.

OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

The proposals will contribute to improving journey times and reducing congestion leading to a more reliable and attractive public transport network and a reduction in vehicle emissions.

REPORT

Introduction

The North Sheffield Better Buses project (comprising Sheffield City Council, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) and local bus operators), has identified Spital Hill as a source of frequent delay on bus routes between Ecclesfield and the City Centre, and vice versa.

Heading outbound, buses are delayed along Spital Hill and journey time data has shown that buses often take up to 6 minutes to travel what should take several minutes less. Inbound, the bus lane is proving to be ineffective and is not providing the expected benefits to buses. It is expected that there will be around a minute saving per bus.

Whilst both schemes should bring about individual journey time savings, they would also help to greatly improve the reliability of bus services at all times, helping buses to turn up on time. Other vehicles would also benefit from the reduced congestion.

Proposal and Consultation

Officers developed two schemes to address the delays, these are discussed separately below.

Spital Hill / Hallcarr Street

The outbound bus on Spital Hill has to stop in the main carriageway due to on-street parking nearby necessitating a bus build-out. When buses are at the stop, traffic cannot pass by and so queues frequently develop behind the buses. Furthermore, buses coming the opposite direction struggle to pass, due to the narrow road width between the parking lay-bys.

To address this it is proposed to relocate the bus stop to a new position opposite Hallcarr Street. Four parking spaces would be removed but two replacement spaces would be installed where the existing bus stop is. This proposal will allow 2 outbound buses to pull in without obstructing other traffic.

Spital Hill/Savile Street

There is currently a relatively short section of bus lane (about 30 metres) operating in the nearside lane approach to Savile Street. Below the Tesco junction, this bus lane is often contravened by motorists but is also ineffective because most of the traffic coming down the hill goes straight ahead to the Wicker or A61 South, and therefore needs to cut across to the nearside lane. There is only a short section of road beyond the bus lane (about 40m which is enough for just 6 or 7 cars) for traffic to do this.

To resolve this, it is proposed to remove the short section of bus lane referred to. This will allow the majority of traffic to be in the appropriate lane earlier on and will afford more stacking space. Buses meanwhile will utilise the lesser used offside lane, which will be right-turn only (except for buses and other authorised users who will continue across Savile Street towards the Wicker). In the Wicker the central reserve island will be narrowed slightly in order to provide an additional lane, thereby allowing buses easier access to the Wicker.

Consultation

Consultation with affected residents took place in July-August 2015. Local Members, the emergency services, Veolia and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive were also consulted. Signs were erected on each approach to Spital Hill advising people to visit a dedicated page on the Council's website to see further details of the two proposals. Over 300 hits were made on the North Sheffield website page.

7 comments were received, two of which were fully supportive. One respondent raised concerns about the additional walk to the relocated bus stop near Hallcarr Street. Officers looked into this but unfortunately there is no suitable alternative position for the bus stop without removing substantial amounts of roadside parking, which would be unpopular in this busy shopping area.

Burngreave TARA responded indicating that they had distributed the plans to their members. They received 10 comments and it was stated that the “*overall response from our 10 respondents was positive overall and things 'seem sensible'.*”

2 comments were received from cyclists, who raised concerns that the Spital Hill / Savile Street scheme may cause additional problems for them and other cyclists. In view of this the scheme was amended to incorporate a new shared use facility between the Tesco junction and Savile Street. This provides a safe alternative for those cyclists who wish to access the advanced stop line or turn left along Savile Street. It is likely that confident cyclists will continue to use the main carriageway, taking advantage of the gap between two better-organised queues.

A response was also received from Cycle Sheffield, on 30 September 2015. The response stated that “*Commenting on the specifics of this design, which leaves the road fundamentally unsafe for cyclists, might be seen to condone it, so we will refrain. The minor changes represent no significant improvement for cyclists (existing or potential).*”

Relevant Implications

Financial

The total cost of the revised scheme is estimated to be around £300,000 which includes for design, construction, supervision, contingency and commuted sum. It is to be funded from the Passenger Transport Executive’s 2015/16 and 2016/17 Better Buses programme, but this allocation still needs to go through the Councils Capital Approval process.

The 25-year commuted sum for ongoing maintenance costs is estimated at around £10,000. This indicative sum was calculated following an assessment of the preliminary design. The actual sum will be calculated by the New Works team in the Highways Maintenance Division once the detailed design has been signed off by the City Council and the Bill of Quantities provided by Amey. There is no revenue element in this Better Buses funded project, so the commuted sum will be funded out of TTAPS resources which, in this instance – as a bus-related scheme – could include camera enforcement income or using ‘credit’ from negative commuted sum calculations for other bus-related schemes.

Legal

Traffic Regulation Order: The Council has a statutory duty to promote road safety and to ensure that any measures it promotes and implements are reasonably safe for all users. In making decisions of this nature the Individual Cabinet Member must be satisfied that the measures are necessary to avoid danger to pedestrians and other road users or for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. Providing that the Individual Cabinet Member is so satisfied then it is acting lawfully and within its powers.

Highways Improvements: The Council, as the Highways Authority for Sheffield, has the powers under Part V of the Highways Act 1980 to approve and carry out the improvements requested in this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

An EIA (reference 537) has been carried out for the Transport Capital 2015/16 programme. The conclusion is that the works are equality neutral affecting all people equally regardless of age, race, faith, gender, disability, sexuality, etc. However, it should prove positive for vulnerable road users such as the young, elderly and/or people with disabilities as it will increase safety and accessibility. This project aims to improve the reliability of some high-frequency local bus services and provide road safety benefits by reducing vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts at this junction. Together with other 'bus hotspots' schemes, the benefits to public transport users will be amplified. No negative impacts have been identified.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative would be to do nothing which would not address the issues that regularly occur at these locations. The designs are therefore the preferred options.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The schemes described in this report will contribute to improving journey times and reliability for bus services along this route.

The schemes are being designed in detail with funding available to allow the schemes to be built in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve and implement the schemes as shown in Appendices A and B, subject to any required re-confirmation of costs after detailed design (including any commuted sums).

Inform the respondents accordingly.

Simon Green

Executive Director, Place

12 November 2015

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