

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Access York Phase 1: Park & Ride Development

Proposed Submission to the Regional Transport Board

Summary

1. This report provides details of a proposed bid for the funding of 3 Park & Rides sites planned to be submitted to the Regional Transport Board on 15 February 2008. Members are asked to consider the proposal and endorse the submission of the bid.

Background

LTP Strategy

2. The transport strategy of the Council to address traffic congestion, safety, air quality and accessibility issues is identified in the city's Local Transport Plan (LTP). Between 2001 and 2006 the strategies in the first LTP to address congestion were a combination of Park & Ride (P&R), demand management using parking charges, improvements to the cycling and walking network, use of technology to realise the most out of the network and the introduction of bus priorities on key radial routes. This successfully increased bus patronage by nearly 50% and kept the traffic levels in the urban area static at 1999 levels.
3. The strategy in the 2nd LTP period from 2006 to 2011 and beyond for tackling congestion and improving the quality of life for York's residents is to build upon the successes already achieved and undertake further improvements to public transport provision. The key proposals identified in the LTP are to increase the capacity of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) to reduce congestion in the city centre and allow reallocation of road space to buses, cyclists and pedestrians, provide additional park and ride sites to intercept traffic on all main radials, provision of an orbital and cross city bus network and manage the demand using parking charges and possibly access restraint over the city centre bridges. The Access York project combines the major infrastructure improvements required into a single scheme to provide a step change in the transport provision for the city.
4. Owing to the cost of the proposed strategy and the reducing LTP allocation the current level of funding is inadequate to undertake the proposed works. The

LTP included the proposal to bid for funding for the Access York project from the Department for Transport using the Major Scheme Bid process.

5. The proposed scheme supports the Regional Spatial Strategy which recognises York as a growth point and identifies improved access to the city centre as one of the regional transport priorities. The Leeds City Region transport vision includes improved connectivity between key cities as a priority with improvements to the Outer Ring Road specifically identified.

Access York Major Scheme Bid Summary

6. The Access York Major Scheme Bid enables a step change in transport provision to be achieved whilst complimenting the improvements provided using funding from the LTP block settlement. The scheme will help to deliver an integrated transport vision for the city where the most sustainable travel option will be available to all. The Access York proposal provides the infrastructure to enable improved interchange between road, rail, tram and bus modes.
7. The overall concept is to increase the capacity of the ORR to reduce traffic diverting through the City centre and enable road space to be used for bus priorities and enhanced cycling and pedestrian routes, the provision of enhanced P&R services to cover additional radial routes and the implementation of improved bus priority measures on key routes. All new P&R sites are on rail corridors and have the added future potential to be included in the tram/train proposal for the city. This would enable the ride element of the service to be provided by a fast rail alternative avoiding the city centre road network, reducing journey times and maximising reliability.
8. There are 5 existing P&R sites covering most of the main radial routes into the City. The Access York proposal will enable the remaining key corridors to benefit from traffic reduction and bring the total number of P&R sites up to 7. P&R operates particularly successfully in York with the combination of commuters, visitors and back trips to attractions at the sites providing an income to the city whereas most other P&Rs across the country are subsidised. The Council have recently awarded a contract for the provision of P&R bus services to First York, that will see major new investment in the bus fleet with leading edge environmentally friendly engines. Additional coach parking for visitors would also be incorporated into the designs for the sites and the opportunity for providing connections to rural bus services developed.
9. The main elements of the proposal are:
 - Phase 1: 2 new and 1 replacement Park & Ride sites.
 - Phase 2: Outer Ring Road Improvements

Bid Process

10. A new process introduced in 2006 gives the Regions more control over a Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) for major transport schemes proposed on Local Authority and Trunks roads which are not of national strategic importance. The RFA for transport is approximately £90m per year with £845m allocated up to 2015/16. The Regional Transport Board (RTB) of the Yorkshire

and The Humber Region reviews all larger schemes (generally over £5m) and manages the programme. The RTB advises the Department for Transport (DfT) which schemes they wish to promote within the Region and Ministers take account of this advice when determining the list of projects to be funded.

11. To obtain funding for a scheme the promoter must first ensure that the project is included in the Regional programme. The DfT will then consider the submission of a Major Scheme Bid to check the value for money of the project and its alignment with government policy. The full indicative programme of all schemes in the Region up to 2015/16 was approved by Ministers in 2006. No schemes in the York area were approved although Haxby Station was included providing the viability was confirmed by Network Rail.
12. Progress on the schemes within the regional programme has been slower than anticipated opening up a potential underspend of £93m in the early years. In addition the RTB has decided to include a 20% allowance for overprogramming in 2008/09 and 2009/10 to enable better management of slippage meaning that there is approximately £129m currently unallocated. The RTB is also proposing to refresh the full programme (extended up to 2017/18) in the Autumn of 2008.
13. The RTB issued an invitation for the submission of bids to cover the projected underspend on 14 December 2007 with a deadline of 15 February 2008 for the receipt of bids. All schemes had to have estimated costs below £30m and be deliverable before 2013/14.
14. Owing to the short timescale and the limit on the maximum value of the bid, the Access York proposal has been split into two elements with the Park & Ride proposal being progressed in advance to meet the February deadline. It is proposed to develop the bid for the improvements to the Outer Ring Road over the next few months and submit a proposal in the Autumn.
15. Halcrow were commissioned to prepare the traffic modelling and economic appraisal elements of the Park & Ride bid. Cost estimates and outline designs have been prepared in house by Engineering Consultancy.
16. Acceptance by the RTB is the start of a long process to deliver the scheme. If the bid to the RTB is successful additional appraisal work will be undertaken before submitting a full Major Scheme Bid to the DfT later in the year. The DfT have a three stage approval process prior to releasing funds for construction.
17. The DfT anticipate that they will take approximately 6 months to analyse the bid and determine whether it is acceptable for Programme Entry status. Following approval by the DfT additional design work would be undertaken and statutory approvals, such as planning consent, obtained prior to re-submitting the bid for Conditional Approval. Before granting Final Approval of the scheme the DfT require tenders for the construction works to have been received. Providing there have not been significant changes to the value for money of the scheme the DfT will grant Final Approval and construction can commence.

Access York Submission

Phase 1 – Development of Park & Ride Service

18. The proposed bid is for the development of the Park & Ride (P&R) operation in York including the provision of three sites and associated bus priority road improvements at an estimated cost of £26.2m (Outturn Costs). The proposal increases the number of P&R sites in York to seven, covering all main radial routes, by relocating and enlarging the existing site at Askham Bar (1250 spaces), providing a new site on the A59 (750 spaces) and constructing a new site on Wigginton Road (500 spaces). Total Park & Ride spaces will increase from 3,750 to 6,250. Bus priorities would be provided on each route with significant work required at the congested A59/A1237 roundabout adjacent to the A59 P&R site to enhance capacity.
19. All of the sites are close to existing railway corridors which would enable a potential tram/train link to be installed in the future. Schematic drawings of the proposals are included in the annex to this report.
20. The bid is flexible as each site could be developed independently to suit the availability of funding. This allows the Regional Transport Board scope to allocate funds for one of the sites at anytime during the programme period. However, it is anticipated that there would be cost reductions of approximately £1.5m if the full package was progressed at one time owing to economy of scale benefits.

Askham Bar P&R Relocation (Outturn Cost £6.9m)

21. Askham Bar is the principal gateway site for travellers from the A64 west, A1 and Leeds. The existing Park & Ride site has operated very successfully since opening in 1990 with the viability supported by significant back trips for students to the new York College. Over 600,000 passengers per year are carried by this service but the existing 550 space site is undersized and regularly full by 10:00am. This leads to diversion to alternative P & R sites or the use of city centre car parks. It is not possible to extend the existing site owing to the constrained boundaries.
22. The new 1250 space site proposed on a former landfill tip would enable additional trips to be intercepted and reduce traffic at the Moor Lane roundabout exit to the existing site. The increased size would ensure that all drivers arriving from the west could make use of the most convenient P&R site. It is projected that at peak times approximately 50% of the vehicles on the north end of Tadcaster Road would be intercepted by the Park & Ride site. There is also the potential to provide off site parking at this location for developments in the south and west of the city, particularly the redevelopment of the Terry's site. The proximity to the East Coast Mail Line rail corridor allows options for a tram/train based solution to be developed in the future.
23. The scheme comprises a 1250 space car park with associated landscaping and office/toilet buildings. A new signalised junction would be provided on the A1036 Tadcaster Road to allow access to the site for cars. The preferred route for buses would be a dedicated bus lane passing to the rear of the supermarket and exiting via the existing Park & Ride route to the Moor Lane

Roundabout thus avoiding traffic on the main road. It is anticipated that the current number of 5 articulated vehicles would need to be increased to 7 at peak times and on Saturdays.

A59 (Poppleton) P&R, A59/A1237 Junction Improvement and Bus Priorities
(Outturn Cost £13.8m)

24. A P&R site on the A59 would ensure that traffic from the north west and Harrogate would be intercepted before it reached the outer ring road. The proposed 750 space site with space available for an additional 500 cars for York Northwest development would benefit from significant back trips for employees at the adjacent Northminster Business Park. For the P&R to operate successfully the adjacent A59/ORR roundabout would also have to be upgraded to ensure delays to buses crossing the ring road were minimised. The A59 site would be particularly beneficial for the proposed York Northwest development reducing the level of car traffic into the York Central section. In addition the York Northwest site provides the opportunity to provide a purpose designed bus priority route directly into the city centre from the A59 P&R site. Pending this route being available additional bus priorities will be provided on Boroughbridge Road.
25. Modelling suggests that approximately 40% of the traffic on the north end of Boroughbridge Road in the am peak would be intercepted by the Park & Ride site.
26. Two sites are under consideration to the north and south of Northminster Business Park, however in transport terms, the site closest to the A59 is preferred. The northern site also provides the opportunity for a future link to a tram/train service running along the Harrogate to York line.
27. The scheme comprises a 750 space car park with associated landscaping and office/toilet buildings. A new signalised junction would be provided on Northfield Lane to allow access to the site for cars and buses. A separate route into and around the site would be provided for buses to limit conflict with car users and create priority. A new signalised junction would be provided at the existing Station Road/Northfield Lane intersection with the A59 to allow access for cars to the site and provide priority for the Park & Ride bus service. An option to provide a dedicated access from the south off the A1237 will be developed providing traffic flows can be accommodated on the existing Northfield Lane. The existing A59/A1237 Roundabout will be enlarged (diameter approximately doubled) within the highway boundary to increase capacity and ensure that the Park & Ride service is not delayed. A safe crossing point for pedestrians/cyclists by means of a subway will be provided close to the roundabout.
28. Bus priorities will be provided along the A59 into the city centre to minimise delays and provide a time advantage for the service. Bus priority measures including bus gates and sections of bus lane are proposed at Beckfield Lane, Carr Lane, Water End, The Fox and Hamilton Drive. It is anticipated that a fleet of 5 artic and rigid buses would provide the necessary capacity for the service with enhancements at peak times and Saturdays.

Clifton Moor P&R and Bus Priorities (Outturn Cost £6.9m)

29. The 500 space site on Wigginton Road would intercept traffic from the north using the road from Helmsley and the North Yorks Moors. This route, although not on the Primary Route Network, carries as much traffic as the A19 at peak times. The bus service from the site would stop at the District Hospital reducing the need for traffic to pass through congested areas on the network. There are two potential sites close to the ORR roundabout which could be progressed. The site closest to the city could have the added benefit of the possibility of a future link to a tram/train service along the Scarborough to York line.
30. The scheme comprises a 500 space car park with associated landscaping and office/toilet buildings. A new signalised junction would be provided on Wigginton Road to allow access to the site for cars and buses. A separate route into and around the site would be provided for buses to limit conflict with car users. Improvements to the A1237/Wigginton Road roundabout would be required for the northernmost site. Bus priorities including a section of bus lane and bus gate close to the level crossing would also be provided along Wigginton Road to minimise delays to the service. It is anticipated that a fleet of 6 rigid buses would provide the necessary capacity for the service with enhancements at peak times and Saturdays.

Transport Modelling

31. Halcrow have undertaken the modelling work using the York SATURN model and EMME2 Public Transport model to determine the effect of the proposal on the network and determine the size of the sites required. The models predict travel behaviour during the am peak hour in 2011 and 2021.
32. It is projected that the full project will deliver an average 8% reduction in journey times on the Inner Ring Road and an average 5% reduction in journey times on the Outer Ring Road in 2011. Approximate 5% reductions relative to the do nothing scenario are projected for 2021. More significant improvements to journey times are experienced on the radial routes with the new Park & Ride sites. A 12 % reduction in journey time relative to the do nothing scenario is anticipated for Wigginton Road and 19% for the A59 in 2011 (11.5% and 26.5% in 2021).

Economic Appraisal

33. The economic appraisal of the proposals has been undertaken by Halcrow in accordance with DfT guidance. Estimates for the schemes have been prepared by Engineering Consultancy based upon the costs for the Monks Cross site completed in 2004. Each individual site and the package of 3 sites has been assessed.

Askham Bar Park & Ride Site

34. There is an economic case for development of the Askham Bar Expansion scheme, underlined by a benefit to cost ratio of 2.4. The main driver of the economic benefits are travel time savings, reliability benefits and external benefits to highway users generated by a reduction in road user vehicle kilometres. Expansion of the Askham Bar Park and Ride site generates an additional 123,000 public transport trips in 2011, increasing up to 246,000 (with York Central) by 2021.

A59 (Poppleton) Park & Ride Site and Roundabout Improvements

35. An expected 250,000 public transport trips per annum in 2011 will result from the development of a Park and Ride facility at this site, rising to 289,000 by 2021 (with York Central). Development of the A59 Park and Ride site and the associated junction improvement is expected to generate large travel time savings to highways and public transport users. The benefit cost ratio is 7.3 implying a strong economic case for development of this option.

Clifton Moor Park & Ride Site

36. A strong economic case exists for the development of this option. The benefit is driven almost entirely by public transport travel time savings. This scheme represents high value for money supported by a BCR of 3.7. An extra 121,000 public transport trips are expected in 2011 increasing to 130,000 by 2021.

Package of 3 Park & Ride Sites

37. The package of benefits represents high value for money with a BCR of 5.0 and over £70m worth of economic benefits. This represents 76% of benefits generated by the individual packages if they were to be introduced separately. There is a strong economic case for taking the package to a further stage of development with the package resulting in large highway and public transport benefits.
38. Based on the results of this appraisal, it is recommended that the full package of options is taken forward due to the large economic benefits expected. The schemes have the potential to reduce travel times to both highway and public transport users by generating a significant amount of modal shift from highways to public transport. The full development is expected to increase annual trips made by public transport by 432,000 in 2011 and up to 545,000 by 2021.

Deliverability

39. The RTB are particularly concerned that any schemes which are included within the programme are deliverable to the specified timescale. The bid emphasises the recent experience of the Council in delivering Park & Ride sites and major highway improvement schemes to time and budget. The principal risks to delivery relate to obtaining planning consent and purchase of land for the sites. Ground conditions at the A59 roundabout and the proposed Askham Bar site will affect construction methods but the risks will be mitigated by undertaking ground investigation surveys at an early stage in the development of the schemes.

Phase 2 – Reducing Congestion on the Outer Ring Road

40. Since the ORR was built in the 1980s it has significantly reduced the number of trips through the city centre and enabled areas of employment growth at Monks Cross and Clifton Moor to be developed. However traffic levels using the road have increased by approximately 50% over the last 15 years with journey times lengthening and the duration of the peak periods extending. Orbital and radial traffic flow is severely disrupted by the 12 roundabouts along its 10 mile length. At peak times traffic diverts through the city and surrounding villages to avoid the congestion on the ring road. End to end journey times in the morning peak are projected to increase to over an hour in 2021.

41. The Outer Ring Road Study, which was accepted by members in July 2005, is currently being reviewed in light of the changes to the anticipated development in the area and making use of the latest transport models available for analysing traffic flows. A number of options for improvements are being investigated ranging from enlarged roundabouts with or without grade separation to possible dualling of the most congested sections.
42. The ORR also acts as a barrier to non-motorised users severing communities particularly at Strensall Road. The study will include options for the provision of enhanced crossing points such as subways at key locations and the possibility of a section of orbital cycle route between Strensall Rd and Wigginton Rd opening up routes for cyclists to the Clifton Moor employment/retail site.
43. The results of the study will be presented to members in the Summer prior to preparing a bid for funding to the Regional Transport Board in the Autumn. The bid will need to include the most cost effective combination of the proposed solutions, taking into consideration the environmental impact and consequences on transport across the city.
44. The Highways Agency are proposing to submit a bid for funding to the RTB in February for reducing congestion at the Hopgrove Roundabout at the eastern end of the ORR. It is anticipated that the improvements proposed by the Highways Agency will compliment any solution for the remainder of the ORR and will reduce evening clockwise peak time delays by half.

Consultation

45. Internal consultation on this report has been held with Finance, Property, Environmental Protection and Transport Planning to ensure that the proposals are acceptable. Owing to the short timescale no separate external consultation has been undertaken but the proposals were included in the Local Transport Plan which was widely reviewed by stakeholders across the city and specific consultation on the A59 site was undertaken in 2005. If the RTB bid is successful it is planned to consult local residents and include their views in the final bid before submission to the DfT.

Corporate Priorities

46. The development of the Park & Ride service is a key element of the Council's transport strategy set down in the Local Transport Plan. In addition it supports the Council's strategy to increase the use of public and environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Implications

47. The provision of a successful and efficient Park & Ride service is essential for the continued prosperity of the city and the desire to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the city centre. There are implications across a wide range of areas both within the Council and externally.

48. **Financial Implications** The DfT approves funding for Major Schemes on the basis that 10% of the funding is locally sourced. The local funds could be from the LTP settlement, developer contributions or Council resources. If the full bid for approximately £26m was progressed up to £3.3m spread over 3 years would need to be contributed from local sources.
49. If this contribution was funded from the LTP settlement it would mean approximately 30% less would be available for other integrated transport schemes across the city during that period. Currently it is not anticipated that any developer contributions would be available to support the provision of the Park & Ride sites in the timescale required however it may be possible to fund future expansion of the sites from specific developments. In particular it is anticipated that developer contributions from the York Northwest development may be available to expand the A59 site to meet the increased demand. If the relocation of the Askham Bar site was progressed it is anticipated that proceeds from the sale of the existing site could be used as part of the contribution to fund the full package of Park & Ride development.
50. Preparatory costs incurred prior to the acceptance of the scheme by the DfT are not recoverable through the Major Scheme Bid process and would need to be provide from Council Revenue sources. It is anticipated that approximately £200k would be required to prepare a Major Scheme Bid for the full package. A contingency item of £164k is included within the proposed budget for 2008/09. Additional funding would be sourced from within existing City Strategy revenue budgets. Once the bid has been accepted by the DfT 50% of the further development costs after acceptance to take the bid through the approval process are recoverable from the DfT. The DfT will then fund 90% of the construction costs and 50% of any additional risk costs up to an agreed level. Any additional costs above this agreed level would have to be funded fully from local sources.
51. There will be financial implications to the Council relating to the operation of the new sites. Currently a licence fee is paid to the Council by the operator of the service. The contract for the operation of the new sites would need to be procured in accordance with the Council's financial regulations which may result in a lower rate being received for the new sites owing to the risk associated with patronage numbers in the early years of operation.
52. **Human Resources (HR)** There are no Human Resource implications for staff employed by the Council. The role of the Park & Ride monitoring officer will change to include the additional sites. A project team will need to be created to progress the construction of the new sites however it is likely that some of the work will be undertaken by Consultants.
53. **Equalities** There are no equalities implications of progressing the bid at this stage.
54. **Legal** There are no equalities implications of progressing the bid at this stage.
55. **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications.

56. **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications.
57. **Property** If the new site at Askham Bar is constructed the existing site, owned by the Council, would be vacated and available for possible sale.
58. **Other** None.

Risk Management

59. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to financial loss, non-compliance with legislation, damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. However measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the score for all risks has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.
60. At this stage in the bid process the Council does not commit to funding or underwriting the construction of the new sites. Separate reports will be submitted to the Executive as the bid progresses indicating the financial commitment and level of risk at each stage.

Recommendations

61. Members are asked to:
- 1) Endorse the submission of the bid to the Regional Transport Board for the funding of 3 Park & Ride sites.
 - 2) Authorise the expenditure of contingency funding up to a limit of £164k to progress the bid subject to the acceptance of the 2008/09 budget by Full Council and acceptance of the bid by the Regional Transport Board.

Reason: To obtain funding to develop the Park & Ride service in the City.

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Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:
2nd Local Transport Plan

Annexes
Annex 1 Schematic Drawings of proposed Park & Ride Sites