

## **CALL IN REQUEST ON CABINET DECISION ON WESTERN TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE**

**Councillor:** Neil McEvoy  
**Cabinet Decision:** Western Transport Interchange  
**Decision Reference:** CAB/16/38  
**Date of Call in Request:** 29 December 2016

As a non-Cabinet Councillor, I proceed with the call on the basis of cost, lack of analysis, lack of forward planning, health and safety concerns, added time to bus journeys, no plan to cater for extra parking in the locality & a lack of consideration for cyclists.

The report justifying the decision in the papers given out did not give all the information required to make a fully informed decision.

The decision exposes the Council to unknown & unquantified financial risk. The projected has risen from £500,000 to £1.7m. The report states that the costs may rise when the soil survey results are known, but there was no quantified amount in the report. No business would be given finance without a detailed business plan forecasting cash flows and costs. The Cabinet report failed to provide such detail; this is an unacceptable oversight.

Much of the £1.7m spend goes to shoring up the rail embankment. An alternative was not considered in the Cabinet report. This is an unacceptable oversight.

The proposed funding for this scheme brings forward the alternative City Operations Capital Programme over a four-year period. This will leave the financial cupboard incredibly bare for any future corridor improvement schemes in the medium term and does not represent value for money.

The AECOM background report stated that, *“The modelling assessment has not considered in detail the internal operation and capacity of the interchange.”* (2) This was an unacceptable oversight.

Furthermore, *“Peak hour queuing occurs southbound on Fairwater Grove with over 100 vehicles not entering the model due to congestion.”* (5.1) Therefore, what reliability can be placed on the resulting data?

Figure 3 of AECOM’s report points to traffic moving at less than 5mph, with just 39 bus movements an hour. Moreover, nowhere in the Cabinet report is the added journey time of up to 8 minutes. 8 minutes added to a bus journey is hardly progress and is unlikely to encourage modal shift. The background paper therefore contradicts the claim made in the Cabinet Report.

In AECOM's report, there is mention of changing signal times in order to keep delays to up to 8 minutes, yet there is no analysis of the ripple effect on traffic in the rest of the area by doing this. This is an unacceptable oversight.

The AECOM report states, *"In the AM peak St Fagans Road Eastbound has similar levels of queuing to the base model (with all vehicles entering the network). In the PM peak queues on St Fagans Road Eastbound increase due to signal timing adjustments made to facilitate the bus hub junctions and maintain the operation of the surrounding highway network."*

It is already quicker to walk down St Fagans Road in the mornings at peak time, rather than take the bus. If congestion is going to worsen with the proposed bus exchange, the traffic chaos will be unimaginable. There was also no modelling for increased traffic flow which will come to pass with the thousands of new houses projected to be built in the North West of the City. It is grossly irresponsible to progress a decision without such calculations. Moreover, the available evidence contradicts the Cabinet report, which stated: *"The modelling suggests that there will not be any significant additional congestion on the network with up to 40 buses per hour using the site."*

There is a pressing need here to define "significant". The lack of precision in the report on future traffic flow is an unacceptable oversight.

Micro-simulation modelling of the surrounding highway network with the junction improvements needed to provide the access for the Western Transport Interchange has been undertaken (see background paper 5). Following consultation with bus operators, the design was subsequently changed to provide 4 stands rather than the 5 included in the modelling work which included scenarios of up to 53 buses per hour. A failure to do redo the modelling study is an unacceptable oversight

There is no mention or analysis of parking around the proposed exchange; this is an unacceptable oversight.

Rapid Transport Bus corridors are referred to, but there was no detail given; this is an unacceptable oversight.

Turns onto the A48 across the traffic, including into the right-turning lane city-bound (on Waungron Rd east) are planned, but would be prevented by queuing traffic and safety concerns. The Safety Report says right turns from the A48 into the interchange are unsafe. Yet the "Swept Paths" plans show no barrier to prevent this.

The Swept Paths plan (amended plan subsequent to the AECOM modelling) shows amendments to allow buses from Waungron Rd to make a 3-point turn within the inner triangle. The however cannot be used to overcome the problems of turns across traffic on the A48 because 3-point turning buses do not pass the bus stops.

Council officers have recently undertaken a critical road-safety assessment. No solutions to the identified road safety dangers is an unacceptable oversight.

Putting cyclists onto shared pavements is against Active Travel policy as accepted in the draft cycling strategy. This sticks to the old shared-path preference of the officers, not the actual cycling strategy and certainly not the new draft with segregation from pedestrians stated as a principle. The Cabinet report has therefore contradicted existing policy.

A further issue is planning cycle stands in the middle of the triangle. Buses may use this for 3-point turns, so all public have to be excluded. The secluded area with no staff on-site would feel insecure for leaving bikes. There are no documents in the proposal from cycling officers. This is an unacceptable oversight.

It is unrealistic to seek to operate the site with no staff. There are clear health and safety dangers in such an approach. The running costs of the site have also not been taken into account in the Cabinet report. This is an unacceptable oversight.

The Cabinet report states: "The benefits will be further accentuated by future plans for integrated ticketing in the region." There have been such plans since at least 2008. There is no detail to support the assertion, which appears to be padding of a very poor proposal.

It is likely that there will be a change of Administration after May 4<sup>th</sup>. The most sensible course of action would be to leave any decision on such huge capital expenditure until after May's election. Ignoring of a likely scenario in a matter of weeks is an unacceptable oversight. The possibility of the exchange being cancelled before it is in operation is a likely scenario. As well as referring calling the decision in, I ask that the decision be referred to internal audit. The waste of public money on a doomed project is not at all acceptable.

**Councillor Neil McEvoy**  
**29 December 2016**