
BUS PRIORITY NETWORK

Please note Appendix 4 contains confidential legal advice which is exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update to deliver a priority bus network across Cardiff prior to it being considered at Cabinet on 21st March 2024

Structure of the papers

2. The draft report to Cabinet titled “Delivering a Bus Priority Network for Cardiff” is attached at **Appendix A**, and outlines the reasons for the reports to Cabinet as being:
 - To seek approval of the draft Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan document, as set out in Appendix 1.
 - To seek approval to go out to public consultation on the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan.
 - To seek approval to delegate authority to the Director of Transport, Planning and Environment, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member, to make minor amendments to the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan and formulate a programme of deliverable bus priority projects and relevant engagement with key stakeholders, and to move forward with the delivery of those key projects.
 - To note that all related transport project deliverables included in, and/or produced from the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan will be subject to successful funding bids, public consultation, design feasibility, assessments (including Equalities Impact Assessments EQIA) and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

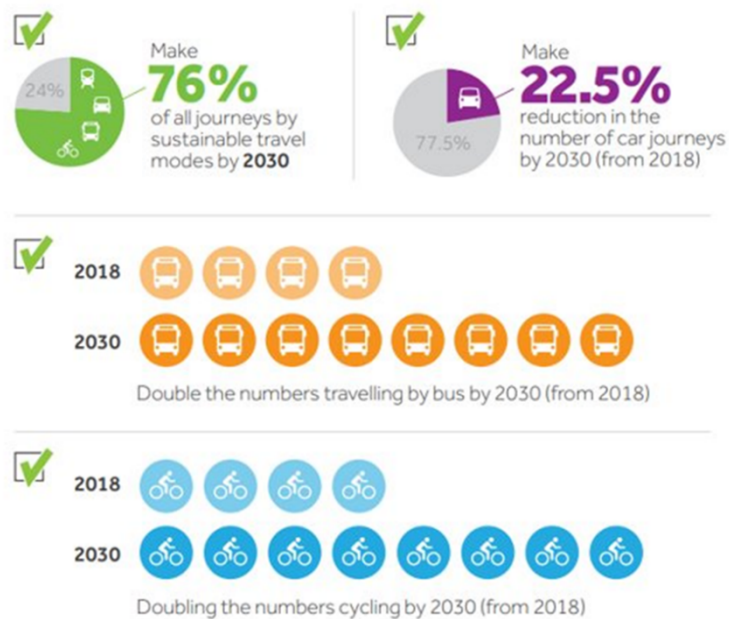
3. Also attached to the papers are the following appendices:
 - Appendix 1** - Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan 2024
 - Appendix 2** - Corridor Improvements (high level options)
 - Appendix 3** - Equalities Impact Assessment
 - Appendix 4** - Exempt Legal Implications – CONFIDENTIAL
 - Appendix B** - Presentation

Scope of Scrutiny

4. During this scrutiny, Members have the opportunity to review the draft Cabinet report and explore:
 - Current Challenges and Issues
 - Major Developments and Transport Projects
 - The Bus Priority Plan.
 - Proposes Recommendation and Next Steps
 - Future Public and Stakeholder Engagement,
 - Project Funding

Background

5. The 10 year Cardiff Transport White Paper outlines ambitious targets to change the way people travel within and across the city. The Bus Priority Network is key to support this with the aim of also improving connectivity and accessibility of services.
6. The achievement of the Transport Paper modal shift targets also support the aims of the One Planet Cardiff strategy.
7. The diagram on the following page illustrates the targets included in the Transport White Paper (2020)



8. In July 2021, Cabinet approved the undertaking of a public consultation to develop and inform a Bus Strategy for Cardiff. The papers presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet consideration of the Bus Strategy consultation, detailed that until the Covid pandemic, bus ridership in Cardiff had remained relatively stable, primarily due to population growth. However, the pandemic led to public transport numbers falling to approximately 10% in April 2020; and as of Summer 2021, transport numbers rose to approximately 60% pre-Covid levels. In addition, as of Summer 2021, bus service frequency had returned to 100% of pre-Covid levels.
9. The Bus Strategy included a number of 'Big Moves', outlined below:
 - Big Move 1: Complete the Bus Interchange
 - Big Move 2: Create New Priority Bus 'Smart' Corridors
 - Big Move 3: City Centre Package
 - Big Move 4: Metro Integration, Integrated Ticketing and Information Package
 - Big Move 5: Fares
 - Big Move 6: Review of Bus Network Governance arrangements for the medium and long term
 - Big Move 7: Creating a Better Customer Experience
 - Big Move 8: A Low Emission/Zero Carbon Bus Fleet
 - Big Move 9: Integration of Schools Transport

10. The aims of **Appendix 1**, the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan (2024) are to deliver a network that 'bridges the gap' between current bus usage and the ideal bus network and to support integrated, efficient journeys.
11. The report identifies six routes that would form the 'corridors' and enable connection to the 'City Centre Bus Box' and facilitate onward travel. It should be noted that bus corridors are not necessarily 'bus lanes' and that other interventions can be put in place to support 'bus corridors'.
12. It is hoped that these changes will improve journey times, enabling operators to run better services, which are therefore more appealing.
13. **Appendix 3**, the Equality Impact Assessment relates to the overarching Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan. The implementation of future individual projects will need to be supported by further assessments.

Challenges and Issues

14. The Cabinet reports lists the following as current challenges and issues:
 - Bus Patronage – which was impacted by COVID and at the moment is 20% lower than pre Covid amounts
 - Funding for Bus Projects – Funding to support the projects will be sought from the Local Transport Fund, it is also hoped that the Welsh Government's recent strategy 'Bws Cymru' could provide funding.
 - Funding for Bus Services - the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) supported service through COVID and was replaced by the Bus Transition Scheme to allow service to continue with reduced numbers. A new Bus Network Grant will be available from 1 April 2024. Unfortunately, some services have been cut/reduced/combined in light of the funding available, it is hoped that a core network of protected services will provide the impetus for people to make the shift to bus travel.
 - Network Congestion and Pinch Points – Post COVID traffic has returned to the city and congestion has increased, impacting on bus journey times. There is a balance to be made in safeguarding the transport needs of the city at the same time as making improvements.

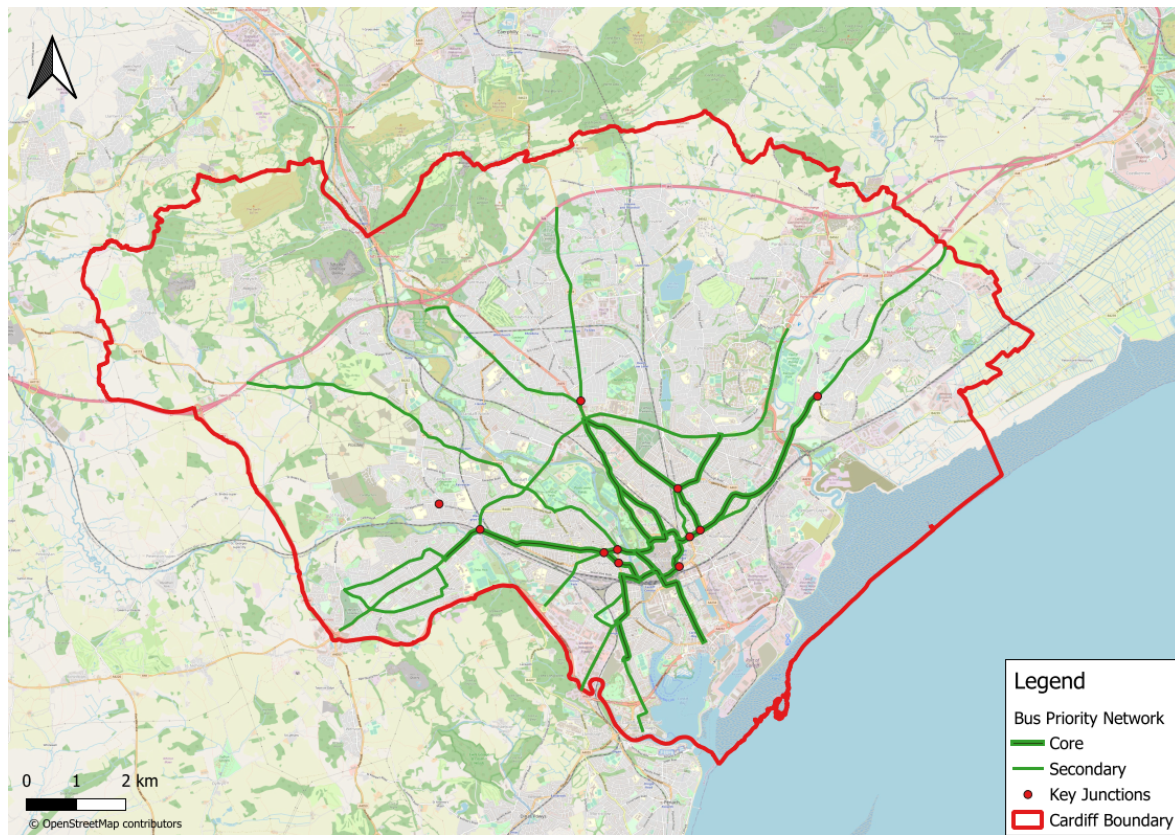
15. The report also refers to other **major developments and transport projects** that need to be considered in the planning process:
- **Central Transport Interchange** (Bus Interchange) – due to open in 2024
 - A strategy to support **Park and Ride Facilities** is to be developed.
 - **South East Wales Metro** – creating more interchange locations.
 - **Cardiff Bay Developments** – including the arena which will need better bus provision to support sustainable travel choices by visitors.
 - **Active Travel Network Developments** – that also need road space to create safe routes, and the need for pedestrians/passengers to access buses and bus stops safely.
 - **Education Facilities** – efficient journeys could be a deciding factor in choice of transport mode.

The Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan (Appendix 1)

16. The following are noted as the objectives of the plan:
- Faster and more reliable bus services.
 - Attract more funding for bus priority measures.
 - More accessible services that are easier to use.
 - Better integration between bus services and with rail, light rail and bus.
 - Bus routes and stops designed to complement walking and cycling facilities.
17. The reports features commentary on the following aspects of the plan:
- **Establishing a core network of bus routes on the network**, to carry a large majority of passengers on the six identifies corridors, and enable links from the City Centre Bus Box, out of the city. **Table 1** of the Cabinet report details the routes and potential interventions. Briefly the routes are:
 - Western Bus Corridor (Ely to City Centre)
 - North – UHW – ISV Cross City Corridor (University Hospital Wales to City Centre)
 - Eastern Bus Corridor (City Centre along Newport Road to Newport border and potentially Parkway Station)
 - Southern Bus Corridor (City Centre to Bay)

- Norther Bus Corridor (City Centre to North Cardiff, RCT & Caerphilly)
 - Roath-North East (City Centre to Roath and North East Cardiff)
- **Establishing the secondary network** – connecting the core and regional network
- **Introduction of a diverse range of interventions**, in addition to dedicated bus lanes, actions to support bus corridors include; bus prioritisation, bus gates, signage, telematics, kerbside controls/restrictions, bus stop placement, junction improvements and other interventions.
- **Hot spot junctions** - 11 have been identified to cause issues currently, and are listed below and also in **Table 1** of the Cabinet Report.
 - A48 Cowbridge Road W / A4161 Cowbridge Road E / A48 Western Road
 - Saint Fagans Road / Fairwater Road
 - Merthyr Road / Caerphilly Road
 - B4487 Newport Road / Wentloog Road
 - Albany Road / City Road / Richmond Road / Crwys Road
 - Newport Road / City Road
 - Newport Road / West Grove
 - Bute Terrace/ Churchill Way / Adam St
 - Lower Cathedral Road / Neville St / Clare St
 - Cathedral Rd / Cowbridge Road E / Lower Cathedral
 - Cowbridge Road East / Wellington Street / Neville St
- **An Interventions playbook** is a list of the options available to deliver on each corridor depending on it's location, the issues faced and depending on suitability for the circumstances.
- **Park and Rides** – the need to enable incorporation of the key routes with park and rides and/or transport hubs, now in in the future.

18. The diagram below maps the core and secondary routes along with the identified junction hot spots.



19. The Transport Team will be able to develop a programme or works based on the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan, these will then be able to be presented for funding opportunities going through the normal process. How quickly the projects are delivered will depend on the availability of funding and resources.

Consultation and Engagement

20. Bus operators and TfW have been involved in the development of the plan as the situation is continually evolving.
21. Public consultation will be undertaken following approval of the plan by Cabinet, and any individual projects developed, following further Cabinet approval will need to undergo the normal consultation and engagement process with local members, stakeholders and any Traffic Regulation Order requirements.
22. Equality Impact Assessments will also be required for each future proposal, and these will be undertaken with the Access Focus Group.
23. **Project Funding** is noted as the need for financial support for the proposals for each of the corridors as they are developed. To date internal capital funding

has been used to match fund Government grant bids, and £200k of City Region Deal is supporting the bus corridors in the North of the city and other external funding is Also notes is that funding that is currently being used to back the Newport Corridor.

24. The reasons for the recommendations made in the report are set out on **points 23 – 28**
25. The financial implications of the delivery the vision of the strategy are not possible with the financial constraints of the Council. Each proposal will need to secure external grant funding to maximise s106 funds and not rely on additional Council monies.
26. **Point 30** highlights general **Legal Implications**. In relation to the following:
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
27. Other **legal implications** relate to the need for further legal advice on each of the bus corridor proposals as they are developed and to the requirements in regard to the proposed consultation on the Bus Priority Plan itself.
28. No **HR** or **Property implications** are noted.

Proposed Recommendations to Cabinet

29. The report to Cabinet contains the following recommendations:
 - i. To seek approval of the draft Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan document, as set out in Appendix 1.
 - ii. To seek approval to go out to public consultation on the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan.
 - iii. To seek approval to delegate authority to the Director of Transport, Planning and Environment in conjunction with the Cabinet Member to make minor amendments to the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan and formulate a programme of deliverable bus priority projects and relevant engagement with key stakeholders, and to move forward with the delivery of those key projects.

- iv. To note that all related transport project deliverables included in, and/or produced from the Bus Priority Infrastructure Plan will be subject to successful funding bids, public consultation, design feasibility, assessments (including Equalities Impact Assessments EQIA) and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

Way Forward

Cllr Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Transport & Strategic Planning and Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning Transport & Environment have been invited to make a statement and answer Member's questions. They have been asked to make a brief presentation followed by Member's questions.

Legal Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to

Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the information in this report, and the presentation and any further information presented at the meeting;
- ii. Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations on this matter; and
- iii. Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

LEANNE WESTON

Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer

8th March 2024