



20TH October 2016

Agenda Item: 12

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR - PLACE

NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT ROUTE EXTENSION – UPDATE ON FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the first year of operation of the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) phase 2 extension from Nottingham to Park and Ride sites at Toton and Clifton and to provide a summary of costs relating to the level of financial assistance funded during construction.

Background

2. NET lines 2 and 3 to Clifton and Chilwell became operational on 25th August 2015 following a construction period which commenced early in 2012. The two additional routes more than doubled the size of the Nottingham tram network adding 17.5 km of new track, 28 new stops and 2 new park and ride sites which are the termination points for the outbound lines.
3. Trams on line 2 from the Clifton South Park and Ride site (parking capacity 1,000 vehicles) operate at a 7 to 10-minute frequency between 7am and 9pm which offers a journey time of 21 minutes into Nottingham Station. From 6am to 7am and 9pm to midnight the frequency is every 15 minutes.
4. Trams on line 3 from the Toton Lane Park and Ride site (parking capacity 1,400 vehicles) operate at a 7 to 10 minute frequency between 7am and 9pm offering a journey time to QMC of 20 minutes and 28 minutes into Nottingham Rail Station. From 6am to 7am and 9pm to midnight the frequency is every 15 minutes.
5. A 23-year contract was let by Nottingham City Council to Tramlink Nottingham in December 2011 for the design, build, operation and maintenance of the NET network. Tramlink Nottingham was formed as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), under which Taylor Woodrow Alstom (TWA) were formed as the Design and Construction Joint Venture. The Operations and Maintenance contract is with Nottingham Trams Limited (NTL), who are made up of Keolis and Wellglade (the parent company of Trent Barton).
6. Both routes are shown on the accompanying drawings 'NET Phase Two: Clifton via Wilford Route' and 'NET Phase Two: Chilwell via QMC and Beeston Route'.

One Year of Operation

7. Total patronage for the year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 as reported to the Department for Transport was 12.15 million throughout the tram network. This period included 7 full months of operation of the two additional lines 2 and 3. The patronage figure for the year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 was 8.1 million. It is anticipated that there will be a steady growth in patronage over the next 3 – 5 years as the public transport market matures and in response to increased local economic activity. Since Phase Two opened the most popular stops on line 3 between Toton and Nottingham have been the park and ride site, Beeston town centre and the Queens Medical Centre. For information with the publication of timetables covering through running between the initial system and phase two, the terminology has been changed, with line 1 referring to the through service from Hucknall to Chilwell and line 2 to the service from Phoenix Park to Clifton.
8. Since the first tram line opened, public transport use in the Greater Nottingham area has grown from 67 million in 2004 to 78 million in 2016, an increase of 16%. Recent passenger surveys undertaken by Tramlink indicate that over 30% of tram users formerly made their journey by car are now using the tram for all their journeys or are using the park and ride sites.
9. Tram service reliability and punctuality has generally been high. Reliability has consistently been above 97% since services started on lines 2 and 3, and since January, punctuality has improved to levels typically above 97%.
10. The NET service has received a customer satisfaction rating of 98% in a report published by the nationally respected Transport Focus organisation in May 2016 which was the highest figure of all other UK tram networks. This level of satisfaction was described by Paul Maynard the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport as “incredible”.

Construction Period

11. In advance of the construction period it was accepted by both of the original promoting authorities Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and Nottingham City Council (NCiC) that the works were likely to have a significant impact especially in the Chilwell High Road / Chilwell Road retail area. It was concluded that given the unique set of circumstances in this area, specifically a narrow road, high traffic flows, busy on road service requirements for businesses, the construction of two-way tram lines with stops in the area there was significant risk that business activities may be affected.
12. In view of these factors it was agreed that a Financial Assistance Package (FAP) would be available to small business owners to support them during the construction period and a subsequent recovery period. This scheme was additional to the statutory procedures regarding compensation for loss of land and initially was in a defined area focussed upon the High Road / Chilwell Road shopping area. The FAP came into effect on 14th January 2013 following the start of significant diversion work on Chilwell Road and was administered on behalf of both local authorities by Bruton Knowles Property Consultants.
13. In addition to the FAP an Exceptional Disturbance Allowance (EDA) was established which was intended to offer businesses funding for the cost of activities such as additional window cleaning that were necessitated due to the works. The EDA was capped at £60 per week per business.

14. During the construction period it became apparent that the impact of the road works was severe on local business across the area affected by the scheme and the anticipated timescale for re-opening of the route was longer than forecast. In view of this a decision was reached by both NCC and NCiC that the area eligible for the FAP would be extended to cover all areas which were directly impacted upon. NCC determined this at the full council meeting of Thursday 15th May 2014 with a motion stating *"This Council: - Supports the principle that the original financial assistance package should be extended to all businesses that have suffered demonstrable losses directly attributed to NET phase two."* A further report was considered by Transport and Highways Committee on 21st May 2014 approving the opportunity for businesses to claim for loss of income as a direct result of the tram construction works from outside the FAP area under the eligibility terms set out in the report.
15. The FAP included a recovery period after the completion of the works, which allowed payments to continue to be made for one third of the period of the duration that businesses were eligible to claim. In Beeston the recovery period came into effect from 1st June 2015 and most businesses were able to claim until the end of March 2016 though not all businesses did so. A total of 93 businesses accessed the FAP and the EDA during the works along the Beeston / Chilwell route at a cost to NCC of £1,234,960. Of the 93, 20 businesses claimed EDA only. NCiC operated a similar FAP in Clifton to support local businesses.
16. In addition to the FAP both NCC and NCiC resolved to finance a further initiative. A Hardship Fund was established to offer assistance to traders that were experiencing particular financial difficulties during the construction period. A total of 22 businesses benefitted from the Hardship Fund and the total paid to date is £199,552, with both NCC and NCiC contributing £100,000 each which was administered by Broxtowe Borough Council at no cost. The funding offered support to business owners that were experiencing difficulty in meeting operational costs such as rent, leases or stock purchase. It did not require substantial historical trading information to be supplied to support an application for assistance.

Highway Issues Arising

17. In the lead up to the tram becoming operational there was concern expressed by local residents that problems may be created in the vicinity of tram stops by commuters parking nearby on street and creating unofficial park and ride facilities taking advantage of long stay free parking on street. Parking surveys were carried out on 45 roads in Beeston, 16 roads in Chilwell and three roads in West Bridgford prior to the construction of the tram in 2012; with further surveys undertaken on two additional roads in West Bridgford during 2014. Parking surveys were then carried out after the opening of the NET extensions during May 2016 to assess how parking patterns had changed.
18. The surveys have shown that since the opening of the NET extensions:
 - There has been no significant increase in non-residents parking on any of the roads surveyed in West Bridgford;
 - There has been no significant increase in non-residents parking on all but one of the roads surveyed in Chilwell; and the section of road (Eskdale Drive) that has seen increases has no residential properties adjacent to it;
 - There has been no significant increase in non-residents parking on 34 of the roads surveyed in Beeston;

- On five of the roads in Beeston, whilst there have been increases in non-residents parking, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the increase in parking;
 - It has not been possible to determine the changes in parking patterns on two roads in Beeston due to construction work;
 - Parking restrictions at four locations in Beeston were approved as additions to the 2016/17 Integrated Transport Measures programme at the Transport and Highways Committee meeting on 21st September 2016. This was due to the increases in non-resident parking, the fact that these properties do not have off-street parking and the road having little spare capacity resulting in residents having difficulty parking, the locations added to the programme are:
 - Tattershall Drive, Beeston
 - Hallam Road, Beeston
 - Imperial Road, Beeston
 - Lower Regent Street, Beeston
19. To date NCC has received very little in the way of complaints from local residents to suggest this has become a problem. NCC has given a commitment that it will continue to monitor and take appropriate action should such a problem be created and persist.
20. The tram scheme included significant investment in cycling infrastructure to help cyclists travel safely around the tramway and to create new cycling opportunities, all of which have been developed in close consultation with local cycle groups such as PEDALS and road safety experts, and have been developed in accordance with recognised design guidance. Notwithstanding this, there have been concerns about specific incidents of cyclists having difficulty riding along Chilwell Road/High Road due to the presence of tracks and narrow width, and following a road safety audit a number of alterations to warning signs and road markings have been made. This is to highlight the need for cyclists to take extra care when crossing tracks and also to alert motorists to the need to be more considerate to cyclists. For those who are uncomfortable with cycling along this route, an alternative route is available and signed.
21. During Summer 2016 a flooding incident occurred at Fletcher Road /Lower Road area and also on the High Road at the tram stop close to Ellis Grove. A motion in respect of this flood event was presented to Full Council on 4th July 2016 which resulted in a commitment from NCC to ensure that all interested parties worked together to identify the cause of the flooding and seek to initiate any remedial measures necessary. Subsequent to this a meeting has taken place including both NCC and NCiC, Taylor Woodrow, Severn Trent Water and Tramlink to review the event, and Taylor Woodrow has agreed to complete their CCTV surveys of drainage installed as part of the tram works, and following this, to assess if any defects could have been a contributory factor.
22. At present NCC and NCiC as Local Highway Authorities are working with Taylor Woodrow Alstom to make arrangements to formally hand back the network and enter a one-year maintenance period. There are 96 roads in the county maintained area that will form part of the formal handback of the network. Joint drainage inspections are currently being undertaken, all inspections relating to quality and compliance of the civils work including lighting, traffic signals, footways, road construction, signs and lines etc. have been completed and final schedules of defects / non-compliance are being produced. NCC are negotiating with TWA to agree a schedule of work which needs completing before the network can formally enter the one-year maintenance period during which time it will be responsibility of TWA to address any further defects arising.

Additional Issues

23. Broxtowe Borough Council gathers information on various key performance indicators including a monthly occupancy check of each of the Beeston Town Centre ground floor retail and leisure premises. In Beeston during April 2016 the vacancy rate was at 5%, this fell to 4% in July 2016 and remained at 4% during August 2016. The national average most recently reported in April 2016 is at 10% which casts the figure for Beeston in very good terms. Additionally, as compared to other District Centres in Broxtowe the rates show Beeston as performing very well. During construction vacancy rates were at 14% in April 2014 as compared to 7% in April 2015 and as stated above recovered to 5% in April 2016.
24. Since the tram became operational Broxtowe Borough Council now promotes a Wednesday market in The Square at Beeston, this in addition to a Monday market and monthly market.
25. One issue that has been the source of concern for tram users that alight and board at QMC relates to the lack of a dedicated entrance into the Hospital from the tram platform. Nottingham University Hospitals now have revised plans to provide such a direct access and has advised this will be in situ by late Summer 2017.

Reasons for Recommendations

26. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

28. This report is for information only and there are no direct financial implication arising from the report. Details related to the Financial Assistance Package, Exceptional Disturbance Allowance and Hardship Fund are included in paragraphs 11 to 16.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is **recommended** that:

- 1) Committee note the update on the first year of operations of the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) phase 2 extension from Nottingham to Park and Ride sites at Toton and Clifton and the summary of costs relating to financial assistance funded during construction.

Tim Gregory
Corporate Director – Place

Name and Title of Report Author

Mike Barnett, Team Manager Major Projects and Improvements - Via East Midlands Limited

Constitutional Comments (CH – 05/10/2016)

29. The report is for noting purposes only.

Financial Comments (GB – 06/10/2016)

30. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

All relevant documents for the proposed scheme are contained within the scheme file which can be found in the Major Projects and Improvements Team at Trent Bridge House, West Bridgford.

Specific reports include:

- Report to Transport and Highways Committee, 31st October 2013 – Agenda Item 8 Nottinghamshire Express Transit: Nottingham – Toton Extension, Financial Assistance Package for Local Traders and Business
- Report to Transport and Highways Committee, 20th March 2014 – Agenda Item 7 Nottinghamshire Express Transit: Nottingham – Toton Extension, Update to Special Hardship Fund
- Report to Transport and Highways Committee, 20th March 2014 – Agenda Item 5 Nottinghamshire Express Transit: Nottingham – Toton, Financial Assistance Package
- Report to Transport and Highways Committee, 17th July 2014 – Agenda Item 7 Nottinghamshire Express Transit: Nottingham – Toton Extension, Update to Special Hardship Fund
- Report to Transport and Highways Committee, 21st September 2016 – Agenda Item 4 Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance Capital Programmes 2016/17

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Beeston North
Beeston South and Attenborough
Chilwell and Toton
Chilwell and Toton
West Bridgford West

Councillor Steve Carr
Councillor Kate Foale
Councillor John Doddy
Councillor Richard Jackson
Councillor Gordon Wheeler