



Oldham
Council

Report to CABINET

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) – Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor

Portfolio Holder (s):

Councillor Amanda Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

Officer Contact:

Emma Barton, Executive Director Place and Economic Growth

Report Author:

Eleanor Sykes, Transport Policy Officer

17th October 2022

Reason for Decision

Oldham Council has secured additional funding for scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), via:

- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)

The purpose of this report is to confirm the value of the grant available to Oldham and notify Cabinet of the intention to bring this additional resource into the transport capital programme to commence detailed development of the scheme.

The report will also outline the steps that Oldham Council will need to take to procure the necessary support to develop the scheme in the appropriate timescales and to meet the funding requirements for both development and future delivery of the scheme.

Executive Summary

The Greater Manchester CRSTS programme business case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in September 2021 by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on behalf of themselves and all 10 GM districts.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) received confirmation of our full CRSTS allocation of £1.07bn for spend across 2022/23-2026/27 on the 1st April 2022.

On the 29th July 2022, the DfT, as the funders of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, confirmed the delivery plans and funding allocations to each city region and sent a funding letter to each City Region Mayor.

One scheme included in the delivery plan is the TfGM-led Quality Bus Transit (QBT) scheme for the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Corridor.

This scheme has been developed over the past 2 years and has now secured Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) assurance through TfGM processes to move to the next stage of scheme development, utilising some of the now approved DfT CRSTS capital budget.

Recommendations

- That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), be accepted.
- Approval is granted to enter into a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM in relation to the proposed scheme development.
- That the intention to bring the additional resource into the transport capital programme in 2022/23 and complete development of the scheme in the appropriate timescales be noted.
- Approval to procure and make tender awards relating to the necessary external support required to develop the QBT scheme (examples listed in the report) be delegated to the Executive Director for Place & Economic Growth.
- Approval to use part of this resource to progress the development of and tender for a Strategic Partnership Agreement with a view to awarding the works packages to a single Contractor to meet the expectations and timescales of the funders be granted.
- Approval to use part of this resource to appoint temporary agency support within the Highways Team to progress design options to secure further capital funding for Oldham be granted.

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) – Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor

1 Background

- 1.1 Quality Bus Transit (QBT) refers to a programme of highway improvements along corridors that will improve the reliability, accessibility, and attractiveness of local buses on strategic corridors that connect people to key destinations, such as town centres, schools, hospitals, and employment sites, as well as the wider transport network.
- 1.2 As part of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (GMTS2040) 10 bus routes across GM were proposed for development as QBT corridors in the 5-year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-26), including the Rochdale – Oldham - Ashton QBT.
- 1.3 QBT measures can include the following:
- Strategic bus priority measures that reduce journey times and bus delays e.g. new and extended bus lanes, bus priority at junctions, bus gates/bus only streets, signal priority for buses.
 - Bus stop improvements e.g. accessibility improvements, high quality shelters and seating, information on buses, improved public realm, improved links to/from bus stops.
 - Streets for All improvements e.g. wider streets-based improvements to the corridor that complement bus measures, coherent bee network facilities, public realm improvements, improved connections to rail and Metrolink stops.
 - Wider supporting measures e.g. high-spec electric buses, smart/integrated ticketing, and promotional and engagement activities.
- 1.4 The ROA corridor is a 10-mile orbital corridor, which serves 4 town centres, includes 1 bus route, connects to the wider transport network (Metrolink and rail), and includes key development sites delivering c.1,200 new homes.
- 1.5 Within Oldham the route runs through six of our wards - Medlock Vale, Alexandra, Werneth, Coldhurst, Royton South and Royton North.
- 1.6 This corridor is in the first phase of QBT delivery across GM and had Transforming Cities Funding (TCF) awarded to commission the consultant Atkins to develop concept designs and a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC).
- 1.7 The relevant Portfolio Holders (Planning, Neighbourhoods, Transport and Finance and Low Carbon) had a presentation from TfGM and Council officers on the ROA QBT in January 2022. This was prior to the SOBC being complete and CRSTS funding being confirmed but Members were supportive and very keen to see the scheme progress.

2 Current Position

Next Steps

- 2.1 The GM Streets for All Programme Board endorsed the recommendation to approve the SOBC for the ROA QBT scheme on the 27th July 2022.
- 2.2 The next steps now include:

-
- TfGM request Outline Business Case (OBC) development funding drawdown to GMCA in September 2022 from the CRSTS allocation for this QBT corridor of £50m. This drawdown includes an ask of £632,050 for Oldham Council costs to develop the scheme to the OBC stage.
 - Oldham Council accept the grant offer of £632,050 for scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).
 - Oldham Council enter into a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM in relation to the proposed scheme development.
 - Oldham Council bring the additional resource into the transport capital programme in 2022/23 and commence design development for main scheme and ‘quick win’ interventions in October 2022 (on behalf of TfGM).
 - Completion of OBC for corridor and combined Outline/Full Business Case for ‘quick win’ interventions with a target date of May 2023 (completed by TfGM).

External Support

2.3 The £632,050 ask prepared by Oldham Council to TfGM for development costs includes the following work:

- Officer time on developing the scheme, consultation and engagement with Members and key stakeholders, communications, finance, legal and procurement input (£554,650).
- Traffic Modelling.
- Signal design.
- Topographical surveys.
- Intrusive surveys and site investigation.
- Landscape architect input.
- Development of a Strategic Partnership Agreement to aid with delivery of this, and other, CRSTS schemes.

2.4 The elements of the above work that we require external support to deliver (topographical surveys, intrusive surveys, site investigation and landscape architect input etc.) will be discussed with procurement and the most appropriate procurement methods selected. It is proposed that the approval for any procurement activity, including the award of contracts for any of these works will be delegated to the Executive Director for Place & Economic Growth (who may delegate further if appropriate to ensure procurement and delivery in a timely manner).

Strategic Partnership Agreement (Delivery Model)

2.5 For Oldham Council to meet the expectations and delivery timescales required under CRSTS we need to adopt a pro-active approach to procurement of a contractor to deliver works.

2.6 We have previously entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement – ‘Accessible Oldham’ - with a medium-sized local contractor who are successfully delivering several works packages across the town centre to meet timescales put in place by funders. This agreement is working well and evidence that, once established, in conjunction with legal, procurement and finance colleagues, a Strategic Partnership Agreement can be used to negate the need for lengthy procurement exercises of up to 3-4 months for each package of works.

-
- 2.7 Repeating this successful model for the development and delivery of highway works on the QBT (and other schemes coming forward through CRSTS allocations) means that individual projects will be procured via a Call Off procedure under the Strategic Partnership Agreement. The Call-Off procedure would be governed by the overarching agreement and each order for works (Call-Off) would be approved at Director level (in liaison with the Directors of Finance and Legal Services) rather than through individual Cabinet reports for each element of work over £400k.
- 2.8 In addition, having a Strategic Partner in place will assist the Delivery Team at key stages of the development of schemes and business cases through Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and fast-track, where applicable, the construction of projects, to meet the expectations demands of the overseeing organisations.

Additional Highways Resource

- 2.9 In addition to the delivery model outlined above there is also a need to appoint temporary agency support within the Highways Team to progress design options on the QBT to ensure we can secure further capital funding for the scheme and its delivery at various upcoming assurance stages.
- 2.10 An element of the £632,050 development drawdown for Oldham (£554,650) is set aside for staff time for all the necessary resources to develop the scheme, including input from a wide range of Council colleagues.
- 2.11 This identified budget will support the request to appoint additional agency members of staff via a recognised framework to produce the design information and technical support needed for outline and full business case(s) subject to available external funding and programme permits.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 There are two options:

Option 1:

- That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), be accepted.
- That approval is granted to enter into a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM in relation to the proposed scheme development.
- That approval for all procurement activity and tender award decisions relating to the necessary external support required to develop the QBT scheme (examples listed in the report) be delegated to the Executive Director for Place & Economic Growth.
- That approval to use part of this resource to progress the development of and tender for a Strategic Partnership Agreement with a view to awarding the works packages to a single Contractor to meet the expectations and timescales of the funders be granted.
- That approval to use part of this resource to appoint temporary agency support within the Highways Team to progress design options to secure further capital funding for Oldham be granted.

Option 2:

- That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton

Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), is not accepted.

- That approval to enter into a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM in relation to the proposed scheme development is not granted.
- That approval for all tender award decisions relating to the necessary external support required to develop the QBT scheme (examples listed in the report) be delegated to the Executive Director for Place & Economic Growth is not granted.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 We are recommending 'Option 1' as this will enable us to develop the QBT scheme in the appropriate timescales to meet the funding requirements for both the development and future delivery of the scheme.

4.2 The alternative, 'Option 2' would be reputationally damaging. We have committed to develop and implement these types of schemes as part of the GM 2040 Transport Strategy (<https://tfgm.com/2040-transport-strategy>).

4.3 In addition, this scheme will make the corridor a more attractive option for travel by bus and active travel modes for both local, short, and onward journeys.

5 Consultation

5.1 As part of the Atkins commission into the QBT they carried out some public engagement, however Covid-19 impacted on this.

5.2 Key Portfolio Holders in Oldham were briefed in January 2022 and introduced to the QBT scheme as part of a wider briefing on the GM Streets for All approach.

5.3 We will continue the engagement with Members of wards along the route and are currently working on how this takes place as we start to develop our stakeholder engagement plan.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The acceptance of the £632k CRSTS capital grant funding will enable delivering the scheme development of the Oldham section of the Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor, which is detailed in the body of the report, on behalf of TfGM. The overall cost of the scheme will need to be contained within the available funding.

6.2 The Councils 2022/23 capital programme will be amended to reflect the receipt of the £632k additional grant and planned programme of expenditure.

(John Edisbury)

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 Grant funding awarded by TfGM will be subject to the Council entering into a grant funding delivery agreement. It is essential that the agreement is reviewed by Legal Services so that any risks can be addressed and, where possible, mitigated. All matters of note and all risks will be communicated to relevant officers for consideration.

7.2 The procurement activity proposed in the report must be undertaken in consultation with the Commercial Procurement Unit and with Legal Services, who will supply suitable forms of contract. Provided all activity follows the Contract Procedure Rules and that the award

processes are in accordance with the advertised evaluation and scoring criteria, there are no known legal implications linked to the procurement recommendations.
(Sarah Orrell)

8. Co-operative Agenda

- 8.1 Development of the QBT scheme in Oldham is part of the collaborative approach to public transport and active travel schemes which sees the 10 Greater Manchester councils, including Oldham, working in partnership with GMCA and TfGM to improve the city-region's active travel network.

The QBT proposals will assist Oldham to meet the mode share targets we have supported as part of the GM 'Right Mix Vision' – for 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester to be made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2040.

They will also encourage travel by active and sustainable modes, reduce road danger in Oldham and improve the environment and air quality for people living and working in Oldham.

9 Human Resources Comments

- 9.1 None

10 Risk Assessments

- 10.1 The Council in accepting this grant must determine whether it can comply with the grant conditions and deliver the project. The risks in accepting this grant award are assessed as minimal.

(Mark Stenson)

11 IT Implications

- 11.1 None

12 Property Implications

- 12.1 None

13 Procurement Implications

- 13.1 If option one is selected and approved, that the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) is accepted for scheme development and a Funding Delivery Agreement with TfGM be entered into in relation to the proposed scheme, any additional external support resources required by Oldham Council to discharge its obligations for the grant funded scheme must be fully compliant in accordance with the **Public Contracts Regulations (2015)**.

The compliant procurement of external consultants and professionals for the delivery of services, as previously stated, traffic modelling, signal design, topographical surveys and the development of strategic partnership agreements will be delivered using specialist frameworks as permitted and set out in **PCR 2015 Chapter 2, Section 4 r33 Framework Agreements**.

A decision to utilise certain frameworks available to Oldham Council has been taken including the use of the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) framework Lots to deliver

these specialist requirements and services. The use of frameworks allows compliant flexibility and efficiency in securing the necessary external support services required for successful delivery.
(Phil Harper-Oliver)

14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

14.1 None

15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

15.1 None

16 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

16.1 No

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 Yes

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 NEI-13-22