

Report to the Transport for South Hampshire Joint Committee

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Subject: South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit Progress Update

Purpose of the Report

This report provides a progress update on the high profile South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit prior to the commencement of the substantive launch campaign for the opening of Phase 1A in Spring 2012. The report covers Phase 1A a construction overview, progress on the operational voluntary partnership agreement, the marketing and launch campaign and increasingly important operational elements.

The report also summarises progress on the ongoing commissions covering the development and progression of future phases of the scheme in advance of the completion of these work-streams in March 2012. A more detailed report will be prepared for this Committee in May 2012 which will follow on from the Phase 1A opening and the completion of the future phase commissions. The report will include a suggested next steps delivery and funding strategy to build upon the positive opening and marketing of Phase 1A and help provide a lever to lobby key stakeholders and funding bodies.

Recommendation

- a) That the Transport for South Hampshire Joint Committee note the contents of the report, which provides an update on the South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit, Phase 1A and future phases.

Introduction

1. The main construction works for the South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit scheme have been ongoing since October 2010 and the first phase of the scheme is now moving rapidly towards completion and the more public facing operational phase. Whilst there is still ongoing emphasis on the completion of the construction work, the focus in the public eye is now starting to be more directed towards the operational dimension including the provision of the brand new high specification buses, bus stop infrastructure, and new bus routes and service provision.

2. The completion and operational opening of the first phase whilst critically important at this time, must be viewed in the context of the development and delivery of future phases of the much wider network in order for the full value of the scheme to start to be realised. A critical package of work is currently being progressed to identify the network, route priorities and funding sources and strategies to facilitate future phases and hence add value to the ongoing section.
3. The first part of this report will provide a brief update on Phase 1A:
 - (i) construction milestones;
 - (ii) progress on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement;
 - (iii) marketing, branding and launch campaign; and
 - (iv) operational Issues.
4. The second part of this report will provide a progress update on future phases and scheme development:
 - (i) BRT Phase 1B and 3 Tichborne Way in Gosport to Gosport town centre and ferry, feasibility study;
 - (ii) BRT Phase 9 – A27 Delme roundabout in Fareham to the Queen Alexandra Hospital (QAH) in Portsmouth, feasibility study;
 - (iii) BRT wider network development study; and
 - (iv) BRT Funding and Delivery Strategy.

Construction Milestones

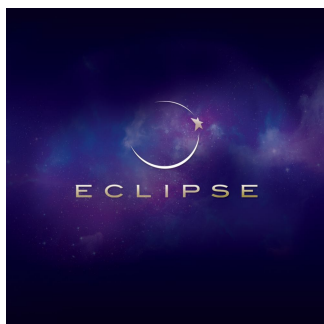
5. In terms of construction, significant progress has been made since the last report to this Committee in April 2011. Road carriageway construction, drainage, lighting and fencing are now nearing completion along large sections of the route. Since April some of the key milestones in relation to the construction work have included: the re-opening of Palmerston Drive; the closure of Redlands Lane until late 2011 to enable the safe construction of a retaining wall, steps and a toucan crossing; work towards the re-opening of Wych Lane before Christmas, which has been closed to all traffic since March 2011 to enable the road to be raised by around 2 metres; and the construction of a retaining wall at Gregson Bridge to enable footway construction onto adjacent roads.
6. Construction work and testing of the all of the operational elements of the route including the security barriers and CCTV are currently planned to be completed and ready for the operational **opening on 23 April 2012.**

Voluntary Partnership Agreement

7. Progress on the **Voluntary Partnership Agreement** was reported to this Committee in April 2011. The Committee recommended that the agreement once finalised should form the basis of other similar agreements which will be developed in the future to cover the wider network. Since April the legal representatives of the County Council and First Group have been reviewing the fine points of the agreement and are now in a position close to concluding and signing the agreement prior to the opening of the route in April. The agreement covers such items as BRT bus services, Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), bus stops, transport interchanges, accessibility, branding, marketing and monitoring. *A verbal update will be provided if any significant developments have taken place since the report drafting.*

Branding and Launch

8. Following the approval by the Joint Committee on 20 April 2011 of the South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit brand, the **Eclipse brand** name and logo (shown below) have been registered as a Trade Mark in the name of Hampshire County Council.



9. The brand was launched to the media on 4 November 2011, which resulted in significant coverage in the print, online and broadcast media – local and trade, and a pre-launch marketing campaign began on 7 November, with direct mail leaflets distributed to over 8,000 properties in Gosport and Fareham; billboard and other on-street advertising (billboard at Fareham railway station shown below); bus-back and on-bus advertising and the creation of a new microsite, www.eclipsebus.co.uk.



10. The commencement of the launch of the busway to the public will start in March/early April with a co-ordinated marketing campaign that will include a direct mail leaflet with discounts and special offers, a route map and timetables; billboard and poster advertising; on-bus and bus-back advertising and a radio promotional campaign with Wave 105FM. It is planned to hold two promotional days in Gosport town centre and two in Fareham town centre, where an Eclipse bus will be available for people to board and First will provide information and promotional giveaways. On the first day of operation, First will also be encouraging people to try Eclipse with special offers. Business tours are also planned, where an Eclipse bus will be taken to business parks in Gosport and Fareham and business people encouraged to find out more about the benefits of the busway. In addition, talks to local business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce will be organised.
11. The busway is planned to be in operation from **Monday 23 April 2012**, and an official launch event will take place on Wednesday 25 April 2012, when Norman Baker MP will visit and a reception will be held.

Operational Issues

12. In keeping with the high specification Eclipse brand image and as part of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement, First Group have funded the provision of 14 brand **new single deck buses** that will operate the Eclipse services costing £2.3 million as part of their contribution towards the scheme. The buses are state of the art and will include the latest in low emission technology, such as Euro 5 level emissions engines. They include features such as; passenger information screens, full disabled access, free wi-fi as well as leather seating, wooden flooring and will be fully branded in the BRT 'Eclipse' livery. The buses are fitted with RTPI kits that will enable RTPI to be available at all bus stops along the busway as well as being disseminated via the web and mobile phones to all areas of Fareham and Gosport. In addition, a further 41 buses in First's fleet in Fareham and Gosport are being fitted with kits that will make RTPI available to many more bus services on the peninsula.

13. The **bus stops and associated infrastructure** along the route are also of high specification including solar panels, seating, lighting, cycle parking at the busiest stops, Help Points at all stops; and closed circuit security cameras as well as real-time passenger information advising on the arrival times of the next buses. See image below.



14. **Bus routes and services and infrastructure improvements** will extend beyond the busway onto the wider bus network in order to connect directly with Fareham railway station, Gosport town centre and the ferry, where brand new stops and passenger facilities will be provided. The routes and frequencies are currently being finalised and agreed with the bus operators. There will be two main BRT routes which will both operate between Gosport bus station and Fareham bus station. They will use the full length of the busway and enter Fareham town centre via Redlands Lane, Fareham Rail Station and West Street. The routes will be very similar to the existing 82 and 86 services but will completely bypass the congested A32. It will be the first time that Gosport residents will have had a direct bus link to access the rail network at Fareham rail station. BRT will also provide fast links to the Gosport Ferry and onwards to Gunwharf Quays and Portsmouth Harbour rail station. Other services will also be permitted to make use of the busway as long as they meet the criteria in the operating agreement. First's current service 88, again between Gosport and Fareham is likely to make use of part of the busway to avoid traffic congestion.

Future Phases

BRT Phase 1B and 3 Tichborne Way in Gosport to Gosport town centre and ferry, feasibility study

15. The BRT report to this Committee in April 2011 identified the extension of Phase 1A to connect with Gosport town centre and ferry as a priority. Planning permission is already in place and detailed design work has been completed to enable the extension of the dedicated busway south

from Tichborne Way to Military Road. Subsequent feasibility work has now been completed upon this section following a detailed optioneering exercise which took into account journey time issues, network delay points, potential patronage and operational issues leading to a preferred short and long term strategy.

16. The study identified Rowner Road (which is north of Military Road) as the optimum place to connect the dedicated railway corridor route with the existing highway network in the short term with a longer term option to continue along the railway corridor route as far south as Anns Hill Road. From Rowner Road three routes are proposed via improved A32 Brockhurst roundabouts, along high patronage routes and linking to key destinations; one via Elson and Priddys Hard, one via Gosport War Memorial Hospital and a third via St Vincents College. All three routes link to key improved stops in the town centre and at the ferry and bus station.
17. The study findings will be built into the report on BRT Future Phases and will be fully reported in May 2012 and critically defined as part of the delivery strategy.

BRT Phase 9 – A27 Delme roundabout in Fareham to the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, feasibility study

18. The BRT report to this Committee in April identified the A27 to the east of Fareham as a priority. Further to the recommendation and as part of a package of work commissioned through the Highways Professional Services Framework (IESE) in August to be completed by March 2012 a feasibility study was commenced by Atkins. Work is progressing well and is seeking to identify preferred solutions along the corridor following an assessment of journey time issues, patronage and operational issues and engineering issues. The scheme seeks to; help improve the bus access along the eastern approach to Delme roundabout, help improve access to and improved facilities at Portchester shops, and improvements involving new and linked signals between Port Solent and Raymarine roundabout in conjunction with improved accessibility to the Queen Alexandra Hospital. The study findings will be included in the wider BRT study to be fully reported in May 2012.

BRT Future Phase Network

19. A key part of the package of work being progressed by Atkins is the identification of a preferred network of specific routes for the remaining sections of the wider network. Work is progressing which has taken into account demand along key corridors, journey times, patronage and status of routes. Operator liaison and liaison with key stakeholders has formed a key part of this study. The study will encompass all parts of the network and will provide an outline feasibility design and cost for each part in turn.

Funding, Economic and Delivery Strategy

20. This part of the package in many ways is the most significant. The strategy is being undertaken by Ernst and Young who are sub-contracted to Atkins for this piece of work. Ernst and Young will identify a clear funding and economic strategy based upon all public and private sector potential sources and will be looking for innovative ways to influence decision makers and lobby for future funding, for instance transport or infrastructure funds could be developed based upon a combination of funding sources including elements of Community Infrastructure Levy and repayment loan options. Importantly this study will identify the delivery mechanisms required to drive this high profile scheme forward. The timing of the completion of the study is critically linked to the opening of Phase 1A. It will be essential to have a clear understanding at this time regarding short and longer term delivery priorities and the strategy for securing funding to progress the wider scheme whilst the Eclipse is receiving high levels of positive publicity. The report to this committee in May 2012 will report fully on the findings of this study.

Portsmouth Update

21. The recent funding successes for Portsmouth City Council in relation to both Tipner and Northern Road Bridge are supported. It is recognised that in relation to Tipner the Eclipse provides a significant enhancement to the public transport access to the site. At a recent meeting Portsmouth City Council reaffirmed their commitment to the Eclipse project and are working jointly with Hampshire County Council officers to ensure the benefits of the scheme within the Portsmouth area can be fully realised

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

None

Rpt/3616/HW