

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 27 February 2020

A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Scheme - Response to Draft Orders and Environmental Statement

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	N/A
Council Commitments	6 , 19

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To notify Committee of the Council's response to the draft Orders and Environmental Statement published as part of proposals to grade-separate the Sheriffhall Roundabout on the A720. The response was approved by the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of Transport and Environment Committee prior to submission.

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A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Scheme - Response to Draft Orders and Environmental Statement

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report notifies Committee of the Council's formal response to the published draft Orders as part of the statutory process to grade-separate Sheriffhall Roundabout on the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass. The response aligns with local and national policies and was compiled on feedback from the relevant service areas.
- 2.2 The Council did not formally object to the draft Orders, however, a number of observations and concerns were raised in relation to the proposed scheme and the Council welcomes opportunities to further engage with Transport Scotland (the promotor of the scheme) on these matters.
- 2.3 As the statutory consultation deadline for submissions fell before this Committee meeting, the Executive Director of Place approved, in consultation with the Transport and Environment (T&E) Convener and Vice Convener, the content of the response prior to its submission on 31 January 2020. A copy of the Council's final response is attached in Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 The case for grade-separation at Sheriffhall roundabout was initially identified in the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) in 2008 and is now being taken forward by Transport Scotland as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.
- 3.2 The proposed scheme is to restructure the existing at-grade roundabout at Sheriffhall to a grade-separated junction, connecting the A7 North, A6101 Millerhill Road, A6106 Old Dalkeith Road, A7 South and four new A720 slip roads, with the A720 being carried over an enlarged Sheriffhall Roundabout. The proposal includes measures to enhance routes for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs), including pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. These measures will remove an existing barrier to NMU at the junction.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Council recognises the well documented issues on A720 City Bypass and the case for the grade-separation of the A720 Sheriffhall roundabout. However, the proposals, as they are currently configured, do not align with key local and national priorities and objectives, and therefore, the Council is of the view that amendments to the proposals are required (amendments that resolve key matters to better support a coordinated approach of sustainable travel and help reduce car traffic related carbon emissions). The Council's observations on the current proposals are based on the following:
- 4.1.1 The Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) proposes the incorporation of bus priority as part of the grade-separation scheme (T13), however, the current Transport Scotland proposal does not include any dedicated bus priority measures. Therefore, in cognisance of the LDP (a statutory document), the proposal should be amended to include bus priority measures from the onset.
 - 4.1.2 The final grade-separation design should deliver a robust proposal that not only caters for immediate bus priority, but also provides the future proofing of options to deliver mass rapid infrastructure, such as tram, at a later date (a requirement that is safeguarded in the LDP as intervention T1).
 - 4.1.3 The Council suggests that the Sheriffhall grade-separation proposal safeguards public transport based mass rapid transport on the A720 City Bypass (within the built structures) and that further consideration of a mass rapid transit proposition along the A720 is delivered during the next stages of Strategic Transport Project Review 2 (which Transport Scotland are also leading on).
 - 4.1.4 The commitment to remove the existing barrier for NMUs across the A720 at Sheriffhall, unlocks an opportunity to develop a step change in NMU facilities along a much longer part of the A7 corridor. Therefore, the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) intends to develop a bid to Sustrans Scotland for a cross-boundary Active Travel scheme which would join-up connections with larger Active Travel networks.
- 4.2 Full details of the Council's comments are included in Appendix 1.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Engage with Transport Scotland to further explore the observations and concerns raised by the Council in relation to the proposals.
- 5.2 The Council, in consultation with relevant officers, stakeholders and elected members, will consider a potential a bid to Sustrans Scotland for funds to a develop a cross-boundary Active Travel scheme which would join-up larger Active Travel networks connections with the new Sheriffhall scheme.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The scheme is being funded by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. There are no direct financial implications on the Council associated with responding to this consultation.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 In responding to this consultation exercise, this report and supporting Appendix reflect the coordinated views of relevant officers, senior management and the T&E Convener and Vice Convener.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Scheme - Draft Orders and Environmental Statement](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1: Council response to A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Scheme

Appendix 1

Response by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to:

A720 SHERIFFHALL ROUNDABOUT SCHEME STATUTORY CONSULTATION (DRAFT ORDERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT)

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) recognises the well documented issues on A720 City Bypass and the case for the grade separation of the A720 Sheriffhall roundabout as part of a wider and planned strategic proposition for the entire City Bypass.

However, CEC has concerns that the grade separation, if done in isolation and not as part of a wider planned strategic invention for A720 in its entirety as is currently proposed, could encourage and increase car use which is contrary to both national and local level policy objectives and outcomes.

Policy Context

On 16 January 2020 the CEC's Transport and Environment Committee approved Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan – Draft for Consultation (CMP). The CMP aligns with the objectives and priorities of the National Transport Strategy, National Planning Framework, Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, and frames a bold, ambitious and rapid change agenda (underpinned by a target to be net carbon zero by 2030). The CMP sets out a basis for significant tram, bus network and active travel intervention to address major challenges, including those related to the growth of cross-boundary travel, congestion and poor air quality. The CMP also confirmed an ambition for the city centre to be largely car free by 2030 (of which a range of enabling interventions on a city wide and regional basis will be required, such as the upgrading of Park & Ride facilities and the development of regional mass rapid public transport networks).

Furthermore, the Edinburgh Strategic Sustainable Transport Study (a background document of both the emerging Edinburgh City Plan and CMP) sets key priorities for the city and concluded that one of four mass transit corridors to be further developed includes an extension of tram from City Centre to Bio-Quarter and beyond to Dalkeith (where an indicative tram route (T1) to this effect has already been safeguarded in Edinburgh's Local Development Plan). The Edinburgh Strategic Sustainable Transport Study is also helping inform constructive conversations between CEC and Transport Scotland with regard to the development of STPR2.

Key Issues

However, the Sheriffhall proposals as they are currently configured do not align with key local and national priorities and objectives, and therefore, we believe that amendments to the proposals are required (amendments that resolve key matters to better support a coordinated approach of sustainable travel, help reduce car traffic related carbon emissions and the promotion of healthier lifestyles).

The key issues are as follows;

Public Transport in the Short Term

The A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Scheme is situated in a key strategic location and presents a significant opportunity to influence and bring forward a transformation in regional travel choices through the promotion of highly attractive active travel and public transport infrastructure. However, there are no bus priority measures included in the current proposals.

Consequently, CEC insist that dedicated bus priority measures should be included from the onset ensuring that attractive and reliable bus service journey times are delivered as a core scheme outcome. Attractive and reliable bus journey times could be achieved through a variety of measures, including; bus lanes on the approaches and circulatory carriageway. Additionally, the retention of a traffic signal control arrangement, on the local road approaches, would allow for further bus priority to be achieved through traffic signal control.

It is also worth noting that the CEC Local Development Plan proposes the incorporation of bus priority as part of the grade separation scheme (T13) and therefore the scheme should take cognisance of this statutory document and proposals be amended to include, as a minimum, bus priority measures from the onset.

Public Transport in the Medium and Long Term

CEC are considering Bus Rapid Transport in the context of Transport Scotland's emerging Bus Partnership Fund to deliver a step change in cross-boundary bus priority infrastructure; connecting key settlements in Midlothian (including growth areas such as Dalkeith) and Edinburgh. The ambition of this infrastructure would be based on high quality mass rapid bus transit with a prioritised direct routing through the Sheriffhall grade separation. Therefore, CEC recommends that the final grade separation design delivers a robust proposal that not only caters for immediate bus priority, but also provides, within the built structures, an option to deliver mass rapid infrastructure (bus based initially) that could be upgraded to tram at a later date (without triggering a significant redesign of the main infrastructure).

Furthermore, a longer-term ambition is the extension of tram southward to Dalkeith (where the CEC Local Development Plan safeguards a tram route to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and beyond to Midlothian). And as referred to previously, the recently published ESSTS (that has helped informed inputs to STPR2) recommended that further evaluation of the tram route to Dalkeith be undertaken. This work has commenced and constructive discussions with partners are being actively progressed. Therefore, taking cognisance of the statutory plans that safeguard tram routes to Dalkeith, and the appetite to deliver high quality bus rapid transit in the medium term, the design should take account of these proposals and be amended as such to safeguard both such outcomes.

Public Transport on Strategic Road Network

Congestion issues on A720 are well documented and the STPR2 process considers the future proposition of the A720. Considerable work for the introduction of public transport based mass rapid transit on the A720 City Bypass has been previously undertaken (including Orbital Bus proposals) and the development of STPR2 considers future A720 City Bypass interventions further (with public transport based mass rapid transit options forming part of the evaluation). Therefore, the CEC suggests that the Sheriffhall grade separation proposal safeguards public transport based mass rapid transit on the A720 City Bypass and that further consideration of mass rapid transit is delivered during the next stages of STPR2.

Furthermore, the success of any public transport mass rapid transport service on the A720 would be dependent on the implementation of substantial wider supporting infrastructure and would require connections with new and existing Park and Ride Hubs, complimented by the development of supporting Active Travel networks (linking into wider strategic Active Travel networks) at each of these Park and Ride Hubs (offering multi-modal interchange opportunities). CEC recommends that the further consideration of the wider A720 public transport based intervention is also evaluated through next stages of the STPR2 process.

Active Travel

CEC welcomes the commitments to improve the safety and attractiveness for non-motorised users (NMU) as part of the grade separation proposal.

CEC has previously expressed the desire to deliver a good standard of NMU provision in its entirety from origin to destination, and avoid such outcomes where excellent active travel standards are achieved in isolated pockets of interventions (e.g. at new junctions) but fail to connect and join-up as a meaningful overall route enhancement.

Existing arrangements at Sheriffhall Roundabout act as a significant barrier for NMUs. However, the commitment to remove the existing barrier across the A720, transforming conditions for NMUs, unlocks an opportunity to promote and develop a step change in NMU facilities along a much longer part of the A7 corridor. Therefore, CEC intends to develop a bid to Sustrans Scotland for a cross-boundary Active Travel scheme which would join-up connections with larger Active Travel networks from appropriate points in Midlothian and north-westwards to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. CEC recommends that Transport Scotland note this proposed bid and works with Sustrans Scotland to ensure that a coordinated and coherent active Travel network proposition is delivered upon in due course.

Road Network Comments

Current traffic issues on A720 at Sheriffhall, on both local and strategic road approaches, are well documented. The proposals to grade separate strategic and local road traffic will address many existing concerns, however, CEC have residual concerns that the delivery of increased traffic capacity will release induced demand and the ES highlights that *'Underlying traffic volumes on the road network around*

Edinburgh are expected to increase by approximately 40% over the next 20 years', therefore, to allay concerns, CEC would welcome an opportunity to review traffic modelling, assumptions, outputs and analysis to demonstrate that traffic signal control is not required on the local road approaches.

It should also be noted that by not implementing traffic signal control on local road approaches removes the opportunity to implement traffic signal controlled bus priority at the later date and that this aspect should be a material consideration in any further evaluation of traffic signal requirement.

Construction Plans

The CEC would welcome the opportunity to review and make comment on the Temporary Traffic Management arrangement during construction of the scheme and would request early engagement on this matter. Furthermore, an opportunity to review the associated construction phasing plans would also be welcome.

Planning Authority Comments

There are generally no substantive issues with regard to the predicted Landscape and Visual Effects of the proposed scheme or those on Nature Conservation. The one exception being the long-term adverse visual effects on the group of residential properties at Summerside, northwest of Sheriffhall Roundabout within the CEC's administrative area, where scope to provide additional screen planting would be welcomed.

Water Management Comments

CEC are generally content with the Road Drainage and Water Environment proposals at this stage.