

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee

10 am, Friday 6 March 2020

THE A720 SHERIFFHALL ROUNDABOUT JUNCTION UPGRADE SCHEME

Item number

Executive Summary

The agreed terms of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESESCRD) concluded between the City Deal partners and the UK and Scottish Governments, includes a commitment by Scottish Government of up to £120m to support improvements to the A720 City Bypass for the grade separation of Sheriffhall Roundabout.

In December 2019 Transport Scotland, acting on behalf of Scottish Ministers, published draft Orders for the scheme to which any objection could be submitted by 31st January 2020. The ESESCRD partners submitted a representation supporting the scheme, urging Scottish Ministers to complete the statutory procedures and implement the upgrade without undue delay.

The Scottish Government budget, approved by the Parliament on 27th February 2020, includes a commitment by the Government to engage with the local partners to seek their agreement to undertake a review of the scheme and its compatibility with the Scottish Government's environmental obligations.

At its meeting on 28th February 2020 the City Region Deal Leaders' Group asked the Chair of the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board to write to Transport Scotland seeking further information on the scope and timing of this review.



In response Transport Scotland have set out their position on the matter as noted in their letter of 5 March 2020 attached at Appendix C to this report.

The Joint Committee is recommended to note the current position and to agree on any further action.

Grace Vickers

Chair, Transport Appraisal Board, ESESCR Deal

Contact: Ian Johnson, Head of Major Projects, Midlothian Council

E-mail: ian.johnson2@midlothian.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 271 5203

THE A720 SHERIFFHALL ROUNDABOUT JUNCTION UPGRADE SCHEME

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the content of the correspondence with Transport Scotland in relation to the Scottish Government's commitment to undertake a review of the A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Junction Upgrade Scheme.
- 1.2 To agree on any further action in relation to that matter.

2. Background

- 2.1 The ESESCRD document as signed by the UK Government, the Scottish Government, and the City Deal partners in August 2018 includes the following statement within the Transport section – *“The Scottish Government is committed to investing £140m on strategic transport improvements as part of the City Region deal. This specifically includes up to £120m to support improvements to the A720 City Bypass for the grade separation of Sheriffhall Roundabout and £20m investment to support public transport infrastructure improvements identified by the West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal.”*
- 2.2 The ESESCRD document, under the same section goes on to say that: *“Transport Scotland will manage and deliver the upgrade of Sheriffhall Roundabout. The preferred option is a grade separated junction which separates local traffic from the strategic traffic on the A720 (city bypass) and when complete will allow the traffic on the bypass to flow freely, improving road safety and journey times for all users, bringing improved economic benefits and inclusion across Edinburgh and South East Scotland. It will improve accessibility for all modes of transport including walking and cycling. Transport Scotland will provide updates on progress to the Transport Appraisal Board, as well as the Executive Board and Joint Committee as and when appropriate.”*
- 2.3 On 5th December 2019 Transport Scotland, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, published draft Orders for *“The A720 (Sheriffhall Roundabout) Special Road Scheme []”* The draft Orders covered the main scheme, side roads, and the compulsory purchase of land. A period of time up until 31st January 2020 was set aside for the receipt of any objections.

- 2.4 The ESESCRD partners submitted a representation, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A to this report. In summary it states support for the scheme and urges Scottish Ministers to complete the statutory procedures and implement the upgrade without undue delay.

3. Main report

- 3.1 On 27 February 2020 the Scottish Parliament approved the Scottish Government's proposed budget for the financial year 2020/21. As part of the budget settlement, the Scottish Government committed to undertake a review of the scheme to upgrade the Sheriffhall Roundabout and its compatibility with the Scottish Government's environmental obligations.
- 3.2 This matter was discussed at the City Region Deal Leaders' meeting on 28th February 2020. Leaders' agreed that:
- i) the Chair of the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board would write to Transport Scotland to seek further information on the scope and timing of the review; and
 - ii) a report would be submitted on this matter to the meeting of the Joint Committee on 6th March 2020.
- 3.3 A copy of the letter sent by the Chair of the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board to the Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis at Transport Scotland is attached at Appendix B to this report.
- 3.4 The response letter from Transport Scotland dated 5 March 2020 is attached at Appendix C.

4. Financial impact

- 4.1 The costs of the A720 Sheriffhall upgrade scheme are noted at paragraph 2.1 above.

5. Alignment with Sustainable, Inclusive Growth Ambitions

- 5.1 The A720 Sheriffhall upgrade scheme will provide a significant strategic contribution to the City Region Deal Themes 1 (Accelerating inclusive growth), 2 (Removing the physical barriers to growth), and 4 (Targeted employability and skills interventions). In summary it will remove a congestion blockage which, inter alia, hinders the efficient movement of freight and business traffic within the region and to markets outwith the region. It will also improve connectivity within the region through reducing journey times as well as providing opportunities for greater levels of movement by public transport and active travel modes. In addition, during the

construction phase, the community benefit arrangements will provide opportunities for local employment and training.

6. Background reading/external references

- 6.1 i) City Region Deal : Accelerating Growth Agreement : August 2018
- ii) A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout : Environmental Statement : Transport Scotland : December 2019
- iii) Transport Scotland letter of 3rd December 2019 : A720 draft Orders
- iv) Scottish Government press statement “Budget agreement reached” dated 26th February 2020 (including budget agreement letter).

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A : copy of ESESCRD representation response to Scottish Ministers on the A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout draft Orders.
- 7.2 Appendix B: copy of letter to Transport Scotland from the Chair of the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board dated 2nd March 2020.
- 7.3 Appendix C : copy of response from Transport Scotland dated 5 March 2020

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Executive Board

Response to the Scottish Ministers' Draft Orders for the Upgrade of the A720 Sheriffhall Junction

Transport Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, published draft Orders under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 in respect of proposals to upgrade the existing Sheriffhall Junction on the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass trunk road. The draft Orders were published on 6 December 2019, for a period until 31 January 2020 during which objections can be submitted to Transport Scotland. The partners to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal are submitting this supporting representation including recommendations in respect of active travel and public transport.

The City Region Deal includes as one of its specified projects the upgrade of the A720 Sheriffhall Junction, to be fully funded by Scottish Government as part of its overall contribution to the City Deal. The formal City Region Deal document, signed in August 2018 by all of the partners together with the UK and Scottish Governments, states:

“The preferred option is a grade separated junction which separates local traffic from the strategic traffic on the A720 (city bypass) and when complete will allow the traffic on the bypass to flow freely, improving road safety and journey times for road users, bringing improved economic benefits and inclusion across Edinburgh and South East Scotland. It will improve accessibility for all modes of transport including walking and cycling.”

The City Deal partners consider that the published proposals will deliver these outcomes and, accordingly, supports the proposals and urges Scottish Ministers to complete the statutory procedures and implement the upgrade without undue delay.

Environmental sustainability and demonstrable measures to develop a low carbon economy are primary components of the overall City Region Deal agenda to deliver inclusive growth across the region. This is anticipated in the main themes of the Deal, including that of *“Removing the physical barriers to growth”* under which improved connectivity for all communities is a definitive proposed outcome of City Region Deal investment. Essential to that improved connectivity is an emphasis, in accordance with emerging national and regional transport policy, on maximising opportunities to expand and deliver greater levels of active travel measures and public transport. In this respect, the City Deal partners have noted the overarching recommendation of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland in its report *Phase 1 : Key Findings Report A Blueprint for Scotland (January 2020)* that the drive to achieve an inclusive net zero carbon economy is a key consideration in the management of existing, and the provision of new, infrastructure, including transport.

The City Region Deal partners are therefore recommending to Scottish Ministers that, whilst the upgrade proposals are welcome, particularly in relation to the provision being made for cyclists and pedestrians, there are two particular matters worthy of consideration. The first relates to the potential for greater emphasis on bus

priority across the junction from the A7 and A6106 roads, as well as provision for a potential orbital bus route along the A720 ; and in examining options to achieve greater levels of public transport, consideration could be given to a design of the structures which future proofs the option of a tram route extension from north to south across the new junction, and which could also serve as a dual route for buses. This tram route extension option is identified in the City of Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016), and is noted in principle in the Midlothian Local Development Plan (2017).

The second matter for consideration is to maximise the benefits of the proposals for cyclists by including within the scheme proposal measures to increase the attractiveness to cyclists of the approach roads leading to and from the junction; thus providing more of an active travel network linking the City with communities within Midlothian and beyond.

In summary, the City Region Deal partners welcome the draft Orders for the upgrade of the A720 Sheriffhall Junction and would wish the scheme to be implemented at an early date. The partners also consider that in the detailed design of the scheme proposals there is opportunity to further maximise the active travel and public transport benefits in accordance with the overall aims and objectives of the City Region Deal.

2 March 2020

Alison Irvine
Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF



Dear Ms Irvine

A720 Sheriffhall Upgrade Scheme

The next meeting of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee will take place on 6th March 2020. At the agenda pre meeting of the six Council Leaders on 28th February there was discussion on the recent announcement from Scottish Government that the Government budget settlement for 2020/21 includes an undertaking by Government to review the A720 Sheriffhall Upgrade Scheme. As a result of this discussion, Council Leaders have asked that I write to you to seek further information on the scope and timing of the review.

Council Leaders also request a report be submitted to the meeting of the Joint Committee on 6th March. Accordingly, I would be grateful to receive your response to this letter by Thursday 5th March in order that the Joint Committee can be kept fully up to date about the review of this project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Grace Vickers
Chair of City Deal Transport Appraisal Board, and Chief Executive, Midlothian Council

Dr Grace Vickers
Chair of City Deal Transport Appraisal Board, and Chief Executive, Midlothian
Council

5 March 2020

By e-mail Grace.Vickers@midlothian.gov.uk

Dear Dr Vickers,

A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout Improvement and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal

Thank you for your letter dated 2 March regarding the reference to Sherriffhall Roundabout in the Scottish Government Budget debate.

As you are aware draft Orders and an Environmental Statement for the proposed scheme were published on 5 December 2019 and we have received a significant number of representations and objections to the scheme during the statutory consultation period which closed on 31 January 2020. As undertaken on all of our road schemes, we are currently reviewing and considering all of the submissions made with a view to providing substantive responses to each. This includes those representations made by City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council and City Region Deal Partners.

We endeavour to address all concerns raised during this statutory consultation through provision of additional information and assurances, however those submissions that raise objection to the Scheme, as distinct from representation, may need to be heard at a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) if we are unable to resolve them in advance. The statutory process undertaken for all our trunk road schemes rightly allows citizens the right to be heard with comments fully considered before Scottish Ministers ultimately make a decision on the Scheme in accordance with their statutory duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. The scope of the inquiry process is to examine if the draft road orders may be made along with the acquisition of the land identified in the draft compulsory purchase order. Scottish Ministers must also be satisfied that the assessment of the effects on the environment associated with the scheme have been properly mitigated. Accordingly the scheme cannot progress until objections are resolved.

Given the volume of objections received and based on recent experience other major schemes, our view is that it is highly likely that at PLI will be required as part of the statutory process for Sheriffhall Roundabout Improvement.

Further to discussions with City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Council City Region Deal partners at a meeting on 11 February 2020, arranged by the City Region Deal Programme Management Office, Transport Scotland will review the proposals for Sheriffhall Roundabout, in line with the Scottish Government budget agreement and provide answers to the questions posed. This review will focus on whether it is feasible and desirable to further improve active travel and public transport provision whilst not creating additional impacts for local landowners, residents and businesses. We welcome City Region Deal Partners' support for the scheme and note the desire to see the project delivered as soon as possible. We further note that many of the actions that can be taken to improve provision for active travel and public transport are within the remit of the locals authorities adjacent to the scheme.

As discussed at the meeting on 11 February 2020 we agreed to examine the feasibility and impact of introducing bus priority on the local road network within the current scheme boundary, including reallocating roadspace as well as potential signalisation. Our scheme consultants AECOM are already working on this exercise in the context of avoiding additional impacts for local landowners, residents and business of such measures and we will update the Joint Committee on progress and timescales for this review in due course.

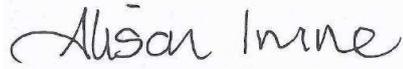
Please be assured that the Scottish Government remains committed to investing £140m on strategic transport improvements as part of the City Region deal, specifically up to £120m to support improvements to the A720 City Bypass for the grade separation of Sheriffhall Roundabout and £20m investment to support public transport infrastructure improvements identified by the West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal. As also outlined in the full deal documentation we will continue to *"...manage and deliver the upgrade of Sheriffhall Roundabout. The preferred option is a grade separated junction which separates local traffic from the strategic traffic on the A720 (city bypass) and when complete will allow the traffic on the bypass to flow freely, improving road safety and journey times for all road users, bringing improved economic benefits and inclusion across Edinburgh and South-East Scotland. It will improve accessibility for all modes of transport including walking and cycling. Transport Scotland will provide updates on progress to the Transport Appraisal Board, as well as the Executive Board and Joint Committee as and when appropriate."*

We would also reiterate that the scheme remains subject to Transport Scotland and City Region Deal governance. Therefore should there be any information arising from the review that has the potential to impact on either cost or timescale for delivery of the scheme this would be raised and considered through the existing governance procedures.

As discussed with you we appreciate that the next Joint Committee meeting is not until June 2020, therefore should Joint Committee members wish to convene a special meeting in the intervening period to discuss the project further then please do let us know. In the meantime the Transport Scotland Project Team will write to City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board partners, including SEStran, to seek an officer level technical discussion on the review and to collaborate on ideas that can be considered.

We look forward to continued engagement in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and will ensure that the Joint Committee is kept fully up to date on the project, including the review.

Yours Sincerely



Alison Irvine
Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis

c.c. Ian Johnson, Midlothian Council
Andy Nicholl, Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Programme
Management Office
Morag Watt, Scottish Government
Robert Martin, Scottish Government
Sandy Jamieson, Transport Scotland
Amy Phillips, Transport Scotland