

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 February 2017**

### **'Let's talk transport – Re-Newcastle' – development programme update**

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#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee on the themes of work identified in the 'Let's Talk Transport – Re-Newcastle' report of July 2014 and subsequent Cabinet reports including March and November 2016.

#### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 In July 2014, a report to the Council Cabinet noted that our Local Plan recognises that an improved transport network is fundamentally important to the future economic growth and liveability of Newcastle. The paper outlined an approach to take forward the Council's commitment to upgrade our transport system by helping people to move more freely around, across and within the city.
- 2.2 In line with the transparent and democratic processes of the Council, the work associated with progressing these recommendations are subject to regular review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **3. North East Local Growth Deal schemes**

- 3.1 Following recent announcements by government about Local Growth Deal funding the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) are conducting a review of the existing Growth Deal programme. Newcastle City Council, along with all other partners in the North East Combined Authority area are taking part in this review.
- 3.2 Newcastle City Council originally secured funding for four transport schemes through the first round of the North East Local Growth Deal. The Full Business Case for Scotswood Bridgehead has been submitted and will be assessed against the North East Combined Authority's assurance framework. The Outline Business Case for the second phase of improvements at the Central Station is being

finalised to be submitted as part of the review of the programme.

- 3.3 The Business Case for the 'Northern Access Corridor' improvement package between Cowgate Junction and Haddricks Mill will be submitted in the coming weeks, as outlined in the November 2016 Cabinet Report 'Connecting Key Junctions in the North of the City'. Further information on the progress of these schemes is outlined in Section 5.

## **4 City Centre Schemes**

### **4.1 City Centre North**

Continuing engagement around the North of the City Centre schemes, particularly with key businesses and transport operators, has resulted in a proposal to trial a series of interventions on an experimental basis, in order to demonstrate the outcomes of the scheme and build confidence prior to a permanent installation.

- 4.2 Two design proposals have been developed for the Percy Street and Barras Bridge locations, incorporating feedback from stakeholders such as Fenwick, John Lewis, Intu, Eldon Garden and Newcastle University. An independent road safety audit has been conducted on each of these design options. We are now in the process of reviewing the audit and the associated signage that would be required before finalising the detail of the trial.

### **4.3 City Centre User Survey**

In December 2016, an independent survey was undertaken in the city centre to better understand the travel and spending habits of those visiting, shopping and working in Newcastle. Both face to face and online survey options were available, with a total of 1063 face to face surveys and 478 online responses being secured. This, and other metrics will act as a baseline for establishing the impact of changes in the city centre and people's travel choices.

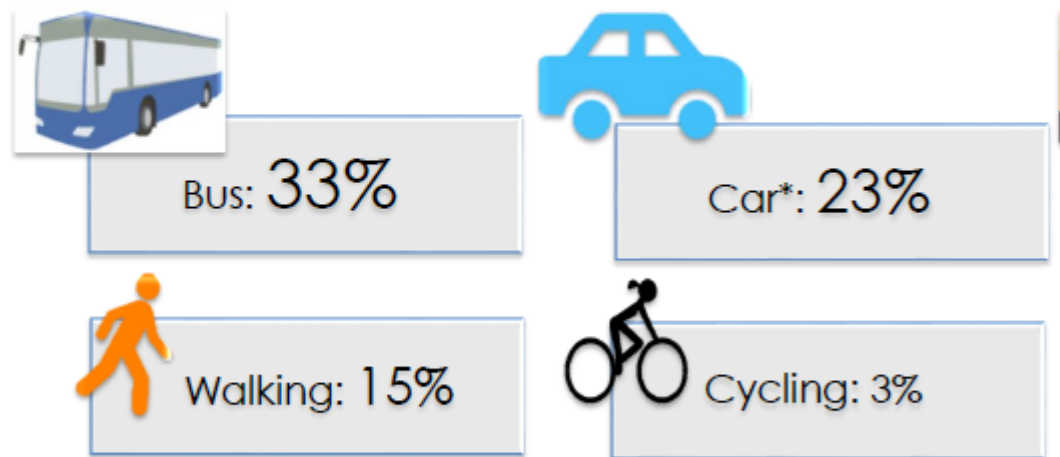
- 4.5 Key findings from the face to face element of the survey included:

- Almost 60% of city centre users travel there by public transport;
- Public transport is often considered a very reliable option;
- Current city centre car parking and accessibility score moderately well;
- Average weekly expenditure in the city centre is typically in the £10-49 range; and
- Over a quarter of city centre users request a cleaner city centre environment

## Transport Used on the Day of Survey Participation

Reiterating the BUS as the most frequently used mode of transport to and from the city ce on the day of survey participation. This shows the bus being followed by the CAR\* (23%) as we show how transport varied by the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Fig.15

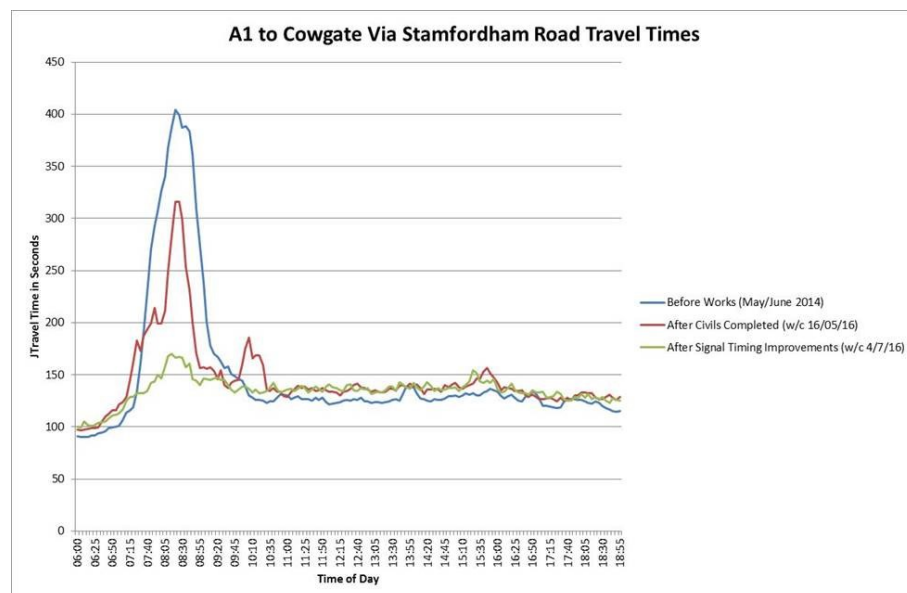
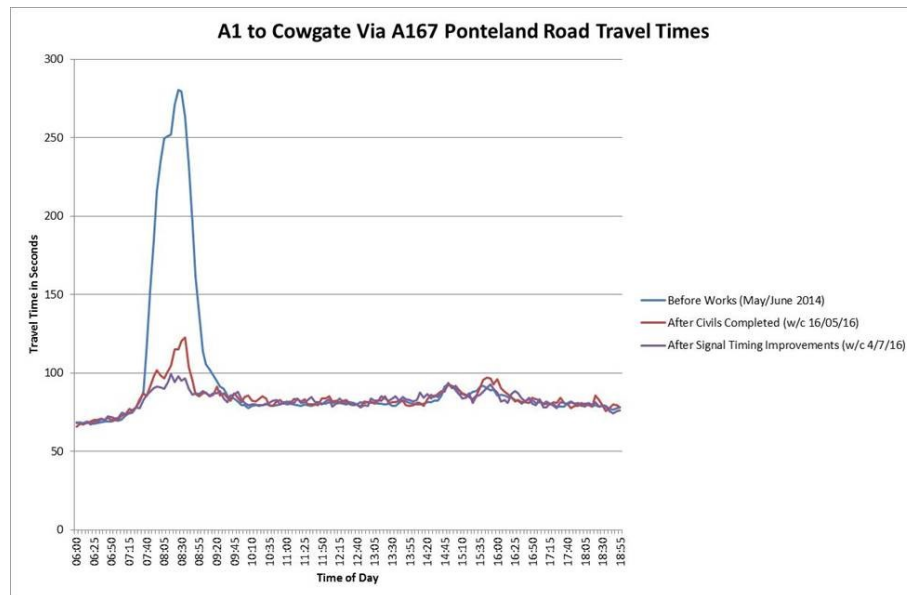


\*or van/lorry

## 5 Large Major Schemes

### 5.1 Cowgate Junction

The first phase of the new Cowgate junction is operational. The junction is already showing journey time decreases of up to 200 seconds northbound and 300 seconds southbound when compared to journey times prior to the improvements. The graph overleaf demonstrates comparative journey times before the works, after the works, and then following some signal time changes to improve the route via Stamfordham Road.



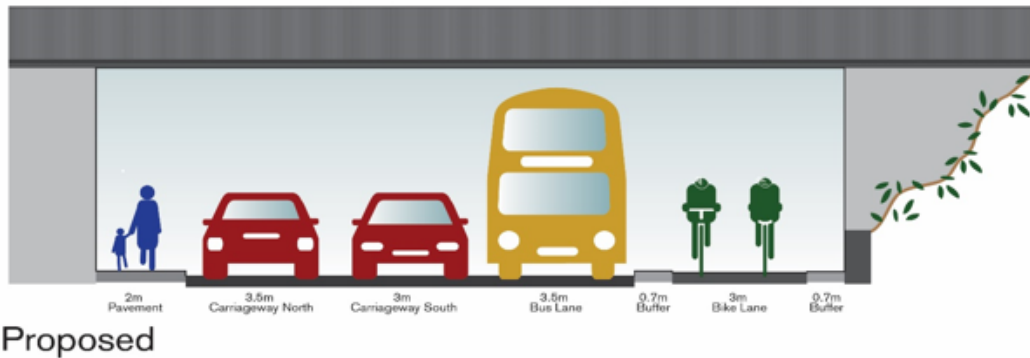
## 5.2 Haddricks Mill, Killingworth Road, and Blue House

Public engagement on the Haddricks Mill proposals took place in August 2016. Although there was significant public opposition to certain elements of the proposed Haddricks Mill junction, this engagement exercise, along with that of Blue House in the same time period, was one of the biggest engagement exercises on a transport scheme that the city has undertaken. Following feedback received throughout this engagement, Newcastle City Council are continuing to make design changes before finalising the Haddricks Mill scheme.

- 5.3 A Planning Application has already been submitted by Nexus for the replacement of the Metro bridge on Killingworth Road, and a Planning Application for the widening of the road and the relocation of the retaining wall will also be

submitted.

- 5.4 Two public engagement events took place in January to communicate the proposals and impacts of the Killingworth Road widening scheme to local people. The engagement events were well attended and generally there appeared to be public support and understanding for the rationale of the Killingworth Road element of this scheme.



Cross section visual used in the Killingworth Road engagement exercise

- 5.5 The City Council has been going through a process of review with a working group of representatives drawn from local groups, organisations and collectives with an interest in the Blue House and Jesmond Dene Road junction improvements – notes and supporting documents about the review can found on line at [bluehousegroup.org](http://bluehousegroup.org)
- 5.6 The group has moved forward to a point of more certainty on two aspects:
- **Improvements to infrastructure for people on foot or on a bike that support the provision of rights to air and exercise on Town Moor land.** The working group have sought the consideration of the Freeman and their Stewards

Committee to the principle that where possible, routes for people on foot and bike would be delivered within designated Town Moor land. Preferably this would be within the existing tree line using appropriate treatments to ensure the roots of the trees are not negatively impacted upon. The introduction of such facilities would also enable the issues created by standing water in the south west corner of the Little Moor to be addressed.

- **Changes to infrastructure at the Blue House Junction.** Our data shows that the junction is currently the second worst in the city for injuries to people caused by road traffic collisions. The majority of injuries occur in the north-west quadrant of the junction (the area closest to the Blue House). A number of options are being considered for the junction to address safety and reliability issues. Options under consideration include the potential removal of the Blue House and its associated garden (within the boundary of the property).

## 6. Supporting the delivery of housing

- 6.1 The Strategic Highways Study (SHS) was undertaken to assess the impact of the development of SLR sites on the highway network. It identified a number of junctions for improvement and showed potential solutions to mitigate the impact of housing delivery on the proviso that schemes had to be delivered within the existing highway boundary. This was endorsed by Cabinet in November 2015 (<http://democracy.newcastle.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=857&MId=6406&Ver=4>, see Item 10).
- 6.2 We have commenced work to develop a matrix to prioritise the junction improvements needed, using NCC data alongside information on Northumberland and North Tyneside's Local Plans, as well as other development sites north of the River Tyne. The matrix will produce a 5 year rolling programme of required highway works, changeable should sites not be delivered as expected.
- 6.3 In order to ensure the delivery of housing and growth in the outer west, the junctions identified in the SHS will require improvement – the matrix will identify the correct improvement at the correct time. This will allow us to resource plan effectively to ensure that the funding is available in advance of schemes being required to allow for their development. Work needs to be carried out to identify funding for the development / design of schemes.

## **7 Engagement, consultation and communications**

7.1 One of the key messages received about the development of transport proposals has been the communication and engagement exercises that take place. This is something that has been highlighted by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously. Consequently, a number of improvements have been made to the way in which we raise awareness, provide information and seek feedback and comments on transport schemes.

7.2 Newcastle City Council have employed both on and offline methods to engage with our stakeholders, including face to face drop ins, regular meetings and workshops help to build trust, confidence and strong working relationships. Online feedback tools, help broaden the appeal and accessibility of our consultations and provide an effective vehicle for one off involvement in a specific scheme. The complexity of a proposal ultimately determines the extent and depth of the methods we will devise to engage and involve stakeholders.

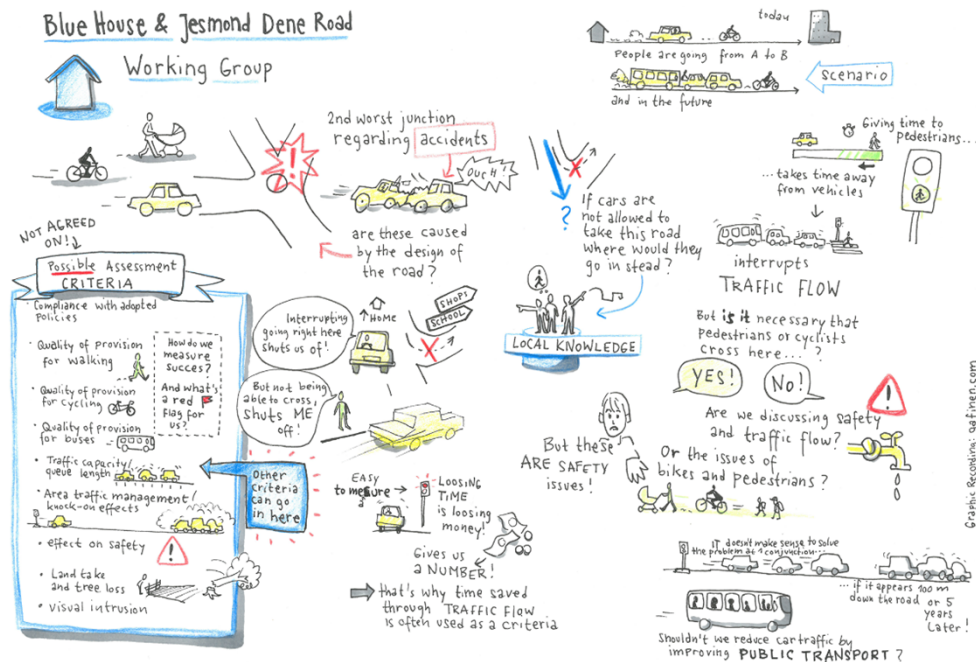
7.3 In 2016 we designed and managed the following consultations:

- Streets for People Needs Analysis In Jesmond; Heaton & Ouseburn; Arthurs Hill & Fenham
- John Dobson Street Public Art Project
- Ward Committees -Dene, East Gosforth; North Jesmond; South Jesmond; West Gosforth, Parklands
- Brandling Park Trial and TROs
- Blue House, Jesmond Dene Road & Haddricks Mill public engagement and Blue House Working Group
- Acorn Road public engagement and Working Group
- CR4 Broadway to Brunton
- Go Smarter
- Cycling Stakeholders Forum
- Transport Forum
- Gosforth High Street Working Group
- City Centre Traders Forum
- Cowgate Junction
- Highways England –A1 Scotswood to North Brunton
- Salters Road /Church Road Junction
- Gosforth High Street (informal TRO consultation)

A total of 17,747 contacts with members of the public made in 2016

7.4 We have also used new methods of outlining progress on schemes. We have

worked with the Digital Civics team at Newcastle University who have created easy to digest minutes to meetings of some projects we have been working on. These have taken the form of images, and also short videos.



Visual from the Blue House & Jesmond Dene Road Working Group

## 8 Health and Transport

- 8.1 Despite improvements in air quality over recent decades, air pollution still has a significant effect on public health in England. Short-term episodes of elevated levels of air pollution are associated with immediate health effects, particularly on individuals with pre-existing heart or lung conditions. However, the biggest health burden is understood to be from long-term exposure to particulate air pollution. These concerns around the health implications of poor air quality were recently raised at the Health Scrutiny Committee in February 2017.
- 8.2 There is a clear link between transport and air quality, with the most significant improvements in air quality nationally being brought about by improvements in vehicle engine technology to reduce emissions. At a local level, air quality improvement measures focus on behavioural change to promote more sustainable travel, infrastructure improvements including those to support low emission and electric vehicles, and new technology (see Section 9).

### 8.3 Healthy Streets Board



In 2016, Newcastle City Council formed its Healthy Streets Board to help align the interlinking work that is currently being delivered under its Transport and Public Health functions. The Board has been established to bring together Transport, Public Health and other key stakeholders that can contribute to and influence the active travel policies and services that the Council and its partners provide. The Board will meet every other month and act to influence and monitor the delivery of agreed Council policy and budget proposals in relation to transport, health and related matters such as air quality.

## **9 Additional Schemes**

- 9.1 Newcastle City Council are committed to maximising the use of technology in order to support and improve the transport network. We are partners in both the EMPOWER and Catch! 'app' development projects, working with national and European partners to develop mobile phone applications that will collect data on journey times and frequencies.
- 9.2 The EMPOWER app offers incentives and rewards to those that walk, cycle and utilise public transport in order to encourage participation in more sustainable modes of travel. The data collected from this app can be used to inform preferred routes, journey times, barriers and opportunities to modal shift across the network. The Catch! AI app will also provide this kind of information, with the development ongoing as to the potential uses for the collection of this – perhaps to aid with community engagement on transport schemes, with business travel planning or as an individual journey planner.
- 9.3 Newcastle is also leading in the deployment of Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS), again with involvement in European projects to demonstrate the benefits that this technology can realise. This can include vehicle to infrastructure communications, whereby the traffic signals communicate to trial vehicles to notify them of green light priority and optimum driving speeds to promote smoother traffic flow. There are expected benefits to this in terms of reliability improvements for passengers, but also in relation to fuel savings and air quality improvements. Trials in this technology also link to improving the safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

## **9 Summary**

- 9.1 This report aims to briefly outline progress in developing transport improvements across the city. Significant progress has been made across the transport network

not only in terms of large scale infrastructure projects but also in relation to improving engagement techniques, addressing air quality and public health issues and trialling new technology to better manage the city's transport network.