

Transport Board

4th September 2020

SCR RENEWAL ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Purpose of Report

This report presents the SCR Renewal Action Plan and sets out the actions being undertaken to implement the Plan in terms of the Transport elements of the Plan.

Thematic Priority

This report relates to all of the existing and future Strategic Economic Plan priorities.

Freedom of Information

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to

1. Consider the SCR Renewal Action Plan, in order to shape and develop the actions being undertaken to implement Plan in terms of the Transport elements of the Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The development of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Renewal Action Plan (RAP), endorsed by the LEP Board on the 16th July and approved by the MCA on the 27th July, is an important move to mitigate the worst effects of the Covid-19 crisis and ensure a strong and timely recovery towards a more resilient economy and society.
- 1.2 The RAP focuses upon three main areas of action:
 - **People** - *we will invest to ensure local people have the opportunity to develop their skills, and to find, stay and progress in work*
 - **Employers** - *We will invest to ensure employers can survive, adapt and thrive*
 - **Places** - *We will invest to create jobs and thriving places, in a way that reduces inequality and enhances our environment*

The evidence shows that the areas above will face the greatest challenges and thus should be the focus of activity. These challenges laid bare by the evidence are briefly summarised below.

1.2.1 People

The global and national economic outlook is widely predicted to be bleak. The potential impact on the City Region could be devastating for our communities, particularly the predicted rise of unemployment. There is also expected to be a significant loss of training opportunities, at least in the immediate term. This includes those made unemployed, forced into unemployment by personal circumstances, those currently on the job retention scheme though at risk of unemployment, and those to be made unemployed in the next 6 – 12 months.

1.2.2 Employers

There are immediate concerns of the liquidity of many businesses in SCR. It is expected that as supportive measures reduce or are discontinued, the business base will face pressing cashflow, invoicing and investment challenges. There is a risk of widespread insolvencies, due to a lack of demand and/or inability to operate in the wake of COVID-19 impacts. This includes those businesses over leveraged through loans and Central Government support, who will no longer be viable once Government support ends.

1.2.3 Place

Our places are feeling the effects of social distancing measures and reductions in disposable income due to furlough measures or loss of income due to increased unemployment. This is most stark in our urban centres which are facing current challenges with their space configuration and mobility and could see longer term issues, particularly with property values. With the potential closure, or failure, of high street retailers our urban centres face an uncertain future. This includes the knock-on impacts on wider determinants of health and wellbeing, community, inclusion, transport, housing and employment / engagement opportunities

- 1.3 The RAP has been designed with three linked horizons in mind – Relief (immediate term) Recovery (medium term) and Resilience (long term). The RAP is attached at Appendix 1. The interventions in the draft RAP are designed to be delivered within the next 12 to 18 months to bring immediate **Relief** to local people, employers and businesses. The Transport Board is tasked by the LEP and MCA in overseeing the related implementation activity for the transport activity.

2. Proposal and Justification

2.1 Implementing the RAP

The Thematic Boards have been tasked by the LEP and MCA to oversee activities related to their thematic area to implement the strategy and achieve the ambitions and targets set out in the RAP. The intention is for implementation plans to be developed via the appropriate Thematic Boards to present to the LEP and MCA Boards at their October / November meetings, with delivery beginning as soon as funds are available and allocated.

- 2.2 The RAP includes a commitment to supporting sustainable, affordable and safe means for people and goods to move efficiently in line with COVID-19 regulations and beyond. The Plan focuses on accelerating investment plans to enable and promote cycling and walking, and a commitment to support local development plans which enable more liveable, low traffic neighbourhoods through a £53m active travel investment programme. There is also a commitment to improve local bus services.

- 2.3 The target of RAP investment is to maintain COVID-19 lockdown active travel levels. As of the end of May, 64% of adults walked weekly (22% ran), and 14% cycled – this would equate to an additional 70,000 cyclists in the region. The Plan also included a commitment to increased public transport patronage compared to pre-Covid 19 levels.

2.3 The proposed £53m active travel investment programme focuses on three measures: Low traffic neighbourhoods, active travel lanes, and a behaviour change package. During lockdown, most people spent a lot more time in their local neighbourhoods, and initially were only going out to the local shops or for local exercise. Active Travel increased markedly, although it was hard to measure because it was happening away from counting sites. Those local retail outlets that stayed open proved more resilient than many in city centres and retail parks. The aim of the Renewal Action Plan is to lock in these local economic and health benefits.

2.4 The proposals in the Recovery Action Plan align with the SCR Active Travel Implementation Plan (ATIP). The SCR has an Active Travel Programme Board comprising relevant Transport Officers from the Local Authorities. There is also an Advisory Board made up of regional representatives from national Active Travel organisations. It is proposed to use existing structures to develop and deliver projects related to the RAP. The Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey, has led a process of engagement with local authority leaders, portfolio holders, members and officers, a collaboration that brought about the Active Travel Implementation Plan. The programme has over 1500 local contributors to the interactive map, and good engagement on social media channels. The Commissioner and Mayor have influenced Government announcements, policy and funding for Active Travel.

2.5 National Investment - Emergency Active Travel Funds

In recent months the Government has announced a number of active travel support packages, some of which have been given directly to Local Authorities, and others that have been competitive:

- Emergency Active Travel Fund - £7.1m for SCR MCA
- Towns Fund additional short-term funding – selected LAs
- MHCLG funding to enable social distancing – all LAs

Considerable time in Local Authorities and the MCA Executive has been redirected to submitting proposals to the Emergency Active Travel Funding rounds. Additionally, some existing funding is likely to be reprogrammed and subject to change controls, for example, the Transforming Cities Fund (£166m to 2023).

Involving local communities and elected members in planning, building and benefitting from changes to local neighbourhoods is vital to the success of these schemes. This engagement process has been made more difficult given Covid related restrictions and the timeframes for delivery specified by Government.

The national funding available so far to support active travel is not of the scale envisaged in the SCR RAP. Our call would be for longer term devolved funding settlements for active travel investment, both capital and revenue. This would enable SCR MCA to deliver the ambitions outlined in the ATIP.

2.6 Improvements to public transport are being planned in light of the findings of the South Yorkshire Independent Bus Review. The work programme arising from this was agreed by the MCA in July 2020 and is the subject of a separate paper at this Transport Board meeting. The Government has provided a financial support package to ensure that buses can continue to operate with reduced patronage.

2.7 Developing the RAP Active Travel Programme

Local Authorities have developed scheme outlines over the past few months in response to various calls from Government. These have been collated and reviewed. The review exercise suggests that significant resources would be required to develop and deliver schemes to the value identified in the RAP. The prospective list currently has 86 schemes with a total cost of approximately £70m. These are a combination of enhancements to existing projects, e.g. TCF schemes, and entirely new projects.

The prospective schemes have been identified based on local need and there is a leaning towards Active Travel Lanes, the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods element identified in the Renewal Action Plan will need considerable development. The schemes identified are also predominantly capital infrastructure, the revenue activities required to support these still need to be defined.

There are considerable capacity constraints in both local and city regional authorities to be able to build this pipeline to the stage of investable business cases. This is particularly in the context of delivering existing programmes such as TCF as well as the additional investment outlined above. We are able to access additional support through Sustrans, the national cycling and walking charity to develop some schemes over the coming months.

2.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Work is underway to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Active Travel Implementation Plan. There is also a monitoring and evaluation plan for the TCF programme. There are limited clear targets or datasets that can measure success in some areas of the proposed programme particularly where this relates to relatively new intervention types such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

3.1 Do more

At this stage it is unclear what additional resources available to support our RAP aspirations and whilst the focus could be to look at all three time horizons this has been discounted in order to focus on the immediate relief Phase and thus target any available resource to the immediate needs.

3.2 Do Less

Failure to develop and focus activity to address the needs identified in the Relief phase has also been discounted. The RAP was sent to government with a request for additional resources to be made available. In addition, other departments may call for ideas for investment and therefore there is an imperative to develop in detail the interventions we wish to see supported

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The RAP will help to secure additional funding from Government for SCR. The actions and activities being developed / undertaken, as set out in this report, will have financial implications, but these will be the subject of a future Board paper once details are known.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal issues arising directly from this paper.

4.3 Risk Management

Risks include:

- Failure to adequately prepare for and implement schemes that mitigate the adverse impacts of Covid 19 on the transport sector and their resulting reduction in accessibility in SCR.
- Failure to capture the opportunity presented to support modal shift to active and sustainable modes of transport
- Failure to adequately prepare schemes to a detailed level of development, that evidence their deliverability to support people to access jobs, learning, essential services and leisure in a timely manner. The consequence being the potential loss

of government funding as the region is unprepared to secure new and additional resources that could be made available.

- Failure to demonstrate leadership of the agenda to the residents of the City Region. The consequence being adverse publicity or reputational damage to the Mayor, the MCA and the LEP.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The RAP will help to address poverty and the health and wellbeing of the local populations and therefore will contribute to improving social inclusion. Covid-19 is disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups – from a health and economic perspective and the RAP seeks to target these groups.

5. Communication

- 5.1** Proactive communications will be delivered across a range of channels, including digital, social and traditional media as part of implementation of the RAP. The LEP and MCA will work with partners and stakeholders to deliver this communication. A RAP communication plan is available.

6. Appendices/Annexes

Appendix 1 – SCR Renewal Action Plan

REPORT AUTHOR	Katherine Humphreys
POST	Project Manager Covid 19 Business and Economy
Director responsible	Ruth Adams
Email	Ruth.adams@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
Telephone	Microsoft Teams (or 0114 220 3442)

Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ. Other sources and references: N/A.