

## **TRANSPORT BOARD**

**19<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

### **Active Travel Update**

#### **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an update for Transport Board members on the work of the Active Travel Programme, led by Dame Sarah Storey.

#### **Freedom of Information**

Thematic Board Papers and any appendices will be made available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme. This scheme commits the Authority to make information about how decisions are made available to the public as part of its normal business activities.

#### **Recommendations**

Board members are asked to:

- Note the progress made in developing the active travel programme, and the appointed of a Commissioner and the active travel team.
- Endorse the creation of an Active Travel Advisory Board and the associated Terms of Reference.
- Agree to the creation of a set of minimum standards for active travel infrastructure.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** In May 2018, Mayor Dan Jarvis was elected with a manifesto commitment to promote more cycling and walking within the City Region. This commitment was captured in the Mayor's Vision for Transport, adopted by the MCA in December 2018. This commitment is consistent with the Transport Strategy which seeks to increase the number of people walking and cycling by over 350%, as part of a greater move towards modal shift.
- 1.2** A key part of the Mayor's manifesto commitment was to appoint an Active Travel Commissioner. Dame Sarah Storey was appointed to this role in April 2019 to lead the active travel programme. This report provides an update on progress to date and asks the Board to consider the adoption of a set of minimum standards for the development of future active travel infrastructure.

## **2. Proposal and justification**

- 2.1** Following the appointment of Dame Sarah Storey as Active Travel Commissioner, Pete Zanzottera was appointed to lead the programme team. The team also includes two secondments until March 2020. Ruth Speare is seconded for 2 days a week to extend her work as a public health registrar in Barnsley, to the whole region helping the active travel plan to direct the work and evidence the approach. Living Streets have seconded Jim Shaw to engage an additional 20 schools in their Walk to School programme (5 in each of the South Yorkshire partner authorities).

**2.2** Active Travel effectively means walking and cycling, but also includes running, wheelchair use, 3 and 4 wheeled cycles and scooting, both on and off the public highways. It includes all journey purposes (utility and leisure trips). At the heart of the Active Travel Project are 4 pledges that the Commissioner has made:

1. Being led by our communities
2. Enabling cycling and walking rather than encouraging it
3. Infrastructure will meet minimum standards
4. Infrastructure will be fully accessible

As part of joined up lobbying with other mayors and commissioners across the UK, Mayor Dan Jarvis and Dame Sarah Storey have already written to the Secretary of State for Transport with 'five asks', the first of which is a continuous funding stream for active travel to provide long term certainty over infrastructure funding.

**2.3** The intention is that these pledges will form the basis of an Active Travel Plan for the City Region, which will also be the Implementation Plan for this strand of work in the Transport Strategy. Previously, the City Region and local authorities have worked together as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) process, prompted by Government as a way for local areas to identify and prioritise investment in active travel infrastructure. It is a requirement of that process that SCR publishes its LCWIP plan by the end of 2019, however agreement has been reached to incorporate that within the new Active Travel Plan, which will seek to identify all key active travel corridors in the City Region where investment should be focussed.

**2.4** To help guide the development of the Active Travel Plan, an Active Travel Advisory Board (ATAB) has been established. This will be chaired by Professor Steve Haake from Sheffield Hallam University and include a range of national and local cycling and walking organisations. The ATAB is important in reducing project risk by making sure that the project is in line with best practice on walking and cycling and includes the wider policy areas and benefits. It is also essential that the project is open to wider funding support beyond the transport sector. A Terms of Reference for this group is attached as Annex 1. In parallel with that strategic group, an office level group made up of local authority representatives will help shape the detail of the plan.

**2.5** The project team and associated boards will also oversee and facilitate input the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) business case process. The draft business case has been submitted on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019, with a final business case due in November 2019 alongside detailed design business cases for each proposed initiative. For the active travel schemes included in TCF, it will be important these align with the overall Active Travel Plan being developed in parallel, and also meet the highest possible design standards to meet the Commissioner's pledges. Minimum standards for Active Travel are important for two reasons:

1. There are differing standards across the region although the needs and expectations of active travellers are the same.
2. Much of the current infrastructure has not been successful in increasing active travel trips, this is particularly clear at junctions where active travellers do not have priority and suffer repeated delays and exposure to traffic danger.

**2.6** The Commissioner is proposing that the basic minimum standards for infrastructure are agreed before a more detailed set standard are brought to this Board at the next meeting. This will help to ensure that active travel schemes being worked up for inclusion in the TCF business case are of sufficient quality. In the period between this meeting and next, we will

seek the expert guidance of the Advisory Board and work with partners to refine the standards. These are proposed to include:

1. Continuous minimum widths for cycle tracks to include 3 and 4-wheel cycles and for footways to include wheelchairs.
2. Separation of footways and cycle tracks from high volumes of traffic, high vehicle speeds (above 30mph) or significant amounts of large vehicles.
3. Separation of highway footways from cycle tracks for significant distances. Shared use only to be used for placemaking and some off-road routes.
4. Clear priority for active travel routes at junctions, continuing cycle tracks and footways straight across side roads and reducing crossing times.

These basic standards are proposed primarily to reduce the actual and perceived danger that deters active travellers, but also to reduce the everyday delays that they suffer. The standards will also ensure that the network is fully accessible.

**2.7** It is proposed that once adopted, these standards are used to as a basis for signing of future SCR funding for active travel schemes. As they were not in place prior to the submission of the tranche 1 TCF projects, which were awarded funding in April 2019, further discussions will need to be held with those project sponsors to try and seek the best possible fit for the criteria within the funding and timing envelope applied by Government.

**2.8** Although Active Travel is primarily being addressed through transport functions it has wider links that are being explored. A key part of the strategy is to engage with stakeholders, particularly in health, sport, communities and business. We have started initial stakeholder mapping and we have started to build a contacts database and we would welcome any suggestions that board members have in suggesting contacts. The team are also exploring how best to engage communities and stakeholders in the process of improving active travel and will be bringing forward detailed suggestions to the next Board.

### **3. Consideration of alternative approaches**

**3.1** The approach of minimum standards for active travel infrastructure has been used in Manchester and is now adopted by Sustrans who no longer have a design manual. For SCR to adopt a full design manual it would take a significant amount of time and resource and therefore not be in place for TCF programme. Design standards for cycling and walking are changing rapidly so it would be difficult to keep up to date and we have chosen to reference the best current manuals. We are also awaiting new national guidance from the DfT which should be published soon.

The Active Travel Advisory Board will discuss the issues around this and this will be evidenced in the next TEB paper.

### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Financial**

£180k of Mayoral Capacity Fund is allocated to the active travel agenda.

#### **4.2 Legal**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however funding arrangements will need to be put in place with scheme sponsors for the delivery of active travel projects associated with the TCF process.

#### **4.3 Risk Management**

The core approach of the programme is to reduce danger for active travel at source. Road danger is cited as the main reason for not cycling and having a safe and pleasant environment

for walking is a key consideration. There are also reputational risks involved in the active travel project in not delivering the pledges of the Mayor and the Active Travel Commissioner.

#### 4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The active travel project aims to be fully inclusive and this will be included in the Active Travel Implementation Plan.

### 5. Communications

**5.1** A multi-channel programme of communications is now underway on the theme of Active Travel, with the aim of informing and engaging members of the public and stakeholders. This has involved media engagement, the launch of new social media accounts, digital media, and two high-profile events; one held on 1 April to showcase Dame Sarah Storey's appointment, and the Mayor's Transport Conference on 9 May, which was attended by both Dame Sarah and Chris Boardman (Cycling and Walking Commissioner for Greater Manchester).

Active Travel is also a key focus of Mayoral communications activity, both within the SCR and in Westminster.

**5.2** There are 6 Active Travel Commissioners (SCR, TfGM, TfWM, London, Scotland, Merseytravel) and there was an inaugural summit in Manchester on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June in Manchester. It was also attended by Dan Jarvis and chaired by the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham. As part of the event the commissioners and their mayors all co-signed a letter to government (addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP) which included the following:

- Commitment to long term devolved funding for cycling and walking.
- A political commitment to minimum quality levels.
- Reform policing and enforcement and ensure the local retention of fines.
- Enable innovation by keeping road traffic regulations under review.
- Transport investment decisions should account for the true cost of car use to society

### 6. Appendices/Annexes

**6.1** Annex 1: Active Travel Advisory Board Terms of Reference

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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: