

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 18 March 2010

Subject: Leigh - Salford - Manchester Guided Busway

Report of: Interim Executive Director for Environmental Services
and Executive Director Business Services

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Purpose / summary: The purpose of the report is to update Members on the progression of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Guided Busway project and to seek a decision on the terms of the transfer of land required for the operation of the busway. The project to construct a guided busway from Leigh to Ellenbrook and then into Manchester was drawn up a decade ago and powers to carry out the works were granted in 2005. The project was revived in May 2009 following a decision by AGMA to include it within the Transport Development Programme. Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive ("GMPTE") who are leading the project towards full completion in 2013 are seeking a revised option agreement relating to land owned by the Council which will be required for the operation of the busway. This report deals with that issue with the key matter being whether to transfer the land to GMPTE at nominal rather than market value.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: The alternative option would be to transfer the land at market value as originally envisaged and agreed. However the busway is now proposed to be entirely locally funded and for the reasons set out in the report, disposal at

market value is not consistent with the approach adopted with locally funded transport schemes elsewhere within Greater Manchester.

Recommendation / decision:

1. That Cabinet notes the progress being made on the development of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Guided Busway Project.
2. That Cabinet agrees to the principle that within the revised option agreement, in recognition of the contribution of the scheme to the regeneration of the borough, provision is made that land to be transferred to GMPTE for the necessary operation of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Guided Busway project is done so on the basis of nominal value subject to agreement being reached with GMPTE on the funding for the maintenance of the linear park running alongside the busway which will be in the Council's ownership.
3. That the final detailed arrangements for the revised option agreement be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet for approval.

Key Decision:

This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 30 March 2010

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:

The original option agreement assumed disposal of the land required for the operation of the busway at open market value which is estimated to be £1.2m (February 2010 base)

Staffing:

None

Policy:

None

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?

No

Wards affected:

The Leigh-Salford-Manchester Guided Busway project will directly affect Leigh East, Tyldesley, and Astley Mosley Common wards.

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

Yes

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

Yes *

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

Yes *

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No *

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	X
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		18.3.2010	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Committee Report on the Option Agreement for Leigh Guided Busway	Strategy Committee	October 2001	Property Services

Proper Officer G Bishop

Date 3 March 2010

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The proposal to construct a guided busway from Leigh to Ellenbrook in Salford and then onto Manchester city centre is a long standing one. Powers were granted to GMPTE following a public inquiry in 2005 with the proposal being subject to consultation for some years before that. The project has been revived with the decision by AGMA in 2010 to prioritise the scheme as part of the Transport Development Programme. A project team has been set up by GMPTE to progress the busway project to completion by Spring 2013.
- 1.2 The busway will run primarily on an old railway line between Leigh and Ellenbrook and then along a prioritised route into Manchester city centre. The main off-road 'guided' section lies within this borough. The project will cut journey times into Manchester significantly and will have a number of economic and environmental benefits. The project will also involve the establishment of a linear country park between Leigh and Tyldesley. A second element of the project, to be also completed by 2013, will involve physical measures to improve the prioritisation of buses on existing roads between Wigan and Tyldesley in order to link into the route into Manchester.
- 1.3 GMPTE has recently commenced some pre-development works in Salford involving clearance of trees and intend to start advance works, all in Salford, in August. These relate to junction improvements at Newearth Road in Ellenbrook. GMPTE has recently circulated a leaflet to households with 400m of the proposed busway. A copy of the leaflet is appended to this report.

2.0 Proposals:

- 2.1 In 2002 the Council granted an option agreement to GMPTE to enable the construction of the busway. The option agreement included all of the Council's land that would be required for operational, construction and access purposes. The agreement provided for that on the freehold transfer of the land the purchase price was to be determined on the basis of open market value. The agreement also provided for the construction of a linear park alongside the busway, the land for the park staying in or being transferred to the ownership of the Council. The agreement provided for an initial sum and then annual payments from GMPTE to the Council for the management and maintenance of the park.
- 2.2 GMPTE is seeking to establish a revised option agreement with the Council. Some elements of this revision are being discussed with officers and information on a number of issues such as the expected level and nature of management and maintenance of the park is awaited from GMPTE. It is evident that GMPTE are seeking changes relating to the way in which the land is managed and the terms including commuted sums.
- 2.3 However, for business planning GMPTE consider it important to establish a matter of principle surrounding the transfer of the operational land as this will have a significant bearing on the financial viability of the project. GMPTE consider that now that the scheme is entirely locally funded through Local Transport Plan funds and prudential borrowing rather than being funded nationally, the project is now consistent with other public transport schemes in Greater Manchester where local authority land has been transferred at nominal value. Transfer at market value would result in the vendor authority receiving a payment derived from Transport Development Funding which is

essentially a contribution from all AGMA authorities. GMPTE also argue that the benefits of the scheme are very much within the area covered by the Council disposing of the land. The estimated value of the land required for the operation of the busway and to be transferred is £1.2m (February 2010 base).

- 2.4 The Local Government Act 1972 (Section 123) requires local authorities to dispose of land for the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 removes the requirement for authorities to seek specific consent from the Secretary of State for any disposal of land with an undervalue of up to £2m where the land in question will help secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the area. It would be for the Council disposing of the asset at an undervalue to satisfy itself of the well being issue but it is considered that this would apply here given the benefits of the scheme. The scheme provides significant economic, social and environmental benefits to Leigh and Tyldesley by stimulating economic regeneration and substantially improving transport links to the regional centre (including through to Manchester University) as well as providing for the establishment of a new linear country park which will provide multi-user access opportunities. The scheme will provide faster and more reliable bus services and because the buses are segregated from general traffic on the relevant sections, will reduce the likelihood of road traffic accidents. The scheme will also use low emission buses which will result in improvements in air quality.
- 2.5 The renewal of the option agreement would also require renewal of the approval to dispose of public open space which will need to be advertised under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Any objections to the disposal as a result of the advertisement will need to be considered and taken into account in making the decision whether to enter into the option agreement for the transfer of the land.

3.0 Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:

- 3.1 The alternative option of disposing of land required for the operation of the busway at market value has been considered but not recommended for the reasons set out above.

4.0 Conclusions:

- 4.1 The Leigh Guided Busway Scheme is now on course to be completed by Spring 2013 following the decision by AGMA to prioritise it within the Transport Development Programme. This still requires conditional approval of the business case by AGMA Executive.
- 4.2 The existing option agreement will need to be revised and renewed. However, a key principle of whether the land to be transferred for operational use of the busway needs to be resolved and for the reasons set out in the report, it is recommended that Cabinet agree to this being included within the option agreement at nominal rather than open market value.



Illustration only

Leigh, Salford and Manchester Busway Project

February 2010

Current status of the Busway Project



Introduction

Between 1998 and 2002, local organisations, residents and businesses were consulted on proposals for a new high quality public transport service linking Leigh with Tyldesley, Ellenbrook, Salford and Manchester with a guided busway together with significant bus route improvements. This is known as the Leigh – Salford – Manchester Busway Project.

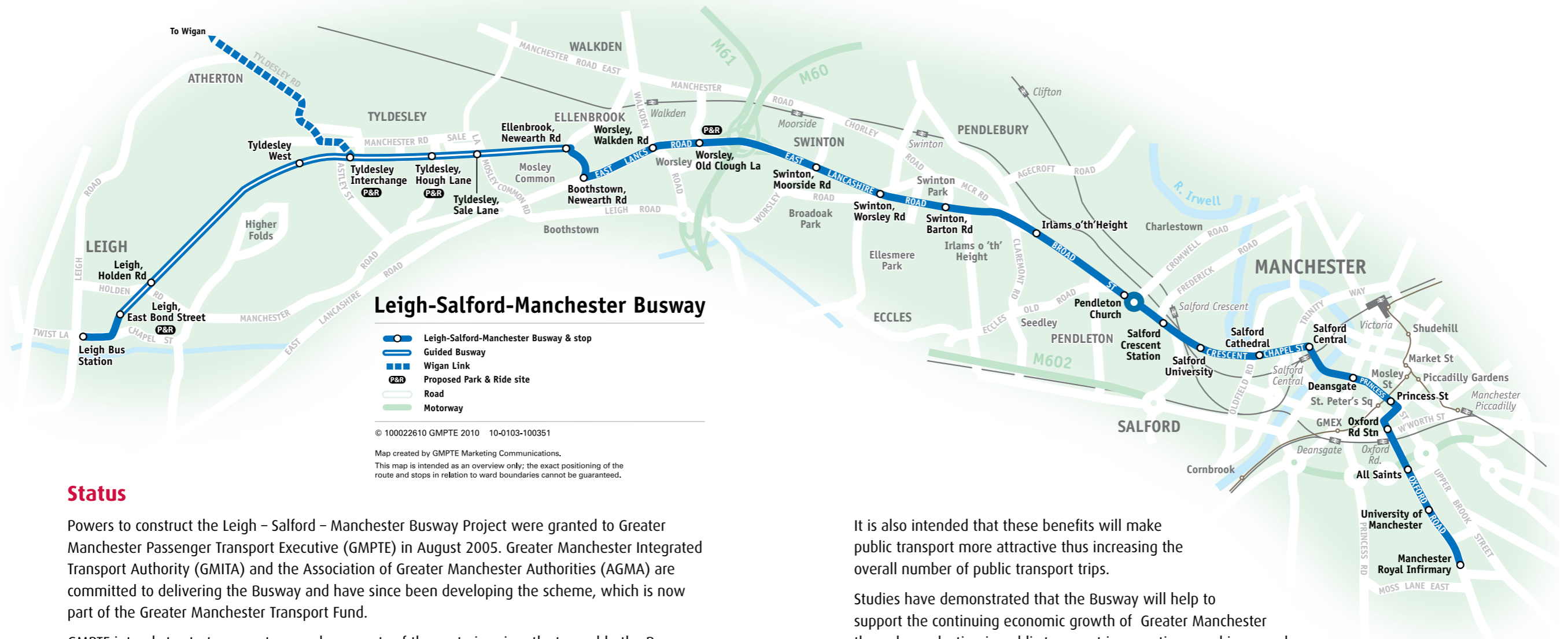
This is an update on the progress of this project following recent developments.

Benefits of the Busway

The Leigh – Salford – Manchester Busway will provide a high quality and reliable public transport link between Leigh, Salford and Manchester, thereby improving access to employment, education and healthcare, and promote opportunities for investment in the area.

The new Busway will play a key role in enhancing Greater Manchester's public transport network.

Bus passengers will benefit from quicker and more reliable journey times, giving improved access to Manchester city centre and the town centres of Leigh and Wigan; increasing opportunities for interchange with trains, trams and other bus services.



Status

Powers to construct the Leigh – Salford – Manchester Busway Project were granted to Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTe) in August 2005. Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA) and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) are committed to delivering the Busway and have since been developing the scheme, which is now part of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund.

GMPTe intends to start preparatory works on parts of the route imminently, to enable the Busway to be fully operational by 2013. You may notice some activity along the route over the coming months as GMPTe carries out a range of enabling and preparatory works. You will be notified in advance of any works taking place near your property.

Leigh – Salford – Manchester Busway

The vehicles operating on the Busway will be modern, high quality, and will result in a significant uplift in quality compared to current standards experienced by public transport users on these routes. Around 7km of the 21km route (from Leigh to Ellenbrook) is to be a dedicated guided busway running along the former rail line. A plan of the route is shown above.

It is also intended that these benefits will make public transport more attractive thus increasing the overall number of public transport trips.

Studies have demonstrated that the Busway will help to support the continuing economic growth of Greater Manchester through a reduction in public transport journey times and improved accessibility across the public transport network.

Further information

GMPTe will provide more information on the progress of the Busway project over the coming months. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the public liaison team on 0161 886 2613 (office hours) or email LSMworks@gmpte.gov.uk.



Photograph courtesy of
Cambridgeshire County Council.

How to find out more

- phone us on 0161 886 2613 (office hours)
- email LSMworks@gmpte.gov.uk
- write to us at
GMPTE LSM Busway
FREEPOST RRHE-RKUU-KSJY
Manchester
M1 3BG

Look out for future updates at www.gmpte.com

If you would like this information in other formats such as in Braille, in large print, on audio CD or in other languages, please phone Traveline on **0871 200 22 33.**

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