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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 May 2023 18:46
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: DRP discussion summary: LBAN 15/5/2023
Attachments: Levenshulme local centre connectivity illustration_v2.pptx.pdf
Dear colleagues

Many thanks for making the me for our discussion at Design Review Panel last Monday regarding the Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood scheme. As I emphasised at the start of the meeting, DRP is not a decision making body, and its role is to advise and inform the FBC process such that decision makers – the Active Travel Commissioner, Active Travel Programme Board and ultimately the Combined Authority – can have confidence in the designs of the schemes that are put forward for funding approval through the various GMCA active travel funding streams. As discussed on during the meeting, the Design Review Panel is recommending that the scheme design does not progress to FBC at this point, based on the information on presented to date. As set out below, the DRP and the Active Travel team at TfGM are ready to support MCC in any way to get to a position where an approvable FBC can be submitted.

The key points raised by the panel in response to the presentation on of the scheme provided by MCC at the meeting were as follows:

- It is not clear how the various measures sum to provide connected routes for walking, wheeling and cycling through the neighbourhood, for example in terms of connecting residential areas to key services such as shops and schools, through high quality routes that advantage both walking and cycling.
- Some routes for cycling that appear to be enabled by the scheme are likely to still be reliant on some connections on roads with more than the recommended amount of traffic for mixed traffic cycle provision. It would be useful to map these routes such that this point can be more fully understood and potential mitigations examined. I have made an initial suggestion for this mapping attached.
- There are a number of existing areas of filtered streets or areas where there is no through traffic which can be considered to contribute to the overall plan for the area, in addition to those which the project itself is delivering. Again, the attached illustrates these
- The project currently comprises a range of interventions across a significant geographical area. Individually, these measures have value, but they do not appear, as currently proposed, to amount to a holistic plan which will deliver connected active travel routes through the area.
- In addition, it was noted in the meeting that MCC is currently advising of a significant budget shortfall within the MCF allocation, based on previous approvals and when taking into account the forecast cost for this scheme. It is understood that the recently submitted revised VNEG scheme has a value of c£8.8m, which based on a previously indicated cost of £6m for the current Levenshulme scheme, would equate to an overall MCC funding shortfall of c£4.3m, when considering the £37.2m budget available. It was agreed, however, that any discussions around how to manage the potential funding shortfall should not delay submission of a draft business case for Critical Friend Review.

As a result of the above, the Design Review Panel is not able to recommend the scheme progresses to FBC submission based on the information currently presented. We recommend that further analysis is undertaken on potential solutions to the above issues in order to enable a FBC to be submitted which could be approved by decision makers. Members of the TfGM Active Travel team are ready to support MCC to undertake that work collaboratively.

To that end, since the meeting, I have put together the attached sequence of slides which illustrates the principal concern of the DRP, using the example of Bee Network standard routes to the local centre. Whilst this is only illustrative based on my current knowledge of the scheme, you can see that the lack of joined up routes means that only relatively small areas of the community will have high quality walking and cycling routes to the local centre under the current proposals. The final couple of slides illustrate the impact of two potential additional measures/solutions, which you can see have a significant impact in terms of network connectivity. It is this connectivity – how communities are linked to local services – which is at the heart of what an active neighbourhood should deliver. To date, we have been missing that overview of what the scheme delivers, and instead discussions at DRP have focussed on the detail of individual elements of the projects. TfGM has consistently advised MCC, through a number of DRPs over the last two years, through 121 officer conversations and through various other meetings, of the need for a strategic overview and analysis of how the scheme delivers its programme entry intent, ahead of FBC submission. This was also emphasised and agreed when the Active Travel Commissioner and the Leader met with Richard Nickson regarding the scheme some months ago. This position is consistent and has not changed. The work undertaken to date and presented last Monday has made significant progress towards having that strategic overview, but has also pointed up the issues covered above around network connectivity which we need to work together to resolve. I hope the attached is a useful starter in that regard.

In order to plan the best way forward for the Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood scheme in the light of last week's DRP review and the attached work undertaken since, I recommend that a meeting of senior MCC and TfGM officers is convened as a matter of urgency, and I will be asking colleagues to convene this.

Best wishes

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