

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT**

**17 October 2023**

### **Procurement of an additional Traffic Signals - Supply and Maintenance contract to support Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

**Report by Corporate Director of Environment and Place**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) **Authorise officers to procure an additional Traffic Signals – Supply and Maintenance contract to support commitments within the Bus Services Improvement Plan**
  - b) **Delegate the award of the contract to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place.**
  - c) **Delegate approval for any contract extension to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place**

## **Executive Summary**

2. Oxfordshire County Council has a contract with Telent to supply and maintain existing traffic signals across the County. The contract includes provision for the refurbishment of existing signals to provide for bus priority at junctions. The existing contract has three years to run but has reached its financial limit for the procurement of refurbishment services. In order to deliver commitments within the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) an additional contract, to run in parallel with the existing, is required.
3. The value of new contract is expected to be £1,243,000 over a 2-year period, the life of the BSIP funding.

## **Background**

4. The contract is valued at £1,243,000 of capital investment to refurbish existing sites to allow for improved bus priority, and therefore exceeds the £1m threshold for capital decision making by Officers and needs to be reported and approved as a Key Decision.

5. In August 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed capital funding of £8.743 million to enable the County Council to implement its proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. This contains specific funding allocations for Real Time Passenger Information and County Wide Traffic Signal Upgrade schemes.
6. The Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan seeks to achieve a number of key outcomes:
  - an enhanced bus network
  - more attractive fares and ticketing
  - better vehicles
  - improved information
  - a more reliable main road network; and
  - improved bus stop infrastructure.
7. The delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan programme will be monitored by the Enhanced Bus Partnership. Targets for passenger numbers, passenger satisfaction, and improvements in reliability and journey times are tied to the delivery of this programme.
8. The new contract will facilitate the delivery of the Council's agreed Bus Service Improvement Plan, meeting the following objectives:
  - To deliver a programme of improvements to traffic signals at key junctions across Oxfordshire that will prioritise the movement of buses. This will primarily, but not solely, focus on improvements along corridors served by commercial bus operations.
9. To achieve commitments regarding bus journey time, through traffic signal bus priority in particular, the refurbishment of existing traffic signals requires significant investment due to the age of the current equipment

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

### **Strategic Plan**

9. Investing in Traffic Signal enhancement to create bus priority supports the strategic priorities for Oxfordshire:
10. Priority 1 – Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work – supplying increased bus priority enhances the offering provided by bus companies, reduces the reliance on private vehicles, avoids unnecessary journeys by private vehicles, and decreases congestion and subsequent pollution.
11. Priority 2 – Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire – enhancing bus priority at junctions promotes greater confidence in bus services, as well as facilitating existing and potential passengers' employment and leisure opportunities within the County.

12. Priority 5 – Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network – by investing in existing and enhanced bus priority improves the quality of the public transport offer and therefore benefit the travelling public.
13. Priority 9 – Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit – providing enhanced bus priority supports the work of the bus companies operating in Oxfordshire, contributing to improved bus patronage and a more sustainable commercial bus network.
14. Section 138 of the Transport Act 2000 allows for a local authority to enter into an Enhanced Bus Partnership with operators, and the County Council has done so. The Enhanced Partnership arrangements include for enhanced provision of services by the local authority, and a legal commitment to provide them, of which enhanced traffic signals and bus priority is a key commitment

### **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)**

15. Delivering enhanced bus priority at junctions supports the vision and aims of LTCP in that:
  - Supports the reduction of 1 in 4 car trips by 2030
  - Deliver a net zero transport network by 2040

### **Network Management Plan**

16. The delivery of enhanced bus priority at junctions also supports the overall ambitions of the Network Management Plan.

### **Financial Implications**

17. The Bus Services Improvement Plan has an allocation of £1.243m for bus priority at junctions. This capital investment in additional bus priority will have a positive impact on maintenance in respect of capital end of life replacement but will require additional revenue funding for ongoing support and routine/cyclical maintenance past the warranty period.
18. The current service maintenance budget of £760k per annum covers existing maintenance activity. New equipment to promote bus priority will require increased maintenance, and funding, at £100k per annum. This is yet unfunded and will need to be considered and identified and factored into the financial planning for future years budgets.
19. The value of this short-term contract to deliver BSIP commitments exceeds the £1m Capital contract threshold, which requires reporting as a Key Decision.

Comments checked by:

Prem Salhan, Interim Finance Business Partner –  
prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

20. The Council has a statutory power to provide traffic signals and bus priority as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.
21. Provided the procurement is conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules there are no direct legal implications in the proposed procurement of the parallel contract. Officers across services are engaged with the procurement process to ensure such compliance.

Comments checked by: Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (Contracts), Legal Services  
[Jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Procurement Implications

22. Procurement of the contract will be via a compliant procurement process, with associated contract and terms and conditions.

Comments checked by:  
Becky Saunders, Head of Category – Environment and Place (Procurement)

## Staff Implications

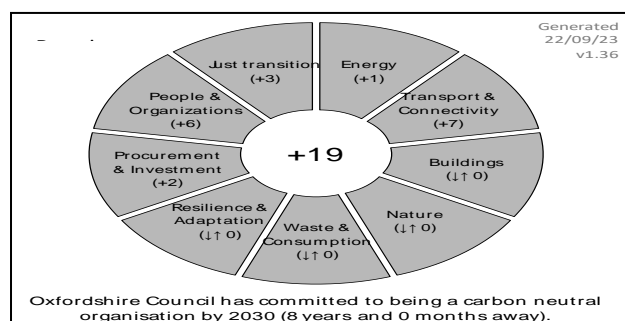
23. There are no additional staffing requirements as a result of decisions within this report. The procurement process and management of the service procured will be managed by existing staff within Network Management.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

24. The proposals have a positive impact on equality and diversity by enhancing existing bus services through reliable and accessible data. The full EIA is shown at Annex 1.

## Sustainability Implications

25. The proposal has a positive impact (+19) on Climate Action as detailed in the Climate Impact Assessment. Annex 2.



## Consultations

26. No public consultation is required or planned as part of this procurement. Communications on the specific improvements and changes to traffic signals that this procurement will enable, will be included and undertaken as part of the wider Bus Services Improvement Programme communication plan.
27. Information on our bus service improvement plan can be accessed here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/public-transport/bus-service-improvement-plan>

Bill Cotton – Corporate Director Environment and Place

Annex:                                1. Equalities Impact Assessment.  
   2. Climate Impact Assessment.

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September 2023