Greater Bristol Bus Network

Progress to Date

A Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) for the GBBN was submitted to the DfT in July 2005. The business case set out plans for 40 showcase bus routes & made a bid for £42m from DfT, £20m from First & £6m from developers to fund this project. In July 2006 the 4UA's received PE, an agreement in principle for funding, for this scheme from DfT.

A requirement set by DfT was to undertake a second Gateway Review (GR). This was completed in Dec 2006.

A number of steps were necessary to achieve Full Approval (FA) this work has now been undertaken. This included:

- Completion of Procurement Strategy demonstrating value for money
- Completion of Resource Plan
- Full reappraisal – this involves model runs, a full New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) appraisal, an assessment of economic impacts & an updated Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR).
- Delivery – Finalisation of rigorous programme management documentation, tools & procedures to ensure delivery on time & within budget, contractual controls & a detailed assessment of any risks associated with the project.
- Completion of Full Approval (FA) Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC)

Of the above significant progress was made in undertaking a review of procurement, detailed resource planning, optimisation of scheme, draft contractual documentation & preparation of the programme management tools to ensure delivery of the scheme. The technical work identified a rise in scheme costs which were reported to the Executive on 6th March 2006 noting that an additional £219 K of costs would need to be funded via JLTP allocation.

Progress has also been made in the planned appointment of the permanent Independent Programme Director (IPD) with the assistance of the project management team in Bath & North East Somerset headed by John Betty. CV's are to be circulated shortly & the PB is to agree the process. Interviews are planned to be held around June.

Future Activities

The MSBC was submitted to the DfT for FA on the 23/03/07. Following this dialogue with the DfT has been undertaken & a draft response has been received. Progress will be needed in the following key areas:-

- Completion of a legal agreement which underpins the relationship between the 4 UA's - required by DfT before FA will be granted.
- Clarification of empowerment of Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

- Appointment of IPD
- Further explanation of relationship between the IPD, SRO, Programme Board & Steering Group.
- Development of work around high level risks & risk at individual project level.

Issues

The draft response from the DfT tabled at the Board meeting on 16th May 07 looks encouraging subject to the issues identified above, that might be described as show stoppers, being resolved.

A key issue in securing FA from DfT is the provision of suitable assurance mechanisms. With a road scheme or a bridge DfT can see that the scheme has been completed & that it will remain in operation. DfT's concern with GBBN is that, in theory, the scheme could be damaged through poor maintenance or even potentially by a future decision to remove bus lanes.

To provide the necessary re-assurance for DfT the authorities & First signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during March 07 for submission with the F A bid setting out the commitment of all parties. This will be progressed through the period of the major scheme into a full Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) & Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Agreement (SQBPA), thereby giving assurance to DfT, & the 4 UA's regarding the commitment from First Group.

The GR highlighted the need for the Programme Steering Group (PSG) to confirm the approach to dealing with any potential cost pressures within the scheme. The PB has undertaken a complete re-appraisal of all the scheme elements & agreed the final programme. This programme will in effect delegate scheme elements to individual UA's & it is proposed that each UA effectively underwrite any cost pressures within their scheme elements. A risk budget will be used by the PB & IPD to assist with managing this process.