

CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE PARK STATION

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **15th April 2014**

From: **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

Electoral division(s): **Milton, East Chesterton, Abbey**

Forward Plan ref: **2014/007** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **This report sets out progress with the scheme and summarises the delivery arrangements being discussed with the County Council by the key project partners Network Rail and the Department for Transport.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is recommended to:**

- a) Endorse the key partners, Network Rail and the Department for Transport, taking responsibility for delivery of the station**
- b) Approve the implementation of the enabling works including the construction of the Busway extension within the programme and funding limits set by Government.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contact:</i>	
Name:	Bob Menzies	Name:	Councillor Ian Bates
Post:	Acting Director, Strategy and Development	Portfolio:	Growth and Planning
Email:	Bob.Menzies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Ian.Bates@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 728368	Tel:	01223 699173

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Further to the Cabinet reports in January 2012 and January 2013, the County Council has been promoting the delivery of a new railway station and transport interchange at Chesterton Sidings, to be funded on the strength of the business case by Council borrowing that would be repaid by revenue from extra ticket sales via the rail franchises. There have been a number of significant milestones recently achieved and developments in the proposed scheme funding and delivery.
- 1.2 This report sets out progress with the scheme and summarises the delivery arrangements being discussed by the County Council and the key project partners Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT).

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Planning permission for the station was secured on December 18th 2013. In parallel with this, the final submissions were made to Network Rail under Stage 4 of the Guide to Railway Improvement Projects (GRIP), which fixes the scope of the station and all related Network Rail works. The next stage is detailed design and procurement.
- 2.2 Also in December the Deputy Prime Minister announced a grant of £6m from Government to allow the County Council to deliver access works outside the Network Rail Chesterton sidings boundary,
- 2.3 This funding is time-limited to be spent by the end of March 2015.
- 2.4 Network Rail and the Department for Transport now propose to take over the delivery phase of the elements of the scheme within Chesterton Sidings, from the Council. This proposal includes the rail industry taking on the funding and implementation of the majority of the scheme as a self-financing project with the initial capital investment borrowed against the future revenues from the station. This is as a result of the work done by the County Council, which has demonstrated that the station will generate at least £5m in new to rail income for the railway industry each year and that there is therefore a very strong business case.
- 2.5 Both the DfT and Network Rail are currently in the process of seeking approval from their respective Boards and the Office of Rail Regulation. Currently the Council has a Business Plan commitment of £30m to deliver the scheme. Once the DfT and Network Rail confirm their approvals, this will no longer be required.
- 2.6 Network Rail will be responsible for the construction of the station, interchange and associated works within Chesterton Sidings in accordance with the Council's planning consent and their own permitted development rights. Any cost or programme risks associated with the construction phase would be managed by Network Rail, removing these risks from the Council.
- 2.7 In 2012 the Council initially set a target to open the station by the end of 2015. The Council's programme aimed to have the scope of the station interchange defined and planning permission secured by the end of 2013, which has been achieved. Network Rail as rail authority and landowner now have full control

of the delivery of all future stages of the scheme from detailed design to opening.

- 2.8 At a recent milestone conference with Network Rail and the Department for Transport, Network Rail explained that they consider the December 2015 opening too challenging and as a result consider that the best time to aim to open their station would be at the routine planned timetable change in May 2016. This is the date supported by Network Rail, the DfT, and the rail industry. While this is disappointing given the work put in by the Council to advance the project to its current position, it is considered that Network Rail are best placed to understand all the programme constraints. Officers will continue to press Network Rail and the DfT to achieve this revised programme.
- 2.9 The Department's standard position for scheme development costs on major schemes such as new railway stations is that scheme development costs should be met by the Local Authority, but under the Council's original funding proposal these costs would have been repaid through the additional franchise revenue. Now that rail industry funding has been proposed for the delivery of the station, the recovery of the Council's scheme development costs is the subject of separate discussion with the DfT.

3. ENABLING WORKS

- 3.1 Following the announcement of the £6m grant for enabling works, the Council remains responsible for the delivery of:
- The extension of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway together with a maintenance track and cycleway
 - Pedestrian and cycle routes, including improved provision on Cowley Road, access through Moss Bank and from Nuffield Road
 - Environmental enhancements to the Bramblefields Local Nature Reserve
 - Minor highway improvements to Milton Road and Cowley Road.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to approve officers progressing these works, including discharging planning conditions and procuring the construction of the Busway extension under the existing Transport and Works Act consent, to meet the DfT funding deadline of March 2015. Given the time constraint, advance work has already commenced in key areas such as site clearance, early contractor involvement and design.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the Busway extension will be delivered using an existing framework contract, which has successfully delivered a number of schemes, most recently the Huntingdon West of Town Centre Link Road. One of our framework contractors is also the main contractor for the Leigh-Salford Guided Busway, which is currently under construction. Discussions are taking place regarding using the same construction technique that has been developed for the Leigh-Salford Busway. This form of construction is different from that used for the existing Busway, and involves pouring and shaping the concrete on site using specially developed equipment rather than installing pre-cast beams as used on the existing Busway.

- 3.4 This 'slipforming' technique has the potential to offer significant cost and programme savings compared to pre-casting, and based on preliminary work should be broadly comparable in price to conventional road construction, as the specialist equipment needed has already been manufactured for the Leigh-Salford scheme and indications are that it should be available to meet the programme for this short section.
- 3.5 Construction of this section as a guideway is therefore dependent on agreeing an acceptable price and programme with the contractor. Should this not prove possible then it is proposed to substitute a conventional road construction with access controlled by short lengths of guided busway at the entry and exit points.
- 3.6 The City Business Park is on the northern side of the Busway for the entire length of this section, and has a security fence in place. There is therefore unlikely to be any requirement in the future for any crossing within this section. Within the Network Rail site it has been agreed that the Busway should be unguided, so as not to constrain the future development of the site and allow for the provision of pedestrian and cycle crossings should they be required in future. This does not form part of the current works.
- 3.7 The enabling works include provision of an improved cycle route on Cowley Road. The detailed design of this cycle route will be the subject of further public consultation prior to discharging the relevant planning condition.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 4.1 While there are very strong transport and commercial cases for the scheme, the economic case is even more compelling. The new station will enhance connectivity for the north of the County and, more directly, stimulate further employment growth in the high tech cluster in north Cambridge. This will be achieved by:

- The greatly enhanced access key destinations and markets in London, Stansted and Gatwick airports, European rail services, via the national rail network
- The interchange with the Busway improving direct and rapid access to growth sites on the Cambridge – Northstowe – St Ives – Huntingdon – Alconbury Enterprise Zone corridor.

Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 4.2 The interchange facilities at the station will allow for a greater range of transport linkages to be made by residents and visitors to the north Cambridge area. This will improve employment opportunities and thus promote independence and good health.

Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 4.3 There are no significant implications for this priority. The station has been designed to meet all accessibility criteria.

Ways of working

- 4.4 The Council has shown strong leadership by taking positive action to use its borrowing to bring forward this important infrastructure investment. The Council's actions have moved this project into the delivery phase.
- 4.5 The Council supported by the Department for Transport has unlocked delivery of the scheme by key partners in the rail industry. The Network Rail and DfT decision to take on responsibility for the delivery of the majority of the construction works means that the Council's borrowing requirement is greatly reduced.
- 4.6 Cambridge Science Park Station has very strong local support, including from District and County Councillors as well as local MPs. Consultation and representations at the Planning Committee have shown very strong support for the scheme.
- 4.7 Officers have worked closely with colleagues at the District Councils as part of the scheme development, particularly with regard to Urban Design and planning issues.
- 4.8 The provision of additional rail capacity will help manage pressure on the road network in north Cambridge and the wider area, and reduce the financial and social costs of congestion on that network.
- 4.9 The report above sets out the implications for leadership and investing in growth in 2.1-2.3.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

Resource and Performance Implications

- 5.1 The Council is prepared to borrow the cost of the scheme, which is expected to be fully repaid by revenue from the rail franchises. During discussions with key partners the Department for Transport and Network Rail it has been proposed that the rail industry will take on the delivery of the scheme, which will remove the need for this borrowing. The recovery of the Council's scheme development costs is the subject of separate discussion with the DfT.
- 5.2 The Council will be responsible for the delivery of the Busway extension and other enabling works for the project.

Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- 5.3 The proposed change in funding method means that the Council will no longer carry any of the cost or programme risks associated with the construction of the station. The Council will be responsible for ensuring that the enabling works are delivered within the £6m grant and by March 2015. Discussions are taking place with DfT regarding the recovery of scheme development costs to date.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.4 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 5.5 Public consultation on the scheme took place late in 2012, which showed widespread public support.
- 5.6 The scheme has broad political support, including from Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council. Network Rail is supportive, and as noted above, is the critical partner without whom delivery of the scheme cannot take place.

Public Health Implications

- 5.7 The scheme provides important sections of the strategic cycle network in Cambridge and will provide enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling for leisure and commuting.

Source Documents	Location
Cabinet report January 2012 Cabinet report January 2013 Planning application and decision – Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee 18 th December 2013	