

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	25 SEPTEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	READING GREEN PARK STATION - DESIGN & BUILD		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE	WARDS:	WHITLEY
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the latest position regarding proposals for Reading Green Park Station and the recommendation to enter into agreements with Balfour Beatty, Network Rail and Great Western Railway (GWR) to progress the detailed design and construction of the station and multi-modal interchange.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee gives scheme and spend approval for the Reading Green Park Station scheme.
- 2.2 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into a Delivery Agreement with Balfour Beatty to undertake the detailed design and build for Green Park Station through the Scape procurement framework.
- 2.3 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into contract for the implementation of the station interchange.
- 2.4 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into an Asset Protection Agreement with Network Rail to progress the scheme and that the

Committee approves that the Council's named representative within the Agreement to be Cris Butler, Head of Transportation & Streetcare.

- 2.5 That the Committee welcomes the award of £2.3m from the New Stations Fund 2 (NSF2) for Green Park Station from the Department for Transport (DfT), and that delegated authority is given to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into the NSF2 Asset Purchase Agreement with Network Rail.
- 2.6 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into Cooperation Agreement with Great Western Railway (GWR) to progress the scheme in partnership with the train operator.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Green Park Station is included within the Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019, Local Plan 2008 (revised 2015) and Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026; and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan 2015/16 - 2020/21.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Reading Green Park Station is a proposed new railway station on the Reading to Basingstoke line. The station and multi-modal interchange is a long-standing element of Reading's transport strategy which would significantly improve accessibility and connectivity in south Reading.
- 4.2 The station will provide an alternative sustainable transport option helping to manage the forecast increase in traffic congestion on the A33 corridor within Reading. There is a significant amount of development proposed for this area including Green Park Village, the expansion of Green Park Business Park and the Royal Elm Park mixed use development.
- 4.3 The scheme was included within Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's bid to Government for funding from the Local Growth Fund, and funding has been allocated by the LEP and the Council through specific S106 contributions. The full business case for the scheme has been approved by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Berkshire Local Transport Body (the transport advisory body for the LEP).
- 4.4 Planning permission was granted for the station, multi-modal interchange, car park and access road by Reading Borough Council in April 2015 and West Berkshire Council in May 2015. The process of discharging the planning conditions associated with the two planning consents has commenced with each authority.

- 4.5 The Council has reached agreement with Berkeley Homes to acquire the land required for the station, interchange and car park on the eastern side of the railway track. Agreement in principle has been reached with the landowner for the small piece of land required on the western side of the railway.
- 4.6 As authorised by Policy Committee in June 2016, the GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) stages 1-3 concept design work for the station has been progressed in partnership with Network Rail through a Development Services Agreement. This work has been undertaken by Network Rail's framework contractor and is due to be completed in October.
- 4.7 As authorised by a Decision Book report in July 2017, Balfour Beatty plc have been appointed to support the completion of GRIP stage 3 and undertake the GRIP stage 4 concept design work through the Scape procurement framework. This work is progressing well and is due to complete by the end of the year.
- 4.8 The Department for Transport announced in July that the Council had been awarded £2.3m from the New Stations Fund 2 for additional passenger facilities at Green Park Station, specifically for a station building and longer platforms.

5. THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The GRIP stage 1-4 concept design work currently being undertaken by Network Rail and Balfour Beatty will ensure that the fundamental aspects of the station and interchange design are fixed and formally approved by Network Rail. This includes the location and dimensions of the platforms, footbridge, station entrance and passenger building. It is anticipated that the outcome of this work will require the station platforms to extend south by approximately 50 meters from the current scheme, to ensure the station is future-proofed and located in the optimum position. Revised plans to take account of this change will be submitted to the relevant planning authorities when the station designs have been formally approved by Network Rail.
- 5.2 To progress the scheme beyond the concept design, it is recommended that the Council appoints Balfour Beatty through the Scape procurement framework to undertake the GRIP stages 5-8 detailed design and build contract. It is considered that this approach provides the best opportunity to deliver the station to the shortest programme possible, alongside providing a value for money solution by taking advantage of the efficiencies achieved through the wider Scape framework. Pursuing this route will provide greater cost certainty for the scheme as Scape requires the contractor to market test build costs to inform the design phase and provide construction estimates at an early stage. Thereafter, value for money will be secured for the construction itself as Balfour Beatty will tender individual elements of the build to gain the best price and provide the opportunity for local SMEs to be involved in construction of the scheme.
- 5.3 The alternative options would be for the Council to contract development of the station through Network Rail, or to undertake a competitive procurement process to appoint a contractor to undertake the design and build contract. Neither of these options is considered to provide the best solution in terms of

achieving the best outcome for the Council regarding delivery of the station to programme and budget in compliance with all relevant legislation, in comparison to appointing an experienced rail contractor through an existing procurement framework. In addition, appointing Balfour Beatty at this stage will provide continuity with the same contractor leading completion of the concept design prior to undertaking the detailed design and construction.

- 5.4 Detailed design of the multi-modal interchange and car park has been undertaken by the Council's engineering term consultants. A number of minor amendments to the consented scheme have been made in response to comments from Network Rail and to ensure consistency with Berkeley Homes' revised plans for Green Park Village, and these are currently being discussed with the planning authority. It is recommended that the Council undertakes a competitive procurement process to appoint a contractor to undertake the initial phases of interchange construction by requesting quotes from three suitable contractors. These contractors will be selected based on those currently undertaking works in the nearby area to ensure that value for money is achieved by the Council.
- 5.5 In order to progress development of the station in accordance with the latest railway standards, the Council is required to enter into an Asset Protection Agreement with Network Rail. This is required to ensure that Network Rail can oversee and approve designs for the station as they are progressed from concept to detailed design, ensuring that the final design for construction is fully signed-off by Network Rail prior to any works being undertaken. The Council is required to enter into a similar separate agreement with Network Rail, the NSF2 Asset Purchase Agreement, to cover the additional funding and works provided for under the New Stations Fund 2.
- 5.6 In addition it is recommended that the Council enters into a Cooperation Agreement with GWR as the current franchise holder on the line. This will help to ensure that the station is developed in accordance with GWR's requirements to serve and manage the station facility when it opens. This will ensure GWR input into the detailed design process at the relevant design to help avoid any delays as the designs develop.
- 5.7 Discussions are on-going with Network Rail, GWR and Berkeley Homes regarding the asset boundary to be transferred to the railway post construction, including options for leasing and management of the station car park facility which will be jointly owned by Berkeley Homes and the Council. A recommendation on the way forward for the asset transfer will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 5.8 An indicative programme for delivery of the station by May 2019 has been agreed with the DfT, Network Rail and GWR, based on the requirement for the station to be included within the specification for the Great Western Franchise. There is also a requirement for an additional diesel train to be supplied for the Reading-Basingstoke line as part of this franchise to enable Green Park Station to be served prior to delivery of electrification of the line (which will enable the station to be served with the existing provision of two trains on the line) which has been agreed with the DfT.

5.9 The Council will continue to work with all relevant parties including the DfT, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, Network Rail and Great Western Railway to progress development of this scheme. Progress will continue to be reported to the Council's Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee and Traffic Management Sub-Committee; and the Berkshire Local Transport Body.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 The delivery of this scheme would help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Informal consultation on the scheme was undertaken as part of the public consultation for the Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026.

7.2 Statutory consultation on the scheme was undertaken through the planning process in 2015.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The detailed designs for the station will be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment as they are developed.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It will be necessary to enter into a formal Agreement with Balfour Beatty plc, under the terms of the SCAPE Framework. The terms of this Agreement will be approved by the Council's Legal Services.

9.2 The initial interchange works are estimated to be significantly below the works threshold stipulated in the Public Contract Regulations. Due to there being a number of Contractors already operating close to the station site, it is proposed that best value will be achieved through undertaking a closed quotation process with these Contractors. This proposal has been agreed by the Council's Legal Services.

9.3 Following this quotation exercise, it will be necessary to enter into a formal Agreement with the successful Contractor to undertake the initial interchange

works. The terms of this Agreement will be approved by the Council's Legal Services.

- 9.3 Further advice will be sought from the Council's Legal Services prior to entering into a formal agreement with Network Rail for the Asset Protection Agreement or NSF2 Asset Purchase Agreement.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The cost of undertaking the detailed design and construction of the station and interchange is included within the overall funding package for the scheme which comprises of £9.15m from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal, £2.3m from the New Stations Fund 2, and £5.5m from the already agreed S106 agreement for the Green Park Village development which is specifically fettered towards the station.
- 10.2 There is no commitment on Reading Borough Council finances and if these sums are not used for this purpose then they would have to be returned to the LEP, DfT and developer as appropriate.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Major Transport & Highway Projects - Update Reports, Traffic Management Sub-Committee, from November 2015 onwards.
- 11.2 Major Transport & Highway Projects - Update Reports, Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee, from November 2015 onwards.
- 11.3 Green Park Station - Scheme Progress Reports, Berkshire Local Transport Body, from March 2013 onwards.
- 11.4 Reading Green Park Station - Design Work, Policy Committee (Part 2), June 2016.
- 11.5 Reading Green Park Station - Design Work, Decision Book, July 2017.