

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	3 rd December 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2713
TITLE:	Saltford Station Business Case	
WARD:	Saltford	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Report by CHM2Hill		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting in June 2012, agreed that a High Level Option Assessment should be commissioned into the potential for reopening Saltford Station. The initial conclusions of that report were shared at a public exhibition in May this year. Cabinet now needs to decide if it wishes to take this project forward and, if so, in what timescale.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

- 2.1 Work should continue to develop the Business Case for a station at Saltford and that this should include the option of opening a station to the west of the village where future development may support the new facility.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Cabinet is considering inclusion of a capital budget of £250k in the February 2015 budget report to Council for Saltford Station – reopening feasibility work. This will be formally approved through the Council's capital approval processes. The budget is proposed to be funded by Corporately Supported borrowing.
- 3.2 There is a risk that any expenditure will revert to revenue if the feasibility work does not lead to a capital project.
- 3.3 Details of the potential financial liabilities arising from this project are detailed in paragraph 5.8 below

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*
- *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live*

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 **Introduction:** Saltford Station was closed in 1970 at which time the platforms and station buildings were removed. The site of the station has not been redeveloped since and has been used for a variety of building and storage purposes. A campaign to reopen the station has been pressing for this project in the local media and with well supported petitions.
- 5.2 The Metro West project Phase 1 will increase the frequency of local trains serving Keynsham and Oldfield Park providing a ½ hourly service, and it is these trains which could also stop at a new station at Saltford. The Metro West project, which will re-open the railway line to Portishead, is not due to be completed until 2019 at the earliest.
- 5.3 The site of the old station is located 8km west of Bath Spa Station on the line towards Bristol Temple Meads some 11km further. Trains stopping at a new Saltford Station would have to fit into with those services which stop at Keynsham and/or Oldfield Park Station. These two stations currently enjoy an hourly service. It is unlikely that the rail industry would wish to or could afford to stop other regional (as opposed to local) services at a Saltford Station.
- 5.4 Following the Cabinet report in 2012, CH2MHill were commissioned to undertake an initial review of the demand for the station in Saltford and surrounding areas, the suitability of the existing station site to support a new facility and assess whether a site to the west of the village, nearer to Keynsham would provide a better location for the station. Finally, the initial conclusions of the CH2MHill work were shared at a public exhibition in February 2014.
- 5.5 **CH2MHill's report:** The report by CH2MHill is summarised below.
- (1) The former station site is probably in the optimum location within the context of the current Core Strategy, having significant advantages over others to the west (e.g. at Chelwood Road). Alternative sites would have the advantage of better access arrangements and parking. These might need to be revisited in the light of any review of Core Strategy
 - (2) Whilst modelling for the timetable for Metro West project has confirmed that a new station could be fitted into the service pattern, there are a number of risks:
 - The new station may need an additional unit of rolling stock which would add significant costs to the revenue support needed.
 - Network Rail will need to be confident that the new station does not increase the risk of any delays accrued spreading to the wider MetroWest route
 - (3) Potential patronage is estimated to be some 200,000 users/annum (i.e. about 370 persons per day) assuming there were 2 trains an hour.
 - (4) This patronage could provide £770,000 p.a. in new fares to the Train Operating Company but would still require revenue support
 - (5) The station would require a 200 space car park including a new car park near to the station

- (6) Parking fees would provide a significant revenue stream which would support the running of the station and any subsidies required for the services stopping there.
- (7) On-street parking control would be needed to reduce pressure in adjoining streets.
- (8) The station would cost between £4 - £6m to build (excluding land acquisition, Train Operating Companies (TOC) compensation and traffic management. These costs will be identified in due course). . It should be noted that in some scenarios, high costs lead to a low Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) which may be a risk to the Business Case.
- (9) The access to the station from the A4 would require improvement which might be controversial locally. Cost of this unknown at the moment and would depend on which option is taken forward.

5.6 The public exhibition in February 2014 was a busy and well-attended event with over 300 people attending. The results of their responses are summarised in the CH2MHill report and showed very strong support for the station. The main reservations expressed during the discussion and in the response was the potential impact on parking in the vicinity of the station and concerns over any need to introduce on-street parking control.

5.7 Salford Parish Council considered the initial findings of the CH2MHill report at their meeting on 7th October and passed the following resolution:

“Following the results of the informal public consultation exercise launched at the public exhibition held in Saltford in February 2014 regarding the possible re-opening of Saltford Railway Station, Saltford Parish Council asks B&NES Council Cabinet to consider the Higher Level Output Assessment (HLOA) report and to take the project to GRIP (Governance in Railway Projects) stage 3 of Network Rail's GRIP process for railway development.”

5.8 **Costs of a new Station:** There are a number of costs which the Council would have to cover in order to take this project forward these include developing further the business case and of designing the new station. This would take a number of years and would require a budget of approximately £250,000.

5.9 There are three areas of work which should now be progressed. They are:

- (1) Rail Industry Engagement – Working with Network Rail on operational issues in particular confirmation of the timetable for trains stopping at the new station. Discussions with Train Operating Companies which would run the service and with DfT that would support the new station.
- (2) Project funding / governance – Confirmation of who will agree to the new station and what source of funding is available
- (3) GRIP 3 (Option development) / 4 (Single Option Design) – This can only be taken forward when the location of the station is agreed. Once this is confirmed we would have to engage with Network Rail on the detailed design of platforms and signals etc. There may be complications here given the electrification work; to date we have sought ‘passive provision’ for the station at its original site we would have to seek similar assurance for any new site. Finally, Network Rail may not have the capacity to fully engage with this

project given their work on electrification and the leading role they will be taking on the Metro West Project and in particular the promotion of the Development Consent Order for the re-opening of the Portishead line.

- 5.10 The capital cost of constructing the station, signals and car park would be up to £6m. While we could seek Major Scheme funding (like for the Bath Transport Package) - these are now devolved to the WoE LEP and are fully committed to funding Metro West phases 1 and 2 until 2024. Alternatively, the project could be funded by the Council using its own resources.
- 5.11 Finally, once the station is open, the Council would have to provide revenue subsidy to the TOC for servicing the station. Currently this subsidy is required for at least 3 years. The size of this subsidy is not known at present and would be a new pressure on budgets.
- 5.12 **Core Strategy review:** Since the report was finalised the Council has agreed that it will need to review its Core Strategy with other WoE authorities, and in particular strategic housing needs. If this were to conclude that additional housing should be provided in the medium term in the vicinity of Keynsham and/or Saltford then a different location for a new station at Saltford could have several advantages, for example: new housing could be integrated with the station, adequate parking could be provided and developer contributions could be sought to reduce the call on public funds for the new facility.
- 5.13 **Conclusion:** The work to date has established that a station at Saltford has a positive business case. However there are a number of significant constraints in re-opening the original station which could be avoided if an alternative site were found. It is therefore recommended that the work streams identified in the paragraph 5.9 above (1) and (2) are progressed and that a further review of opportunities to relocate the station to the west of Saltford is undertaken to help inform the review of the Core Strategy and avoid some of the costs and constraints with re-opening the station on its former site.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed at the present time. An assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the Business Case for the re-opening of the station and will be more informed at that time.

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 There is widespread support for the re-opening of Saltford Station which would provide a quick means of traveling into both Bristol and Bath allowing interchange to longer distance services. Transfer of car users to train use would reduce pressures on existing road and reduce congestion.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Cabinet members; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer

10.2 A public exhibition was undertaken in May 2014 at which 371 people attended

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability;

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	