

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

8th July 2013

CONSULTATION REPORT

**REGULATION 3 CONSULTATION
BROMSGROVE TRAIN STATION**

Application Reference: 13/000029/REG3

Application Description: Development of a new Bromsgrove Railway Station with platforms capable of handling six-carriage trains. Car parking for 365 cars is to be provided along with cycle parking. There will be a station building with ticket office, toilets and space for a retail operation.

Purpose of Report

To advise Members of an application the Bromsgrove station project, a £14million project under development by a Project Board consisting of Worcestershire County Council, Centro (the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive) and Network Rail. Funding, excluding grants, is being provided from Centro (70%) and Worcestershire County Council (30%), and following construction the station will be operated by Centro.

This report sets out the background, the location of the Project, the main elements forming the Project and the main planning issues arising from the scheme in order to inform Members. The views of Members on the scheme are thus invited for submission to Worcestershire County Council for consideration in the determination of the application.

Background

The existing station has a number of key shortcomings that will be addressed through the proposals. These are:

Short platform length

- Local restrictions do not allow the extension of the existing 3 car platforms which is a significant bar to increasing capacity on the line. The proposed station will accommodate 6 car trains with a revised track alignment that will allow future extension to 9 car trains.

Accessibility

- The existing station does not comply with the minimum requirements of the Equalities Act nor with Network Rail's wider accessibility requirements for a station of this size. The existing footbridge, for example, offers only stepped access to the far platform. The new station will provide a fully accessible environment.

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Electrification

- The existing station design does not accommodate the needs of the proposed electrification of the line without further investment to the station.

Passenger facilities

- The existing station does not offer the basic facilities required of a category C2 station. Nor do they meet the requirements established by Centro who will take over operation of the new station.

Objectives

The objectives of the project are:

- to provide a railway station with longer platforms;
- a station that can be used by all users
- an enlarged car park and a facility to integrate bus and rail services in Bromsgrove
- improve information on bus and rail services
- provide for all modes of travel (bus, rail, cycle, walk, taxi and park and ride)
- facilitation of the electrification of the route from Barnt Green to Bromsgrove which in turn will provide an increased train service between Bromsgrove and Birmingham.
- Existing peak time services are frequently over crowded. Further housing development will continue to increase demand. The existing platforms are only long enough to accommodate a three car length train which introduces operational issues and limits capacity.

Site and Surroundings

The site is situated to the east of Bromsgrove Town Centre at the termination of New Road in Aston Fields. The application area takes in New Road, the existing, non-adopted Network Rail access from Stoke Road, the former oil depot site and existing rail corridor. The total area within the application boundary is 2.3 hectares.

The existing site is a former oil depot and supplementary strategic freight site. The existing sidings are now used by Network Rail National Delivery Service for the storage and servicing of track maintenance plant. The land outside of the Network Rail operational infrastructure is currently derelict, comprising large areas of concrete hard standing, piles of dumped material and low vegetation. The site is entirely owned by Network Rail. The site and adjacent surroundings is primarily residential with limited retail, a public house on Stoke Road and a hotel adjacent to the New Road station approach.

The overall site is bounded on the east side by a low embankment which is heavily vegetated and provides a screen to residential properties which bound the railway. The site is bounded on the west by the Breme Park housing development. The site is *circa* 1 metre higher here than the adjacent, existing Garrington Road. There is a

close boarded fence separating the site from Garrington Road and several large pine trees provide some screening where South Road and Garrington Road meet. There is no vehicular access between South Road and Garrington Road. The Busy Bees Nursery occupies land to the west of the site at the northern end and a mixture of stone and brick retaining walls provides the rear boundary between the nursery and the site.

The land to the north of the site is bounded by the existing station. The land to the south of the site is Network Rail infrastructure and is generally low embankment with low vegetation. The proposed southern access/egress to the station will be via the former access road to the depot. This is currently used by visitors to the Busy Bees Nursery and by Network Rail for plant maintenance. The road forms the rear boundary to properties on Coronation Terrace and South Road which comprises a mixture of close boarded and chain link fences.

Project Details

The application is for the relocation and replacement of the Bromsgrove railway station from its current location on New Road to the former oil terminal site, 250 metres away. The geographical constraints of the existing station relative to the Lickey Incline and other network restrictions mean the existing station cannot be modified or extended to meet current standards. The scheme forms part of the passenger service enhancement strategy that will provide electrification and re-signalling of the line between Barnt Green and Bromsgrove, thereby enabling extension of the current electric Cross City services from Longbridge. The project will enable three of the six train services per hour which currently terminate at Longbridge to be continued to Bromsgrove. The other three services will continue to Redditch, subject to the provision of infrastructure under the Redditch branch line enhancement scheme currently under consideration by the Planning Inspectorate.

Work to decontaminate the site is planned to take place in autumn 2013. Network Rail plan to undertake enabling works to move the track and signalling associated with the existing sidings in late 2013 and early 2014. The main civil engineering works contract is planned to commence in April 2014 and to last for one year, with the station opening in late April/ early May 2015 in advance of the May train time table change. The existing station will then be decommissioned and removed and Network Rail will then complete their works for electrification of the line from Barnt Green to Bromsgrove, which is due to be completed no later than July 2016.

The proposals briefly include;

- New island platforms with on platform shelters
- New enclosed and weather protected bridge, stairs and lifts to all platforms
- New station building and concourse
- New car park with expanded capacity
- New bus stops
- Highways works to form 2 access/ egress routes to the station

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In detail, the following elements therefore comprise the application:

Track works

- reconfiguration within the rail corridor to create 2 high speed through lines and 2 stopping lines.
- formation of peripheral space to track edges for the future electrification of the line
- formation of 2 island platforms suitable for 6 carriage trains and for further extension in the future

Station works

- formation of covered, enclosed bridge link to platforms from concourse with stairs and lifts to all platforms
- formation of a fully accessible station concourse capable of handling circa. 800,000 ppa and including passenger information, automated ticketing, covered cycle storage, vending machines, local information and onward travel and providing covered access to the lift and stairs to platform.
- formation of a station building including accessible public unisex WC, manned ticket office with staff welfare area, waiting room and potential retail concession, ticket and travel information
- formation of an external concourse linking to new bus stops, taxi rank, pedestrian footpaths, cycle store, disabled parking bays and wider car park areas
- A Public Address system designed by a specialist PA designer with the brief that it is to be designed to the minimum noise level which meets all safety and intelligibility requirements.
- Erection of 2 metre high close boarded timber fence to the site perimeter with Garrington Road

Vehicular access works

- improvements to New Road to create two way vehicular access into the proposed station
- upgrading of the existing Network Rail site access from Stoke Road to create a new 2 way vehicular access into the proposed station to adoptable highways standards:
 - The first of these uses the existing station access road, New Road/ Station Approach that will be extended from the site of the current station to the new railway station. The existing parking located on both sides of New Road between the existing station and the Ladybird Inn will be removed from the east side.
 - The second access will be from Stoke Road alongside Baldwin's Garage. This unnamed access road currently takes users to Busy Bees Nursery and to the derelict site. The existing vegetation will be cut back, new planting and fencing provided where required and new lighting installed to make this a generally improved access to the new railway station.

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Station car park

- formation of a new station car park to Park Mark standard and to provide 337 standard parking bays, 17 disabled parking bays, 4 electric vehicle charging stations, 3 staff parking bays, 4 car share parking bays, 5 motorcycle parking bays with security rail and 2 bus stops
- maintain access points to north and south of the site for Network Rail trackside maintenance.
- landscape the site area and boundaries to mitigate impacts to surrounding areas.

Demand Forecast

No change is proposed in the train services at the time of opening of the new station. However, on completion of Network Rail's electrification project in the following year, the number of train services is planned to increase to 2 or 3 train services per hour at both peak and non-peak times. Currently, there are 2 services per hours in the peak and 1 per hour outside of the peak times. Peak times are arriving Birmingham 7.30 – 9.30am and leaving Birmingham 4.30 - 6.30pm.

The platform lengths are consistent with the requirements of the train operators to stop 6 car trains at the station with no restrictions on door opening. Additional length is provided for the lifts and steps, and the platform and track layouts provide for the option to extend the platforms to 9 car length if required in the future.

The application has been accompanied by the following reports:

- landscape and visual impact assessment
- arboricultural survey
- site waste management plan
- environmental management plan
- noise survey and assessment
- transport
- flood risk assessment
- contamination risk assessment and monitoring strategy
- lighting assessment
- biodiversity surveys (including protected species surveys for reptiles and badgers)

Material Planning Considerations

Under the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, the site of the new station is located in an employment zone. New Road and the new access leading off Stoke Road are designated residential.

Members will be aware that the policy of a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of in the NPPF, it emphasises that it should be seen as a golden thread running through plan making and decision-making. It suggests that patterns of growth should make the best use of public transport and focus development which are or can be made sustainable. The objective is to reduce the need for travel and, secondly, to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. Sustainability also relates to the need to create an environment

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for economic growth. The railway is generally recognised as being a more sustainable transport system than the private car. To achieve a modal shift primarily from the private car to trains, the railway system needs to be made more attractive to users in terms of both reliability and capacity.

Policy TR13 of the BDLP favours applications which directly promote the use of a variety of transport. This project clearly encourages existing car users to seek an alternative on the railway with the improved services that will be delivered. Policy TR15 encourages more use of rail services by enhancing car parking at railway stations, including Bromsgrove.

Conclusions

The development represents a key improvement to the railway infrastructure that will provide extra capacity, as well as improved reliability and an enhanced facility for Bromsgrove. It is supported by Government policy through the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the promotion of modal shift from private car to rail. In considering this context, Bromsgrove District Council supports the principle of the development of the new Bromsgrove Railway Station.

Recommendation

Whilst the principle of the new station is supported, Bromsgrove District Council would draw the attention of Worcestershire County Council to the following key issues to be considered as part of the determination process:

- Impact on the highway network and associated parking provision
- Impact on residential amenity (with particular regard to noise and lighting matters)
- Design (including scale, massing and external materials of the station building and new bridge)
- Ground investigation and contamination issues
- Infrastructure and servicing, including drainage matters
- Ecology and biodiversity issues

The recommendation made by Members will form the relevant representation from Bromsgrove District Council to Worcestershire County Council for consideration in the determination of the application.

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