

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

1ST AUGUST 2007

**BROMSGROVE RAILWAY STATION AND INTEGRATED PASSENGER
TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor J. Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning & Environment

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To request Cabinet to release £25,000 (capital) to support the re-development of Bromsgrove Railway Station.
- 1.2 To request Cabinet formally endorse the Council's response to the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy consultation and agree to establish a Transport Theme Group for the District under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 1.3 This report will require Full Council approval, as the £25,000 capital was not approved as part of the 2007/08 Council budget.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members agree to contribute £25,000 (capital) towards stages 3 & 4 of the station re-development (see paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10).
- 2.2 That Members be aware that a further contribution may be required at later stages of the station re-development (see paragraph 3.11).
- 2.3 That Cabinet endorse the Council's response to the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy consultation (3.14).
- 2.4 That Cabinet agree to the establishment of a Transport Theme Group for the District under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership (3.15).

3. BACKGROUND

Bromsgrove Train Station

- 3.1 Over the last ten years the number of people who use Bromsgrove station has increased by 400%, the strongest growth rate in Worcestershire. Most of the people who use the station commute to work in the West Midlands

conurbation, but there are an increasing number of people using the train services from Bromsgrove for leisure trips, education, and to access health facilities.

- 3.2 Bromsgrove station is the most heavily used un-staffed station on Central Trains area. The existing Bromsgrove Railway Station facilities are extremely basic, consisting of one shelter on each platform, a stepped footbridge crossing the tracks that is unsuitable for disabled people, no booking office or waiting room, and provision for only 79 cars. Due to the platform lengths, large trains are unable to stop at Bromsgrove, limiting the number of commuter services for travellers at Bromsgrove Station. The image of the existing station offers a poor gateway into Bromsgrove District.
- 3.3 NetWork Rail and Worcestershire County Council recently funded a pre-feasibility study to consider two potential options. Firstly, enhancing the existing station with platform extensions up to 6 car lengths on both the Up and Down platforms, new ticket office and waiting facilities, step free access to the Down platform, additional 70 car parking spaces and bus interchange facilities. Secondly, the relocation of Bromsgrove Station.
- 3.4 The study confirmed that the existing station does not meet requirements in respect of platform length, passenger facilities, disabled access, and car parking. The option of enhancing the existing station was ruled out, as it would cause too much disruption to passengers. Also, the platforms at the existing station cannot be extended to accommodate more than 4 car length trains on the north platform, and no more than 6 car trains on the south platform. This limits the number of trains able to stop at the station. The outcome of the pre-feasibility study was that the most sensible option is to re-locate the station.
- 3.5 The relocated station option is situated on the former Oil Depot site, south of the existing station. There is a large amount of land available, which can be utilised for an appropriate station design layout. Additionally, an increase in car parking capacity can be considered, which given Bromsgrove's proximity to the major road network (M5, M42, A38) offers potential for a Park & Ride station, in a strategic location.
- 3.6 The options for the new station include a ticket office and waiting room, step free access to platforms, 300 car parking spaces, and bus interchange facilities. Extending the platform lengths would permit 10 car trains to pull into the station, enabling additional services as well as longer services to be considered. This would also facilitate a potential Cross City line extension, which would require a minimum 6 car platform length and a turn back facility.
- 3.7 The direct benefits a new station would bring to Bromsgrove District include enhancing the gateway into Bromsgrove District, improvements to accessibility, passenger facilities, train services, and removing parking from adjacent roads. Secondary benefits include the socio economic benefits,

opportunities for further development in Bromsgrove, linkages to Town Centre and Technology Park, and employment opportunities that the new station with improved capacity and services will offer.

3.8 Following the pre-feasibility study, the next phase of development will be stages 3 & 4: Option Selection and Single Option Development. Stages 3 & 4 will look at:

- Option identification and selection for station layout design and Up Goods Loop mitigation;
- Interface with Down Goods Loop renewal;
- Identify possession requirements and opportunities;
- Negotiations with Commercial Property reuse of former Oil Depot;
- Identify planning requirements;
- Environmental appraisal;
- Risk & Value Management; and
- Preparation of outline design for Approval in Principal.

3.9 During stages 3 & 4 Bromsgrove District Council Planning Department will be involved in looking at the options for the design of the station layout, in particular the location of the platforms, station building, car parking, road access, and bus interchange. The Council will also assist with the public consultation event planned for Autumn 2007.

3.10 £350,000 needs to be raised for stages 3 & 4. NetWork Rail, Worcestershire County Council (£100,000), Centro, and the train franchise operator are contributing funds. The rationale behind the contributions is that broadly they should be in relation to the benefits the station re-development will offer each party. It is hoped that Bromsgrove District Council will contribute £25,000 towards this phase of development, which should be completed by end of 2007.

3.11 Stages 5 & 6 (Design & Development) will follow stages 3 & 4. An estimated £10 to £12 million will need to be raised. NetWork Rail, Worcestershire County Council, Centro, and the train franchise operator are contributing funds. It is hoped that Bromsgrove District Council will also contribute funds towards this stage of development. The funding agreement for stages 5 & 6 must be in place by Autumn 2007 to avoid delays to station re-development.

3.12 Providing there are no delays with funding agreements, development on the new station should commence in Spring 2008, and the new station could be open to the public in early 2009.

Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy

3.13 Through the Members' Bulletin, a presentation by County Council officers at the Local Strategic Partnership Board and a presentation to Members, the Council has been given a number of opportunities to find out about the County consultation on the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy.

3.14 At this stage, the Strategy is more of a method statement, setting out how the County Council, will develop specific transport plans for each District. The planning for our District is likely to start within the next 12 months. The Council's response to the consultation, approved by the Portfolio Holder (and taking into account the view of Members who have responded) is attached at **Appendix 1**. The response aimed to do a number of things:-

- provide some initial clarity about the most important transport issues in the District. Based on the draft Community Strategy, the Council Plan 2007/2010, Members views and the Equalities Forum, these appear to be:-
 - ensuring integrated transport links form a key part of the town centre regeneration, in particular, links to the planned new railway station and links to the outlying villages of the District;
 - possible ring and ride schemes to improve rural access and service people with disabilities;
 - the impact of the Longbridge redevelopment;
 - specific developments like the railway station, bus interchange in the town centre and possible expansion of the Wythall rail line; and
 - congestion on the A38 and M42.

3.15 A number of Members have an interest in transport matters, either from a ward perspective or from a general interest perspective. In addition, the Council has welcomed the support of Mike Ponsonby, the Chairman of the Bromsgrove Railway Users Group. As a result, these people, plus the Portfolio Holder and the Assistant Chief Executive have started meeting on an informal basis to share their knowledge on transport issues. Recent discussions with the County Council have highlighted that the Council should have a transport theme group within its Local Strategic Partnership. As a result, it is recommended that a formal thematic group is established. The proposed membership is set out in **Appendix 2**.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is hoped that Bromsgrove District Council will contribute £25,000 (capital) towards the £350,000 that needs to be raised for stages 3 & 4 of station re-development.
- 4.2 £10 to £12 million must be raised for stages 5 & 6 of station re-development. It is hoped that Bromsgrove District Council will make a contribution. The funding agreement must be in place by Autumn 2007 to enable stages 5 & 6 to commence early 2008.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

6.1 The railway station re-development is consistent with plans for improving Bromsgrove Town Centre. With the right integrated transport link, a new railway station will generate more people into town centre and enhance the gateway into Bromsgrove District.

6.2 The railway station re-development is also consistent with travel plans in Worcestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan (2006/2011), and Bromsgrove's Sustainable Community Strategy. Worcestershire County Council has identified improvements at Bromsgrove Railway Station as one of their top ten rail aspirations.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 None

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council will assist with the Public Consultation event planned for Autumn 2007.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Council response to Consultation
Appendix 2 Proposed Membership of Transport LSP Thematic Group

CONTACT OFFICER

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Consultation on draft Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Strategy 2007

Comments and Questionnaire

Welcome to the consultation questionnaire for the Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy (IPTS) 2007. The consultation period runs from 19th March to May 2007 inclusive.

Your views on our proposals are critical to the success of the Strategy and the aim of this questionnaire is to provide a simple way for you to respond. Please complete it and let us know what you think, if you wish to make further comments you may continue on additional paper. If you provide us with contact details we will then be able to feedback the outcomes of this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to read the document. As a key Stakeholder, your comments are valued and we look forward to reading them.

1. Is the overarching IPTS vision of the strategy appropriate? If not, how should it be modified (page 22)?

The Council supports the Vision, in particular, the desire for an “integrated passenger transport network”. The Council has regeneration plans to develop Bromsgrove into a thriving market town. Improved bus interchanges at the railway station and town centre, that connect out on a radial basis with the surrounding District is a key part of our vision for the town centre. An integrated transport approach for the regeneration of Longbridge is also a key issue for the District.

The Council also notes the word “accessible”. Rural access and access for people with disabilities are two issues that have come up through discussions with Members and our Equalities Forum. The Council welcomes the reference to accessibility and will be keen to explore how these issues can be improved, for example, through ring and ride schemes.

Although not directly reflected in the Vision statement, the Strategy also makes reference to an intelligent transport system. The Council has noted with interest the use of digital TV technology and text messaging to provide alerts for regular buses linking estates with town centres. The Council would be keen to explore this type of technology alongside our plans for the town centre redevelopment and the redevelopment of the railway station.

2. Does the IPTS vision help deliver national, regional and local policies including the Local Transport Plan 2 objectives for Worcestershire?

Yes; however, the Council notes the commentary on page 12 which refers to Regional Spatial Strategy 1 and the sub –regional focus on the regeneration of Kidderminster and Redditch. Similarly, the Council notes the focus on Worcester developing as a university city. Due to the Council's internal problems, the Council has not been well placed in the past to work in partnership on ensuring Bromsgrove District's strategic issues are appropriately reflected at a County and regional level. The Council is now improving quickly and is concerned that the potential focus on Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester will squeeze out the required focus on Bromsgrove, when in fact, the District should be a priority given: our proximity to Birmingham, the A38, the plans for the much needed redevelopment of the town centre, the redevelopment of the train station, Longbridge, the potential impact of Regional Spatial Strategy 2 (particularly, if the District has to take some of Redditch's housing allocation) and possible plans to expand the train service to Wythall. The Council is keen to work in partnership with the County Council on these issues.

3. In seeking to deliver the Strategy objectives our partnership process cites two lead groups (The Integrated Passenger Joint Members Forum and the Worcestershire Accessibility Partnership). Do you feel that this is the best way to work with the public and stakeholders to deliver the Strategy (page 19)? If not, how can it work better?

As per our telephone conversation, we note that other councils are sending more senior officers and their portfolio holders. The Council is keen to increase its partnership working with County and will review this issue. Again, as per our telephone conversation, the Council notes that the District lacks a transport theme group for the District Local Strategic Partnership; however, the Council is currently establishing such a group and would welcome County representation on this group and any specific project groups that may be required, for example, for the train station and town centre bus interchange.

4. Are the performance monitoring measures sufficiently ambitious/specific/realistic? If not why not (page 20)?

The Council understands that the draft Strategy is designed to provide a method statement of how to develop the transport network for the County using a modular approach. As a result, the exact objectives and priorities that will flow from this modular approach are not yet known. As a result, the measures set out on page 20 provide an indication of possible measures of success, but more work will need to be done cross referencing objectives to outcome measures as the strategy develops.

As the Strategy develops, the Council would be interested in whether the overall measure of satisfaction (BVP103) could be broken down into ward specific, socio-economic and disability specific sub satisfaction scores, which may help highlight particular hot spots of dissatisfaction. The Council was also particularly interested in Appendix D, leisure access to town centres. The Council wants to develop a thriving market town for Bromsgrove and this vision involves access to arts, markets, leisure activities, as well as employment. The Council would like this to be a key indicator for the Strategy. Similarly, we would like to see something on ring and ride, but are unclear at this stage how to measure this.

The Council also notes Appendix H, Targets from Local Transport Plan 2 and the focus on the A4440. Should the A38 feature in future thinking? Also, while a responsibility of the Highways Agency, the Council is concerned about the morning rush hour flow of traffic eastbound on the M42.

Finally, the Council would suggest that as part of the user and non-user consultation we find out what drives our residents satisfaction, as these may be smaller less tangible things than the strategic measures set out on page 20.

5. Are the seven objectives of the Strategy appropriate and do they fairly reflect the challenges facing transport in Worcestershire? If not, please could you explain why (page 24)?

Yes. As per the previous question, these objectives and the commentary alongside them, provide a useful starting point for developing specific outcome measures.

6. Should the IPTS include any further objectives?

No. As per your presentation to the District's LSP and Members, the Vision and objectives are inclusive and broad in nature. A key issue, will be refining these into specific actions and measures of success through the modular approach.

7. Do you agree that our approach to produce a 'modular' strategy is the best way forward (pp 26-55)? If not, please suggest alternatives.

The Council supports the modular approach and on the basis of the initiatives set out in question 2, sees this as a priority of the District. The Council understands that the modular work is likely to start within the next 12 months.

8. Is there anything NOT listed within a module that could be added to improve the Strategy?

No.

9. Do you have any other suggestions or comments that could enhance the Strategy?

The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Strategy and the potential to establish a theme group for the District LSP with a focus on transport. No further comments at this stage.

Thank you once again for your comments. The information you provide us with will only be used for the purposes of the consultation and research in order for us to improve our services. Anonymous results will be published on the Councils Ask Me! Consultation Planner and Finder web database. Survey results will never contain your name. If you would like to be kept up to date with the progress of the Strategy, please write in your name, organisation and address below.

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Please send your response by 30 June to the following address FREEPOST, no stamp required.

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Proposed Membership of Transport LSP Thematic Group

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