
Individual Cabinet Member Delegated Decision

Cabinet Member for Economic Development – Cllr Philip Whitehead

Service Economic Development and planning

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Reference: L-09-20

Title: Chippenham Station Hub – improvements to the Chippenham Station Square and a safe walking route to the new lift on the northern side.

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks authority to sign a Legal Agreement for up to £1,4M with Great Western Railway (GWR) to enable the delivery of improvements to the Chippenham Station Square, as well as a safe walking route to the new lift on the northern side which will enable the lift to open to the public and delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Place and Environment to sign the contract and agree terms, conditions and any other consequential matters including dealing with any project underspend.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. To ensure that Wiltshire Council/Chippenham maximises the benefits and opportunities associated with the Growth Deal programme in terms of delivering key infrastructure projects and building Wiltshire's economy.
3. The improvements at Chippenham Station will help delivery economic development in a sustainable manner by improving the use of public transport, better the experience for those arriving at the station, improving the station's role as a transport gateway to Chippenham town centre and create opportunities for jobs and growth. It will also support the grow in demand created by Great Western Main Line Modernisation Programme as well as the additional housing provision planned for the area.

Background

4. A Local Growth funding bid for the Chippenham Station Hub project was submitted as part of the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic and Economic Plan in 2014. It received a funding allocation of £16M (which has since reduced to £13M).
5. The project was subject to the SWLEP's assurance framework which included full business case development.

6. The Cabinet Capital Assets Committee agreed in September 2016 to grant delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning to cashflow and deliver the schemes.
1. In October a grant agreement for £16M was entered into with the SWLEP with WC acting as Accountable Body, i.e. acting as the accountable organisation for SWLEP.
7. The various phases including the improvements to station square have been agreed with the SWLEP and minuted in Board meetings as well as through regular highlight reports.

Main Considerations for the Council

8. The works form part of a funding agreement with the SWLEP for a total figure of £16M in relation to the Chippenham Station Hub.
9. This funding amount has since been reduced to £13M as some works planned were deemed unfeasible (this does not include these works).
10. A key element of Chippenham Station Hub is the delivery of improvements to the Chippenham Station Square, including new cycle facilities, safer and clearer movement routes for pedestrians and cyclists, improved public transport links as well as a safe walking route to the new lift on the northern side which will enable the lift to open to the public.
11. These works were approved by the SWLEP Board in September and November 2019. Approval is now sought from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development to enter into the contract with Network Rail.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

12. In March 2020, the Joint Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Task Group produced a report on the Chippenham Station Hub Project. The Chippenham Station Hub project was identified as a specific project for the task group to explore; the aim being for the task group to scrutinise the role of the SWLEP.
13. In undertaking this work, the task group was informed of a variety of reasons why this had been a constantly evolving project; including the detailed design of the various elements developing within the cost constraints of the allocated funding and within the needs and constraints of the variety of public sector and private sector partners involved in the project. The evolving nature of the project is also reflected in this request for a delegated decision. The task group is no longer in existence. There is now a SWLEP joint scrutiny panel, and the panel will be informed of this delegated decision.
14. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has been consulted in the publication of this as a Key single member decision by the Leader.

Safeguarding Implications

15. No implications

Public Health Implications

16. The work of the SWLEP delivered through nationally competitive Growth Deals, aims to deliver significant levels of new jobs in Wiltshire and attract significant private sector investment to our economy. This will help ensure that Wiltshire's economy remains strong and resilient and that employment figures remain high.
17. The local economy is a known contributor to the wider determinants of health. A struggling local economy can lead to higher unemployment throughout the local population. This in turn can impact on the social, physical and mental health outcomes of the population. Getting people into work is therefore of critical importance for reducing health inequalities.
18. The proposed transport improvements offer an opportunity to enhance utilisation of both public transport and active travel options which over time could lead to improved health outcomes. There may also be associated benefits in relation to both road safety and air quality.

Procurement Implications

19. None identified - Procurement is currently being undertaken by GWR in accordance with standard rules and procedures applicable.
20. The deadline for passporting the remaining grant funds over to GWR is the 31st March 2021 and it is therefore urgent that this Legal Agreement is signed at the earliest opportunity; there is not a meeting of Cabinet before 5 January 2021.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

21. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published its Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for Growth Deals in July 2014. The report concludes that the Growth Deal programme has no adverse impact on any protected group and that the proposed funding decision is neutral in advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share the relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
22. As the project develops, Wiltshire Council officers will continue to consider the Final 5-9-16 equality implications locally and ensure that there are no negative impacts. This will be done throughout the life of their development and delivery.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

23. The planned transport improvements provide an opportunity to embed the development of a low carbon infrastructure and sustainable building practices.

24. The proposed transport improvements offer an opportunity to enhance utilisation of both public transport and active travel options which reduce the use of private car and therefore contribute to an overall carbon and pollution reduction in Wiltshire.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

25. The works are not undertaken. Chippenham Station would continue to underperform and would be unable to meet demand or help sustain economic development.
26. The environment and climate would also be negatively affected as more people would have to rely on the use of private vehicles to move around.
27. There would also be reputational issues for Wiltshire Council and SWLEP which could affect our ability to bid for future central government funding.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

28. No significant risks have been identified - This is a LEP funded project, to be delivered by GWR. The funding agreement with GWR is been finalised.
29. The details of the funding agreement with GWR are being finalised and include clawback provisions for non-delivery. The project is well advanced, tender activities are under way and due to be completed in December.

Financial Implications

30. None identified - this is a LEP funded project and Wiltshire Council is only acting as the accountable body. Funding has already been allocated and approved by the SWLEP and there are contractual provisions in the legal agreement between GWR and the Council which include clawback provisions for non-delivery.
31. The total funding envelope for the works was approved at the SWLEP Board Meetings which took place in September and November 2019.

Legal Implications

32. Wiltshire Council's legal team have been involved in drafting the funding agreement with GWR.

Workforce Implications

33. None identified

Options Considered

34. Not entering into a legal agreement with GWR would mean that the improvement works to the station would not be completed and the station would continue to underperform. In the absence of a safe walking route this would also mean that the lift would not be able to open to the public.

Proposal

35. The conclusions reached having taken all of the above into account.

Reason for Proposal

36. To enter into a Legal Agreement with GWR to enable GWR to appoint the preferred contractor and start the construction of improvements to the Chippenham Station Square, including new cycle facilities, safer and clearer movement routes for pedestrians and cyclists, improved public transport links and a safe walking route to the new lift on the northern side.

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Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- [Capital Assets Committee Meeting September 2016](#)
- [SWLEP Board Presentation- Chippenham Station Hub Development Phases](#)
- [SWLEP Board Minutes September 2019](#)
- [SWLEP Board Minutes March 2020](#)