

## Summary Sheet

**Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

Cabinet Member – Councillor Lelliott

**Title: ROTHERHAM RAIL CONNECTIVITY STUDY – NEXT STEPS**

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No**

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:**

Caroline Bruce, Interim Strategic Director, Environment & Development Services

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**Ward(s) Affected:** Rawmarsh

### **Executive Summary:**

The Transportation and Highways Project Group has been working with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) to undertake a review of the current rail connectivity and service provision to Rotherham Central Station. There has been a longstanding desire to improve both the range of destinations served and also the frequency of services.

A study was commissioned by SYPTTE to consider why the existing service provision was limited and what constraints needed to be overcome in order to provide an enhanced service. The study also considered the economic growth potential that could arise in Rotherham as a result of better rail connectivity. The study concludes that the only practical and cost effective way to enhance rail connectivity to Rotherham is to consider providing a new railway station on the mainline to take advantage of services that currently pass through the borough but do not stop.

The suggested location for this station is at Parkgate, although the next phase of work will consider all potential station locations in greater detail. In order to develop a business case and ensure that the station is a viable proposition, further consultancy support will be commissioned and funded by SYPTTE. Oversight of this work will take the form of a project board with representatives of RMBC, the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Executive Team, SYPTTE and Network Rail.

### **Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:-

- i) endorses the findings of Rotherham Rail Connectivity study, noting that SYPTE presented the findings of the study to the SCR Transport Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (attached at Appendix A);
- ii) Provides any comments on the further work to be undertaken and the suitability of the project board.
- iii) Notes that the new railway station is one of the Development Pool projects included within the Capital Strategy that has been identified as part of the development of the Council's capital programme (2016-2021), with a provisional cost of £15.1m.
- iv) Endorses the proposal for officers from the Transportation and Highways Project Group to work as part of the project board, to develop the further detail of the scheme, noting that the Department for Transport are expected to announce a 'New Stations Fund' in 2016.

**List of Appendices Included: Appendix A:** SYPTE report to SCR Transport Committee

**Background Papers:** Rotherham Rail Connectivity Study  
SYPTE report to SCR Transport Committee 12 October 15

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel:**  
No

**Council Approval Required:** No

**Exempt from the Press and Public:** No

## **Title: ROTHERHAM RAIL CONNECTIVITY STUDY**

### **1. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Endorses the findings of Rotherham Rail Connectivity study, noting that SYPTE presented the findings of the study to the SCR Transport Committee on the 12 October 2015 (attached at Appendix A);
- (ii) Provides any comments on the further work to be undertaken and the suitability of the project board.
- (iii) Notes that the new railway station is one of the Development Pool included within the Capital Strategy that has been identified as part of the development of the Council's capital programme (2016-2021), with a provisional cost of £15.1m.
- (iv) Endorses the proposal for officers from the Transportation and Highways Project Group work as part of the project board, to develop the further detail of the scheme, noting that the Department for Transport (DfT) are expected to announce a 'New Stations Fund' in 2016.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Transportation and Highways Project Group has been working with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) to undertake a review of the current rail connectivity and service provision to Rotherham Central Station.
- 2.2 Rotherham Central Station opened in 1987 and is located on a branch line constructed to serve the new station. Previously Rotherham's main railway station was located in Masbrough, and was served by mainline railway services. However, Rotherham Central was considered a more convenient location due to its proximity to the town centre.
- 2.3 Rotherham Central Station was significantly upgraded and remodelled during an extensive £10.4 million redevelopment, which re-opened to the public in February 2012. The station works have provided customers with better facilities, improved passenger comfort and accessibility via lifts, and a new waiting room, lighting, CCTV, information screens, ticket office and retail kiosk, to create a much improved gateway to Rotherham.
- 2.4 Whilst the station facilities have been significantly improved there has also been a longstanding desire to improve both the range of destinations served and also the frequency of services. A study was commissioned by SYPTE to consider why the existing service provision was limited and what constraints needed to be overcome in order to provide an enhanced service.

### **3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 For a number of years it was considered that the main constraint to the current rail service provision at Rotherham Central was the length of single track immediately to the south of the station known as 'Holmes

Chord'. However, instead of constraining the scope of the review to issues solely related to Holmes Chord, the study took a wider view in the following three-stage approach:

Stage A – A baseline review of the current service level, including comparison against comparator towns and defining a Rail Service Specification (RSS) that supports our growth aspirations.

Stage B – Assessment of the potential for the existing rail infrastructure to deliver the RSS.

Stage C – If the existing infrastructure was unable to cater for the RSS, Stage C identified options on the infrastructure that would be required, and whether a business case for its delivery could be identified.

- 3.2 Stage A identified that existing services to Rotherham Central Station are considerably limited when compared to a number of comparator towns and their rail services. Indeed Rotherham Central was found to have the poorest level of rail connectivity based on a number of measures including the total number of services, the range of destinations served and the type of services operated, with services being solely characterised by urban services providing local links to Doncaster, Sheffield and Leeds.
- 3.3 Economic modelling demonstrated that there would be significant benefits to the economy from improving services to a number of key locations including Leeds, the Midlands, Manchester and Doncaster. Due to these benefits a specification was developed to provide additional services to these destinations.
- 3.4 Having identified a service level to support Rotherham's economic potential the Stage B analysis demonstrated that it would not be possible to deliver this by operating additional services through Rotherham Central within the constraints of the existing infrastructure. It also confirmed that the assumptions that Holmes Chord is the constraint preventing an improved service are false, and whilst it is part of the problem that there are other significant factors that limit rail access.
- 3.5 Stage C considered potential options to improve the infrastructure to deliver the Rail Service Specification. It was found that the upgrades required to deliver the service specification via Rotherham Central would be unaffordable, with a requirement to realign Holmes Chord alongside further significant works at Aldwarke junction and would deliver poor value for money, with a benefit/cost ratio below 1. The option of doubling Holmes Chord was also found to address neither operational nor commercial issues.
- 3.6 An alternative and cost effective way of delivering the service specification was found to be to open an additional station for Rotherham located on the existing mainline to take advantage of the services that currently pass through the borough. An outline assessment of potential locations for a station indicated that a station near Parkgate is likely to be the most

appropriate. However, within the further work that is required to develop a mainline station a more detailed review of potential suitable locations will be undertaken, providing a fuller options appraisal. The cost of a new station is likely to be in the region of £15.1m, although this does not include the costs of wider connectivity through tram-train, which again will be considered as part of the further station development work and also covered in part by further work to be undertaken to develop the options for a tram-train stop at Magna.

- 3.7 A new station would deliver the service specification at a significantly lower cost than the option of upgrading the route via Rotherham Central. The Parkgate location offers the potential for a Parkway station that would help to stimulate development and regeneration in a number of areas surrounding the station site, as well as delivering the potential wider economic benefits of service improvements.
- 3.8 Rotherham Central would continue to play an important role by providing key local connections, particularly Rotherham-Sheffield, which will be further enhanced by the development of the Tram-Train scheme which is due to open in early 2017.
- 3.9 The findings of the review are provided in a report prepared by the Sheffield City Region Executive Team for the Transport Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 which is attached at Appendix A

#### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the potential for an additional station at Parkgate is developed in greater detail and that further work is undertaken by RMBC and SYPTTE as part of a project board to develop the business case for investment.
- 4.2 The DfT is expected to announce a further round of the 'New Stations Fund' in 2016; this was included in the budget in 2015. The last time that a fund of this nature was released was in 2013 and the overall funding available was limited to £20m with a limit on individual bids of £5m. A new railway station is one of the projects included within the Development Pool projects that have been included in the Council's Capital Strategy as part of the development of the Council's capital programme (2016-2021), with a provisional cost of £15.1m.
- 4.3 In order to pursue the building of a new station, further work is required using the format of the "Guide to Rail Investment Process" (GRIP). The commissioning of this work will be carried out by SYPTTE and the brief will include work up to GRIP stage 3. This develops options for addressing constraints; assesses and selects the most appropriate option that delivers the stakeholders' requirements, together with confirmation that the outputs can be economically delivered. Its main output is to determine a single option and stakeholder approval of that option secured through Approval in Principle (AIP).

#### **5. Consultation**

Consultation undertaken to date:-

- Briefings with Commissioner Kenny and Cllr Lelliott with comments and feedback included.
- Network Rail were engaged in the project meetings that were organised to inform and steer the study.
- Consultation with the landowner Stadium Developments

Proposed consultation:-

- Train Operating Companies and Network Rail as part of the GRIP3 work.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 Developing the business case for a new Railway Station is a significant exercise. Officers from SYPTE and RMBC have met to scope out the further work required and in light of the potential 'New Stations fund' opportunity, SYPTE have developed a brief for the further technical work required to prepare a submission to the fund when it is announced. The GRIP3 work will be commissioned by SYPTE before May 2016. The likely timescale of the new station's delivery will become apparent as a result of the GRIP3 work.

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

7.1 At this early stage the full financial implications of a potential new station are not known although the advice based on similar new stations being constructed at present is that the cost could be in the region of £15.1m. However, this does not include the costs of wider connectivity, such as tram-train connections and these will be considered as part of developing the case for the new station. As indicated in 4.2 a new station is included as one of the Development Pool projects included within the Capital Strategy, that have been identified as part of the development of the Council's capital programme (2016-2021).

7.2 At this time there is no requirement for any additional Council funding to be allocated towards this scheme. Should additional technical studies be required to progress the scheme RMBC may be asked for a financial contribution. Should this be the case it will be the subject of further reports and decisions.

7.3 SYPTE will be commissioning the further specialist work required to develop a preferred station option. This will be funded by SYPTE and is anticipated to cost in the region of £100k.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

12.1 Coordination with colleagues across Planning and Regeneration is critical to the development of this scheme. There is a continued need to ensure that officers from across the Council are engaged in the discussions on the project and that the full implications of the potential new scheme are considered as part of delivering the Council's growth agenda.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 There is some uncertainty regarding the amount of Government funding that will be available in the future, not just locally but nationally; transport projects are acknowledged by the Government to support Economic Growth and therefore stand a reasonable chance of being supported. The potential for a new station is at the very early stages of development and therefore subject to significant uncertainty. The risks associated with the project will be developed through a defined risk register and include appropriate mitigation.

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

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Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Jon Baggaley and Rob Mahon

Director of Legal Services: Stuart Fletcher

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- N/A

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