

31st October 2013

Agenda Item: 13

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS

PROPOSED NEW BUS STATION WORKSOP

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the proposal to construct a new bus station for Worksop.

Background

2. Members may recall that during November 2012 a report was presented to Transport and Highways Committee which sought approval to carry out public consultation, develop detailed designs, prepare and submit a planning application and to commence negotiations to purchase land required to construct the new bus station. That report is listed here as a background paper and outlines the case for the new Worksop Bus Station. The content of that report remains relevant but is not all repeated here.

The Proposed Scheme

3. The scheme as shown on drawing H/PHII.01800.21/23 (as displayed during the Committee meeting) focuses the building on the prominent corner plot of Watson Road/ Newcastle Street. It offers good access for buses and pedestrians alike. The building would be 280m from the current stops on Hardy Street, 160m from Bridge Street (the main shopping street), and 150m from the Library.
4. The bus station will have 8 bays (plus one lay over bay) which will cater for existing demand and allow for growth in the network. The intention is that the bus station will replace a number of on-street stops in the town which will subsequently be removed. The bus station will operate on a Drive In Reverse Out (DIRO) arrangement which has been adopted at other main bus stations within the county. This arrangement enables all passenger facilities to be accommodated in a single building.

5. The building will be of a similar design to that at Retford, and will contain a staffed information point, toilets, seating, electronic passenger information screens and CCTV. A café /retail unit is included within the design of the building.
6. Stagecoach East Midlands (SEM) is the main bus operator in the town and it is supportive of the scheme and has been involved in the development of the scheme.

Site Assembly

7. Since the report of November 2012 two parcels of land have been acquired through agreed sales which means that all land required to deliver the project is within the ownership of NCC or Bassetlaw District Council (BDC). The successful land negotiations have removed the need for Compulsory Purchase Order powers and their associated delays.
8. The land owned by BDC is part of the Queen Street pay and display car park which has 104 spaces of which approximately 30 are required for the bus station development. BDC have agreed in principle that the land will be contributed towards the scheme on the basis of a 99 year lease. The current car park access will remain on Queen Street, with the car park shielded from the bus station by railings. In order to maximise spaces within the Queen Street car park a revised parking layout is currently being prepared.

Funding Profile, budgets and programme

9. The latest estimated cost of the scheme is £3.2m. Land acquisition to date has been funded from County Capital at £660k. Unfortunately the European funding opportunity referred to in the November 2012 report was not successful.
10. Once operational, the bus station is estimated to have annual operating costs of £178,500 which will be partially offset by an income of £74,000 from departure charges and other advertising and rental incomes. This leaves an operating deficit of £108,500 per annum which will in principle be shared by NCC and BDC on a 65% / 35% split. BDC has indicated that it wishes to cap its annual contribution and undertake a review of revenue costs after an initial 5 year period. These requests will be considered as part of a formal legal agreement being drawn up between the two authorities but are not considered to be unreasonable requests at this stage. This will be the subject of further reports to both authorities to confirm a formal legal agreement. It should be noted that the figures referred to in this report are increased from the November 2012 figures as the suggested hours of operation are extended to be 6am-10pm, Monday to Saturday.

11. It is anticipated that the planning application will be submitted to NCC as Local Planning Authority during the last week of October which dependant on the statutory consultation period could at the earliest be considered in January 2014 by Planning and Licensing Committee. A significant amount of pre application work has been undertaken to address potential issues arising from the submission. This includes a design review of the project carried out independently by OPUN which has led to a number of refinements of the scheme which were subsequently presented in a public exhibition in February 2013. The feedback from the exhibition was very positive, 85% of people commenting considered the existing facilities in the town to be poor or very poor. 71% people said they would be more likely to travel by bus if a new bus station was built. 80% of people rated the proposed location as excellent or good and 92% of those commenting felt the design was excellent or good.
12. A positive planning determination early in 2014 will allow for works to commence on the project soon after with a contractor being appointed through the East Midlands Property Alliance (EMPA) framework through which the projects at Retford and Mansfield were let. Works starting in Spring 2014 will allow for a Spring 2015 opening. The first phase of works will involve alterations to the Queen Street car park followed by the start of works to the building. In advance of the works tendered through the EMPA framework it is intended to carry out clearance of trees and shrubs from the plots acquired by NCC, it is expected that this will be during late 2013.

Other Options Considered

13. Several options involving alternative sites have been considered over a number of years. With each there have been land ownership or site design issues that have prevented opportunity to develop the project. The option now presented is considered to be the most viable one to deliver the much needed improvement in the town.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14. The provision of a new bus station with all services focussed on a central modern facility will offer greater choice for people when making journeys into Worksop and it is hoped that transference of trips from private vehicles to public transport will occur. Additionally a comfortable modern facility may serve to generate a number of trips which are currently not taking place.
15. The building is proposed to have solar panels and rainwater harvesting in addition to low energy consumption lighting and display screens.

Reasons for Recommendations

16. It is considered that the proposals as contained in this report represent the best available option to deliver a new bus station for Worksop in a suitable town centre location and to meet the Council's commitment to improving bus travel in the town.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Equal Opportunities Implications

18. The scheme as proposed will offer an improvement to public transport operations within Worksop. The bus station is designed with Inclusive Mobility principles at the foremost and will offer improved access for all passengers and improved facilities including travel information, seating and toilets. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the scheme.

Human Rights Act Implications

19. This report has been compiled having given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the design process.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Committee confirms its support to:

- a) Construct the Worksop Bus Station Scheme at the earliest possible start date.
- b) Undertake site clearance works on the land acquired by the County Council at the junction of Watson Road / Newcastle Avenue this calendar year
- c) Note ongoing revenue requirements to operate the bus station

Neil Hodgson
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**For any enquiries about this report please contact:
Neil Hodgson (0115 977 2720)**

Constitutional Comments (SB)

Committee have the power to decide the recommendation

Financial Comments (IC)

The continued provision of adequate funding for construction of the bus station will be considered as part of the 2014/15 budget process.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Worksop North - Councillor Sybil Fielding
Worksop East – Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle
Worksop West – Councillor Kevin Greaves
Worksop South – Councillor Alan Rhodes