



meeting **CABINET**

date **7 JUNE 2006**

agenda item number

## REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

The financial details of this project are set out in the exempt appendix to this report (Appendix B). The exempt appendix is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 as publication of the latest estimated cost for building works prior to receipt of competitive tenders will potentially give an advantage to a tendering contractor.

### RETFORD BUS STATION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME – LATEST ESTIMATED COST AND APPROVAL TO INVITE TENDERS

#### Purpose of Report

1. To inform Cabinet of the scheme's progress to date (Phase 1) and the latest estimated capital and revenue costs; and to seek approval for the invitation and award of tenders for the construction contract (Phase 2). This approval will also commit the County Council to meeting its share of the associated running costs.

#### Background

2. Retford Bus Station offers an unappealing environment for the bus users of Retford and the layout raises operational and safety concerns for passengers and operators alike. Although the existing facility is well located, its design is dated and consists of standard bus shelters located around an open roadway which is susceptible to 'rat running' traffic. This requires passengers to cross 'live' running lanes to access their stop. To resolve the identified safety issues and to improve the facilities in accordance with the Local Transport Plan's proposals for public transport, an improvement scheme has been prepared. Phase 1 of the proposals deals with improving the operational safety of the existing site by addressing access issues and site preparation. Phase 2 incorporates the provision of a new bus station building with associated landscaping.
3. A public exhibition was undertaken in February 2005 which showed a significant level of support for the proposals. 95% of respondents felt that the bus station needed improving and 73% favoured the option of providing a fully enclosed bus

station building to replace the current layout. The main bus operator to the station (Stagecoach) supports the proposals and is willing to contribute financially to the staffing of the new facilities.

4. On 10 November 2005, the Cabinet Member for Environment gave approval to implement Phase 1 of the scheme and to continue with the detailed design of Phase 2, including the submission of necessary planning applications and associated approvals, at a full scheme estimated cost of £1,640,000. Phase 1 of the works is now complete, and planning approval for Phase 2 has been granted.

### **Policy Framework**

5. Improving the quality of bus travel is a key element of the County Council's transport strategy as contained within the Local Transport Plan for North Nottinghamshire (March 2006). The proposed bus station will offer a new hub for bus travel within Retford and its hinterland, by providing a fully enclosed waiting environment for bus passengers. The proposed bus station will assist in delivering the aims of improved accessibility, reduced congestion by encouraging public transport, regeneration and improved quality of life.
6. The scheme has been identified as a 'significant' named scheme in the 2006/07 – 2010/11 North Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan and provisional funding allocations have been made. Funding support has also been obtained from the Building Better Communities budget and from the North Nottinghamshire Alliance.

### **Project Details – Phase 2**

7. The bus station building proposed under Phase 2 groups all the bus stops together and provides a single concourse for passengers, minimising their contact with moving buses. The fully enclosed building will offer protection from the wind and rain. It will include a café/retail unit to generate income as well as male, female and disabled toilets, ample seating, space for a staffed travel information point with rear office space and CCTV. Appendix A contains plans and an artist's impression of the proposed building.
8. Subject to approval, an invitation to tender will be issued to pre-qualified contractors for an anticipated contractor appointment in September 2006.

### **Scheme Delivery**

9. Phase 1 works are now substantially complete and include:
  - alterations to the bus station access making it in-bound only from Arlington Way and out-bound onto Beardsall's Row;
  - a right turn lane installed on Arlington Way to aid buses turning into the bus station;

- the creation of an alternative route for Wilkinson's delivery lorries to access their service yard through the adjacent public car park;
  - the creation of a new vehicular access into the adjacent Bassetlaw District Council depot site.
10. Preparation works for Phase 2 have progressed as follows:
- The bus station building received planning approval on 30 March 2006 (permission no. 1/01/05/00430).
  - The stopping up order has been sent to the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) to be processed. This will remove the footprint of the bus station building from the public highway.
  - Detailed design of the bus station to produce documents for tender and cost estimates are now ready.

### **Budget Implications and Latest Estimated Cost**

11. The North Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11 was approved for submission by the County Council on 23 February 2006. This statutory plan included Retford Bus Station as a 'significant scheme' with an allocation of £1m over the financial years 2006/07 to 2007/08.
12. The County Council has been successful in securing a £250,000 contribution to the scheme from Alliance SSP. This funding has been used to deliver Phase 1 of the scheme (preparatory highway and safety works) and to contribute towards the design of Phase 2 of the scheme. In addition, a further £500,000 has been allocated to the scheme from the Building Better Communities budget. Developer contributions of £40,000 will also be allocated to the scheme.
13. The total budget available for the scheme (Phase 1 and Phase 2) is £1.79m. There are no land purchase costs as the land is owned by the County Council; however there are legal fees associated with the arrangement to swap small sections of land owned by the County Council and London and City Land. This land transfer deal provides London and City Land with more service yard space to accommodate the revised delivery access to their premises, but also enables the County Council to widen Spa Lane to improve the pedestrian environment on the approach to the bus station.
14. The latest estimated cost of the full scheme is included in the exempt appendix to this report.

### **Start and Completion Dates**

15. Construction is anticipated to commence in November 2006 and finish in August 2007. During construction it will be necessary to move the bus stops out of the bus station and temporarily locate them on Grove Street.

## **Revenue Implications**

16. There will be a year on year cost to operate and maintain the bus station once it has opened. The running of the bus station will be the responsibility of the Environment Department, in combination with Corporate Property.
17. Yearly running costs are estimated to be £110,000 for the preferred option, which provides travel information staff on site during its operational hours (7am to 7pm). It should be possible to reduce this by leasing the retail/café unit and seeking contributions from bus operators and Bassetlaw District Council. Contributions may take the form of financial or 'in kind' contributions such as the provision of cleaning staff. Stagecoach have given in principle agreements to make financial contributions towards staffing and security costs.
18. The breakdown of the annual revenue costs is as follows:

	£
Staffing	48,000
Other running costs	62,000
TOTAL	110,000

The worst case scenario would require the Environment and Sustainability Portfolio to provide £100,000 per annum to run the bus station; however the actual figure is likely to be less once formal contributions have been agreed with Stagecoach and others.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of Equal Opportunities, Finance, Personnel, Crime and Disorder (Community Safety), the Local Member and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of the report. Attention is, however, drawn to specifics as follows:

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

20. The proposed scheme would offer an improvement to public transport provisions in Retford. The bus station has been designed with inclusive mobility principles including level boarding access, flush floors to pavements and disabled toilets. The design options have been subjected to a mobility audit.

### **Financial Implications**

21. These are set out in the report and in the exempt appendix.

### **Personnel**

22. The personnel issues associated with staffing of the bus station will be considered as part of a future report. Staffing costs have been included in operating costs of the site.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

23. Structures that provide shelter from the elements have the potential to attract lingerers, particularly at night-time. To minimise this, the option progressed is a fully enclosed bus station that can be closed down at night time for security. CCTV installation is included in the design which will be linked to the existing town centre system. Consultations with the Police Buildings Liaison Officer has been included as part of the planning process.

### **Key Decision**

24. This report leads to a Key Decision, as expenditure to the County Council of over £1 million would be incurred. Notice of intention to make the decision was first published in the County Council's Forward Plan on 8 May 2006.

### **Reasons for Taking Report to Cabinet**

25. The report is brought to Cabinet for decision under the Council's Financial Regulations, section B5.3, which requires Cabinet approval for capital schemes with an estimated cost exceeding £1 million.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

26. It is RECOMMENDED that the Director of Environment be authorised to receive competitive tenders and to enter into a contract within the approved latest estimated cost subject to the Financial Regulations of the Authority.
27. It is FURTHER RECOMMENDED that Members agree to meeting the County Council's share of the bus stations' running costs.

COUNCILLOR STELLA SMEDLEY  
Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability

### **Director of Resources' Financial Comments**

The financial implications are as set out in the report.

It should be noted that there is currently no budget provision for the revenue implications of the scheme, set out in paragraphs 16-18.

If the scheme is accepted, then these costs will need to be borne by the Environment and Sustainability Portfolio, and provision for the annual revenue costs will need to be considered as part of the 2007/08 budget process.

[KRP 19.5.06]

**Legal Services' Comments**

Cabinet have power to decide the Recommendation. [SHB.19.5.06]

**Background Papers Available for Inspection**

None.

**Electoral Division(s) Affected**

Retford East  
Retford West

Tphes1426