

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee

Cabinet

Date of Committee

16th June 2005

Report Title

Rail Skills and Investment Partnership

Summary

An increase in the amount of rail related work undertaken by the Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy means that a new approach to resourcing this highly technical area of work is required. Any rail projects undertaken by the County Council need active rail industry support and technical expertise. Creating a partnership with an organisation that has the relevant skills and who may be willing to invest in County Council sponsored rail projects will be of benefit to the County Council and the travelling public. Cabinet is invited to approve the principle of a partnership with a specialist provider of rail based technical skills and investment and the use of a competitive tender process to identify a suitable partner.

For further information please contact

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?

Yes/No

Background Papers

None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

☐

Local Member(s)

(With brief comments, if appropriate)

☐

Other Elected Members

☒ Councillor C K N Browne } for information
Councillor Mrs E M Goode
Councillor Mrs J Lea

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with
appropriate Cabinet Member)

☒ Councillor M Heatley - I approve of any
partnership that benefits the County's Council Tax
payers

Chief Executive

☐

Legal

☒ P Endall – comments incorporated

Finance

☒ C Holden - agreed

Other Chief Officers

☐

District Councils

☐

Health Authority

☐

Police

☐

Other Bodies/Individuals

☐

FINAL DECISION

YES/NO (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by
this Committee

☒ Results of tendering exercise to be reported to
Cabinet seeking authorisation to award the
partnership to a preferred bidder.

To Council

☐

To Cabinet

☐

To an O & S Committee

☐

To an Area Committee

☐

Further Consultation

☐

Cabinet – 16th June 2005

Rail Skills and Investment Partnership

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and
Economic Strategy**

Recommendation

1. That Cabinet approves the principle of a partnership with a specialist provider of rail based technical skills and investment and authorises the Director of Planning Transport and Economic Strategy to use a competitive tender process to identify a suitable partner.
2. That a further report be brought to Cabinet as soon as practicable regarding the outcome of the tender process and giving recommendations as to the advisability of proceeding with the partnership.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The number of rail passengers using rail services in Warwickshire, including both residents and visitors, has continued to grow substantially in many areas of the county and this growth is projected to continue.
- 1.2 The County Council is committed through the Local Transport Plan to a policy of seeking continual improvements to rail services and the access thereto through integrated transport links, new rail stations and raising the standard of facilities at existing rail stations.
- 1.3 The County Council has established a good track record in delivering rail initiatives and is entitled to regard itself as one of the leading local authorities in this area of work. This has enabled the County Council to promote and deliver a range of schemes which have benefited local residents and existing and potential rail passengers including, Warwick Parkway Station, the new transport interchange on Leamington Spa Station Forecourt and the recent introduction of an enhanced passenger information system at Leamington Spa, Warwick, Hatton and Lapworth. A number of other schemes are either to be started shortly or are in development including, Coleshill Parkway, improved passenger information at Stratford-upon-Avon Station and Henley-in-Arden Station and additional parking at Warwick Parkway, Hatton and Lapworth.

2. The Need for a Rail Industry Partner

- 2.1 Close working with the rail industry is the key to successful promotion and delivery of rail schemes. The operation of railways and dealings with the associated regulatory bodies requires very specialist skills which in many cases will not be available at all outside the rail industry itself. It is therefore essential for the County Council to have access to these specialist operational and delivery skills from a rail industry partner which has reputation and influence within that industry.
- 2.2 The rail related work of the County Council is currently undertaken by the Transport Planning Group of the Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy with support from appropriate specialists as required.
- 2.3 Rail projects are usually expensive, but also deliver significant benefits for the local residents and the travelling public. Private sector companies within the rail industry may be prepared to jointly promote and in appropriate circumstances, to invest in schemes alongside the County Council. In order to deliver railway projects negotiations of a technical nature are required with the various rail related authorities. These negotiations would be made easier if the County Council had a rail industry partner to assist.
- 2.4 In addition, the current railway regime requires safety licensing for work to be carried out. Only companies within the railway industry can provide this and each time the County Council undertakes a rail related project it must seek the assistance of companies with the appropriate permits and knowledge of the industry's procedures.
- 2.5 Specific schemes have generated partnerships that have delivered excellent results. Warwick Parkway Station was delivered through joint working and investment by the County Council and a rail industry partner. The complex approval processes within the rail industry were handled by our rail industry partner whilst the County Council concentrated on its strengths in planning, highway and integrated transport elements of the scheme. A similar approach has been adopted in respect of Coleshill Parkway.
- 2.6 It is envisaged that the proposed partnership would be compatible with the existing partnership with Arup and would operate in parallel, with the County Council, Arup and the chosen rail partner bringing together their complementary and unique skills to promote and deliver County Council sponsored rail projects.

3. What a Partnership could deliver

- 3.1 The County Council would seek a partner from the rail industry which has the following capabilities:-
 - (i) A willingness to enter into a partnership arrangement for five years with the option to extend the agreement for a further two years. This is to ensure adequate time to achieve completion of schemes that can have long planning and delivery timescales.

- (ii) The delivery of technical advice on railway related matters.
- (iii) The ability to widen the railway knowledge base of County Council Officers.
- (iv) A willingness to invest in rail related projects championed by the County Council.
- (v) The ability to deal with rail industry processes on behalf of the County Council.
- (vi) The ability to assist the County Council in negotiating with the various rail authorities.

3.2 Possible projects which the partnership could assist include: -

- (i) New stations, including Stratford Parkway, Kingsbury and Rugby East;
- (ii) Development of heavy rail options on the Nuneaton-Coventry-Leamington Corridor, including new stations at Bermuda, Hawkesbury and Kenilworth.
- (ii) Car park extensions at Warwick Parkway, Hatton and Lapworth.
- (iv) South Warwickshire Stations Improvement Programme.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 In order to identify a suitable partner organisation it will be necessary to undertake a competitive tendering exercise to ensure that best value is secured for the County Council.
- 4.2 When a preferred bidder has been identified a further report would be made to Cabinet reporting the proposed details of the partnering arrangement and seeking approval to enter into the partnership.

JOHN DEEGAN
Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy
Shire Hall
Warwick

31st May 2005