

## **COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

### **NUCKLE 1.2 Update on Bay platform at Coventry station**

#### **1. The Scheme**

1.1 NUCKLE 1.2 will enable an increased frequency of train service between Coventry and Nuneaton, made possible by a new bay platform at Coventry station and associated track and signalling works.

1.2 Coventry City Council (CCC) is the lead authority for the delivery of the NUCKLE 1.2 scheme.

#### **2.0 Progress update**

2.1 A report to O&S in February 2020 outlined that the bay platform project at Coventry station has been delayed due to the tenders received for the design and build contract coming in significantly over budget, over-programme and being non-compliant. The report also stated that the Department for Transport has requested an update of the NUCKLE 1.2 full Business Case in order to establish whether the scheme still provides a value for money case.

2.2 The February 2020 O&S report outlined that CCC is leading a piece of work to assess whether any of the scheme elements can be removed or scaled back to reduce costs whilst delivering the key aim of the project (half hourly rail services between Coventry and Nuneaton). It has been agreed that this work will be led by Network Rail and the specification for this work has been agreed. The specification will include:

- An option to remove the Arena turnback capability. This would mean any additional trains put on for major events at the Arena stadium would continue through to Nuneaton rather than shuttle between Coventry station and Arena station;
- Reviewing whether a reduced platform length at Coventry would be acceptable and the savings this would give in terms of infrastructure works and costs;
- Track and signal upgrades required to facilitate operation into the new bay platform. These interventions will be kept to a minimum to reduce the cost of the delivery of the scheme;
- Consideration of how the bay platform is integrated with the rest of the station, in particular the relationship with adjacent transport interchange and Warwick Road pedestrian access tunnel;
- Ensure any proposals do not impact on the paths for the oil train. The freight paths are approved within the rail timetabling and need to be protected.

- 2.3 A delay to this work commencing has occurred due to NR having to seek formal agreement from the DfT to repurpose the funding from the original scheme to fund the revised design development process. The DfT has accepted this in principle but have stated that there is now a governance process this will need to be taken through for formal approval. NR are awaiting the outcome on the funding position.
- 2.4 In order to keep momentum on the project, it has been agreed to use the residual funding from the NUCKLE 1.1 project to fund the Network Rail work ahead of the DfT formal approval.
- 2.5 A Development Service Agreement between NR and Coventry has been drafted and signed by CCC and is with NR for signing. A wider inception meeting will take place between CCC, WCC and NR to review the programme and agree the governance arrangements, with proposed 4 weekly progress meetings to be scheduled going forwards.
- 2.6 Discussion between CCC and West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) and stakeholders has taken place in relation to the introduction of an additional rail service earlier than the implementation of the bay platform. This would be on a temporary basis, utilising the additional capacity created at Coventry through some services ceasing to run due to the COVID-19 timetable. The feasibility of the half hourly Coventry to Nuneaton service being fitted into the timetable will be looked at by NR.
- 2.7 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) recently approved a project change request for reallocation of grant funding relating to NUCKLE 1.2 and the wider station masterplan project. WMCA have approved the funding switch on the basis the bay platform is still delivered by the funding agreement backstop date of March 2023, which remains a key deliverable.