

22 February 2021

Wards: All Wards

Additional Rail Halt Proposal

Report of the Director of Regeneration

This item is not exempt
[Click here to select grounds for exemption](#)

This is a key decision. The matter is in the Forward Plan
(0003/21)

1. Purpose of the Report and Summary
 - 1.1 This report sets out the current status of potential funding available to develop a new rail halt in the Bricknell Ward Area and identifies the initial development work that would be required.
2. Recommendations
 - 2.1 That Cabinet do not agree to commit funding to develop a rail halt proposal further at the present time
 - 2.2 That Cabinet agree to re-examine this decision at a future point, informed by the outcome of negotiations for a devolution deal.
3. Reasons for Recommendations
 - 3.1 Previous feasibility work indicated that the proposal did not have a strong business case and it is unlikely to have improved significantly since 2009.
 - 3.2 The 2009 feasibility work also identified high capital and operating costs and better value for money could be achieved by developing the existing public transport network.
 - 3.3 There is no indication that Department for Transport (DfT) will make further funding available to support building of new stations.
 - 3.4 The devolution deal will enable Hull and East Riding to identify

and deliver key transport priorities for the area.

4. Impact on other Executive Committees (including Area Committees)

4.1 Whilst an additional rail halt in the Bricknell area could enhance connectivity for that part of the city and adjoining wards, the likely negative impact on existing timetables and services would impact the whole city.

5. Background

5.1 The suggestion for the introduction of rail halts at various locations in the City was raised in the early 2000's within Bricknell and at Priory Park.

5.2 In 2009 a preliminary feasibility study was undertaken by consultants Steer Davis Gleeve into the viability of introducing new rail halts at Priory Park on the main line into the City from the west and in the Bricknell Avenue Area between Hull and Cottingham on the line from the north.

5.3 This very preliminary feasibility study concluded that there were no 'show-stopping' technical reasons why halts could not physically be built at these locations. However, it also found that there was no strong business case to provide them in the economic climate at the time. It recommended that given the high capital and operating costs, better value for money could be obtained by improving the existing public transport network.

5.4 The study also identified that there was a lack of interest from train operating companies due to adverse effects on existing timetables which led to a decision to protect future sites but not to actively progress any implementation.

5.5 This position was reinforced in the currently approved Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).

5.6 Early in 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) invited MPs, local Councils and community groups across England and Wales to propose how they could use funding to reinstate axed local rail services and restore closed stations.

5.7 The funding was split into three categories

- I. The ideas fund – early stage development to restore rail connections to communities (other than rail station creation or restoration)
- II. Advanced proposals – to provide support for lines and stations already being considered for restoration.
- III. Proposals for new or restored rail stations

- 5.8 The Restoring Your Railways Fund reopened on Friday 23rd January 2021. The 3rd category 'proposals for new or restored railways' has not reopened. The guidance indicates that very early stage proposals for new stations may be eligible for funding through the 'new ideas' category, however, as the new ideas fund is predominantly about restoring lost connections it is unlikely to fund a stand-alone proposal for a new station that does not facilitate the reintroduction of a previously cut service.
- 5.9 East Riding Yorkshire Council submitted a successful bid to the Ideas Fund in the summer 2020. The bid is to enable further development work of the Minster Line, reinstating the link between Beverley and York. Should the scheme feasibility work identify that there is a business case for developing the scheme further, the Minster Line proposal would then provide another direct link between Hull and York; noting that only some of the existing services to York involve no change at Selby station.

6. Issues for Consideration

- 6.1 Should the East Riding development work for the Minster Line be successful then the direct link to York via Beverley rather than via Selby will be a valuable additional service connection for Hull residents and businesses. There is greater potential for any new service between Beverley and York will be light rail rather than heavy rail.
- 6.2 It is likely that any new service from Hull to York would make use of existing service provision between Hull and Beverley.
- 6.3 The impacts on the wider operation are likely to arise in a number of areas; the additional dwell time required to be added to the service to stop at a station (including deceleration into the station and acceleration out of the station); reduced speed exiting Paragon interchange because the engine unit will not reach full speed before preparing to slow into the next station stop, and managing the interactions with other services.
- 6.4 The introduction of a new rail halt would impact on the operation of the trains on the network. This impact would be wider than just on the Wyke Area and therefore approval and funding from Cabinet to progress with this investigation into the introduction of a new rail halt is required to undertake the initial investigation.
- 6.5 In order to demonstrate a strong business case the proposal must be capable of demonstrating that additional rail journeys would be generated as a result of the new rail halt being built. These must be entirely new journeys that would not happen without the new station and cannot be journeys abstracted from existing stations. This strategic element of the business case will

be extremely difficult to demonstrate because there is very limited new, currently unserved market that would make use of the new halt and no new housing nearby if a new direct connection to York is able to be provided at some point in the future.

- 6.6 The Rail Needs Assessment (RNA) report, published by the National Infrastructure Commission in December 2020, proposes reducing rail investment in the North to ensure HS2 phases 1 and 2a are delivered. Should any of the three scenarios put forward be accepted by the Government, it is unlikely that additional rail funding on a scale sufficient to bring new stations forward will be made available. Transport for the North are strongly objecting to the proposals in the RNA but it could mean current rail priorities for Hull (electrification, reduced journey times, improved infrastructure) are not brought forward.
- 6.7 There is currently no indication that there will be another round of funding for the third category, 'Proposals for new or restored rail stations' and any funding allocated to the development of a new rail halt will be speculative.
- 6.8 If a further round of funding becomes available, it is likely that the criteria would remain the same as previous rounds, namely;
- The business case had to demonstrate reasonable value for money — the DfT classification of medium value for money was used as a comparative indication. This included the strategic case — for example, unlocking housing
 - A minimum of 25% third party match funding was required. For delivery of a new station a 25% contribution is likely to be in the region of £1.5m - £2m plus development costs.
 - Bids were required to demonstrate that new expected rail income generated from the station would cover the operating costs.
 - That services could be timetabled effectively.
 - That the project can be delivered with minimal passenger disruption.
- 6.9 Network Rail's Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process would have to be followed for any new schemes/proposals. Discussions will be required with Network Rail to confirm a way forward with any new rail halt proposals.

- 6.6 The GRIP process divides a project into eight distinct stages. If a new round of funding did become available in 2021 and it used the existing guidance then all bids will have to be sufficiently developed to Network Rail's GRIP3 stage (option selection) in order to have a business case sufficiently developed.
- 6.7 Reaching GRIP stage 3 does not include any design, so significant work to progress and fund the scheme through outline design, detailed design and construction through to GRIP stage 8 (project close out) would still be required at further cost.
- 6.8 Exact costs for reaching GRIP stage 3 (Option selection) are unknown but are estimated at approximately £120k and it is anticipated that it would take 12 – 18 months to complete the assessment work required.
- 6.9 It is not guaranteed that the project would be developed as far as GRIP stage 3 if the feasibility work (GRIP stage 2) identifies a weak business case. There may therefore, be significant abortive costs.
- 6.10 Resources for rail priorities are currently focused on electrification of the Hull to Leeds line and improving services Hull to Manchester and Hull to Sheffield.
- 6.11 Existing staff resources to develop the proposal would have to be diverted from other schemes or the resource would have to be procured specifically for the project.

7. Options and Risk Assessment

7.1 Option 1

Cabinet agree to commit the revenue funding to develop the proposal as far as GRIP 3 in anticipation that funding to develop a new rail halt further will become available at some point in the future.

The development of a proposal to GRIP stage 3 enables a future funding bid to be made should funding become available. Without completion of the GRIP work submitting a funding bid will be very difficult, unless the fund also includes for the feasibility.

There is, however, no guarantee that Network Rail would support the proposal to develop a new rail halt on their network,

Engagement with the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and their support for the proposal will be required in order to develop the pathing and servicing options a part of the business case.

There is no guarantee that the TOCs will support the proposal through the GRIP process or want to use an additional rail halt in this location; they did not support the proposal in the 2009 high level feasibility work undertaken.

Staff resources would need to be diverted onto this proposal or external support would need to be procured to lead the project. Note that there are no staff specialising in rail development within the Council and some external expertise would be required.

7.2 Option 2

Cabinet do not agree to commit the revenue funding to develop the proposal as far as GRIP 3.

There are no funding streams currently available that would support the development or delivery of the proposal, however without progressing the GRIP work future funding bids for a rail halt will be difficult.

Previous preliminary work identified that the business case in the pre-existing economic climate was weak. The economic environment around the proposal has changed slightly in that the current government is supportive of delivering major infrastructure projects as a means of creating jobs; however the business case is likely to remain weak particularly in relation to the financial and strategic cases, even with the potential for a direct rail link from Hull to York.

Staff and funding resources would remain focused on delivering existing transport priorities.

8. Consultation

8.1 No external consultation has been undertaken but in the first instance support from Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies will be required to develop the proposal.

8.2 A briefing paper was submitted to Wyke Area Committee for consideration at its meeting on 3 September 2020 that outlined the previous work completed and the GRIP process.

9. Comments of the Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal Services and Partnerships)

9.1 The report is unclear as to when the support of Network Rail is required, or indeed how it is gained, in order to limit the risk of abortive cost should development work be authorised. It is therefore difficult to assess risk, although this would appear to

be significant in any scenario. The Council has no statutory duty to provide rail links and the benefits of introducing a halt in such close proximity to existing stations at Paragon and Cottingham are clearly questionable and would be detrimental to current running times and timetabling. A rail halt proposal at this location appears unlikely to meet the government funding criteria. [CA].

10. Comments of the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance and Transformation)

10.1 The ultimate provision of a rail halt at Bricknell as outlined in this report would appear to be unlikely under current Government railway infrastructure funding evaluation criteria given the need to demonstrate:

- Additional passenger numbers over and above those who would join the train at other stations (principally Hull Paragon and Cottingham stations both of which are within close proximity)
- The costs of running the station needing to be covered by additional revenue
- Support from the Train Operating Companies

The impact on the GRIP value for money evaluation is also likely to be problematic given the outcomes of the previous business case and the need to decelerate and dwell at the new station could have the potential of weakening the overall case for a direct route to York from Hull (as it would reduce any reductions in passenger journey time, a key component of the financial benefits that feeds into the GRIP evaluation).

In additional there is no budget identifiable for support to GRIP3 (estimated at £120k) nor the required contribution of £1.5m - £2m plus development costs. Moreover, rail investment projects traditionally are at greater risk of overspend across the industry, especially compared to initial cost estimates so this required contribution is at significant risk of substantial increase.

11. Comments of Assistant Director of HR & OD and compliance with the Equality Duty

11.1 There are no staffing or equality duty implications arising from this recommendation. (KM)

12. Comments of Overview and Scrutiny

- 12.1 This report was considered by the Infrastructure and Energy Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting of Wednesday, 10 February, 2021. The Commission comments and recommendations were:
- a) That the Commission does not support the recommendations at section 2 of the report.
 - b) Instead, in light of the national and local need for modal shift and reduced carbon outputs, the Commission recommends that a cross-party group of members of this Commission and the Economy and Investment OSC be established to enable members to explore how the development of rail halts in Bricknell and other areas of the City can be progressed.
 - c) That the group be member led; that those members engage with rail companies and rail bodies to identify potential rail sector support for the halts, and current and potential funding streams; and, in order to address the capacity issues within the Major Projects team detailed in the report, staff from other services be utilised to carry out research and support.
 - d) That should the rail halts not be able to be developed in the short term then on the shelf plans be drawn up by the group in readiness of future opportunities arising. (Ref. Sc6011 (FH))

13. Comments of the Portfolio Holder Economic Investment, Regeneration and Planning, Land and Property

- 13.1 Given the mood-music from Government regarding cash reductions to the HS2 extension and also NPR, the chances of funding for this from such a funding pot are extremely unlikely. Given this, as the officer suggests, we may be better off seeking to get bespoke funding as part of any future devolution deal, which would take this outside of the general funding envelope.

Mark Jones, Corporate Director of Regeneration

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Officer Interests: None

Background Documents:

Assessment of New Stations in Hull. Priory Park and Bricknell. Steer Davis
Gleeve (2009)

Implications Matrix

This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant Assistant Director	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes
I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.	Yes
I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	Yes
Any human rights implications are included within the report	Yes
I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report	Yes
I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are included within the report	Yes

I have included information about how this report contributes to the City Plan/ Area priorities within the report	Yes
I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report.	Yes