

Meeting date: 8th July 2021

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Subject/report title: Solihull Integrated Transport Hub

Report from: Assistant Director for Growth and Development

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the commencement of public consultation on proposals for the redevelopment of Solihull Train Station to create a new Integrated Transport Hub.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 Cabinet Member is asked to
- a) Approve commencement of consultation on the proposed Solihull Integrated Transport Hub scheme (see Appendix B), in accordance with the approach set out in paragraphs 3.14 to 3.15 of this report;
 - b) Delegate authority to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Infrastructure, to submit an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the West Midlands Combined Authority, subject to the successful outcome of the public consultation.

3. Matters for Consideration

Introduction

- 3.1 Redevelopment of Solihull Train station is required to ensure it is able to accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers. Prior to the pandemic, around 2m passengers used the train station, and this was forecast to increase to 3m by 2036. The station already experiences significant crowding, with pinch points in key locations, and the facilities do not meet expectations of modern stations.
- 3.2 Whilst the pandemic has had a temporary effect on patronage, this is expected to recover and sensitivity testing of alternative recovery scenarios demonstrate the case for investing in the station remains valid.
- 3.3 A project steering group was established in 2018, comprising of Transport for West Midlands, West Midlands Railway, Chiltern Railways and, Network Rail to oversee a scheme to deliver the redevelopment of Solihull Station.
- 3.4 The scheme objectives were produced by the Steering Group in July 2019. They are as follows:
 - (a) To accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers up to 2050 and not preclude future four tracking and electrification of the line
 - (b) To provide quick, safe and seamless interchange between multiple modes of transport, providing the highest quality of passenger experience, with modern facilities, provision of customer information and comfortable convenience and waiting facilities and which meets the highest levels of safety and environmental standards
 - (c) Provides a strong sense of place and a clear sense of arrival, with a landmark building which complements its surroundings
 - (d) Responds to, and facilitates, the economic growth anticipated by the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan
 - (e) Facilitates the transformation of the connectivity between the station and the heart of the Town Centre, to address the current sense of distance and lack of ease in travelling between the two, particularly felt by pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.5 Mott MacDonald and Hawkins Brown Architects were appointed to produce an outline design and outline business case.
- 3.6 A preferred option (see Appendix B) has been developed that seeks to meet all the objectives outlined above. The key features of the proposed scheme are:
 - (a) Establishment of 3 distinct zones within the site. By positioning the station at the centre, in approximately the same location as the existing station, this allows the site to be split into 2 halves; one dedicated to the transport interchange which utilises the underused existing green space and the other to a new public realm, with enhanced green space that can be enjoyed by station users.
 - (b) Design of the surrounding public realm to allow intuitive access into and around the new station development. An abundance of green space and planting will be provided and pedestrian routes around the site are designed for easy, safe navigation and clear sight lines, accommodating both pedestrians and cyclists.

- (c) The proposed station will be a landmark building which complements its surroundings.
- (d) The development of a single storey building with an elevated platform in the same organisation as the existing station, but larger in scale. Generous internal public concourse space that includes ticketing facilities, public toilets and commercial spaces.
- (e) A new widened underpass, along with a new lift with twice the current capacity and an additional stairway to platform level. Ticket gates at either side of the underpass and a new and improved rear entrance.
- (f) The platform's decluttered design is achieved by centralising the accommodation facilities around the lift and stairways. The existing accommodation and canopy structure is to be replaced with a new building, which is kept within the footprint width of the stairways to improve passenger circulation.
- (g) New canopies over the platform to ensure weather protection, improving safety and passenger comfort during inclement weather. The elevated nature of the platforms and track provide clear views for onward travel routes, and views directly into the new concourse space are provided through the station building's glazed gable end.
- (h) The organisation of the interchange is reflective of the aspiration to prioritise active and public modes of travel. The interchange, located to the north of the station building, takes the form of a loop in order to establish single entry and exit points for most vehicular traffic. All vehicular movements are consolidated separately to pedestrian movements and where crossings are required, these are clear, prioritised and enlarged.
- (i) Sustainability has been at the core of the design. Preliminary analysis has shown that the project has potential to go beyond Net Zero Whole Life Carbon, being highly energy efficient and fully powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources. Timber is proposed for use internally within the station building and has a key role to play in the building achieving its net zero ambition.

The Proposed design will bring the following benefits:

- a) Improved station capacity and facilities in line with forecast passenger growth.
- b) Reduced environmental impact, improved energy efficiency, BREEAM Excellent.
- c) Reduction in passenger congestion, especially during morning peak hours.
- d) Improved planting, greenspace and public amenity.
- e) Minimisation of pedestrian and vehicle conflict.
- f) Increased revenue potential for station and wider local economy.
- g) DDA compliant step free access.
- h) Improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between Solihull station and the town centre.
- i) Improvements to parking.

- j) Increased levels of walking and cycling.
- k) Increased levels of public transport use.

3.7 A draft Outline Business Case has been developed based on the preferred option. Public consultation is an essential part of the business case development process, and is required before approval can be given for the preferred option to be taken forward to the next stage of detailed design, and to inform the detailed design process.

3.8 The planned steps following the public consultation are as follows:

Activity	Programme	Brief Description
Public Consultation	July-Sept 2021	This current consultation process will inform the way in which the project progresses. It is required to approve the preferred option and to inform the next stage of design
Highways Study	July 2021	Conclude highways study to consider further opportunities to increase capacity and improve performance of the road network and junctions linked to the scheme
Develop Designs	2021-2022	The designs shown in this consultation are conceptual, and the feedback from the consultation will inform further design development as the designs become more detailed. More detailed designs are needed to secure the necessary consents
Secure Consents	2022-2023	Consents will be needed from various authorities, including Solihull MBC (planning authority and highway authority) and Network Rail (who own the railway and station).
Secure Funding	2023-2024	Funding will be needed from various sources. A full business case will be developed to support this process
Construction	2024-2026	Construction is expected to take between 18-24 months..
Station Opens	2026-2027	

Regional Policy Context

- 3.9 ‘Movement for Growth’, published by the WMCA in 2016, set out the vision for transport within the West Midlands over the next 10 years- This will be done by ‘creating a transport system befitting a sustainable, attractive and economically vibrant conurbation in the world’s sixth largest economy.’
- 3.10 It proposes a rail and rapid transit network comprising new rail stations, metro lines and Sprint routes. Solihull Station is identified as a key interchange between rail and Sprint, with Sprint providing connections to the HS2 Interchange, Blythe Valley Business Park and South East and Central Birmingham.

Local Policy Context

- 3.11 The Solihull Station redevelopment project sits within the UK Central Infrastructure Programme package of 24 projects. Being one part of a coherent and interconnected

programme of interventions allows Solihull Station to deliver maximum value for money and promotes co-ordination with other investments to minimise duplicated or abortive efforts.

- 3.12 The redevelopment of Solihull Station is a key project identified in the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan. The proposed scheme will create a landmark building in the 'Western Gateway Area of Change', providing an attractive welcome and sense of arrival and helping to improve the connectivity with the heart of the town centre, which is a key concept of the Masterplan. It will also complement the nearby Westgate Grade A office scheme being developed by the Council.
- 3.13 Solihull town centre is the point of convergence for seven cycle routes proposed in the Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure. These would significantly increase the potential cycling catchment of the town centre and station hub.

Public Consultation

- 3.14 It is proposed that public consultation on the proposed scheme be undertaken for an 8 week period, commencing in July 2021.
- 3.15 Measures will need to be taken to ensure that the consultation process complies with Covid restrictions that are in place at the time, and places public safety first. As this is likely to place a restriction on drop-in sessions at which face to face discussion can be held it is proposed that the following approach to consultation be adopted:
 - (a) A dedicated website providing the detail of the scheme, including narrative, imagery, and 3D visualisations. The website will provide the facility to make comments on the scheme, and respond to a questionnaire designed to elicit feedback on the key elements of the scheme.
 - (b) Production of a dedicated newsletter setting out the key features of the design, and providing directions on how to get more information and complete the consultation questionnaire (see Appendix A).
 - (c) 3 virtual webinars where the design team will present the design and invite comments and respond to questions.
 - (d) Promotion of the consultation via bulletins, social media, local media and press releases and email circulation lists.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 A full list of options was generated for the station. Following a high-level option sift to eliminate any contradictory, illogical or similar components a long list of options was identified. The long list was assessed against policy, benefits and deliverability criteria, resulting in the shortlist of 4 options.
- 4.2 Design and cost estimation work was undertaken on the shortlist and these 4 options were then further assessed against the policy, benefits and deliverability criteria. Options 1 and 4 were discounted due to the significant deliverability challenges which are not experienced in the other options.

4.3 Options 2 and 3, scored similarly in the assessment, with option 2 scoring better on deliverability and cost, with option 3 scoring better on benefits. Option 3 is considered to be the preferred option based upon its ability to best meet the scheme objectives and deliver benefits, as shown in the appraisal summary table below:

Option	Key Features
Do min	Do Nothing scenario with exception of adding 2 new Sprint services with one stopping at Station and one on Blossomfield Road
DS1	New station building to north of existing, bridge to platforms, third party land required for interchange
DS2	New station building to north of existing, bridge to platforms, third party land not required, utilising existing green space for interchange
DS3	New station building in existing location, widened subway to platforms, interchange at centre of site, no additional land requirement identified, enhanced green space to south
DS4	New station building to south west, widened subway to platforms, third party land required, Sprint stop on Blossomfield Rd

Key Objective	Do min	DS1	DS2	DS3 Preferred Option	DS4
Accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers up to 2050 and not preclude future four tracking and electrification of the line;	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Provide quick, safe and seamless interchange between multiple modes of transport; Provides the highest quality of passenger experience, with modern facilities, provision of customer information and comfortable convenience and waiting facilities, and which meets the highest levels of safety and environmental standards;	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Provide a strong sense of place and a clear sense of arrival, with a landmark building which complements its surroundings;	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Respond to and facilitate the economic growth anticipated by the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Facilitate the transformation of the connectivity between the station and the heart of the Town Centre, to address the sense of distance and difficulty in travelling between the two, particularly felt by pedestrians and cyclists.	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

✓ Weak fit
✓✓ Medium fit
✓✓✓ Strong fit

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 Solihull station requires redevelopment to ensure it can accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers, support the ambition to increase access to the town centre via public transport, and to create an attractive and impressive gateway to Solihull town centre.
- 5.2 The preferred option meets all the identified objectives of the project, which are:
- (a) To accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers up to 2050 and not preclude future four tracking and electrification of the line
 - (b) To provide: quick, safe and seamless interchange between multiple modes of transport alongside the highest quality of passenger experience, with modern facilities, provision of customer information and comfortable convenience and waiting facilities, and which meets the highest levels of safety and environmental standards
 - (c) To provide a strong sense of place and a clear sense of arrival, with a landmark building which complements its surroundings
 - (d) To respond to, and facilitate the economic growth anticipated by the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan
 - (e) Facilitate the transformation of the connectivity between the station and the heart of the Town Centre, to address the current sense of distance and difficulty in travelling between the two, particularly felt by pedestrians and cyclists
- 5.3 The preferred option provides a simple, easy to navigate station for passengers. It does not require land to be purchased and will produce a station that is a landmark building in the Western Gateway of the town.
- 5.4 The preferred option repurposes the existing green space for the public transport interchange, but retains a buffer of mature trees along the boundary with the adjacent properties. New enhanced green space and public realm is proposed with planting that supports biodiversity, and designed to create a relaxing and inviting space for people using the station and its facilities
- 5.5 The preferred option aims to achieve BREEAM excellent accreditation, with numerous sustainable design features including onsite energy generation, electric vehicle charging, biodiverse planting and efficient energy systems.
- 5.6 The preferred option delivers a positive Benefit Cost Ratio of just above 2, which is a strong score for a scheme of this nature and is above the minimum score required to access potential funding streams.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>The redevelopment of Solihull Station ensures that it can accommodate a growth in passenger numbers and therefore not become a constraint to economic growth in the town centre. The station provides a key access point to the town centre for employees and residents, and ease of access is a key consideration for investors looking to locate new commercial and residential development.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions. 	<p>The station has been designed to meet BREEAM Excellent standards, and includes a number of sustainability features that reduce the building's carbon emissions and improve biodiversity.</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs. 	<p>The preferred option has been designed so as to ensure the building is accessible, easy to navigate, and safe. The conflict between vehicles and pedestrians has been designed out as much as possible, and the surrounding open space and public realm has been carefully considered to ensure its use is maximised for the benefit of the local community.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.2.1 A public engagement exercise was carried out at Stage 1 to gather information about the public perception of the existing facilities and understand the issues people faced using the station and public transport interchange, as well as any aspirations for the future.
- 6.2.2 A project steering group was established in 2018, who have helped inform the identification of project objectives, and carried out reviews of the designs as they have developed, providing comments for improvements or issues for consideration.
- 6.2.3 To keep the residents of Solihull informed and engaged with ongoing work, in spite of the restrictions on meeting imposed by COVID-19, a video was released in September 2020 giving an update on progress, and invite further comments.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 The proposals for the redevelopment of Solihull Train Station to create a new Integrated Transport Hub are being progressed using funding secured from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) with up to £2.075m having been unlocked to support its development, which includes the funding of this proposed public consultation.

6.3.2 An Outline Business Case is being developed to secure additional funding to further progress the scheme.

6.3.3 Capital funding to deliver the scheme will be sought at the appropriate time, once further stages of project and business case development have been completed.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 The Corporate Risk Management approach has been applied to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision.

6.5.2 A full project risk register has been produced and is monitored regularly, the most significant risks are provided in the table below:

Risk Title Description	Caused By	Leads to	Rating	Mitigation Actions	Rating
Public Acceptability	Poor public reaction to the scheme reduces support and funding opportunities. Covid-19's impact on public transport makes the public question the need for a large investment.	Further rework to make the design more acceptable Further public engagement	7	Develop and maintain Stakeholder Engagement Plan Develop the project following community-led design principles through public consultation and other supporting activities. Undertake Public engagement at key stages	5
Utilities impact	Known or unknown existing utilities clash with proposals, requiring diversions or redesign. Connections to existing drainage systems not feasible due to condition/line/depth	Diverting utilities leading to large programme delays and cost increases. Connections into existing system can't be made and a new system is required,	7	Request utility records from Network Rail Carry out utility search for highway areas Request drainage records from NR/Severn Trent. Identify clashes with utilities for designs during Stage 2 and Stage3	4

	of these existing elements.	resulting in additional cost and programme delay.		Carry out additional survey and validation using trial pits Carry out drainage survey to validate records	
COVID-19	COVID-19 pandemic	Long-term changes to travelling behaviours and demand so infrastructure is changed to suit.	9	Project team to consider scenario-testing as part of OBC development	5
Increasing costs due to station change process and Asset Protection Agreement	Change of SFO responsibilities so a new commercial agreement will need to be reached. Station change process	Increased cost of scheme Increased in costs for Network Rail due to increased maintenance	9	Liaise with NR/SFO regarding benchmarking values Account for potential additional costs as part of contingency	8

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 A Network Rail Diversity Impact Assessment of the preferred option has been carried out, and the project team attended a Network Rail Built Environment Accessibility Panel, to present the preferred option and gain feedback on potential issues and areas of improvement.

A Fair Treatment Assessment of the preferred option will be undertaken as the design progresses further.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Consultation Newsletter

7.2 Appendix B - Preferred Option

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 N/A

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 [Click here to enter text.](#)