

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION Taken BY:

Cabinet on 27 January 2020

DECISION NO:

19/00085

For publication

Thanet Parkway Railway Station – Scheme Delivery

Key decision: YES

Expenditure over £1m

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Thanet Parkway Railway Station – Scheme Delivery

Decision:

The Cabinet agrees to the progression and delivery of the Thanet Parkway Railway Station project (up to a total KCC contribution of £17.81m, subject to necessary increases to the capital budget allocation in the 2020/21 County Council budget), which will include the following key activities;

- a) undertaking detailed design; and subject to planning approval;
- b) completing acquisition of the land; and
- c) entering into contracts as necessary for construction.

And;

Agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take appropriate actions necessary to implement this decision, including but not limited to, deciding the preferred procurement route and entering into relevant contracts (of which KCC's contribution is to the maximum value of £17.81m) or other legal agreements.

Reason(s) for decision:

Since 2010, Thanet Parkway has been a key strategic transport priority for Kent County Council, with the ambition to deliver the station first mentioned in Growth without Gridlock (December 2010), the third Local Transport Plan (2011-2016), the Rail Action Plan for Kent (April 2011) and most recently in Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016 – 2031) (LTP4). The delivery of the station continues to be of significant importance to the County Council and is a strategic priority in LTP4 because of its ability to improve rail connectivity between East Kent, other Kent towns and London; to improve the attractiveness of the area to employers and thereby address the historic economic disadvantage of East Kent.

The delivery of the station will help meet the overarching objective of LTP4:

To deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent's communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced, and economic growth is supported.

Background

A previous Key Decision was taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on 1 August 2014 (14/00056) which approved the delivery of Thanet Parkway Station in the location to the west of Cliffsend, involving:

- a) Commencing land acquisition work;
- b) Undertaking public consultations to support the project development process; and
- c) Undertaking project development work to enable the submission of a planning application and design work for the scheme.

The feasibility design for the scheme received Approval in Principle (equivalent to Network Rail's 'Governance in Railway Investment Projects Stage 3' [GRIP 3] status) in August 2017. Following that milestone, the scheme was progressed through outline design (GRIP 4) and planning application was submitted in May 2018.

Comments received during the planning process regarding the visual impact of the scheme led to changes in the scheme design. As a result, the design work and planning application documents were amended and resubmitted in November 2019.

Negotiations for land acquisition have been ongoing with the intention to enter into a contract following this decision approval, and subject to planning permission being granted.

A decision is required to proceed with the delivery of the scheme in order to meet the project delivery programme.

Financial Implications

The total cost of the project is estimated to be £34.51m based on a 2019 estimate.

The scheme funding comprises of £14m from the Local Growth Fund (administered by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership), £2m from Thanet District Council, £0.7 from the East Kent Spatial Development Company.

KCC has already committed £2.65m (via decision 14/00056) and will therefore commit to a further investment of up to £15.16m (a maximum total of £17.81m), whilst continuing to explore further external funding opportunities.

The business case work has been completed, showing that the project offers very high value for money and that the station is commercially viable (net fares revenue is in excess of the on-going cost). Depending on the operating model, there is the potential for the station car park to provide a future income to KCC over a number of years.

Growth Environment & Transport, Section 4 – Capital Investment Plans 2019-20 to 2021-22 By Year, Row 6, page 70.

Growth Environment & Transport, Section 4 – Capital Investment Plans 2019-20 to 2021-22 By Funding, Row 7, page 74.

Legal Implications

Invicta Law is providing advice and the land acquisition will be completed by KCC Infrastructure. Any further legal implications to be established through continued engagement with Invicta Law Ltd and Strategic Commissioning.

Equalities implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and considered.

Data Protection implications

A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required as this project does not require the processing of personal data.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Cabinet Committee

The project was taken to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in July 2014, at which the proposed decision (14/00056) was endorsed. The scheme has also featured in many transport strategy documents, including the statutory *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-31)* which was adopted by County Council on 13th July 2017.

The proposed decision was considered by the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 29th November 2019. The committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that additional survey work be undertaken before the decision is taken by Cabinet. This recommendation was accepted; survey work was commissioned and the decision deferred pending this engagement activity.

Public Consultation

Extensive public consultation activity has taken place throughout the development of the project:

Public consultations were held on 2nd February – 27th March 2015 and 25th January – 19th March 2017.

A statutory planning consultation was held in 2018 following submission of a planning application in May 2018. A second statutory planning consultation commenced on 10th December 2019 until 20th January 2020.

Further stakeholder engagement has been carried out during autumn 2019. This included a public meeting organised by Cliffsend Parish Council for the residents of Cliffsend on 10th October 2019 and a newsletter delivered to all 800 households in Cliffsend to notify residents of the design changes and December/January statutory planning consultation.

Following a recommendation by Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee to the Cabinet Member, a survey of public opinion was commissioned in December 2019 with the survey taking place in January 2020. This was designed to gain a representative sample of views on the project.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/thanet-parkway-railway-station>

Which Divisions / Local Members are particularly affected:

All Thanet Electoral Divisions notably;
Ramsgate
Birchington and Rural

Have views been sought from local Members?

The views of Members were sought through the consultation which ran from 25th January – 19th March 2017. All members were supplied with a copy of the consultation booklet and questionnaire and a KCC Member briefing was held on the 10th January 2017. All current affected Members were informed of and invited to the public meeting in Cliffsend on 10th October 2019.

Several local Members attended and spoke at the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 27 November 2019.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

A full options analysis was carried out as part of the scheme business case. Below is a summary of the options considered as alternatives to delivering Thanet Parkway.

Option		Outcome
1	Do nothing	rejected as it would fail to accommodate increasing demand for rail travel, accelerate the delivery of housing and fail to improve access to jobs and employment space.
2	Increase car parking provision at Ramsgate Station	shortlisted for further investigation but rejected due to the lack of land in the residential area around the station.
3	Increase car parking provision at Minster Station	rejected due to unsuitable local highway network, impact on Minster village and poorer rail service at Minster.
4	Shuttle bus from the Birchington-On-Sea Station	rejected due to unattractive journey times and lack of rail access to Ashford, Canterbury and Maidstone.
5	Direct coach service from London	rejected due to long journey times and low impact on economic growth.
6	Shuttle bus from Ramsgate Station	rejected due to lack of suitable terminus at Ramsgate and low impact on economic growth.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None.