

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

30 July 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**HS2 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESPONDING TO THE
GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To approve the arrangements and budget for responding to the Government's consultation on high speed rail.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Cabinet meeting on 16 July considered a report on the Government's proposals for High Speed Rail. A recommendation in the report was that the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Employment and Transport should be authorised to consider further reports, including the financial implications of responding to the Government's proposals.

The report explained that the Government was due to announce the start of public consultation on HS2. At the time of drafting this report the deadline for the receipt of comments was still to be announced, but it is expected that the County Council will need to prepare its formal response by the end of 2013.

The Authority's response will need to focus on maximising the opportunities presented by HS2 while pressing hard for changes or measures that reduce the adverse effects of the scheme. Further work and investigations are needed to understand fully the impact of the proposals and these will need to feed in to the response. This will carry more weight and have a better chance of influencing Government decisions if it is effectively co-ordinated.

In order to understand fully the implications and potential opportunities, the County Council is currently working with other East Midlands authorities to support an economic impact assessment of the proposed station at Toton and an investigation of the potential for providing a physical link between HS2 and the conventional rail network. It is likely that there will be further issues that may need investigation, for example, there would seem to be merit in considering the potential to extend the NET tram west of the proposed station at Toton. In order to contain costs, this work will be undertaken as far as

possible on an in-house basis, but there will be circumstances where there is a need to make use of external resources either because of limited capacity or because of the specialist nature of the work.

In order to make an effective response to the proposals and to secure the best possible outcome for Derbyshire's residents, it will be important to ensure that the Authority's response is internally consistent and, as far as possible, effectively co-ordinated with responses from District and Borough Councils. HS2 Ltd has indicated a strong preference for a co-ordinated response from Derbyshire Authorities and it is reasonable to assume that this would carry more weight than a series of uncoordinated and potentially contradictory responses.

It is recommended that the co-ordination of an effective response could be best achieved by the appointment of a dedicated Project Officer on a fixed term or consultancy basis, initially for a period of up to six months. The post would involve working with HS2 Ltd, District/Borough Councils and partner organisations, and would require excellent inter-personal and negotiating skills. It would also be necessary to work constructively with elected Members and professional staff from a wide range of disciplines, including economic development, spatial planning, transport, civil engineering, environment/conservation interests and recreation.

This is by far the largest infrastructure project in Derbyshire since the construction of the M1 motorway in the 1960s and it has far reaching implications for the County's residents. The consultation provides one of the best opportunities to influence and to help shape the project, and it is appropriate therefore that a commensurate level of funding should be made available.

It is difficult to estimate costs in detail at this stage and it is suggested that significant provision should be made for contingencies.

It is therefore recommended that a provisional budget for the period to 31 March 2013 should be established and allocated as follows:

	£
Economic Impact Assessment (Toton) - contribution	7,000
Links to Midland Main Line Study - contribution	4,000
NET extension: investigation of options	15,000
Project officer - staff costs/consultancy	45,000
Travel and other miscellaneous	3,000
Contingencies	20,000
Total	94,000

There is a limited time within which a detailed response can be co-ordinated and collated into a coherent and meaningful document. It is anticipated that

detailed discussions will be needed with a number of interested parties. This work will need to be carefully monitored to ensure an effective response to the proposals from the County Council and its partner organisations.

(3) **Financial Considerations** It is proposed that the external costs of this work should be met from the remaining balance on the Departmental underspend in 2012/13.

(4) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** In responding to the HS2 proposals, it will be necessary to consider the way in which the scheme affects different groups and communities. In particular, it will be important to ensure, as far as possible that some sections of the community are not unduly disadvantaged because of, for example, the severance effects of the new railway. There is also a concern that efforts should be made to facilitate meaningful consultation with as wide as possible section of the community. To this end, representations have already been made to HS2 Ltd seeking the provision of accessible transport to the planned roadshows so that no one is advantaged as a result of, for example, limited mobility or lack of suitable transport.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** There is insufficient capacity to manage this workload within the existing resources in Environmental Services and it will be necessary to secure additional support on a consultancy basis or by means of a fixed term appointment. Some aspects of the work will require a technical input that is best provided by the use of specialist consultants. Costs will be contained as much as possible by using existing in-house resources or sharing costs with other local authorities.

(6) **Environmental and Health Considerations** The HS2 proposals give rise to some potentially significant issues for residents, businesses and others along the line of the route, particularly in terms of visual intrusion and noise effects. The County Council will need to be vigorous in seeking modifications and measures to remove or mitigate these adverse impacts.

The scheme's promoters will need to be encouraged to take advantage of any opportunities that arise to bring about environmental improvements, for example, through landscaping, additional planting or the creation of new habitats.

(7) **Transport Considerations** An important aspect of the County Council's response to the HS2 proposals will be to encourage effective use of 'released capacity' on the Midland Main Line and to ensure that passengers using conventional rail services are not unduly disadvantaged.

In the area around the proposed station at Toton, the focus will be on seeking good access for local residents and avoiding undue pressure on the local road network. There may be potential for extending the NET tram service to the west of the proposed station at Toton. This would support the development of the station as an 'East Midlands Hub', provide new travel opportunities for local residents and contributes to economic development in the area.

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder and property considerations.

(8) **Key Decision** No.

(9) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(10) **Background Papers** Report to Cabinet dated 16 July 2013 - Officer contact details – Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(11) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the arrangements and proposed budget for responding to the Government's consultation on HS2, as outlined in this report.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services