


Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	20 May 2024	
Report Title:	Whittlesea Station Enhancement Programme	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

1.1 Cabinet is asked to support the following:

- The delivery of a £3 million pound programme of enhancements at Whittlesea railway station supported by CPCA Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) funding available between April 2024 and March 2027.
- Authorise the S151 Officer to enter into a grant funding agreement (GFA) with CPCA for FDC to deliver the enhancement programme for Whittlesea Station
- Support the June 2019 decision of FDC Cabinet relating to the Governance of the Whittlesea Station project. Enabling the existing governance arrangements and a Project Board to oversee the development and delivery of the £3million programme.
- To give delegated authorisation to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Heritage and Culture to approve associated procurement in accordance with FDC procurement procedures, the terms of the GFA with CPCA and decisions by the Project Board.

2 Key Issues

2.1 In April 2012 FDC Cabinet approved the Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011 - 2031. The Strategy is aligned to the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014) and has 3 priorities - More Community Involvement, Better Stations and Rail Service Improvements.

2.2 In partnership with the Hereward Community Rail Partnership high level masterplans have been developed for Manea (2014), March (2017) and Whittlesea (2013) Stations. These masterplans set out a range of short-, medium- and long-term improvements for each of the railway stations, which aim to deliver the Better Stations Priority in the Fenland Rail Development Strategy

2.3 In 2016 the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded a new long-term Anglia railway franchise to Abellio. Known as Greater Anglia the franchise included commitments that helped to deliver the station masterplans including ticket machines and customer information screens. This franchise agreement has subsequently been amended to a national railway contract in accordance with government. Proposals to reform the railways are currently subject to a draft reform bill that was published by Government in February 2024.

- 2.4 In October 2017 (subsequently supported by CPCA Board papers in March 2018 and January 2019) the Fenland Stations Regeneration Project was successful in securing substantial funding of £9.5million. Some developer funding was also secured towards specific items within individual masterplans.
- 2.5 The programme has since completed a range of small- and large-scale projects for Manea and March Station. For Whittlesea Station smaller projects such as a second ticket machine and two waiting shelters have been completed. Substantial technical and feasibility study work has also been undertaken for larger projects which has highlighted several technical challenges relating to access, ecology, and the existing railway level crossing. A Project Board was established to ensure the Fenland Stations Regeneration Project was being delivered in accordance with FDC processes and procedures. The membership, objectives, and terms of reference of the Fenland Stations Regeneration Project Board was approved by FDC Cabinet in June 2019 and was detailed in Appendix A of that Cabinet paper. A link to which can be found in the background papers section of this report below.
- 2.6 Due to the technical challenges highlighted through the feasibility study work, the Project Board approved the delivery of an additional Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). The main purpose of this work which concluded in late 2022 being to consider whether an alternative site for Whittlesea Station might be more appropriate. The outcome of the SOBC determined that the requirements to deliver a new station and the cost of such a proposal would be prohibitive and unlikely to represent value for money. In November 2023, the Project Board approved the recommendation to enhance the existing station and to take the project to the next stage which is Outline Business Case (OBC). This phase being to also undertake additional technical and design work to confirm a final enhancement solution which can progress to detailed design and construction. This new phase was approved subject to funding being available.
- 2.7 In January 2024, the CPCA Board approved a funding package of £3million for Whittlesea Station from April 2024 to March 2027. This package was expected to initially take forward the OBC work referred to in paragraph 2.6 above and enable detailed design and construction subject to the enhancement projects being determined.
- 2.8 The approved funding enables the development of a grant funding agreement (GFA) with CPCA. It is requested that Cabinet authorises the S151 officer to enter into the Grant Funding Agreement with CPCA to allow the delivery of the project. The project to be managed using FDC project management methodology, governance through a Project Board (see paragraph 2.9 below) and any cost limited to the total sum of grant funding available.
- 2.9 It is proposed to keep the existing Governance structure in place for the delivery of the project as approved by Cabinet in July 2019. This is in accordance with similar Project Boards that are also in existence to oversee and deliver CPCA funded projects. Details of the terms of reference for the Project Board as approved in 2019 can be found in the background papers section of this report.

2.10 The successful delivery of the schemes for Whittlesea Station with this funding will require contractors to be appointed for feasibility and outline design work, business case development (outline and full business case) and detailed design and construction. It is requested that decisions relating to the procurement be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Heritage, and Culture. All such decisions would be made in accordance with the terms of the GFA with CPCA, FDC procurement rules and related Project Board decisions.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Approve the delivery of a £3 million pound programme of enhancements at Whittlesea railway station supported by CPCA Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) funding available between April 2024 and March 2027.
- 3.2 Authorise the S151 Officer to enter into a grant agreement with CPCA for FDC to deliver the enhancement programme for Whittlesea Station
- 3.3 Reconfirm the June 2019 decision of FDC Cabinet relating to the Governance of the Whittlesea Station project. Enabling the existing governance arrangements and a Project Board to oversee the development and delivery of the £3million programme.
- 3.4 To give delegated authorisation to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Heritage and Culture to approve associated procurement in accordance with FDC procurement procedures, the terms of the GFA with CPCA and decisions by the Project Board.

Wards Affected	All Whittlesey Wards
Forward Plan Reference	Key/12Apr24/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Seaton – Portfolio Holder for Transport, Heritage, and Culture
Report Originator(s)	Wendy Otter, Transport Development Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Wendy Otter, Transport Development Manager

Background Papers	<p>FDC Cabinet April 2012 – Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011 – 2031 Meeting of Cabinet on Thursday, 19th April, 2012, 4.00 pm - Fenland District Council</p> <p>Whittlesea Station Masterplan (2013) V:\Assets+Projects\Architech\DWGS\PS469\1 Layout1 (1 fenland.gov.uk)</p> <p>CPCA Board Meeting October 2017 – Transport Priority Schemes CMIS > Meetings</p> <p>CPCA Board Meeting March 2018 - Transport Delivery 2018/19 CMIS > Meetings</p> <p>CPCA Board Meeting January 2019 – Transport Delivery 2019/20 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2019 - 2023 Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)</p> <p>FDC Cabinet June 2019 – Fenland Stations Regeneration Project Board Agenda Item 9.pdf (fenland.gov.uk)</p> <p>Whittlesea Station SOBC 2022 Railway Station Masterplans - Fenland District Council</p> <p>CPCA Board Meeting January 2024 – Item 10 – CPCA MTFP – New capital investment projects appendix E CMIS > Meetings</p> <p>Hereward Community Rail Partnership and Fenland Railways Equality Impact Assessment Equality Impact Assessments - Fenland District Council</p>
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Report:

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

1.1 See cover sheet.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 See cover sheet

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Consultation was undertaken in 2011 to support the development of the Fenland Rail Development Strategy adopted in April 2012.
- 3.2 Consultation was also undertaken in 2012 and 2013 to support the adoption of the Whittlesea Station Masterplan by the Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP). This masterplan sets out a planned programme of improvements for Whittlesea Station. The ongoing work since 2017 as part of the Fenland Stations masterplan programme with CPCA has been focused on the delivery of the projects in the station masterplan.
- 3.3 The Hereward CRP also has an ongoing programme of events and Meet the Manager sessions to engage with the local community and to seek their feedback on railway matters. The CRP has an ongoing evidence base to support the projects in the Station Masterplan. The next event for Whittlesea is due to be held on 28 June 2024 at Whittlesey Town Council Offices.
- 3.4 All detailed proposals taken forward through this new £3million enhancement programme for Whittlesea Station will be subject to additional public consultation.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Fenland District Council has an integrated transport policy as set out in the Fenland Local Plan 2014. This policy sets out an approach which will see enhancements across the district for all modes of transport. Programmes and projects are therefore being developed for all other modes of transport. All options are therefore being considered and taken forward as opposed to alternatives. Fenland District has a substantial transport infrastructure deficit and therefore proposals for all modes of travel are appropriate.
- 4.2 As stated in section 4 above, the specific projects in the station masterplan for Whittlesea have been developed through ongoing consultation with the local community.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The proposals contained within this report meet with the Council's legal obligations and the terms of any grant funding agreement will be revised to ensure that the obligations and liabilities of Fenland District Council and proportionate and achievable.

5.3 Financial Implications

- 5.4 The spend on this project will be incorporated into the most recent version of the Council's capital programme approved by Cabinet on 26 February 2024. Arrangements will be in place to draw down funding from the CPCA as the project progresses. There are no further financial implications. This project is

fully funded from grant and if any overspend were to occur it is understood that railway projects scheduled for later years would be adjusted to ensure the total spend on projects relating to railway infrastructure are within the total budget allocated by the CPCA.

5.5 Equality Implications

- 5.6 Improvements to our local railway stations are aimed at providing improvements for everyone. There are no specific equality implications, the enhancements that will be made as part of this project will benefit all.
- 5.7 All FDC railway work and the Hereward Community Rail Partnership programme have been considered in equality terms through the equality impact assessment for the Hereward CRP. A link to this assessment can be found in the background papers section of this report.