

**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Action Taken Under Delegated Powers**

**West Coast Mainline HS2 Connectivity study – Station Masterplanning - Grant Agreement relating to a Black Country Growth Deal Project**

**1. Background**

1.1 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council became a formal member of West Midlands Rail Ltd in October 2015. This afforded the Council a greater opportunity to influence rail services and station development as part of Government’s rail devolution agenda.

1.2 Sandwell MBC has been working with the West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA), a new partnership between West Midlands Rail, Network Rail and the new train operator, West Midlands Trains. The WMSA is working to address the lack of investment at stations and help transform stations into community assets which act as quality gateways and meet the needs of passengers, residents and visitors.

1.3 Stations on the “Stour Valley” line between Wolverhampton and Birmingham and the Cannock “Chase Line between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall were chosen as pilot study routes where the stations were to be assessed and masterplanned. The stations include:

<b>Stour Valley stations</b>	<b>Chase line stations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smethwick Rolfe Street*</li><li>• Smethwick Galton Bridge*</li><li>• Sandwell &amp; Dudley*</li><li>• Dudley Port*</li><li>• Tipton*</li><li>• Coseley</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bloxwich</li><li>• Bloxwich North</li><li>• Landywood</li><li>• Cannock</li><li>• Hednesford</li><li>• Rugeley Town</li><li>• Rugeley Trent Valley</li></ul>
<i>* = Stations in Sandwell</i>	

1.4 The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) has agreed to award £80,000 of pre-allocated Local Growth Fund towards the project on the basis that Sandwell MBC and Walsall MBC sign a Grant Agreement committing to underwrite £40,000. This approach was endorsed at the BCLEP Joint Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The Grant Agreement for Sandwell MBC is included as Appendix A.

1.5 Following a tender exercise in April 2017, the West Midlands Combined Authority, as the procuring agent for the WMSA, appointed consultants Weston Williamson and Partners (WWP) to undertake the masterplanning work.

1.6 Following an extensive consultation process with Alliance partners and the local community, masterplans have now been produced for all of the Stour Valley stations.

Each station report includes:

- SWOT and contextual analysis
- Station usage and future demand projections
- Proposed interventions (including layout plan options)
- Broad cost estimates

1.7 Further detailed work has been undertaken for Sandwell & Dudley (as a Black Country hub station benefiting from Intercity fast services) and Dudley Port station (as the interchange for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension).

1.8 The masterplans are already shaping WMSA workstreams and will be used to bid for funding and/or proceed to implementation on an opportunistic basis if funds become available. They will also be important evidence for the formal review of the Council's Local Plan.

## 2. Legal and Resource implications

2.1 Walsall MBC, as the LEP Accountable Body, has now issued Sandwell MBC with the Grant Agreement. However, Schedule 1 of the Grant Agreement includes the following clawback provisions:

### *Claw Back*

*In addition to clause 20 of the Grant Agreement, you will repay the Grant within 28 days of the Council's written request to do so if the development study:*

- Concludes that delivery stage of the West Coast Mainline HS2 scheme (the 'scheme') will not proceed; or*
- Does not result in a developed scheme or asset by the end of the Grant period*

2.2 Given the claw back provisions in the agreement, there is a risk that the BCLEP may seek to claw back the £40,000 from the Council if it deems that the terms of the Agreement have not been complied with. Based on the terms set out in the Schedule, there is a risk that the claw back may be invoked if a capital project does not result from the masterplanning exercise by 2021. Whilst this is considered remote, it is proposed that the Council sets aside £40,000 of funding as a contingency measure to cover this eventuality.

### 3. Next steps

3.1 The masterplanning project is approaching completion and Walsall MBC, as the LEP Accountable Body, requires the signing of the agreement to release the BCLEP funding during 2017/18 year. It is proposed therefore that Sandwell MBC signs the Grant Agreement so that the reports can be issued.

### 4. Recommendation

4.1 That the s151 officer signs the Grant Agreement (included as Appendix A) under the delegated powers; and

4.2 That the Council allocates £40,000 of funding to cover any possible funding claw back under the provisions of Schedule 1 of the Grant Agreement.

In accordance with the authority delegated to Directors to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

I ~~do~~/do not have an interest to declare in this matter.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Darren Carter.

**Darren Carter**  
**Executive Director of Resources**

Date: 25-1-2018

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