

Executive Decision Report

Management of Levelling-Up Grant Funding: Leicester Station Improvements

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 30 December 2021

Lead director/officer: Andrew L Smith

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: David Beale
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of the Levelling-Up grant awarded to the Railway Station Improvement Project and to approve the addition to the capital programme, along with the associated match funding.
- 1.2 The project will deliver significant improvements to the station for rail passengers and as an enhanced arrival point to the City and setting for continuing regeneration of land around the station.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 The City Mayor is recommended to:

Approve the addition of £22.6m to the capital programme to fund the Leicester Railway Station Improvement Project. This will be funded from £17.6m of Levelling-Up grant from Government and £5m of match funding from the Council.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The Levelling Up Fund was considered at Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission on 22nd April 2021 and proposals for the railway station have been considered as part of a report to Economic Development Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission of 7th September 2021 on the Draft Leicester Transport Plan.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 The Levelling-Up Fund has been made available by Government for Authorities to bid into on a competitive basis for projects that will support the economic prosperity of their areas.
- 4.2 In June 2021 the Council submitted a bid to the Government's Levelling-Up fund for the railway station improvements scheme. On 27th October the Council was advised the bid was successful and the project awarded £17.6m of grant funding, which, alongside a previously identified commitment of £5m match funding from the Council's own resources provides a total project budget of £22.6m.
- 4.3 The proposed station improvements scheme has three main objectives:
 - To improve passenger safety, capacity and flows by removing points of congestion, providing more space for passengers to move through the building and better legibility.
 - To improve the station as an arrival point to the city with better retail and hospitality facilities and improved public spaces and architecture; and,

- To facilitate the continuing regeneration of land and buildings around the station by providing an enhanced setting for future phases of development.

4.4 These objectives are consistent with and help to deliver Council corporate objectives set out in the emerging City of Leicester Local Plan, which identifies the station and surrounding land as a key development and regeneration site; and, Leicester's Local Transport Plan 2021-2036, which underlines the role of a transformed station in the connected corridors and hubs central strategic theme.

4.5 The main built improvements to be delivered by this project are:

- A new main entrance and plaza to be formed into the station booking hall, oriented towards the City Centre (Granby Street).
- The booking hall itself will be reconfigured to significantly increase the floorspace allocated to public areas, existing back-office space will be relocated to the lower-ground floor and existing retail and hospitality space will be re-provided in locations which enable unhindered pedestrian flows through the building. The ticket gatelines will be rationalised into one, larger gateline to eliminate queuing.
- The historic *porte cochere* (currently used as a taxi rank) will be restored, openings glazed and the building repurposed for hospitality and informal work space. Taxi facilities will be relocated to a new rank on Station Street, at the new station entrance.

4.6 Images illustrating the project concept design are appended.

4.7 The project will be delivered by the City Council in partnership with the rail industry, including the Department for Transport, Network Rail and East Midlands Railways. Partners will collaborate on detailed design decisions and issue technical approvals; and, to assist in obtaining for the Council, vacant possession of parts of the site where construction work is proposed. Roles and responsibilities have been agreed in a signed Memorandum of Understanding by relevant parties. The Council is expected to manage project delivery and the profiling of spend in-line with Government targets and deadlines. The scheme is programmed to be complete by March 2024.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

This report proposes to add £22.6m to the capital programme to support the Railway Station improvement project. This scheme is to be funded from £17.6m of Levelling Up Funding from Government and £5m of match funding from the Council. The match funding is coming from monies set aside at the 2020/21 outturn for this purpose.

Amy Oliver, Head of Finance

6.2 Legal implications

While this proposal does not have any direct legal implications, it is anticipated the terms of the of the funding agreement are likely to include conditions relating to the application of the funding for this project, including where required evidence of spend targets and potential for clawback in the event that spend as required under the terms of the funding agreement aren't met.

John McIvor, Principal Lawyer, ext. 37-1409

6.3 Equalities implications

- 6.3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.
- 6.3.2 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- 6.3.3 The Act also requires that reasonable adjustments be made so that disabled people are not excluded from places that serve the public, including publicly accessible open spaces. This duty is on-going and anticipatory and, therefore, reasonable and proportionate steps to overcome barriers which may impede people with different kinds of disabilities.
- 6.3.4 The report provides details of the Levelling-Up grant awarded to the Railway Station Improvement Project and seeks approval of the addition to the capital programme, along with the associated match funding. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. However, if the proposal is agreed, it would be conducive to carry out an equalities impact as part of the project development process. The design of the space should adhere to accessible design principles in order to ensure that people with different protected characteristic/s are able to access and utilise the space to its full potential.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Buildings represent the single biggest source of carbon emissions in Leicester and commercial and public sector buildings between them generate 17% of city emissions. Decarbonisation of buildings will need to happen at pace if the council's ambition for the city to become carbon neutral by 2030 is to remain achievable. Our own construction and refurbishment projects, such as the Leicester Railway Station Improvement Project present an ideal opportunity to lead by example in this area.

In addition, the Levelling Up funding criteria stipulate that projects must address Government policy objectives, including net zero. Our application stated that the design would maximise the environmental benefits of the project through use of natural light, LEDs and reducing heat loss. It should also be noted that the project will also encourage modal shift from road to rail, which has been calculated to deliver a significant reduction in city-wide carbon emissions of 8.9 mtCO₂e over the appraisal period.

It is recommended that sustainability performance targets are now established for the projects which are consistent with the above commitments and the climate emergency declaration. This should include an assessment of opportunities to reduce waste and target a high level of diversion from landfill alongside the identified measures. These should be tracked throughout the project, to ensure that they are achieved on completion.

At the time of writing, a study is underway in the council to develop corporate sustainability performance targets for council construction and refurbishment projects, along with a set of guidance and project management tools to support their achievement. While these are still under development, they are being designed to ensure that completed schemes perform to the level needed in a carbon neutral city. It is therefore recommended that consideration is given to aligning the railway station project with them.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None applicable

7. Background information and other papers:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

None

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Yes

Expenditure exceeding £1m is proposed which has not been specifically approved by Council.

Note that the decision can be taken by the Executive as the corporate resources to be committed are below £10m.

Appendix – Concept Design Illustrations



New Station Entrance and Plaza



Porte Cochere Hospitality Space



Reconfigured Booking Hall with Expanded Ticket Gateline