

Agenda Item IMD5

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2018/05

TITLE	Great Western Consultation
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Keith Baker
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	15 February 2018 SF4 at 15:00
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Interim Director of Environment - Josie Wragg

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Response to the DfT's consultation on the future of the Great Western Rail Franchise on behalf of Wokingham Borough. Response to be with the DfT by 21 February 2018

RECOMMENDATION

The consultation document asks 19 questions on the future of the Great Western, regarding its size, shape and relationship with Network Rail. The Council has answered the appropriate questions

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report responds to the 19 questions on the future of the franchise, covering the objectives of enhancement, improved journey times and improved train frequencies. The document explores a number of options to deliver the objectives. Wokingham Borough Council have commented on the questions that are relevant to the those lines and stations within the borough boundary, these being:

- The Great Western Main Line and Twyford
- The Henley Branch and Wargrave
- The North Downs Line through Wokingham to Guildford, Redhill and Gatwick and,
- The Reading to Basingstoke line with the prospect of new development at Grazeley.

Background

The GWR franchise only covers 2 GWR operated stations in the borough, these being Twyford and Wargrave. Crowthorne Station, just within Bracknell Forest, is also operated by GWR and serves the part of this Borough within the settlement of Crowthorne.

GWR operates stopping services on 4 lines passing through the Borough and GWR services call at Wokingham (where GWR provides about half the train services) and at Winnersh (a few services).

Analysis of Issues

Changes to the way the franchise operates and delivers services up to 2024 will change connectivity for many residents. The introduction of the Elizabeth line, operated by TfL has to be accommodated by GWR and will affect services and connectivity from Twyford. Included within the scope of the change could also be services to Heathrow and we feel that GWR should be the custodian of that project and that services that form the future Western Rail Access to Heathrow services.

We have commented on the proposal to split the franchise up and reduce the size of the franchised area and then further integrating service delivery, of train and track, by forming a stronger alliance with Network Rail. The council has made the comment that we do not see any value in the case for franchise devolution if the DfT wants to see a stronger alliance with NR across the Western Route.

We also comment on the boroughs need to deliver a new station and improved station facilities. We value strong links with the franchise and in particular the support of GWR with a new station at Grazeley should the development come forward and necessitate it's construction. We also value the relationship and the hard work put in by the GWR team to develop a solution to car parking and access at Twyford station. We will look to continue to develop a way forward at Twyford and work within the confines of the new franchise proposals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Nil	Nil

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
N/A

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	No comments received
Monitoring Officer	No comments received
Leader of the Council	No comments received

For Highways use only	
<i>If your item is not about a highways matter you do not need to complete the Town and Parish Council information or the Local Ward Member information</i>	
Town and Parish Councils	
Local Ward Members	

List of Background Papers
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-western-franchise-response-to-the-2014-consultation

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