



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORWARD PLANNING DECISION-MAKING MEETING - 3 MARCH 2021
Report Number	ITEM I
Subject	£5,000 CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE STRATFORD-UPON-AVON - HONEYBOURNE – WORCESTER / OXFORD RAILWAY LINE
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr. Rachel Coxcoon - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning Email: Rachel.coxcoon@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	James Brain (Forward Planning Manager) Tel: 01285 623540 Email: james.brain@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	The Stratford Rail Transport Group has been successful in a bid to the Reopening of Railways Fund. They have been awarded 75% of costs up to £50,000 for feasibility study for the Strategic Outline Business Case the restoration of passenger rail services between Stratford-upon-Avon station to Worcester and Oxford via Honeybourne Junctions on the Worcester-Oxford (via Moreton-in-Marsh and the North Cotswold Line). Cotswold District Council has been asked to contribute towards the remaining 25% of the cost, which is needed for the feasibility study.
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	<i>That the Cabinet Member agrees to contribute £5,000 towards the cost of the feasibility study.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to the challenges presented by the climate change emergency• Presenting a Local Plan which is green to the core
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Consultation between Cotswold District Council officers, Senior Management and the Cabinet Members for Planning Policy, Climate Change and Energy and Development Management

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Stratford-upon-Avon to Honeybourne line was closed in 1976. The Stratford Rail Transport Group has been successful in a bid to the Reopening of Railways Fund, which will consider if the line could be reopened to passenger services, which would link Moreton-in-Marsh to Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham. There would also be an opportunity for additional heavy freight trains along the route.

2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 2.1. The SOBC is the first of three stages in business case development and focusses on the strategic case and the economic case. The strategic case is the overview of the issue. At the SOBC stage the strategic case focusses particularly on the transport issue, potential options and wider issues that make the case for intervention. The key areas which the SOBC will cover are:

- What is the transport issue under consideration and case for intervention?
- What is the scope of this intervention and/or constraints on the approach?
- What are the options? Why is rail the preferred mode?
- How does each option perform in delivering benefits?
- Other strategic considerations – regional/local socio-economic evidence/data, levelling up, re-balancing etc.
- The consultant will consider the aspiration for four trains an hour between Birmingham-Oxford (via the North Cotswold Line), together with The Gloucestershire Rail Investment Strategy (March 2020) and the long term service opportunities offered by Cheltenham-Stratford reinstatement. This would identify further work that would need to be conducted to deliver such services or project dependencies as to be viable.
- Highlight the impact of this proposed scheme on the existing railway operations, and any dependencies such as the North Cotswold bid for double tracking, based on an hourly through service from Stratford to Paddington via Moreton-in-Marsh and Oxford, being extensions of fast Paddington-Oxford-Hanborough services.

3. KEY ISSUES

- The project has consistently been supported in the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan.
- The [Rail Investment Strategy for Gloucestershire](#) demonstrates that operating this service would be economically viable.
- Improved public transport accessibility for Moreton-in-Marsh and connectivity with other towns / cities along the route.
- Parking around Moreton-in-Marsh railway station, which will be looked at within the study
- Economic implications for Moreton-in-Marsh resulting from the reinstatement of the railway line
- The particular benefits for students in Moreton who study at Stratford College; the potential for additional tourism in the Cotswolds; and opportunities to link in with non-train rail customer journeys, both commuter and visitor.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The proposal would require a £5,000 contribution. This work would support the Sustainable Transport Strategy and would inform the Local Plan. The funds would therefore come from the Local Plan budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no legal implications at this stage.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Risks have been considered. However, contributing this money to the feasibility study is unlikely to pose any risks to the Council.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1. Operating passenger rail services over this reinstated line would enable people who cannot afford / choose not to own a car to have better and more affordable accessibility to settlements that surround Cotswold District

8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There is potential to reduce the number of private car journeys by providing a realistic and viable alternative. There is also potential to reduce long-distance road freight journeys by transferring freight onto rail. It is expected that both of these things will help to reduce CO2 emissions.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1. None.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1. None.

(END)