Enhancing Urban Connectivity

2.6 Reading - Green Park Railway Station

2.6.1   **Lead organisation:** Reading Borough Council

2.6.2   **Contact details (name, email, telephone numbers):**

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2.6.3   **Brief description of the project and the main activities within it:**

The proposal is for the construction of a new railway station on the Reading to Basingstoke line, along with multi-modal interchange including bus interchange, decked park & ride facility, short stay car park (kiss & ride), taxi drop-off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping, and associated works.

2.6.4   **Location of the project:**

South West Reading

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council and West Berkshire Council

Parliamentary Constituency: Reading West and Wokingham

Postcode: RG30

Rationale for the project and strategic fit

2.6.5   **How will the project contribute to the delivery of Thames Valley Berkshire's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)?**

A key objective of the SEP is to improve urban connectivity, linking employment and residential areas to mainline railway stations. Green Park Station and multi-modal interchange will serve the major employment area of Green Park on the outskirts of Reading and act as an integrated transport hub for Southern Reading. It is also designed to link with the proposed South Reading Mass Rapid Transit scheme.

2.6.6 How does the project fit within the Programmes and Packages outlined in the SEP?

This project is part of the Infrastructure Programme: Enhancing Urban Connectivity. It will add a new station in a key location for business growth to the strategic rail network. It will also contribute to Unlocking Housing Development by directly unlocking the consented development of 735 dwellings at Green Park Village[1].

In the medium to longer term it also supports the International Programme given the potential for direct connections to Heathrow Airport, London Paddington and connection via Basingstoke to London Waterloo.

This project received Programme Entry Status in the prioritisation exercise conducted by the Berkshire Local Transport Body in July 2013.

2.6.7 What is the rationale for the project?

Green Park is one of the largest employment areas in central Berkshire and has substantial potential for further growth. It is particularly important as an inward investment destination, for both TVB and the UK economy. However, the access to Green Park is currently exclusively by road, and the entrance to the Park suffers from congestion in peak hours both northwards towards central Reading and southwards to the M4 Junction 11. A new railway station and multi-modal interchange at Green Park will greatly improve public transport accessibility and reduce road congestion in the vicinity.

The station also directly unlocks the consented development of 735 dwellings at Green Park Village.

The high-quality, low emission bus service currently operating on this corridor (approx 600,000 trips per annum) would be adapted to provide an integrated public transport offer on the corridor.

2.6.8 What market failures will it address? What is the evidence?

A new railway station is a public good. It also enables better use to be made of existing public infrastructure. Although preliminary site works have been funded by the private sector, the majority of the cost of the new station cannot be recouped from private development gain.

2.6.9 What other options have been considered?

Green Park is already served by a dedicated, frequent bus service: further improvements to that service are possible, but will not address the road congestion which currently affects both Green Park and surrounding residential and business areas. In addition, there is a risk that existing businesses would consider relocating due to worsening traffic conditions.

2.6.10 What would be the consequences of a "*do nothing*" option?

Increasing road congestion, a gradual decline in the attractiveness of Green Park as a business location, and the failure to bring forward the development of 735 dwellings at Green Park Village

2.6.11 Which partner organisations are involved in, and committed to, the project?

Reading Borough Council, Network Rail, First Great Western and South Reading businesses

Value for money

2.6.12 What outputs will the project deliver that is attributable to LGF and other funding sources?

The A33 corridor provides access to over 50,000 jobs in central Reading and 10,000 jobs and 1,600 homes in the south Reading area. There is planned growth of some 7,500 jobs and 1,500 homes along the corridor, plus a strategic development South of M4 Junction 11 (2,500 homes).

The Reading Green Park Station Business Case[2] estimated that the local market (within 3km) contains a population of 36,906, which with 3.9 trips per 1,000 population are likely to use the station.

4,786 cars would pass the station on the A33 to/from the M4. The parkway is expected to attract 1.6% of this traffic (or 0.18% of the 42,100 entries on to the M4). This could potentially be higher, but the capacity of the car park will constrain the use of station by car.

New residential development will accommodate a population of approximately 1,652, with 77.7 trips per 1,000 population using the station. 3.16% of the local workforce totalling 8,970 people are also likely to use the station, based upon analysis of London Area Travel Survey (LATS)[3] which shows a penetration figure of around 2%. With the opening of the new facility, and the opportunity for modal shift this provides, it is predicted that the demand on rail use (using rail for the main leg of their journey) will rise to 3.16% of total employment.

Furthermore, passenger flows established from LENNON data[4] based on an equivalent comparable station (Winnersh Triangle - geographically and demographically) would indicate that very high passenger flows (greater than 100,000 per annum) can be anticipated in the post-electrification scenario.

Network Rail's emerging Market Studies[5] have used a variation of DfT's WEB TAG guidance and it is anticipated that this would give additional wider economic benefits, taking account of how the change in rail service provision advantages both individuals and businesses willing to travel.

Outputs		2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	Later
Houses (units)	LGF		40	200	200	148		
	Other public sector (specify ESIF, etc.)							
	Private sector		10	50	50	37		
	Total		50	250	250	185		
Jobs	LGF		337	842	842	842		
	Other public sector (specify ESIF, etc.)							
	Private sector		84	211	211	211		
	Total		421	1,053	1,053	1,053		
Employment floor space (sq m)	LGF		6,400	16,000	16,000	16,000		
	Other public sector (specify ESIF, etc.)							
	Private sector		1,600	4,000	4,000	4,000		
	Total		8,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		

2.6.13 How have these outputs been estimated?

The number of existing households within three distance bands has been estimated using GIS techniques to analyse 2001 Census data. Average household size for Reading Borough Council listed within the Office of National Statistics has then been applied.

Existing jobs have been based on occupancy of the Green Park business park at the time of writing the business case, with an assumption that Phase 1 & 2 had reached 15% occupancy. Rail trips by employees have been estimated using LATS.

Housing units and employment floor space outputs are based on planning permissions and likely build-out. Jobs are estimated on a ratio of 1 job to 19sqm floor space. The updated Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition[6] shows B1 as 1 per 12sqm, therefore this calculation would be conservative.

2.6.14 What wider outcomes will be achieved in TVB? Please quantify these if possible

The scheme will improve connectivity along one of the most important and congested transport corridors in Reading, leading south towards the M4 and towards much of the planned housing growth in Greater Reading. This corridor also has a concentration of employment areas including but not limited to Green Park.

Green Park is an important destination for inward investment: improved accessibility will ensure a more favourable impression to potential inward investors and encourage re-investment by firms already located there.

The scheme will realise additional benefits from those already achieved by the Reading Station upgrade, forthcoming electrification and the planned Western Rail Access to Heathrow projects.

2.6.15 To what extent are these outputs (and downstream outcomes/impacts) likely to be additional? What is the basis for this assessment?

The 735 homes at Green Park Village will not be built unless and until the station is developed, as consented in accordance with the Green Park Village S106 agreement[7].

The new rail station will make a major contribution to reducing congestion in the vicinity.

Research into land values surrounding railway stations has identified that land and property values within 1km of stations can increase by around 10% above levels of growth in surrounding areas[4].

2.6.16 What is the nature of the resourcing package that is proposed (e.g. balance between loans and grants, etc.)?

The proposed resourcing package is 80% LGF and 20% private sector funding. S106 funding is specifically committed to this scheme. In addition, there have been significant contributions from the private sector and local authority in progress the scheme to date, including scheme development costs and enabling works.

2.6.17 What is the funding package through which the project will be delivered?

Source	Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
LGF	Capital	£3.2m	£3.2m				
Other public sector 1 2 3	*Please specify*						
Private sector 1 2 3	*S106* PRUPIM enabling works	£0.8m £1.0m	£0.8m				

Deliverability and risks

2.6.18 How secure are the funding contributions from elsewhere?

The scheme has planning permission and the active support of the rail industry. All the land has been determined and preliminary site works have been funded by the private sector. The scheme is deliverable with a 2015/16 start and has been prioritised by the Local Transport Body.

2.6.19 What are the key project milestones?

The key project milestones include:

- Enabling works - Completed

- Network Rail Capability Analysis[8] - Completed

- Planning application (including all associated surveys) - In progress

- Business case refresh - In progress

- Outline design review - In progress

- DfT / BLTB business case review

- Detailed design

- Procurement of a contractor

- Construction

- Open to public (December 2016)

2.6.20   What are the proposed arrangements for project management?

A project steering group will be established to coordinate works and monitor progress, with representation from all key organisations including Reading Borough Council, Network Rail, First Great Western and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. The role of the steering group will be to adhere to and consider project manager and working group reports, update project risks and oversee and manage all key decisions on the programme.

A detailed project programme will be developed for the scheme and a project management manual will be produced and used as a live document by the team as one management tool.

Governance protocols will include appropriate progress reports to Local Authority Councillors and the appropriate TVB LEP meetings.

Any funding awarded to this project from the LGF process will be managed on behalf of the LEP by Berkshire Local Transport Body. The BLTB operates a DfT-approved Assurance Framework which governs the release of project funds.

2.6.21   What are the principal risks linked to the project's delivery, and what actions will be (or have been) taken to mitigate and manage these?

Risk	Likelihood (H / M / L)	Severity (H / M / L)	Mitigating actions
1. Planning permission is not granted.	L	H	The existing planning application is being updated to reflect the latest situation.
2. It is not feasible to stop trains at the new station.	L	H	Discussions have been progressed with Network Rail and a timetable capability assessment has been undertaken.
3. TOC does not agree to on-going operating costs.	M	H	Discussions have been progressed with FGW and the commercial case will be developed in partnership.
4. Business case does not meet DfT requirements for new stations.	L	M	The business case is being updated in partnership with Network Rail and First Great Western. Patronage/revenue forecasting is being progressed.
5. Scheme costs significantly increase.	L	H	Costs are being reviewed and cost savings sought, contingency has been built into the overall scheme cost.

List of supporting information and evidence

There is a dedicated webpage at http://www.reading.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/TransportStrategy/strategic-economic-plan/ which gives access to all the relevant supporting information for this project.

References

[1] Green Park Village Planning Application, Prudential & Berkeley Homes (St Edwards), 2011

[2] Reading Green Park Station Business Case, Reading Borough Council & Prudential, 2005

[3] London Area Travel Survey (LATS), Department for Transport, 2001

[4] Wider Economic Benefits of Improved Rail Frequencies, Mott MacDonald, 2012

[5] Western Route Market Study (Draft), Network Rail, 2014

[6] Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition, Driver Jonas Deloitte, 2010

[7] Green Park Village S106 Agreement, Reading Borough Council, 2011

[8] Reading Green Park Station Capability Study, Network Rail, 2013

[9] Reading-Waterloo Rail Economic Impact Study (Draft), JMP & Regeneris, 2014