

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015  
**Report of:** Executive Director of Economic Growth & Prosperity  
**Subject/Title:** Crewe Bus Interchange Facility  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr David Topping, Service Commissioning  
Cllr Don Stockton, Housing and Jobs

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### 1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The Council has placed a high priority on the development of a Delivery Framework to support economic growth and regeneration in Crewe. A key component of this is to ensure the provision of excellent public transport facilities in the town which provides residents with access to a wide range of local services and the town centre.
- 1.2 There is the real prospect of Crewe bus station closing when Arriva's current lease arrangement ends on 1 May 2016. The Council has responded proactively to this and a feasibility study is well under way. This has included dialogue with local bus operators and a site appraisal to identify the potential solutions for a high quality replacement facility.
- 1.3 The Council will be talking to bus users and the town's residents to identify the best possible solution which meets the current and future needs of residents.
- 1.4 This exercise is about identifying the best solution for Crewe's residents and local businesses and meeting the Council's high ambitions for the town.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to outline the findings of the feasibility study and site option appraisal and propose a series of next steps. This report is fully aligned with two complementary Cabinet reports entitled:
- Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Framework for Growth
  - Strategic Acquisition – Crewe

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- a) Note the progress to date on the feasibility study and emerging options;
  - b) Authorise officers to widen the scope of the feasibility study to consider the potential to retain the operation of the bus station at the existing site for a short period from 1 May 2016;

- c) Authorise officers to widen the scope of the site option appraisal in light of the potential acquisition of the 'Royal Arcade' site to establish whether additional options for a new bus interchange facility exist;
- d) Authorise officers to undertake stakeholder engagement and public consultation co-ordinated with the planned consultation on the Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Framework.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The current bus station provides 1.6 million passenger movements annually. Over half (54%) of users are aged 60+ and 10% are people with a disability who rely on bus access to the town centre. The bus station plays a vital role in providing residents with access to key services, such as education, employment and shopping facilities, as well as supporting the local economy.
- 3.2 Enabling and encouraging the use of local bus services supports wider economic and environmental objectives in reducing congestion and supports sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions.
- 3.3 The provision of a bus interchange facility in Crewe supports all of the Council's corporate objectives in putting residents first and achieving positive outcomes for the community in Cheshire East, specifically:
  - Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive
  - Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy
  - Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need to thrive
  - Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place
  - Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer.
- 3.4 By widening the scope of the feasibility study, there is an opportunity to consider and assess other options to identify the best solution for a bus interchange facility in consultation with the local community. The consultation will be co-ordinated with a period of engagement on the wider regeneration delivery framework for Crewe.

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All Crewe Wards.

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All Crewe Ward Members.

### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 The bus interchange project is fully aligned with the Crewe Regeneration Delivery Framework for Growth, which sets out a clear route map to support the economic prosperity of Crewe town centre. The project also takes account of the proposed strategic acquisition of the 'Royal Arcade' site and is aligned with the proposals in the separate Cabinet report.

- 6.2 The proposals to provide a bus interchange replacement facility are in line with the strategic priorities of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) to "create conditions for business growth" and "ensure a sustainable future". The LTP includes priority policies relating to public transport integration and facilities (Policy S3) and public transport service levels and reliability (Policy S4).
- 6.3 The project is also aligned with the policies in the Local Plan Strategy Submission Version, including Policy CO1 to improve public transport integration, facilities, services levels and access for all users, including bus infrastructure where Crewe Bus Station is listed as an improvement scheme.

## **7.0 Implications for Rural Communities**

- 7.1 A bus interchange facility will enable residents in rural communities to travel into the town centre and potentially interchange for onward travel.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Crewe bus interchange facility is a named scheme within the 2015-18 Capital Programme approved by Council on 26 February 2015, profiled as follows:

<b>Approved Capital Budget</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Total</b>
Crewe Bus Interchange Facility	200	2,750	0	2,950

- 8.2 The scheme is expected to be funded from the Council's own resources, and therefore can only be spent once such funding has been specifically identified and earmarked (for example from a capital receipt or prudential borrowing).
- 8.3 Feasibility costs may have to be applied to the revenue budget if a scheme does not proceed, referred to as abortive costs, and funding would then need to be provided by the service or allocated to the Capital Financing Budget. However, due to the strategic importance of this scheme, this risk is unlikely to materialise. To date spending has been funded from the Local Transport Plan allocation, and is in the region of £50,000.
- 8.4 A business case will be submitted to the Technical Enabler Group and Executive Monitoring Board (Gate 1) in due course, detailing the outcome of the feasibility study and site option appraisal. Following the selection of the preferred option, a detailed business case will be prepared for Technical Enabler Group and Executive Monitoring Board (Gate 2) prior to submission to Cabinet for approval.
- 8.5 Depending on the option chosen, there may be wider financial implications which will need to be considered as part of the process. For example, if it is decided to progress with an off-street solution, there is an opportunity to collect departure charges from local bus operators which could achieve an estimated income of £119,356 per annum (based on the operations at the current bus station).
- 8.6 In addition, as the Delamere Street car park is being considered in the option appraisal process, there is a need to consider the revenue from the car park

which in 2013/14 was £125,481. However, consideration also needs to be given to the potential to offset this loss with a new car park facility within the 'Royal Arcade' site.

- 8.7 The financial implications of any risks associated with this project, as per paragraph 10.3 below, would be considered through quarterly monitoring of expenditure. Reports would be made to Cabinet or Council if appropriate and within the requirements of the Financial Procedure Rules.

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 Consultation with stakeholders and the public should be conducted with adherence to the following;

9.1.1 the consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage.

9.1.2 the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.

9.1.3 adequate time must be given for consideration and response.

9.1.4 the result of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the proposals.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

- 10.1 Many local bus users are elderly or young people who rely on bus access to the town centre. Without a bus interchange, passengers would face longer walks to the key parts of the town centre and between bus stops to interchange for onward travel. As a result, passenger numbers are likely to reduce which would impact on the viability of local bus services.
- 10.2 In addition, if a replacement facility is not identified, operators would be forced to stop on street in the town centre, which, if unmanaged, would lead to traffic congestion and gridlock in the town centre and negative impacts on bus service reliability and on other traffic and business. The deterioration in the quality of bus travel would be likely to encourage increased car use.
- 10.3 The optimum solution for a bus interchange facility has not yet been identified and there are no detailed costings. There is a risk that the cost of providing a replacement facility would exceed the Council's corporate capital programme allocation of £2.95m.

## **11.0 Background and Options**

- 11.1 Arriva have managed and operated the current bus station on a long term lease since May 1996. When the 20 year lease expires in May 2016, Arriva have confirmed their intention to cease operating the bus station due to the substantial annual cost associated with the lease and the ongoing maintenance liability. In addition, the existing bus station does not meet the aspirations of the town in terms of quality public transport facilities.

- 11.2 Crewe has the densest commercial bus network in Cheshire East and the Council recognise that local bus services play a vital role in providing residents with access to services and supporting the town centre economy.
- 11.3 A bus interchange facility is required from 1 May 2016 onwards to:
- Enable **residents** to **access** town centre facilities by bus
  - Provide a **safe, accessible, managed environment** for bus use
  - Support the **stability** of the bus network and **viability** of services
  - Enable **interchange** between different bus services
  - Enable the **continuation** of existing bus route corridors
  - Support the town centre **economy** (retail, leisure and cultural offer).
- 11.4 This report is focused on addressing the town's bus infrastructure needs today and in the immediate future. The demand for new public transport facilities is only likely to grow linked to the future transformational growth of the town.
- 11.5 The feasibility study work completed to date has identified and sifted the potential options. The study has been undertaken in 3 stages:
- Stage 1 – Baseline Evidence (passenger profile / operational requirements)
  - Stage 2 – Site Option Appraisal (assessing / ranking the potential options)
  - Stage 3 – Preliminary Design (identification of recommended solutions)

#### Stage 1 – Baseline Evidence

- 11.6 A survey of existing passengers was undertaken in June 2014 and a total of 777 interviews were completed. The survey found that:
- 54% of users are aged 60 or over
  - 10% confirmed themselves as disabled
  - Over 50% were shopping and a further 16% were undertaking social / recreational trips
  - A relatively low proportion of passengers (8%) were commuting
  - Many bus users rely on bus access to the town centre and loss of this facility would impact on residents using both the town and inter-urban services.
- 11.7 The replacement facility needs to provide a safe, accessible managed environment for the following operational requirements:
- 529 bus departures per day
  - 49 bus departures per hour between 10.00 and 12.00
  - 1.6 million passenger movements annually
  - 11 stands to service all departures using Fixed Stand Allocation (FSA)
  - 9 bus route corridors into the existing bus station
  - 40% of daily departures use the southbound corridors (i.e. Edleston Road and Oak Street – Mill Street)
  - 40:60 ratio of Terminating to Through buses

- 15% of passengers interchange between different bus services
- Driver welfare facilities and capacity for layover
- Passenger waiting and interchange facilities.

## Stage 2 – Site Option Appraisal Framework

11.8 The framework consists of a series of criteria in the categories listed below.

- Size and Location and Passenger Implications
- Safety and Security
- Accessibility and Operability
- Integration
- Strategic Implications
- Practicality and Public Acceptability
- Stakeholder Impacts
- Risks, Timescale and Costs.

11.9 The site option appraisal has identified two shortlisted options which scored highly in the appraisal framework:

- Delamere Street / Chester Street: provision of 11 on-street stands
- Delamere Street car park: provision of an off-street facility with 11 stands

11.10 The key reasons for shortlisting these sites include:

- Optimum location to serve the bus route corridors and secure the stability of the town centre network (both commercial and supported services)
- Proximity to the shopping areas of the town centre – addressing bus operators core business and supporting the retail economy
- Minimises walking distance for users and enables interchange
- Sites are within CEC landownership and are deliverable within the timescale.

## Stage 3 – Preliminary Design

11.11 The stage 3 study has identified a “do-minimum” option by estimating, in conjunction with the local bus operators, what would happen if the bus station were to close without any intervention from the Council. Once the site option appraisal is complete, all the shortlisted options will then be compared to the “do-minimum” scenario to carry out the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis and develop a detailed business case.

11.12 In light of the proposed strategic acquisition of the ‘Royal Arcade’ site (including the current bus station), there is an opportunity to widen the scope of the feasibility study. The implications of the acquisition could be both short term and long term:

- Short term – There is an opportunity to continue the operation of the existing site as a bus station beyond 1 May 2016 for a short period (e.g. 6-12 months). This would allow time to consider the best solution for a bus interchange facility in light of the acquisition and the proposed redevelopment of the site and in consultation with the local community.

- Long term – There may be an opportunity to consider the retention of a proportion of the existing site for a bus interchange facility, which would need assessing through the site option appraisal framework. Alternatively, there may be an opportunity to provide car parking facilities which would offset the loss of the spaces associated with the Delamere Street car park off-street solution.

11.13 Following the site option appraisal and public consultation, the preliminary design work will be undertaken to further assess the value for money and deliverability of each option with consideration of the cost, time and quality factors, as well as the key risks associated with each option. The outcomes will follow the Council's programme management control process and be reported back to Cabinet for approval of a preferred option.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

12.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writers:

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