

Cheshire East Council

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 10th October 2017

Report of: Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place

Subject/Title: Crewe Hub Consultation – Cheshire East Response

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Rachel Bailey, Leader of the Council

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The arrival of HS2 to Crewe is a once in a lifetime opportunity to deliver transformational growth across Cheshire, North Staffordshire and North Wales. It also has the capacity to deliver wider economic and productivity benefits across the North West, Midlands and Wales.
- 1.2. The Council has taken a supportive stance on HS2 subject to the inclusion of a new Hub Station at Crewe provided that the highest standards of mitigation and compensation are applied.
- 1.3. The council is preparing a comprehensive Masterplan for Crewe setting the framework for development over the next 25 years, stimulated by HS2 connectivity.
- 1.4. The Council is also working with partners in the Constellation area which spans Cheshire and North Staffordshire to develop a HS2 Growth Strategy demonstrating the scale of plan led growth that the catalyst of HS2 can unlock across the region. For Cheshire East this will deliver a plan led response to growth and development.
- 1.5. However, these plans and the wider economic potential of the Crewe hub is predicated on securing the right rail infrastructure solution for Crewe. The base case Crewe Hub solution is set out in the Phase 2a Hybrid Bill proposals and only allows for 2 HS2 trains per hour stopping at Crewe, serving only London. This shift in connectivity in itself will not be sufficient to support the transformational economic growth agenda of the region.
- 1.6. On the 17th July 2017 Government launched a consultation document “Crewe Hub consultation – Moving Britain Ahead” which introduces 3 alternative rail infrastructure solutions for the Crewe Hub which could give Crewe and the surrounding region even better access to high speed services, serving even more destinations.
- 1.7. This consultation sets out 3 scenarios for a Crewe Hub Station:

- Scenario 1 – Crewe Hub route serving Stoke-on-Trent (through splitting and joining one train per hour)
 - Scenario 2 – Crewe Hub route serving Stoke-on-Trent and upgrading capacity (through splitting and joining two trains per hour)
 - Scenario 3 – Crewe Hub with a new northern junction (which is in addition to Scenario 2) and allowing for high speed services to Manchester and Birmingham.
- 1.8. This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Council's response to the consultation included in Appendix 1.
- 1.9. The Council welcomes the Crewe Hub consultation and the inclusion of the option for a northern junction in Scenario 3 providing the infrastructure needed to allow Crewe to have direct HS2 services to Manchester and Birmingham as well as London. It is only Scenario 3 that is capable of delivering the transformational growth ambitions of the Crewe Masterplan and Growth Strategy for the Constellation Partnership area.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Cabinet are recommended to approve the proposed consultation response on the Crewe Hub options as set out in Appendix 1

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. The Crewe Hub consultation provides the opportunity for Cheshire East to present a case for an enhanced Hub Station at Crewe that offers direct HS2 services to Manchester, Birmingham and London. This would support the growth ambitions of Cheshire East, the Constellation Partnership and beyond.
- 3.2. Scenarios 1 and 2 as set out in the Crewe Hub Station consultation document would not allow for direct HS2 services to Manchester and Birmingham which are essential for the growth ambitions of Cheshire East and our Partners to be realised. Therefore the Council would not be able to support these options for the Crewe Hub Station.
- 3.3. There is an overwhelming case for Scenario 3 as compared to the base case solution and scenarios 1 and 2. This is demonstrated in the consultation material itself with Scenario 3 displaying a transport BCR (benefits to costs ratio) of 2.7, exceptionally high for a rail scheme, and significantly higher than the 1.6 and 0.8 calculated for scenarios 2 and 1 respectively.
- 3.4. Whilst Scenario 3 has the potential to deliver the transformational benefits and economic potential of the region it does not deliver the ability for the Crewe Hub to offer at least 3 HS2 trains an hour to each of London,

Manchester and Birmingham. Therefore the Council would seek to safeguard a stop at Crewe on one of the HS2 London to Manchester services as well.

- 3.5. The consultation only considers the rail infrastructure options to accommodate HS2 at Crewe. Decisions on the station design, scope and delivery are subject to separate discussions between the Council and the Department for Transport. Whilst the Council is potentially prepared to make a local contribution towards a station design that supports the Crewe Masterplan and the growth ambitions of the Constellation Partnership it is not prepared to fund the rail infrastructure including a northern junction.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The recommendations above have been made in order to maximise the economic and transport benefits of the Crewe Hub Station for Cheshire East, the Constellation Partnership, the Welsh Government and the wider Midlands and North West economies.
- 4.2. The right Hub Station and HS2 connectivity at Crewe would bring about significant economic growth in many areas across the UK. The Council are looking to ensure the Crewe Hub Station solution maximises the positive impact on the local economy. Economic growth would be realised through jobs directly related to HS2, either during construction or associated to its operation, and also as a result of better transport links to other major towns and cities across the UK.
- 4.3. This means delivering a rail infrastructure solution that offers at least 3 HS2 services an hour to each of London, Manchester and Birmingham and one which is resilient and flexible such that it is future proofed for new local and regional services to support the regional growth ambitions.
- 4.4. This consultation provides the opportunity for Cheshire East to influence Government's decisions on the Crewe Hub Station rail infrastructure to support growth ambitions of the region.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. The Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, announced the initial preferred line of route and station options in January 2013 and the first round of public consultation ran until the end of January
- 5.2. In November 2015 the Secretary of State made the decision on the final preferred option for the Line of Route for Phase 2A, from Fradley to Crewe. At the same time safeguarding directions were issued to protect the route from conflicting development and a property consultation was launched to assist those living along the Phase 2A route. This directly affects those properties within 300m either side of the proposed HS2 Line of Route.
- 5.3. In November 2016 the Secretary of State proposed that the site for any HS2 Hub Station at Crewe should be on the site of the existing station.

- 5.4. The current Government base case for Crewe is a solution that delivers 2 HS2 trains per hour to London only and to be delivered by 2027. This would reduce journey times to London from Crewe to 55 minutes.
- 5.5. Over the past 5 years the Council's evidence base for an enhanced Hub Station at Crewe has been strengthening. An enhanced Hub Station is one that is capable of handling 7 stopping HS2 trains per hour with direct HS2 connectivity to Manchester and Birmingham as well as London. This would bring Manchester and Birmingham within 21 minutes and 28 minutes of Crewe respectively and see Crewe become one of the best connected places in the UK.
- 5.6. This evidence shows that the difference in economic and social benefits that can be delivered by an enhanced station as compared to a base case station is stark. A HS2 Growth Strategy from the Constellation Partnership will be submitted to Government this autumn and will demonstrate how an enhanced Hub Station at Crewe will support the delivery of significant housing and employment growth across South Cheshire and North Staffordshire.
- 5.7. The Council is working with Government, Network Rail and Partners across the North West, Midlands and Wales to influence decision making over the Crewe Hub proposals and maximise the benefits that can be delivered.

Crewe Hub Consultation

- 5.8. The Crewe Hub Consultation – Moving Britain Ahead launched on 17th July 2017 and is running to 12th October 2017. The consultation material is available on the Government webpage (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/crewe-hub-options-for-building-on-existing-connectivity>).
- 5.9. As part of the Crewe Hub consultation all respondents (including the public and the Council) were asked to answer nine questions, which can be seen in the Council's proposed response in Appendix 1 and on the webpage above.
- 5.10. The consultation asks for views on:
 - The vision for a hub station at Crewe, as recommended by Sir David Higgins in 2014
 - Providing 400m platforms at Crewe station in 2027 which could enable longer HS2 trains to and from London to split and join at Crewe, meaning other destinations, such as Stoke-on-Trent, could be served by a high speed service
 - Providing a junction north of Crewe station to connect the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and the high-speed line, in 2033 as part of HS2 Phase 2b. This could enable northbound high speed connectivity from Crewe, providing more seats between Crewe and London

- Levels of future freight growth that should be considered in planning a Crewe Hub
 - Levels of growth in local and regional passenger services that should be considered in planning a Crewe Hub
 - The role the local area could play in realising a Crewe Hub, including by way of local funding contributions and evidence for potential levels of growth
- 5.11. Given Crewe's unique connectivity to the entire North West, North Wales and the North Midlands, delivering the enhanced HS2 connectivity to Crewe would spread the benefits over a wider area. In addition, it would free up the West Coast Main Line south of Crewe where significant capacity constraints exist.
- 5.12. A regional rail plan is being prepared which will demonstrate how this freed up capacity and regional rail improvements could be made to maximise the benefits of an enhanced hub station at Crewe to the wider region.
- 5.13. Cheshire East is working with partners across Government, HS2 and Network Rail through an integrated study approach to develop plans for how an enhanced Hub Station at Crewe could be designed, funded and delivered.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. All Wards, All Ward Members

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

A major national project such as HS2 has national policy objectives. Addressing the development impacts of a project of this scale will cover all the Council's aims within the corporate plan.

7.2. Legal Implications

As the Phase 2a hybrid Bill progresses through Parliament the Council may decide that there is a need to petition against the hybrid Bill. If this is the case then there will likely be time and costs associated with this process.

7.3. Financial Implications

The work required to complete the Council's Crewe Hub consultation response and to support engagement with the DfT and HS2 Ltd will be funded from within existing service budgets.

7.4. Equality Implications

The Council's consultation response is seeking Government to deliver a hub station that is inclusive and accessible with high quality facilities and amenities that can be accessed by all.

7.5. Rural Community Implications

The Council's consultation response is seeking maximum mitigation against the environmental impacts of HS2 on our communities.

The Council's consultation response supports the delivery of a full Hub Station at Crewe by 2027 rather than in several phases of works to minimise the disruption to local business and residents including those in our rural communities.

7.6. Human Resources Implications

The work required to complete the consultation response has been resourced from existing Council resources.

7.7. Public Health Implications

The Council's consultation response supports the delivery of an enhanced HS2 Hub Station which can have significant impacts upon public health through access to high quality environments, amenities and employment opportunities.

7.8. Implications for Children and Young People

The Council's consultation response supports the delivery of an enhanced Crewe Hub Station which will provide opportunities for employment and be the catalyst to deliver good quality housing and environments for residents of all ages.

7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)

None

8. Risk Management

It is considered that by submitting a robust consultation response to Government will increase the ability of the Council to maintain its influence as a key stakeholder and achieve the best possible final decisions for the Borough.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

- 9.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Hayley Kirkham
Designation: Head of HS2 Growth
Tel No: 01270 686881
Email: hayley.kirkham@cheshireeast.gov.uk