

Minutes of the Corsham Railway Station Town Team meeting held on Friday 18 February 2022 via MS Teams

- Present**
- Councillor S Abbott (Chair - Corsham Town Council)
 - M Baker (MOD Corsham)
 - Councillor A Crockford (Corsham Town Council)
 - P Deaves (GWR)
 - Rt Hon M Donelan (MP)
 - H Gallimore (Network Rail)
 - Councillor R Hopkinson (Corsham Town Council and Wiltshire Council)
 - P Johnson (TransWilts)
 - J Lovatt (Network Rail)
 - R Murphy (Wiltshire Council)
 - Councillor H Prickett (Wiltshire Council)
 - D Phillips (Wiltshire Council)
 - P Pearson (Resident and Volunteer)
 - P Tapscott (Resident and Volunteer)
 - A Tucker (Atkins)
 - P Whalley (Resident and Volunteer)
- In attendance**
- Mrs K Gilby (Finance and Planning Officer, Corsham Town Council)
 - D Martin (Chief Executive, Corsham Town Council)

TT 85 Apologies.

Apologies had been received from J Strachan (Bath Spa University) and M Turner (GWR).

TT 86 Welcome and Introductions

S Abbott welcomed everyone to the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

TT 87 Background

R Murphy explained in a presentation that Wiltshire Council had submitted a successful bid for funding from the third round of the Department for Transport's Restoring Your Railways Fund. The bid had been supported by Corsham Town Council, local MP's and many local organisations. The Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) would need to consider train services and non-rail options. Provisional objectives had been drawn up. He explained the Department for Transport's (DfT) business case process. Monthly reports were to be submitted to the DfT. The SOBC would need to be submitted by the end of September with a draft SOBC to be submitted by the end of July.

TT 88 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2021

The Minutes were approved as a true record.

TT 89 Matters Arising from the above Minutes

There were none.

TT 90 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference had been amended to better reflect the RYR process. It was requested to further amend the Terms of Reference to include Transwilt as a member.

Agreed: That, subject to the above amendment, the Terms of Reference be approved.

TT 91 Strategic Outline Case Proposal

David Phillips explained in a presentation that the objective was to provide a convincing case for the station that makes economic sense. There is only a limited budget available. It was suggested that the objective could be widened to provide more travel opportunities to take advantage of the changed situation due to Covid. P Johnson felt that we were now in a different world which meant that GWR's offer to stop London-Bristol services was more realistic. It was also suggested that total journey times should be considered especially due to the difficulties in getting to Chippenham and Bath from Corsham. P Deaves stated that stopping the London-Bristol service presents a massive opportunity – but that we needed to state this assumption clearly. Also stated that Cardiff-Swindon service was a low priority option and that diversion of Metrowest (Bristol-Westbury) should not be considered because of the difficulties in changing other authorities' priorities and funded commitments. The SOBC could feed into Network Rail's strategic planning, but this would be a longer process.

When making the strategic case for the station alternatives will need to be considered and the economic case will need to be measured against a baseline that includes one or more proposed service options. The SOBC would include a light-touch operational feasibility assessment for train service options. The financial case for the service options will be made partly using the 2014/5 work by Atkins. The financial, commercial and management cases will be based on what was presented in the SOBC for Devizes Gateway station but will also touch upon the complexities of delivering a train service. P Johnson felt that we were making the SOBC too complex by including options such as Thingley and Lacock station options – need to consider realistic non-rail options such as a shuttle bus to Chippenham station. RM responded that at the SOBC stage we needed to consider all potential options.

It was queried whether the group could see examples of other successful SOBC's. It was suggested that the difficulties of providing a shuttle bus to Chippenham Railway Station be explained. Working with Visit Wiltshire on the leisure case could be useful. It was suggested that it would be best to keep the story as simple as possible whilst still providing the detail the DfT required.

It would be useful to get GWR and Network Rail support for the Bristol/Paddington stopping service. Bus alternatives would need to be looked at. J Lovatt supported the approach presented by DP and recommended that the SOBC look at strategic transport improvements to the east of Bath (e.g. Park & Ride). It would be useful to assess the problems that had been encountered with strategic access improvements to the east of Bath as

Corsham Station was often raised as an alternative to using the heavily congested A4.

M Donelan MP offered to raise any outstanding issues with the Minister.

A meeting was due to be held by Network Rail, GWR and the DfT in the week beginning 21 Feb.

ACTION: D Phillips to share his slides so that they could be discussed at that meeting.

The parking at the station site would need to be understood. In terms of service options, the Cardiff/Swindon route was not a high priority. If consideration was being given to diverting the MetroWest Service other interested parties would need to be consulted. It was suggested that the Paddington/Bristol option could be focussed on.

TT 92 Discussion and Approval of Proposal

A definitive proposal could not be put forward at this stage. The scope needed to be with DfT by the end of February. **ACTION:** R Murphy would see if there was any flexibility on this. **ACTION:** GWR, Network Rail and the DfT would try to narrow down the options at its meeting. **ACTION:** Atkins to come back on costings.

Agreed: To continue to proceed on the scope by email.

TT 93 Community Survey/Engagement Requirements

Representatives from Corsham Town Council had met with R Murphy and D Perrett from Wiltshire Council earlier in the week to discuss community engagement. R Murphy and D Perrett would put together an engagement map. It was felt to be too soon to explore a rail user group. It would be worthwhile for Wiltshire Council to engage with BANES for support. The letter to landowners would be fed into the engagement mapping. It was not felt necessary to use consultants for this work. The Town Council would be hosting various community events throughout the year which could provide opportunities for face-to-face engagement. We would follow Devizes engagement map and also update the engagement with local stakeholders. Any concerns from residents around the station area would need to be managed sensitively.

TT 94 Next Steps

Project Scope to DfT by the end of February – R Murphy to see if this could be extended in light of issues regarding train service options.
The next monthly report to the DfT was due on 25 February.
The next meeting with DfT, Network Rail and GWR was scheduled for 4 March. It was hoped to commission Atkins in March.
The communications mapping would be completed.
As for the Devizes Gateway SOBC, a pre-application would be submitted to establish initial planning, highways and related comments.
The draft SOBC would be ready by July with the final SOBC being submitted in September.

TT 95 Any other business

D Phillips asked for authorisation to use the data from the SLC Rail Report. P Johnson confirmed that this was a Transwilt's document and that it could be used.

The scope would be shared by email. The monthly report did not need to be shared.

TT 96 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Approximately three months unless an earlier meeting is required. Date to be confirmed.