

Cheltenham Borough Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 26 October 2015
Scrutiny Task Group Review – Cheltenham Spa Railway Station
Covering Report

Accountable member	Councillor Roger Whyborn, Chair of Task Group
Accountable officer	Saira Malin, Democracy Officer
Executive summary	<p>At its meeting on 8 September 2014 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee commenced a review of the Cheltenham Spa Railway Station. A Scrutiny task group was set up and undertook to better understand the franchise renewal process. The group were also tasked with developing a wish-list of improvements to the station, transport links and rail service itself and establish if and how they were being progressed.</p> <p>The findings and recommendations of that Group are set out in detail in the attached Scrutiny Task Group Report.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the recommendations as set out in the Scrutiny Task Group report and recommends that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorise the Managing Director of the Cheltenham Task force in conjunction with the Leader of the Council to undertake the following tasks and to report progress to O&S in 12 months' time; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To proactively lobby the relevant parties for all improvements in Phase 1A and 1B as listed in the table at 5.1.3 of the task group report. • Being mindful of devolution, particularly the integration of transport, to continue dialogue with Gloucestershire County Council, Local Economic Partnership and others; in particular to pursue all possible opportunities to improve public transport links to/from Cheltenham Spa station. • Publicise Smartcard and PlusBus opportunities in the area. • In view of the fact that some funding levels and finalised proposals for all of the improvements to the station have not yet been announced, to keep O&S informed of any developments. 2. Note that whilst the service improvements announced by FGW are to be welcomed, it should be acknowledged, with concern, that a consequence of the increased services to London will be increased pressure on the rail network in the need to terminate additional trains. Thus Phase 2 will be even more necessary than it is a

present.

3. To note the other relevant matters raised;

- On the north/south route, though train services are fairly frequent, there is concern that lack of route capacity may stifle traffic, and hence modal shift to rail in the future, with too high a proportion of traffic going by road.
- The rolling stock on some local services, particularly operated by Arrive trains, if life-expired, and should be a factor when this franchise is renewed.
- The train service to Worcester remains poor and is not addressed by the recent proposals.
- The potential for future improvements through both electrification and re-signalling on the Bristol-Birmingham line is to be welcomed.

Financial implications	There are no financial implications to the council, arising from this report. Contact officer: Sarah Didcote, sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264125
Legal implications	There are no legal implications arising from this report. Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon, shirin.wotherspoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	No direct HR implications arising from this report. Contact officer: Julie McCarthy, Julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264355
Key risks	
Corporate and Community Plan implications	
Environmental and climate change implications	Improvements to the railway station, increasing the frequency of service and provision of a wider integrated transport network all support modal shift, which delivers benefits for the environment and climate change by contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions. However, in order to maximise the potential for modal shift, improvements need to be delivered as an integrated package, ie an increase in services should be linked to a high quality facility and easy transport links to and from the station to ensure a positive passenger experience. As the task group has highlighted, there are already existing schemes, notably the plus-bus scheme and the smartcard ticket which, if more effectively promoted, could also encourage modal shift.
Property/Asset Implications	

Report author	Contact officer: Saira Malin, saira.malin@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774937
Appendices	1. Task Group report (including appendices)
Background information	