

## **STOCKPORT STATIONS ALLIANCE**

### **Report of the Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive**

#### **1.0 Matter for Consideration**

- 1.1 The exploration of opportunities around 4 stations in Stockport as part of the Stockport Stations Alliance programme under One Public Estate (OPE) 6.
- 1.2 Members are requested to note the report and the Cabinet will be requested to agree to Stockport's continued involvement in the Stations Alliance proposals. These proposals are at an early stage, but it is important that each of the opportunities are explored in detail to maximise the benefit to the Council and residents.

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Council developed a bid which was successfully awarded OPE 6 funding in 2018, along with securing match funding from TfGM and Network Rail to develop a methodology to review the 19 Stockport Rail Stations and the surrounding land within which they reside, with the remit to assess the enormous potential to unlock land for housing, community uses, growth and wider development. This was brought forward through a partnership approach with London & Continental Railways (LCR) a government department of the Department for Transport, Network Rail (NR), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and GMCA known as 'The Alliance'.
- 2.2 In conjunction with CBRE, the Alliance conducted a comprehensive prioritisation review of all 19 stations in the Stockport Metropolitan area and determined that a small number were worthy of further detailed study as they demonstrated the potential for making best use of infrastructure assets, sustainable redevelopment opportunities including sustainable housing, commercial development and the potential for consolidation of public services facilities. These site proposals are collectively known as the Stockport Station Development Portfolio.
- 2.3 Since January 2020 the Alliance has been working to undertake further due diligence and feasibility at four stations alongside design work to establish viable propositions at each site. These four stations are Cheadle Hulme, Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Marple Rose Hill. We are now in a position where we believe there are viable concept developments to bring forward for two of the stations in the first phase of the portfolio.
- 2.4 There are a range of factors that the Council must consider in the next stage of analysis to assess whether these are suitable locations for redevelopment and to consider the risks of the proposals along with the associated opportunities to the local communities at each of the sites.

- 2.5 Initial discussions have been held with planning officers to understand the planning requirements in respect of the sites. These discussions are being used to inform the scheme development and will be further developed during pre-application discussions.
- 2.6 Part of the development option with partners is to assume no parking loss at these stations, but also to seek beneficial improvements at the stations for their users. The principles of the schemes focus on quality place making, including delivering against the Stockport Climate Action Now Strategy. New housing and facilities in locations close to public transport, offer an opportunity to create housing that will stimulate the communities that these stations serve.
- 2.7 The proposals will, in addition to assessing financial viability, give full consideration to sustainable transport options, housing needs, and improved local amenities, both in commercial and community assets, in District Centres. The proposed improvements to the stations will endorse their status within the community as an anchor asset, from which investment in the vital transport offer the deliver will continue to grow.

### **3.0 Next steps**

- 3.1 A major priority for the Council is to ensure that the proposed opportunities deliver the Borough Plan objectives for local residents. The principles of the outcomes of the schemes will be developed in consultation with local members to highlight the benefits to our communities and also work through any of the site constraints that must be considered thoroughly together. Local members will be briefed in the coming months once the plans are at a further advanced stage.
- 3.2 In order to mitigate risk and fully establish appropriate parameters around viable land acquisition prices, it is important to first establish the principles of the proposed land pool to give partners comfort.
- 3.3 In order to deliver the comprehensive benefits of the Portfolio, a degree of third party land will be needed. This land assembly exercise will give control to the public sector and be a necessary prerequisite before engaging formally with potential delivery partners.
- 3.4 It is important to the Alliance that mutually agreeable terms are reached with existing landowners and occupiers. This said, the current economic uncertainty in the emerging post Covid-19 world may mean that existing landowners could be receptive to a proposal that provides an injection of capital and enables a long-term operational solution for the local businesses.
- 3.5 To assist with approaches to third party landowners LCR require confirmation from the Council that they will commit to being a strategic partner in the proposals. At present it is not anticipated that the Council will acquire any of the land required as LCR have identified and allocated the necessary funds.

- 3.6 It is proposed that a joint land ownership vehicle may need to be created at some point which will involve all partners' landholdings. Full details will be provided for consideration and approval in due course.
- 3.7 It is prudent that of the 4 stations under detailed consideration, Cheadle Hulme and Hazel Grove are the most viable and the next stage will therefore concentrate on these with Bramhall and Marple Rose Hill being brought forward at a later date.

#### **4 Financial Information**

- 4.1 At present there is no financial commitment from the Council as all costs to date have been met by LCR and it is stressed that approval to continue with the proposals will not commit the Council to any financial outlay at this stage or to commit to disposal of any of the Council's landholdings. LCR will recoup their costs to date along with any land acquisition costs as a prior charge over any profits. LCR will not look to recoup any costs from either the Council or Network Rail.

#### **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

- 5.1 Whilst the initial proposals came from LCR as part of the OPE 6 programme, all partners have played a full part in the subsequent progress. At this stage it is now envisaged that the Council will continue its involvement as a strategic partner without commitment to any financial outlay.
- 5.2 The Scrutiny Committee is requested to comment on and note the report.
- 5.3 Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this report and:-
- Endorse the work carried out to date and confirm that the Council should continue to progress the strategic relationship with LCR, TfGM and Network Rail with regards potential redevelopment plans around Cheadle Hulme and Hazel Grove Stations;
  - Authorise the investigation of opportunities at the other Stockport stations;
  - Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive Place and to the Deputy Chief Executive CSS in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Resources and Commissioning, and the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration, to agree the terms of the strategic relationship with LCR, TfGM and Network Rail in order to provide the necessary commitment to LCR.

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