

DETAILED PROJECT APPRAISAL**APPRAISAL NO: H194****Name of the Scheme:** Didcot Parkway Station Interchange**Basis of Estimate:** Pre-tender cost estimate**Start Year:** 2011**1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

1. The objective of the project is to improve the attractiveness of public transport, and it will transform the layout to create a welcoming gateway to Didcot and Science Vale UK. This will include providing more space to accommodate new bus services and more cycles, improve safety and make travel by train and other modes sustainable and attractive for those living and working in and around Didcot.
2. The project will see significant changes to the existing forecourt, with the following positive benefits to users of the station:
 - Removal of vehicle, pedestrian and cycle conflicts and consequential major improvement in passenger safety and ease of accessibility;
 - Wider footways and clear walking routes;
 - A pedestrian piazza for improved safety and circulation;
 - Covered walkway from main car park, taxi rank and drop-off area;
 - More disabled parking;
 - More cycle parking;
 - Completion of Sustrans National Cycle Network route;
 - Additional bus stops with real-time bus information;
 - A larger taxi rank;
 - Designated drop-off and pick-up areas;
 - Short-stay 20 minute waiting bays;
 - Motorcycle parking;
 - Better provision for rail replacement buses;
 - Delivery and service vehicle bays;
 - Improved security with new lighting and CCTV;
 - Public realm improvements;
 - Environmental improvement through hard and soft landscaping, with shrubs and trees creating a welcoming appearance to the station;
 - Design allows for the future extension of car parking, including potential to deck some of Foxhall Road car park;
 - Passive provision for accessible pedestrian link from Foxhall Road (main) station car park;
 - New drainage system will resolve an on-site flooding problem.
3. The project will incorporate the “Brilliant Didcot” branding developed by South Oxfordshire District Council on some of the new signage.

2. NEED FOR PROJECT

4. Didcot Parkway is the second busiest station in Oxfordshire and is used by around 3 million people every year. The number of people using railways through the Thames Valley is predicted to increase considerably over the next 5-10 years as set out in Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy published in 2010. Plans for new East West Rail services from Didcot to Milton Keynes and Bedford will also generate new travel demand from the internationally important Science Vale UK area within the Oxford-Cambridge 'high-tech' arc.
5. The layout of the forecourt at Didcot Parkway creates various conflicts between the different users of the railway station. Buses, taxis, deliveries, cyclists and private cars all use the same area outside the station building. Buses and taxis setting down and picking up passengers and private cars heading for the two car parks at either side of the forecourt, as well as bringing people to and from the station. There is only a small area to wait and cars reverse into the path of incoming traffic.
6. Pedestrian routes to the station entrance are poor and some main routes have no defined footways. The lack of wide, step-free footways means that pedestrians are forced to share the road space with traffic to reach the station from the pedestrian crossing and the station car parks. The overall result is congestion and gridlock at busy times on a daily basis and this limits the potential to increase the use of sustainable public transport in the future as the resident and workforce population increases.
7. The station is also a transport hub for the town where users can interchange between local bus routes. With each transport mode jostling for the same limited space, this can delay bus services and can affect their attractiveness as an alternative to using the car.
8. There is no sense of arrival in Didcot with only a narrow paved area outside the station building for people to move around or congregate safely. The station is the main arrival point in Science Vale UK, an international centre for innovation and technology, and its four main areas – Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park Estate, Didcot and Grove, all have good transport links with the station.

3. CONSISTENCY WITH SERVICE STRATEGY

9. The need to promote and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport is an integral part in helping to achieve the four corporate objectives of:
 - (a) "*World Class Economy*" in the context of accessibility to new homes and employment within Science Vale UK by making public transport more attractive;
 - (b) "*Healthy & Thriving Communities*" by making Didcot a vibrant place to live and work with an emphasis on walking and cycling;

- (c) “*Environment & Climate Change*” by helping to reduce congestion and encourage longer-distance travel by train with a low rate of carbon emissions.
 - (d) “*Better Public Services*” by integrating supported bus services with train services and encouraging greater use of local bus services.
10. The project supports the E&E Business Strategy 2011-2015 and is compliant with the Highways and Transport Service Business Plan for the same period, where we aim to “*to be a leading transport authority...*”, “*...with a strong customer focus and high level of satisfaction*”.
11. Objective 8 of the Local Transport Plan states a need “*to develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport*” and contributes to and fits within the Premium Route Network Strategy for increasing bus reliability and patronage.

4. OTHER REASONABLE OPTIONS

12. Initial design work took place in 2001 and was reviewed as part of the Didcot Integrated Transport Strategy (*Phase 1 Final Report, Halcrow*) in March 2004. Eleven alternative proposals were considered by the strategy steering group before a preferred layout was agreed in December 2005. All the options were based on the objective of separating the conflicting modes of transport.
13. This preferred layout has been developed in greater detail, informed by site engineering surveys and studies and ongoing stakeholder consultation. A number of changes were made at the request of South Oxfordshire District Council, taxi operators and First Great Western, the station operator.
14. A Transport Assessment was carried out to support the planning application and this proved the need for new entrances and exits onto Station Road as the best means of managing traffic flow to and from the station.
15. A series of exhibitions have been held at the station since 2008 to show the public and station users what the redevelopment of the forecourt will achieve. These have been received very positively by all attendees.

5. LAND

16. The project is being built on land owned by Network Rail and it will transfer to them on completion. The County Council has an asset protection agreement in place with Network Rail to facilitate delivery of this project.
17. New drainage gullies will be installed along Station Road, requiring temporary traffic management. Discussions are ongoing within the Highways & Transport service regarding the potential to renew the existing carriageway along Station Road at the same time.
18. Upon completion of the project, Network Rail will dedicate some of their land as highway to ensure there is a coherent boundary between the

footway/cycleway and the station lease area. A land dedication agreement is currently being drawn up between the County Council and Network Rail to formalise this arrangement.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

19. The project will have positive environmental benefits as it seeks to reduce the amount of car traffic to the station in favour of more sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
20. In creating a modern high-quality interchange the project will remove some of the redundant buildings and give a sense of arrival and improve the overall appearance of this key gateway to Science Vale UK.
21. It is intended to recycle much of the material removed from the site, especially when installing the new surface water collection tanks, and to re-use this later in the project rather than bring in new material by road.
22. Some mature trees will be removed from the front of the station, but none of the trees are subject to a tree protection order and they will be replaced by a greater number of semi-mature trees and shrubs.
23. The project will provide a managed surface water drainage system that will ensure the risk of flooding on the highway and within the station is removed with the outfall to a local watercourse is controlled.
24. Ecology surveys have been carried out at regular intervals throughout development of the project and there are no protected species or resident wildlife.

7. TIMING/PHASING

25. The first stage of the contract, between May and August 2011, involves early contractor involvement where the contractor will engage with all stakeholders to put together their delivery programme, ensuring that the station remains operational throughout. This will require a phased approach. They will also contribute towards a communications strategy and obtain final technical approvals from Network Rail.
26. It is intended that the main construction should start in September 2011 and will take up to 18 months.

8. FINANCIAL AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS

27. This is a large and complex project estimated at a total capital cost of £6.690m. This includes £1.581m already spent on fees and consultation since 2005. This means that the approval sought in this report is £5,109,000 spread over four financial years between 2011/12 and 2015/16.

28. The funding package consists of an allocation within the Capital Programme that is mainly made up from section 106 developer funding but with some contributions from the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.
29. On 20th July 2010 Cabinet recommended that funding for this project should be 'released' from the moratorium on capital funding and this was endorsed by the Council on 27th July 2010.
30. Capital Investment Board on 6th December 2010 approved the conditional allocation of an additional £960,000 OCC funding to cover an increase in the estimated project cost between preliminary design and end of detailed design. This has now been met from unallocated section 106 monies that are held from the Didcot area, along with interest that will be accrued during the project timeline. However, it is anticipated that the cost of construction will come in under budget and the £550,000 contingency currently allowed for in the budget may not be needed.
31. As part of a joint funding package between the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, the County Council's Capital Steering Group on 21st December 2007 agreed to allocate £609,000 of capital funding to the project. A further £500,000 was allocated from the Transport "Preparation Pool" project development fund, therefore the total capital funding allocation from the County Council is £1,109,000. South Oxfordshire District Council committed £812,000 and this was approved by their Executive on 4th November 2010. A funding agreement is currently being prepared setting out the schedule of payments.
32. Under the Government's 'Partnership for Growth' initiative, South Oxfordshire District Council was successful in gaining New Growth Point status for Didcot in October 2006. This resulted in a total of £877,000 being allocated to this project which has contributed towards developing the project since 2008.
33. Project development has continued to the point of tender award and a pre-tender cost estimate and a breakdown of the project funding is given in the financial project appraisal.
34. Assuming Cabinet approves the recommendations in the main report, it is expected that delivery of this project will commence in June 2011, with construction activities getting underway in September 2011. It is expected that construction will take up to 18 months and the formal project close-down will be a further twelve months after that.
35. The County Council has two officers involved in this project. One acts as the Project Sponsor within Highways & Transport, Policy & Strategy and the other is within Highways & Transport, Delivery. Supervision of construction will be carried out by staff brought in from Atkins to undertake the Project Manager and Project Supervisor roles required under the NEC Engineering and Construction Contract. An allowance has been made for staffing costs within the financial project appraisal.

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May 2011

Financial Project Appraisal

Name of the Project: Didcot Parkway Station Interchange

Appraisal No: H194

Status: Pre-tender cost estimate

Date: May 2011

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Project Expenditure	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Main contract (stages 1 and 2)</i>		1,300	2,100	84			3,484
<i>Demolition</i>		43					43
<i>Site preparation works</i>		45					45
<i>Utilities (electricity, telecoms)</i>		12	21				33
<i>Electrical Supply</i>		6	60				66
<i>CCTV</i>		18	42				60
<i>Network Rail Fees</i>	80	96	65	6			247
<i>Designer Fees</i>	1,496	60	28	7			1,591
<i>Project Staff</i>		146	271	62	5		484
<i>Other Fees</i>		30	32	11			73
<i>Works Compound Tenancy</i>		3	5	1			9
<i>Planning Charge</i>	5						5
<i>Risk and Contingency¹</i>		-150	150		550		550
Total Estimated Payments	1,581	1,609	2,774	171	555		6,690

Project Funding	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Developer Funding</i>	615	427	2,199	101	550		3,892
<i>SCE Capital</i>	89	1,020					1,109
<i>Government Grant</i>	877						877
<i>South Oxfordshire District Council</i>		162	575	70	5		812
Total Financing	1,581	1,609	2,774	171	555		6,690

¹ Delivery risk adjustment made to Capital Programme to anticipate potential slippage. Now more in line with February 2011 Capital Programme.

Revenue Implications

Corporate Costs	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Capital Financing (Cost of Borrowing)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Service Implications	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Employees</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Running Costs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Income</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cost/(Savings) to Service							

Staffing	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E
<i>Additions/(Savings) resulting from the project</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0