

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	16 MARCH 2021	4
<b>SOUTH FYLDE LINE STUDY</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### SUMMARY

Funding has been secured to carry out a study and develop a Strategic Outline Business Case into the viability of creating a passing loop on the South Fylde Line to increase the capacity of the line from 1 to 2 trains per hour. The report outlines the proposed study and progress made to date.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Operational Management Committee are requested to:**

1. Support the study into the viability of creating a passing loop on the South Fylde Line and the creation of a Strategic Outline Business Case.
2. To recommend to the Finance and Democracy Committee a new fully funded addition to the Capital Programme in 2021/22 'South Fylde Line Study' to the sum of £70,000 funded from a grant of £50,000 from the Department for Transport and further funding of £16,000 from project partners, and the remaining £4,000 match funding from Fylde Council to be funded from the Capital Investment Reserve.
3. Subject to the approval from Finance and Democracy Committee as detailed above, to authorise expenditure of up to £70,000 following the required procurement of the consultants to undertake this study.

### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Full Council at its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 resolved:

1. That the council approves the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan receiving annual progress reports in accordance with the established performance policy framework; and
2. That the Budget Work Group be tasked to identify the priority actions of the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and to report back to Full Council for agreement.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

## REPORT

1. Within the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 one of the actions under the economy section is to 'Work in collaboration with partners to deliver 'a passing loop on the South Fylde railway line.'
2. Prior to the Beeching Review of railway lines in the 1960s the South Fylde line was double-tracked enabling trains to pass each other along the line. Following the review the line from Blackpool South Station to Kirkham and Wesham Station was reduced to a single track resulting in a maximum of one train per hour being able to use the line, limiting the potential capacity of the train services and restricting growth. When there are delays on the line services are unable to catch up resulting in poor service performance and an increased likelihood of cancellations.
3. In early 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) announced the Restoring Your Railway/Beeching Reversal ideas fund. The fund was established to looking at the viability of restoring lost railway lines to communities. DfT would fund 75% of costs, up to £50,000, of successful proposals to help fund transport and economic studies and create a business case. Future funding to develop projects would be subject to agreement of the business case. The Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) that would need to be produced would be the equivalent of a [Governance for Railway Investment Projects \(GRIP\) 3 study](#).
4. In the first round of funding a study to review the Fleetwood to Poulton line was successful in obtaining funding. This study is ongoing, due for completion in April 2021.
5. The fund required a Member of Parliament to sponsor the project and a group, such as a Local Authority, to act as a lead promotor. For the second round of funding Mark Menzies MP and Scott Benton MP submitted a joint bid to progress the idea of providing a passing loop on the South Fylde Railway Line to enable the capacity of the line to increase from one to two trains an hour. Fylde Council's Chief Executive was named as the Lead Promotor for the scheme meaning that Fylde Council will be responsible for financial management and overall oversight of the project. The application was successful and announced at the end of 2020.
6. A Project Working Group has been established to provide advice and assistance and oversee the progress of this study and the development of the SOBC and ensure it is produced by November 2021. The group includes representatives of the two MPs, Department for Transport, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Community Rail Lancashire, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council. A monthly update report is provided to DfT to update the Secretary of State for Transport on progress. This report is also shared with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Operational Management Committee.
7. The Project Working Group have concluded that the best way to proceed is to procure the services of two consultants. One would look at the capacity of the network to see whether 2 trains an hour could operate. A second consultant would gather a variety of evidence to support the proposals, carry out an assessment of alternative transport options, carry out stakeholder engagement, assess costs of implementing a scheme, carry out a cost benefit analysis and produce the SOBC.
8. Network Rail are best placed to carry out a capacity study of the line to assess whether it would be viable to operate 2 trains per hour within the wider timetable and that platform space can be provided at the already congested Preston Station, taking into account other potential changes to train services in the future. Network rail are currently developing a remit for this study and will provide a cost for this work. It is proposed that, assuming the quote provided is considered by the Project Working Group to be reasonable, the work will be direct awarded to Network Rail. Within Fylde Council's procurement rules, where engaging consultants for specialised needs, a direct award is possible when agreed between a Director and the Chief Executive.
9. The scope of work required by the second consultant is currently being agreed by the Project Working Group then the work will be tendered, either through The Chest or via a mini tender exercise through a Local Authority Framework.
10. The grant for this study is 75% of the total cost up to £50,000 with 25% match funding required.

11. To assist with match funding, Project Group members were asked for assistance in covering the match funding amount. Community Rail Lancashire have offered 10% of the total costs up to £10,000. It has been proposed that Fylde Council, Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council split the remaining match funding amount which would equate to 5% each of the total project cost. Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council have informally agreed to this.
12. To accept the grant and to continue with delivery of the project a grant offer letter must be signed by Fylde Council with DfT by the end of March 2021. Although the full costing for the study do not need to have been finalised by this point, agreements for match funding must be in place.
13. The Operational Management Committee are asked to support the study and to recommend to the Finance and Democracy Committee that an in-year addition to the capital budget for 2021/22 is made up to £70,000 including a contribution from Fylde Council's Capital Investment Reserve of £4,000. Subject to agreement with the Finance and Democracy Committee, the Operational Management Committee are asked to approve expenditure of the capital budget so that the relevant consultants can be appointed as soon as possible.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report proposes a recommendation to the Finance & Democracy Committee for approval of a fully funded capital scheme addition to the Capital Programme in 2021/22 'South Fylde Line Study' to the sum of £70,000 funded from a grant of £50,000 from the Department for Transport, £16,000 from project partners and the remaining £4,000 match funding from Fylde Council to be funded from the Capital Investment Reserve and subject to this approval, authorisation of expenditure up to £70,000 following the required procurement of the consultants to undertake this study.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		