

Transport Board

3rd July 2020

Restoring Your Railways Fund

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on SCR's bids to the Department for Transport's: Restoring Your Railways Fund

Thematic Priority

Secure investment in infrastructure where it will do most to support growth.

Recommendations

That members of the Transport Board:

- Note the update provided and proposed next steps (para 2.3-2.6) and agree to the progression of the Barrow Hill Line scheme and further investigation on the other schemes.

1. Introduction

1.1 In early February the Government launched its Restoring Your Railways Fund (sometimes referred to as the 'Beeching Reversal Fund') and invited expressions of interest for rail re-opening schemes. This would be for a share of the initial £500m made available to develop the business cases for successful schemes.

1.2 The funding is split in three ways to offer support to projects at different phases of development:

1) Ideas Fund: This will provide support to proposals to reinstate axed local services. These must be sponsored by MPs working with local authorities and community groups.

2) Accelerating existing proposals: As well as looking for new ideas, the £500 million fund will be used to help accelerate the development of closed lines and stations which are already in the process of being considered for restoration.

3) Proposals for new and restored stations: A new round of the New Stations Fund will support both the development of new stations and the restoration of old station sites.

The Ideas Fund is currently the most appropriate route for schemes in SCR to pursue scheme development opportunities.

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1 The SCR Integrated Rail Plan provides a clear strategic basis for the development of schemes in Sheffield City Region (SCR). Using this plan as a starting point, as well as a SCR Rail Reinstatement study commissioned in 2019, SCR worked with Local MPs and authorities to submit bids to the first round of the Ideas Fund in March for the following lines:
- Sheffield Victoria to Stocksbridge via Deepcar
 - Sheffield Victoria to Chesterfield via Barrow Hill
 - Barnsley to Wakefield via Royston
 - Doncaster to Knottingley / Leeds via Askern
- 2.2 At the end of May the Department for Transport announced the first shortlist of ten schemes across England to take forward out of the sixty bids received, following assessment by a panel of experts chaired by the Rail Minister. SCR has been successful in securing support to progress the Sheffield Victoria to Chesterfield via Barrow Hill line. This is a significant achievement, but only the start of the process.
- 2.3 The Department for Transport are now seeking to arrange feedback sessions for all four proposals. SCR has engaged with Department for Transport officials to arrange the feedback sessions and will coordinate with the relevant local MPs offices. The outcome of the sessions will provide a substantive way forward for all schemes. For the successful scheme SCR anticipate this to be in the form of the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case. For the remaining schemes we anticipate the need to resubmit the application with improvements to the submission.
- 2.4 SCR will continue to engage with the relevant local MPs for each scheme to coordinate next steps and provide advice. At this stage SCR propose to prioritise resources on the development of the Sheffield Victoria to Chesterfield via Barrow Hill scheme. This scheme was sponsored by Lee Rowley, MP for NE Derbyshire, and had the support of Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, NE Derbyshire and Chesterfield Councils. SCR will be working closely with those partners in taking the scheme forward.
- 2.5 SCR also submitted a bid to the second round of the Ideas Fund in June for a new Waverley Station on the Sheffield-Lincoln Line. This proposal could be taken forward as part of the Barrow Hill Line scheme as trains from that line could serve it, or as a standalone project.
- 2.6 The Board will be provided with an update on the next steps for all schemes in SCR following the feedback session with the Department for Transport. This further update is likely to be in July. General information for the fund can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/restoring-your-railway-fund>

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 **Do more:** SCR and partners could invest additional funding and resources to accelerate the development of all of the proposed lines in parallel. This approach would help to ensure there is a strong pipeline of rail schemes, supported by local MPs. This option is not currently being progressed as current team resources and budget are allocated to higher priority activities, both in Rail and across transport. If scheme promoters intend to continue to develop a proposal, SCR can provide advice, but do not propose to provide resources or development funding at this stage.
- 3.2 **Delay:** SCR and partners could pause participation in the Restoring Your Railway Fund to focus on other activities. This could result in the loss of DfT funding to the progress the

Barrow Hill Line scheme and would be a missed opportunity and a wasted effort and costs devoted to it so far.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The DfT will provide 75% of the business case development costs up to a maximum of £50,000. This could mean that SCR and other partners will need to provide some match funding to progress the scheme through the business case process.

4.2 Legal

The recommendation of this paper does not have Legal implications.

4.3 Risk Management

The recommendation of this paper is low risk and describes an established Government funding approach.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The recommendation of this paper does not have a equality, diversity and social inclusion impact.

5. Communications

- 5.1** Outward communication is not required at this stage. Consideration of communication and community engagement will be developed once the requirements for the next stages of the business case process are understood. The sponsoring MP has issued a press release and done some social media promotion of the Barrow Hill Line scheme success.

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 Appendix A - SCR bid for Barrow Hill Line

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: n/a