

# North-West Leeds Growth Hub Connectivity – amendment to existing Funding Agreement with WYCA

Date: 20 March 2024

Report of: Principal Transport Planner

Report to: Chief Officer Highways and Transportation

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

The North-West Leeds Growth Hub Connectivity project forms part of the West Yorkshire Transport Fund (WYTF) programme and looks to improve connections by sustainable transport modes, to and between, the proposed North-West Leeds Employment Hub, Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA) and the proposed LBA Parkway Rail Station.

Following approval of further development funding from within the existing WYTF allocation, the purpose of this report is to seek approval to amend the existing Funding Agreement with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) accordingly.

## Recommendations

The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation is recommended to:

- a) Agree to enter into a Deed of Variation (DoV) to amend the existing funding agreement with WYCA, and instruct the City Solicitor to negotiate and agree the DoV.

## What is this report about?

- 1 The North-West Leeds Growth Hub Connectivity project forms part of the West Yorkshire Transport Fund (WYTF) programme and looks to improve connections by sustainable transport modes, to and between, the proposed North-West Leeds Employment Hub, Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA) and the proposed LBA Parkway Rail Station. The project also seeks to prompt a step change in modal shift within the vicinity of these developments, and to create greater connectivity between the local communities and employment, leisure and educational opportunities.
- 2 A Change Request was approved by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in July 2023, giving approval to draw down a further £508,000 to support the project through to Outline

Business Case (OBC) submission. This has prompted the need for this report to give approval to enter into a Deed of Variation to amend the existing Funding Agreement with WYCA.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 3 The additional funding will enable the project to progress to OBC submission. Subject to further approvals via WYCA's Appraisal Framework and funding availability, elements of the project will then be taken forward to Full Business Case (FBC) development and delivery, providing improvements to connectivity, provision by public transport and active travel modes, and helping to unlock the economic benefits of the NWLEH. Approval to amend the existing Funding Agreement will ensure future grant claims can be made.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 4 Inclusive Growth and Health and Wellbeing are at the forefront of the NW Leeds Growth Hub Connectivity proposals, as the project seeks:
  - i. to provide improved connectivity and access for local residents and communities across the city region to employment and training opportunities;
  - ii. to unlock economic potential of the allocated North West Leeds Employment Hub site - supporting delivery of this site, connectivity and access via sustainable and affordable transport modes.
- 5 The additional development funding will enable conclusion of the OBC in a timely manner. The proposals will deliver benefits to public transport and active travel modes, improving reliability and accessibility. This will facilitate a modal shift away from private motor vehicles, helping to reduce emissions, improve local air quality and encourage active travel (with associated potential health benefits).
- 6 During the construction phases of this project there will be some unavoidable negative effects, such as embedded carbon involved with materials, construction traffic etc. LCC will work with the Contractor to explore opportunities to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Council's climate emergency targets and will advise on this and the details of any measures they take to minimise carbon emissions, including effectively managing waste and transporting plant and goods through recycling of materials.
- 7 Carbon:
  - i. The focus of the current connectivity work is on enabling and promoting public transport, walking and cycling and on initiating a step change in mode shift for trips to/from the proposed employment hub and the airport, and within the general vicinity. Through supporting connectivity to the LBA Parkway station, this project has the potential to reduce private vehicle kilometres for trips to Leeds and Harrogate and beyond.
  - ii. Consideration of carbon impact is embedded in the appraisal framework being used to inform the optioneering process. In line with the WYCA approvals process, carbon impact assessment and mitigation will be integral to the scheme and business case development.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Otley & Yeadon, Horsforth

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

8 Public consultation and stakeholder engagement took place between November 2022 and January 2023 around the 'early phase' of proposals that had been identified which specifically supports the development of the Parkway Station and provides initial access to the proposed NWLEH.

Proposals in the 'early' phases include:

- Widening of Scotland Lane to accommodate shuttle bus services and segregated active travel provision between the airport and proposed Parkway Station and employment hub;
- New roundabout junction and access road stub to provide access into the proposed employment hub, from Whitehouse Lane;
- New high quality active travel provision along Whitehouse Lane;
- Minor changes to the junction between Whitehouse Lane and Scotland Lane.

9. Constructive and targeted engagement with key stakeholders has been undertaken to inform the development of scheme proposals. This has included a series of briefings, workshops and meetings including with local ward councillors, local cycle forum, bus operators, accessibility groups and local transport groups.

10. A briefing on the scheme was given to the members of the Access and Useability Group (AUAG) in advance of the public consultation, to help ensure they were able to review the proposals and feedback.

11. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. This shows the scheme proposals have neutral or positive impacts for people with protected characteristics. A copy of this is appended to the Report at Appendix 1.

12. Further stakeholder engagement will be undertaken as part of the FBC process.

## What are the resource implications?

13. The development funding is drawn down from an existing allocation from the WYTF. There will be no direct impact on LCC resources or value for money for completion of OBC.

14. The Deed of Variation ensures resource is in place to enable completion of the OBC and design work in a timely manner. This mitigates the risk that the programme to OBC submission and beyond will be delayed.

## What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

15. The risk register for the connectivity project will continue to be monitored and updated throughout the lifecycle of the project to include risk mitigation with owners clearly identified.

16. The additional development funding will ensure resource is in place to enable completion of the OBC and design work in a timely manner. The amended Funding Agreement will ensure expenditure can be claimed against the WYTF allocation.

### **What are the legal implications?**

17. An existing Funding Agreement is in place that regulates the provision of the grant funding. A Deed of Variation will therefore be required to the Funding Agreement to increase the value of the existing Agreement to enable subsequent grant funding claims to be paid. The Deed will be progressed accordingly to completion.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **What other options were considered?**

18. If this decision is not approved, there is a risk that the OBC cannot be completed or not completed to an acceptable standard. The project would be unlikely to progress as no alternative funding source is currently available.

#### **How will success be measured?**

19. Directly in terms of this decision, the anticipated outcome will be the successful completion and submission of the OBC. The success of the project will be measured against Key Performance Indicators.

#### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

20. The OBC is due to be submitted to WYCA in summer 2024. Subject to approvals and funding availability, it is anticipated that the first phase can be delivered 2025/26.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – EDCI Screening Report
- Appendix 2 – NW Leeds Growth Hub Connectivity Early Phases proposals and scheme extent

### **Background papers**

- None