

WHITTLESEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the additional meeting of Whittlesey Town Council on Tuesday 22nd August 2023 at 10.00am at Peel House, 8 Queen Street, Whittlesey PE7 1YL.

Present: Cllrs Mayor, Black, Boden, Nawaz, Wainwright, Wicks, Dorling (left at 10.30), Gerstner

Officer in Attendance: Sue Piergianni – Town Clerk & RFO

Recording: The recording is made as an aide memoir for the Clerk

F126/2023 To receive apologies from absent members and the reason for the apology.

Cllr Arman, Laws, Mockett, Sennitt-Clough, Cllr Dickinson was not present, and no apologies were received.

F127/2023. To receive members' declarations of disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items discussed later in the agenda.

There were no member declarations.

F128/2023 Introductions – Cllr Mrs Kay Mayor

Cllr Mayor asked everyone to introduce themselves. The Councillors are listed above, additionally in attendance was:

Wendy Otter - Transport Development Manager – Fenland District Council.

Alan Neville – Stakeholder Community and Customer Engagement Manager - Network Rail.

Martin Seiffarth – Public Affairs Manager - Network Rail.

Chris Seaton – Portfolio Holder for Transport and Infrastructure – Fenland District Council, Chair of Station Project Board, Chair of Hereward Community Partnership.

F129/2023 Structure and roles of the railway industry – who is who in the railways, responsibilities, and specific roles of (Network Rail, Greater Anglia, Hereward Community Rail Partnership, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Great British Railways – Wendy Otter – Transport and Development Manager – Fenland District Council.

After each presentation there will be 15 minutes set aside for Councillors to ask questions.

At the present time there are many different components to the railway industry and lots of inter connections between all bodies. It is a complex industry. Government are working towards a new approach that is intended to simplify the current structure. Appendix one is the presentation from Wendy Otter and gives all details.

Cllr Gerstner asked for confirmation that 'Great British Railways' (GBR) will be the new name for Network Rail, Ms Otter confirmed that Network Rail's main functions will be part of GBR, and the transition team are working in parallel on this change. GBR will be the main body for railways in future. Much of the functionality of all the other organisations will be carried out by GBR which will be simpler. There is no date at present for GBR being fully established as an organisation as this is still waiting for government legislation.

Cllr Nawaz – How can Whittlesey ensure its needs are met and they have input into changes and is there a mechanism in place. Ms Otter advised she will be covering this later the agenda.

F130/2023 – Hereward CRP Presentation – Covered under Ms Otter Presentation attached.

Ms Otter, through her presentation slides set out a detailed timeline and history of all the work undertaken in respect of Whittlesea Station over the last 10 – 15 years. This presentation informs Councillors about the extensive work completed so far and includes the following:

- Station Masterplan (adopted 2013)
- Progress on the Masterplan – slide platform lengthening and pedestrian bridge. Grip3a is the process used to delivery their projects,
- Key issues associated with the Masterplan delivery and the related feasibility study work.
- CRP engagement with the community and stakeholders – ways WTC and others can get involved.

Ms Otter confirmed that feasibility study work shows you cannot integrate full size buses into the station layout. Due to the size of the vehicles, they are unable to turn round at the end near Coveva (Frogchem). County Council Highways also have concerns relating to safety issues with vehicles exiting the station into Station Road due to the proximity of the railway level crossing and gates.

Feasibility study work has considered moving the entrance further up Station Road currently where the overgrown space is. This would give greater visibility and helps to address several of the safety issues. This study work and possible station layout also includes the ability for buses to safely enter the station and turn round. Additionally, there is room to fit the platform lengthening and pedestrian bridge within this design. There are however considerable costs associated with this design along with biodiversity assessments, the moving of protected species and the creation elsewhere of high-quality wet woodland.

Selective door opening prevents people stepping out of the train onto the track.

Cllr Mayor thanked Mrs Otter for her hard work and presentation.

Cllr Boden – Questioned the projected passenger numbers, we must show value for money. The projected passenger numbers for the mid 2040's is an underestimate of what they should be and are significantly lower than expected and could this be looked again to try and increase the figures. Ms Otter advised the numbers using the trains now are the same as pre covid. The numbers will be looked at again as part of the process, as we factor in all the development that has happened in Whittlesey. The outline business case when taken forward will have substantially higher figures, the existing figures still show this is a high value scheme.

Cllr Wicks – The concept of a standard bus using the station. Could other options be considered? Could reevaluate what we want from the station and how it will be provided.

Cllr Black – More cars will move from town to the railway station. They will need more care parking at the station. Also, if there is a bus company going to deliver the service. Has any bus company come forward to offer this service. Mrs Otter advised we need to reevaluate the work that has been done before as we have never got to the point of delivering the masterplan. There have been proposals for bus services linked the station to the town centre linked to proposed developments, but it has not been possible to bring these forward to date.

Cllr Gerstner – Will the pedestrian bridge be stepped or have disabled access. Ms Otter confirmed it will have to be disabled compliant. Is the bushland owned by Network Rail? Ms Otter advised not all is owned by Network Rail and there are protected species present.

Cllr Boden – Many people drive to March or Peterborough as the rail service is better, however the parking cost is high. It would be a great retrograde step if there were any car park charges within Whittlesey Station and it would push people onto the residential roads. We are currently undertaking a bus review, none of which will have any impact on the railway station in Whittlesey, this set of reviews are highly limited in respect of change, more importantly we have the opportunity for buses to provide the service at Whittlesey Station if we get the infrastructure right.

Cllr Nawaz – Has to drive to Peterborough to collect family members due to the lack of service. The more facility with more frequent services means more passengers, therefore he agrees the figures quoted could be construed as very conservative. Cllr Nawaz asked for the split on the 9.5m funding that had been given by the CPCA. Ms Otter advised approximately 2m for March station, 1.1m for Manea Station and the remainder was for Whittlesey station. We are in a position where there are two phases of the project for Whittlesey, with most of the funding being linked to the platform lengthening and pedestrian bridge. It was decided this is going to be phase 2 which has not come forward yet due to the level of service stopping at Whittlesey Station and the Ely junction project, likewise we have not been able to bring forward some of the other works, due to highways, the level crossing and biodiversity etc. Although the funding was allocated at that time the bulk of the funding was for the second phase of the project. Cllr Nawaz asked if the funding is still ring fenced for the project, Ms Otter advised the funding is CPCA funding and therefore she cannot speak specifically about all the details. Because the platform lengthening and the pedestrian bridge were phase 2 projects and clearly would not be delivery in the very short term, her understanding is they would need to go through a process to rebid for the funding, that said the CPCA have continue to say the delivery of the Fenland Station projects are still apriority for them. The 500k for the Outline Business Case has not been spent, this is the next stage and would look at more detail and what could be achievable. The funding for this phase also still needs to be found. The presentation by Ms Otter included information about how Whittlesey can engage with the Community Rail Partnership and the railway industry. The need for continued and ongoing partnership working was discussed, along with the need for one strong and continued voice to press for change and improvements. Cllr Nawaz confirmed that the presentation did answer his question from earlier in the meeting.

11:30 Cllr Mayor suspended standing orders to allow members of the public to ask questions.

Mrs Christine Terry – As a regular user of the train in both directions, on platform one there is a steep slope then a gate she finds these two things very awkward. Mrs Terry advised occasionally there are bus replacement services at the station, where do they turn at the present. Mr Neville advised the buses do not go into the station but pick up off the main street, this is highlighted on the railway information posters. With regards to the slope etc, this will be looked at within the proposals of all the changes. A member of the public advised they turn round on the East side of the station where the grassed area is.

Mr Robert Windle – Asked if we must spend 500k to get consultants to bid for the funding again, plus the additional 60K that has already been spent on the location research. Ms Otter confirmed that is the case.

Mr Robert Boddington – Historically, the station had goods yards south and north, which is now the wet woodland. One way to claw back any land would be to purchase the business as the end of the platform.

Mr Lloyd Davis – Advised the were the case studies about moving the station but they were not cost effective, were they base on a business model. As a regular rail user who does not drive, he made comment that on platform 1 a ticket machine has been installed, however there is no protection and with the Fen winds, he has lost his tickets when the wind has taken them. Perhaps there should be a shelter around the machine. The pedestrian gate is always locked presumably for safety, he has witnessed people crossing with pushchairs, wheelchairs having to go over the main lines. Could this be look at as well.

Geoff Howes – Station Adopter – Great lack of signage telling you which platform you should be on for which direction. Greater Anglia trains all stop, the cross-country trains, three stop in one direction and two stop in one direction.

F131/2023 – Greater Anglia Presentation.

Mr Neville thanked Mr Howes for all his work at the station, it is not just plants and flowers etc, he does many other things at the station and deals with many issues including removal of graffiti.

Greater Anglia is one of the companies serving this line, which has three train operators and is also a main freight line. It is 10 mins on the train to Peterborough City Centre and around 50 minutes to Cambridge without a change of train.

Greater Anglia were in a railway franchise, as part of the move towards railway contracts they are now answerable to the Department for Transport, they are working on an annual business plan. The current train service is two hourly service, they want to run an hourly service, the new trains with sliding step, which assists with disabled and pushchair access and is much more accessible for all.

The line through Whittlesey is an exceedingly busy arterial route, with GA trains slotted in. The timetable is one that has been agreed by the Department of Transport and Network Rail.

Greater Anglia want to encourage people to travel by train, less people in their cars.

Young people are turning to rail, ticketing easy, commuting is coming back slowly, and they are 85/90% of where they were before the pandemic, leisure has bounced back extremely well -post pandemic. Commuting is recovering but still lower than before the pandemic.

- GA role as an organisation and the station asset owner -
- Processes and Procedures – They are covered by SQR (Service Quality Regime), they expect the highest standards, they do not want litter, graffiti and they have auditors constantly checking the stations and reporting back. They also have area surveyors monitoring all the stations. People often ask why there are just plastic bags for the rubbish and not metal bins, this is for security purposes and is a national requirement it is not something the train companies can change.
- More passenger services for Whittlesey Station – he cannot speak for East Midlands and Cross Country the two other operators; however, they lease enough trains to have a one hourly service. If they could operate the new service, they would be able to increase the footfall.

Cllr Wicks – Cycle security at the station needs improving.

Cllr Boden – No direct GA trains to Cambridge. When will the trains stop every hour. Will it have to wait until the Ely North junction is finished. What is the trigger which will allow for hourly services to Whittlesey? Alan advises they will look at the weekends to see if they can add additional services as there are less freight trains on the route, it is easier at weekends as they are less trains on the route, he cannot say it will be this decade that we see the conclusion of Ely North.

F132/2023 – Network Rail Presentation - Martin Seiffarth

- Ely Area Capacity Enhancements
They do not run any of the services, but they give train companies the paths they need to run the trains. Ely junction can run 6.5 trains across this network due to the trains its carry's they are at an advanced enhancement stage of the project, this will allow ten trains per hour providing the train companies have the trains. This is a very busy freight route. They are still waiting for confirmation the project can go ahead.
- Level crossings including Whittlesea Station – if no change at Ely, there will be little to the crossing at Whittlesey. This was scoped to change this to fully automated then rescoped. If a full barrier crossing is permitted this will be a long plan.
- Freight – they do not run all the time, but as the paths are in place this cannot be changed.

Cllr Boden - How safe is this that we get the train paths for the hourly service if the Ely north goes ahead, of would it just go to freight, Mr Seiffarth advised there is no guarantee. One train path for

the hourly service stopping at Whittlesea Station has though been included within the feasibility planning for the project.

Cllr Nawaz – Is there any plan to run trains directly from Whittlesey to London? Mr Neville advised it is not possible at this time. A Metro service has been discussed, however it is down to the line capacity, as this is a main arterial line for freight.

Cllr Gerstner – A signalling update was due on 23rd October, Mr Seiffarth was not familiar with this and would investigate and get back to us.

Cllr Wainwright – Would automatic barriers mean more down time? Mr Neville confirmed it would be longer than using a manual operative.

Mr Robert Windle - hourly trains would be great, but what time would they run to in the evening, could this be considered.

Questions raised – by Cllr Sennitt-Clough prior to the meeting were answered during the presentations.

Cllr Seaton thanked all the presenters for their input this morning.

Nine members of the were public present.

Meeting closed: 12:42



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Cllr Mrs Kay Mayor
Chairman
Whittlesey Town Council



Whittlesey Town Council

22 August 2023

Railways Meeting





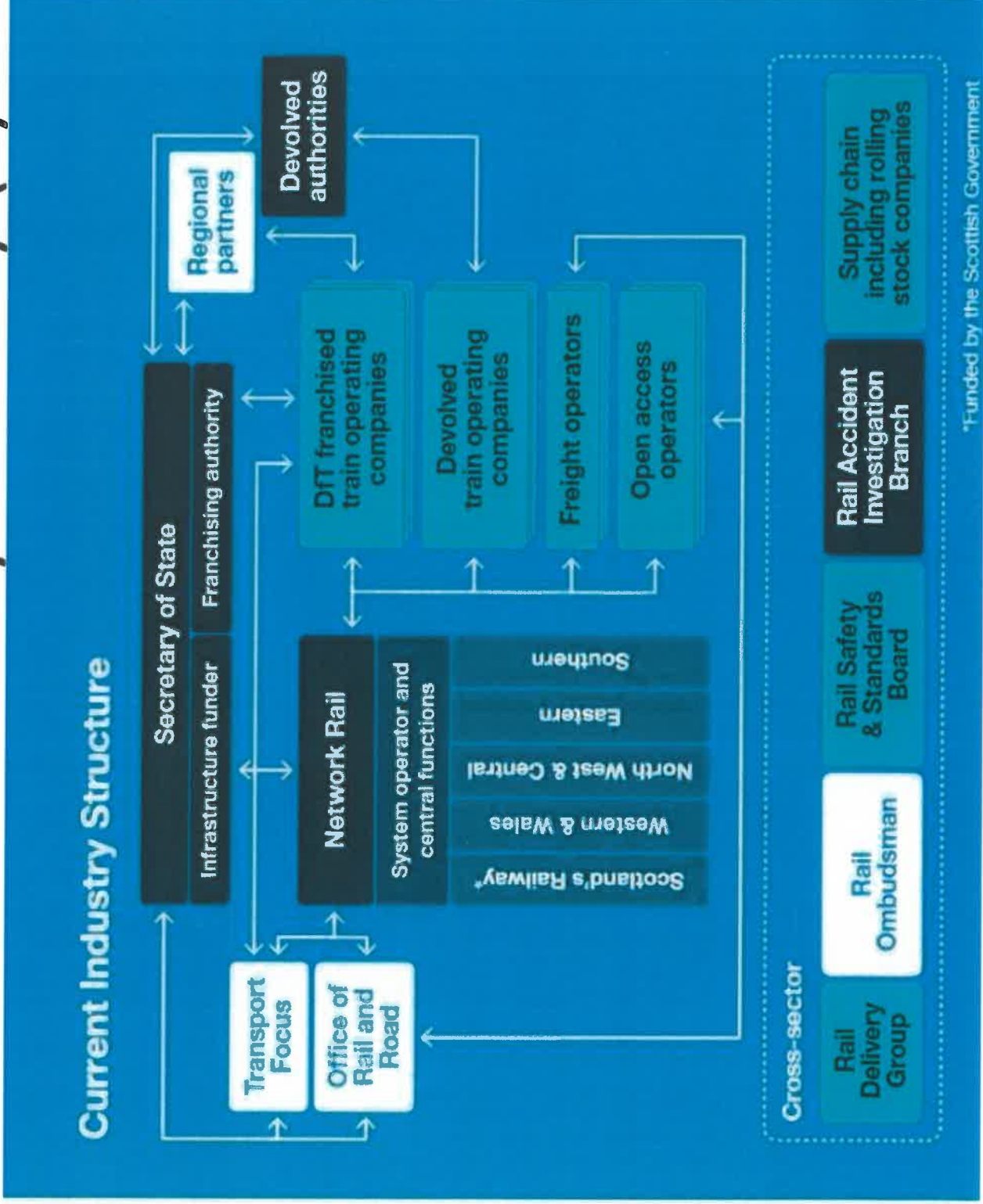
Whittlesey Town Council

22 August 2023

Structure and role of the railways

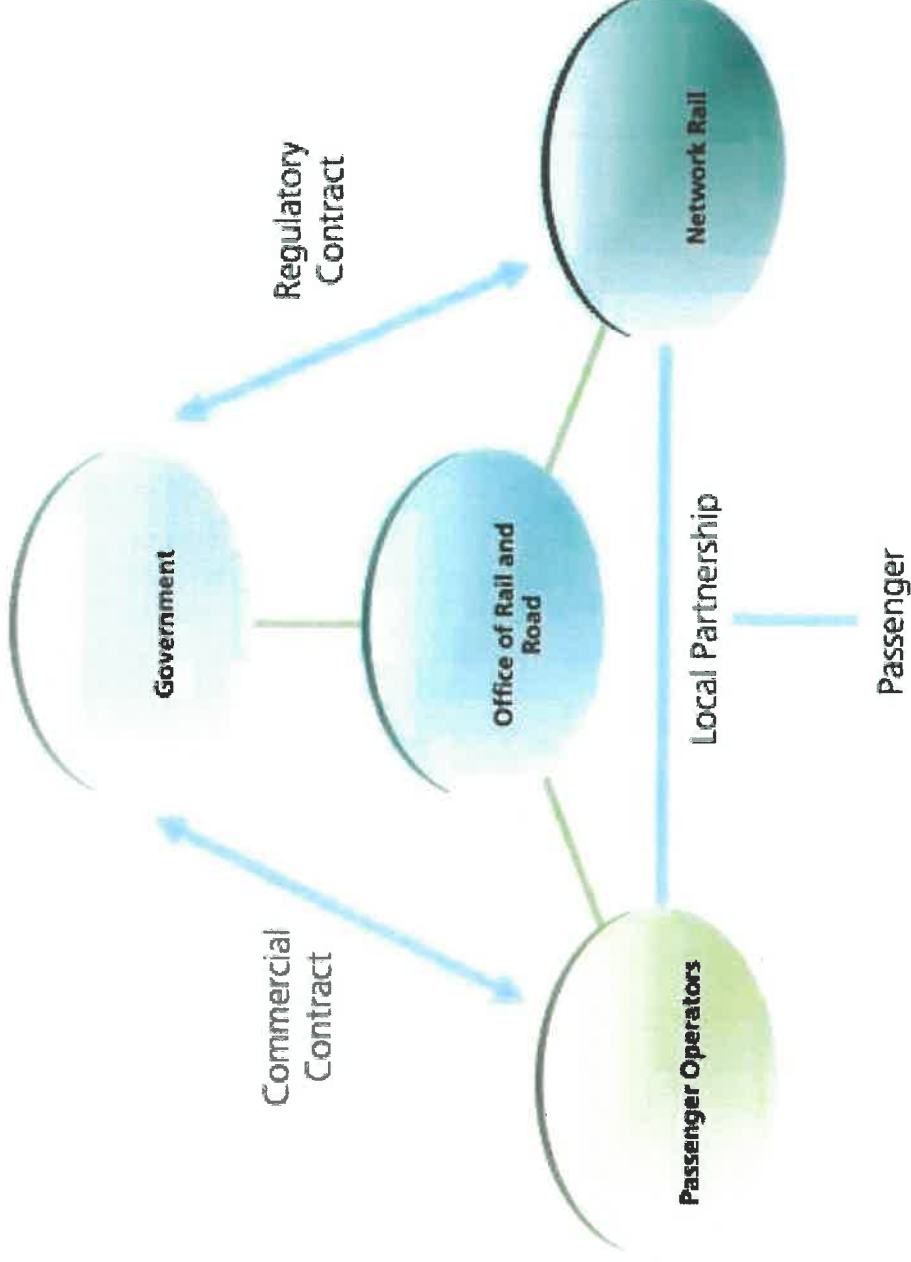


Structure and Role of the railway Industry (1)



*Funded by the Scottish Government

Structure and Role of the Railway Industry (2)



Structure & Role of the Railway Industry (2)



Responsibility and accountability for the running of the railway is split between different bodies, often operating with different incentives.

- Railway infrastructure - owned, maintained and operated by Network Rail, a publicly-owned company. E.g. track, signals, bridges etc
- Passenger services - run by privately-owned train operating companies (TOCs). Train operators have contracts with Government to operate on specific routes and identified geographical areas



Structure & Role of the Railway Industry (3)



- trains (or rolling stock) – these are owned by private rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs) and leased to the TOCs.
- most railway stations - while owned by Network Rail, are leased to train operators, except for the main passenger terminals which Network Rail runs itself.



Structure and Role Time for Change?(1)



Williams Rail Review

- Established September 2018
- Independent Chair to lead the review – Keith Williams
- Purpose - to look at the structure of the whole rail industry and the way passenger rail services are delivered
- Evidence papers were produced between February and May 2019
- Call for Evidence closed May 2019

Structure and Role

Time for Change? (2)



Williams-Shapps Rail Review

- May 2021 – Publication of the Williams-Shapps Rail Review White Paper
- Government 30-year plan for the future of the railways
- Bring the railway together through the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR).
- Private sector role - GBR will contract private partners to operate the trains to the timetable it sets. Contracts to run high-quality services and increase passenger demand.

Structure and Role Great British Railways (GBR)



- Deliver the government's priorities for rail
- Develop a 30-year strategy and five-year business plans
- Manage the railway budget
- Be responsible for safe and efficient operations
- Be accountable for the passenger offer
- Own stations and infrastructure
- Plan access in the public interest, consistent with Secretary of State guidance
- Support the growth of rail freight market and cross-regional services
- Empower its regional divisions and their local operational teams to make decisions

Structure and Role

Time for Change? (3)



- October 2021 – Establishment of the Great British Railway Transition Team - responsible for driving forward reforms and setting up GBR. Initial focus on revenue recovery efforts post-pandemic including establishing 'a strategic freight unit' to boost the sector.
- June – August 2022 - Williams Shapps Plan for Rail – Consultation on legislation to implement rail transformation. Seeking views on proposals ahead of introducing legislation that will support delivery of the railway transformation.
- March 2023 – GBR headquarters will be in Derby



Whittlesey Town Council

22 August 2023

Hereward Community Rail Partnership



Hereward

Community Rail Partnership (HCRP)



HEREWARD

Community Rail Partnership

Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011 – 2031 adopted April 2012

- 3 Priorities:
- More Community Involvement
 - Better Stations
 - Railway Service Improvements

Hereward Community Rail Partnership



- More Community Involvement – HCRP - established October 2012. Greater involvement of the community in the railways
- Better Stations – investment in stations and plans for improvements. Development of masterplans for each station. HCRP support to ensure buy in to station masterplan proposals

Whittlesea Station Masterplan

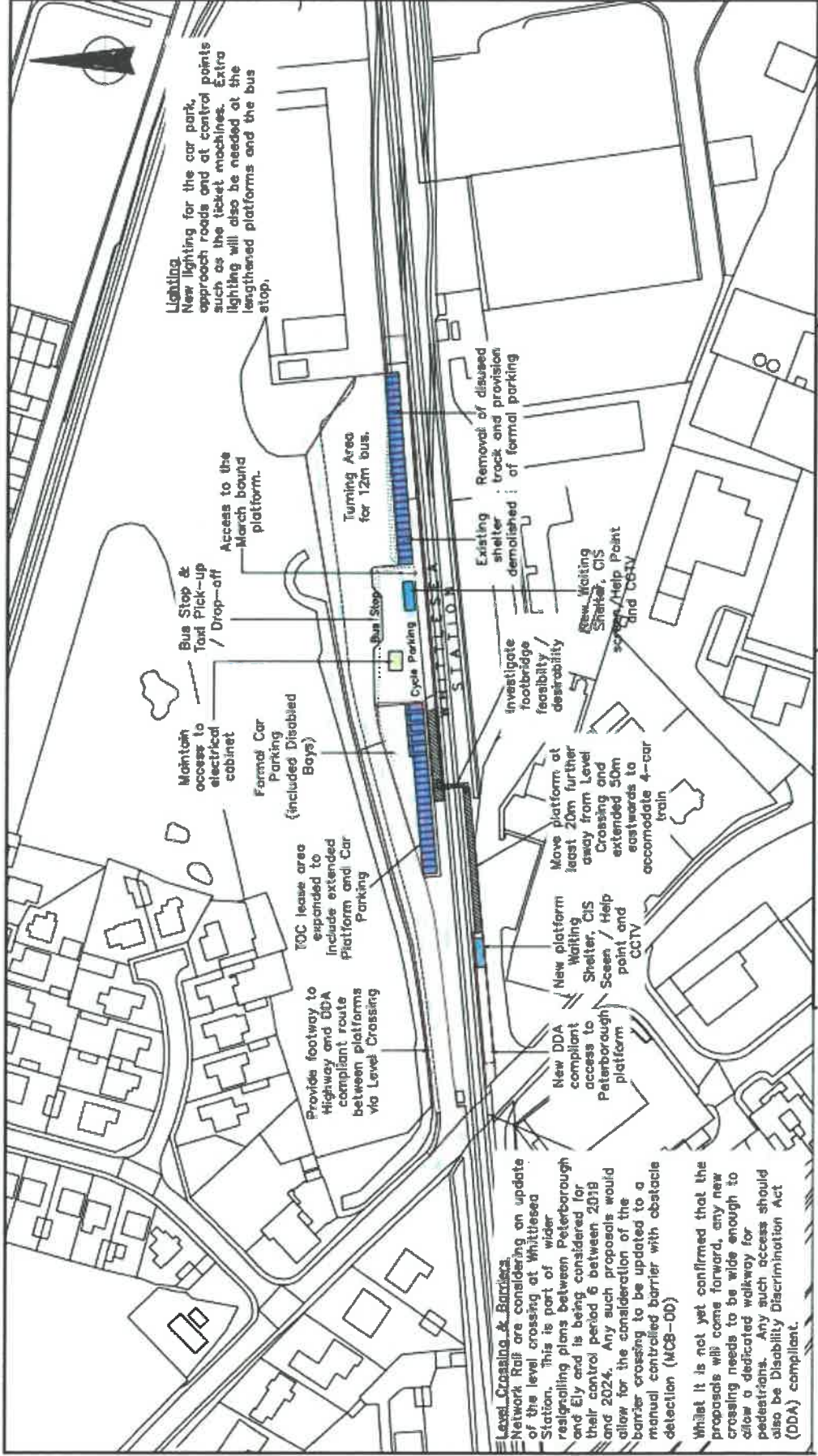


HEREWARD
Community Rail Partnership

- 2011 & 2012 – development work and review of previous public feedback. This led to a list of schemes for a Whittlesea Station Masterplan
- 2012 – Public consultation on the draft masterplan
- 2013 – Masterplan adoption



Whittlesey Station Masterplan



Level Crossing & Barriers.
Network Rail are considering an update of the level crossing at Whittlesey Station. This is part of wider resignalling plans between Peterborough and Ely and is being considered for their control period 6 between 2019 and 2024. Any such proposals would allow for the consideration of the barrier crossing to be updated to a manual controlled barrier with obstacle detection (MCS-00)

Whilst it is not yet confirmed that the proposals will come forward, any new crossing needs to be wide enough to allow a dedicated walkway for pedestrians. Any such access should also be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.



Whittlesea Station Masterplan



Progress (1)

HEREWARD
Community Rail Partnership

- GA Franchise – information screens, ticket machine, help point, cycle parking and ticket machine
- Platform 2 to Station Road – initial solar lighting followed by station electricity upgrade allowing new lighting
- Second ticket machine (platform 1)
- New waiting shelters

Whittlesea Stn Masterplan Progress (2)

Platform Lengthening & Pedestrian Bridge



Pre-feasibility study (2015) - Arup

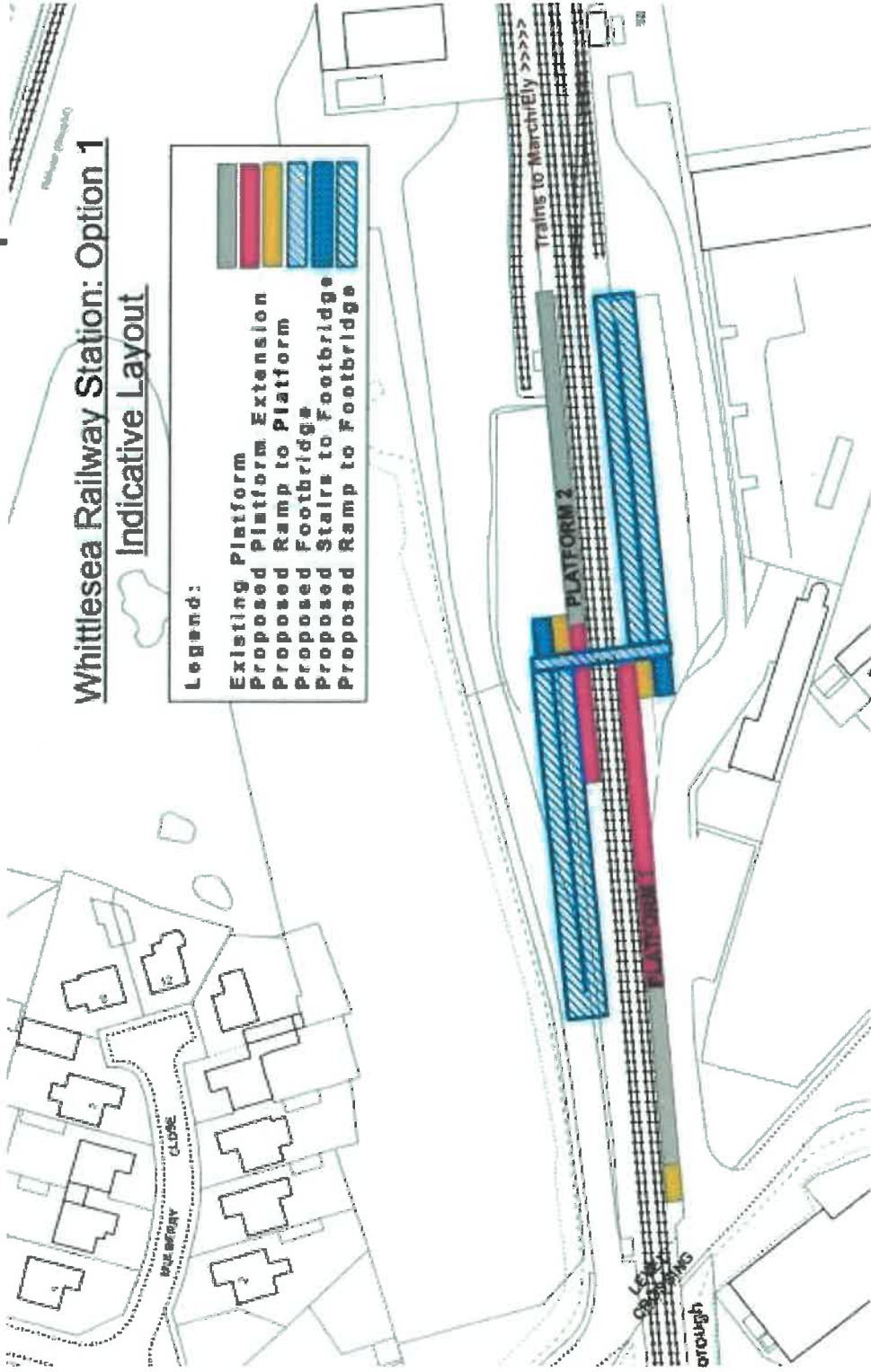
- Initial concepts
- Confirmation that the projects were achievable

Feasibility study (2017) – Network Rail GRIP3A study

- A range of concept designs and technical work
- Key issues with to address for each design
- Public consultation

Whittlesey Station Masterplan

GRIP 3A Consultation Option



Whittlesea Station Masterplan



Progress (3)

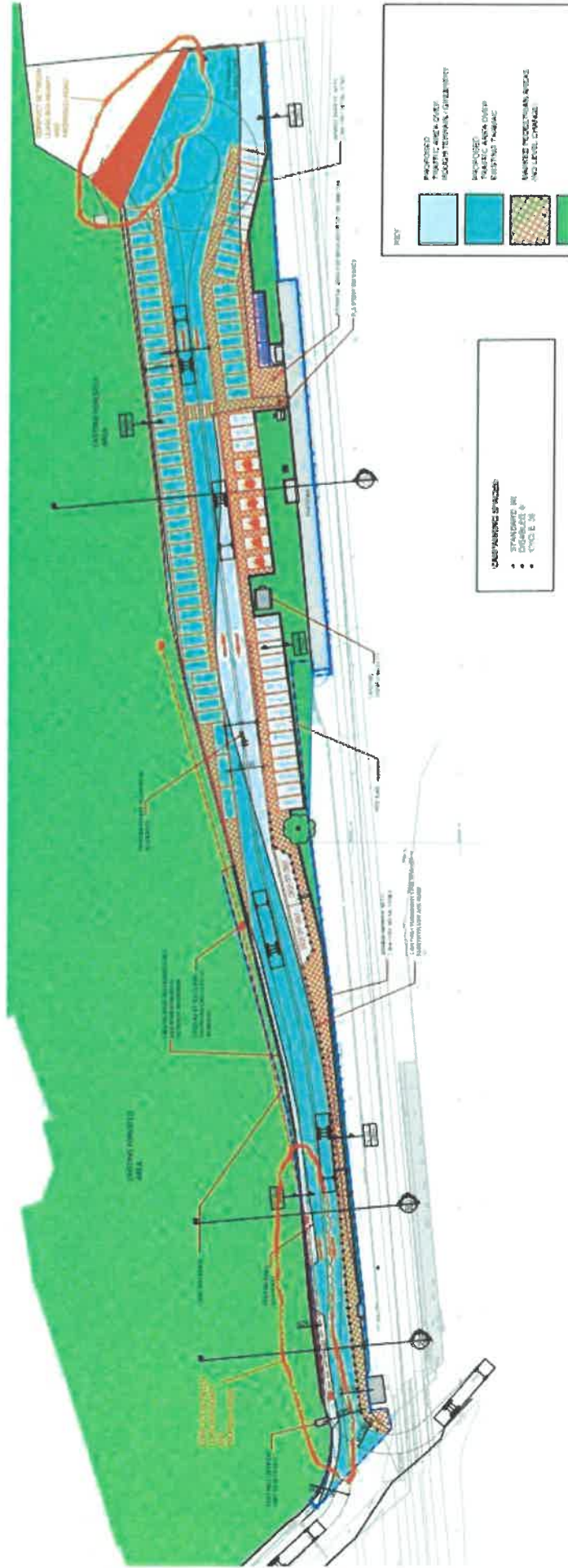
HEREWARD
Community Rail Partnership

Fenland Stations Regeneration (CPCA) 2018 onwards

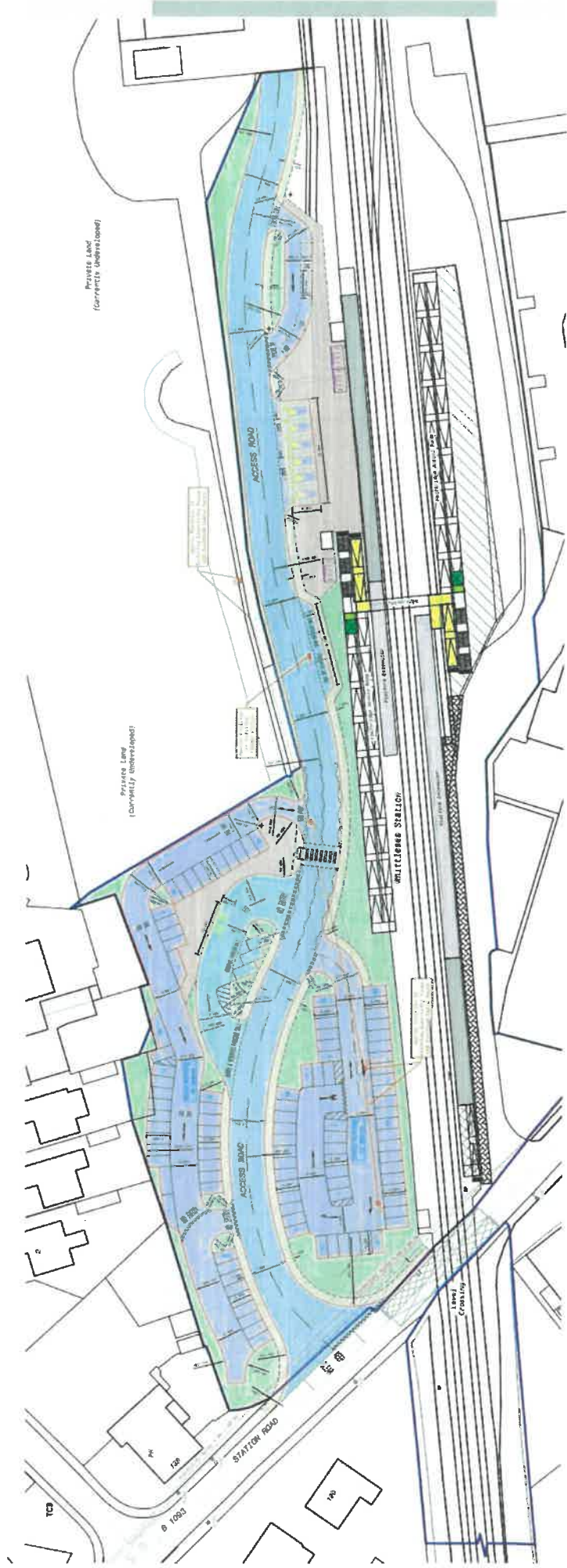
- Designs for car parking, bus and taxi facilities (FDC)
- Designs for car parking, bus and taxi facilities (GA)
- Highways & Access – consultation & discussion with the Highway Authority. Designs for the station access and car parking
- Ecology & biodiversity - studies, surveys and assessments
- Planning matters and land ownerships
- HGV access to the business premises

Whittlesea Stn - Options Considered

Existing station footprint



Whittlesea Stn - Options Considered



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE The Government Standard

Fenland CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council

100% people driven

QUALITY SERVICE

Whittlesea Station Masterplan



HEREWARD
Community Rail Partnership

Fenland Stations Regeneration (CPCA) 2018 onwards

- Ongoing discussions to develop the timeline and programme for the platform lengthening and platform bridge
- High level discussions between CPCA Mayor and Network Rail. Advice given that Ely Capacity Improvements are needed to fully realise the benefits of this two schemes

Masterplan Progress

Technical Matters (1)



- Designs for car parking, bus and taxi facilities
- Limited space using the station footprint
 - Limited optional for additional space
 - The shape of the site - linear
 - Highway Safety concerns over traffic levels and access onto Station Road
 - Proximity of the entrance to the level crossing
 - Ability to achieve business case vfm linked to the level of parking spaces and costs of the project

Masterplan Progress

Technical Matters (2)



Biodiversity & Ecology

- Wet woodland area is high quality and would need to be replaced nearby. Difficulties to recreate this habitat – limited options
- Survey work has confirmed that protected species live within the site
- Relocation of protected species
- Cost of the above

Masterplan Progress

Technical Matters (3)



Level Crossing

- Proximity to the station entrance
- Safety issues with visibility
- Barrier down time and congestion
- Customers missing trains due to long barrier downtime
- Future impact of increased freight and barrier downtime

Masterplan Progress

Technical Matters (4)



Planning & Business

- Land ownerships
- Limited land availability in and around the existing station site
- Operational access for the factory business during the project build – HGVs. This adds significant cost to the build

Whittlesea Station Masterplan

Progress - Business Case (1)



Fenland Stns Regen (CPCA) – Outline Business Case (2019)

- Cost of station works approx £1million (not platform lengthening and ped bridge)
- Conservative modelling outputs showing 15,000 additional journeys per annum (34,500 to 2036/37)
- Overall BCR for Whittlesea Station 5.18 (not including platform lengthening & ped bridge). Very high value for money
- Net present value of benefits £1.42m

Whittlesea Station Masterplan

Progress - Business Case (2)



Fenland Stns Regen (CPCA) - Business Case (2022)

- A review of the work to date
- Development of a refreshed and up to date robust strategic case
- Consideration of different sites for Whittlesea railway station
- Outcome – A strong strategic case for the station to remain in its current location

Whittlesea Station Masterplan

Progress – Business Case (3)



Fenland Stns Regen (CPCA) - Business Case (2022)

- Development of a proposal for an Outline Business Case project (OBC)
- Approximate cost of the OBC £500,000
- Project Board approval of the OBC project
- Funding now needs to be secured

CRP Engagement

Working with Stakeholders and the community



- WTC representative on the CRP Management Board
- CRP events across Fenland to meet the public and stakeholders. Seek views and develop evidence base
- Surveys & public consultation to support wider railway work
- Draft responses to railway industry public consultations representing local views

Any Questions?