

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23 November 2022
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Janet Jackson – Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Connectivity
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Julian Jackson, Director of Place Gregg Stott, Assistant Director Investment, Development & Housing
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>STALYBRIDGE BUS STATION STUDY</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report seeks approval of the Stalybridge Bus Station Study which has identified the need for and options to create improved public transport infrastructure that provides enhanced connectivity between public transport modes and better accessibility to destinations in Stalybridge Town Centre and beyond.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Approve the Stalybridge Bus Station Study that will guide future decisions to improve bus-rail connectivity and general bus based provision within Stalybridge Town Centre.</li> <li>(ii) Note the next steps in relation to further work with partners, including TfGM, TransPennine Express and the GM Stations Alliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Key aims of the Corporate Plan are to provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise and to ensure modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations. The Stalybridge Bus Station Study supports these aims in the areas of providing modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The Stalybridge Bus Station Study supports the policy aims of the Stalybridge GM Mayor’s Town Centre Challenge, deliver priorities in the Town Centre Challenge Action Plan, the Borough’s Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021, Tameside Climate Change & Environment Strategy, the Council’s growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020 and the draft Greater Manchester Places for Everyone joint development strategy.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer)</b>	There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.  The study referenced in section 2.1 of the report was wholly funded by Intra-City Transport Settlement Resource grant funding (via Transport for Greater Manchester).  It should be noted that there is no Council funding available to finance any potential options that are to be considered for bus service connectivity and related provision in Stalybridge town centre.  Alternative funding sources will therefore need to be clearly identified in future option update reports presented to Members for consideration.

**Legal Implications:**  
**(Authorised by the**  
**Borough Solicitor)**

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report given that the study is still at a concept stage. It is understood that in due course there will be consultation with the public on the possible options.

**Risk Management:**

Risks associated with the work are set out at Section 4.

**Background Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Mike Reed, Head of Major Programmes



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council has identified Stalybridge Town Centre, as one of its priority areas to deliver the objectives of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26 in making our town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector. Stalybridge Town Centre was selected as Tameside's focus for the Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor's Town Centre Challenge in 2018. Initial work to plan and progress the delivery of Stalybridge's Town Centre Challenge was co-ordinated by the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge (STCC) Board and the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan – Our Place Our Plan which set out the aspirations for the Town Centre.
- 1.2 The Stalybridge High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) is currently helping to regenerate areas of the town centre and restore the town's local historic character including delivery of the Heritage Walk to provide connectivity and improve safety along Market Street, strengthening the link from the rail station to the Town Centre and cultural facilities. The Stalybridge West Feasibility Study (2022) sets out the regeneration strategy for the redevelopment of a number of brownfield sites adjacent to the railway station and along Castle Street for residential/mixed use development.
- 1.3 The Stalybridge Action Plan identified the need to determine the future role of Stalybridge Bus Station on Market Street and consider the potential for its relocation into a more appropriate location. The Council has now completed the Stalybridge Bus Station Study (**Appendix 1**) to develop options for new bus infrastructure in the Town Centre, including strengthening links with the existing rail station.
- 1.4 The Stalybridge Bus Station Study has been prepared in the context of an emerging wider strategic vision for the Town, consistent with the Council's emerging Tameside Town Centres Framework, supporting existing and planned investment. This will in turn help to deliver a catalytic economic and social impact to the local community.
- 1.5 The GM Stations Alliance, including TfGM; Network Rail; LCR; GMCA and the rail service providers (Trans Pennine and Northern) have identified Stalybridge as a growth point for new development around the railway station area in the future. The Stalybridge Bus Station Study has been prepared in the context of this emerging work.
- 1.6 The Stalybridge Bus Station Study is also consistent with this work and the Council's £19,900,000 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2 bid for Stalybridge, submitted in August 2022 and focused enabling infrastructure to bring forward vacant sites, public realm and active travel improvements, and the delivery of the Stalybridge 'Cultural Quarter'. The Council is currently awaiting a decision on this bid and if successful the associated LUF delivery programme will need to be prepared in the context of the findings of this study.

## **2. STALYBRIDGE BUS STATION STUDY**

- 2.1 GMCA and TfGM identified a need to provide Local Authorities with revenue funding to enable general project development expertise to be brought in at a local level to support the development of local place-based transport priorities. The Council has utilised £59,000 of Intra-City Transport Settlement Resource grant funding (via TfGM) for scheme development relating to the Stalybridge Bus Station Study.
- 2.2 In February 2022, following a procurement process via STaR, the Council appointed Pell Frischmann together with Jefferson Sheard Architects, and Temple Group to identify and then appraise a number of options to improve bus-rail connectivity and general bus based provision within Stalybridge Town Centre.
- 2.3 This study has identified the need for and options to create improved public transport

infrastructure that provides enhanced connectivity between public transport modes and to provide better accessibility to destinations in the Town Centre and beyond. The options have been developed to be complementary to the wider ambitions for the town centre and accommodate future development aspirations. The options identified within the Study focus on the relocation of the bus station, or the provision of enhanced bus infrastructure, in order to provide cost effective, sustainable and deliverable potential solutions. Whilst not an immediate factor to be incorporated within the options identified, the aspiration is that the study should be cognisant of the potential for Metrolink services and/or tram-train operations to be extended to serve Stalybridge at some point in the future.

### **Existing Bus Station Site**

- 2.4 It has been identified that the existing bus station, currently comprising four stands and served by c7 buses per hour, is not ideally located for pedestrian access to either the railway station or to the main retail core of the town centre, which is approximately 500m away.
- 2.5 Whilst Stalybridge is currently well connected by both bus and rail, a number of constraints currently exist for public transport users who wish to make multi-modal journeys. This is due to the bus and rail stations being located approximately 300m from each other, with a number of barriers negatively impacting pedestrian and active travel movements between the two. Therefore, options for some form co-located provision close to the rail station have been specifically considered in the study.
- 2.6 The size of the existing bus station site (c. 2,125sqm) has also been identified as disproportionate to the number of stands and the number of services. Furthermore the existing bus station does not provide any additional supporting facilities, and therefore it is considered that opportunities exist to rationalise the scale of the existing facility in order to reduce land take for this purpose within the town centre, and potentially to free up additional land for development to benefit the town.
- 2.7 Analysis of bus service patterns has demonstrated that the number of services stopping at Armentieres Square, which is located in closer proximity to the main origin / destination points within the Town Centre, is similar to those serving the existing bus station, with most services stopping at both facilities. As such, Armentieres Square has become a 'de-facto' bus station site for the centre of Stalybridge. Therefore, options to enhance the existing bus provision at Armentieres Square have been specifically considered in the study.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- 2.8 An objective setting workshop for the Study was held on commencement of the Study and attended by representatives from Tameside Council, TransPennine Express, First Group, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), GM Stations Alliance, Jefferson Sheard, Temple Group and Pell Frischmann.
- 2.9 Following the objective setting workshop the following objectives were adopted:
- Improve connectivity between bus and rail travel modes for public transport users.
  - Improve connectivity for public transport users to key destinations within Stalybridge Town Centre.
  - Support wider regeneration efforts within Stalybridge.
  - Encourage greater levels of public transport and active travel usage within Stalybridge and the wider region.
  - Avoid impacting (increasing) bus journey times.
  - Consider provision for micro-mobility in all options.
- 2.10 This in turn informed the main aims of the Study as follows:
- To provide enhanced connectivity for multi-modal journeys comprising bus and rail travel;
  - To provide more convenient access for public transport users to and from the key destinations within Stalybridge Town Centre;

- To support the wider regeneration of Stalybridge Town Centre;
- If possible, to enable the existing bus station site to be redeveloped for the benefit of the town centre; and,
- To encourage greater take up of public transport within Stalybridge and the surrounding area, in order to bring about benefits in terms of air quality, highway congestion, and public health.

### **Options Identification and Analysis**

- 2.11 The Study has then identified a long list of options, with the intention of these options being to meet the overall aims as ascertained through the objective setting workshop. In considering what options are available to provide improved facilities, the Study has considered a wide range of potential solutions and types of solutions. A detailed appraisal of each option has been undertaken against the key objectives and appraisal criteria to identify in quantitative terms the highest scoring options which were then taken forward to the shortlist stage.
- 2.12 The options identified have been further categorised into three broad concept areas as follows:
- Concept 1 – the provision of a co-located bus and rail interchange facility;
  - Concept 2 – the provision of a re-located bus station within the town centre; and,
  - Concept 3 – the provision of a series of high-quality on-street bus stops at key points across the town centre in the place of a singular centralised bus station.
- 2.13 The initial option appraisal process resulted in a shortlist being identified as follows:
- Option 4 - New Bus Station to the north side of Rassbottom Street (Current Car Park);
  - Option 9 - New Bus Stops utilising Parking Area to immediate North-East of Station Entrance forecourt;
  - Option 10 - Enhance Existing Bus Stops on Rassbottom Street; and
  - Option 12 - New Bus Stops at Key Locations in the Town Centre (Including by Station) and Redevelop Existing Bus Station.

### **Preferred Option**

- 2.14 The shortlist identified has then been appraised further based on stakeholder acceptability, land ownership impact, forecast timescales for implementation and Town Centre wide impact. This process identified Option 12 - New Bus Stops at Key Locations in the Town Centre (Including by Station) and Redevelop Existing Bus Station as the highest scoring option, and therefore this has been identified as the recommended preferred option.
- 2.15 The option is considered to be cost effective, deliverable, and is forecast to deliver tangible town-centre wide improvements to bus and rail connectivity and to bus infrastructure generally within Stalybridge. The option would also allow the existing bus station site, owned by TfGM, to be redeveloped to support wider regeneration efforts within the town centre.

## **3. NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 The outputs of this study will support development of a pipeline of schemes across GM for delivery against anticipated future capital funding streams. The Council will continue to engage with TfGM to explore how the preferred option could be developed in more detail to secure funding and enable delivery. Once more work has been undertaken and there are specific proposals then these will be subject to a formal consultation process.
- 3.2 The Council will continue to engage with the GM Station Alliance, TfGM and TransPennine Express to ensure that the outputs of the study are aligned with and considered in any emerging work for further improvements to Stalybridge rail station.
- 3.3 The Council will also continue to engage with TfGM to understand/influence the potential

longer term delivery of new infrastructure linked to any future Metrolink or train-tram provision and the role of the rails station.

#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The main project risks associated with Stalybridge Bus Station Study have been identified in the table below.

Risk Area	Detail	RAG Rating	Mitigation	RAG Rating
<b>Engagement</b>	Lack of engagement with partners, leads to fragmented approach to transport infrastructure.	Yellow	Early engagement with TfGM, TransPennine Express and TfGM to ensure activity is aligned and delivers a coordinated approach.	Green
<b>Financial</b>	Insufficient budget to progress to next stage.	Red	Early engagement with TfGM and partners to clearly understand emerging funding opportunities and ensure scheme is identified on all relevant project pipelines.	Yellow
<b>Programme</b>	Lack of resource capacity to undertake workstreams in line with expectations.	Yellow	Apply adequate resource to the project to ensure programme adherence. Seek additional support from TfGM partners.	Green

#### 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Stalybridge Bus Station Study supports delivery of the Tameside Corporate Plan, Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy, and the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan. Furthermore it fully aligns with the broader GM transport priorities, GM Clean Air Strategy, and draft GM Places for Everyone joint development strategy.

5.2 The delivery of improved infrastructure to provide enhanced connectivity between public transport modes as proposed in this study will support the continued regeneration of Stalybridge as a modern hub that more effectively serves its local catchment and attracts additional investment.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 As set out at the front of the report.