

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	23 November 2022
Executive Member:	Councillor Jan Jackson – Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Connectivity
Reporting Officer:	Julian Jackson, Director of Place Gregg Stott, Assistant Director Investment, Development & Housing
Subject:	GM STATIONS ALLIANCE
Report Summary:	This report provides an update on the emerging work of Tameside Council with the Greater Manchester (GM) Stations Alliance and seeks approval to progress initial feasibility work at Ashton Rail Station and continue engagement in relation to opportunities at Stalybridge Rail Station.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Approve that the Council enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GM Stations Alliance to undertake initial feasibility work at Ashton Rail Station. (ii) Note the next steps in relation to further work with the GM Stations Alliance at Stalybridge Rail Station.
Corporate Plan:	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 work of the GM Stations Alliance will support these aims in the areas of providing modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment.
Policy Implications:	The work of the GM Stations Alliance will support the Borough's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021, Tameside Climate Change & Environment Strategy, the Council's growth priorities and the draft GM Places for Everyone joint development strategy.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	As set out in section 2.4, working alongside the GM Stations Alliance will not result in any additional implications on the Council budget except for existing officer time. It is essential that any resultant expenditure incurred on feasibility studies at both rail stations referenced in the report is entirely financed by the Alliance or via grant funding awarded to the Council with related procurement advice provided via STAR as appropriate. It is advised that a subsequent update report is presented to Members on the outcome of any studies undertaken together with any cost implications and financing arrangements.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	As set out in the main body of the report it is advantageous for the council to be involved in the GM Station Alliance. The Alliance is under pinned by a Memorandum of Understanding MoU.


It would be advisable to seek advice from legal services before the MoU is signed.

Risk Management:

Risks associated with the work are set out at Section 3.

Background Information:

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

 Telephone: 07974 111 756

 e-mail: mike.reed@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In late 2017, the Secretary of State for Transport, responding to the Greater Manchester (GM) transport devolution agenda, endorsed an Alliance approach for rail stations across the conurbation. This included a focus on fostering a “one team” approach at rail stations to achieve the broad range of improvements required to meet the needs of a 21st century railway, under the GM Stations Alliance (the Alliance).
- 1.2 In April 2019, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), formally entered into the Rail Station Alliance Framework Agreement with Network Rail, London Continental Railway (LCR), TransPennine Express and Northern Rail. The agreement establishes the framework for governance and operation of the Alliance, including formally setting out the Vision, Aim and Objectives.

2. GM STATION ALLIANCE: TAMESIDE

- 2.1 The Council has engaged with the Alliance to understand how the group might support, establish and progress regeneration and development opportunities within Tameside. It has been identified that the Alliance can initially support Tameside with specific feasibility work for potential development at Ashton Rail Station and further engagement in relation to potential works at Stalybridge Rail Station.

Ashton Rail Station

- 2.2 This report seeks approval for Tameside to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GM Stations Alliance for initial feasibility stage work at Ashton Rail Station and surrounding land.
- 2.3 The MOU will not be a legally binding contract and will not create a partnership between the Council and the Alliance but set the basis for collaborative working to progress the following:
 - To explore the potential to promote mixed use development on the land around Ashton Rail Station.
 - To investigate the planning position and to establish the potential for viable and deliverable development.
 - To investigate and share information to protect current and future railway operational and maintenance requirements.
 - To investigate and test scheme viability.
 - To investigate the availability of external funding, delivery structures and procurement options.
 - To engage with the Network Rail operational teams and train operators to explore potential passenger benefits and to understand rail requirements, interfaces and constraints.
 - To consider future arrangements for more formal collaboration subject to further governance and ensuring any development meets the Parties’ statutory and regulatory requirements and obligations, including as to land value, procurement, subsidy control and decision-making.
- 2.4 The MoU places no financial or time commitments on either party rather sets a framework for information sharing and collaboration to determine the potential for longer-term working relationships, subject to further governance and approval. At this stage the Alliance will invest time and money in collaboration with the Council; apart from officer input in terms of time it will not involve the Council with any costs
- 2.5 This work will be aligned with and complement the emerging work in relation to the Ashton Levelling Up Fund Programme, proposed Mayors Challenge Fund scheme for Albion Way, and the emerging Tameside Car Parking Strategy.

Stalybridge Rail Station

- 2.6 At Stalybridge the Council has prepared the Stalybridge West Phase 1 Masterplan which identifies the potential for significant residential led mixed use development on brownfield land in the vicinity of Stalybridge Rail Station. There is now an opportunity to engage proactively with the Alliance, and specifically TfGM and TransPennine Express, to further explore how potential improvement works at the Station can support the emerging proposals for Stalybridge West and the wider regeneration of the Town Centre through improved accessibility and greater integration with other transport modes.
- 2.7 This work also will be aligned with and specifically complement the emerging work in relation to the Stalybridge High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), the Stalybridge Bus Station Study, the emerging Tameside Car Parking Strategy and the Stalybridge Levelling Up Fund 2 bid (if successful).
- 2.8 In addition to the emerging work at Ashton and Stalybridge, the Council will maintain regular engagement with the Alliance in respect of any opportunities that may arise in relation to the other 11 rail stations in Tameside.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The main project risks associated with the work have been identified in the table below.

Risk Area	Detail	RAG Rating	Mitigation	RAG Rating
Engagement	Lack of engagement with partners leads to fragmented approach.	Yellow	Early engagement with GM Stations Alliance to ensure activity, such as Stalybridge West and Car Parking Strategy is aligned and delivers a coordinated approach.	Green
Financial	Insufficient budget to progress to next stage.	Red	Early engagement with GM Stations Alliance to clearly understand any potential future costs and the emerging funding opportunities that might be available.	Yellow
Programme	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

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Council will enter into an MOU with the GM Stations Alliance for initial feasibility stage work at Ashton Rail Station and surrounding land. Once this work has been undertaken a further report will be shared recommending whether there is an opportunity to progress any options to support the wider regeneration of Ashton Town Centre.
- 4.2 The Council will continue to engage with the Alliance in relation to the emerging work for further improvements to Stalybridge Rail Station to ensure that this is properly aligned with the wider programme of regeneration activity for the Town Centre and any opportunities for external funding are maximised.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.