



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER DECISION – HIGHWAYS ASSETS AND TRANSPORT

12 November 2021

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Bus Real Time Information Development in Derbyshire

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function concerned and it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

3. Purpose

3.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the current development of the bus service Real Time Information (RTI) system in Derbyshire and seek approval to continue to use the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) procurement framework up to a new level of spend to purchase electronic RTI bus stop information displays and associated back office systems.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 Derbyshire is part of the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (D2N2) wide RTI system which provides bus passengers with up to date information on how long they will have to

wait until their bus arrives. The first signs were installed in Derbyshire in 2018 using funding provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) following a success bid by the Council to the National Productive Investment Fund (NPIF) programme. The NPIF project called the Derbyshire Highways Hub Advanced Real Time Information (DHART) included funding for a variety of other elements, as well as RTI, such as the establishment of a central traffic control room at County Hall and the installation of bus priority at signals.

- 4.2 Following the successful funding bid, permission was sought from Cabinet to use the existing NCC procurement framework to purchase RTI equipment and associated back office systems (Minute No. 107/18 refers) up to a total spend of £0.6m. This approach was taken as joining the existing regional system significantly reduced the cost of establishing RTI in Derbyshire, compared to introducing the Council's own separate network. Also, as Derby City and Nottingham City were also already part of the same system, it meant that bus services, which crossed into Derbyshire from these adjacent local authorities, could easily be displayed on RTI signs in the Council's area.
- 4.3 The RTI system in Derbyshire has continued to develop over the last three years outside of the original DHART area in Amber Valley and Erewash to include signs from Clay Cross to Chesterfield using funding from the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership A61 Growth Deal. Additional signs have also been provided using money from the Derby-Nottingham Transforming Cities Fund, the Brimington clean air programme and a contribution from Chesterfield Royal Hospital. The 2021-22 Local Transport Plan capital programme also includes £399,000, the majority of which has already been used to purchase further signs. As a result, there are now over 200 RTI displays across Derbyshire.
- 4.4 To ensure 2021-22 Local Transport Plan RTI schemes can be completed, retrospective approval is sought to extend the total spend using the Nottinghamshire procurement framework to £0.99m which will include the additional £399,000 in this year's capital programme.

The Future

- 4.5 As part of the new National Bus Strategy, the Council has recently submitted its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the DfT. This includes a significant funding request for £6m to pay for a large number of additional RTI signs to be installed across Derbyshire from April 2022 until March 2027. To ensure work can commence as soon as possible after the BSIP funding settlement is announced, permission is sought to further extend the funding limit on the NCC procurement framework up

to a total spend of £3.7m by the end of January 2024 when the current NCC framework ends.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 As part of the public consultation process undertaken as part of the development of the BSIP, more RTI signs were identified as one of the key improvements passengers wanted to see in the future. The County Council is already named in the NCC framework as an authority which can use this arrangement, and this has recently been reconfirmed.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 **Do nothing and end the current use of Nottinghamshire framework and have no replacement arrangement in place to procure RTI equipment** - This is not considered an appropriate option given the need to complete the current 2021-22 Local Transport Plan RTI schemes before March 2022 and to have suppliers in place from April 2022 for the start of the BSIP programme.
- 6.2 **Set up the Council's own procurement arrangement for RTI** This is not considered a practical option as the Council would need to engage with suppliers and service providers to produce a new set of purchasing agreements. This would take months to complete as it would require the setting up and managing of a number of complex contracts. It would be impossible to reach the level of savings the Council currently achieves from using the current NCC framework arrangement due to recent increase in costs for such equipment as a result of shortages in the market for sign components. The data handling and delivery arrangements between any new supplier and the existing system would also create a massively complicated system and would be incredibly difficult to resolve in the time available. This alternative is therefore not recommended.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None identified.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Implications.

10. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member:

- a) Notes the development of the Real Time Information (RTI) system in Derbyshire since 2018.
- b) Agrees to retrospectively extend the level of spending allowed on the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) procurement framework from £0.6m to £0.99m to take account of the £399,000 allocated for RTI schemes in the 2021-22 Local Transport Plan capital programme.
- c) Agrees to further extend the overall spending allowed on the NCC RTI procurement framework to a maximum of £3.7m by January 2024, to take account of the proposals in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

11. Reasons for Recommendations

- 11.1 The RTI system has developed quickly over the last three years and has been popular with bus passengers. Funding to develop this project has come from a variety of external sources as well as the Local Transport Plan capital programme.
- 11.2 Continuing to use the NCC procurement framework will allow the Council to continue to deliver the RTI program in a timely and cost efficient manner.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) process, the Council is seeking £6m in funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for Real Time Information (RTI) between 2022-2023 until 2026-27. In addition, the Council has committed £399,000 from the 2021-22 LTP capital programme. Funding for the initial scheme set up came from the DfT National Productive Investment Fund (NPIF) programme. It is estimated that the total spend on RTI from the start of programme in 2018 until January 2024 will be £3.7m, provided the full BSIP funding is made available by the DfT.

Legal

- 2.1 Section 63(1) of the Transport Act 1985 places a duty on Derbyshire County Council to secure the provision of '*such passenger transport services as the Council considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirement within Derbyshire which would not, in its view, be met, apart from any action taken by them for that purpose*'.

Human Resources

- 3.1 The current RTI installation program has been implemented by existing members of staff from the Councils Public Transport Unit. Funding for additional staff to support the roll out of additional RTI signs and other elements of the BSIP program has been included in funding ask to DfT.

Information Technology

- 4.1 The RTI system is based on tried and test information technology systems hosted by Nottingham City Council as part of the D2N2 RTI Partnership. This is not expected to change in the future.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Bus services are particularly important to a variety of disadvantaged groups including children, younger adults, older people and those from economic deprived areas. Expanding the RTI system to more areas would allow a larger number of people from these disadvantaged groups to benefit from the provision of up to date bus service information.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 This proposal will help deliver the following Council Plan priorities: Resilient, Healthy and Safe Communities; High Performing, Value for Money and Resident-Focused Services; A Prosperous and Green Derbyshire.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 NA.