

MSDC - Thurston Rail Station Improvements - Feasibility Study update

Background

Following the completion and submission of the Feasibility Study by Network Rail in April 2024, Mid Suffolk Cabinet Members considered the Options on the 15th May 2024 at a Cabinet briefing. Members agreed two actions:-

- To meet with the Thurston wider group and listen to their feedback about the Options. The wider group asked for a meeting with Network Rail which is still to be held - likely when further work has been undertaken as a result of the CIL Bid M24-20 being determined (see below)
- Mid Suffolk Cabinet Members met with Network Rail on the 17th July to discuss the way forward. It was agreed that the preferred option was the subway proposal and that a new CIL Bid would be pursued to take the subway proposal to ES3/4 level which would result in a single option costed proposal. From there, a financial strategy could be developed including sourcing external funds for the option including from the Department of Transport.

Current position

- A new CIL Bid has been submitted (in the October Bid round) by Network Rail (M24-20) seeking £6,000 to allow sufficient funds for resource to develop a pre cost estimate and schedule for the engineering stage (ES3) for the single option selection and endorsement. The intention is to carry out consultation and to recommend approval of this CIL Bid by a delegated decision and ask Cabinet to note this decision in the CIL Expenditure programme planned for December 2024.
- A second CIL Bid has come forward this week from Network Rail in this October Bid round for the costs /programme of taking the subway scheme to engineering stage (ES3) for the single option selection and endorsement of the subway together with a business case. Getting to ES3 would allow the development of a funding strategy and it may not be necessary to go to ES4 as originally thought. Originally the costs for taking the scheme forward were considered to be as stated:

Table 3 NRs next stages with costs and durations for Thurston Rail Station Improvements following Option selection (taken from the Feasibility Study)

Stages	Start	Finish	Cost	Notes
3	Sept 2024	March 2025	c£200-£230K	Based on previous Access For All (AFA)schemes

4	April 2025	November 2025	c£350-400K	Based on previous Access For All (AFA) schemes
5	December 2025	June 2026	To be determined (TBD)	-
6	July 2026	July 2027	To be determined (TBD)	-
7-8	August 2027	October 2027	To be determined (TBD)	-

- However, with the determination of the £6,000 CIL Bid now and the ES3 stage full costs CIL Bid (submitted this week) Network Rail consider this should be sufficient to achieve the single option selection and endorsement where funding sources could then be explored for the infrastructure.

C Thurlow

8th October 2024