

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 April 2022

Report of the Head of Asset Management

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster Central;

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

Changing Places Programme

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Brief Summary

This report sets out a proposal to award a grant contribution of £50,000 to support the development of a Changing Places facility at Lancaster Train Station.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve entering into a grant funding agreement with Avanti West Coast for the county council's contribution of £50,000 towards delivery of the project.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and Director of Finance, to agree and finalise the terms of the agreements with Avanti West Coast. The grant funding will be taken from the unallocated balance of the approved Changing Places programme.

Detail

Standard accessible toilets meet the needs of some disabled people but not all. There are over 230,000 people in the United Kingdom who need assistance to use the toilet or change continence pads, including people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, spinal injuries and people living with strokes. Without appropriate facilities carers find themselves in the unacceptable and undignified position of having to wait until they get home or having to change continence pads on public toilet floors.

Changing places are larger than standard toilets and have the right equipment including a changing bench and a hoist specifically designed to support disabled people who need assistance.

As part of its 2013/14 budget, the county council agreed a capital allocation of £481,000 to fund the installation of Changing Places facilities at locations throughout Lancashire.

Approval has previously been given for the county council to provide funding towards the installation of facilities in the following locations:

- Chorley Town Hall
- Victoria Park Pavilion, Nelson
- Accrington Bus Station
- Preston Mobility Centre (Chapel Yard)
- Pendle Care & Support (Stanley Villas)
- Preston Bus Station
- Ormskirk Bus Station
- Rawtenstall Bus Station (to be developed)

In partnership with Avanti West Coast Rail the public and integrated transport service has identified an opportunity to develop a Changing Places facility at Lancaster Train Station.

The station is a grade II listed structure located close to the city centre just to the west of the castle and has an annual footfall of over 2 million passengers per year. The facility will be developed by Avanti and located on platform 3 making it equally accessible for the public as well as rail passengers.

A Changing Places facility is also available on the opposite side of the city centre in The Cornerstone which is part of Lancaster Methodist Church although hours are limited to Monday to Saturday 10:00 – 15:00. The proposed facility at the train station would be available for 18 hours daily.

An appraisal has been undertaken by Avanti which has confirmed the feasibility of the proposal and given the anticipated costs of adapting a listed structure Avanti has approached the county council for financial assistance. The county council has previously contributed up to £50,000 for the provision of the facilities at the bus stations and it is proposed to award grant funding of this amount to Avanti in support of the Lancaster project.

Avanti has secured funding to meet the remaining costs associated with the project with their contribution being up to £150,000.

The county council's grant contribution of £50,000 will be subject to a grant funding agreement, including appropriate monitoring, reporting and clawback conditions.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Should the proposal not be approved Avanti will have insufficient funding to develop the proposed Changing Places facility. This will result in a lack of appropriate facilities for people with profound physical and personal care needs in this busy transport hub and more limited access in the city centre.

Property Asset Management

This is a financial grant only. The proposed Changing Places facility is within Lancaster Train Station and the county council does not have any property interest in it. The facility will be managed by Avanti and there will be no ongoing maintenance responsibility for the county council.

Financial

The unallocated balance of the Changing Places budget will be reduced to £208,000 of which £50,000 is earmarked for a facility at Rawtenstall Bus Station with the balance of £158,000 available for any projects identified in the future. The programme is funded by borrowing and the charge to the revenue account in relation to this project will be c £3,750 per annum over 20 years.

Equality and Cohesion

Should the proposal be approved, the provision of a Changing Places facility at Lancaster Train Station would contribute positively to the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aim of advancing equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and its associated aim of improving participation in public life. Those who need a Changing Places facility are amongst those in the disability protected characteristics group.

Legal

A grant funding agreement between the county council and Avanti West Coast will be agreed, which will facilitate the county council's financial contribution along with specifying the scheme outputs for Avanti West Coast to deliver.

In providing grant funding, the county council is required to give due consideration to subsidy control rules derived from the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement, the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement, World Trade Organisation anti-subsidy rules and any other UK free trade agreement.

If approval is given to this proposal the county council will give due consideration to the rules of the subsidy control regimes detailed above, to ensure that the grant funding arrangement reached between the parties does not constitute provision by

the county council of an unlawful subsidy, or, in the event of a subsidy existing, that such is permitted under the subsidy control regime.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
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