

16th October 2017

Dear David, Jessica, John and Mark,

Please find below a résumé of MAGOR and Monmouthshire County Council's meeting with Network Rail (NR) and Department for Transport (DfT) officials on 12/10/17. The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback on our unsuccessful New Station Fund application.

Firstly the point was made that of the 5 successful bids, 3 had failed on their first application and this should be borne in mind going forward. It was also recognised that that MAGOR / MCC's application was evidently premature but this was because the change to inviting at the 'GRIP 2 stage', which inevitably meant that not all the required information could be available. For example; the 'timetable plan' was not sufficiently robust to analyse, there was no consideration of 'optimism-bias' and no estimation of a 'post-opening evaluation'. However, it was stated by the DfT officials that, and this is key, the concept had "real merit and traction" and could be fit for purpose on completion of GRIP 3. It was also stated that DfT's commercial director was very impressed with the strength of the bid, which contained opportunity for 'modal shift' and to capture west-bound business. The overall advice to MAGOR/MCC was to complete the GRIP 3 work and re-submit an application, possibly even before the next round of NSF allocation (which is likely to be in 2019).

Both Network Rail and DfT officials gave some specific advice to strengthen the bid. Namely;

- engage with the winning bidder of the Wales and Border Franchise and re-engage with Great Western when that franchise renewal is initiated
- engage with the freight operating companies to identify and mitigate any issues
- avoid the term 'community owned' as this was misleading and that the term 'community adopted' would be more accurate
- consider breaking up the remaining GRIP 3 work into smaller packages
- and, most importantly, to gain specific written endorsement from the Welsh Government Economy and Infrastructure secretary, showing that he supports the completion of the GRIP 3 stage

It is now intended to draft a letter from the CEO of MCC to the minister to request that endorsement (and a reminder of the previous request for part-funding).

In recognition and appreciation of the assistance and continued support that you have given MAGOR with the campaign, if there are opportunities for you to catalyse the remaining work by conversations or questions to relevant people at the appropriate times, that would be wonderful!

It was not just fantastic that DfT and NR took the time to give us feedback but also that they were so impressed and clearly enthused with the potential for doing something really innovative. This was demonstrated by them offering real and practical advice to succeed next time, which was tremendously encouraging.

Thank you again for all your help. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Yours sincerely

Ted Hand and Paul Turner

(MAGOR group).

CC Christian Schmidt