

Executive Decision Report

Decision maker and date of Leadership Team meeting or (in the case of individual Lead Member decisions) the earliest date the decision will be taken	Sue Harris, Executive Director for Environment and Communities Date of report: 19/02/20 Forward Plan reference: 05502/19/P/A	 THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
Report title	LADBROKE GROVE UNDERGROUND STATION STEP FREE ACCESS	
Reporting officer	Director for Transport and Highways	
Key decision	No	
Access to information classification	Public	
Ward	Notting Dale	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks approval for the expenditure of £140,000 of Council funds for a feasibility study to determine the cost and means of providing step-free access at Ladbroke Grove Underground station.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. It is recommended that you give your approval for the Council to enter into the accompanying Funding Agreement with Transport for London (TfL).

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1. Information on the feasibility of providing step-free access to Ladbroke Grove Underground Station is needed to direct the Council's efforts towards delivering step free access at Ladbroke Grove in line with the Council's Capital Programme and the Borough's Local Plan.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. The Council has an adopted planning policy¹ "to work with partners to ensure that step-free access is delivered at all Underground and rail stations by 2028" to

¹ Local Plan (2019) Policy CT1 (k)

increase the use of public transport and to support our policies in respect of ensuring that people with reduced mobility have equal access to opportunities for employment and leisure.

- 4.2. At present Earl's Court is the only step-free London Underground Station in the borough. Step-free facilities are also available at Kensington Olympia Station and to the London Overground platforms at West Brompton. We expect step-free facilities to open at Knightsbridge in 2021 and at South Kensington later in the 2020s. No other step free projects are currently programmed.
- 4.3. In March 2019, the Council approved a Capital Programme that includes a commitment to fund 50 per cent of the cost of providing step-free access at Ladbroke Grove and High Street Kensington stations. Substantial sums have been allocated to that end and expenditure of up to £7.5 million has been approved in respect of Ladbroke Grove, subject to the receipt of match funding from non-Council sources.
- 4.4. The Council has prioritised the delivery of step-free facilities at Ladbroke Grove for the following reasons:
 - The station is situated centrally within the northern part of the borough and more borough residents live within walking distance of this station than any other station in North Kensington.
 - The station is served by six bus routes so the station can be easily reached by bus from much of the northern half of the borough.
 - The station is the busiest of the three Hammersmith and City Line stations in the borough.
 - All available information indicates that it is technically less challenging to provide step-free access at Ladbroke Grove than at Latimer Road or Westbourne Park. A feasibility study was carried out 15 years ago by a company called Metronet that established that a step-free scheme could be delivered at the station within its existing physical envelope.
 - Public investment in local infrastructure is needed to assist the local community and economy to recover from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, which occurred within the catchment of Ladbroke Grove station.
 - Ladbroke Grove is the closest station in the borough to the Kensal Canalside Opportunity Area and if an Elizabeth Line station were not built, it would be used by many future residents of the new homes that will be built there.
- 4.5. The Council intends to lobby for funding from the Mayor and/or to secure development contributions to cover 50 per cent of the cost of delivering step-free facilities at Ladbroke Grove. We need to understand what such a project might cost to help secure the requisite funds.
- 4.6. It is important to note that to date TfL has not undertaken to fund any part of a step-free scheme at Ladbroke Grove. However, the provision of step-free facilities at London's stations is a priority for the Mayor and TfL; substantial sums of money have been set aside by TfL to that end.

5. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES

5.1 The proposal is to spend a maximum of £140,000 on a feasibility study as described in the accompanying Funding Agreement with Transport for London. The costs would cover:

- (a) TfL's fees, costs and expenses in commissioning the study;
- (b) the fees of any other external consultants engaged by TfL where appropriate;
- (c) the fees/costs of TfL internal resources including (but not limited to) surveyors, engineers, lawyers and project managers together with appropriate finance, project office and administrative support;
- (d) the fees, costs and expenses incurred by TfL in connection with discharging its obligations under this Agreement;
- (e) any other costs arising in connection with undertaking and delivering the Study.

5.2 A number of residents have questioned why the Council's focus is not on providing step-free facilities at Latimer Road instead. Step-free schemes are expensive. It is unlikely that funding could be found within the foreseeable future to cover the cost of two step-free schemes in the northern part of the borough. There are two primary grounds for favouring the delivery of a scheme at Ladbroke Grove over one at Latimer Road.

1.) Engineering Feasibility:

The configuration of Latimer Road station makes it very challenging to provide step free facilities there. The ticket hall is located to the east of Bramley Road and has staircases that dogleg back to the west to link to the two platforms at their extreme eastern ends. Whilst there may be sufficient space to install a lift to the westbound platform via a link from the ticket hall, the provision of a lift from the ticket hall to the eastbound platform is not possible given the physical constraint imposed by the viaduct. A separate standalone lift entrance to the eastbound platform would be required and this could only be built on land, known as Lockton Street, that serves as a public highway. Such a structure would unavoidably be situated proximate to the windows to residential flats, impacting on their aspect and light. Such a structure, depending on its siting, could impact significantly on highway visibility, highway operation, local access and servicing. Therefore it is questionable whether the provision of a step free scheme at Latimer Road is in practice deliverable.



2.) Patronage:

In 2017, 5.95 million entries and exits were recorded at Ladbrooke Grove. The equivalent figure for Latimer Road is 2.46 million. Ladbrooke Grove is much busier and an investment in step free facilities there would benefit more passengers. More borough residents live within walking distance² of Ladbrooke Grove (31,863) than live within a similar distance from Latimer Road (18,066).

6. OPTIONS

6.1 You have two options:

- i) Accept the Officer recommendations in Section 2
- ii) Reject the Officer recommendations in Section 2 and decide not to commission a feasibility study at this time.

7. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 In itself, this decision to release funds for a study will be of low public interest. It would be more appropriate to engage local communities if and when a scheme is found to be technically and financially viable. The Council has through our Local

² 960 metres or a 12-minute walk. This is the distance used by Transport for London to calculate public transport accessibility levels (PTAL).

Plan Review consulted on our aim to deliver step- free access at all London Underground Stations in the Borough.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no Human Resources Implications arising directly from this report.
- 8.2. The Council has had regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty contained under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and places a general equality duty on the Council when exercising its functions and the making of such decisions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct; advance of equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sex orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in relation to the elimination of discrimination.
- 8.3. The report itself has no equalities implications but of course the ultimate objective driving the need for the study would greatly improve travel options for people with limited mobility.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Based in the information in this report, the Council intend to enter into a funding agreement for the sum of £140,000 with TfL, in respect of the procurement and provision of a feasibility study of step free access to Ladbroke Grove tube station.
- 9.2 Given the value of the agreement is below the relevant threshold of £181,302, the full implications of the Public Contract Regulations (PCR's) do not apply. The Council must award the contract in accordance with Chapter 8 of the PCR's which does not obligate the Councils to publicly compete the contract award.
- 9.3 As TfL are the only real party who could instruct the procurement of the study (as they own the station and are privy to business and confidential information needed to procure the study, competition is absent for technical reasons and accordingly the Council has grounds in accordance with section 2.09(b) of the Contract Regulations in not competing the agreement or making the opportunity public.
- 9.4 Approval to enter into the agreement is required by at least the relevant Director.
- 9.5 The Council should publish notice of the contract award in accordance Regulation 112 of the PCR's unless it had grounds under the said Regulation so as not to do so, namely it would impede law enforcement or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest, or would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of a particular economic operator, whether public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Legal comments supplied by Christina Worrell, Solicitor (Contracts), Bi-Borough Shared legal Services, ph: 02076415712; email: cworrell@Westminster.gov.uk

10. FINANCIAL, PROPERTY, IT AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 £15m has been approved in the Council's Capital Programme pipeline for future years for this scheme and the assumption is that this would cover 50% of the estimated costs of such a scheme; the remaining 50% costs to be funded by TfL. As detailed in paragraph 4.6 no funding has been agreed by TfL as yet.
- 10.2 The feasibility study will be undertaken by TfL but funded wholly by RBKC as detailed in the proposed funding agreement. It is recommended that the £140,000 cost is funded from the Car Parking Reserve.
- 10.3 The purpose of this feasibility study is to gain a clear idea of the potential cost of a step-free scheme at Ladbroke Grove. TfL spends approximately £50m per year on schemes of this nature and producing a feasibility study will give TfL sufficient information to make an informed decision when deciding which schemes to fund. It is anticipated that commissioning this detailed study will stand the Council in the best position to secure funding from TfL and stand out from a number of pipeline schemes under consideration.
- 10.4 Corporate Finance has been consulted and comments that the financial implications of this decision are as explained in paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2 to this report.
- 10.5 Implications completed by Tai' Oyinlola, Finance Manager – Environment and Communities. Tel. 0208 753 2224.

Implications verified by Varenne Lucy, Head of Finance, Environment and Communities. Tel. 0207 341 5777.

Mahmood Siddiqi
Director for Transport and Highways

Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Background papers used in the preparation of this report: none

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