

# **New railway station in Winchburgh could be funded by a government development fund**

## **A new railway station in Winchburgh could be funded by a government development fund.**

The long-running campaign for a new rail station in West Lothian was dealt a blow earlier this year when the Scottish Government ruled out paying the estimated £18m costs.

But council bosses say they could potentially tap into a £50m pot through the City Region Deal.

The deal is an alliance of councils in southeast Scotland, and the Holyrood and Westminster governments set up to focus on economic development.

Head of Economic Development Craig McCorriston told councillors any decision would “ultimately be made by ministers.”

Asked if there was “a Plan B” if the bid for City Region Deal funding failed, Mr McCorriston said: “The steering group continues to look at all the available options to deliver the project, but the principal focus is on a bid into the City region Deal.

“It does seem that all parties are focused on making that work.”

But he added: “It’s an application that the council will not be in control of. We may submit the application, but the

decisions will ultimately be made by the City Region Deal and Scottish Government ministers.”

Mr McCorrison said a detailed design for the station would need to be drawn up before potential costs would be known and an application made to the CRD fund. “We need to know how much we are applying for,” he added.

Councillor Doran-Timson asked what pressure the council could put on the Scottish Government and developers to get the plans ready.

Mr McCorrison said the council was encouraging the City Region Deal to be part of the steering group working on station plans. He added: “Transport Scotland are being helpful in developing the business case. Engagement is at a high level across all parts of government.”

A Labour motion agreed that West Lothian Council could potentially become a co-promoter of plans to build the station. It urged officers to report back to the council what steps the council could take on the role.

Having been promised as part of the master plan more than a decade ago, the station’s development has stalled.

Mr McCorrison told a meeting of the full council: “The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (CRD) has an infrastructure fund to support development of seven strategic sites across the region. Winchburgh is one of the named strategic sites.

“It is noted that at least £50 million will be available via this fund but the exact figure and the source of this funding has not yet been confirmed by the Scottish Government.

“This has been raised with Ministers and an update is awaited. Despite this obstacle, the steering group is proceeding to update the existing business case for the railway station to

ensure that an application to the fund can be submitted at the earliest opportunity.”

Winchburgh Developments Ltd, (WDL) the lead developer for the Winchburgh Core Development Area, has indicated that it would be willing to partially fund a station.

The developer has already committed to progressing a number of associated works, such as creating access roads and the park and ride facility in the new town centre, which would also serve the railway station and therefore reduce the cost of the project’s unfunded balance.

WDL has also indicated that in addition to the associated works it will provide a cash contribution to the overall cost of the station.

The developers claim they already have made a business case for the new station first planned in 2012, even though it is not down to them as the developers to do so.

Last year WDL published research which showed that a station could take up to 500,000 car journeys a year off the roads into Edinburgh.

While some major road infrastructure around Winchburgh has been put in place as the village grows into a town, with more than 4,000 new homes the rail plans have been dogged by delays.

A spokesperson for Transport Scotland, the national transport agency, earlier told the LDRS: “It is clear there is keen interest to build a station at Winchburgh, however a number of issues require detailed investigation before any further comment could be made.”

By Stuart Sommerville Local Democracy Reporter