

Cabinet - 6 February 2014

Report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment

Electoral Divisions affected: All Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale divisions

Approval of the East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan
(Appendices 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' refer)

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Executive Summary

In order to determine its future transport planning and investment priorities, and provide a sound and defensible basis for decisions affecting development across Lancashire, the County Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to put in place highways and transport masterplans to cover the county.

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented here for approval. The masterplan has been developed jointly with Blackburn with Darwen Council which is also intending to approve and publish this masterplan.

A public consultation exercise for the Consultation draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan ran for seven weeks, finishing on 13 December 2013. The response to the consultation exercise has, on the whole, endorsed the County Council's vision for East Lancashire's highways and transport networks and for the work needed to take the masterplan forward.

A number of concerns and suggestions were raised through the consultation and a number of changes have been made to the draft Masterplan as a result. The two most significant of these concerns were:

- Representation received from stakeholders about the A56 Colne to Foulridge Bypass. Almost without exception, there is total support for the 'Brown' route amongst businesses and our partners. However, amongst the public, responses are more mixed, with a far wider range of opinions as to the merit of any bypass. It is therefore proposed to progress the more detailed work necessary to take a business case for the bypass forward, including what could ultimately be done along the North Valley to increase capacity in the absence of a bypass as well as detailed consideration of all possible routes for an A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass. Once this work has been completed we will be able to consult on our final proposals.

- There was a significant response calling for the East Lancashire Railway to be utilised as a commuter link and incorporated into the proposals within the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan. We have therefore moved consideration of a potential commuter link from the rail connectivity study to the M66 corridor gateway study to ensure that the corridor is treated holistically and that a long term solution to congestion in the corridor is found.

According to the Masterplan's delivery programme, a number of studies will be undertaken to establish how highways and transport can best support the development of East Lancashire; these studies will look at rail connectivity, highways connectivity in key corridors, accessibility to employment, town centres and to remote and/or rural areas and will establish a strategic East Lancashire Cycle Network.

The joint East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan is set out at Appendix 'A'.

The Consultation Reports in respect of the Masterplan as a whole and an A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass are set out at Appendices 'B' and 'C' respectively.

The accompanying Environmental Report, containing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is set out at Appendix 'D'. A copy of the EIA can be found on the council's website at

<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s34797/Appendix%20D.pdf>

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve the publication of the joint East Lancashire Highways and Transport Master Plan, presented at Appendix 'A', and the delivery of the studies that will allow the masterplan to be taken forward;
- (ii) Approve, as part of this work, the more detailed work necessary to establish whether there is a business case for a bypass, including what could ultimately be done along the North Valley to increase capacity as well as detailed consideration of all possible routes for an A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass.

Background and Advice

As the local transport and highway authority for Lancashire, the County Council is responsible for the preparation of a local transport plan (LTP) that sets out a strategy and priorities for transport and travel in the area and a delivery programme for transport improvements, sustainable travel, road safety and maintenance.

In order to determine its future transport planning and investment priorities, and provide a sound and defensible basis for decisions affecting development across Lancashire, the County Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to put in place highways and transport masterplans to cover the county.

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented here for approval for publication. The masterplan has been developed jointly with Blackburn with Darwen Council which is also intending to approve and publish this masterplan.

The master planning exercise looks to identify problems, gaps and opportunities on the highways and public transport systems serving Lancashire and, importantly, how they impact on the County's economy. These masterplans will form the transport evidence base for a much more pro-active role for the County Council in forward planning activities, and the improvements they identify will be a key influence on future patterns of development, at a strategic and local level, set out in local plans and development briefs across Lancashire.

Each Masterplan, supported by its evidence base and public consultation, should form an integral part of the evidence base to the development plan, and the County Council would expect transport infrastructure identified in each Masterplan to attract Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to be included in district Infrastructure Delivery Schedules ('Regulation 123 lists'). At the detailed planning stage, the Masterplans will be a material planning consideration in determining planning applications in its area.

Masterplans will also form the basis for the County Council's dealings with other transport infrastructure and service providers such as the Highways Agency, Network Rail, train and bus operating companies and neighbouring local authorities.

A key driver for East Lancashire's economic development is the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), of which both Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Councils are members. The Partnership's Lancashire Growth Plan for 2013/14 has been approved and sets out how strong and sustainable economic growth can be achieved in the county.

A second driver comes from the County Council's responsibility for some work that was previously carried out by the NHS. The County Council and the NHS will now work together to tackle some of the key issues that affect people's health and wellbeing, helping people to stay healthy and prevent illness.

The cost of delivering the package of measures identified in the masterplan, and those that will come out of the work proposed, cannot be borne entirely by public sector funding. It has been shown that, in areas where the county can come to rely on the development industry to contribute funding to new infrastructure, investor confidence increases together with the ability to attract other sources of funding, and in turn improve the prospects of delivery.

Moving forward, investment in major new infrastructure will, increasingly need to demonstrate an economic justification. In practice, this means a clear strategy towards bringing forward integrated development proposals for new development and economic growth alongside the infrastructure to support it.

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan seeks to deliver good, reliable connections for people, goods and services whilst offering choice, facilitating travel on foot, by cycle, bus and rail as well as by car and goods vehicle. It should:

- Support the economic development of East Lancashire and of the county as a whole.
- Work to address deprivation.
- Promote community resilience.
- Increase healthy behaviour.
- Reduce the area's carbon footprint.

To do this, the masterplan seeks to ensure that:

- Sustainable travel becomes the choice wherever possible, even in rural areas.
- Strategic employment sites flourish and are well connected nationally and internationally.
- Local developments and business are supported and have the strategic and local connections that they need to succeed.
- People from all communities are able to access the employment and education opportunities that are available both in East Lancashire and further afield.
- Active travel is encouraged and supported, making walking and cycling safe and easy choices for local journeys.
- Public realm improvements support both new development and existing communities and enhance the appearance and safety of sustainable travel routes.
- Visitors find the area attractive and easy to travel around without a car.

These objectives fall into a number of themes which are grouped into 3 strands:

- Connecting East Lancashire.
- Travel in East Lancashire
- Local Travel.

Connecting East Lancashire looks at how East Lancashire connects to other areas, particularly to the rest of the county and neighbouring growth areas to make sure that its people, economy and housing markets are more fully integrated to areas of opportunity.

Travel in East Lancashire is about the links between East Lancashire's towns and the major employment and housing locations.

Local Travel takes up the challenge of making sure that everyone, regardless of their background or where they live, can get to the services and opportunities that they need, from education and employment to leisure and health.

The 3 strands are closely linked to each other. Easy local travel, by walking and cycling, needs to feed into the bus and rail networks for longer journeys. The bus and rail networks themselves need to connect properly both for journeys in East Lancashire and to the wider area. No matter how far from East Lancashire people

and goods are going, the connections to strategic road and rail networks must work to make national and international travel as easy as possible.

The masterplan therefore proposes the following work programme to enable the masterplan to move forward:

- **Rail Connectivity Study** to look at all issues surrounding rail connectivity to, from and within East Lancashire, with the exception of connections to Rawtenstall, which, in response to consultation, are remitted to
- **A56/M66 Haslingden/Rawtenstall to Manchester Gateway Study** to look at all issues within the corridor including, in response to consultation, possible new rail connections.
- **Samlesbury/Cuerden/Whitebirk Growth Triangle Study** to look at issues on and around the M65 gateway.
- **Burnley/Pendle Growth Corridor Study** will look at what needs to be done to make sure that our roads can support the economic growth planned for Burnley and Pendle.
- **Blackburn Key Corridor** improvements have been identified and the business case for them will be developed.
- **Ribble Valley Growth Corridor Study** to include the A59 between Samlesbury and North Yorkshire boundary and also the A671/A6068 route between Whalley and M65 Junction 8.
- **East Lancashire Accessibility Study** will focus on travel between the main towns and employment areas, but will also include travel to education and for leisure.
- **East Lancashire Strategic Cycle Network** will provide 'good' links between towns, employment, education and housing.
- **Local Links** will come out of work in other areas of this masterplan and from the day to day contacts we have with our partners and our communities.

The **A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass** was included in the masterplan as an existing scheme for which the County Council wished to progress a revised, shortened option.

The M65 to Yorkshire Corridor study was commissioned by Lancashire County Council to investigate whether a bypass was still the most appropriate solution, both to Colne's current congestion and to accommodating potential development proposals that could put more traffic on the network. If a bypass was needed, the second question was whether the original scheme was still the route to take forward.

On the evidence available, the study concluded that a bypass was likely to be needed and that the most cost effective route would be a shortened version of the currently protected scheme. This would run from a new junction between Junctions 13 and 14 on the M65 to a point on the A56 just north of Foulridge. Importantly, it would not stop the reopening of the railway at some time in the future.

This 'Brown' route was one of 2 southern options that did not preclude railway reopening, the other being the 'Blue' option to the west of the 'Brown'. A 'Red' option

based on the original scheme was a third southern variant based on the currently protected line. Two northern options, 'Pink' and 'Purple' were also considered and a 'Green' option ran from Foulridge to the east to meet the A6068.

The results of the study were published as part of the consultation on this masterplan with a view to finding out what our partners and East Lancashire's people and businesses thought of the possible changes to the bypass scheme.

The consultation response, discussed earlier, does confirm that we do have support to undertake the next stage of the work that will give us the evidence to draw up detailed design proposals for all the southern options. These options will include what could ultimately be done along the North Valley to increase capacity in the absence of a bypass, as well as detailed consideration of all possible routes for an A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass. Once this work has been completed we will be able to consult on our final proposals.

The further work required will include detailed traffic data collection which will be used to model the traffic implications of development and of changes to the highway network. The traffic study will not only look at the immediate area that changes in and around Colne could affect, but will also consider the impacts across a much wider area.

We therefore also seek approval to carry out this further work towards the preparation and submission of a business case for an A56 Colne to Foulridge bypass.

Consultations

Consultation on the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan was carried during October and December 2013 and views were sought from District Councils, Members, Stakeholders, District and Parish Councils and members of the public.

At the start of the consultation a news release was issued and a series of briefings were held with the media. These included Radio Lancashire, the Lancashire Telegraph, 2BR radio and the Colne Times. A further two news releases were issued, the first to promote the consultation event being held at Colne Library and the second as a consultation deadline reminder.

Media relations activity has resulted in extensive media coverage. From 10 October to 22 November 2013 there were more than 50 articles printed in the local media.

A dedicated area for the consultation was developed on the County Council's website. Visits to the page to date (23 October – 4 December) are as follows:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=5489&pageid=43429&e=e

Page views	Avg. time on page
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The consultation was also posted on the 'Have your Say' consultation pages of council's website -

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/consultation/responses/response.asp?ID=219

A series of messages were posted on the County Council's social media channels Facebook and Twitter - throughout the consultation period messages on Facebook reached over 4,300 people and, Twitter reached over 60,000 people.

Consultation documents were distributed to the following locations on 23 October 2013. Barnoldswick Library; Barrowford Library; Burnley Central Library; Longridge Library; Great Harwood Library; Earby Library; Whalley Library; Rishton Library; Clayton le Moors Library; Nelson Library; Chatburn Library; Church Library; Bacup Library; Clitheroe Library; Briercliffe Library; Brierfield Library; Oswaldtwistle Library; Adlington Library; UCLAN University Library; Preston Harris Central Library; Burnley County Information Centre; Blackburn Visitor Centre; Preston County Information Centre; Chorley Interchange; Clitheroe Interchange; Accrington Library and Information Centre; Nelson Interchange; Rawtenstall Library and Information Centre; Leyland Library. Documents were hand deliver to Colne Library on 8 November 2013.

Across all consultation groups support was given to the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan. There was a general consensus that improved connectivity is essential for the future economic growth of East Lancashire. Whilst there was recognition that outward connectivity to Yorkshire and Manchester was vital, it was also felt that connectivity within East Lancashire was also an important factor and underplayed in the consultation draft.

Representation received from stakeholders, where an opinion was offered, supported the need for a Bypass at Colne with the preference being for the brown route. However, there was significant opposition to the Blue Route and also a significant minority opposed to any route.

There was a significant response calling for the East Lancashire Railway to be utilised as a commuter link and incorporated into the proposals within the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan.

A number of stakeholders across different groups expressed concern at the lack of sustainable transport measures in the masterplan.

There were a number of specific comments suggesting junction, traffic light phasing and public transport improvements.

The masterplan has been updated to take into account as many suggestions as possible and a new section outlining how the masterplan has changed in response to consultation has been included. Reports on the consultation into the draft masterplan and a separate report on the A56 bypass are attached at Appendices 'B' and 'C' respectively.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The programme of studies and work potentially stemming from them as presented in the Masterplan, covering development stages and construction works, will be funded from a number of sources, details of which are presented in Appendix 1 of the Masterplan document. The County Council's financial contribution for the period 2013/14 - 2015/16, which will provide for preparatory scheme identification and design works, with the prospect for some physical works, is contained within the agreed Capital Programme and Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan for that period. Beyond then, the County Council's contributions will be contained within the LTP Integrated Block grant from Government alongside any financial commitments arising from the other Master Plans which have yet to be brought forward for consultation.

Legal

The recommendations contained within the masterplan are in compliance with relevant legislation; and will be procured in accordance with appropriate legislation and protocols, including, where relevant, European directives.

Risk management

The risks are outlined in the report.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
East Lancashire Highways and Transport Master Plan Consultation Draft	October 2013	Marcus Hudson, Environment Directorate, (01772) 530696
M65 to Yorkshire Corridor Study: Stage 3: Review of Major Highway Proposals Report	September 2013	Marcus Hudson, Environment Directorate, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan for 2012/13-2014/15	August 2012	Marcus Hudson, Environment Directorate, (01772) 530696

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A