

Lancashire Strategic Transport Propectus

January 2015



Foreword

Lancashire has one of the largest local economies in the North of England, valued at over £25 billion, is home to over 40,000 businesses employing in excess of 670,000 people, and has a population of 1.4 million. It also has a particularly rich and varied economy and geography, with nationally important areas for agriculture and horticulture and the visitor economy, linked to urban centres recognised as for industrial excellence that are reshaping themselves for the 21st century.

Lancashire has experienced sustained growth in the last decade, with readily identifiable economic hotspots focused on the performance Preston and Lancaster, and economically revitalised towns like Burnley, and we are now the second largest economy in North West England and one of the biggest in the North; only Greater Manchester and Leeds at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse are significantly bigger. Our world-leading aerospace sector, which is the 4th largest in the world with a core of ambitious SMEs focused on competing in global markets. They are supported by the extensive research and development facilities of major employers, our three leading universities, and an Enterprise Zone dedicated to the growth of the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector.

Over the last three years, the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), working with 15 local authorities, county, unitary and district, has brought forward a comprehensive economic strategy to underpin Lancashire's future growth. Although only recently established, the LEP has developed a growth and infrastructure programme valued at £1 billion, which is one of the most comprehensive in the North of England.

The LEP's economic strategy is underpinned by Lancashire's already significant contribution to key sectors of the UK economy, and paved the way for both the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal and the subsequent Lancashire Growth Deals.

Lancashire's role as part of the Northern Powerhouse is clear, providing key international and national growth sectors, a nationally significant university based innovation asset, a large and highly skilled workforce, and a high quality of life for residents who live and work in the sub-region or residents commuting to neighbouring city-regions. Increasing economic growth across the Northern Powerhouse can only benefit Lancashire and vice versa.

Our transformational agenda is therefore not just critical to Lancashire, but also critical for Lancashire to grow far more strongly as part of the Northern Powerhouse and for the Northern Powerhouse to reap the benefits of Lancashire's offer.

Transport ~ Our Key Priority

Lancashire has benefited in recent years from key transport and infrastructure schemes of national significance such as the West Coast Main Line Route Modernisation programme. But there hasn't been enough investment in critical local transport infrastructure over recent decades. This failure is estimated to account for one-quarter of Lancashire's current economic performance gap with the rest of the UK.

An ineffective transport network constrains economic growth and the potential to deliver new employment and housing. Better connectivity, reducing congestion, developing a reliable and efficient public transport network, unlocking strategic employment sites and linking to neighbouring growth areas and important national and international markets are all vital to transforming economic growth in Lancashire.

Transforming Lancashire's economy will benefit everyone; our residents and businesses will prosper as will those we share our economic fortunes with, particularly in the North. Connectivity, both within and outside the county is key to our plans to grow. We must have a truly integrated highways and transport network for both people and freight that will provide a long term support to a transformed economy.

To do so we must make the best use of available resources and prioritise the investments that deliver significant economic growth. That means Lancashire must take full advantage of investment beyond the county. HS2 and the North's interconnected city regions will together make the North a new destination of choice for mobile businesses; Lancashire's international and national connections make it well placed to both benefit from this and to make the North's offer more attractive.

We therefore set out our agenda for transport that will underpin transformational economic change across Lancashire and across the wider North.



Our Transformational Agenda

Part 1:

Our Transformational Priorities

National Connectivity: Connecting to HS2

As a key economic centre in its own right and identified by Government as such, it is vital that Preston has direct and frequent access to HS2 and potentially HS3 in fit for purpose surroundings. Preston station is a critical asset for the city and given its location on the West Coast Main Line mid-way between London and Glasgow also acts as a gateway to Lancashire and for communities further north for local, regional and national connectivity. We therefore need to:

- Secure the current commitment to deliver a connection from HS2 to the West Coast Main Line at Bamfurlong south of Wigan and ensure it is considered in conjunction with the proposed wider examination of east-west connectivity across the North including HS3.
- By 2026, transform Preston railway station into a fit for purpose 21st century facility and reinforce its role as the North West's major rail hub north of Manchester.

National Connectivity: the M6

The M6 is an integral part of the UK's main north-south transport spine between London, the West Midlands and Scotland, which also includes the West Coast Main Line. From a Lancashire perspective, it is particularly important for the movement of freight operations, many of which function on the basis of 'Just in Time' delivery. South of Preston, deterioration in the operational effectiveness of the route is resulting in increased average journey times and a worsening of journey time reliability. We therefore need to:

- By 2021, secure a commitment to extend the 'smart spine' linking to North West and London identified in the 2014 Road Investment Strategy northwards along the M6 to Junction 32.



Inter City Region Connectivity within the Northern Powerhouse

The rail corridor linking Preston with central Manchester and Manchester Airport is not only of strategic importance to Lancashire but also to Cumbria and Scotland. Connections are available in central Manchester for onward travel to a range of other key destinations across the North, including Leeds and Sheffield. This corridor offers the greatest opportunity to grow the business travel market in Lancashire, hence we need to:

- By 2021, deliver faster journey times by rail between Preston and central Manchester / Manchester Airport with modern electric trains providing sufficient capacity on all services within the corridor.



Cross City Services: Connecting Lancashire to City Region Networks

It is essential that all of Lancashire can benefit from the development of city region rail networks across the North. However, across much of Lancashire, the quality of many local rail services and infrastructure leaves much to be desired or is non-existent. We therefore need to:

- By 2026, transform the East Lancashire rail network including electrification of all routes and the introduction of modern electric trains providing increased service frequencies and sufficient capacity on all services.
- By 2026, deliver a new rail link and town centre railway station / transport interchange for Skelmersdale with modern electric trains providing frequent services to both Manchester and Liverpool in support of the town's wider transformation.



Part 2: Our Key Supporting Infrastructure Priorities

A) Central Lancashire

- By 2026, deliver a new crossing of the River Ribble to the west of Preston to link the Preston Western Distributor with the South Ribble Western Distributor.



B) East Lancashire

- By 2021, secure a commitment to deliver additional capacity on the M65 between the M61 and Junction 6 at Whitebirk in the next Road Investment Strategy.
- By 2021, secure a commitment to start implementation of measures to deliver the Conditional Outputs of the M66 Gateway Study.



C) West Lancashire

- By 2031, upgrade rail connectivity across West Lancashire through electrification of the Ormskirk to Preston line together with the introduction of modern electric trains and improving interchange with the Manchester-Wigan-Southport line at Burscough.



D) Fylde Coast

- By 2021, upgrade Blackpool North railway station into a high quality, multi-modal interchange to capitalise on the forthcoming electrification of routes to Preston, Manchester and Liverpool and extension of the Blackpool Tramway from the North Pier.
- By 2021, secure a commitment to start implementation of measures to deliver the Conditional Outputs of the South Fylde SINTROPER project.
- By 2021, deliver the A585 Little Singleton Bypass and agree a programme of cost effective, deliverable improvements to remove any remaining pinch-points on the route, in particular, the unimproved length between the M55 and the Windy Harbour Junction.



E) Lancaster

- By 2026, deliver a comprehensive transport solution for Lancaster South to support implementation of the City Centre Movement Strategy and planned and future development to the south of the city, including a reconfigured Junction 33.
- By 2021, secure a commitment to include the railway line between Morecambe and the West Coast Main Line in the North West's electrified rail network.





Lancashire Strategic Transport Propectus

January 2015

