

## **Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### **Report of the Director Programmes and Project Management**

Electoral Divisions affected: All in Fylde and Wyre
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#### **Proposed Approval of the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan for Publication**

(Appendices 'A', 'B', and 'C' 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 Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented here at Appendix A for approval. The masterplan has been developed jointly with Blackpool Council; who will consider for approval on 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2015.

A public consultation exercise for the draft Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan ran for six weeks, from 12<sup>th</sup> January until 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The response to the consultation exercise has largely endorsed the county council's vision for the Fylde Coast's highways and transport networks and for the work needed to take the masterplan forward.

However, our proposal to no longer pursue the M55 to Norcross scheme has not been well received and there is also a strong feeling that we have ignored a potentially vital link in the Fylde Coast network that the old Fleetwood to Poulton railway line could offer.

The current M55 to Norcross scheme, the line of which has been protected since April 2009, is the culmination of a very long standing proposal, which first saw the county council implement route protection of what was then the Fylde Coast Easterly Bypass in 1994. Whilst we still believe that the scheme is not deliverable in the foreseeable future and that we must urgently seek other solutions, the consultation has made it very clear that, almost without exception, respondents do not believe that any other long term solution to problems on the A585(T) corridor exist.

Many of those respondents produced compelling qualitative evidence of the geographical extent of problems caused by drivers seeking to avoid the A585. In many ways linked to the issue of the future of the M55 to Norcross Link road were the many respondents who complained that we had not taken proper notice of Fleetwood's lack of mainline rail connectivity.

Whilst we feel that neither a mainline rail connection nor a tram link will be achievable in the lifetime of this masterplan, we had originally intended to investigate what could be done to improve Fleetwood's connectivity as part of the Urban Public Transport Strategy.

We now propose to carry out a North Fylde Connectivity Study that will use all available evidence held by the county council and our partners and stakeholders to set out what is achievable across all modes of transport within the wider corridor that has the A585(T) at its heart. This study will now incorporate the North Fylde Line Station Viability Study as a key component.

Therefore at this stage the masterplan does not seek to remove any protection from the current alignment of the 'Blue Route', but will take a final decision about the scheme's future on completion of this study, details of which are set out in the masterplan.

The third major change to the masterplan has come about both through consultation responses and through changing circumstances. We now feel the time is right to pursue an Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles Strategy for the Fylde Coast given that funding opportunities are becoming more available to do so.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No 25 have been complied with.

### **Recommendation**

The Cabinet is asked to approve the publication of the joint Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Master Plan, presented at Appendix 'A', and the delivery of the strategies that will allow the masterplan to be taken forward.

### **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 Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented here at Appendix A for approval. The masterplan has been developed jointly with Blackpool Council; who will consider the plan for approval on 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2015.

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 master plans 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 development plans. At the detailed planning stage, the Masterplan 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 Highways England, Network Rail, train and bus operating companies and neighbouring local authorities.

A key driver for the Fylde Coast's economic development is the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), of which both Lancashire and Blackpool 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 both Lancashire and Blackpool councils' responsibility for public health activity that was previously carried out by the NHS. The councils 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 County Council would expect transport infrastructure identified in each Masterplan to attract developer contributions and, where applicable, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to be included in district Infrastructure Delivery Schedules ('Regulation 123 lists').

The Fylde Coast 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.

By 2032, we want the Fylde Coast to have highways and transport networks that support:

**Prosperity** - because the success of the area's economy will determine the availability of good jobs that allow people to fulfil their aspirations and enjoy independent, productive lives; and because a strong, diverse commercial base will be central to sustaining investment in the area and in turn securing long term economic success.

**Health** - because it is central to everybody's happiness and ability to achieve what they want from life and

**Wellbeing** - because we aim to move from intervention to prevention as much as we can, giving people the opportunities that allow them to stay well and thrive on their own or as part of their family

Greater prosperity, health and wellbeing will make the Fylde Coast a good place to live, work or visit, a place where all people can live long, happy and healthy lives regardless of their background.

We believe there are 5 key requirements that our highways and transport networks must meet and we can use to set out our programme:

(i) We need our highway network to operate more efficiently, not just for cars, but also for buses, coaches and for freight.

#### **What we will do:**

To **enable growth**, we will work with our partners to ensure that demands placed on our highways and transport networks by new housing and development are accommodated as sustainably as possible. We will also make sure that our main business locations, such as the Enterprise Zone at Warton, Blackpool Airport and other strategic locations, are well served by both roads and other means of travel. We will also work to make the most of opportunities provided by other development schemes as they come forward where benefits to Lancashire's residents and businesses exist.

We want to ensure that the **A585(T)** operates as effectively as possible by carrying forward a programme of viable improvements. We therefore propose to build on the work that the HE are starting now and to work together to design and take forward the recently announced **A585(T) Windy Harbour to Skippool Improvements** and then any further scheme or schemes needed to remove any final pinch-points on the corridor.

We will therefore undertake a specific **North Fylde Connectivity Study**. The work will gather together the findings of our existing traffic modelling work and also the

work being done by Highways England. It will also quantify the extent of rat-running and road safety problems in the wider corridor of concern that is influenced by the A585(T).

Only when the study has been completed will a final decision on the 'Blue Route' be taken. However, the County Council's position remains that the route will be difficult to fund and that we must urgently seek more readily deliverable alternatives if possible.

We will also pursue an **Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Strategy** across the Fylde Coast area.

(ii) We need our rail network and services to make commuting convenient and to be an outstanding gateway to the Fylde Coast for businesses and visitors.

#### **What we will do:**

We will work with our partners to design and then consult on proposals for a **Blackpool North (Talbot Gateway) Interchange** that will facilitate interchange between rail and tram and provide the terminus to the tramway extension. Once we have a final scheme, we will work with the LEP to secure funding.

In order to establish just what potential our rail stations have, we will undertake a **North Fylde Line Station Viability Study**, which will complement the work being done elsewhere in the county and proposed for the Fylde Coast.

We are carrying out a **South Fylde Line Study** to look at the future role of the South Fylde Line, the best way to enhance the role of the line in providing a southern gateway to Blackpool and to establish what the most viable and cost effective way of linking the South Fylde line and the Blackpool Tramway would be and what benefits such a link would bring.

(iii) We need public transport to serve all our communities so that people can get to the jobs and services they need.

#### **What we will do:**

In Blackpool, we propose to continue to work with our partners to establish design and location options for **coach facilities** within the Leisure Quarter on New Bonny Street and for layover facilities at an appropriate location. Once a scheme for coach facilities has been finalised, we will work with the LEP to secure funding if needed.

To ensure that urban public transport is fully integrated with other sustainable modes, we will work with our partners in the bus industry to put together a **Fylde Coast Long Term Public Transport Strategy**.

In order to **maintain rural connections**, work is already proposed in the county to find the most cost effective methods of providing access to services in rural or remote areas. We will extend this work to the Fylde Coast.

To help ensure effective **visitor travel choices**, we will work with our partners to provide effective marketing to publicise these improvements and reduce the dependence on the car for leisure travel to and from the Fylde Coast. We will also put in place a monitoring programme to make sure that we know how travel patterns are changing.

(iv) We need cycling and walking to become the convenient travel choice for shorter distances and for it to be easy for people to change between modes:

#### **What we will do:**

The **Fylde Coast Cycle Network** will build on work already undertaken between Fleetwood and Starr Gate and in St Annes, as well as the Blackpool Explorer routes and initiatives that are underway such as Blackpool Green Corridors. Key to the network will be the completion of the **Fylde Coastal Way**, the towpaths of the **Lancaster Canal** and the creation of **Explorer Mini-wheels**, family friendly, multi user circular routes aimed at the leisure and tourist market and **Green Spokes** that will allow safe access by cycle to key employment destinations

(v) We need our streets and public spaces to feel safe and attractive

We will work to make **Local Links** play a vital role in improving prosperity, health and wellbeing for all age groups.

The masterplan provides an integrated package of measures that will enable the County Council to support delivery of both the Fylde and Wyre Local Plans and the economic development aspirations of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. It aims to provide residents, businesses and visitors with rail, car, bus, cycling and walking connectivity that will make more destinations easily available and make sustainable travel choices attractive.

#### **Consultations**

Consultation on the draft Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan started on 12 January and ran until 20 February 2015. Views were sought from a range of stakeholders which included district councils, councillors, district and parish councils and members of the public. There were 145 responses to the consultation (excluding comments made at the consultation event).

#### **Media relations**

The masterplan was approved for consultation by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 9 December 2014. Two news releases were issued with details of the consultation period (10 December 2014) and one with details about the events (21 January 2015). The two press releases generated seven articles printed in the local media.

For each story we create a total score depending how positive or negative the story is and how widely the story appears. This total score can range from -8 to +8 for

each story with any positive score representing a positive story. The average score for all Fylde Coast masterplan related articles is 4 (fairly positive).

### Stakeholder engagement

A briefing for county councillors was held on 15 December 2014. All county councillors were invited to attend. For those councillors who were unable to attend, the event was webcast and documents were posted on the members' portal C-First. Emails were also sent to a wide range of stakeholders informing them of the consultation as well as promoting the events. A briefing was also given to Fylde and Wyre councillors on 17 December 2014.

### Website

A dedicated area for the consultation was developed on the county council's website. Visits to the page to date (January – March 2015) are as follows:

Website stats for January – March 2015	Page views	Unique visitors	Avg. time on page
	2073	85	5.5mins

The consultation was also posted on the ['Have your Say'](#) consultation pages of council's website.

### Social media messages

A series of messages were posted on the county council's social media channels – Facebook and Twitter - throughout the consultation period.

- Our messages on Facebook reached over 7,000 people.
- Our messages on Twitter reached nearly 15,500 people.

### Consultation documents

Consultation documents were made available at the following locations across the Fylde Coast from 12 January 2015.

Fleetwood Library	Garstang Library	Poulton Library
Kirkham Library	Lytham Library	Freckleton Library
Ansdell Library	St Annes Library	Thornton Library
Cleveleys Library	Fleetwood Flakefleet Primary School	Knott End Library
All public libraries in Blackpool	Fylde Borough Council Office	Wyre Borough Council Office

## Consultation events

Consultation events were held at the following locations during the consultation period.

Location	No. of people who attended
Garstang Library, Windsor Road, Garstang	20
St John the Evangelist Church, Church Street, Blackpool	30
Poulton Library, Blackpool Old Road, Poulton-le-Fylde	50
Fleetwood Library, North Albert Street, Fleetwood	30
Kirkham Community Centre, Mill Street, Kirkham	50
St Annes United Reform Church, St Georges Road, Lytham	40

A full report on the consultation, including comments, is presented at Appendix B

### Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

#### Risk management

Approval of the masterplan will promote certainty as to the County Council's highways and transport programme for the Fylde Coast over the years to 2032. That certainty will increase the county council's ability to secure investment and therefore to secure safe and efficient transport systems to serve the residents and businesses of the Fylde Coast, supporting public health and economic growth ambitions.

#### Financial

The programme of studies and potential works 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 A of the masterplan document. The county council's contributions will be contained within the approved capital programme and within approved revenue budgets. Future capital spend will be accommodated within the LTP Integrated Transport Block grant from Government, alongside any financial commitments arising from the other Masterplans, including those which have yet to be brought forward for approval, and from project specific external funding.



No final commitment to the implementation of any project in this masterplan will be made until all required funding has been confirmed.

## **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.

## **Environmental**

A draft Environmental Report on the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan is being produced. This report will set out the potential environmental and health impacts of the masterplan and provides background information as to where mitigation may be needed as schemes develop. No significant risks are identified. The report also contains a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

## **Equality**

An Equality Impact Assessment, part of the Draft Environmental Report, is attached at Appendix 'C'

## **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan Consultation Draft	December 2014	Marcus Hudson, Environment, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan for 2012/13-2014/15	August 2012	Marcus Hudson, Environment, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan: A Growth Deal for the Arc of Prosperity	March 2014	Kathryn Molloy, Office of the Chief Executive (01772) 538790

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A