



## **LEP – Sub Committee**

### **Transport for Lancashire Committee**

**Private and Confidential: NO**

Date: Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### **East – West Connectivity: Lancashire to North and West Yorkshire Draft Economic Study Brief**

(Appendix 'A' refers)

**Report Author: Dave Colbert, Specialist Advisor Transportation**  
[dave.colbert@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:dave.colbert@lancashire.gov.uk)

#### **Executive Summary**

There is growing interest in the strategic east-west transport corridor linking Lancashire with North Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region. However, the corridor is not covered specifically by any of the Department for Transport led studies announced in the Road Investment Strategy in December 2014 as none of the Trans-Pennine routes within it are part of the Strategic Road Network. Furthermore, work currently underway by Transport for the North as part of the development of the Northern Transport Strategy has to date focused principally on rail links between the North's core cities of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield together with Hull and Manchester Airport, and the Strategic Road Network.

A study group comprising Lancashire and North Yorkshire County Councils and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in conjunction with the Lancashire, York-North Yorkshire-East Riding and Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnerships have prepared the attached project brief for a shared analysis to identify the potential economic benefits that might arise across the North of England from improved transport links between Lancashire and North and West Yorkshire. Its outputs will assist with identifying whether a strategic case exists for new interventions on both road and rail networks.

#### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to recommend that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board support the commissioning of the East – West Connectivity: Lancashire to North and West Yorkshire Economic Study, with the LEP agreeing to fund Lancashire's contribution from its strategic case-making budget.



## Background and Advice

There is growing interest in the strategic east-west transport corridor linking Lancashire with North Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region. This 'Central' Trans-Pennine Corridor comprises the M65/A56/A6068, A59 and A683/A687/A65 roads and parallel railways, including the Calder Valley line linking Preston, Blackburn and Burnley with Bradford and Leeds via Hebden Bridge and the line linking Lancaster with Leeds via Skipton. Several long-standing aspirations for improved connectivity by both road and rail currently exist and a number of schemes have been considered in the past.

The Lancashire Strategic Transport Prospectus, launched in February 2016, acknowledges this growing interest. The North Yorkshire County Council Strategic Transport Prospectus likewise identifies improving east – west connectivity, including Trans-Pennine links, as a strategic transport priority. However, the corridor is not covered specifically by any of the Department for Transport led studies announced in the Road Investment Strategy in December 2014 and being taken forward in partnership with Transport for the North as none of the Trans-Pennine routes within it are part of the Strategic Road Network. Furthermore, work currently underway by Transport for the North as part of the development of the Northern Transport Strategy has to date focused principally on rail links between the North's core cities of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield together with Hull and Manchester Airport, and the Strategic Road Network.

Road links in the corridor tend to follow historic routes dictated by topography rather than travel demand. Most are poorly aligned and unsuitable for carrying large volumes of traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles. Main line rail links are likewise constrained by topography, with low line speeds, ageing infrastructure and capacity constraints having a significant impact on journey times and reliability. Both are of a much lower quality than those further south that link Liverpool and Manchester with Leeds, Sheffield and the Humber ports. Consequently, there is a strong perception locally that the transport network hinders the efficient movement of people and goods, and that this poor connectivity is having a negative impact on economic development and regeneration.

A study group comprising Lancashire and North Yorkshire County Councils and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in conjunction with the Lancashire, York-North Yorkshire-East Riding and Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnerships have prepared the attached project brief for a shared analysis to identify the potential economic benefits that might arise across the North of England from improved transport links between Lancashire and North and West Yorkshire.

The analysis will develop an understanding of the scale and nature of the wider economic benefits that could arise if transport connectivity and capacity in the 'Central' Trans-Pennine Corridor are significantly enhanced, particularly in terms of reduced centre to centre travel times by both rail and road. Such wider benefits could include increased agglomeration potential, enhanced productivity and ability to attract new growth sectors, improved access to labour markets and job creation, and



hence GVA uplift. Its outputs will therefore assist with identifying whether a strategic case exists for new interventions on both road and rail networks.

The analysis is estimated to cost in the region of £50,000 and should take three months to complete. Discussions with partners in North and West Yorkshire to finalise individual funding contributions are nearly complete. LEP Board approval will be sought to support the Lancashire funding contribution to the study. Once shared funding arrangements have been agreed, it is proposed that Lancashire County Council will commission the work.