

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 12 April 2018

### Report of the Head of Service Planning and Environment

#### Part I

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

### Transport for the North Draft Strategic Transport Plan Public Consultation

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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#### Executive Summary

Transport for the North is consulting on a draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North of England. The county council has been closely involved with its development to date. This report summarises the key messages set out in the draft plan and the rationale for the county council's proposed response, which is set out in Appendix 'A'. Whilst broadly supportive, the county council has three key strategic concerns:

- 1) With regard to Northern Powerhouse Rail, the council is concerned about inference and presentation in the draft plan. Northern Powerhouse Rail should be more properly set within the wider context of the North's Long Term Rail Strategy, of which it should be part.
- 2) With regard to the Major Road Network, there will need to be a consolidation of views between Transport for the North and the Department for Transport, as it will be self-defeating to have two such networks defined in the North.
- 3) Given the implied absolute priority given to developing Northern Powerhouse Rail throughout the draft plan, the North West to Sheffield City Region corridor study needs progressing immediately and set alongside the ongoing Northern Powerhouse Rail work.

The county council's response also draws Transport for the North's attention to a number of key strategic priorities regarding the Strategic Development Corridors, which the council expects to inform the development of the final plan and to feature prominently therein.

#### Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked to approve the attached Appendix 'A' as the county council's response to the consultation.

## Background and Advice

Transport for the North is a partnership of civic and business leaders from across the North that will become the first statutory Sub-National Transport Body in England from April 2018. Its principal role will be to act as a statutory advisor to the Secretary of State for Transport, with responsibility for setting the objectives and priorities for strategic road and rail in the North. To that end and working with the Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail, High Speed 2 Ltd and partner transport authorities, Transport for the North has prepared a Strategic Transport Plan setting out future requirements for the North of England's strategic transport networks. This plan, on which Transport for the North is now consulting formally, will be statutory and will inform future Government investment decisions. The report summarises the key messages set out in the draft plan and the rationale for the county council's proposed response. The deadline for receipt of responses is 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

The county council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategic Transport Plan, which is available at <https://transportforthenorth.com/stp/>. As an extant member of Transport for the North with representation on its various member, executive and technical groups, the council has been closely involved with developing the draft plan and associated Long Term Rail Strategy, and therefore able to influence their evolution. However, whilst expressing broad support for the draft plan, the council has three key strategic concerns it wishes to see addressed before final publication. These relate to Northern Powerhouse Rail / Long Term Rail Strategy, the Major Road Network and Strategic Development Corridor priorities.

The focus of the draft Strategic Transport Plan is economic, with significant long-term investment in transport infrastructure seen as essential to support transformational growth across the North. The North is currently underachieving, with the economic value per person 25% below the England average and income per person £7,500 less. Poor transport links and under investment in transport are key factors contributing towards these gaps.

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review identified four economic strengths in which the North is globally competitive, with each strength strongly represented in Lancashire. These "prime capabilities" are:

- Advanced manufacturing;
- Digital;
- Energy; and
- Health innovation.

Promoting, growing and connecting the "prime capabilities" is expected to deliver higher productivity. They are supported by three "enabling capabilities" - education (particularly higher education), financial and professional services and logistics.

Transport for the North sees its role in supporting economic growth as:

- Connecting people – by creating faster, more reliable transport connections to improve job opportunities, provide access to leisure activities and support tourism;

- Connecting businesses – supporting commerce by improving national and international connections in, out and across the North; and
- Moving goods – by improving links across the North and to ports and airports to enable freight and goods to move more efficiently.

By 2050, with a transformed economy the North could achieve a near £100bn increase in Gross Value Added and create 850,000 additional jobs. Transport for the North is currently undertaking a considerable amount of analytical work to identify the transport infrastructure improvements necessary to deliver this ambition.

To this end, the draft Strategic Transport Plan focuses on four key programmes that could amount to investment of £60-£70 billion over the period from 2020 to 2050:

- **Northern Powerhouse Rail** – rapid, reliable and resilient rail links between six of the North's largest cities (Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield) and between those cities and Manchester Airport;
- **Long Term Rail Strategy** – a framework for the ongoing development of the North's existing railway into a single cohesive network through investment in lines, stations, services and future franchises to deliver across its five key themes of connectivity, capacity, the customer, supporting communities and cost effectiveness;
- **Major Road Network** – strengthening the road links across the North that are vital for economic growth;
- **Integrated and Smart Travel** – to bring forward a new era of simple and seamless public transport journeys across the North.

The county council understands the rationale for **Northern Powerhouse Rail**, but is concerned about inference and presentation. Enhancing rail connectivity between the North's largest cities will not be a game changer in its own right. Northern Powerhouse Rail should be properly set within the wider context of the Long Term Rail Strategy, of which it should be part. The premise should therefore flow from the analysis underpinning the Long Term Rail Strategy as well as the Independent Economic Review. This collective evidence base needs to demonstrate that the North cannot achieve transformational economic growth simply through upgrading existing rail infrastructure and services alone.

In its current form, Northern Powerhouse Rail will be of little benefit to communities along the West Coast Main Line, including the key growth centres of Preston and Lancaster. The diagram on Page 45 of the draft plan only serves to reinforce a sense of separation and perception that these places add little economic value. Lancashire has one of the largest economies in the North of England, home to over 40,000 businesses employing in excess of 670,000 people. Valued at over £29bn, Lancashire's economy is comparable to or more productive than those of city regions such as Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield.

The county council participated in the development of the **Major Road Network** as set out in the draft plan. However, this network is significantly larger than the indicative network included in the recent Department for Transport consultation setting out its own proposals to create a Major Road Network. Clearly, there will need to be a consolidation of views going forward, as it will be self-defeating to have two Major Road Networks defined in the North. The county council considers the

indicative Major Road Network included in the Department's consultation documentation to be a fair reflection of roads within Lancashire that should be included, based on the approach proposed therein.

In addition, Transport for the North has identified seven **Strategic Development Corridors** where it will focus on improving transport infrastructure. These corridors link important prime capability assets and important economic centres currently in need of improved connectivity; four are relevant to Lancashire. Transport for the North considers investment in these corridors as critical to achieving the North's collective ambitions, hence their importance:

- **Central Pennines** – a multi-modal Trans-Pennine corridor linking Lancashire with North Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region;
- **Connecting the Energy Coasts** – a multi-modal Trans-Pennine corridor linking some of the UK's most important energy assets on both the East and West Coasts and covering Lancaster and the Fylde Coast;
- **West and Wales** – a multi-modal corridor extending west from Manchester to North Wales and covering the M58 Corridor in West Lancashire;
- **North West to Sheffield City Region** – a rail focused corridor linking advanced manufacturing centres in Cumbria and Lancashire with those in Greater Manchester and the Sheffield City Region.

The Central Pennines, Connecting the Energy Coasts and West and Wales studies are currently underway and due for completion by the autumn to inform the final Strategic Transport Plan, to be published later this year. There is currently no timescale for commissioning the North West to Sheffield City Region corridor study.

The county council supports the corridors approach set out in the consultation draft, and is particularly pleased with the priority given to taking forward the Central Pennines and Connecting the Energy Coasts corridor studies. However, given the implied absolute priority given to developing Northern Powerhouse Rail throughout the draft plan, the county council wishes to see the North West to Sheffield City Region corridor study progressed immediately and set alongside the ongoing Northern Powerhouse Rail work. This corridor is of strategic importance to Lancashire given ongoing joint work with the Sheffield City Region to develop the Northern Powerhouse Advanced Manufacturing Corridor that anticipated such a corridor study coming forward. As the Cabinet may be aware, this joint working has facilitated key initiatives such as the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre North West on the Samesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone.

The county council's response also draws Transport for the North's attention to a number of key strategic priorities within the Strategic Development Corridors, which the council expects to inform the development of the final plan. They reflect Lancashire's strategic priorities for transport investment to support economic growth, development and regeneration as set out in the Lancashire Strategic Transport Prospectus. Given the significance of Lancashire's economy to the Northern Powerhouse, its growth potential and the importance of better connectivity with other parts of the North, the council's expectation is that these priorities will feature prominently therein.

Following this consultation, Transport for the North will update the draft plan in light of responses received. It will be for Transport for the North acting as statutory Sub-national Transport Body for the North to approve and sign-off the final Strategic Transport Plan. As a voting member of Transport for the North, the county council will have the opportunity to participate in that process.

### **Consultations**

Cabinet should be aware that the Transport for Lancashire committee is preparing a response for submission on behalf of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, informed by the county council's proposed response and those of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

If the county council does not submit a response, there is a risk that the council's three key concerns with the draft Strategic Transport Plan will not be addressed.

### **Financial**

There are no financial implications from responding to this consultation.

### **Legal**

There are no legal implications from responding to this consultation.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan Draft for public consultation	January 2018	Dave Colbert 01772 534501
Long Term Rail Strategy Draft Update	January 2018	Richard Watts 01772 534582

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A