

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 November 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Planning and Environment

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All in Preston, South Ribble
and Fylde

Preston City Transport Plan and the Preston City Region Submission to the Transforming Cities Fund

Contact for further information:

Marcus Hudson, Tel: (01772) 530696, Planning Manager,
marcus.hudson@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

Consultants were commissioned in 2018 to prepare a Preston City Transport Plan setting out a 20 year vision for movement and connectivity focussing on travel to, from, and within the city centre. The consultant has now issued the Plan which presents a long-term strategy for reducing congestion, providing for better public transport, and transforming the city and the wider sub-region's streets and spaces. In support of this, the Plan sets out a programme of proposals to transition the city from a car-dominated network to a multi-modal network.

At its meeting on 14 October 2019, the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal Executive received the Plan and agreed to its publication as evidence to inform current and future transport-related planning and investment programming.

Its publication is timely, with preparatory work underway for the Local Transport Plan, a review underway of Central Lancashire's Highways and Transport Master Plan, the Local Industrial Strategy, and the Central Lancashire Local Plan Review.

Its production also coincides with the bid preparation for Preston City Region under the government's Transforming Cities Fund. Preston is one of just 12 shortlisted Transforming Cities Fund city regions nationwide with the prospect of receiving a share of £1.2 billion, to be spent by March 2023, aimed at driving up productivity through improved public and sustainable transport connectivity. The Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal has provided a strong foundation for the sub-region's proposition to the Transforming Cities Fund, and the delivery of the four major road schemes under the City Deal provides the backdrop, and the means, to deliver meaningful and transformational public and sustainable transport measures across the city and wider sub region.

Work carried out separately for the City Deal including rail and bus scheme development and master planning; the aforementioned City Transport Plan; and a cycling and walking delivery plan; is assisting in preparing the Transforming Cities Fund bid, which is to be submitted to the Department for Transport in November this year.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to

- (i) Note the advice received by consultants and presented in the Preston City Transport Plan document, and agree to its use as evidence to inform current and ongoing transport-related planning and investment programming.
- (ii) Approve the submission of a strategic outline business case in support of a funding bid to the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund and authorise the Director of Growth, Environment and Planning and s151 Officer, or nominated representative, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the County Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to finalise the details of the proposition.

Background and Advice

Consultants were commissioned in 2018 through the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal to prepare a 20-year vision for movement and connectivity in the city, focussing on travel to, from, and within the city centre. This recognised a gap in the evidence base to determining the transport offer within Preston, and how complementary master planning exercises carried out for the City Deal – to inform local centre and public transport corridor interventions and cycling and walking provision all serving the city and sub-region – would be implemented and operate, in a physical and network context, in the city.

The preparation of technical advice for the Preston City Transport Plan has undergone a comprehensive process of evidence gathering, workshops, local and political engagement, and analysis to identify issues and opportunities, ideas for transport options and interventions, sift and appraise potential schemes, and draw up a final set of proposals.

During its preparation, the City Deal Executive has received a series of reports, presentations and workshop engagement. Similarly, Members of the Central Lancashire Joint Advisory Committee for Strategic Planning have had the opportunity to input to these proposals. Most recently, the consultant has engaged with key business and transport stakeholders in the area who have inputted during the course of its preparation.

The consultant has now issued the City Transport Plan document which has been published and can be viewed at <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/organisation-and-partnerships/partnerships/city-deal/preston-city-transport-plan/> (and can also be

viewed in the Members' Retirement Room). It presents a long-term strategy for reducing congestion, providing for better public transport, and transforming the city and the wider sub-region's streets and spaces. Its findings point to a city that is currently dominated by the private car – around 70% of trips to work are made by car – and a lack of real travel alternatives. It recognises Preston's importance at a sub-regional and pan-Lancashire level, and the city's inter-relationships across the Northern Powerhouse and nationally, and concludes that, Preston cannot simply carry on trying to accommodate today's level of car use, particularly commuting.

With a 20-year vision, it exceeds the lifespan of current policies and programmes, including both the current City Deal and existing local plans. Whilst the Transport Plan sets out deliverable short to medium term schemes, it also looks further into the future, setting out a programme of proposals to transition the city from a car-dominated network to a multi-modal network, reducing congestion and bolstering productivity, with added inclusivity, and helping Preston to become an 'accessible' city and a healthy environment to live, work and play.

Importantly, the Plan recognises that none of its policies or proposals have been adopted and will need to go through the formal due processes before achieving that status. In this respect, its production is timely, with the county council's Local Transport Plan and Highways and Transport Master Plan being reviewed, and so too the Local industrial Strategy and Central Lancashire Local Plan.

The Transport Plan's production also coincides with the bid preparation for Preston City Region under the government's Transforming Cities Fund. Prompted by the county council's expression of interest submitted to government in 2018, Preston has been chosen as one of just 12 shortlisted city regions nationwide with the prospect of receiving a share of £1.2 billion. A funding award will need to be spent by March 2023, and bids will be assessed according to the aim to drive up productivity through improved public and sustainable transport connectivity in some of England's largest cities. The focus for this is on improved connections on key intra-urban corridors between urban centres and suburbs.

The county council's Highways and Transport Master Plan for Central Lancashire, and its delivery through the City Deal, provided a strong foundation for the initial proposition to government submitted last year. This recognised the economic strengths of the area and its strong economic performance over recent years, but also that this could come to be hampered by a struggling transport network. The importance of delivering the four critical road schemes under the City Deal provides the backdrop, and the means, to delivering a substantial and interlinked package of public and sustainable transport measures – new rail capacity, bus, cycling and walking infrastructure, junction and road space reconfiguration, supported by new technology - to boosting productivity and unlocking new jobs and new housing.

Complementary and cross-cutting priorities for the Transforming Cities Fund also include promoting low carbon journeys, tackling air pollution, and encouraging the use of new mobility systems and technology as part of the government's Grand Challenge on the Future of Mobility.

Work carried out separately for the City Deal, including rail and bus scheme development and master planning, and the Transport Plan, is assisting in preparing the bid, and so too is the Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan produced for the City Deal. Cycling and walking proposals to the Transforming Cities Fund derived and prioritised using the governments 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan process (which the City Deal's delivery plan now represents) will be viewed more favourably in the bid determination process.

The bid proposition and strategic outline business case to support its submission are being co-developed with the assistance of the Department for Transport. The development process has benefitted from a 'mock' business case submission in June of this year, which contained a draft programme, presented as a series of low, medium and high funding scenarios of between £111m and £190m. The Department's feedback at that time, and since then, has been particularly positive towards the proposals, and, indeed, has challenged for more innovation and transformation in the choice and design of schemes.

Based on the Department's guidance, a package of proposals is under development that will, once agreed, inform a Strategic Outline Business Case to be submitted to the Department for Transport in November this year. At this point in time, the package considers a range of interlinked improvements along a series of key corridors serving the city and connecting existing and new residential areas and centres of employment.

The corridors currently being considered are consistent with the public transport priority corridors identified in the county council's own Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan and since taken up in the Preston City Transport Plan issued by the consultant and described above. These represent the key radial routes linking suburban and local service and employment centres to the city centre, including Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall, Ribbleson, Fulwood, Ashton, and the major employment and new housing areas at Cuerden, Sablesbury, Warton, south Blackpool and North West Preston. Key city centre destinations that feature in these considerations include the rail station, bus station, Ringway, Cardinal Newman College and University of Central Lancashire.

Consideration is currently being given to bus priority measures, such as new bus lanes, bus gates, traffic signal-controlled junctions and other technology improvements; cycling and walking priority measures, including separated cycle ways and enhanced footways; and rail improvements, including new station development and capacity improvements to existing rail facilities.

Given the rapidly evolving package of measures and the deadline to submission of the proposition and supporting business case, Cabinet is asked to give authority to finalise the details of the proposition and submit the strategic outline business case in support of this funding bid, to the Director of Growth, Environment and Planning and s151 Officer, or nominated representative, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the County Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

Consultations

Measures are being developed working with relevant district local authorities and engagement with local transport providers and other key stakeholders.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

In the event that the county council does not submit a bid to the Transforming Cities Fund it would forego the opportunity to realise substantial Department for Transport funding towards sustainable and active travel provision serving the Preston city region. This would impede efforts to reduce the reliance on the private car for journeys into the city centre and to remove through-traffic and result in continuing and increasing levels of congestion, worsening journey times and reliability, to the detriment of productivity and growth, air quality and carbon reduction goals.

Financial

The bid application will be expected to confirm the amount of local or third party contribution towards the cost of this proposition. As a general guideline recent Department for Transport guidelines suggest schemes should aim for a contribution to be at least 15% of the total scheme costs. Guidance published for this fund explains that the greater the overall local contribution towards the costs and the more the contribution is from the private sector and other external organisations, the more positively the business case will be considered in the assessment process.

For this bid, the local contribution will be met from a combination of sources, including the county council's transport capital programme, secured developer contributions under s106 agreements, and funding under the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal budget, in all cases this comprises funding already in place towards schemes within this proposition. No additional borrowing by the county council is anticipated under this bid and this would not be authorised under the delegations asked for under the recommendation set out in this report. The county council is also actively engaging with local transport providers in the area to explore opportunities for third-party contributions, including the prospect for investment in service improvements, to support this bid.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A