

## **Levelling Up Fund Optioneering Process**

The proposed East Lancashire Levelling Up Fund package bid is the product of an extensive optioneering process. The key principle underpinning the option assessment is that potential improvements are driven by identified problems, prioritisation of places, strategic objectives defined by LUF, project specific objectives, stakeholder engagement and deliverability criteria. This ensures the need for investment can be clearly justified and evidenced, and the selection of the potential options are readily linked back to the need for investment.

As part of the optioneering process, a set of study objectives were defined in order to ensure that selected options address the issues identified during the development of the need for investment. The objectives developed for the study are:

- Support and encourage business and domestic investment, innovation, and growth.
- Benefit businesses and Lancashire's workforce with quick and reliable journey times to work, and for the movement of goods and services.
- Increase resident's travel horizons with fast, reliable, and affordable public transport.
- Connect home and places of work, training, education, services, and leisure by active travel.
- Reduce actual and perceived road safety risks towards zero.
- Improve people's health and well-being, sense of pride and connection with their community.

### **Overall optioneering process**

In line with Transport Analysis Guidelines (TAG), a wide range of possible measures have been considered which cover sustainable modes and potential combinations of options. In accordance with the guidance and to undertake a thorough optioneering exercise, the process has been undertaken for the whole of Lancashire rather than focusing on East Lancashire alone. This has ensured that all options, including those geographically located outside of East Lancashire but with the potential to unlock improvements for the local population, have been considered holistically.

The optioneering process led to the development of the three project themes:

- East Lancashire Liveable Neighbourhoods.
- East Lancashire Public Transport Improvements.
- East Lancashire Active Travel Improvements.

### **Location indexing**

Alongside the optioneering process, an index-based assessment was undertaken in order to validate the identification of in-need locations for investment and to ensure that the projects selected fall within LUF priority 1 locations.

The indexing tool ranked Lancashire's districts in order of where investment is needed based on key indicators such as Economic Deprivation, Skills and Productivity, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, journey times by car, accessibility by PT, walking and cycling facilities, percentage of physically active and obese individuals and access to outdoor spaces. These indicators were selected in accordance with the LUF guidance.

A summary of key reasons the four areas have been prioritised is presented below.

**Pendle** falls within the top five places within the county with high unemployment rates and it also houses the highest proportion of the county's population without a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Pendle is one of the districts with a low proportion of active adults. These factors, amongst others, contribute to there being several pockets of high deprivation across the district, including most notably in central Colne and Nelson.

**Burnley** is located directly south of Pendle. Burnley falls within the top five places within the county with high unemployment rates, as well as being one of the areas with the lowest business densities. Although not the lowest, Burnley district's population has a lower proportion of qualifications than many other areas of the county. Burnley is one of the districts with a low proportion of active adults. There are several pockets of high deprivation across the district, including in Burnley town centre.

**Hyndburn**, home to Accrington, has high unemployment rates and low business densities. Hyndburn shows low percentages of active adults compared to the rest of the districts. There are several pockets of high deprivation across the district, including within Accrington.

**Rossendale** has high unemployment rates and low business densities, contributing to the number of areas within the district that fall within the most deprived decile for indices of multiple deprivation. Pockets of deprivation are found within Rawtenstall.