

LEP - Transport for Lancashire Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 10th June, 2016 at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present

County Councillor John Fillis (Chair)

Graham Cowley
Mike Damms

Councillor Fred Jackson
Councillor Phil Riley

Observers

Richard Perry, Department for Transport

In Attendance

Dave Colbert, Specialist Advisor Transportation, Lancashire County Council
Tom Flanagan, Executive Director Place, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Andy Milroy, Company Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Jeremy Walker, Transport Policy Manager, Blackpool Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

County Councillor John Fillis welcomed all to the meeting, it was noted that County Councillor Jennifer Mein had submitted apologies with County Councillor Fillis nominated as her representative as Chair of the Committee.

Apologies were also noted from Bruce Parker, Highways England (Observer), Mike Kirby, Lancashire County Council (Officer) and Alan Cavill, Blackpool Council (Officer).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2016

Resolved: The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 5th April 2016 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Declarations of Interest

None

5. Department for Transport Large Local Major Transport Schemes: New Ribble Crossing Development Funding Bid

Dave Colbert, Specialist Advisor Transportation, Lancashire County Council, presented a report (circulated) on the Department for Transport Large Major Transport Schemes, New Ribble Crossing Development Funding Bid.

It was highlighted that the Department for Transport (DfT) had not set out rigid eligibility criteria but will sift out schemes according to whether they are genuinely 'otherwise unaffordable' by other means. It was noted that the size of the schemes proposed should be relative to the size of the LEP, the minimum cost threshold for the largest LEPs, including Lancashire, being £75m.

With one exception, the priorities set out in the Lancashire Strategic Transport Prospectus are considered to be outside the scope of the Large Local Major Transport Schemes fund. The majority are either schemes on the national rail network or the Strategic Road Network. Mr Colbert highlighted that the New Ribble Crossing is that exception, and it is proposed that the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership submit a bid for development funding from 2017/18 to produce a fully worked up Outline Business Case for the scheme. A feasibility study is currently underway, due for completion by April 2017.

The New Ribble Crossing is considered to meet all of the factors that the DfT will take into account when selecting schemes:

- It will cost considerably in excess of £75m to construct (with anticipated cost in excess of £200m);
- It is not divisible;
- There are no alternative local funding routes available for a scheme of this magnitude, the possible exception being the Road Investment Strategy;
- Subject to inclusion in the Road Investment Strategy, the scheme could not access any other Government funding.

Work is underway to produce a robust cost estimate and delivery timescale for the development of an Outline Business Case. The Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2015/18 includes £2m for the feasibility study and work to take the project forward through consultation to concept design approval. Some of this funding, potentially up to £1m, could be available as a local contribution.

It was stated that a New Ribble Crossing would have significant impact on not only the movement of transport but would also have economic and housing benefits.

The Committee debated if an alternative scheme could be put forward and

discussed the potential of combining schemes within the Strategic Transport Prospectus, it was felt this was not a viable option and the Committee and that the New Ribble Crossing be put forward as the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership bid.

Resolved: The Committee approved the recommendation that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board be requested to agree the submission of a bid to the Department for Transport's Large Local Major Transport Schemes Fund for development funding to support the preparation of a fully worked up Outline Business Case for the New Ribble Crossing.

6. East - West Connectivity: Lancashire to North and West Yorkshire Draft Economic Study Brief

Dave Colbert presented a report (circulated) regarding the East – West Connectivity between Lancashire and North / West Yorkshire.

It was reported that 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.

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 a project brief (circulated) which contains 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.

The Committee welcomed and supported the Study, and particularly the engagement from partners in North and West Yorkshire. The Committee discussed the need to ensure the Study considers all elements of connectivity – rail, development of the M65 along with the other major roads and also links to the Transport for the North Freight Strategy which is due to be published soon.

Resolved: The Committee approved the recommendation that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board be requested to agree to 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.

7. Any Other Business

None

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 13th September 2016, 10am, Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.