

# Transport for the North Board

**Subject:** Trans Pennine Strategic Road Studies

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**Sponsor:** Peter Molyneux, Major Roads Director

**Meeting Date:** Thursday 14 January 2021

## 1. Purpose of the Report:

To secure agreement from Board Members on TfN statutory advice to the Secretary of State on next steps for Trans Pennine Tunnel and M6 – A1(M) Strategic Road Studies.

## 2. Executive Summary:

- 2.1 The Trans Pennine Tunnel (TPT) and M6-A1(M) Central Pennines Corridor (M6-A1M) Studies were commissioned by DfT to consider strategic road options in the Southern and Central Pennines that have the potential to improve strategic connectivity and contribute to the Northern economy through agglomeration benefits.
- 2.2 Partnership Board received an update on the TPT and M6-A1(M) studies on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 2.3 This report briefly summarises the findings from the two studies and sets out proposed next steps for improving transport links in the two corridors.

## 3. Background

### Trans Pennine Tunnel (TPT) Study

- 3.1 The Trans Pennine study was one of the six strategic studies announced in the RIS1 and is looking at the performance of the current route between Greater Manchester and Sheffield City Region (A57, A628, A616, A61) and the degree to which this is an obstacle to improving local economic growth.
- 3.3 The distance between Manchester and Sheffield is around 40 miles and the journey takes 80 minutes in uncongested conditions. This makes Manchester – Sheffield the poorest connected of the city pairings across the North of England.

- 3.4 Transport for the North, Transport for Greater Manchester, Sheffield City Region and the Peak District National Park Planning Authority participated in the study at Project Committee level and have been involved in key decision points.
- 3.5 The TPT study identified a package of improvements that would deliver substantial benefits, including time savings to car and freight users, improved journey time reliability and resilience.
- 3.6 There are substantial cost and environmental challenges to delivering the full TPT package in its current form.

### **M6 – A1(M) Central Pennines**

- 3.7 In March 2019, DfT commissioned Highways England to lead an M6 – A1(M) study, and to consider options for improving strategic road connectivity between the M65 at Colne and communities in North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.
- 3.8 Transport for the North, Lancashire CC, North Yorkshire CC, West Yorkshire CA, Leeds City Council and City of Bradford MDC participated in the study Project Board and have been involved in key decision points.
- 3.9 The study demonstrated the potential to deliver benefits to the Central Pennines Corridor, including improved journey time reliability, reduction in accidents, greater resilience for east-west movements, improved journey quality, regeneration of locations along the core study corridor, enhanced accessibility to key transport hubs, improved access to leisure and tourism facilities and facilitating improved access to jobs and education for communities within the corridor.
- 3.10 Evidence from a demand impact assessment using the Highways England Trans Pennine South Regional Traffic Model demonstrated that under normal traffic conditions the new strategic route would only result in a small transfer traffic from the M62, with limited benefits to relieving congestion on the M62.
- 3.11 The scale of the proposed highway improvements, geography and environmentally sensitive areas within the corridor mean that there are major challenges associated with the project, these include the very high capital cost, topography of the study area and potential for large adverse environmental impacts.

## **4. Proposed Next Steps**

### **Relevant to both TPT and M6-A1(M)**

- 4.1 That work should continue exploring deliverable and financially viable solutions to improving transport connectivity in the two corridors.

- 4.2 Future work should include assessment of the cumulative benefits of road and rail improvements to identify the programme level benefits across passenger and freight travel markets. For road travel this should include opportunities to improve travel by long distance bus.
- 4.3 That further work applies the revised guidance in the update to the 'Green Book', with a stronger focus on assessing schemes / packages of schemes against strategic objectives.
- 4.4 That in weighing up options there should be a greater emphasis on considering the future impact of new technologies, digital working and of other forms of behaviour change. Also reference to Government policies on transport decarbonisation, noting that publication of the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan is expected in Spring 2021.
- 4.5 That resilience of the transport network is a key consideration and should gain greater prominence in the programme level assessment of schemes / packages of schemes.
- 4.6 Proposed interventions should ensure good integration with localised priorities such as enabling sustainable transport provision on shorter journeys and the 'last mile' to town and city centres.
- 4.7 That any reduction in the funding requests for road upgrades within the two corridors should be considered within a wider multi-modal context. For example, including the need to ensure Manchester - Sheffield is well connected by rail.

#### **Specific to Trans Pennine Tunnel**

- 4.8 TfN and partners understand the significant challenges to delivering the ambition for a twin bore tunnel for the trans Pennine route, and accept the need to investigate proposals that move away from the full dualling of a strategic route.
- 4.9 There is still a strong case for improving strategic connectivity between Manchester and Sheffield and that further work should continue, and within the context set out in points 4.2 – 4.6 should include:
  - a) Improvements to the A628 and A616, rather than full dualling, to increase road safety, reliability and resilience. These would need to consider effects on the wider local road network and be to an exemplar environmental design.
  - b) With the move to zero tailpipe emission and expected advent of autonomous / semi- autonomous vehicles the potential for a single bore tunnel to achieve similar strategic benefits to the more expensive dual bore tunnel considered up till now.

- c) Consideration of the resilience benefits of improving east-west connectivity in the Southern Pennines, including the advantages of a tunnel in reducing the impact of severe weather.
  - d) Benefits of improved connectivity for freight, both through and to the Peak District. Taking account of the changing demands for, and distribution of freight movements across the North. This is particularly important as the United Kingdom develops new trading relationships with the European Union and globally.
  - e) Account of the cumulative impacts for passengers and freight of the Trans Pennine Rail Upgrade and Northern Powerhouse Rail.
- 4.10 Further work will require development funding and should be sponsored by TfN, working in close partnership with DfT, Highways England, Peak District National Park and local authority partners.

**Specific to M6 – A1(M)**

- 4.11 TfN and partners recognise the significant challenges in delivering a major strategic route within the Central Pennines Corridor and accept that there should be no further work on considering a strategic motorway or dual carriageway standard route.
- 4.12 Transport connectivity is still poor within the corridor, with several congestion hot spots and overall slow journey times from East Lancashire to West and North Yorkshire.
- 4.13 The M6-A1(M) strategic connectivity study identified several locations where smaller scale interventions could be pursued for considerably less cost and with less disruption.
- 4.14 Further work should be managed at a coordinated programme level, thereby minimising disruption and seeking to maximise opportunities for improving overall value for money. Within the context set out in points 4.2 – 4.6 this should include:
- a) Development of a business case for a coherent, prioritised and sequenced corridor wide programme of smaller scale measures.
  - b) Options for reducing congestion at pinch points in the corridor, for example at Colne and on the A629/ A650.
  - c) Consideration of future passenger and freight travel markets including the interdependencies with the proposal to reopen the Skipton-Colne rail line and opportunities for improved long-distance bus routes.
- 4.15 Further work on the M6-A1(M) will require development funding and should be sponsored by TfN working in close partnership with the local

transport authorities responsible for the road network in the corridor.

**5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Board is asked to agree to TfN writing to the Secretary of State setting out the recommended next steps detailed in section 4 of this report.

**6. Appendices:**

- 6.1 None

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**List of Background Documents:**

There are no background papers to this report.

**Required Considerations**
**Equalities:**

Age	Yes	No
Disability	Yes	No
Gender Reassignment	Yes	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	No
Race	Yes	No
Religion or Belief	Yes	No
Sex	Yes	No
Sexual Orientation	Yes	No

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Equalities	An Impact assessment has not been carried out as this report is seeking endorsement for TfN recommendations on feasibility work.	Major Roads Strategy Manager	Major Roads Director

**Environment and Sustainability**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Sustainability / Environment – including considerations regarding Active Travel and Wellbeing	An Impact assessment has not been carried out as this report is seeking endorsement for TfN recommendations on feasibility work. Recommendations within report consider potential adverse environmental impacts of TPT and more generally the aspirations of TfN’s emerging Decarbonisation Strategy by considering future travel scenarios in relation to new	Major Roads Strategy Manager	Major Roads Director

	vehicle technologies / increased WFH / long distance bus travel, when planning next steps.		
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### **Legal**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Legal	<i>TfN Legal Team</i> has confirmed there are no legal implications.	Deborah Dimock	Julie Openshaw

### **Finance**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Finance	TfN Finance Team has confirmed there are no financial implications for the current financial year. Scheme budgets would be agreed prior to initiating any work sponsored by TfN.	Paul Kelly	Iain Craven

### **Resource**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Resource	TfN HR Team has confirmed there are no direct resource implications as a result of this report.	Head of HR	Business Capabilities Director

### **Risk**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Risk	A risk assessment has not been carried out at this stage.	Haddy Njie	Iain Craven

### **Consultation**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Consultation	Suitable consultation has been carried out with TfN partners.	Major Roads Strategy Manager	Major Roads Director