

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

31 January 2017

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

TRANS-PENNINE HIGHWAY PROJECTS (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To update Cabinet on a number of projects relating to highway links across the South Pennines and to recommend a County Council policy statement on these.
- (2) **Information and Analysis** There are currently a number of inter-related pieces of work being undertaken on existing and potential roads across the South Pennines. Essentially, these are a combination of Highways England's management and maintenance programmes for the strategic road network and priorities for highways improvement emerging from Transport for the North (TfN), which is the sub-national transport body for the north of England. Cabinet will be aware that, in terms of governance, Derbyshire sits within the equivalent Midlands Connect sub-national transport body, but there are clearly strong relationships between the two entities in relation to economic geography and travel. Worthy of note is the considerable amount of work underway relating to connections between Manchester and Sheffield, which inevitably pass through Derbyshire. The key current areas of work on trans-Pennine roads are:
- **The Mottram Bypass and A57(T) to A57 Link Road**
The Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which sets out the work of Highways England for the period up to the year 2020-21 includes major schemes which are expected to begin construction during the RIS period. The Mottram Bypass would carry the Trunk Road around the village of Mottram-in-Longdendale (in Tameside) and provide a link between this and the A57 Principal Road near Woolley Bridge in Derbyshire. The Link Road would take traffic travelling to and from Glossopdale out of the existing A57(T)/A628(T)/A57 'Gun Inn' junction, reducing congestion at a major pinch point. At this stage there are no reports available on the forecast traffic and environmental impacts of the schemes. They are, though, highly unlikely to provide any relief to the village of Tintwistle, an issue discussed further below.

- **Trans-Pennine Tunnel Study**
One of six strategic studies announced through the RIS. Initial work has been carried out into the case for a new road tunnel to improve connectivity between Manchester and Sheffield. A Stage 3 report was published in November 2016 which identifies potential routes for a tunnel and finds that journey times between Manchester and Sheffield could be greatly reduced, resulting in a significant uplift in connectivity between the two cities. Government has signalled an intention to carry out further analysis of benefits and impacts but details of the scope and programme for this are currently awaited.
- **Wider Transport Connectivity Assessment**
Led by TfN and the Department for Transport (DfT), this work is intended to identify potential schemes which might complement a Trans-Pennine road tunnel across a broad corridor between Liverpool and Hull. It will also seek to identify projects which might be worth pursuing independently of a tunnel. Northern Derbyshire falls within the scope of the study area and the County Council, therefore, has been offered direct representation on TfN's project governance structures.
- **Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme**
Announced in the 2014 Autumn Statement, this includes technology and safety packages for the A57(T) - A628(T) - A616(T) corridor between the M67 and M1 Motorways. This is aimed at addressing identified challenges relating to the collision record and to route resilience resulting from collisions, extreme weather and maintenance issues. Specific interventions under investigation include climbing lanes, automatic snow gates and additional safety and closed-circuit camera systems. The climbing lanes could have some limited potential to affect the overall attractiveness of the route to traffic. However, unless this is likely to have wider impacts, it is not necessarily appropriate for the County Council to adopt a formal policy position on how Highways England manages its existing network and no such position is recommended at this time.

Cabinet will wish to note that whilst each of these areas of work is concerned primarily with road transport, there are separate studies underway for TfN on passenger and freight rail.

Bringing together the outcomes of the above schemes and studies, there is a reasonable degree of certainty that the Mottram Bypass, the A57(T) to A57 Link Road and the safety and technology improvements along the existing Trunk Road will take place. There are approval processes to be completed, but the schemes can be regarded as funded. Whilst there is also considerable momentum behind the investigation of longer-term tunnel and wider connectivity schemes, these do not have construction funding currently identified. This throws into focus the question of what might be the impacts of the 'definite' projects on Derbyshire's interests, possibly in perpetuity, but at

least in the interim period (potentially a number of years) ahead of the completion of a tunnel.

The provision of the Mottram Bypass and A57(T) to A57 Link Road will result in a significant uplift in the connectivity of Glossop and Glossopdale to Greater Manchester and to the strategic road network via the M67 Motorway.

Alongside good, existing rail connectivity, this will help the northern parts of High Peak Borough to strengthen its relationship with the economy of Greater Manchester. The removal of significant constraints in the centre of Mottram and the Gun Inn junction though, are likely to increase demand for travel over both the Woodhead (A628(T)) and Snake (A57) passes. Judgement over whether this will be at an 'acceptable level' will only be possible on receipt of detailed modelling reports. There are, though, legitimate grounds for concern over road safety and environmental impacts on the communities of Tintwistle, Dinting Vale and Glossop. It is possible that, to help address these, the County Council could seek support for mitigation measures to reduce demand for travel on its own network. Opportunities to do this will be limited by the sensitivity of the environment through which the routes pass and also the reliance on these roads for local access, as well as for longer-distance travel. Although it is not possible to quantify impacts at this stage, there is reason to expect the County Council will face difficult decisions over whether to support the RIS schemes once the preferred solutions for these are announced. Whilst existing problems on the Trunk Road corridor through Tameside are acute and deserving of resolution, it is possible the Council will be unable to support the proposed schemes due to the consequential detrimental impacts within its own area.

Given the above, it is notable that both the Greater Manchester and Sheffield City Region Combined Authorities are expected to consider reports in the near future which recommend support for the extension of shorter-term programmes of work to incorporate bypasses of Hollingworth and Tintwistle. Although there is no doubt this raises contentious issues, not least that a complete bypass of Tintwistle would be impossible to achieve without some road construction within the Peak District National Park, it is welcome that a debate is being initiated. At the same time, it would be difficult for officers to recommend unequivocal support for such a scheme without a more detailed understanding of its route, its design and its impacts across a wide range of criteria.

It is recommended that the County Council resolves to:

- Raise with DfT, TfN and Highways England its concern that the schemes proposed in the current RIS have potential to be damaging to the interests of Derbyshire should they result in increased traffic over the Woodhead and/or Snake Passes.

- Support, without prejudice to any future consideration of their outcomes, the continuation of studies into a trans-Pennine road tunnel and wider connectivity.
- Welcome, in principle, any interest expressed by the Greater Manchester and Sheffield City Region Combined Authorities in the development of a full bypass of Mottram-in-Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle.
- Request that the DfT and TfN give consideration within their current programme of studies to:
 - a full investigation of the case for such a scheme, with and without the longer-term prospect of a trans-Pennine road tunnel;
 - consideration within this of ways in which the impacts of a scheme on the Peak District National Park could be minimised; this could incorporate examination of carriageway standards, lighting options and whether tunnelling in some form (already proposed for the Mottram Bypass) would be feasible.
- Reserve its formal position until receipt of a full assessment of benefits and impacts on whether to support:
 - the Mottram Bypass
 - the A57(T)-A57 Link Road
 - a Mottram-Hollingworth-Tintwistle bypass in some form.

(3) Environmental and Health, Social Value and Transport

Considerations Full consideration of these issues will need to form the basis, in due course, of whether the County Council chooses to support or oppose the potential road schemes discussed in this report. At this stage, however, insufficient information is available to support any definitive recommendations or advice to Cabinet regarding the impact of proposals in such matters as environment, social value or transport.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources and property considerations.

(4) Key Decision No.

(5) Call-In Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(6) Background Papers Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details - Jim Seymour, extension 38557.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet agrees to the adoption of the following as policy position regarding potential schemes for trans-Pennine roads:

- (a) Raise with the Department for Transport (DfT), Transport for the North (TfN) and Highways England its concern that the schemes proposed in the current Road Investment Strategy (RIS) have potential to be damaging to the interests of Derbyshire should they result in increased traffic over the Woodhead and/or Snake Passes.
- (b) Support, without prejudice to any future consideration of their outcomes, the continuation of studies into a trans-Pennine road tunnel and wider connectivity.
- (c) Welcome, in principle, any interest expressed by the Greater Manchester and Sheffield City Region Combined Authorities in the development of a full bypass of Mottram-in-Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle.
- (d) Request that the DfT and TfN give consideration within their current programme of studies to:
 - a full investigation of the case for such a scheme, with and without the longer-term prospect of a trans-Pennine road tunnel;
 - consideration within this of ways in which the impacts of a scheme on the Peak District National Park could be minimised; this could incorporate examination of carriageway standards, lighting options and whether tunnelling in some form (already proposed for the Mottram Bypass) would be feasible.
- (e) Reserve its formal position until receipt of a full assessment of benefits and impacts on whether to support:
 - the Mottram Bypass
 - the A57(T)-A57 Link Road
 - a Mottram-Hollingworth-Tintwistle bypass in some form.

Mike Ashworth
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