

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018  
title: TRANSPORT STRATEGY CONSULTATION  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: CRAIG MATTHEWS

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive information on the Strategic Transport Plan for the North.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions - In addition to Ribble Valley Borough Council striving to meet its three ambitions, it also recognises the importance of securing a diverse, sustainable economic base for the Borough.
- Community Objectives – The issues highlighted in this report contribute to the objectives of a strong and sustainable economy in the Borough.
- Corporate Priorities - Delivery of services to all.
- Other Considerations – None.

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 On Monday 15th January 2018, The House of Commons approved regulations for Transport for the North to become the first Sub-national Transport Body in England. Following the successful approval from the House of Lords on the 18th December 2017, and will come to force from April 2018.

2.2 Transport for the North (TfN) was created as a pan-Northern Partnership Board of civic and business leaders from across the North, working with Highways England, Network Rail, High Speed 2 (HS2) Ltd and the Department for Transport. With the support of the business and academic communities, and is tasked with setting out the requirements of the pan-Northern transport network through a Strategic Transport Plan for the North.

### 3 INFORMATION

3.1 A draft Strategic Transport Plan (STP) has since been developed to show the spatial and modal scope for transport investment across the North of England to 2050, together with expected costs and benefits. The STP is currently subject to public consultation until mid-April 2018, and has been created with regard to other relevant initiatives, including the Northern Powerhouse.

3.2 The STP will become a statutory document. This report outlines the content of the STP and proposes an outline of a response from the Council. It is intended to coordinate this response with a complementary response being prepared for submission by Lancashire County Council as the strategic transport authority for the County.

- 3.3 As part of this, the consultation draft Long Term Rail Strategy (LTRS) sets out Transport for the North's (TfN) vision for the ongoing transformation of the North of England's railways, covering the period up until 2050. It describes how the network should be improved to realise its potential to support and facilitate a growing and more vibrant Northern economy, and to enhance the North's quality of life, in an environmentally sustainable way.
- 3.4 The strategy has also established a set of Conditional Outputs and, associated with these a set of Desirable Minimum Standards, which consider and reflect the needs of both passenger and freight services across the entirety of the North's railway network. After the consultation exercise has been concluded and the responses considered, this LTRS will supersede the Long Term Rail Strategy that was endorsed by Rail North Association in 2015.
- 3.5 The full draft Strategic Transport Plan is available from the Transport for the North's website (98 pages) at [www.transportforthenorth.com](http://www.transportforthenorth.com) along with a series of assessments that the draft Strategic Transport Plan has been subject to. The full ISA documentation is also available on the Transport for the North's website (103 page report, 482 pages of appendices and a 45 page Habitats Regulations Assessment).
- 3.6 The structure of the STP focuses on spatial corridors across the North, with modal sections (particularly road and rail). In order to deliver the objectives for these corridors a series of specific modal initiatives are also referenced in the Plan. Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is a key element of the STP and is probably the most significant. Alongside HS2 Phase 2 (linking Birmingham with Leeds and Manchester), it aims to transform rail travel across the North offering much faster, more frequent and more reliable rail links between the main urban areas of the North and Manchester Airport, as well as other significant centres.
- 3.7 Alongside these other significant centres. The emerging Vision for NPR in the STP includes the following: -
- A new line between Liverpool and the HS2 Manchester Spur via Warrington.
  - Capacity at Manchester Piccadilly for around eight through services per hour.
  - A new Trans Pennine rail line that connects Manchester and Leeds via Bradford
  - Significant upgrades along the corridor of the existing Hope Valley line between Sheffield and Manchester via Stockport.
  - Leeds to Sheffield delivered through HS2 Phase 2B and upgrading the route from Sheffield.
  - Leeds to Newcastle via HS2 junction and upgrades to the East Coast Mainline.
  - Significant upgrades to existing line from Leeds to Hull (via Selby) and Sheffield to Hull (via Doncaster).
- 3.8 Some maps illustrating these transport corridors are attached at Appendix A of this report. NPR will be subject to further scheme development and TfN will complete a Strategic Outline Business Case by the end of 2018. Alongside, and complementary to NPR, is a Long Term Rail Strategy which is discussed in the Plan and which will

seek to integrate NPR and HS2 with the existing rail infrastructure. A key objective will be to ensure good connectivity and to meet the capacity, frequency, reliability and resilience needs of both passenger and freight customers, whilst minimising costs and contributing towards broader initiatives such as tackling climate change.

3.9 As stated earlier, it is proposed that a consultation response from the Council should put forward incorporating the following issues: -

- **Enhanced services to Blackburn and Manchester** - Rail traffic towards Blackburn and wider areas from and to Clitheroe is growing (284,000 passengers in 2016 –17) and has recovered from delays in recent years associated with improvement works on the line between Blackburn and Bolton which has enabled regular half hourly services from Blackburn to Manchester to be established after several years of detailed work. It should also be borne in mind that numbers are likely to grow further as new committed housing development in the Clitheroe and wider area is built out.

Recent discussions indicate that there may be support for an extension of the current half hourly Blackburn to Manchester service through to Clitheroe, with possible additions of late services to allow Ribble Valley users to use public transport to access late night events in Manchester. This would build on current services and evidence that already exists, and was recognised within, the current franchise, such as likely increased patronage

- **New services towards Hellifield** – Restoring passenger services on the railway line from Clitheroe to Hellifield. The Clitheroe to Hellifield line closed in 1962. The reopening of the line would lead to the restoration of links from Clitheroe to Skipton, Leeds and Bradford to the east as well as Lancaster and Carlisle to the west coast mainline.

The proposal to press for the restoration of passenger services to Hellifield was made at the last meeting of the Economic Development Committee This plan forms part of the council's approved proposals to drive the Ribble Valley economy to create more jobs, and further strengthen tourism opportunities and improve connectivity in the Ribble Valley and to locations further afield. It is also likely that any initial studies may require further subsequent detailed studies before any final case could be made and such a process would be over a significant period of time.

3.10 A briefing event on this matter was held at County Hall in Preston on Wednesday 28 February 2018, which was attended by the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and the Councils' Regeneration Officer. The briefing summarised the work TfN have undertaken to date, as well as how Lancashire can benefit from this vision. The consultation closes on 17 April 2018.

## 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – None.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – None.

- Reputation - The matters covered in this report link with the Council's objectives of a sustainable economy and thriving market towns.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Instruct the Chief Executive to prepare and submit the Council's formal response to the STP consultation referring to the issues laid out in section 3.7 of this report, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee.

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For further information please ask for Craig Matthews, extension 4531.



