

## AGENDA ITEM 7

### REPORT TO THE TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET

13 JUNE 2017

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF TRANSPORT

## INVESTING IN OUR ROAD NETWORK

### SUMMARY

The Tees Valley Combined Authority has ambitious plans to maintain and improve our roads so that they are safe, less congested and contribute to the growth of our economy.

This report covers three key areas of development:-

#### Improved East West Road connectivity along the A66 corridor from the A1(M) to Teesport

There is a strategic need to improve the A66 between the A1 and Teesport to support economic growth and to make it easier to travel in and out of the Tees Valley. This report provides an overview on work undertaken to date to develop a strategic programme along the corridor from the A1(M) to Teesport. It also seeks approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for a new strategic road link around the north of Darlington and approval to progress the case through a public information exercise and to the next stage in the process. This work is funded via the Department for Transport's Large Local Majors fund.

#### The National Productivity Investment Fund

In January of this year the Combined Authority received an allocation of £2.29 million from Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) for highway improvements to be delivered in the 2017/18 financial year. These monies were for schemes that reduce congestion, unlock economic job creation opportunities or enable delivery of new housing development. The report identifies a programme of investment for the first allocation of money and describes the approach being taken to develop a proposal for funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

#### Tees Valley Key Route Network (KRN)

The report outlines the principles of a KRN and seeks approval of an initial network for the Tees Valley. The KRN will be kept under continual development and review.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Combined Authority Cabinet:

- i. Approve the Strategic Outline Programme Case for the A66 East-West connections study and the associated Strategic Outline Business Case for the A66 Northern Bypass to allow progression to the next stage of work;
- ii. Agree a Key Route Network for the Tees Valley Combined Authority area;
- iii. Agree the proposed package of schemes to improve the Key Route Network, to be funded by the National Productivity Investment Fund, for the financial year 2017/18
- iv. Agree to submit proposals to the National Productivity Investment Fund for the 2018-20 period; and delegate responsibility for the submission to the Managing Director; in consultation with the Tees Valley Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Transport, and transport lead officers from the five councils.

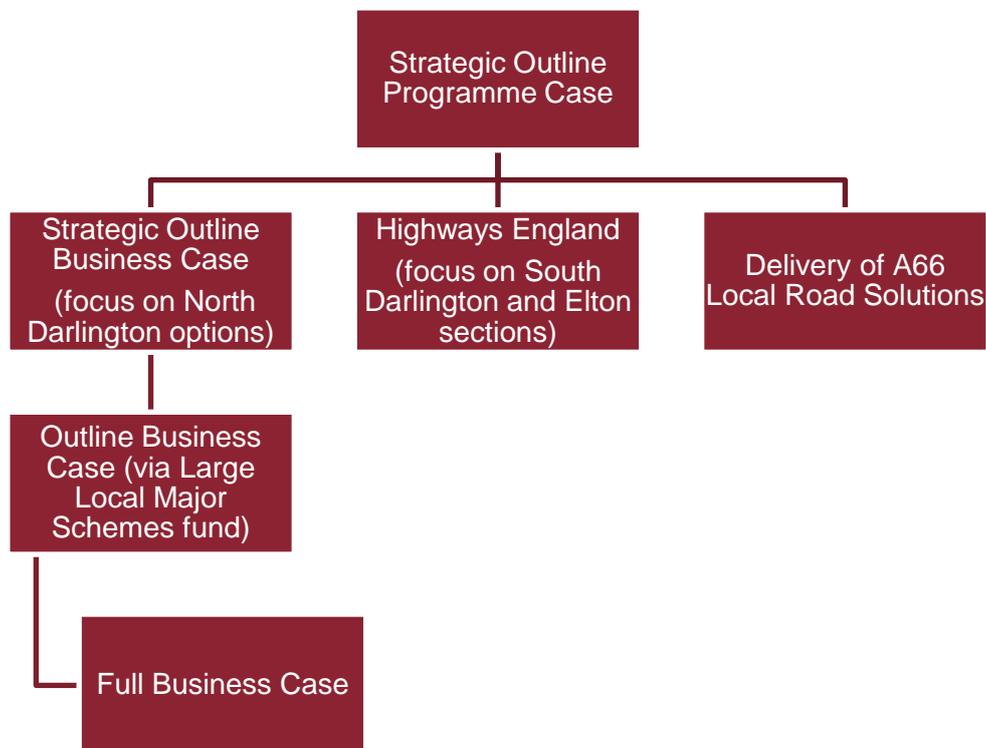
## DETAIL

### A66 East West Connections Study

1. The A66 East West Road Connectivity Programme is one of the Combined Authority's strategic transport priorities, and an important component of our devolution deal.
2. The creation of a fast, effective and reliable road corridor from the port to the A1(M) benefits communities from across the Tees Valley. It links with national announcements to dual the A66 between the A1(M) and M6. It also has national and pan-northern benefits in terms of efficient and sustainable movement of goods and people.
3. A Strategic Outline Programme Case has now been developed that makes the case for a series of proposed road improvements between the A1(M) and Teesport to improve connectivity, reliability and resilience and to facilitate Economic and Housing Growth within the Tees Valley and the wider North.
4. The programme has been developed from a number of studies undertaken over previous years in partnership with Highways England to identify issues and possible options. The work has considered wider connectivity issues across the Tees Valley including the A66 and A689. The findings have narrowed down the areas of further investigation. These studies have been jointly commissioned and funded through the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Strong links have been developed with Highways England and Transport for the North's strategies.
5. The following pieces of feasibility work have been undertaken:
  - **South Darlington Study** – This has developed high level options for a full dual carriageway option for the A66 around Darlington. It also looked at a pared-back option with dual carriageway options and junction improvements at the most 'stressed' locations.
  - **North Darlington Study** – This has developed a series of high level indicative full dual carriageway options and alignments between the A66 Little Burdon roundabout and A1(M) Junction 59.
  - **Teesport** -Improvements to the A66 Teesport roundabout to improve access.

- **Cargo Fleet** – Improvements to the A66 Cargo Fleet roundabout to address junction capacity constraints, particularly for through movements on the A66.
  - **A66 West of Stockton** – was identified as a location where improvements are required. As this is currently part of the UK's Strategic Road Network, this is being considered by Highways England as part of the ongoing management of their network.
6. The package of works outlined forms a Strategic Outline Programme Case that provides a roadmap for improved East West connectivity and results in a corridor that better connects the Tees Valley to the rest of the UK. This aligns with national and regional transport and growth strategies. Transport for the North is currently looking at strategic road corridors and this work will also feed into their studies. The overall Programme has been developed so that its component parts can be delivered via a number of potential national, regional and local funding streams.

Figure 1: The component parts of the Strategic Outline Programme Case



7. A study to the South of Darlington looked at the potential to upgrade the existing route to dual carriageway, but this does not resolve a critical issue of connectivity at Junction 57 of the A1(M). This junction has no north-facing slip roads to/from the A66. This means any traffic wanting to access the Tees Valley from the north must use the local road network and leave the Motorway via Junctions 58 or 59 or 60 through Darlington.
8. As a result, strategic traffic is forced to use mainly residential roads to the north of Darlington, particularly the A1150 and the A167, which are of an inappropriate standard for the volume and type of vehicles that use the route. These routes have relatively high HGV usage and their reliability is often compromised by

incidents, maintenance works or utility works. This causes significant traffic delays, compromises the environment and limits the growth potential of the Tees Valley.

9. The preliminary feasibility on the programme was funded by the Combined Authority and has resulted in development of a possible new link around the north of Darlington. The study identified the potential benefits and options that helped secure Department for Transport Funding for further scheme development. The appropriate information has been developed, according to the Department for Transport process and now permission is required to progress to the next stage.

### **Rationale for a Darlington Northern Bypass**

10. **Connectivity and Growth** - The construction of an alternative northern bypass to connect the A1(M) and the A66 would alleviate pressure on the A68, A1150 and A167 and free up capacity for the local journeys that these roads are better suited to serve, enabling local and regional growth. Importantly, the provision of a southbound exit from the A1(M), and a standard northbound link to the A1(M) from the A66, makes the entire Tees Valley, including Durham Tees Valley Airport and Teesport, more accessible for trips originating in the north, which includes trips from Tyne & Wear, Northumberland and Scotland, it also provides an alternative to the A19.
11. In the context of the wider A66 East-West Connections programme, a new link would facilitate and accelerate the potential growth along the economic corridor between Teesport and Darlington (Newton Aycliffe).
12. **Capacity** – The A167 and A1150 are at or close to capacity with significant congestion. Link speeds during the peak hours are much reduced when compared to freeflow conditions. Traffic conditions will potentially worsen with background traffic growth without any further development.
13. The use of the A1150 and A167 by strategic road traffic causes stress on the local road network in Darlington and is becoming a constraint on development across Darlington and the wider Tees Valley.
14. From a regional connectivity perspective it is a very poor link between the Tees Valley and the wider North, via the A1(M).
15. The traffic volumes along the A1150 and A167 are significant and 2015 traffic data shows:
  - the A1150 carries on average 17,774 vehicles per day with 5.9% HGVs
  - the A167 carries on average 21,661 vehicles per day with 7.2% HGVs
  - In comparison, the A66 around Darlington carries on average 22,897 and 5.8% HGVs
16. These are high traffic levels with a high HGV content which have an adverse impact on the living conditions of residents and those people using the route.

## New Route Option Development

17. A number of options for a Northern Bypass of Darlington were developed initially based on known constraints. A workshop with key stakeholders used the DfT's Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) to provide a comparison of the routes in relation to the project objectives. This process narrowed down the number of route alignments to two strategic routes:
- an outer route, to the east of the Skerne and further from existing residential areas
  - a route closer to the current extents of the town, to the west of the Skerne, crossing the A167
18. The route development work continues with more information being gathered in greater detail to refine known constraints that will inform a final design. This is an ongoing process.
19. Both routes are presently being developed as dual carriageway roads with grade separated junctions. Both schemes at this stage include:
- A grade separated junction at Little Burdon
  - dualling the A66 from Little Burdon to Morton Palms

Table 1: Summary of current options

	Route a	Route b
Base Cost Estimate	£289.2million	£244 million
Cost (With Optimism Bias)	£416.5* million	£351.5* million
	*includes 44% optimum bias at this stage. i.e. unknown costs and risks. These costs should reduce as more detailed work is undertaken to move towards the base estimate costs	
Length	9.8km	9.8km
Initial Benefit:Cost Ratio (BCR)	2.4 (High VfM)	2.3 (High VfM)
BCR range in relation to Value for Money (VfM)	poor VfM if the BCR is less than 1.0 low VfM if the BCR is between 1.0 and 1.5 medium VfM if the BCR is between 1.5 and 2.0 <b>high VfM if the BCR is between 2.0 and 4.0</b> very high VfM if the BCR is greater than 4.0	

20. The development of the Northern Route and the programme of interventions along the A66 not only provide an excellent business case as a Transport Scheme but transform the A66 into an economic growth corridor that will sustain Strategic Economic Plan aspirations.

21. Subject to approval from the Combined Authority both of the feasibility options for the Northern Darlington routes will be taken forward through the DfT processes and developed further as part of an Outline Business Case. An indicative timescale has been developed that assumes early programme entry and is dependent on a number of factors.
- Nov 2017: Completion of Outline Business Case/PCF Stage 1
  - 2018-2019: Preliminary design (subject to programme entry)
  - 2019-2021: Design, Statutory procedures and statutory powers.
  - 2022-2023: Completion of detailed design & Construction mobilisation
  - 2023-2026: Construction and handover
  - 2026: Open scheme to traffic
22. The stages through to November are funded through the DfT Large Local Majors fund. The production of the Outline Business case is to enable funders to consider the case for investment in the next stages. In these stages more work would be undertaken on both routes to develop the high level feasibility undertaken to date.
23. As part of developing the required business case a Public Information Exercise is required. This is being designed to cover all of the Combined Authority's strategic road priorities including both the A66 and A19 Tees Crossing.
24. A further report will be brought with details of the Outline Business Case in the Autumn.

### **Tees Valley Key Route Network**

25. For future planning of highways infrastructure by the Combined Authority and its partners, and to help the five highways authorities to coordinate their investments, transport officers have developed a proposal for a Tees Valley Key Route Network.
26. The Key Route Network (**see Annex A**) identifies routes that strategically link the key economic areas of the Tees Valley. It is a live network that will evolve to meet the emerging needs of the Tees Valley economy, and will be updated and refined on a regular basis with the Combined Authority's Transport Advisory Group undertaking an annual review.
27. The Key Route Network has been developed to help to inform engagement with Transport for the North, and in particular to complement their work to develop a North-wide Major Road Network, to identify strategic routes in the North of England that contribute towards the area's economic prosperity.
28. It is important to stress that the definition of a Key Route Network does not transfer responsibilities for the highways network into the Combined Authority, and that the five councils continue to be responsible for highways management and maintenance within their respective boroughs.

## National Productivity Investment Fund proposals

29. The government has announced a new National Productivity Investment Fund, to bring together various capital programmes to support growth across England. In its first local allocation, the Combined Authority received an allocation of £2.29 million for the 2017-18 financial year. It would have been our preference to receive allocations from this Fund on a more flexible basis, as part of our devolved single programme, allowing a more strategic multi-year approach; and we continue to make this case to DfT. Nevertheless, the allocation is welcome, and allows us to make some immediate interventions to support the Key Route Network.
30. The following package of proposals has therefore been developed by the Transport Advisory Group for delivery in 2017/18:
- Improvements on the B6280 Yarm Road, which is a key corridor on the proposed Key Route Network that links the A66 to Central Park Enterprise Zone, Darlington Station and other economic growth sites.
  - A689 Town Centre Connectivity Improvements to reduce congestion and improve traffic and pedestrian movements
  - Commencement of the initial phases of a series of improvements to the non-Trunk road section of the A66 corridor between the A19 and A171 Cargo Fleet Lane that form critical parts of the draft Key Route Network for the area and provide a local contribution to the SOPC for East-West connectivity improvements
  - Phase one of a two phased approach to the full signalisation of the A689 roundabouts (from Forresters Hall roundabout to the A1185 Seal Sands Link Road roundabout near Wolviston) to improve the operation of this part of the road network.
  - A66 Teesport Roundabout widening improvements. To ease congestion, provide a local contribution to the A66 East –West project and enhance the KRN
31. For 2018/19 to 2019/20, the DfT has established a competitive bidding process. The Fund's guidance states that in areas where there are Combined Authorities, the Authority should coordinate bids by its constituent Highways Authorities. In this way, a stronger and more comprehensive set of proposals can be submitted, increasing the opportunity to secure a more substantial allocation. The objectives of the Fund are to:
- Ease congestion and provide upgrades on important national, regional or local routes;
  - Unlock economic and job creation opportunities; or
  - Enable the delivery of new housing developments

32. The Combined Authority and council partners will also ensure the package of proposals contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan, and enhance the operation of the Key Route Network. We will also propose maximum flexibility in the devolved management of those funds, through arrangements agreed as part of our devolution deal.
33. The deadline for submission of NPIF proposals is the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, and work is still underway by the Transport Advisory Group to prepare all of the data and information required by the DfT. In order to provide as much time as possible to develop a compelling proposal it is requested that the Combined Authority delegate authority to submit the final proposition to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Tees Valley Mayor and Cabinet member for Transport.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

34. Work to develop the appropriate business cases for East-West Connectivity is funded from the DfT Large Local Majors fund and the Combined Authority's agreed budget, and will be further developed through the investment plan for 2017 – 21.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

35. None.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

36. The work being undertaken on East-West connections, development of a KRN and proposals for submission to the NPIF are categorised as low – medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

### **CONSULTATION**

37. A Public Information Exercise is planned for all of the TVCA Strategic Road Priorities and transport proposals will also be subject to consultation as part of the Strategic Transport Plan development process.

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