



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Regeneration
TO:	Council Forum
ON:	30th January 2014

SUBJECT: East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval from the Council Forum to formally approve the publication of the joint Highways and Transport Masterplan for East Lancashire.

Copies of the Plan are available in each of the Political Group Rooms and will be published via the Council's website via <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/Pages/Transport-policy.aspx>

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council Forum is asked to approve the publication of the Highways and Transport Master Plan for East Lancashire as presented within Appendix A.

3. BACKGROUND

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan has been produced to inform and determine future transport investment priorities for the East Lancashire geographic area which covers the Local Transport Authority areas of Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

This Masterplan is the second of a suite of five Transport and Highways Masterplans which are being developed with Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Lancashire's District Councils, local stakeholders and, moving forward, the Local Transport Body Transport for Lancashire, who will govern devolved local major transport scheme funding post 2015.

The Masterplan identifies problems, gaps and opportunities on the highways and public transport systems serving East Lancashire and importantly how they impact on the area's economy. By their nature, the Masterplans need robust evidence. However, in East Lancashire, that evidence is not all in place. Whilst economic and public health evidence is robust, not all Local Plans are at the same stage of development across the area, which means that there is no comprehensive set of spatial policies and plans.

Because of this, the East Lancashire Masterplan does not present a programme of infrastructure delivery but sets out the vision for travel and transport in East Lancashire and seeks a consensus on both the validity of that vision and on some of the options that could be developed to achieve it.

Three strands of further work are set out which follow on from the publication of the Masterplan:

- Connecting East Lancashire
- Travel in East Lancashire
- Local Travel

These strands will develop the economic argument for investment in rail, motorway gateways, key corridors, public transport, cycling and local links. Running through all 3 strands is the need for transport to support transformational economic growth across East Lancashire. From the largest to the smallest investment that results from this Masterplan, from strategic rail interventions down to local footpaths, East Lancashire's transport networks must be made fit for the 21st century.

A six week consultation on the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan began on 23rd October 2013 and saw a range of responses from key stakeholders, including district, town and parish councils, PLACE, and local MPs. The comments received will be summarised within an appendix to the published Masterplan.

The Joint Masterplan will be published by Lancashire Council following sign off and approval by their Cabinet Committee which next meets on 6th February 2014.

4. RATIONALE

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan will provide the basis for determining future transport investment priorities for the East Lancashire area and, moving forward, to support the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in seeking Single Local Growth Fund monies.

They form an important part of developing a transport evidence base to inform future highway and transport planning and investment priorities.

The master planning exercise identifies problems, gaps and opportunities on the highways and public transport systems and importantly how they impact on the area's economy. The Masterplans will provide a much more pro-active role for the Councils as highway and local transport authorities in forward planning, and the improvements they identify will be a key influence on future patterns of development, at a strategic and local level, and set out in local plans covering the Lancashire sub-region.

Completion of this work will also assist the Council in working with other transport infrastructure and service providers including the Highways Agency, Network Rail, train and bus operating companies and neighbouring local authorities to improve transport across the Lancashire subregion and beyond.

Future funding allocations from central government will be increasingly devolved to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, which covers the local authority areas of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. It is therefore vital that there is a coherent highways and transport vision for the East Lancashire area are grounded in jointly approved and adopted strategies and plans.

5. KEY ISSUES

Transport is an enabler. In most cases, it doesn't 'do' anything itself but it does allow a modern society to function. Developing options for East Lancashire's highways and transport networks therefore involves asking a fundamental question; what are these networks expected to do?'

Connections in and out of East Lancashire need to be better, with improved journey times and reliability to both east and west, to Central Lancashire and Yorkshire, and south to Greater Manchester.

The employment and housing development, both strategic and more local, presents a major opportunity for economic development and transformational improvement in East Lancashire. Our networks will need to be able not just to cope with this development in the future but to allow these aspirations to be realised to the benefit of the area as a whole.

The 5 principles that will guide the development of the East Lancashire Masterplan are to:

- Support the economic development of the sub-region and East Lancashire
- Work to address deprivation
- Promote community resilience
- Increase healthy behaviour
- Reduce our carbon footprint

Whilst the information required to finalise the East Lancashire Masterplan will be developed in 2014, a lot of background is available now with many schemes and proposals already in place for delivery which will tackle many of the area's problems. The "Milestones" section of the Masterplan describe the following in more detail:

Confirmed and Approved schemes:

- Todmorden West Curve
- Pennine Reach
- Improvements to Burnley Manchester Road Rail Station
- Rawtenstall Bus Station
- Nelson to Rawtenstall Bus Corridor Study
- Blackburn Town Centre Orbital Route Improvements

And through the Transport for Lancashire (TfL) Local Transport Board:

- Clitheroe to Manchester Rail Corridor Improvements
- Centenary Way Viaduct Major Maintenance Scheme
- A56 Colne-Foulridge Bypass

And through the Department for Transport's Pinch Point Fund:

- Haslingden Road Corridor Improvements
- M65 Junction 5 signalisation
- M65 Junction 4 Upgrade

The Masterplan also looks to the future in terms of current transport problems and wider issues which impact on transport. The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership has an approved growth plan for 2013/14 which sets out how strong and sustainable economic growth can be achieved and sets out the key strategic development sites. It is therefore imperative that the following developments are enabled through appropriate transport infrastructure:

- The Blackburn Knowledge Zone
- Whitebirk Sixty Five
- The Cathedral Quarter
- Pennine Gateway
- East Darwen Development Corridor

A set of key corridors are included within the Masterplan which will underpin and support a net increase of over 9300 homes across 291 potential sites. The preferred locations of these developments are in the inner urban areas of the borough and in accessible locations in the urban area. There are also 35.2 hectares of net site area for employment development over 38 sites in the borough.

In addition to the confirmed schemes identified above, the following proposals are identified within the Masterplan for further development and consultation:

- Completion of the Blackburn Town Centre Orbital route: This scheme will complete the Blackburn Town Centre orbital route between Copy Nook and the Towns Moor retail park and comprises improvements to the highway and a new bridge over the Leeds and Liverpool Canal in Audley, Blackburn, improvements to the Towns Moor Gyratory and widening of Montague Street. The scheme will facilitate sub-regional employment, particularly in Blackburn Town Centre on the Knowledge Zone regional investment site, and will contribute towards the future regeneration of Blackburn Town Centre as an important centre for growth within Pennine Lancashire.
- Darwen East Distributor Route: housing development: This scheme delivers a new link road on the eastern side of Darwen which will unlock land to enable the future development of new housing and improve access to local employment opportunities planned through the Council's emerging Local Development Framework. The scheme also provides a local traffic alternative to the already busy A666 and enables better access to M65 Junction 4.
- The Fishmoor Link Road scheme: The scheme delivers a new link road which will facilitate future development of housing and employment in the Fishmoor area of Blackburn with Darwen. It also relieves one of the borough's busiest and congested junctions at the Blackmoor Road and Roman Road junction, which is classified as an Air Quality Management Area. In addition, the scheme will also improve access to local businesses at Walker Park and Roman Road industrial estates from M65 Junctions 4 and 5.
- Behavioural change programme: Sustainable Transport across Lancashire: This intervention seeks to promote sustainable and affordable transport modes to ensure that the future regeneration of Lancashire is sustainable. A programme of workplace and community travel planning, supporting access to employment,

and a range of walking and cycling initiatives will be pursued by the Transport for Lancashire constituent transport authorities.

The work done so far in the masterplanning process has shown that, despite the improvements we are already making, there will still be issues to resolve on East Lancashire's highways and transport networks.

These issues fall into a number of themes which provide the basis for further work which is grouped into 3 strands:

- Connecting East Lancashire
- Travel in East Lancashire and
- Local Travel

Strand 1: Connecting East Lancashire looks at how East Lancashire connects to other areas, particularly to the rest of the county and neighbouring growth areas, and to make sure that the area's people, economy and housing markets are more fully integrated to areas of opportunity.

Key to this connectivity will be the rail network. This will need to provide the better connections and standards of service that will support East Lancashire's people and businesses in the future.

The main motorway gateways provided by the M65 and the M66 will also need to be able to cope with the demands placed on them.

Next steps:

- To look at possible solutions to these issues in depth, a **Rail Connectivity Study** will be commissioned. This will focus in particular on the importance of improving connectivity between East Lancashire and the growth areas of Preston and Central Lancashire, Manchester (including Manchester Airport) and Leeds.
- To build on the work done so far and produce an **A56/M66 Haslingden/Rawtenstall to Manchester Gateway Study**. This will look at the A56/M66 corridor and how congestion can be reduced and the reliability of bus services improved. Most importantly it will extend to roads maintained by the Highways Agency (HA).
- To find out what else can be done to make sure that the M65 gateway works well, a **Samlesbury / Cuerden / Whitebirk Growth Triangle Study** will be produced that will include the main routes between these 3 key economic growth locations.

Strand 2: Travel in East Lancashire is about the links between East Lancashire's towns and the major employment and housing locations. Economically, these are the connections that make sure that most people and businesses can link into the wider highways and transport networks.

Congestion on key corridors has significant impacts on travel of all kinds, but particularly on travel to work, on businesses and on public transport. Key corridors therefore need to cope with the traffic that wants to use them.

As well as improving public transport reliability, public transport connectivity within East Lancashire will be enhanced, to make bus travel an attractive and viable option where possible, particularly for journeys to employment and education.

Next steps:

- The **Burnley/Pendle Growth Corridor Study** will look at what needs to be done to make sure that roads can support the economic growth planned for Burnley and Pendle.
- The **Ribble Valley Growth Corridor Study** will include the A59 between Samlesbury and North Yorkshire boundary and also the A671/A6068 route between Whalley and M65 Junction 8. The study will look at how these important roads can be made to work as well as possible for cars, freight and for other users.
- The **East Lancashire Accessibility Study** will focus on travel between the main towns and employment areas, but will also include travel to education and for leisure. This will include how public transport can best serve rural/remote East Lancashire. In line with the way funding will be made available in future; the study will focus on where the greatest benefits can be achieved by improving accessibility.

Strand 3: Local Travel takes up the challenge of making sure that everyone, regardless of their background or where they live, can get to the services and opportunities that they need, from education and employment to leisure and health.

Making cycling and walking networks attractive is key to this. Part of this is making sure that highways and transport assets we have already are looked after and maintained: the roads and footways, the lights and signs and all the other things that help our networks function.

But the best road, bus and cycle networks serve no purpose if people can't or don't want to use them. It needs to be easy to change between methods of travel so that whether people are travelling short or long distances, dependence on private cars can be reduced as much as possible. Making sure that travel to work is cheap and easy also helps the economy.

Next steps:

- The **East Lancashire Strategic Cycle Network** will provide 'good' links between towns, employment, education and housing. However, one of the first tasks will be to decide just what a 'good' cycle network is. Different cyclists have very different needs, from enthusiasts with specialist bikes and clothing to people new to cycling with no desire to change clothes and a basic bike.
- Much of the work of identifying where **Local Links** need to be improved will come out of work in other areas of this Masterplan and from the day to day contacts with partners and communities.

Running through all 3 strands is the need for transport to support transformational economic growth across East Lancashire. From the largest to the smallest investment

that results from this Masterplan, from strategic rail improvement schemes down to local footpaths, East Lancashire's transport networks must be made fit for the 21st century.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Masterplan is consistent with the Council's approved Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy and Implementation Plan which provides the policy and direction for the borough in terms of transport and highways.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Masterplan proposals will be developed with existing funding streams including the Local Transport Plan 3 Integrated Transport Block, Department for Transport Major Schemes, Transport for Lancashire Devolved Major Schemes funding, third party contributions and future Single Local Growth Fund bids.

There may be a requirement to develop feasibility and outline designs with Council revenue funding. This will be subject to further reporting through Regeneration SPT and the appropriate Finance Council committees.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations contained within the report are in compliance with relevant legislation; and will be procured in accordance with the Constitution and, where relevant, European directives; and will need to be procured where relevant in accordance with grant conditions.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Development of schemes and projects contained within the Masterplan will be undertaken by utilising existing staff resources from within the Council's Transport Team.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality and Health Impact Assessment accompanies the published Masterplan, developed jointly by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. This is attached to this report in Appendix B (Environmental Report).

11. CONSULTATIONS

A six week consultation on the draft East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan began on 23rd October 2013 and saw a range of responses from the general public, key stakeholders, district, town and parish councils, and local businesses. The comments received will be summarised within an appendix to the published Masterplan.

Lancashire County Council invited comments on the draft Masterplan by placing press releases in the area, leafleting at transport hubs, Town Halls and Libraries, and approaching major employers to raise awareness with as wide a population as possible.

Consultation will continue with a wide range of consultees as schemes develop, and through the three strands of additional work as detailed in section 5 (key issues) of this report.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Mike Cliffe, Strategic Transport Manager, ext 5310
Date: 22nd January 2014
Background Papers: Appendix A: East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan
Appendix B: Environmental Report

Background documents are any files, guidance or other materials that have been relied upon in producing the paper. Any background documents listed must be available for public inspection upon request.