

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Response to the National Infrastructure Commission Consultation, January 2016

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) is a new, independent body, chaired by Lord Adonis, which will look broadly at long-term infrastructure needs and provide impartial advice to ministers and Parliament. The NIC is preparing an initial report before the 2016 budget and has undertaken a consultation exercise focusing on three key challenges:

1. Improving connectivity between cities in the north of England;
2. Large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London; and
3. Improving how electricity demand and supply are balanced.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council wishes to provide a response to the first of these challenges, which has a significant impact on economic success and development in our area. As part of this response we address the five questions asked by the NIC in their invitation to comment:

1. To what extent are weaknesses in transport connectivity holding back northern city regions (specifically in terms of jobs, enterprise creation and growth, and housing)?

East Riding of Yorkshire Council and our partners in both the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) LEP believe that there are significant gaps in east-west transport connectivity across the North of England which is restricting economic development and business performance.

This lack of connectivity is evident in both rail and road links which diminish in capacity and capability east of the A1(M), resulting in congestion and unreliable journey times for traffic accessing the port facilities and emerging green energy industries alongside the Humber and for those travelling between the key cities of Hull and York. The growth of rural businesses in the East Riding of Yorkshire and parts of North Yorkshire, particularly in the tourism sector, is also restricted by the lack of access and connection to markets and the wider network.

The area is seen as being at the periphery of the region and suffers from the reality of poor city to city connections across the north. This inhibits inward investment and restricts the potential for growth in new businesses and associated job creation. The perceived lack of transport access to key employment sites to the west and north of our region, particularly for public transport users, restricts investment in residential development for potential commuters.

In addition, current proposals for improvements to rail and road links do not fully reflect the need for investment in connections to Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Improving east-west transport links by addressing transport issues that suppress economic growth is highlighted as one of the five strategic priorities in the YNYER LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. This will result in better access to customers, markets and labour and increased access to national and international market opportunities for local businesses. The issue of poor east-west transport connectivity in the Humber is also referenced in the Humber LEP's SEP (page 31).

2. What cost-effective infrastructure investments in city-to-city connectivity could address these weaknesses? We are interested in all modes of transport.

Investment in improvements to both road and rail links would provide cost effective and deliverable benefits to the economy of the East Riding and the neighbouring cities of Hull and York, as well as to the wider North of England.

Current proposals focus primarily on connectivity between Leeds and Manchester, with some consideration for the positions of Sheffield, Liverpool and Newcastle. While these proposals are welcome they will have minimal impact for residents to the east, and improvements to the links to the port facilities and emerging green energy industries of the Humber as well as connectivity between

Hull and York do not appear to have been fully considered. These links are critical to provide access to international markets for businesses across the North of England and fundamental to the successful development of the Northern Powerhouse.

Our recommendations for priority improvements to east-west connectivity across the north are:

- A1079 capacity improvements;
- Electrification of the Hull to Selby railway line; and
- A63 improvements.

These are described in more detail below.

I. A1079 Capacity Enhancements

The A1079 forms the principal road link between the two major cities of York and Hull, connecting the port facilities in Hull with York, North Yorkshire, the A64 and A1(M) and onwards to the North East. It also provides a vital road link between numerous towns and villages, connecting residents to employment and services, tourists to local attractions and businesses to labour, suppliers, and markets.

Formerly part of the Strategic Road Network, the A1079 was 'detrunked' and transferred to local authority control in 2003. The Council has delivered several junction improvement schemes along the A1079 in recent years with a combination of DfT funding, local contributions and private sector contributions, including new roundabouts on the A1079 at Hodsow Lane, Pocklington and Holme Road, Market Weighton. However, larger scale capacity improvements have not been deliverable given the levels of funding available.

The A1079 is single carriageway for much of its length and is perceived by many users as slow and unreliable. Current use is constrained by capacity which in turn inhibits future economic development. There are also road safety issues on the A1079, many of which arise from drivers becoming frustrated with inconsistent speeds and taking risks by overtaking on single carriageway sections. Despite the introduction of junction improvement schemes, congestion and safety issues on the A1079 remain a high profile concern for both East Riding and York Councils and the local community. A local group, the Action Access A1079 partnership, is campaigning locally for improvements to the route, and local councillors and MPs have taken an active interest in the issue. The route is also seen by the YNYER LEP as crucial to the economic development of the area and the need to improve the route is included as a key priority in the relevant SEP.

The identified problems along the A1079 corridor can be summarised as follows:

- High existing traffic levels with up to 18,000 vehicles per day using the route, causing localised congestion;
- Low speeds along the route with average speeds of 28mph along some sections, resulting in driver frustration and delays;
- High variability between journey times throughout the day with a coefficient of variation of 0.57 along some sections in the AM peak, which affects business efficiency and quality of life for commuters;
- Up to 20% of total traffic flow is made up of HGVs and up to 18% of traffic from the Humber Ports uses the A1079 corridor, contributing towards unreliable journey times and slow average speeds;
- An average of over 13 casualties per mile along the A1079 corridor which causes suffering for individuals and results in significant costs to businesses in terms of delays and lost productivity; and

- Over 13,000 new houses forecast to be constructed along the A1079 corridor with additional significant projected employment development, which will increase traffic levels on an already congested route.

There is no direct rail line between the East Riding/Hull and York, with rail users having to travel via Selby or Doncaster, or via Scarborough, to travel between these two cities. This results in long journey times and means the train is often not a viable option for regular travellers. For example, the distance between Beverley in the East Riding and York is 30 miles but the average time to make this journey by train is two hours. This means that car travel is the only realistic option for many travelling between York and Hull and the A1079 corridor will continue to be the main transport link between these two cities.

Upgrading the whole route or sections of it to dual carriageway standard would significantly improve journey times, journey time reliability and overall connectivity between Hull and York, the towns along the A1079 and onwards to Northern Yorkshire and the cities of the North East served by the A1. This will in turn support economic growth in the area by making it more attractive for investment. The results of an improved route would be:

- Improved journey times and journey reliability for users of the A1079, particularly for commuters, HGVs and port traffic;
- Improved safety for users of the A1079 and surrounding roads, footways and connecting routes;
- Support for potential future housing and employment development across the area as identified in York and East Riding's Local Plans; and
- Increased connectivity between York, the East Riding and Hull and support for local businesses to access labour, supplies and markets.

In parallel with the SEP, the YNYER LEP also published the Local Growth Deal Implementation Plan in March 2014. This sets out a detailed proposition to support the delivery of 20,000 jobs, 13,000 homes and £1bn private sector investment through a bid for £63m of funding. The Implementation Plan included proposals for dualling a 1 mile section of the A1079 between Barmby Moor and Wilberfoss. This proposal has now been assessed by consultants and has an initial Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of over 2 where the Department for Transport considers that a BCR of over 2 offers high value for money.

A comprehensive study of the benefits of dualling the entire route would be extremely beneficial but has so far not been prepared as there has been insufficient funding to commission this major piece of work.

2. Electrification of the Hull to Selby Railway Line

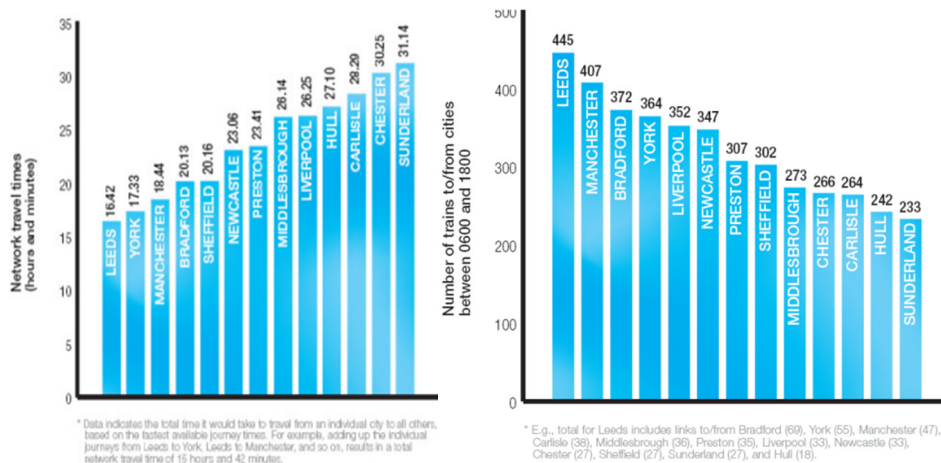
In autumn 2013 the Government announced plans for the North TransPennine electrification scheme covering the Manchester to York and Selby rail line. This left a number of parts of the existing North Trans Pennine network including Hull, Middlesbrough and Scarborough without electrification schemes. The extension of electrification to Hull is important to the economy of the area as it would bring reduced journey times, and potentially improved rolling stock, both contributing towards making the area more attractive to do business in. Furthermore with some parts of the rail network electrified but others not, service planning becomes difficult if there is a desire to maximise the use of the electrified infrastructure.

The Northern Way study on City Region Connectivity highlighted that east-west connectivity has been greatly overshadowed by north-south links connecting northern cities to the south, particularly

London. Barriers to physical movement, such as time and distance, are seen as a possible reason for the lack of interdependence and as a restrictor of growth. Whilst benefits achievable through improved connections to London are large, improving TransPennine rail connectivity is of greater benefit to the north.

Hull is already disadvantaged both in network travel times and number of trains and this is likely to be exacerbated by exclusion from an electrified network (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Network travel times and number of trains between 0600 and 1800



Source: *Connecting the North: Interdependence and barriers: rail, road, air and maritime links, The Northern Way, 2008*

Business to business connectivity is a key factor in supporting productivity growth across the wider North, therefore current levels of rail connectivity from Hull and the East Riding can be considered to be a major constraint.

Examination of the rail connectivity between the northern cities clearly demonstrates that Hull and the East Riding are limited not just by the geographical peripherality within the North but also by less frequent services and poorer access to the main north-south mainline route. Although partly addressed by the new Northern and TransPennine rail franchises, to achieve maximum benefits the electrification of the route between Hull and Selby is necessary to ensure consistent connectivity across the TransPennine corridor.

The relatively low level of rail trips between Hull and neighbouring urban centres reflects the perceived limited rail connectivity between these areas. This is a contributory factor to low levels of business interaction and limits opportunities to increase economic activity. This situation will be exacerbated should part of the TransPennine Corridor be electrified and the section from Selby to Hull be excluded.

Rail journeys on the TransPennine Corridor from Hull are slow when compared with other city pair journeys and are not competitive with the car other than for city centre to city centre trips. The level of connectivity suppresses the level of commuting and restricts rail growth within the sub area, acting as a limiting factor on job mobility and economic activity. It can be concluded therefore that the North Humber Bank is hampered by some basic infrastructure deficiencies, including poor transport links to the rest of the Yorkshire & Humber region and beyond.

Network Rail is examining the business case for extending this electrification to Hull and the benefits have been acknowledged but no date for implementation has been confirmed despite the offer of private funding and support from First Hull Trains. Both East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Hull

City Council strongly support the case for extending the electrification to Hull as soon as possible to enable the realisation of the potential opportunities offered by improved transport infrastructure and the wider implications for the emerging Humber economy. The need for an extension to the existing electrification programme is also referenced in the Humber Rail Strategy and Rail North's Long Term Rail Strategy.

3. Improvements to the A63

The A63 between the M62 Junction 38 and Hull is part of the Strategic Road Network, managed by Highways England. The route provides the principle connection between the national motorway network and the port facilities and emerging green energy businesses in Hull.

The A63 is a dual carriageway, representing a significant restriction on movement due to a reduced capacity when compared to the M62 link to the west. The route is particularly congested in the urban area of Hull especially during peak hours, and this results in slow and unreliable journeys and is a significant block on investment in the emerging Humber Green Port industries and Enterprise Zones, including the sites included in the recent extension to the Humber EZ announced as part of the most recent spending review.

A scheme for improvements at Castle Street in Hull will be funded through Highways England with construction programmed to start in 2016-17 and continue for four years. It is imperative that Highways England is enabled to deliver this scheme as quickly as possible to remove the restriction on access to the port facilities, to support the potential for developing green energy businesses and to facilitate east-west movement of people and goods across the North of England.

It may already be too late to realise the full potential of Hull's tenure as UK City of Culture in 2017 but A63 capacity enhancements would allow businesses in the area to exploit the higher national profile created in the years following and to provide reliable access to international freight connections for businesses in the North of England.

There is also localised congestion around busy junctions on the A63 in the East Riding such as the Welton/Brough junction, which provides access for residents in the growing town of Elloughton/Brough and for commercial users based at the former British Aerospace site (now Enterprise Zone). This Welton/Brough junction is a substandard design which results in congestion, queuing and risk, particularly at peak times. Development of the Enterprise Zone at the former British Aerospace manufacturing site in Brough is severely constrained due to the restricted access provided by this junction and the South Cave junction to the west.

3. Which city-to-city corridor(s) should be the priority for early phases of investment?

The Council believes that improved east-west connectivity is vital to the successful creation of the Northern Powerhouse. To this end, the East Riding needs better road and rail connections to York, Hull, Leeds and Manchester and these links should be a priority for future investment if the potential of the Humber port facilities and emerging green energy industries is to be realised. Specific corridors in need of improvement include the A1079 between Hull and York, the A63/M62 between Hull and Leeds and the Selby-Hull rail line, as set out under question 2 above.

Rural businesses in the East Riding and parts of North Yorkshire would also benefit from improved access to their markets and for visitors to the area. This view is shared by both of our Local Enterprise Partnerships and is identified in their Strategic Economic Plans.

4. What are the key international connectivity needs likely to be in the next 20-30 years in the north of England (with a focus on ports and airports)? What is the most effective way to meet these needs, and what constraints on delivery are anticipated?

The Humber ports provide key economic connections to our international partners and represent a vital outlet for business across the North of England and beyond. Hull, Goole, Grimsby and Immingham contribute £2.2 billion to the UK economy every year and the Humber ports support 33,000 jobs and together handle more than 65 million tonnes of cargo. There is ample scope for future development, particularly in connection with green energy industries and supporting businesses.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many hauliers are now choosing to use the Hull ports and the links to Rotterdam to avoid the issues at Calais and the roads in the south of England which are perceived to be significantly more congested than those to the north. This suggests that the volume of freight traffic passing through the Humber ports could increase significantly in future years.

Current constraints are fundamentally transport related and need to be addressed through improved road and rail links to the existing national network. Over the next two decades access to these ports and the emerging green energy industries will be crucial to the successful economic regeneration of the region. Potential development of visitor based businesses will need better access to the cities of the North of England. Connection to the west and northwest needs to be improved to provide confidence in quick and reliable transport for businesses to reach their markets.

5. What form of governance would most effectively deliver transformative infrastructure in the north, how should this be funded and by whom, including appropriate local contributions?

The development of Transport for the North (TfN) provides a potential structure for managing the delivery of large scale priority projects. TfN should offer opportunities for coalescing Local Growth Fund and Department for Transport funding at critical points to enable delivery of priority schemes. Limited funding is available to local authorities to contribute to these major projects but they can provide local expertise and knowledge.