

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION CALL FOR EVIDENCE HULL AND HUMBER RESPONSE

Kingston upon Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire Councils and the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership welcome the opportunity to respond to the Call for Evidence issued in November by the Commission.

The following provides our joint response to the challenge of Connecting Northern Cities which has a direct impact on economic success and development in our area.

1. Connecting northern cities

1.1 To what extent are weaknesses in transport connectivity holding back northern city regions?

Hull and the Humber depends upon an effective and efficient infrastructure to support investment. Industry and employment within the areas has grown as a result of the relationships with the estuary, which provides strategic economic opportunities both at National and Northern Powerhouse levels. Outdated perceptions about inaccessibility are changing. The Humber's good connectivity to the rest of the UK by road and rail, and to other countries by sea and air, is one of the area's most important assets. However, bottlenecks in road infrastructure remain and parts of the area's rail infrastructure (passenger and freight) are in urgent need of improvement to ensure the enhanced connectivity brought about through HS2 can be fully exploited. The following specific transport weaknesses affecting this area remain to be addressed in order to exploit its full economic potential to contribute to the Northern Powerhouse¹:

- **'First and Last Mile connections'** between the Ports and the motorway network are poor. Although the motorway connections between the Humber Ports and the A1/M1 are generally uncongested they do not connect directly into the City / Port of Hull or the Major Ports of Immingham and Grimsby. The sections of all purpose trunk roads A63 / A1033 and A160 / A180 are generally much lower standard and capacity with higher flows, more congestion and poorer safety and reliability records.
- **Rail passengers and freight connections to Hull and the Humber Ports** are poor. The Humber is the busiest port complex in the UK (by tonnage) and the fourth largest in northern Europe but relies on slow, outdated, low capacity and generally not 'fit for purpose' rail connections to the national network. Rail gauge clearance between the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and ports on both the north and south banks of the Humber is currently inadequate to take full size deep sea containers. The City of Hull needs faster and more frequent good quality passenger rail links to the main East / West (Trans-Pennine) and North- South (ECML and

¹ Transport Plan for the Humber, JMP Consultants Ltd, November 2015

HS2) routes. Important links to Leeds / Manchester and Manchester Airport are currently woefully inadequate for a city of this size and importance.

- **BetterTrans-Pennine road and rail links** are needed (especially Leeds – Manchester and Sheffield – Manchester) in order to better link Hull and the Humber Ports with the west side of the country (especially the Port of Liverpool) to form a 'Northern Landbridge' and to exploit the growth potential of the Humber Estuary and of the M62 (E20) corridor.
- Better alternative **North / South links from Hull and the Humber** are needed with new / improved direct routes south to Lincoln / Cambridge and North to York / Teesside to avoid / relieve the congested A1 / M1 corridors.
- Optimisation of the **Humber's Inland Waterways**, is required to support the movement of freight and leisure onto non-time sensitive modes, providing increased capacity within existing networks².

1.2. What cost-effective infrastructure investments in City-City connectivity could address these weaknesses?

Whilst a number of schemes are either underway or have some level of commitment these need to be completed as a matter of urgency to help overcome the immediate weaknesses. These include:

- South Humber Rail Gauge Clearance (Underway)
- A160 / A180 Port of Immingham Improvement (Underway)
- A63 Castle Street Improvement (In Development)

It is imperative that funding and resources are provided for the A63 improvements to 'unblock' the Port of Hull and realize the potential for growth especially in the fast emerging off-shore wind manufacturing industry based around the Siemens / ABP Green Port development.³

Further schemes needed to address the weaknesses identified in Section 1.1 include:

- **Rail electrification between Hull and the East Coast Mail Line (ECML).** This scheme is being promoted by First Hull Trains with support from Hull and East Riding Councils and the Humber LEP. It would provide new infrastructure by forward funding largely via the private sector. This is seen as a vital link needed for early completion of the Government's committed Trans-Pennine electrification plans. It is also needed to secure long term direct high speed links to London and the rest of the UK via ECML and eventually via access to HS2 at Leeds. The scheme has a healthy business case and works to complete 'GRIP3' are well underway. It is hoped that the Government will support / approve delivery of the scheme via this funding route in the near future. Work is also underway to

² One single 600 tonne barge can move the equivalent of twenty-four 25 tonne lorry loads; Howden and Selby Ports have maximum capacities of 3000 and 1200 tonnes respectively

³ Siemens / Green Port Hull investments amount to a programme of investment of £500m, 500 hectares of employment land, and over 1,000 new jobs

integrate this scheme into 'early-win' options being considered by Transport for the North (TFN) as part of their wider rail remit. This TFN work is looking at options to improve rail journey time and service frequencies between Hull / Leeds and Hull / Sheffield together with investigations of crucial station layouts / connections to HS2 at Leeds. Options to improve track capacity, line speed and freight gauge clearance east of Leeds are also being considered.

- **A63 link between M62 and the City / Port of Hull.** This scheme is currently only at the 'idea' stage with no detailed options identified. In the longer term, probably after 2030 (post RIS 3), there is likely to be a need to increase the capacity of the A63 dual carriageway by either adding lanes or providing a new additional route. These options might also need to be linked to a new orbital route around the North side of the City to link to the Port and development sites East of Hull. Funding is required to investigate options in RIS2 leading to possible delivery at a later date.
- **Humber Bridge Toll reduction.** In 2012 the Government "wrote off" a large proportion of the Humber Bridge debt allowing significant toll reductions. This has so far led to a 26% increase in traffic and has done much to merge the 'travel to work areas' on each bank of the Humber giving significant economic and social advantages to the area. It is highly likely that further reduction in tolls facilitated by further debt "write off" would lead to even greater economic advantages although a detailed study is needed to consider the business case in detail.
- **A1079 Capacity Improvements:** The A1079 between Hull and York is a single carriageway route and current use is constrained by capacity which inhibits future economic development. Upgrading the whole route or sections of it to dual carriageway standard would significantly improve journey times and reliability and overall connectivity between Hull and York, connecting the port facilities in Hull with York, North Yorkshire, the A64 and A1(M) and onwards to the North East. Existing feasibility work on a proposed 1 mile stretch of new dual carriageway on the A1079 near York suggests this would offer high value for money. A study examining the benefits of dualling the entire route would be extremely beneficial.

It will be important in developing the overall strategy, and supporting programmes, that fiscally balanced incentives are provided to support and actively encourage the switch from road to other modes, in particular coastal and inland shipping and rail for freight.

1.3. Which City to City corridor(s) should be the priority for early phases of investment?

In order of priority:

- **East-West (A1033/A63/M62) (including the airport).** This is basically the M62 corridor for road which is progressively becoming congested and unreliable in the Manchester / Leeds central sections. This has a serious negative impact across the North and requires major investment, probably in an alternative parallel route. Investments at the Port City ends (Hull and Liverpool) to address 'last mile' issues are crucial especially to freight traffic. For rail again the central sections of the

route are desperately over capacity especially in peak hours and the eastern sections to Hull are slow and unreliable with poor service levels. Consideration of a new and / or vastly improved high speed rail route from Liverpool through to Hull must be the number one priority.

- **North-South (A164/A15/Yorkshire Coastline) – Cambridge to Teesside.** These routes need serious investment to provide viable alternative routes to the congested A1 / M1 corridors. Investment opportunities to 'dual' the A15, A164, A1079 corridors need to be investigated in conjunction with further reduction in Humber Bridge Tolls. These options would make better use of existing infrastructure (Humber Bridge), provide better resilience in the national road network and boost the economic competitiveness of the Humber region by shortening strategic journeys using less congested routes. A range of options need to be considered from local dualling of key route sections through to a new east coast motorway (M11 extension from Cambridge to Teesside via the Humber Bridge).
- **Hull to Sheffield Rail Improvements.** Although considered a lower priority, there are significant valuable opportunities to improve rail journey times and to complete the M18 to dual three lane standard throughout.

1.4. What are the key International connectivity needs likely to be in the next 20-30 years in the north of England?

- Better **public transport access to Manchester Airport** (and to a lesser extent to Regional Airports). Solutions will be different for each airport ranging from better rail and road links to Manchester incorporating HS2 connections, to new rail station facilities and bus interchanges with associated service improvements at smaller airports.
- Better road and rail **freight services to key airports** where opportunities are highest (Manchester, Robin Hood / Doncaster) with associated warehousing and processing facilities.
- Better **road and public transport links to the major ports** to link with passenger ferries. In terms of Hull this will include the completion of the A63 Castle Street 'unblocking' scheme, long term improvements to the A63 link to the M62 west of Hull, better passenger rail services to the City and bus connections into the port. Investment needed also includes construction of a new purpose built cruise terminal close to the City centre.

1.5. What form of governance would most effectively deliver transformative infrastructure in the North?

The evolving Pan Northern Model based around Transport for the North (incorporating Rail North) with engagement at a regional level through combined authorities and LEPs would appear to be an appropriate delivery vehicle. The exact geographical scope of the Combined Authorities is still being debated.

Our preference would also be for non-overlapping LEPs with boundaries that fit exactly with those of the combined authorities. The political sensitivities and difficulties around delivery of such a model are appreciated. Funding for scheme investigation and preparation for Major National Transport Infrastructure should be provided from Government Sources devolved down via TFN. Local contributions should be on the basis of staff resources "in kind" towards joint investigation of schemes. Major rail and road scheme delivery should continue to be mostly via Network Rail and Highways England with prioritisation and funding controlled via TFN.