

Trans Pennine Tunnel Study, SRG Conference, 9th December 2015 Summary report

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This report summarises discussions at the Trans-Pennine Tunnel study Stakeholder Reference Group conference held in Manchester on 9th December 2015. The conference was attended by stakeholders from a wide range of organisational backgrounds. The primary aims of the event were:

1. To provide an overview of the main findings presented in the interim report, published on 24th November 2015
2. To inform stakeholders of the approach that will be taken to options selection
3. To involve stakeholders in corridor mapping

Copies of the presentations and of the maps used in the corridor mapping session are available at on the Department for Transport's website in due course.

Headline findings

The wider context for the study

Stakeholders expressed interest in how the Trans-Pennine Tunnel study sits in relation to other relevant plans and strategies. These include:

- Manchester and South Yorkshire Spatial Management Plans and the Northern Power House Special Plan
- Plans for rail, park and ride and local public transport networks

Stakeholders wanted clarity on the intended users of any tunnel built - for example, freight and commuters, to enable them to understand the purpose of the tunnel more fully. They also asked whether there is evidence from other schemes that connection between urban areas improves traffic flows.

Carbon emissions

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of measuring carbon emissions arising from the project. This point gave rise to a wider discussion about the potential for the study to reduce the reliance of the north west on southern ports and so reduce freight traffic on south-north routes.

Factors informing selection of route corridors

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of understanding local network flows, current user needs and the potential benefits and risks of different corridors for local communities. The relative benefits of a northern and a southern route were discussed. The northern route was felt to offer a shorter route, better aligned with existing infrastructure, whilst the southern route provides links to the airports and university.

Some stakeholders challenged the viability criteria restricting the tunnel to the study area (Please refer to page 13 on the [interim report](#)), arguing that this is, to some extent, arbitrary and that wherever situated, the tunnel will have impacts on the rest of the Pennine region. Stakeholders noted that the study will need to plan for impacts on the existing road networks both inside and outside the study area.

Additional information sources relevant to corridor selection were identified, including:

- High Peak Moors Vision & Plan
- Peak District Landscape Character Assessment and strategies
- National Trust inalienable land and covenants

National Park

Views differed on whether or not it would be acceptable for the tunnel to surface in the Peak District National Park (PDNP) at any point. For some, this is a 'red line', and completely unacceptable. Other stakeholders suggested they could be flexible, if occasional surfacing was demonstrable in the best interests of environmental or socio-economic factors.

Many stakeholders emphasised the importance of valuing the landscape and environment beyond the boundaries of the PDNP and discussed the importance of protecting buffer zones and limiting the environmental impact of any tunnel on communities outside the PDNP. The south-west region, outside Sheffield, was cited as a particularly important area for local and national tourism.

Recognising this point, it was suggested that the viability criteria be changed in its wording to: 'protects the National Park and its setting'.

Viability criteria

In this section, we summarise the discussions held following presentations on the three viability criteria. These describe high level factors that would rule corridors in or out, before more detailed examination.

4. Provides a strategic link connecting Manchester and Sheffield across Pennines

Stakeholders asked for clarity on what is meant by 'connecting Manchester and Sheffield': does this refer to a connection between economic zones, cities, or major traffic routes? Many felt that a city-to-city connection would be limiting, and that a regional connection should be considered, looking at the M1 and M60 and possibly including Leeds.

5. Within study area boundary

As noted earlier in this report, stakeholders emphasised the importance of looking at impacts beyond the PDNP boundary. In particular, they noted that benefits to freight transport would help to improve links between northern ports, so reducing freight movement from the south to the north.

3. Does not involve construction of a surface route within the National Park

Stakeholders' views were mixed on the potential for some sections of the route to surface in the park. Most felt that this was completely out of bounds, whilst others noted that there might be specific or exceptional circumstances where this might be necessary - for example, for safety reasons, or because this would have environmental benefits. These stakeholders were open to some re-wording of the criteria, providing that the impact of any surface sections was minimal.

One suggestion was to add 'and its wider setting' to this criterion, to incorporate tunneling through the green belt and other areas outside the Park.

Exploring the possibility of using existing tunnels and of synergies with utilities was also suggested.

Differentiators

In this section, we look at the factors that stakeholders think will enable differentiation between route corridors. These include:

- supports sustainable economic growth
- environmental factors, including:
 - weather events/landslides
 - biodiversity impacts – ancient woodlands/wildlife
 - spoil removal method/congestion – use rail to remove
 - number of ventilation shafts required in the PDNP

Stakeholders noted the importance of looking at risks associated with flooding and ground water, acknowledging that these would be considered in detail during the sustainability appraisal:

- Carbon reduction
- Planning for non-motorised users, including cyclists and horse riders
- impacts on existing routes and problems (Tameside and Mottram noted in particular): would all corridors require a full bypass at Mottram?
- How effectively existing problems are addressed: for example, the further north a corridor is, the less likely it is to take traffic off Snake Pass.

In addition to factors that would enable differentiation between corridors, stakeholders identified a number of broader points that should determine corridor selection:

- Objectives of the project should support sustainable economic growth
- Make sure that the right traffic is using the right routes

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- How the Trans-Pennine Tunnel study relates to the strategy for the elimination of HGV miles
 - Clarifying the intended users; benefits will be dependent on the corridor selected but there may be spin-off benefits to the rest of the network
 - Health Impact Assessments need to be carried out, to understand how local communities will be affected.

Mapping route corridors

In the afternoon, stakeholders mapped route corridors on maps, using information on environmental, geological and highway geometry and planning to support their selection. In this section, we summarise the issues discussed during this activity.

Route selection

Factors to consider include:

- Importance of the western fringe of Sheffield to local tourism: Sheffield sells itself as the ‘Outdoor City’ and southern routes could impact negatively on this
- Value of tunnelling beyond the National Park
- Whether or not to include the option of some surface sections
- Stakeholders noted that some of the regeneration areas on the maps were out of date in South Yorkshire (esp. along the M1) so would need to be updated and accounted for

Stakeholders identified some advantages specific to corridors in the north and south:

- **North:**
 - Follows current road route (Woodhead), Stockbridge bypass and potential additional bypass
 - Better geology
 - Would benefit parts of Greater Manchester that need regenerating
 - Offers potential for shorter tunnel lengths.
- **Southern:**
 - Less severe weather
 - Could connect A-roads or bring more traffic and HGVs down
 - Southern routes would need to consider impact on south east quadrant of M60.

Factors specific to the east and west side were also discussed. In the east, connections would be needed to the M1 and Sheffield City Centre, with north of Sheffield favoured. In the west, stakeholders noted that Manchester City Airport is a prime destination and ease of connection to airport routes is important.

Connections

Stakeholders felt it was necessary to consider road and rail options together, noting there is no rail solution in the plan. They asked how the study would link with HS2 developments and some suggested a ‘Channel tunnel’ type vehicle loading train.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of considering the impact of the tunnel on local routes, including other Pennine crossings. They suggested that connections at the M60 and M1 would need to be improved if they are to cater for increased traffic.

Economic case

Investment in an improved public transport network is seen as very important. Stakeholders felt that funding for cities to enhance their infrastructure and transport network would be needed, whichever corridor is chosen.

Stakeholders' suggestions included introducing a Park and Ride scheme and considering a light rail link, to benefit visitors. Views on tolling were mixed: some stakeholders provided examples of where this can work (Ireland) whilst others felt that tolling could deter use of the tunnel and thus limit its potential benefits.

Some stakeholder felt that economic benefits still need to be justified.

Traffic: demand, capacity and forecasts

Stakeholders saw the reduction of traffic in the PDNP as a positive benefit. They asked for additional information on the capacity that would be built into the tunnel, whether modelling would be based on current flows and how forecasting would take the 120 year design life of the tunnel.

Further engagement

Stakeholders would welcome clarity on how their input will inform decision-making.

Additional engagement activities suggested include:

- engagement with stakeholders on other TfN and/or DfT rail and highway schemes taking place as part of Northern Powerhouse Strategy
- engagement on the potential impacts/benefits of ventilation shafts and other features on National Trust Land.