

Date: 19 January 2021

The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

Secretary of State
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(Sent by email -
TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk)

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Trans Pennine Strategic Road Studies - Statutory Advice from Transport for the North

I am writing to you today in response to the agreement at the Transport for the North (TfN) Board on 14th January that TfN should provide your Department with statutory advice on recommended next steps for the Trans Pennine Tunnel and M6-A1(M) strategic road studies.

TfN Board acknowledge the significant challenges in delivering major strategic route upgrades within the two Trans Pennine corridors and accept that there should be no further work on considering full dualling of these strategic routes.

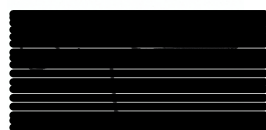
However, road connectivity is poor within both corridors and there is still a requirement to identify deliverable and financially viable solutions supporting our shared strategic objectives for levelling up the economy, delivering environmental benefits and supporting improved quality of life for citizens in the North.

Since their inception, TfN has strongly supported work on both corridor studies, coordinating engagement with local partners, and bringing forward potential solutions to help mitigate financial and environmental challenges.

We have set out TfN's advice, agreed by our Board, in the addendum to this letter. We would all want to see future work to progress at speed. Our advice therefore proposes that TfN should act as the sponsor for further work to investigate viable options for a coherent package of improvements for both corridors.

I look forward to your response and would welcome the opportunity to discuss next steps for identifying transport improvements for both corridors.

Yours sincerely,



Barry White
Chief Executive

Addendum – Recommendations for the Trans Pennine Strategic Road Studies

1. Relevant to both TPT and M6-A1(M)

That work should continue exploring deliverable and financially viable solutions to improving transport connectivity in the two corridors.

Future work should include assessment of the cumulative benefits of road and rail improvements to identify the programme level benefits across passenger and freight travel markets. For road travel this should include opportunities to improve travel by long distance bus.

That further work applies the revised guidance in the update to the 'Green Book', with a stronger focus on assessing schemes / packages of schemes against strategic objectives.

That in weighing up options there should be a greater emphasis on considering the future impact of new technologies, digital working and of other forms of behaviour change. Also reference to Government policies on transport decarbonisation, noting that publication of the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan is expected in Spring 2021.

That resilience of the transport network is a key consideration and should gain greater prominence in the programme level assessment of schemes / packages of schemes.

Proposed interventions should ensure good integration with localised priorities such as enabling sustainable transport provision on shorter journeys and the 'last mile' to town and city centres.

That any reduction in the funding requests for road upgrades within the two corridors should be considered within a wider multi-modal context. For example, including the need to ensure Manchester -Sheffield is well connected by rail.

2. Specific to Trans Pennine Tunnel

TfN and partners understand the significant challenges to delivering the ambition for a twin bore tunnel for the trans Pennine route, and accept the need to investigate proposals that move away from the full dualling of a strategic route.

There is still a strong case for improving strategic connectivity between Manchester and Sheffield and that further work should continue, and within the context set out under section 1 should include:

- a) Improvements to the A628 and A616, rather than full dualling, to increase road safety, reliability and resilience. These would need to consider effects on the wider local road network and be to an exemplar environmental design.
- b) With the move to zero tailpipe emission and expected advent of autonomous / semi- autonomous vehicles the potential for a single bore tunnel to achieve similar strategic benefits to the more expensive dual bore tunnel considered up

till now.

- c) Consideration of the resilience benefits of improving east-west connectivity in the Southern Pennines, including the advantages of a tunnel in reducing the impact of severe weather.
- d) Benefits of improved connectivity for freight, both through and to the Peak District. Taking account of the changing demands for, and distribution of freight movements across the North. This is particularly important as the United Kingdom develops new trading relationships with the European Union and globally.
- e) Account of the cumulative impacts for passengers and freight of the Trans Pennine Rail Upgrade and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Further work will require development funding and should be sponsored by TfN, working in close partnership with DfT, Highways England, Peak District National Park and local authority partners.

3. Specific to M6 – A1(M)

TfN and partners recognise the significant challenges in delivering a major strategic route within the Central Pennines Corridor and accept that there should be no further work on considering a strategic motorway or dual carriageway standard route.

Transport connectivity is still poor within the corridor, with several congestion hot spots and overall slow journey times from East Lancashire to West and North Yorkshire.

The M6-A1(M) strategic connectivity study identified several locations where smaller scale interventions could be pursued for considerably less cost and with less disruption.

Further work should be managed at a coordinated programme level, thereby minimising disruption and seeking to maximise opportunities for improving overall value for money. Within the context set out under section 1 this should include:

- a) Development of a business case for a coherent, prioritised and sequenced corridor wide programme of smaller scale measures.
- b) Options for reducing congestion at pinch points in the corridor, for example at Colne and on the A629/ A650.
- c) Consideration of future passenger and freight travel markets including the interdependencies with the proposal to reopen the Skipton-Colne rail line and opportunities for improved long-distance bus routes.

Further work on the M6-A1(M) will require development funding and should be sponsored by TfN working in close partnership with the local transport authorities responsible for the road network in the corridor.