

# Northern Trans-Pennine Strategic Study

## Study Terms of Reference

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Northern Trans Pennine Study is a strategic study is jointly sponsored by the Department for Transport and Transport for North (TfN). The requirement for this study was set out in the first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS), published in December 2014, which announced a programme of Strategic Studies to explore options to address some of the Strategic Road Network's emerging challenges. The results of these high-level studies will inform the second RIS. The Department for Transport and Transport for the North (TfN) have commissioned Highways England to undertake the study on its behalf.
- 1.2 The Northern Trans-Pennine Study, will investigate the potential to create a new strategic corridor linking the A1 with the M6 by upgrading one or both of the A69 and A66 and making other improvements along their length.

### 2. Purpose of Northern Trans-Pennine Strategic Study

- 2.1 The strategic aim of the Northern Trans-Pennine Strategic Study is to identify options for a new strategic corridor upgrading one or both of the A66 and A69 and making other improvements along their length; improving east – west connectivity in the North of England; and considering the impact any options could have on the wider east-west links from the M62 to the Scottish border.
- 2.2 The study will identify options that can feasibly be constructed, and can be operated and used safely, and reach conclusions on the strategic, economic, safety, environmental and operational benefits and impacts for each of the feasible options, and make recommendations on a preferred option or options.
- 2.3 Key to forming a judgement will be the wider economic costs and benefits of different options, in particular their impacts on the local labour and product markets and the economic geography of the northern transport area. This will allow us to understand how each of the options can act as an enabler to raising growth in the north.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The principal North Pennines routes are the A69 and the A66. Both roads have a mix of high quality dual carriageway and single carriageway. The A69 connects Carlisle with Newcastle, between the M6 and A1. The A66 connects the M6 at Penrith with the A1 just south of Darlington.
- 3.2 However, between Leeds and Manchester in the south and Edinburgh and Glasgow in the north, there is no complete dual carriageway link between the

east and west of the country. This is one of the most visible gaps in the UK transport network, and is seen as a barrier to business in the north of England. It also leaves the economy of the north of England heavily dependent on one road – the M62 – to provide strategic east-west connectivity.

3.3 Proposals to upgrade six sections of single carriageway on the A66 to dual were the subject of previous consultations. The sections of the A66 considered were:

- Penrith to Temple Sowerby
- Temple Sowerby to Appleby
- Appleby to Brough
- Bowes Bypass
- Cross Lanes to Greta Bridge
- Stephen Bank to Carkin Moor

3.4 Of these sections, only the Cross Lanes to Greta Bridge was taken forward and completed in 2009.

3.5 In April 2014 the Highways Agency published 18 route strategy evidence reports, including the North Pennines route evidence report. In March 2015, Highways England published 18 route strategies for the strategic road network (SRN), which helped inform the development of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) – Investment Plan for Road Period 1 (2015/16 – 2019/20).

3.6 In addition, in March 2015, the Northern Transport Strategy (NTS), a joint report by the Department for Transport and Transport for the North, set out plans to transform Northern growth, rebalance the country's economy and establish the North as a global powerhouse. Transport is a fundamental part of achieving these goals. The shared vision set out in the NTS is consistent with the RIS. It commits to development of the next generation of major road improvements to dramatically improve east-west connectivity with the shared aim to address remaining strategic bottlenecks that will otherwise constrain the North's growth potential.

3.7 Improving long distance strategic connectivity on Northern Trans-Pennine routes (principally the A69 and A66) will have important resilience benefits for east - west traffic crossing between the A1M and M6 in the North of England (north of the M62).

3.8 Through the RIS, the Department for Transport has commissioned Highways England to undertake a study to examine the potential to create a new strategic corridor in the region to link the A1 with the M6 by upgrading one or both of the A69 and A66 and making other improvements along their length.

## **4. Study Objectives**

4.1 The objectives of the Northern Trans-Pennine Strategic Study are to:

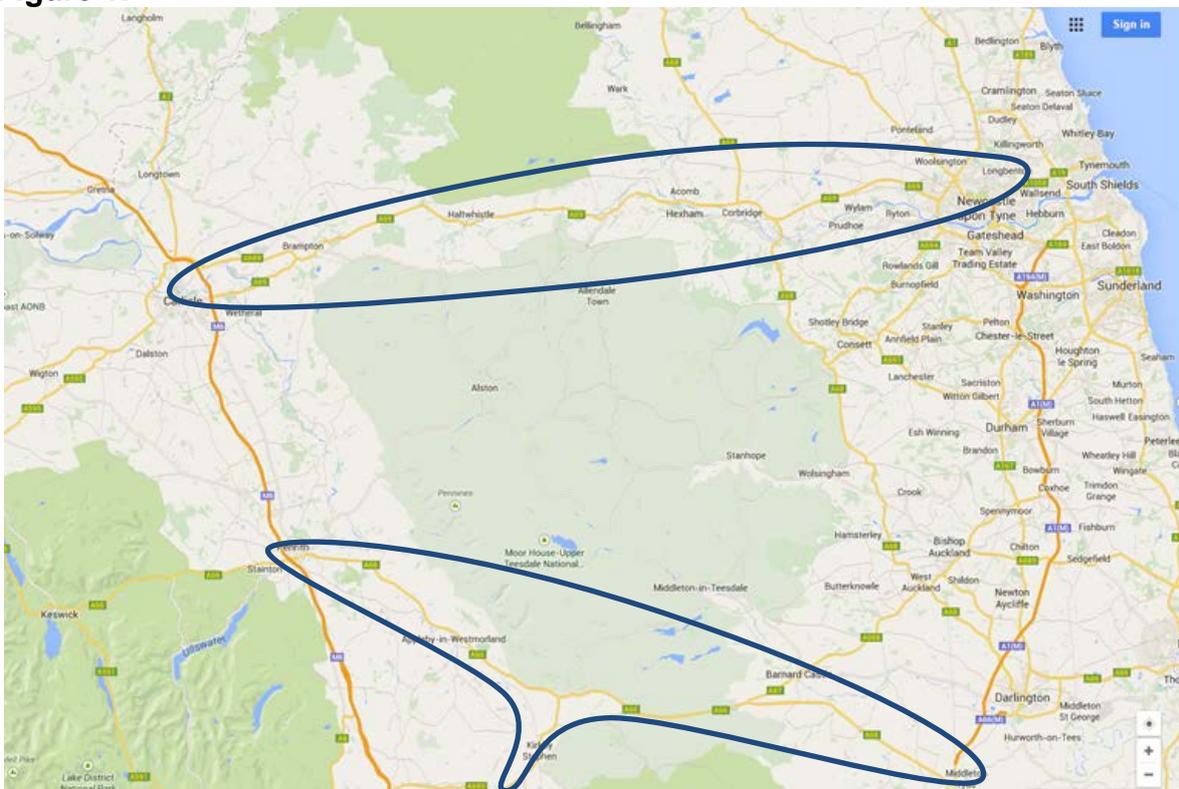
- i. Review previous study work, other relevant data, and current investment plans to understand current performance and constraints of the existing road infrastructure, and confirm the strategic case for considering further investment.

- ii. Identify options for a new strategic corridor upgrading one or both of the A66 and A69 and making other improvements along their length, including how they will connect with the existing strategic route network and the local road network and reaching conclusions on the feasibility of their delivery;
- iii. Understand the operational benefits and challenges of constructing each of the options, in particular the significant issues associated with weather related resilience and long diversions following incidents ; also assessing the safety impacts on road users and on local communities of these options and the operational issues associated with periodic and emergency maintenance and renewals;
- iv. Understand the benefits and impacts resulting from the provision of a new strategic corridor - including the benefits and impacts accruing on the M62 and other existing trans-Pennine routes, including local roads - to further inform the strategic and economic case for investment in new road infrastructure in the corridor. The benefits assessment will need to encompass analysis of the congestion-relief, reliability, safety, and environmental outcomes of constructing a new strategic corridor. The study will need to consider a range of individual potential investment proposals and potentially combinations of investment proposals. As set out in the Transport Investment and Economic Performance Report and the Department for Transport's response on Understanding and Valuing the Impacts of Transport Investments, the study will need to reach an understanding on how options impact on the local and regional environment.
- v. Have reference to and reflect wherever possible the key findings of the other northern Strategic Studies (Trans Pennine Tunnel and M60 Manchester north-west quadrant). Specifically, understand the interdependencies between the potential options arising from the Trans Pennine Tunnel Strategic Study and the Manchester north-west quadrant study, to include:
  - Understanding the implications of the timing and phasing of potential schemes for the three study locations, to minimise impact on the performance of the network during the build phases;
  - Identification of opportunities for synergy or optimal sequencing of major road and rail works involved in, and options for mitigating strategic risks arising from, three major complex projects being undertaken within the same function geography potentially within the same Roads Period.

## 5. Geographic Scope

- 5.1 The geographic scope of the study should consider a broad Trans Pennine corridor between the A1M and M6, considering options for upgrading one or both of the A66 and A69. It will need to take account of the requirements of the emerging freight strategic for TfN across the North. The contribution of improvements to the A695 Kirkby Stephen link between the A66 and M6 to northern Trans-Pennine connectivity and resilience should be considered and tested as part of the review of assumptions in Stage 2.
- 5.2 A map of the proposed approximate geographical scope of the study is included at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.



## 6. Modal Scope

- 6.1 The study will need to understand existing investment proposals on both the strategic and local authority road networks, and the traffic impact that a new strategic corridor would have on these existing routes, including the ability of the network to accommodate the level of re-assigned demand created from any new strategic corridor.
- 6.2 The study will need to consider the possibility that other modal solutions such as bus, coach and rail can address the strategic objectives of the study (including where either existing infrastructure or planned improvements fulfil some of the studies objectives).

- 6.3 The impact of future freight traffic trends through the North East ports (including the Port of Tyne, Hartlepool and Teesport) will be considered as part of this work. It will also consider the needs of and impact on the M62.

## **7. Study Stages**

- 7.1 The study will be completed in three stages which are set out below. The study will be reviewed at the end of stages one and two to confirm the value of proceeding further and review the scope of the subsequent phases of work.

### **Stage 1**

#### **Review of existing evidence and provide advice on the strategic and economic case for a new strategic corridor, upgrading one or both the A66 and A69 and making other improvements along their length.**

- 7.2 The study will review any relevant evidence (including wider economic evidence of labour markets, industrial structure in different geographic areas). The evidence will include that gathered through the Highways Agency's North Pennines route based strategy, together with evidence from any other relevant study work and analysis related to trans-Pennine connectivity to form a view as to the nature and scale of current and future performance of the relevant routes. Gaps in evidence will be reviewed with Highways England and the Department for Transport.
- 7.3 Having established the availability of existing transport models, the study will summarise this evidence and reach a preliminary view on the strategic and economic benefits for improved connectivity in the region to confirm the case to examine the technical feasibility of a new strategic corridor. The study will need to consider a range of individual potential investment proposals and potentially combinations of investment propositions.

### **Stage 2**

#### **Identify options for a new strategic corridor using one or both of the A66 and A69, provide an option assessment, summarising their technical and operational feasibility.**

- 7.4 Once the strategic case has been confirmed, the study will then review the options considered in previous study work for a new road link and identify any further options, and reach a view for each of these options on their technical and operational feasibility.
- 7.5 The study will be required to cover the range of issues set out in the aims and objectives above at paragraphs 4(b) and 4(c). The study will also be required to reach a view based on value for money advice on whether any of the options examined should not be taken through subsequent benefits assessment work

7.6 These will cover impact on traffic levels on trans-Pennine routes from the M62 in the south to the Scottish Borders but also the wider benefits to the north including to growth, employment, businesses and impacts across groups and areas.

### Stage 3

#### Understand the benefits arising from the deliverable options for improved trans-Pennine links

- 7.7 Once a confirmed set of deliverable options have been identified, this stage should comprise the production of benefits assessments covering the areas set out in the aims and objectives above and at paragraph 4(d), including detailed costings for each scheme option.
- 7.8 Where the recommendations can be broken down into several discrete elements, this section should detail both the whole route analysis of the total value of the package of works and separate analysis demonstrating the individual cost and contributions of different sections.

## 8. Deliverables and Timings

- 8.1 The following key milestones will be established for the study. These milestones will be kept under review as the study progresses, and are subject to amendment as and when required.

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Review of existing evidence and provide advice on the strategic and economic case for a new strategic corridor, upgrading one or both the A66 and A69 and making other improvements along their length.	January 2016
Publication of an interim report setting out the strategic and economic case for a providing a new strategic corridor.	March 2016
Identify options for a new strategic corridor using one or both of the A66 and A69, provide an option assessment, summarising technical and operational feasibility.	May 2016
Production of a final report setting out the full findings of the study, as an update to the published interim report, to include full assessment of the options considered.	31 October 2016

## 9. Study Governance

9.1 The Northern Trans-Pennine Strategic Study is a strategic study jointly sponsored by the Department for Transport and Transport for North, which is being undertaken by Highways England. The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the study is Karen Wilkinson, Senior Policy Adviser at the Department for Transport.

9.2 Governance of the study will be provided by the Northern Studies Programme Board. The Northern Studies Programme Board will set the overall direction of the study at each of its stages and will review and approve the outputs of study work, and the Consultant will be expected to report to, and provide information for, this Board. The Programme Board will include representatives from the Department for Transport, Highways England and Transport for the North.

9.3 The role of the Programme Board will be to:

- Provide strategic direction for the programme of studies and monitor key milestones;
- Monitor/validate progress against plan and review significant risks and issues;
- Decide on the frequency and level of detail to be reported to Ministers;
- Provide advice to project managers regarding issues that arise as part of the individual studies;
- Review and approve the study outputs; and
- Take account of analytical assurance provided by the RIS futures analytical working group

9.4 The day to day control of the study will be undertaken by a project board. The project board will provide strategic oversight to the study and will confirm that the terms of reference for the study are being addressed in the delivery of the Services. It will be chaired by the SRO, and will include other representatives from, the Department for Transport, Highways England and Transport for the North.

9.5 The role of the Project Board will be to:

- Ensure agreement to the scope of the study, the aims, timings and outputs of the study, and agree any amendments to the study's activities as it progresses;
- Provide day to day oversight of the study;
- Take decisions as necessary throughout the life of the study and decide which decisions should be escalated to the Programme Board, and approve draft outputs to be considered by the Programme Board;
- Monitor progress against the plan and review significant risks and issues.

9.5 As the study progresses there may be a need to establish specific technical or working groups to take forward defined activities. Decisions on the

establishment and membership of such groups would be for the project board to consider.

- 9.6 Figure 2 illustrates the proposed governance arrangements for the Northern Trans-Pennine Study and its relationship with the other ongoing strategic studies

## **10. Stakeholder Reference Group**

- 10.1 Given the broad range of stakeholder interests in the study a Stakeholder Reference Group will be established by the Department for Transport.
- 10.2 The main role of the reference group will be to ensure stakeholders' views are captured and considered during the study process, particularly at times of the development of key outputs.
- 10.3 The establishment of the reference group will allow stakeholder organisations to be aware and feed into the work of the study and allow representation from other organisations.
- 10.4 The membership of the reference group will be confirmed at the end of stage 1 of the study, and is likely to include LEPs, local authorities (including planning authorities), environmental NGOs, other transport associations and business interest groups. The membership of this group will be kept under review as the study progresses to ensure that it continues to capture stakeholder views throughout the study process.
- 10.5 Transport for the North will chair the Stakeholder Reference Groups for the Northern Trans-Pennine, Manchester North-West Quadrant and Trans-Pennine Tunnel studies.

**Figure 2**

