



Department for Transport

Andrew Stephenson
Member of Parliament for Pendle
By Email

Date: 03/07/2020

████████████████████
Deputy Director
Future RIS
Zone 2/19
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 07342 057801

Dear Mr Stephenson,

I am writing to you regarding the M6 – A1(M) Central Pennines Corridor road study.

The purpose of the study is to consider what enhancements could be made to road connections between the end of the M65 at Colne and communities in North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, and assess whether there is a case for future investment in the corridor. With the current stage of work scheduled to conclude this summer, I want to offer you an update on the project before decisions on any next steps are made.

When the study was launched in March last year, the primary objective was to assess options that could improve connectivity between the east and west of England, providing an alternative to the M62 that would significantly improve journey time reliability in the North. A further objective of the study was to assess enhancements in the corridor that would contribute to delivering the Government's ambitions as identified in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review.

The project team at Highways England has worked over the past year to develop 'corridor concepts' that deliver these strategic and economic benefits whilst seeking to ensure that options represent good value for money for the tax payer and optimise opportunities to enhance the built and natural environment. Collaborating closely with key local stakeholders including Transport for the North, Lancashire County Council, Leeds County Council, City of Bradford, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and North Yorkshire County Council, the team at Highways England has been mindful to consider local interests and aspirations when developing the corridor concepts.

The project team has identified two potential corridor concepts that might fulfil the strategic and economic objectives outlined in this letter. The first corridor concept (the 'purple' option) extends from Colne M65 to the M1 east of Leeds via Leeds-Bradford airport. The second corridor concept (the 'orange' option) extends from Colne M65 to A1(M) via Skipton and Leeds-Bradford Airport. The 'orange' option has been divided into two further sub-options, broadly characterised by a shorter option (49.7 miles) and longer

option (53 miles) that extends from A1(M) to York A64.

Assessment of these options clearly shows that either of these options would constitute a major capital investment with very-high costs forecast for both development and construction. The high costs can be explained in part by the scale of the Central Pennines Corridor but also by the challenging topography of the study area which passes through a sensitive area environmentally. At this stage of the project, the project team has not undertaken a full environmental impact assessment but we do anticipate either option having large environmental disbenefits that will be very costly and challenging to mitigate.

I understand you have been in touch with the project team at Highways England and are keen to discuss the emerging conclusions from the study. I hope this letter serves as a useful update but my officials and Highways England are standing by to run meetings with you and your colleagues to discuss the results of the study in person and hear your views if that would be helpful. Please let my colleague [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] [dft.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@dft.gov.uk)) know if you wish to attend a meeting and we will arrange a convenient time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director
Future RIS