

Transport Working Group Notes – 7th December, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber, Sheffield Road, Rotherham S60 1DX

In attendance:

Dominic Beck (Chamber of Commerce) Adrian Platts (Chamber of Commerce)
Clive Watkinson (JC Snell) – Chair Tony Hickton
Neil Robertson (Keepmoat Construction) Gareth Owen (QFM Group)

Apologies from:

Ian Ashton, Lorraine Lahart (who can no longer be part of the forum due to a job change), Moira Benson (who will no longer be able to take part in Transport Forum activities due to other commitments)

HS2 Update

Clive Watkinson commented that following detailed previous discussion, there is not much change around the situation with HS2.

- Discussions have taken place however regarding the cost being more than a Meadowhall route should the HS2 route run through Sheffield City Centre
- The route has since changed to running through Bramley and Mexborough, which has brought many challenges with some local residents affected by the plans
- Neil Robertson mentioned a LEP meeting regarding the plans around Meadowhall and Sheffield and suggested that any feedback regarding transportation should also be fed back through the property and construction forum at the LEP
- The feeling around the LEP and its engagement in infrastructure issues is that they are not communicating enough about regional plans and how they might address issues in the long term

Trans Pennine Tunnel

Clive Watkinson opened discussion about TPT feasibility study and its current status.

- Tony Hickton mentioned that the TPT study is one of three, however it was considered that the TPT project is the most economically viable scheme and would bring greater connections to the North of England
- Various journeys have been considered comparatively against other destinations like Leeds in terms of demand and the general consensus is that the Trans Pennine Tunnel could cut travel times for routes to the North West significantly
- The potential of lobbying for the best route was suggested, however it was agreed that the group would work supportively with the TPT study team to prove the viability of route B being the best option.
- It was also mentioned that rail needs greater consideration as part of the plans (The consultation report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trans-pennine-tunnel-strategic-study-updated-interim-report>)
- The upcoming Quarterly Economic Survey event in January is expected to cover the possibilities of a tunnel and what that would mean for the local economy

Any other Business

Various points were discussed, with most being raised by members regarding local traffic issues.

- The smart motorways are almost complete and traffic is flowing much more smoothly, however it has been suggested by some members that lobbying should take place to restrict the use of only the two left hand lanes for HGV's. It is felt that the maximum benefit of the additional lane can only take place if the third and fourth lane are used effectively by vehicles that are not restricted by the lower legal speeds to relieve traffic congestion
- It was mentioned that parking in Rotherham is free at weekends throughout the Christmas period to assist the public going about their Christmas activities
- Thoughts were shared on extending vehicle charging points across Barnsley and Rotherham due to the limited number available. It was suggested that local authorities include this as a requirement of planning when building or renovating car parks across the areas
- Traffic congestion was a point of discussion regarding the Meadowhall expansion plans and pending new Ikea site on Sheffield Road near junction 34. The issue is currently being investigated by the LEP. There has been some proposal which are being reviewed, but possible options are yet to be publicised as to how to ease traffic issues. It was suggested that traffic management systems should be more effectively managed/supported by local authorities

Date of the Next Meeting

Next meeting on 8th March, 8am, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce.