

Transport Working Group Notes – 13th June 2017, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber, Sheffield Road, Rotherham S60 1DX

In attendance:

Adrian Platts (Chamber of Commerce)
Brett Hawke (NRL Ltd)
Alan Rigall (First Group)

Clive Watkinson (JC Snell) – Chair
Nick Whitford (Highways England)

Apologies from:

Andy Simpson (First Group)
Sarah Cooper (Burrows Motor Company)
Gareth Owen (QFM Group)
Richard Marshall (Highways England)

John Young (Stagecoach)
David Boden (TM Travel)
Cheryl Green (Stagecoach Group)
Stuart Savage (RMBC)

HS2 Update

- Clive Watkinson fed back regarding the HS2 consultation report stating that the Chamber had returned the document highlighting the views of Chamber members.
- Clive Watkinson (CW) commented that there had been little movement on decisions regarding placement of the HS2 line at this point, however the Chamber would maintain the stance and continue to argue for the case of an HS2 stop being placed at Meadowhall.
- Brett Hawke (BH) raised a query as to the potential plans for a delivery unit/depot based in the region as he stated there will be a need for this in addition to the general route and positioning of public stops. CW agreed that this needs to be a fundamental point in the planning cycle as it is related to the delivery of the scheme.
- CW reinforced the reasoning that the Chamber comes from the point of view of improved transport connectivity, which in turn promotes the creation of jobs across the region.
- Various forum members made additional comments about the content of the consultation feedback and the document was to be amended and reviewed accordingly before submission.

Trans Pennine Tunnel

- CW provided a brief synopsis regarding progress around the TPT feasibility study and present status reiterating what it could bring to the region.
- CW clarified that the project had received significant investment to ensure the feasibility study had been carried out correctly.
- CW highlighted that the project is competing against other projects which are less costly, however this project will have the most significant impact on transport networks.
- BH commented that the electrification of lines continues to be carried out on the routes close to Manchester near to the area of this project.
- The project is viewed as a positive step forward for connectivity on both sides of the TPT focus area, and will benefit both Manchester and Sheffield City Region businesses significantly.

Local Transport Issues

Barnsley

- Additional work had been carried out at M1 J36 & J37 with funding also being contributed by BMBC to support local development.
- The changes to the road infrastructure around Birdwell and Hoyland have been significant and should provide more effective control of traffic flows as the project nears completion. The changes will also promote local industrial investment on land nearby while managing the congestion of traffic entering and exit the M1.
- CW mentioned that the traffic lights at Broadway in Barnsley had been optimised to their greatest efficiency. He confirmed that although the forum has spent significant time focusing on strategic issues, it remains focused on the quick fixes also.
- BH mentioned the crossroads in Worsborough Dale and the significant dangers of the route. It was suggested that more effective traffic management could be put in place as accidents were frequent and significant enough to note this as an accident blackspot.
- Paul Keating mentioned that at Smithies junction in Barnsley, there was no need for a right turn to reduce congestion.

Rotherham

- The planned road widening bid from M1 J33 to Waverley (Catcliffe) is still being pursued.
- The road and signalling adjustments currently taking place at the A57 roundabout for Wales Bar / Swallownest is almost complete.
- CW highlighted that M1 J34 is still a challenge and suggested that once the new Ikea store opens, which is particularly close to the motorway junction, will increase traffic demands further. The additional road leading to the back end of Meadowhall is help to relieve pressure at the roundabout, though it creates a traffic build up elsewhere at peak times. CW asked that if plans are underway to address issues around M1 J34, and requested that they are shared at the earliest opportunity so that consultation could be sought and impacts minimised to the local economy.

Any other Business

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

- A local driving school fed back regarding traffic management issues in Rotherham relating to signage and foliage covering up some signage. It was raised that some key routes were extremely challenging for drivers who are unfamiliar or are learning to drive in the area as some signs were covered by foliage from shrubbery and trees. The information has been passed back to Rotherham MBC's Highways Department for action, which they are responding to.
- CW mentioned that the Smart Motorways still need some tweaking. Feedback has indicated that sometimes speed restrictions are being implemented without any real justification for it. It was noted by Highways England however that a period of testing has taken place to ensure smooth regulation of the motorway traffic and could be the reason for the gantry signage displaying such information.

Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place 20th September from 8am, at the Smart Motorways Operations Centre in Wakefield. Transport Forum members will have the opportunity to see in real time how the Smart Motorways management system operates.