

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Enterprise and Housing Committee

Agenda item 7 approval noting Ref DM/TM Date 15/02/2018

Transport Scotland High Speed Rail Feasibility Study

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of a feasibility study being carried out by Transport Scotland on the potential of a High Speed Rail route between Glasgow and Carstairs as well as the potential for a new interchange station at Eurocentral.

Such a proposal is likely to bring significant benefits to the connectivity and economy of North Lanarkshire and it is proposed to undertake an Economic Impact Assessment to support the study and any next stage developments.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Note the content of the report and current status of the High Speed rail link proposals;
- (ii) Agree to instruct an Economic Impact Assessment of the Eurocentral Station proposal which can also be used for supporting linked business cases in City Deal projects in the area such as the Park & Ride scheme and the A8/Orchard farm roundabout

Supporting Documents

Council Business Plan to 2020 Improve Economic Opportunities, (Action 5) Fund physical programme activity that underpins wider economic development and success.

Appendix 1 Plan of proposed High Speed Rail extension routes

1. Background

- 1.1 High Speed Rail and High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) were developed to meet a near future need for greater capacity on the main railway lines between London and the North of England. It had been identified by Network Rail that if this was not carried out then the West Coast mainline would be full by the mid 2020s. The proposed network was extended to include new lines to Yorkshire as well as Manchester and it has been identified by Transport Scotland that this should be extended to Scotland to connect Scotland with the major cities of England including London. This would meet the objectives of increasing economic benefits for areas around the railway extension and would reduce carbon emissions.
 - 1.2 Transport Scotland have been investigating the potential of routing the High Speed Rail network to Scotland along with the best route for doing this to enable connectivity to Glasgow, Edinburgh and the rest of the Scottish Rail network. Eurocentral is considered to be ideally located for an interchange station.
 - 1.3 A plan of the proposed extensions within the UK from Transport Scotland's website is attached as Appendix 1.
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2. Report

- 2.1 Transport Scotland have reported that they will be carrying out a feasibility study on taking high speed trains from London to both Glasgow and Edinburgh and view the Eurocentral area as giving an ideal opportunity to construct an interchange station. They will be reporting to Ministers on the results of the feasibility study in autumn 2018.
- 2.2 Rail is a strong and growing sector of the Scottish economy with user benefits for passengers and freight of £1b per year, with the industry and its associated supply chain contributing up to £670m in GVA per year, employing up to 13,000 people and providing tax receipts of up to £290m. The expansion to High Speed could significantly boost this position stimulating industry sectors and improving Scotland's attractiveness for further wider investment.
- 2.3 High Speed rail could potentially bring significant benefits to North Lanarkshire, the City region and indeed the whole of central Scotland. Critically, High speed rail provides fast, efficient and cost effective transport, connecting major cities and centres of employment, and in this case, could enable journeys to London to be sub 3 hours and travel to other towns, cities and economic centres such as Manchester to be within reasonable commuting times.
- 2.4 Building substantial capacity and resilience into the rail network, high speed rail grows opportunities for passenger travel and freight movements and broadens the labour market for businesses and offers a wider employment choice for employees, stimulating economic development at both the local and regional level. There is substantial opportunity for modal shift especially from air on some journeys due to factors such as productivity, convenience and environmental considerations, but it should be noted that costs would be a factor. High speed rail

could substantially reduce the need for domestic aviation between Glasgow, Edinburgh and London with the potential for significant environmental benefits.

- 2.5 For North Lanarkshire, the proposal of a station at Eurocentral could bring a significant range of economic benefits in terms of supporting existing businesses, business growth and inward investment. This strengthening of the economy and increased access to markets would provide real economic benefits to our local businesses and communities.
- 2.6 The following timescale is anticipated for the project (subject to consent):
- Out to 5 framework consultants through January 2018 with a view to appointment and commencement of feasibility study in February 2018.
 - Planning/ design works for the project to commence in 2019.
 - Construction to be completed through 2026 -2029.
- 2.7 The Transport Scotland feasibility study will look also at the wider economic case of the project and in order to establish the economic impact of such a proposal on North Lanarkshire it is proposed to instruct an Economic Impact Assessment of our own. Members will recall that there are ongoing City Deal business cases in the area such as the Park & Ride scheme and the A8/Orchard farm roundabout mentioned above.
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3. Implications

3.1 Financial Impact

At the moment the only financial impacts for the Council would be the commissioning of an Economic Impact Assessment as Transport Scotland has the funding secured for the feasibility study. The proposed Economic Impact Assessment will inform the Council as to the likely economic benefits if this proposal is constructed.

3.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

There is no foreseen policy or legislative impact in this proposal for the Council at this stage.

3.3 Environmental Impact

This is at an early stage but full Environmental Impact Assessments would be carried out by Transport Scotland prior to any works. There would also be a need to assess the positive impact on carbon emissions reduction by encouraging more people to use the rail network for travel offset by the travel to the station.

3.4 Risk Impact

Proposals outlined within the report do give rise to any increase in risk identification or mitigation for the North Lanarkshire Council.

4. Measures of success

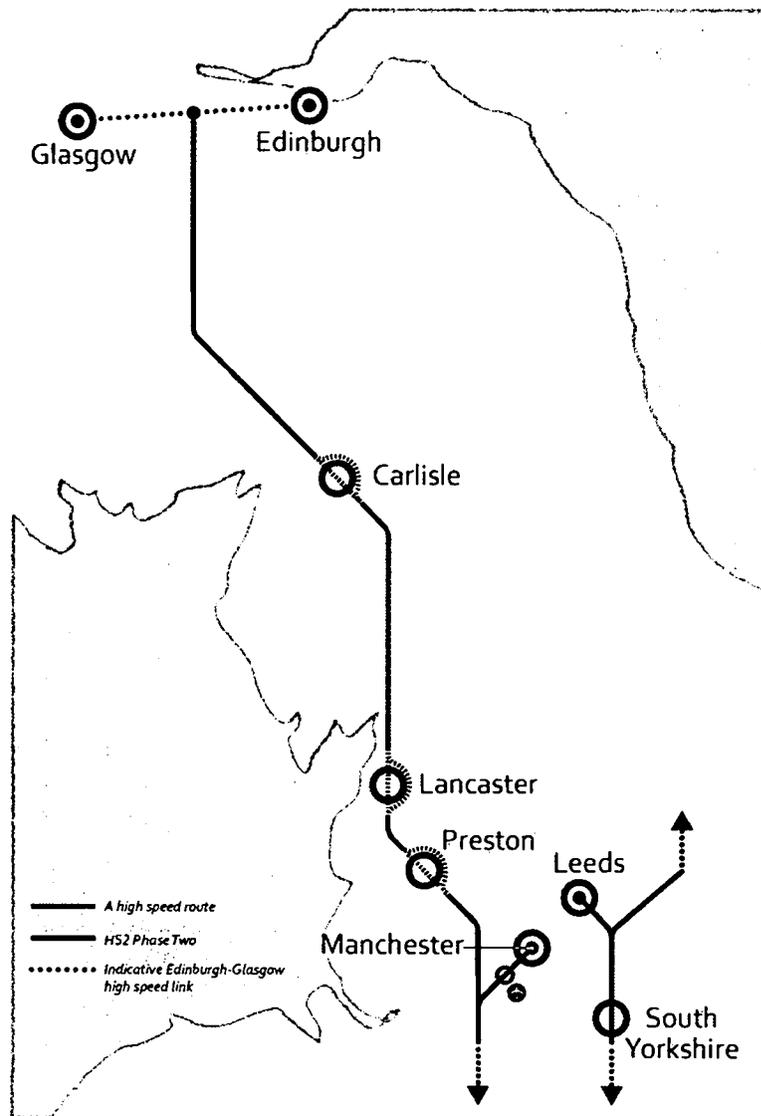
- 4.1 The proposal is only at feasibility stage therefore the immediate measure of success would be achieving Scottish Government approval to progress to the next stage.
- 4.2 Ultimate success would be measured by a High Speed Rail interchange station being constructed at Eurocentral.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DM', written in a cursive style.

Des Murray
Assistant Chief Executive Enterprise and Housing Resources

Appendix 1

Outline Plan of Proposed High Speed Rail Routes



Plan Courtesy of *High Speed Rail Scotland Summary Report*, (p.32) Transport Scotland (2016)