

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting:	16 November 2021
Report Title:	HS2 Update
Report of:	Andrew Ross, Director of Highways and Infrastructure
Report Reference No:	HT/07/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** Having an efficient and integrated transport network in Crewe is critical to supporting the continued regeneration of the town and preparing for the arrival of HS2.
- 1.2.** This report outlines the next steps to develop a refreshed transport plan and priorities for central Crewe following the decisions taken by Corporate Policy Committee at its meeting on the 4 November 2021.
- 1.3.** The report highlights some of the Council's recent successful investments in Crewe and sets out how these along with other planned projects will be considered in shaping the next set of transport priorities.
- 1.4.** The report also identifies the work required to support the Council's Levelling Up Fund transport bid to Government for Crewe to accelerate the delivery of key transport priorities.
- 1.5.** The work outlined in this report on transport for Crewe will support sustainable economic growth and health equalities and contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Plan and Local Transport Plan policies and objectives.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** That Committee:

- 2.1.1. Note the decisions of the Corporate Policy Committee on 04 November 2021;
- 2.1.2. Note the work requirements for the refresh of the transport plans for Crewe, including:
 - 2.1.2.1. Updating the Crewe Transport Model to provide an up-to-date baseline of the local transport network and priorities;
 - 2.1.2.2. Developing a revised transport strategy for central Crewe area (Appendix 1) that both can capture the short-term Government investment priorities and support the long-term HS2 ambition;
 - 2.1.2.3. Prioritising transport interventions identified in the transport strategy into short, medium and long-term priorities;
 - 2.1.2.4. Preparing a Local Transport Authority Levelling Up Fund bid for Crewe, to seek up to £50m of funding to enable the delivery of package of short-term transport priorities in line with the revised transport strategy; and
 - 2.1.2.5. Undertaking community and stakeholder engagement and consultation, as required, to support a Local Transport Authority Levelling Up Fund bid for Crewe.
- 2.1.3. Note that a further report will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee on the transport plan for Crewe and the local transport authority Levelling Up Fund bid

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Council remains committed to supporting the long-term regeneration of Crewe, to enable economic development and promote it as a place to live, work and visit.
- 3.2.** The future arrival of HS2 will give a further boost to the town's connectivity and open further opportunities for growth in high quality jobs and homes.
- 3.3.** Owing to the economic impacts rising from the Covid-19 pandemic the scale of the opportunity for Crewe is now likely to take longer to realise and the Council's plans need to reflect this.
- 3.4.** Recent funding successes through the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund and new Government investment priorities, such as the Levelling Up Fund, clearly show significant short term regeneration opportunities for Crewe in advance of the arrival of HS2.
- 3.5.** An efficient and effective transport network is an essential component to unlocking the full benefits of these investments in Crewe. Developing an updated Crewe Transport Model will enable the Council to understand what transport schemes support both the short-term regeneration plans and the

ambition for HS2. The transport model and plan that it supports are essential for preparing transport funding bids and scheme business cases.

- 3.6.** A Local Transport Authority bid for a package of investments in Crewe, underpinned by the outputs of the updated transport model and transport strategy, and currently provides the best opportunity to secure up to £50m of Government funding.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1.** The Crewe Transport Model and revised transport strategy work for the central Crewe area be paused. This would mean that transport priorities, funding bids and investments would not support the update of planning policy, regeneration plans and developments for the town. Consequently, the transport networks could in fact end up acting as a constraint to growth and regeneration across the town, rather than an enabler.
- 4.2.** The Council could not prepare a Local Transport Authority bid into the Levelling Up Fund. Given the limited funding opportunities available or expected in the coming years, this would be a significant lost opportunity to deliver critical transport investments to benefit the borough.
- 4.3.** The Council is limited to a single Levelling Up Fund bid as the Local Transport Authority and engagement with the borough's MPs has supported the decision to select Crewe as proposed the location for any bid. Based on the Government's bid criteria, Crewe is the likely to be the only location in the borough where the Council can demonstrate that the schemes are deliverable by 2025 and be in line with the wider Levelling Up Fund guidance.

5. Background

- 5.1.** The arrival of HS2 and a Crewe hub station provides a significant opportunity to deliver social, economic and environmental wellbeing for the residents of Crewe and the Borough. The Council is passionate about enhancing what the town already has to offer and enabling more opportunities to people who live in, work in, or visit Crewe.
- 5.2.** As a result of these impacts on the HS2 programme and the deliverability of the Crewe Hub Area Action Plan (CHAAP), the following decisions were made by the Council's Corporate Policy Committee on 04 November 2021:
 - 5.2.1.** Withdraw the CHAAP; and
 - 5.2.2.** Revoke the Crewe Southern Link Road Bridge preferred route decision
- 5.3.** These decisions enable the Council to refresh both the planning policy and transport priorities for Crewe to ensure its continued regeneration and success, linked to emerging Government priorities, and in preparation for the arrival of HS2.

- 5.4.** Earlier this year, the Council secured £14.1m of Government funding from the Future High Street Fund. This will support the delivery of several cultural, community, regeneration and transport projects within the town centre, including:
- 5.4.1. Southern Gateway
 - 5.4.2. Flag Lane link
 - 5.4.3. Adaptive signals
 - 5.4.4. In town living projects
 - 5.4.5. Earle St link
 - 5.4.6. Christ Church Digital Innovation Centre
 - 5.4.7. Sustainable Energy Network
- 5.5.** In addition, Crewe recently secured a 'Town Deal' and a separate allocation of funding from government of up to £22.9m. This funding, subject to business case approval, is allocated to deliver an additional set of projects to support the ongoing regeneration of the town, including:
- 5.5.1. Mill Street Linear Park and Corridor Improvements
 - 5.5.2. Green corridor and Green open space investments
 - 5.5.3. New community and sports hubs
 - 5.5.4. Inner Crewe Warm & Healthy Homes Programme
 - 5.5.5. Public realm improvements
- 5.6.** The schemes to be funded from the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund are partly within the defined boundaries of the CHAAP and represent an opportunity to better connect the station and town centre through investment in key corridors.
- 5.7.** In addition, the Council is working closely with Network Rail and Cheshire and Warrington LEP to refine proposals for the redevelopment of Crewe hub station and its immediate environs as well as assessing the potential for improving the existing rail crossings where they interface with the local transport network within central Crewe.
- 5.8.** This includes proposals for new pedestrian/cycle decks alongside Nantwich Road Bridge that will improve links between the station and town centre, support the regeneration of the Mill Street corridor, promote active travel and support the wider HS2 potential.

- 5.9.** It will also include phase 1 proposals for the redevelopment of the Weston Road car park that can capitalise on investment opportunities coming forward in advance of HS2's arrival.
- 5.10.** Breaking these down into deliverable, Local Plan compliant chunks will provide the necessary flexibility to accelerate the delivery of such interventions as funding opportunities become available.
- 5.11.** To ensure effective delivery of these projects, and to plan for Crewe's regeneration going forward, an efficient transport network is critical. To do this, a refresh of the transport plans and priorities is needed now to capture both current and future funding opportunities. This will provide confidence that the local transport network will effectively serve this future growth and travel demands.
- 5.12.** The current Transport Model for Crewe does not reflect the recent changes to travel behaviours or the changes to demand arising from the Future High Street Fund and Towns Fund investments and therefore, would not allow the Council to accurately assess these emerging proposals.
- 5.13.** An update of the Crewe Transport model that focuses on the central area encompassing the Town Centre, railway station and Grand Junction retail park as highlighted in Appendix 1 will provide an up-to-date picture of the local transport network and transport needs for the town.
- 5.14.** The initial phase of the update will provide an up-to-date baseline for the central Crewe area that will incorporate:
- 5.14.1. Recently delivered and funded schemes (Future High Street Fund, Towns Fund etc.)
 - 5.14.2. Realistic traffic growth assumptions that reflect the disruption and change in transport mode use caused by the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - 5.14.3. The Council's carbon agenda; including the promotion of active travel and public transport schemes
- 5.15.** Once the revised baseline model is updated, it can be used to test various transport interventions and scenarios to identify and validate the priority schemes for the area. This will include the emerging Crewe hub proposals and future infrastructure solutions to support an effective surface access strategy to the station.
- 5.16.** These updated model outputs are critical to the Council in preparing a revised multi-modal transport strategy for Crewe that best capture both the short-term opportunities in and around the town centre as well as the longer-term potential on the back of HS2.
- 5.17.** A revised transport strategy for Crewe will be developed in collaboration with key local stakeholder and community groups including:

- 5.17.1. Crewe Local Ward Members
 - 5.17.2. Crewe Town Board
 - 5.17.3. Transportation, Blue and Green Infrastructure Forum
 - 5.17.4. Crewe Advisory Group
 - 5.17.5. Crewe Town Council
 - 5.17.6. Network Rail / Great British Railways
 - 5.17.7. Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- 5.18.** This strategy will identify and prioritise the key transport interventions needed to support a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable town that can attract new and high value investment, jobs and homes to Crewe and surrounding areas.
- 5.19.** The refreshed transport strategy and updated Transport Model is critical to supporting the preparation of funding bids and business cases for future transport projects.
- 5.20.** As part of the 2020 Autumn Statement, Government launched the first of three rounds of the Levelling Up Fund. The fund is part of the wider levelling-up agenda that aims to rebalance the UK economy and see more investment in the north.
- 5.21.** The Levelling Up Fund is open to all areas of the country to apply and each Member of Parliament can support a bid of up to £20m to support regeneration, transport and culture projects within their constituency that can support the objectives of levelling-up with projects to be delivered by 2024.
- 5.22.** In addition to the MP bids, each Local Transport Authority (LTA) is eligible to submit a bid for a single, or package of closely linked projects, of up to £50m to be delivered by 2025. The LTA bid can be for a town or village that is also subject to an MP bid. However, the MP for that area can only formally support one of the bids.
- 5.23.** Cheshire East has been categorised as a Priority 3 area by Government for Levelling Up funding, which is considered the least in need of Levelling Up Funding. The Council's experience with an unsuccessful Round one bid for Macclesfield suggests that the priority area will have a significant weighting on any bid.
- 5.24.** The prioritisation areas/ towns into three broad local authority categories was crude and ignored the normal index of deprivation methods used by the government for demonstrating need. If this traditional method was used both Crewe and central Macclesfield would have demonstrated a need.
- 5.25.** A levelling up fund transport package bid for Crewe will unlock benefits to Crewe and the Borough and align to the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and carbon agenda. There is also a strong

rationale and evidence base to enable the Council to present a robust case that Crewe is in fact a Priority 1 town within a Priority 3 borough to address the challenges faced with the Round one bid for Macclesfield.

- 5.26.** The transport model update can provide the evidence to support an LTA bid for Crewe, with the work already undertaken providing a strong strategic case for the town and confidence in the ability to deliver the projects by 2025.
- 5.27.** The Levelling Up Fund guidance identifies the need for stakeholder and public engagement as part of a bid. The Council will engage with key stakeholders and the public on its draft Levelling Up Fund plans to seek views and comments to support its bid. A summary of the engagement feedback will be briefed to a future committee.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1.** A revised transport strategy for Crewe will be developed in collaboration with local stakeholder and community groups including:
 - 6.1.1. Crewe Local Ward Members
 - 6.1.2. Crewe Town Board
 - 6.1.3. Transportation, Blue and Green Infrastructure Forum
 - 6.1.4. Crewe Advisory Group
 - 6.1.5. Crewe Town Council
 - 6.1.6. Network Rail / Great British Railways
 - 6.1.7. Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- 6.2.** The Council will engage with key stakeholders in the development of a revised transport strategy for Crewe. These will include:
 - 6.2.1. HS2 Ltd
 - 6.2.2. Transport for the North
 - 6.2.3. Avanti West Coast Partnerships
 - 6.2.4. Other Train and Freight Operating Companies at Crewe
 - 6.2.5. Local Bus Network Providers
 - 6.2.6. Active Travel Groups
- 6.3.** A Local Transport Authority bid to the Levelling Up Fund will need to demonstrate engagement with the local community. The HS2 team will engage with the public, consistent with the Levelling Up Fund guidance, on any schemes forming part of a Levelling Up Fund bid in advance of submission.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.2. The report refers to engagement with local stakeholders in relation to the development of a revised transport strategy for Crewe and engagement with the local stakeholders and the local community in relation to the Levelling Up Fund bid in accordance with the Levelling Up Fund guidance. There is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.

7.3. It is therefore important to test the fairness of the Council's proposed transport strategy by way of consultation on any changes which potentially have the effect of withdrawing existing benefits or advantages or impacting on the community. Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes as well as any relevant representative groups. Similarly, the guidance relating to the Levelling Up Fund refers to engagement with local stakeholders and the local community and the need for the local transport authorities to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously considered when Council decision makers make any future decision in adopting the strategy or on the Levelling Up Fund bid.

7.4. Consultation must be conducted with adherence to the following :-

7.4.1. the consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage;

7.4.2. the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;

7.4.3. adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and

7.4.4. the product of the consultation must be conscientiously considered in finalising the proposals.

7.5. It should be noted that failure to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty or breach of a duty to consult would risk the Council being subjected to legal challenge by way of judicial review.

7.6. Finance

7.6.1. The recommendations in this report will be funded from the HS2 earmarked reserves and existing HS2 base budget with possible contribution from the Future High Street Fund budget depending on the preferred bid package.

7.7. Policy

7.7.1. The development of a revised transport strategy for Crewe and any Levelling Up Fund bid will comply with the Council's Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Corporate Plan.

7.8. Equality

7.8.1. The update of the Crewe Transport Model will assess all relevant transport modes including walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicles.

7.8.2. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken, where appropriate.

7.9. Human Resources

7.9.1. There are no direct HR implications, existing staff in the Highways and Infrastructure Teams will be used to undertake the identified next steps.

7.10. Risk Management

7.10.1. There is a risk that a Levelling Up Fund bid is not successful. However, this is the case with any competitive funding bid. By updating the Crewe Transport Model in advance of the bid will provide the strongest evidence base to support the bid.

7.11. Rural Communities

7.11.1. Crewe and Crewe station serves a wide area, including several rural communities, within the Borough. It is therefore important that the Transport Strategy recognises the town's strategic importance to these communities.

7.12. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.12.1. The future growth and prosperity of Crewe on the back of HS2 can provide significant future employment opportunities for young people.

7.13. Public Health

7.13.1. Transport infrastructure can have a significant impact on population health and wellbeing, via its influence on road safety, access to services, employment and social connections, air quality, biodiversity and climate change, and opportunities for active travel

7.13.2. Providing a safe highway network that promotes active travel is a key aim of the Council

7.13.3. The Transport Strategy will have a strong focus on the environment, Quality of Place and sustainable travel. These will help to develop a place and communities where people want to live and work. This will in turn deliver public health benefits.

7.14. Climate Change

- 7.14.1.** The update of the Crewe Transport Model is considering all modes of transport. The resulting Transport Strategy will have a high focus on walking, cycling and public transport in line with the Council's Carbon Agenda.
- 7.14.2.** Proposals within the transport strategy will help to encourage more sustainable travel to, from and around Crewe which will also help to promote healthy lifestyles.

Access to Information	
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Appendices :	Appendix 1: Central Crewe area of focus Appendix 2: CHAAP Boundary
Background Papers:	Reference Documents Levelling Up Fund Prospectus, March 2021 (Levelling Up prospectus.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)) Levelling Up Fund Technical Note, May 2021 (Levelling Up Fund - Technical note - UK wide (publishing.service.gov.uk)) Linked Reports HS2 Update – Corporate Policy Committee, 04 November 2021 (moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s89712/HS2 Update - report final.pdf) Crewe Hub Station Update – Cabinet, 10 March 2020 (Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)) Crewe Hub Area Action Plan Report – Publication Draft Plan – Cabinet, 10 March 2020 (Crewe Hub Area Action Plan - report final.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk))

Appendix 1: Central Crewe area of focus



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