

Cumbria LEP publishes strategic development plan for M6 corridor

A prospectus highlighting development opportunities for the M6 corridor in Cumbria has been published, with a series of recommendations for road and rail improvements and critical infrastructure to nurture economic growth.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the county's strategic economic body, has been working with Cumbria County Council, Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council to develop a Strategic Infrastructure Prospectus for the M6 corridor.

The purpose of the document is to underline the strategic importance of the M6 corridor for the county and also the Northern Powerhouse and the wider UK. It identifies a range of opportunities, gaps in existing infrastructure and proposals for requisite improvements to maximise economic potential, as well as making the case for future investment.

The document, which is being targeted at both central government and private sector investors, includes three sections focusing on the Northern, central and Southern sections of the M6 corridor. The attainment of the aims within the document will be reliant on closer, more effective partnering work between investors, local government and Cumbria LEP, alongside Transport for the North, Highways England and the Department for Transport.

Proposed road improvements include dualling work to the A69 east of Carlisle and the A66 east of Penrith, as well as further enhancements to the A590 to improve access from the M6 to the Furness Peninsula.

Rail infrastructure proposals feature a comprehensive upgrade of passenger access and rail facilities at Carlisle Citadel Station, improvements to railway and access facilities at Penrith station, and additional capacity, quality and frequency of services on the Furness line. Enhanced access to Carlisle Airport is also being tabled to maximise its potential for passengers and freight.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership chair George Beveridge says: "The M6 corridor is a critical national artery and needs to be a major focus of growth and investment, particularly in the context of the scale and nature of investment due to come into Cumbria over the next 10 years.

"While the corridor is already prospering, collectively we can achieve much more. The county has a rich portfolio of investment opportunities, but there is a critical need for infrastructure investment to bring them alive.

"Our aim is to use this publication to strengthen the nationally important transport role of the M6 corridor, unlock major new investment opportunities and deliver jobs and employment in line with Northern Powerhouse growth aspirations."

Cumbria LEP's Strategic Economic Plan identifies the strategic connectivity of the M6 corridor as one of four strategic priorities for Cumbria. The ongoing development of the corridor will help deliver thousands of new jobs, increase the county's economic output and provide the infrastructure required for new housing.

For further information about the Strategic Infrastructure Prospectus for the M6 corridor, please visit www.cumbrialep.co.uk

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Notes for editors

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.

- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/