



Kendal Strategic Transport Infrastructure Study Summary Note



1. Study Background

The Kendal Strategic Transport Infrastructure Study was commissioned by Cumbria County Council (in partnership with South Lakeland District Council and Kendal Town Council) in August 2016. The study aimed to understand what improvements may be needed to:

- Support delivery of the future strategic growth of the town;
- Reduce congestion and increase the resilience within the town centre;
- Improve resilience and accessibility to existing employment areas; and
- Ensure that, when the M6 is closed, diverted traffic is not reliant on single-lane bridges in Kendal, therefore improving the resilience of the M6 corridor in the Kendal area.

The study work was undertaken in line with DfT guidance which requires the consideration of infrastructure schemes to be undertaken in a sequential manner starting with an assessment of potential options. This study addressed the first stage of this process and focused on identifying key principles and initial options and has not considered specific detailed designs or alignments.

2. Option Identification and Initial Assessment

2.1. Option Identification

The first stage in the development of the study was to establish the need for improvement. The evidence collected was used to identify transport issues, development opportunities and previously considered interventions.

Based upon the objectives agreed for the scheme, a number of scheme options were developed. Option development was informed by a combination of available information, previous studies and local knowledge. Consideration was also given to ongoing studies/work being carried out in the Kendal area including the extensive flood assessment work being undertaken by the Environment Agency and the Kendal Town Centre Master Plan being prepared by AECOM. Officer and Member groups from Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council and Kendal Town Council were key consultees in the option development process.

This process identified 8 high level options including a variety of new road options surrounding the town and a cross river access scheme.

2.2. Initial Option Assessment

An initial sifting exercise was undertaken to assess the options identified through the option identification process.

Schemes were assessed against four key themes: overview (quality of information), option length (proxy for cost), benefits (transport, wider economic, social and environmental) and deliverability. Following this initial sifting exercise four options were shortlisted for further assessment using the Kendal Transport Model.

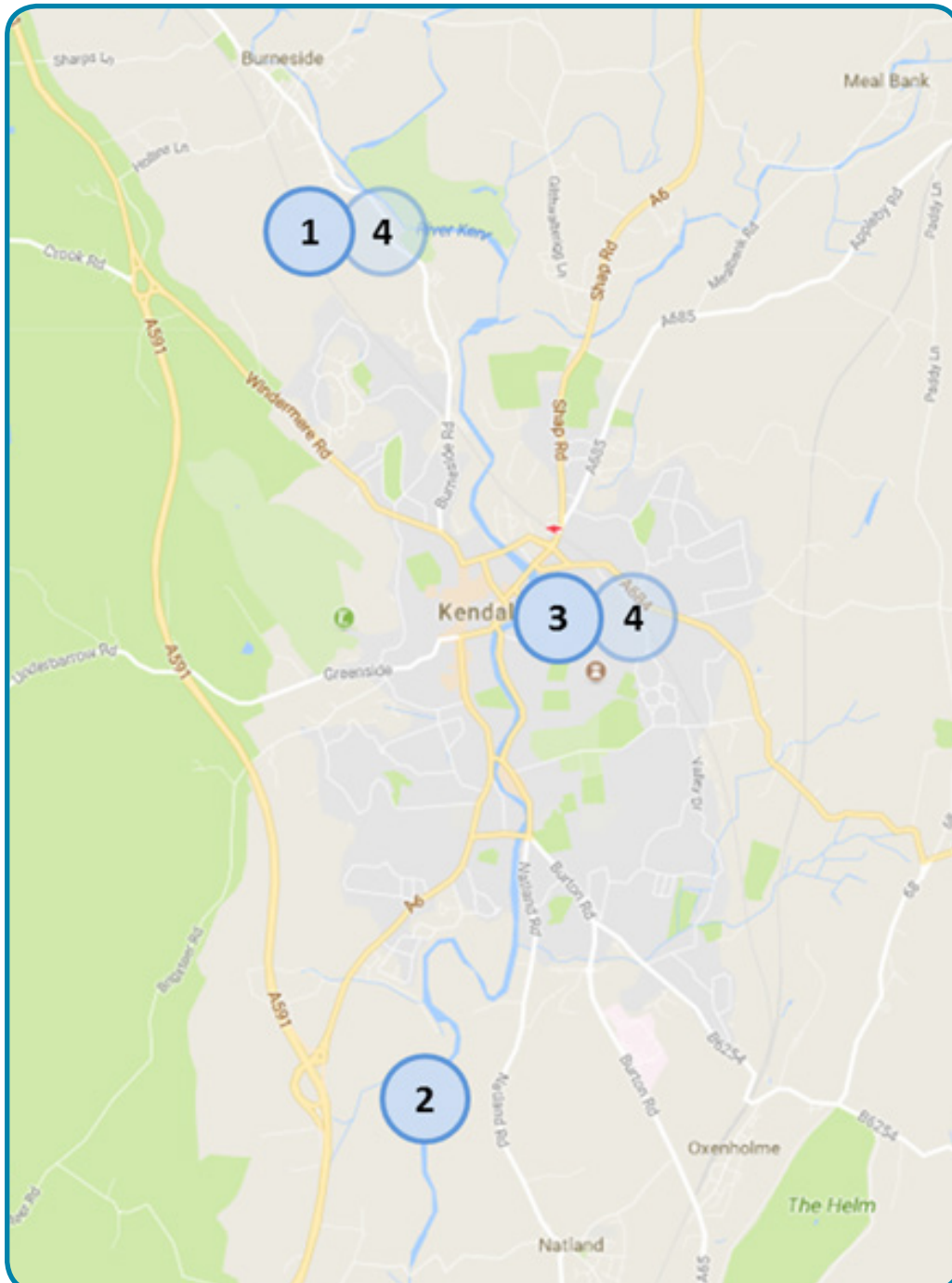
3. Appraisal of the Shortlisted Options

3.1. Shortlisted Scheme Options

The sifting exercise identified four options for further assessment:

1. Northern Access Route – A new link road between the A591 and the A685;
2. Southern Access Route – A new link between the junction of the A6 and the A591;
3. Cross River Access – New or wider bridges at Aynam Road and Lound Road; and
4. Northern Access Route and Cross River Access – A combined package incorporating both the Northern Access Route (Option 1) and Cross River Access Scheme (Option 3).

It is important to recognise that these are strategic corridors and at this stage no specific route alignments have been developed.



3.2. Transport Forecasting and Appraisal

The transport forecasting and appraisal of the options was completed using the Kendal Transport Model. The forecasting considered the future year of 2036, in line with the next potential South Lakeland Local Plan period of 2025-2036. The journey time benefits for each of the options were used as the basis for an indicative appraisal of the transport benefits. The results of the journey time benefits appraisal showed that the Northern Access Route (option 1) provides the highest level of journey time benefit.

Using the results of the transport appraisal as well as high level scheme costs, a further round of appraisal of the four scheme options was undertaken. In order to arrive at a total score for each of the four scheme options, the schemes were assessed against three key criteria: benefits, deliverability and costs. This final appraisal identified the Northern Access Route as the highest scoring option.

3.3. The Preferred Scheme

The conclusion of the study is that the Northern Access Route would best meet the objectives of the study and it would deliver benefits that would include: Delivering future strategic growth in Kendal and improved access to current and future employment sites; reduced town centre congestion; and improved resilience for both Kendal and the wider M6 corridor when the Emergency Diversion Route (EDR) is activated.

By providing an additional crossing of the River Kent, there are also opportunities to engineer the new route so that it contributes to flood water storage, helping to reduce the scale of the impacts of potential future flood events.

It is important to recognise that while the Northern Access Route scored highest against the study criteria the delivery of new bridges in the town centre and a Southern Access Route would also realise benefits. The future role of these should remain under consideration.

4. Next Steps

This study is high level and the outcomes do not include detailed route alignments. Fundamentally the case for new infrastructure will be linked to the next South Lakeland Local Plan and the development of evidence will need to take place in a coordinated manner.

Given the initial stage of the study a number of immediate next steps have been identified. These include:

- Ongoing engagement with the Environment Agency to ensure alignment with their ongoing flood modelling in the Kendal Area;
- Share the Strategic Outline Business Case with Cumbria LEP, TfN and the DfT in order to raise awareness of the need for infrastructure investment;
- South Lakeland District Council to take account of this study in developing their next Local Plan.

Moving beyond these steps will require further investment in scheme development in order to prepare a robust case. As part of any further, more detailed scheme development work there will be further engagement with local stakeholders. Any further study work would also be undertaken in line with DfT guidance and it is through this process that a preferred route option would be established.