Strategic Transport Forum

24th January 2020

Agenda Item 3: Transport Strategy
Report on Engagement and Revised Vision and Principles

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum:

a) Considers the key messages that have been identified from the responses to the Outline Transport Strategy and the implications for the draft Transport Strategy (Annex 1)

b) Subject to amendments, agree the updated Transport Strategy Vision, Principles and Outcomes as the basis on which to develop the draft Transport Strategy (Annex 2)

1. Context

1.1. The engagement phase of the Outline Transport Strategy ran from 16th July to 31st October 2019.

1.2. The Outline Transport Strategy provided the framework for a conversation with people and businesses about the future of the region's transport system.

1.3. Organisations, residents and businesses were encouraged to take part in the engagement in order to shape development of the draft Transport Strategy to be published for formal consultation in summer 2020.

1.4. During the engagement period the document was accessed via the website nearly 4,000 times, EEH Business Unit undertook 35+ engagement events and received more than 100 written responses.

1.5. The Transport Strategy will set out the policy framework for strategic transport provision and investment in the region over the next 30 years.

2. Engagement Phase – Key Outcomes

2.1. The period of engagement has provided incredibly valuable insight from a variety of organisations and individuals, which – alongside our technical work - will help shape the Transport Strategy.

2.2. A summary engagement report has been produced and can be found in Annex 1. The full in depth engagement report is available to Forum Member on request and will be published on the website.

2.3. The summary report is based on an analysis of responses to the Outline Transport Strategy, including the 21 questions posed within it. From this analysis, the EEH Business Unit has identified 12 key themes.

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2.4. The 12 key themes identified through the engagement phase set the framework on which EEH needs to act in order to strengthen the transport strategy. These are:
- The imperative to respond to the climate emergency
- Harness technology and innovation
- Work closely with planning authorities
- Put environment at forefront of strategy
- The need to be bold - not business as usual
- Reduce the need to travel
- Increase emphasis on sustainable modes
- Support health outcomes
- Place greater emphasis on wider strategic linkages
- Use nudges and demand management
- Remember smaller schemes and maintenance
- Show how EEH will deliver

2.5. It is worth noting that the imperative to decarbonise the transport system in the context of the climate emergency came through particularly strongly in the engagement responses.

2.6. This reflects the increased emphasis given by Government to de-carbonising the transport system, which in turn is driven by the targets put into law by the previous Government last summer.

2.7. Publication of a de-carbonisation strategy by Government is expected at some point in the year ahead.

3. Vision, Principles and Outcomes

3.1. The Transport Strategy's vision needs to be a succinct mission statement which sets the agenda for the rest of the document, and which leads directly to the strategy's principles.

3.2. Forum members will recall that the Outline Transport Strategy's vision was 'connecting people and places with opportunities and services'.

3.3. Responses from the engagement suggested this was a good starting point but could be strengthened further to include: strengthening recognition of our environmental commitments; our wider strategic linkages; and the need to be bold and unlock opportunities through innovation.

3.4. As a result, it is proposed that the vision is amended to:

> *To harness the Heartland's globally renowned centres of innovation to unlock a world class transport system that connects people and places within and beyond our region whilst de-carbonising our transport system*.

3.5. It is further proposed that the Vision is supported by four Key Principles and defined by a series of key Outcomes that describe what we need the transport strategy to deliver.

3.6. Annex 2 sets out the working narrative for the revised Vision, Principles and Outcomes for the Transport Strategy.

3.7. Supporting each outcome is a series of policies that describe how we expect EEH will achieve the defined outcomes. These are evolving policies that will continue to develop over the next six months as the conclusions of technical studies are drawn.

3.8. The Vision, Principles and Outcomes will continue to evolve as work on the draft Transport Strategy is taken forward

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January 2020

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Outline Transport Strategy
Engagement Report

1. Context

1.1. This report presents a summary of written responses made during the period of engagement on England's Economic Heartland's *Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement*.

1.2. The period of engagement opened on 16th July 2019 and ended on 31st October 31.

1.3. The Outline Transport Strategy provided the framework for a conversation with people and businesses about the future of the region's transport system.

1.4. Organisations, residents and businesses were encouraged to take part in the engagement in order to shape development of the draft Transport Strategy to be published in draft form for consultation, in summer 2020.

1.5. The Transport Strategy will set out the policy framework for investment in the region over the next 30 years.

2. The Engagement Process

2.1. Production of and engagement on the Outline Transport Strategy (including analysis of responses) was carried out 'in house' by the EEH Business Unit.

2.2. The Outline Transport Strategy – and the subsequent period of engagement - was launched at EEH's annual conference at the University of Hertfordshire on 16th July.

2.3. During the period of engagement the EEH Business Unit attended more than 35 meetings with stakeholders.

2.4. These included with our partners and external organisations including the Chiltern Conservation Board, Motorcycle Action Group, Silverstone Park and Milton Keyes Youth Cabinet.

2.5. The EEH Business Unit also hosted roundtables at the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative party conferences where it gained the views of MP, peers, council and LEP leaders, and think tanks.

2.6. A workshop-style event was held at the CIHT offices for partners and consultants on 29th October.

2.7. Publicity for the engagement included through the media, the EEH and partners' newsletters, and social media. A summary document also appeared as a supplement in Local Transport Today in September.

2.8. Information regarding the Outline Transport Strategy and the period of engagement was prominent on the EEH website, which experienced a 137% increase in hits during the engagement compared to the same period in 2018. The Outline Transport Strategy document was viewed online 3,736 times during the period of engagement.

2.9. The Outline Transport Strategy featured 21 specific questions on which written responses were invited. All of these questions encouraged long-form qualitative responses. Feedback on the four 'Future Visions' was also sought.

2.10. Comments not specifically related to any of the questions were also welcomed.

3. Engagement Responses Overview

3.1. A total of 108 written responses were received during the period of engagement.

3.2. 66 of the written responses came from organisations, while 42 were made on an individual basis.

3.3. Around 40% of written responses answered all or several of the questions contained within the strategy. The other responses tended to focus on one or two key issues, including those not specifically covered by the questions.

3.4. This report is based on an analysis of responses to the Outline Transport Strategy, including the specific 21 questions posed within. From this analysis, EEH Business Unit has identified 12 key themes. A full engagement report is available.

4. Analysis by key message

4.1. Taking into account the responses to the 21 questions, plus additional comments (from written responses and engagement meetings), 12 key messages from the engagement have been identified.

4.2. These are:

- **The imperative to respond to the climate emergency**: This was the most significant message to come out from the responses, and is also implicit in several of the other themes below. For example, The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) said: "Other sectors contributing to carbon emissions have made significant cuts over the past decades but emissions from transport have remained stubbornly high. Therefore, more leadership of transport policy is required to support the required reductions in emissions from transport sources."

- **Harness technology and innovation**: Responses agreed that the Heartland's USP lies in its world leading expertise in science, technology and innovation. We were told that the strategy should demonstrate how it will harness opportunities for innovation by working with the region's universities and businesses to develop a bold, alternative and ambitious approach to achieving its objectives. For example, the Environment Agency said: "Given the Heartland's noted innovation in the transport sector, it does not seem unreasonable that a more challenging target should be achievable for the Heartlands than for the UK as a whole."

- **Work closely with planning authorities:** The importance of spatial planning's role in improving the transport system was highlighted during the engagement, and thus the critical need for EEH to work with planning colleagues in developing the strategy. For example, the Royal Town Planning Institute said: "The Outline Transport Strategy needs to clearly emphasise how it plans to work with local planning and transport authorities, alongside any potential development corporations to ensure better integration of spatial planning and transportation developments."

- **Put environment at forefront of strategy**: Alongside the imperative of decarbonisation, responses emphasised the need for infrastructure to achieve net environmental gain. We were also told that the transport system must be resilient to the consequences of climate change; that we need to consider its role in water management; and develop specific policies for AONBs in the region (Chiltern Conservation Area alone covers 15% of EEH area).

- **The need to be bold – not business as usual**: Responses welcomed the Outline Transport Strategy's acknowledgement that a 'business as usual' approach will not be sufficient, particularly in light of the climate emergency. For example, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Delivery Unit said: "Inevitably, this necessitates a shift from 'business as usual' and the adoption of ambitious proposals, some of which will be radical and transformational, so that economic growth can go hand-in-hand with environmental 'net gain' and improved public health."

- **Reduce need to travel:** Responses were clear on the need to reduce the need for people to travel, particularly journeys taken by private car. Improving digital infrastructure, alongside better spatial planning, were seen as key ways of achieving this. For example, SEMLEP said: "It is important that, when considering incentives for greater use of sustainable transport options, thought is also given to options that reduce or mitigate the use of transport altogether, such as – and as clearly recognised elsewhere in the Outline Transport Strategy – improved digital connectivity."
- **Increase emphasis on sustainable modes**: Engagement responses said the Strategy must not be car-centric and wherever possible should make the case for sustainable transport modes and active travel. For example, Hertfordshire County Council said: "It is felt that the fundamentals of the EEH strategy must support sustainable transport as the priority for the region to be acceptable."
- **Support health outcomes:** We were told that the strategy should recognise the major role transport plays in people's health, for instance through provision of active travel; increasing air quality; reducing isolation; and connecting people to centres of health and green spaces/ leisure. For example, the Oxfordshire Councils told us the strategy should ensure 'that policy priorities reflect the need to develop an inclusive and accessible transport system that supports better health outcomes'.
- **Place greater emphasis on wider strategic linkages:** Responses told us that the strategy needs to strengthen its recognition of the importance of strategic linkages from outside the EEH region. For example, Buckinghamshire Councils told us: "A potential gap in the strategy is explaining how it sits with what is emerging in the area outside and around the EEH Transport Strategy area."
- **Use nudges and demand management:** There was overwhelming support for the use of 'nudges' which seek to change user behaviour, but there was also recognition that demand management policies may also be required. For example, the Chiltern Society said: "But use of nudge principles, and other 'soft' methods, such as extending choice and improving information, will not be sufficient nor rapid enough to deliver the scale and pace of behavioural change necessary. Some 'sticks' as well as 'carrots' will be needed, such as higher car-parking fees or other road charges or restrictions."
- **Remember smaller schemes and maintenance:** Responses suggested that smaller, local schemes and maintenance of existing assets can be just as important to improving connectivity as bigger, 'transformational' schemes. For example, Welwyn Hatfield District Council told us that the strategy, 'needs to make sure that investment is spread beyond a few key projects and that successful local projects are copied and replicated wherever possible'.
- **Show how EEH will deliver:** Many responses touched upon EEH's role in delivering infrastructure improvements, including possible statutory powers and how it can add value to the work already being carried out by local authorities, LEPs, and Arc work streams. For example, Oxfordshire County Council said: "OCC believe that the level and detail of any investment programme across the EEH area will need careful consideration by partners, in particular to understand what best 'fits' at the EEH level, rather than at a more local or national level. This discussion will also need to consider the role of EEH in helping to deliver this programme, including any relevant statutory powers that may be needed, funding considerations, and any prioritisation frameworks."

January 2020
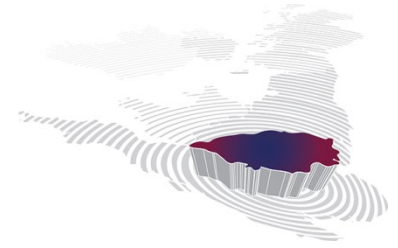
Transport Strategy Vision and Outcomes

Strategy – Overview

The EEH region has a population of more than 5m people, with 280,000 businesses employing 2.5 million people. It is a net contributor to the Treasury. As a region, it has historic city centres; ambitious settlements that have plans to grow in the future; market towns; and a significantly higher rural population than the national average.

The region's economic importance, recognised by the National Infrastructure Commission and Government, is at the heart of the UK's knowledge economy. It is home to two of the top three universities in the world (according to the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2020), and alongside this, an exemplary concentration of world leading research facilities. The Heartland also has internationally significant business clusters, a track record in innovation and entrepreneurship, and a highly skilled workforce.

However, connectivity across the region has consistently remained a barrier to its growth. As a result, housing and labour markets have remained isolated, in places overheated, and often delivered without the supporting infrastructure to make them effective.

The EEH Transport Strategy will improve connectivity as a means of enabling people and businesses realise their potential whilst preserving the unique and varied characteristics and place identities of our cities, towns and rural areas.

The need for change is now. We need to support economic activity with the need to meet the legal commitments to achieve net-zero carbon no later than 2050. The investment in East West Rail and the wider opportunities this creates across the region, mean we have a unique opportunity to effect the change that is needed. But investment in infrastructure alone will not achieve the change we need. To succeed in our ambition requires new operating models within the transport system: models that will enable us to respond to the expectations of both residents and businesses across the region and in so doing create opportunities for economic growth that is sustainable in the longer term.

Investment in public transport and active travel measures are at the heart of our strategy moving forward. However travel is a derived demand and our travel needs continue to evolve in response to wider societal and technological changes. Our strategy will need to consider, and be informed by, interventions in other policy areas, in particular place-making, economy and environmental.

Vision

Our vision for the transport strategy is:

> *To harness the Heartland's globally-renowned centres of innovation to unlock a world class transport system that connects people and places within and beyond our region whilst de-carbonising our transport system*

Principles

The strategy, and policies within it, is underpinned by four key principles. These form the basis on which future policy and investment decision making will be made moving forward.

The four principles are:

- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
- Realising economic opportunities through improved intra-regional connectivity
- Improving the Quality of Life and Wellbeing through enhanced local connectivity
- Improving access to markets through strategic connectivity.

These four principles will be used to deliver our vision in a way that ensures our transport system meets its obligations to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the region – a commitment that is embed in the aspirations for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

The Transport Strategy will work with regional activity focused on place-making, economy and environmental to meet the region's ambitions that future growth will be delivered with net environmental gain.

Our strategy is being developed with the benefit of an Integrated Sustainability Assessment that will ensure all aspects of our strategy are consistent with the region's environmental ambition.

Transport Strategy Structure

The structure of our Transport Strategy will reflect the four key principles, with each one having defined outcomes and policies. Detailed policies and proposals will continue to be developed in light of the outputs from our technical studies and the Regional Evidence Base.

Principle 1 – Decarbonisation: Achieving net-zero carbon no later than 2050

Narrative: A notable shift in public sentiment captured by the engagement phase of the Outline Transport Strategy is how significant addressing the climate change emergency needs to be in shaping our thinking across the transport. The Strategy must demonstrate leadership and ambition in setting a pathway to de-carbonisation of our transport system. There is an ever growing body of technical research that the need for change is urgent if we are to meet our legal obligations as a country on carbon reduction.

Outcomes:

1. **A transport system that is planned and delivered with a clear pathway to decarbonisation, in line with UK legislative requirements.**
Policies:
- Reducing the carbon intensity per km travelled for rail and road journeys taken within the EEH region.
- A commitment to press for electrification and low carbon solutions and deployment of associated/required infrastructure.
- New transport infrastructure designed in way that mitigates and adapts to climate change.
- A focus on measures that deliver a step change in mobility behaviour (exploring options for charging and incentives).

Principle 2 – Realising economic opportunities through improved intra-regional connectivity

Narrative: The economic performance of the region has been consistently above the national average for some time. This has been achieved without the levels of investment in infrastructure and services that have been needed. Pressure on our transport and digital infrastructure has increased inexorably as a result to the point where they operate close to capacity most of the time, with poor reliability and poor network resilience. This deterioration in the performance of our transport system has a direct impact on business productivity.

Improved connectivity – both physical and digital – is key to connecting labour and markets across the region. Our strategy will give residents greater choice of where they live and work, with improved connectivity expanding housing and labour markets. As we look to the future, we need to make use of the region's expertise and innovation to deliver transport solutions that

address transport poverty but in ways that are consistent with the need for the transport system to meet the requirement to be net-zero carbon.

Outcomes:

1. **A cleaner, more efficient and more reliable transport system that supports connectivity across economic hubs**
2. **A transport system that improves economic productivity by connecting businesses with skills and labour markets, and products with markets**
3. **A transport system that supports the housing market by providing connectivity to economic opportunities.**

Policies:

- The transport system will have investment in rail infrastructure and services as the backbone of an intra-regional public, and active travel, transport network.
- The strategy will actively support measures that improve connectivity by developing and deploying digital infrastructure and technology solutions at the earliest opportunity, and reflecting the change in future travel demand that will come as a consequence
- To maximise the opportunity presented by East West Rail for more fundamental change in rail connectivity across the region as a whole.
- To improve connectivity between key clusters identified in conjunction with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Planning Authorities, with priority given to investing in infrastructure that responds to the needs of future generations.
- Where necessary, investment in the strategically important road network will be supported to ensure that, where journeys must be made by road, they are as reliable as possible.
- Working with the planning system to plan positively for the future – ensuring the right design for energy, connectivity and freight delivery are built in from the outset.

Principle 3 – Improving the Quality of Life and Wellbeing through enhanced Local Connectivity

Narrative: The Heartland's polycentric travel behaviours mean that travel patterns will continue to be varied. In many cases, the disparate public transport offer currently available makes travelling by car the only viable option, thereby limiting the opportunities available to many who are seeking to realise their potential.

In order to help improve the quality of life and wellbeing to individuals we will work to address local connectivity, prioritising active travel modes and supporting integration across travel modes. Our ambition is to make sustainable travel options the most convenient form of connectivity for both local journeys and first/last mile connections.

Outcomes:

1. **An inclusive and accessible transport system that provides efficient and cost effective choice for individual journeys**
2. **Interventions that encourage behavioural change with solutions targeted to reflect the varied characteristics of places and communities across the region.**
3. **Requiring the design of planned housing and economic opportunities to be consistent with the need to meet the sustainable travel ambitions of the strategy.**

Policies:

- A public transport network designed, and tailored to local communities, in a way that it becomes the preferred mode of choice for local trips.
- A step change in the way we plan and appraise public transport and active travel (walking and cycling infrastructure).

- Unlocking the potential of future mobility options through either physical or digital solutions.
- Integrating transport and land use planning so that planned growth deliver sustainable and active travel choices as part of the local transport system.
- Addressing transport poverty across the region though the deployment of new service models and technologies that are shaped by an understanding of personal preferences.
- Ensuring all new developments (residential and commercial) demonstrate their connectivity to the natural environment.

Principle 4 – Improving access to markets through strategic connectivity

Narrative: The region does not sit in isolation of its significant linkages with other high performing regions of England. As part of the wider South East, the region has strong connections with London and the Channel ports along the South Coast; Swindon is the gateway to opportunities further west along the Great Western corridor; connectivity to the east links the region to the Port of Felixstowe and the innovation of the Energy Coast; whilst Northamptonshire is a gateway to the Midlands Engine and beyond that the Northern Powerhouse. The area also has strong links with three of London's international gateways Luton Airport, Heathrow Airport and Stansted Airport.

Realising the economic potential of the region requires a focus on identifying and meeting future Freight and Logistics requirements. Strategic connectivity to the key ports of Southampton, Dover and Felixstowe is important in the context of wider supply chains and markets. The distribution centres in the region are at the heart of national distribution networks, and key to the rest of the UK realising its economic potential. Distribution businesses have located in clusters near to many of the region's motorway junctions. However, supporting and managing the demands and impact of freight both now, and in the future, is essential if we are to maintain an effective and reliable transport network.

Outcomes:

1. **The region's international and national gateways physical connections that enable them to support the economic performance of the region: connecting businesses to international gateways and ensuring access to global markets.**

2. **The environmental impact of our connections to international gateways is minimised through the use of innovation, data handling and behaviour change.**

Policies:
- A commitment to improving connectivity to international and strategic gateways in the most environmentally efficient way possible.
- Maximising the potential for innovation and future technologies to reduce the need to travel, ensuring the transport network keeps up pace with the technology needs of operators.
- Supporting the development of rail capacity that enables an increase in rail freight.
- Ensuring the region is planning for the wider infrastructure requirements of future strategic connectivity, including: energy supply; digital infrastructure; and wider supporting infrastructure (such as lorry parking facilities)