

ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLANDS DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 6th October 2020

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director - Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable **Key decision:** No

Outcome: To agree a response to the consultation on England's Economic Heartlands' Draft Transport Strategy

Recommendation: Committee is recommended to:

- a) Comment on the Draft Transport Strategy.
- b) Approve the draft consultation response for submission as attached at Appendix B and delegate to the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee the authority to make any minor changes prior to submission.

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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 A Draft Transport Strategy has been produced by England's Economic Heartland (EEH), and is currently the subject of a public consultation exercise. Feedback from the consultation will inform any amendments to be made prior to the planned adoption of the final strategy towards the end of 2020. EEH is also seeking views on the proposal to establish it as a Sub-national Transport Body on a statutory basis.

1.2 The Vision and Key Principles are:

"Vision

To realise sustainable growth opportunities and improve the quality of life and wellbeing for Heartland residents and businesses, by harnessing the region's globally renowned centres of innovation to unlock a world class, de-carbonised transport system."

Key principles

- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways."

1.3 The consultations close on 6 October 2020.

2 MAIN ISSUES

Draft Transport Strategy

2.1 The strategy includes a number of chapters setting out the strategy approach, a vision of a future transport system, and how that system supports travel, access to opportunities and the economy. A consistent thread throughout is the need to decarbonise the transport system, and there is a strong focus on reducing the need to travel, transforming public transport and promoting active travel. Improved digital infrastructure is identified as integral to the way companies operate and services are accessed. Thirty six policies are set out in the document covering Decarbonisation, Future Mobility, East West Rail and other east west arcs, North South Connectivity, Transforming Journeys, Development, Local and Rural Connectivity, Global Markets and Freight.

2.2 The strategy emphasises the need for a whole system approach, which can seem lacking when considering how the networks managed by government and its agencies are currently planned and integrated. A stronger regional voice on this issue should allow for better planning of strategic infrastructure that complements rather than competes to provide for the same travel demand.

2.3 An investment pipeline is set out, with a strong focus on rail, mass transit, strategic interchange and local connectivity. There is also support for targeted investment in the road network. The pipeline set out as it effects Cambridgeshire is consistent with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) Local Transport Plan, and supports proposals that are supported by the County Council including:

- Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro
- East West Rail
- Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail freight route including improvements in the Ely area.

- A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet.

2.4 A number of connectivity studies are proposed in the EEH area. None of these proposed studies cover Cambridgeshire. This is because such study work has already been undertaken or is ongoing looking at key links in Cambridgeshire and links to neighbouring areas by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council, and by government, Highways England and Network Rail.

Proposal to establish a statutory Sub-national Transport Body

2.5 The proposal to set up a statutory Sub-national Transport Body (STB) would seek to complement the existing role of Local Transport Authorities including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and look for the devolution of powers necessary to deliver the strategic aims and objectives of the transport strategy. It will be for the Local Transport Authorities to determine the context of any proposal and agree to submit it to the Secretary of State for Transport for consideration and so the County Council plans to make no comment on this and leave such comment to the CPCA.

2.6 It should also be noted that Cambridgeshire has strong links to the east and to the area covered by the separate non-statutory STB, Transport East, covering Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. A larger statutory STB covering a combined EEH / Transport East area might be more advantageous for the comprehensive and coherent consideration of strategic transport issues in Cambridgeshire, should a statutory STB be considered appropriate.

2.7 The draft consultation response is attached as Appendix B.

3 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

Improved transport links and improved access to services in person or remotely will have positive impacts on this priority.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The overall thrust of the strategy, and the particular focus on sustainable low carbon transport, and on local and rural connectivity support this council priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The overall thrust of the strategy, and the particular focus on active travel, sustainable low carbon transport, and on local and rural connectivity support this council priority.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

The need to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 is included in the vision of the Draft Transport Strategy and is the first key principle set out in the strategy. The strategy identifies the need to decarbonise the transport system as an opportunity to harness innovation and deliver solutions that in themselves deliver economic growth. The carbon impacts of infrastructure investment is identified as a critical issue.

4 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement / Contractual / Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

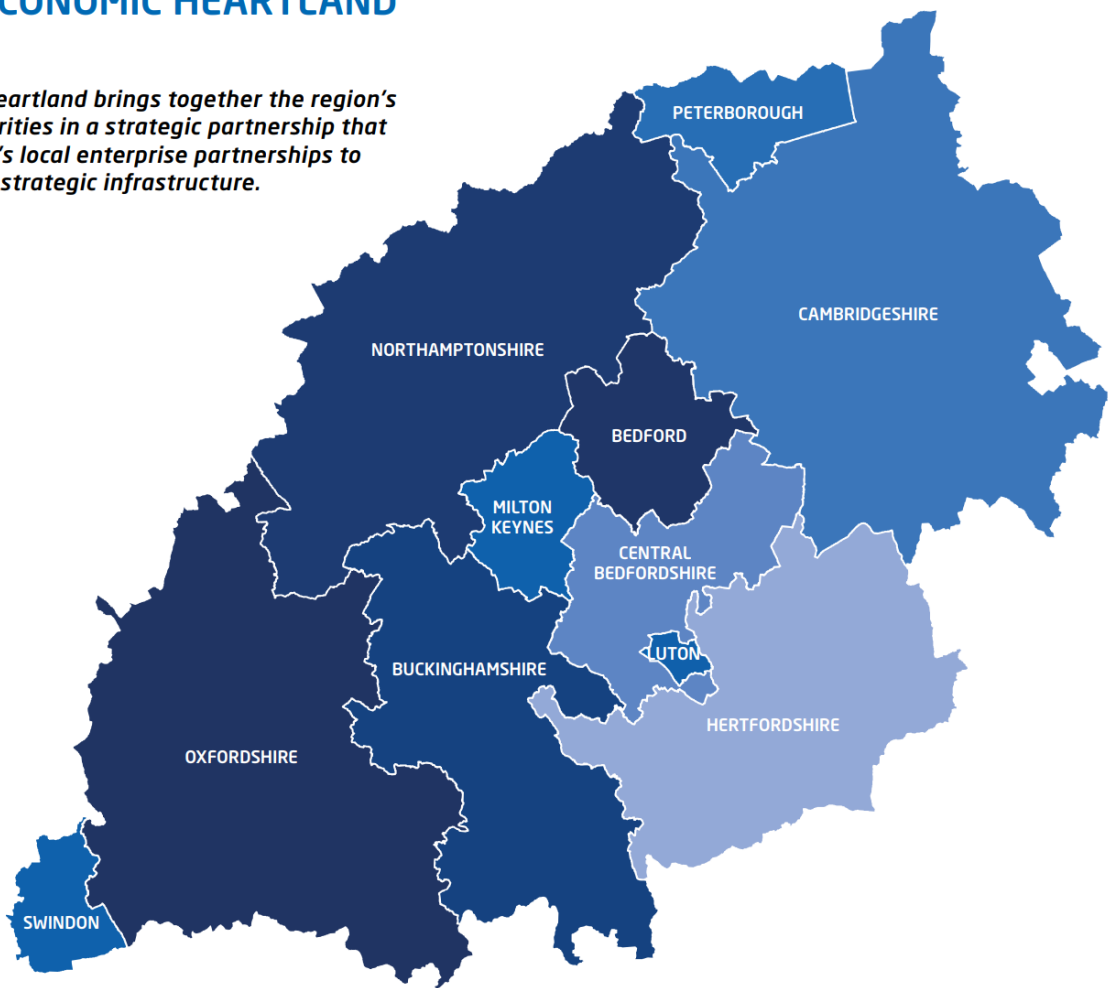
Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Sarah Heywood:
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Gus de Silva:
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	Yes Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Elsa Evans
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Sarah Silk
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Andrew Preston
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Emmeline Watkins

Source Documents	Location
EEH Transport Strategy and supporting documents	http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/transport-strategyconsult.aspx#:~:text=England%27s%20Economic%20Heartland%27s%20Draft%20Transport%20Strategy%20sets%20out,net%20zero%20carbon%20emissions%20no%20later%20than%202050.
Proposal to set up a Sub-national Transport Body	http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Proposal%20to%20Establish%20a%20Statutory%20Sub%20national%20Transport%20Body.pdf

Appendix A England's Economic Heartland area

ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

England's Economic Heartland brings together the region's Local Transport Authorities in a strategic partnership that works with the region's local enterprise partnerships to provide leadership on strategic infrastructure.



Appendix B Draft consultation response

Dear

Cambridgeshire County Council welcomes the Draft Transport Strategy for the Heartland and the opportunity to comment on it.

The Council endorses the vision and key principles, setting out the ambition to support sustainable growth and improve quality of life with a sustainable and inclusive de-carbonised transport network, and wholeheartedly supports the first key principle – to achieve net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050. The threads throughout the strategy of protecting the environment and achieving a de-carbonised transport network align strongly with our own priorities as a Council.

The Draft Transport Strategy is consistent in policy direction and support for key infrastructure with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan, and the inclusion of proposals such as Cambridge South Station and the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro in the investment pipeline is welcome. Similarly, the support for critical pieces of infrastructure such as the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements and the other elements of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail freight route enhancement are welcome.

We note that the connectivity studies that are proposed are largely to the west of Cambridgeshire, but reflect that this is in large part due to the work already undertaken in the county on a number of the key corridors by the County Council and the Combined Authority, or by government and its agencies.

Nonetheless, we would ask that reference to the need for capacity improvements on the southern end of the West Anglia Main Line between Cambridge, Stansted, Bishops Stortford and London are mentioned under "Improved Connectivity (north-south) eastern" in the Investment Pipeline table on pages 57-59 of the draft strategy. Similarly, this same issue could be referenced in "Access to Strategic Gateways", reflecting the opportunity for increased rail mode share for surface trips to and from Stansted Airport from the north and west.

With regard to the proposal to establish a Sub-national Transport Body, the Council would note that the key benefit of such a body would be in the meaningful delegation of powers and funding from central government and / or its agencies to that body, allowing a regional view and local context to feature more strongly in the prioritisation and delivery of key transport infrastructure and services. Without such delegation, the value of a statutory STB may be limited.

We would also note that Cambridgeshire, at the east of the Heartland, has strong links with Transport East and the transport authorities covering Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, and potential additional benefits might be achieved with a larger grouping as part of a single STB.

However, it will be for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, in discussion with all of its member Councils to determine its view as to whether the proposals for a statutory STB are appropriate.

Yours sincerely