

Strategic Transport Forum

27th November 2020

Agenda Item 3: Draft Transport Strategy

Consultation Feedback

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) Notes the overall response to the Transport Strategy and Integrated Sustainability Appraisal consultations**
- b) Considers the implications of the key themes from the consultations for the final version of the Transport Strategy**

1. Draft Transport Strategy Consultation

- 1.1. Forum Members will be aware that the consultation on the draft Transport Strategy took place from 14th July 2020 to 6th October 2020.
- 1.2. EEH received a total of 210 responses, comprising of a mix of online responses and additional written responses. All the responses have now been analysed and a summary report is set out in Annex A.
- 1.3. Feedback on the draft Strategy has generally been positive with 76% of survey responses indicating their overall support for it.
- 1.4. Responses identified a number of areas for improvement and clarification. These are being considered and will inform the preparation of the final version of the Strategy.

2. Consultation Key Themes

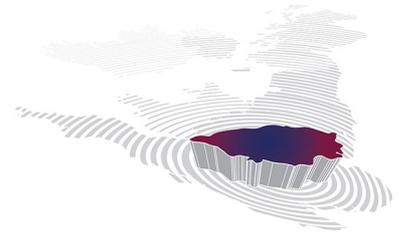
- 2.1. Through the consultation process six themes have been identified that are substantive in nature and which the final strategy will need to address in more detail. These are:
 - Decarbonisation and the environment
 - Alignment with wider geographies/ initiatives
 - Reflecting levers for change
 - Consideration of the balance of modes/ schemes
 - People and safety
 - Rural connectivity
- 2.2. The Transport Officers Group, which met on October 30 and November 13, has considered the implications of these six themes and their comments have been used to shape the papers before this meeting.

3. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.1. In addition to the draft Transport Strategy, the consultation process sought views on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and options for becoming a statutory STB (the latter will be discussed in Agenda Item 6).

- 3.2. The ISA provided an independent assessment of the draft Transport Strategy and considered how the principles of sustainable development were being integrated into the strategy.
- 3.3. Taking advice from specialist consultants, EEH Business Unit has been reviewing specific points made in the ISA consultation responses in order to inform and further strengthen the final version of the Transport Strategy. The below highlights the themes arising from the ISA consultation and proposed approach response:
- Iterative nature of ISA and Transport Strategy – some responses questioned how the ISA and Transport Strategy had worked iteratively alongside each other. The Post Adoption Statement will more clearly provide clarity on this issue.
 - Assessment of alternatives – assessment of alternatives was a theme which was identified by some respondents. The Post Adoption Statement will outline what alternatives were assessed as part of the process.
 - Level of environmental assessment – several comments focussed on scheme level detail, which is not proportionate to the level of ISA undertaken in relation to the Transport Strategy. This position will be reiterated in the Post Adoption Statement.
- 3.4. Several specific responses focussed on some key themes around the environmental and social aspects of the Transport Strategy including: water environment, environmental net gain, accessibility and inclusion, heritage assets and access to green space. Annex B shows these key themes coming through the consultation and the proposed approach within the ISA Post Adoption Statement or proposed changes to the Transport Strategy that the Business Unit proposes to take forward as a result.
- 3.5. A full report of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Post Adoption Statement will be presented to Forum Members in February 2021.

Adam King
Communications manager
November 2020



Annex A

Draft Transport Strategy: Consultation Report

November 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report presents a summary of responses made during the public consultation on England's Economic Heartland's draft Transport Strategy.
- 1.2. The consultation opened on 14th July and ended on 6th October.
- 1.3. Consultation on the draft Transport Strategy was preceded by engagement on the Outline Transport Strategy in 2019, which set the framework for a conversation with people and businesses about the future of the region's transport system. The twelve key messages from that engagement informed the development of the draft Transport Strategy.
- 1.4. Overall accountability for the draft Transport Strategy's development rested with the Strategic Transport Forum (the Sub-national Transport Body). Its preparation was informed by input from the Transport Officers' Group of senior local authority transport and planning professionals, and the EEH Influencers' Group, which contains a diverse range of external stakeholders and acted as a critical friend.
- 1.5. Consultations were also simultaneously held on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal on the draft Transport Strategy, and proposals to become a statutory organisation. Analysis of these responses are considered separately.

2. Publicity and engagement

- 2.1. The draft Transport Strategy was launched as an online-only document on July 14. Other online documents launched on the same day were:
 - Draft Transport Strategy Summary
 - The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
 - Heartland in Context
 - Passenger Rail Study Phase One
 - First/ Last Mile International Best Practice Review
 - Pathways to Decarbonisation
 - Proposals to Become A Statutory Body
- 2.2. All documents were available to download on the EEH website. During the consultation period more than 5,000 different devices logged into the EEH website. The consultation webpage (which contained a link to the consultation survey) was viewed more than 6,500 times. The draft Transport Strategy was downloaded 3,200 times, and the summary version 2,100 times.
- 2.3. Short video guides explaining the draft Transport Strategy and associated documents in an accessible format were viewed more than 1,500 times across the website, YouTube and social media.

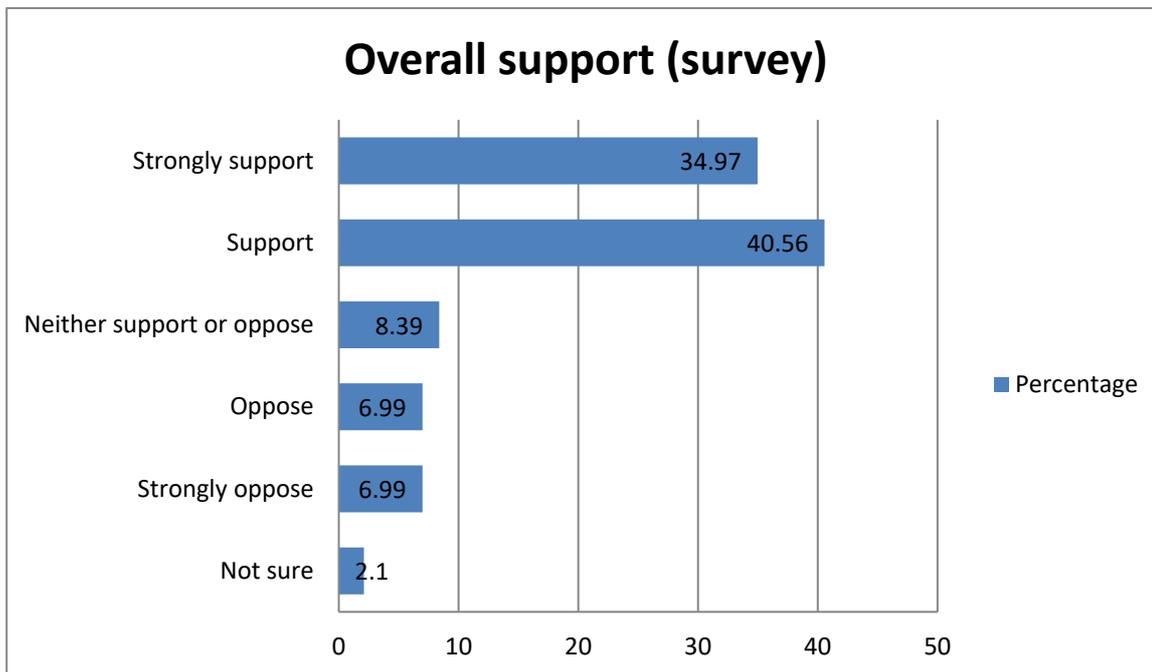
- 2.4. A webinar was held on the day of the launch which attracted 300 delegates. EEH's annual Regional Conference on 15th September (this year online due to COVID-19), attracted nearly 500 attendees, with an average of 320 at any one time. Comments made by delegates during both events were used as informal feedback on the strategy.
- 2.5. On launch day, Programme Director Martin Tugwell was interviewed by BBC Look East regional TV news, and BBC radio stations Northampton, Three Counties and Cambridgeshire. The consultation also featured in local and trade press. Publicity of the Pathways to Decarbonisation led to further articles regarding the consultation in specialist press.
- 2.6. Letters were emailed to more than 300 stakeholders, advising them of the consultation launch.
- 2.7. The EEH Business Unit also offered to meet with EEH partners and other organisations to discuss the strategy. Around 20 such meetings were held during the consultation period, and this included a significant amount of engagement with elected members at partner authorities.
- 2.8. Six newsletters were sent out to EEH's 825 newsletter subscribers during the consultation, each one themed on particular aspects of the strategy, and encouraging people to take part.
- 2.9. Regular posts were made on Twitter (nearly 900 followers) and LinkedIn (275 followers); in addition, posts were also made on team members' individual LinkedIn profiles).

3. Consultation responses: Overview

- 3.1. The consultation and engagement lead officer at Buckinghamshire Council (EEH's accountable body) provided advice on the approach to the consultation and survey questions.
- 3.2. During the consultation an online survey was the primary channel for people to give their views on the draft Transport Strategy. EEH also accepted written responses via email and letter.
- 3.3. The online survey included a mix of closed questions and open questions, allowing for quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- 3.4. The consultation received a total of 210 responses: of these 108 responses were made on behalf of organisations; 102 were made by individuals/residents.
- 3.5. All of EEH's partners either responded to the consultation directly or indicated support for a submission from an over-arching organisation.
- 3.6. In addition, we received responses from:
 - 12 District Councils/Joint Planning Units
 - Six infrastructure owners/operators
 - Five transport operating companies/ groups
 - 16 national organisations and campaign groups
 - 15 businesses/ business groups
 - 25 regional organisations and campaign groups
- 3.7. 152 responses were made via the online survey (75%), while 58 responses were submitted via email/ letter (25%).
- 3.8. Analysis of consultation responses was carried out 'in house' by the EEH Business Unit, enabling all team members to get an understanding of the key messages coming through during the consultation.

4. Consultation Responses: Overall Support

4.1. Of the 143 survey responses which answered the question, 'Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the Draft Transport Strategy?', 76% said they either 'strongly supported' or 'supported' the strategy, while 14% 'strongly opposed' or 'opposed' it.



5. Consultation Responses: Quantitative Analysis

- 5.1. In order to ensure consistency and avoid making false assumptions about levels of support, only responses made to the online survey's closed questions have been included for the quantitative analysis of consultation responses.
- 5.2. Alongside overall support, closed survey questions were asked on the strategy's vision and principles (p14), investment priorities (as part of the 'whole system approach' outlined on p29) and policy areas (contained in the four policy chapters from p30-p52).
- 5.3. A breakdown of survey answers to these questions is provided in the table below ('neither support nor oppose' and 'not sure' were also available as answers to these questions):

To what extent do respondents support...	Strongly support/ support	Strongly oppose/ oppose
Draft Transport Strategy 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.	82%	10%
Principle 1: Achieve net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050	87%	5%
Principle 2: Improve quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all, which emphasises sustainable and active travel	95%	2%
Principle 3: Support the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities	82%	5%
Principle 4: Ensure the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods	78%	6%

through the region and to/from international gateways		
Investment in: Digital infrastructure...in ways that also reduce the need to travel...	91%	1%
Investment in: Our existing infrastructure assets to improve its resilience and connectivity...	76%	4%
Investment in: Repurposing existing infrastructure and services...to actively encourage active travel modes ... and reduce reliance on the private car	90%	3%
Investment in: Greening travel routes to encourage walking or cycling...whilst at the same time acting as green corridors for wildlife	92%	2%
Investment in: New infrastructure capacity and capability to enable delivery of planned economic and housing growth	63%	18%
Investment in: Improved connectivity for rural communities...	85%	5%
Policies in A Transport System for the Future chapter	94%	3%
Policies in Transforming Journeys chapter	81%	8%
Policies in Connecting People with Opportunities chapter	82%	3%
Policies in Making the Heartland Work for the UK	70%	11%
Implementation and delivery approach set out in pages 54-65	60%	11%
Investment pipeline reflects region's connectivity priorities (pages 56-63)	48%	17%

6. Consultation responses: Qualitative analysis

- 6.1. A large number of specific comments were made in the consultation responses. In particular comments were made with regard to:
- Presentation – the document could be easier to read and more succinct
 - Vision and Principles – amendments proposed to the vision and principles, and suggestions for additional principles
 - Heartland Today chapter – suggestions to amend the Places of Strategic Importance table/map, such as including additional places and/or categories and changes to terminology
 - Policies – amendments proposed to policies and suggestions for additional principles
 - Narrative – feedback that specific topics and issues deserved greater emphasis and/or clarity within the strategy
 - Schemes – suggestions for a number of specific schemes to be added to policies, narrative and/or the investment pipeline, and for the investment pipeline to contain additional information on how schemes meet the strategy's vision and principles
 - Corrections – to wording and mapping
- 6.2. Overall six cross-cutting themes were identified that are substantive in nature and which the final strategy will need to address in more detail:
- Decarbonisation and the environment
 - Alignment with wider geographies/ initiatives

- Reflecting levers for change
- Balance of modes/schemes
- People and safety
- Rural connectivity

6.3. These six themes are considered in more detail below.

7. Decarbonisation and the environment

- 7.1. There was strong support for the Strategy's focus on decarbonisation, including the Pathways to Decarbonisation work published in support of the draft Strategy.
- 7.2. However, the single biggest message coming through the consultation – from residents, campaign groups and several local authorities – was the need to deliver a net zero carbon transport system before the legal requirement of 2050.
- 7.3. Several responses challenged EEH to provide carbon budgets for its policies, and to include a timeline as to how the transport system will be decarbonised.
- 7.4. Responses also suggested more needs to be said about net environmental gain and biodiversity.
- 7.5. A notable number of responses also highlighted the potential for hydrogen as a contributor to decarbonising the region's transport system.
- 7.6. Amongst the specific comments made:
- The net-zero carbon target date of 2050 is not particularly ambitious, especially if the post-COVID19 sustainability opportunities are to be properly embraced and delivered.
 - We recognise this updated draft includes a stronger position on carbon reduction, underpinned by the work EEH have done on pathways to decarbonisation. As a Council, our position is to reach net zero by 2030 so we would be keen to see early work done to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050.
 - The TS (Transport Strategy) makes a case that this area is unique in terms of innovation and the opportunities to promote active travel – so it is still not apparent why the 'net zero' target is still no more ambitious than that set by government for the entire country. We still feel that the strategy should be more ambitious with its target in this respect.

8. Alignment with other initiatives/wider geographies

- 8.1. Several responses, particularly from authorities in Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire, highlighted the need to need to strengthen the Strategy's alignment to the work of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
- 8.2. The strategic importance of infrastructure beyond EEH's borders was also highlighted, with a number of respondents highlighting the need to set out more explicitly the linkages with neighbouring Sub-national Transport Bodies and London.
- 8.3. Amongst the specific comments made:
- The strategy should be strengthened by having greater regard to the on-going work at the OxCam Arc level, in particular the emerging spatial framework led by Government.
 - In the Strategy there is also little acknowledgement of London given that the southern boundary of the EEH area is only 15 miles from central London. It is one of the key transport and economic influences for Hertfordshire and much of the region and this needs to be reflected in the strategy as this interaction with London frames much of our own policy direction.

9. Reflecting levers for change

- 9.1. A number of responses suggested that the Strategy needs to give a stronger emphasis on the importance of alignment with other policy areas, including longer-term land-use planning.
- 9.2. In addition, there were an appreciable number of comments highlighting how the need to respond to COVID-19 had had implications for travel behaviours and the demand for travel, implications that need to be considered and reflected in the final Strategy.
- 9.3. Amongst the specific comments made:
 - Land use planning can have a major impact. The Strategy should give a clearer direction on how land use planning can support delivery of the net zero target and the role that EEH will play in this.
 - The challenges of Covid-19 have created opportunities to do things differently and this should be harnessed whilst the number of trips remains low. Whilst there is an acknowledgment that the landscape has changed significantly due to the pandemic, there should be a much stronger COVID-19 recovery section within the Strategy given the radical change this is likely to have in the longer term which affects all strands of the Strategy.
 - The most efficient journey is one that is never even made. There is nowhere near enough emphasis of the potential for telecommuting to replace daily commuting in the report. The feasibility of a large swathe of the public to work for home has been demonstrated during the recent months. This has not been given sufficient discussion in the strategy.

10. Balance of modes/schemes

- 10.1. A number of responses felt there should be greater recognition of the strategic role and opportunities for scheduled bus and coach services.
- 10.2. The support expressed in the draft Strategy for Mass Rapid Transit in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes was welcomed; several responses suggested working with partners to identify other locations where additional MRT/Bus Rapid Transit type solutions might be realised.
- 10.3. Several responses said greater consideration should be given to the future role of roads in the region and a multi-modal approach to connectivity, including active travel.
- 10.4. Amongst the specific comments made:
 - We would see the Strategy being strengthened further with more details and projects supported in/around on what bus and coach operators can achieve, and are achieving, as part of an integrated transport mix.
 - As well as the locations highlighted in the strategy, Northampton, Luton, Peterborough and Oxford require mass transit systems.
 - EEH needs to propose more to reduce the proliferation of and dependence on the private car and to enable active transport to achieve the benefits it sets out.

11. People and safety

- 11.1. A number of responses suggested that the 'Connecting People with Opportunities' chapter should be strengthened on a range of issues.
- 11.2. Amongst the suggestions made there was a request that the Strategy should be more explicit about the need to plan positively for the needs of the disabled and elderly people, and to recognise the importance of non-work-related trips. Variable levels of service and the affordability of transport were identified as barriers to people realising their potential.
- 11.3. Improving safety was also highlighted as an issue on which the Strategy should be more explicit about the need to achieve a specific outcome.
- 11.4. Amongst the specific comments made:

- There is a noticeable lack of specificity with regards to how an "inclusive transport system accessible to all" would be created. It is simply not enough to have that as a principle and then not have any proposals or roadmap to achieve it.
- It does not address the issue of accessibility to public transport in terms of income and service provision.
- There is a strong emphasis on reducing emissions, but not road deaths and serious injury. Highways England has a vision for towards zero road deaths by 2040, arguably the Major Road Network needs a similar vision by 2045 and local authority roads by 2050...Particularly when (rightly) emphasising the need for more active travel, we must also emphasise the need for safe active travel.

12. Rural connectivity

12.1. Rural connectivity has been identified in the consultation as a challenge for the region.

12.2. A number of responses recognised that the Heartland has a high proportion of rural areas, and a higher dependence on car in these areas.

12.3. It was suggested that the strategy needed to strengthen its narrative on rural connectivity issues, particularly in more isolated rural areas.

12.4. Amongst the specific comments made:

- The section on rural connectivity is focused too closely on transport provision for market towns...Focusing on hubs does not acknowledge the need for travel in dispersed rural areas.
- [The strategy needs] greater prioritisation of connectivity, in particular the needs of rural areas across the EEH area.

November 2020

Annex A: Themes emerging from the ISA consultation

Theme/consultation comment	Proposed change/ new information	Change to Transport Strategy/ PAS
Historic and heritage assets (including access)	Proposed addition of historic environment within narrative including access to special places, such as heritage assets should be in line with Policies focusing on the travel hierarchy.	Transport Strategy
Net gain	Proposed clarification and additional wording relating to net gain (including a specific new policy). We are currently working with the Arc Environment Group to finalise wording and will present at the Strategic Transport Forum for consideration.	Transport Strategy
Interaction between the Transport Strategy and ISA	Additional narrative added to the ISA Post Adoption Statement to highlight how the ISA and Transport Strategy were developed iteratively (including meeting dates)	Post Adoption Statement
Water management	Additional text to show that taking a whole system approach and early engagement with areas outside of transport can bring wider benefits such as cost savings. The Transport Strategy will note that these themes are also about managing and operating existing asset and responding to issues such as extreme weather events.	Post Adoption Statement also to clarify technical water management comments.
Green Infrastructure and access to green space	<p>It is proposed that this information is expanded in the Transport Strategy to show that how improving local connectivity to assets (such as the natural environment) not only improves health and wellbeing but also reduces the need to travel, bringing nature to people rather than people having to travel to nature.</p> <p>The link between greening transport corridors and provision of green infrastructure can also contribute to wider</p>	Transport Strategy

	environmental benefits such as biodiversity net gain will also be highlighted	
Accessibility and inclusion	<p>Additions will be made to the Transport Strategy highlighting the DfT's Inclusive Transport Strategy, including inclusive by design principles and the addition of accessible information.</p> <p>Further narrative will be added about accessibility.</p>	Transport Strategy
Road Safety	<p>Further narrative will be included about safety. This will accompany current wording about the principles of applying a 'safe system approach'.</p> <p>A new policy is suggested in the Transport Strategy relating to safety.</p>	Transport Strategy