



Strategic Transport Forum

11th September 2020

Agenda Item 3: Draft Transport Strategy: Launch and Consultation

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum notes the successful launch of the draft Transport Strategy and discusses emerging consultation themes

1. Draft Transport Strategy Launch

- 1.1. The draft Transport Strategy was published in digital form for consultation on 14th July 2020, alongside the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and a suite of other technical documents.
- 1.2. A 60 minute webinar was held on the day of launch chaired by Mayor Dave Hodgson with speakers/ panel including Greg Smith MP, Laura Church, Martin Tugwell and EEH Vision 2050 winner, Emily Seabrook. The webinar, watched live by 300 people, was well received.
- 1.3. The launch also had a strong social media presence, enjoying a high profile on Twitter and LinkedIn. Many of our partners tweeted or retweeted posts from their accounts, encouraging residents to have their say in the consultation.
- 1.4. The launch has appeared in trade, regional and local media. On 14th July, EEH Programme Director, Martin Tugwell, was interviewed by radio stations BBC Three Counties, BBC Cambridgeshire and BBC Northampton, and by the TV regional news BBC Look East.
- 1.5. As of 19th August 2020, the Transport Strategy page on the EEH website had been viewed 4,500 times. The Draft Transport Strategy document had been downloaded 2,100 times and the summary version 1,500 times.

2. Consultation

- 2.1. The consultation, which also encourages feedback on the ISA and statutory body proposals, runs until midnight on 6th October 2020.
- 2.2. All partners are encouraged to provide a response. EEH Business Unit is working with Transport Officers to ensure, where required, we are providing presentations and/or briefings on the strategy, as well as one-to-one engagement with partners.
- 2.3. In addition, the Business Unit will hold a second webinar towards the end of the consultation period that will be open to anyone interested.
- 2.4. The Business Unit has already held webinars for the Department for Transport and CIHT, and with stakeholders, for example representatives from the CPRE.

- 2.5. A wide range of communications activity will continue throughout the consultation period aimed at increasing consultation responses, including regular blogs, videos, newsletters, social media posts and news releases.

3. Emerging themes

- 3.1. As of September 1, there had been more than 40 responses to the consultation. The majority of these responses are from individual residents. Based on previous experience, we would expect to receive the majority of responses, including partner and organisational responses, towards the end of the consultation period.
- 3.2. Feedback so far has been positive. Of the responses so far, 84% have indicated they 'support' or 'strongly support' the Draft Transport Strategy.
- 3.3. One respondent stated: *"A joined-up approach, like the one highlighted in this transport strategy, is crucial for the development of an efficient transport network."* A Councillor who sits on a partner authority, said: *"It looks very strong and comprehensive."*
- 3.4. The consultation has, as anticipated, identified a number of areas for further consideration in the final transport strategy. Thus far, this includes:
- There should be greater policy emphasis on accessibility and inclusion, including step-free access at stations and affordability of public transport: *"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."*
 - The importance of delivering infrastructure at pace and before planned growth has been raised several times.

Support has been shown for schemes in the Transport Strategy's investment pipeline including East West Rail; Wisbech rail reopening; Wixams station; and the Felixstowe to Nuneaton Rail Corridor. There has been support for the mass rapid transit systems featured in the strategy such as the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro – indeed, respondents said the MRT concept should be extended to several other large towns in the Heartland.

There have also been requests for the Transport Strategy to include a number of additional specific schemes, most notably the North Cotswold Line upgrade. Woodfines LLP said: *"The focus has to be on the major projects as they will deliver the most immediate benefit in the longer term. It is a question of priorities and delivery and overcoming the obstacles to delivery quickly and effectively adopting a pragmatic approach but not to the point of compromising or settling for lesser solutions."*

- Even greater emphasis on joining up land use planning with infrastructure planning. This also came through in responses to EEH's statutory proposals. For example one resident said: *"Sub-National (regional) strategic planning of all sorts has been in short supply in recent years and is definitely needed."*
- Even greater emphasis on remote working and active travel. A respondent said: *"The most efficient journey is one that is never even made. There nowhere near emphasis of the potential for telecommuting to replace daily commuting in the report."*
- On active transport, a respondent said: *"...dedicated cycleways separated from roads make a staggering difference to the use of 'active' travel, i.e. cycling and more recent technologies in what we might term assisted two-wheel modes of transport. EEH should be supporting both strategic cycleways such as the proposed Misbourne Greenway and ensuring that local communities have a cycleway masterplan. Local Planning Authorities should insist that every new housing estate is built with dedicated cycleway provision that links into their wider network of existing and future envisioned cycleways."*

- There has been a mix of views on the role to be played by private cars and the road network in the future. One respondent said: *"The answer is not to make car or motorcycle travel less pleasant, that only forces people to choose a poorer, slower, more expensive or unreliable option. If the council wants people out of their cars, they need to make other modes more attractive rather than making cars less attractive."*
- However, several other respondents welcomed the strategy's emphasis on public transport and active travel, whilst also stating that they do not support increasing road capacity. One respondent warned over the environmental impact of electric vehicles: *"I very much welcome the move to better public transport. I am concerned, however, that the unenvironmental manufacture and disposal of electric cars is not omitted in your decarbonisation strategy."*
- There has been strong support for the policies targeted at decarbonising the transport system: *"the Draft Transport Strategy is an excellent piece of work and I especially support the aim of decarbonising the transport system."* However, several responses stressed that the transport system should be carbon neutral earlier than 2050.

3.5. The Forum is invited to note the emerging themes arising from the consultation to date.

3.6. During the next meeting of the Forum in November 2020, following close of the consultation, Members will be provided with a full report of consultation responses. Forum Members will be presented with a detailed record of the changes that are proposed within in the Transport Strategy as a result of the consultation process. The meeting will also be invited to consider, and approve, the final version of the EEH Transport Strategy.

4. 4th Annual Conference

4.1. England's Economic Heartland's annual regional conference – the fourth - is being held virtually on 15th September 2020 from 9.30am to 1pm. Forum Members have been sent an invitation to the event.

4.2. The focus of the conference is how the draft Transport Strategy is providing the momentum for delivering the transport system our region needs in order to realise our economic potential and deliver net environmental gain.

4.3. There are 5 sections to the programme:

- Welcome and Overview
 - Opening remarks by Mayor Dave Hodgson, Chair of the Strategic Transport Forum
 - Key note speech by Greg Smith, MP for Buckingham and member of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee
- What the Strategy means for me?
 - With perspectives from a local business, a young professional (Lucy Ellis – award winning young professional working for the East West Rail Alliance) and the environmental sector (Paul Leinster – Chair of the Ox-Cam Local Natural Capital Plan Steering Group)
- Shaping the Future
 - With perspectives from the winner of our Vision 2050 competition (Emily Seabrook), the manager of our programme of connectivity studies (Abi Nichols), the innovators (Gemma Ball of the Satellite Applications Catapult)
- Innovation in Delivery
 - In which our delivery partners will present a range of initiatives already underway across the Heartland that are making a difference
- Delivering Transformation

- With updates on progress with delivering the region's transformative schemes – including East West Rail, the CAM (Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro), and the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

5. Vision 2050 Competition

- 5.1. As stated above, Emily Seabrook, a graduate civil engineer at Skanska who works at Oxfordshire County Council, won EEH's Vision 2050 competition. Colleagues will recall that the competition sought fresh perspectives on connectivity from the next generation of professionals.
- 5.2. Emily was chosen by a judging panel which included Professor Sadie Morgan OBE (co-founding director at RIBA Stirling Prize winning dRMM Architects and one of the NIC commissioners that led the Commission's work on the Arc), and Lynda Addison OBE (Chair of CIHT's Sustainable Transport Panel and former chair of the Transport Planning Society).
- 5.3. Lockdown delayed publication of the competition outcome, but a webpage has now been set up where Members can view Emily's winning vision, alongside that of the other finalists.
- 5.4. Emily will present her winning vision, including a bespoke graphic produced by spatial design agency 5th Studio, at the annual conference.
- 5.5. The perspective provided by young professionals is particularly important, representing as it does the opportunity to ensure that our approach meets the needs of the future, as opposed to simply trying to solve the problems of the past. Moving forward we will continue to reach out to young professionals across the region.

Adam King
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September 2020