

## Strategic Transport Forum 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018

### Agenda Item 3: Transport Strategy Evidence Base

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Forum note the progress made in developing the evidence base for the overarching Transport Strategy

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1. A key strand of the Forum's work programme is developing the evidence base that will underpin the development of the overarching Transport Strategy, including the identification of future investment priorities.
- 1.2. The availability of a common evidence base was an issue that the Department for Transport identified as a key benefit of collaborative working at the sub-national level.
- 1.3. The Department for Transport is currently seeking views on proposals related to the identification of the Major Road Network. The consultation document highlights the key role that emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies will have in developing a Regional Evidence Base and that this will form the basis for identifying investment priorities.
- 1.4. The Forum's approach to establishing the evidence base comprises three elements:
  - a) A database that provides the baseline evidence base
  - b) A data hub through which it is possible to access a wide range of data
  - c) A policy scenario model that draws on both the database and the datahub and through which it is possible to consider the relative impact of a range of policy scenarios.

#### **2. The Baseline Evidence Database**

- 2.1. Consultants WSP were commissioned to undertake the work to produce the database, which has a GIS interface allowing interrogation of the information held.
- 2.2. The draft database was showcased to officers from local partners across the Heartland on 12<sup>th</sup> January: reaction so far has been very positive with partners welcoming the availability of such a database – the first time that such a comprehensive overview of information across the Heartland has been available.
- 2.3. WSP will provide the Forum with an introduction to the database at the meeting.
- 2.4. Information held within the database has been provided by local partners. A data protocol has been put in place to ensure that partners can have confidence that the data is being managed in accordance with the relevant requirements.

- 2.5. The initial commission – to produce the database – will conclude in February. The Forum – in its role as the emerging Sub-national Transport Body – is putting in arrangements to manage and maintain the database moving forward to ensure that it remains up to date.
- 2.6. The commission to produce the database has been overseen by a steering group comprising representatives from County, Unitary and District Councils. The steering group – chaired by Hilary Chipping – will advise the core programme team on areas for further development. This will be taken forward as a separate commission, which will also provide the opportunity to expand coverage of the database to pick up information relating to Swindon and Hertfordshire.
- 2.7. In addition to informing the development of the overarching Transport Strategy the database will be available to all local partners across the Heartland for their own use

### **3. Data Hub**

- 3.1. The Innovation Working Group is currently exploring the options for establishing a data hub through which it will be possible to gain access to a wide range of data.
- 3.2. In addition to supporting the development of the overarching Transport Strategy, the availability of a data hub will be helpful in encouraging the development of 'mobility as a service' initiatives across the Heartland: likely to be a key opportunity that the Forum will look to encourage as part of the overarching Transport Strategy.

### **4. Policy Scenario Model**

- 4.1. The Forum has previously seen the potential of a 'policy scenario model' demonstrated by colleagues at the Transport Systems Catapult and identified the added value of such a tool in developing the overarching Transport Strategy.
- 4.2. A core programme team is in the process of leading a commission that will see the Forum develop this capability. The model – which will build upon existing models across the Heartland area – will provide the Forum with the ability to explore the relative implications of a range of policy scenarios. Use of policy scenarios is particularly relevant given that the 'multi modal spine' will transform connectivity across the Heartland.

### **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1. The work of the Innovation Working Group will be the focus of a more substantial debate at the March meeting of the Strategic Transport Forum.

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