



Strategic Transport Forum

19th June 2020

Agenda Item 4: Draft Transport Strategy

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) Agrees, subject to amendments agreed by the Forum, the draft Transport Strategy as presented at Appendix 1 for publication and consultation**
- b) Notes the revisions to Policy T3 and T20 in light of the recommended way forward on Pathways to Decarbonisation**
- c) Notes the contents of the draft Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, which will be published for consultation alongside the draft Transport Strategy**
- d) Reviews and agrees the approach set out in Annex 3 in respect of issues raised through the draft ISA but which are best considered through different mechanisms**

1. Context

- 1.1. England's Economic Heartland's draft Transport Strategy sets the policy framework for strategic transport provision and investment in the Heartland region over the next 30 years. Subject to approval by the Strategic Transport Forum, the strategy will be published for consultation on 14th July 2020.
- 1.2. It is proposed that the draft Transport Strategy will be published on 14th July, and that this will mark the start of a 12 week public consultation to end on 6th October.
- 1.3. Alongside the draft Transport Strategy, we will publish a suite of supporting documents that together set out the evidence base in support the Strategy. This will include the draft Integrated Sustainability Appraisal; the consultation seeking views on options for the seeking to establish the Sub-national Transport Body on a statutory basis; and the outputs from a number of technical studies underpinning the Transport Strategy.
- 1.4. The outcome of the consultation will be considered by the Forum this autumn, with the intention of publishing the final Transport Strategy at the turn of the calendar year.
- 1.5. The development of the Transport Strategy is underpinned by our Regional Evidence Base. This is comprehensive in nature and has been designed to be used not just for the preparation of the transport strategy but also to provide EEH and its partners with a suite of tools that can be used in taking forward its implementation.

2. The draft Transport Strategy

- 2.1. On 15th May 2020 this Forum considered and provided steers on the draft Transport Strategy. Forum Members were supportive of the draft Strategy in principle, particularly welcoming the commitment to the region's environmental responsibilities that were embedded throughout the document.



- 2.2. In the ensuing discussion the Forum asked for the strategy to be further developed, reflecting:
- The need to amend the presentation of the region's locations of strategic importance (Pages 14 and 15) to allow the reader a clearer understanding of each area and how it forms part of the region's socio economic structure.
 - The need to be bold, particularly in the context of the environment and the UK's legislative requirements for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Forum agreed that the government's decarbonisation plan should be referenced but that the 2050 requirement should not be a rigid target, but one kept under review with an ambition for us to meet the net zero greenhouse emissions target earlier than 2050.
 - The implications of Covid-19: Forum members identified the need to build on the experience of remote and flexible working and ensure that the longer term implications for the Strategy are considered.
 - The need to better reflect the government's renewed ambitions for boosting active travel, including through local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies.
 - The need to reflect on the implications of a more flexible work pattern, and in particular the increased importance of investment in digital infrastructure
 - The need to encourage new development to actively plan for reducing the need to travel, with proposed development in the region planned sustainably and located around key transport hubs where possible
- 2.3. The final draft Transport Strategy is attached at Appendix 1. This looks to address the points made by the Forum at its previous meeting.
- 2.4. In addition the Business Unit met with the EEH Bus Operators Association, who are represented on the Forum but were unable to attend the previous meeting. Feedback from the Bus Operators Association was that the Strategy needed to provide a stronger framework as to the importance of bus and coach sector in supporting the region's ambitions. The final draft seeks to take on board this point.
- 2.5. The Implementation chapter has been updated to include the draft Investment Pipeline (Agenda Item 5) and a set of indicators. The indicators proposed will be used to monitor and evaluate implementation of the final Strategy on an annual basis.

3. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.1. In January 2020, the EEH Business Unit advised the Forum that work on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) was being taken forward concurrently with the draft Transport Strategy. It is through the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal that strategies can be assessed against the principles of sustainable development.
- 3.2. Forum Members have consistently been supportive that transport solutions are planned (and delivered) in a way that respects and enhances the environment, both natural and built, rural and urban. Putting the environment at the forefront of the draft Transport Strategy was also one of the key themes which emerged from the engagement phase of the Outline Transport Strategy. The ISA is one of the ways in which we are ensuring these views are expressed in the draft Transport Strategy.
- 3.3. The ISA is a major piece of work that is integral to the development of the draft Transport Strategy. The Business Unit worked with the Transport Officer Group to agree the approach to be taken with the ISA. Officers were clear that an assessment of the sustainability aspects of the Transport Strategy had to be a comprehensive but proportionate approach to the development of a regional strategy.



- 3.4. The ISA has involved an integrated approach, one that brings together the work associated with a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Community Safety Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment. The draft ISA document is included as Appendix 2.
- 3.5. The work of the ISA has informed the development of the draft Transport Strategy. Working with the consultants, EEH Business Unit has strengthened a number of areas within the draft Transport Strategy a result. These are:
- Environmental Net Gain – the draft Transport Strategy needs a clear environmental net gain policy, pre-empting any UK-wide regulations that may evolve through the awaited Environment Bill. As a result, EEH Business Unit and WSP have agreed a form of words, which has also been reviewed by members of the environment group for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc programme. The revised wording on Environmental Net Gain is set out in paras 4.18 to 4.24 of the final draft Strategy.
 - Community Safety – a consistent area of feedback from the ISA team has been community safety (actual safety and perceptions of safety), this has now been reflected within the revised strategy.
 - Access to greenspace and greenways – feedback through the ISA process, supported by the EEH Influencers’ Group, identified the need to provide a stronger narrative on access to greenspace and greenways. The strategy now goes further, and proposes working with partners to create a pan-regional network of Greenways which will enhance opportunities for walking and cycling. This includes working with Sustrans to improve the national cycle network, making it segregated wherever possible.
 - Social isolation - The growing risk of social isolation within society was raised a number of times during the ISA process. While there are limits to the role of a strategic document in seeking to address this, the draft Transport Strategy has acknowledged the significance of ensuring all policies and approaches developed by EEH are not to the detriment of any members of society.
- 3.6. In addition to those areas that have been revised, there are a small number of areas where the ISA has identified an issue, but which, on balance it is considered these are best addressed in different ways.
- 3.7. Predominantly this is because the draft Transport Strategy is a strategic document, setting regional ambitions for the transport system and a regional framework for investment prioritisation. As a Sub National Transport Body, EEH is not responsible for the specific delivery of schemes, which would be the point that many of the more specific recommendations of the ISA would be achieved.
- 3.8. Appendix 3 sets out the areas identified by the ISA that summarises these issues and sets out the rationale for dealing with the issue through a different means. The Forum is invited to consider this approach and confirm that it is content with it.

4. Pathways to Decarbonisation

- 4.1. The previous agenda item considered the region’s options when it comes to Pathways to Decarbonisation.
- 4.2. In anticipation of the Forum supporting the recommended Pathway to Decarbonisation the final draft Transport Strategy has been revised. Most notable is:
- Clarification of policy T3: making clear that the policy commitment is to achieve a reduction in single occupancy car journeys of 20% % (of total traffic flow) by 2040 (compared with 2020).
 - Amending policy T20: strengthening the expectation that new infrastructure will be designed to be digitally enabled corridors.



- The final draft Transport Strategy also sets out the need for an east-west 'smart spine'. In time this will form the backbone of a highly connected, intelligent transport network across the entire region.
 - Underpinning the overall approach to decarbonisation of the transport system is the need for residents and businesses to have access to low carbon alternative travel choices, including walking and cycling. The final draft Transport Strategy therefore includes a greater emphasis on Greenways, including the creation of an east-west 'green spine', one that can act as a focal point for developing a region wide network of greenways.
- 4.3. The policy revisions to the final draft Transport Strategy will enable the delivery of Pathways 2 and 4. They reinforce the critical importance of digital infrastructure as a key part of the long term connectivity solution for the region, something that has long been an ambition for England's Economic Heartland.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. Subject to Forum agreement, the draft Transport Strategy and draft ISA will be published for consultation on 14th July 2020.

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