



Strategic Transport Forum

15th May 2020

Agenda Item 8: Business Unit Update

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum notes the report

1. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.1. The Forum has been clear that economic growth must not be to the detriment of the environment across the Heartland. Concurrently, there is a need to meet our legislative requirements in relation to completing an appraisal of the Transport Strategy given our ambition to become a statutory Sub-national Transport Strategy.
- 1.2. Accordingly the EEH Business Unit commissioned an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) that encompasses a Strategic Environment Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Community Safety Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.
- 1.3. The ISA is running concurrently with the work to develop the Transport Strategy. It is considering ways in which the Transport Strategy can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions. It is also a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects arising from the Strategy.
- 1.4. Consultation on the scope of the ISA was the first stage of ISA development and concluded on 8th April. The consultation had a good response rate and the consultation responses shaped the way in which the ISA is being taken forward.
- 1.5. The draft ISA will be published for consultation alongside the draft Transport Strategy in July 2020.

2. Influencers' Group

- 2.1. Alongside development of the draft Transport Strategy, the EEH Business Unit has established an Influencers' Group. The Group has been convened to act as a critical friend to the draft Transport Strategy, reviewing its vision, principles and policies.
- 2.2. The Influencers' Group is providing insight and expertise on issues within the strategy, including the environment, sustainable and active transport and inclusion, ensuring a broad range of perspectives are captured and tested.
- 2.3. The Influencers' Group is supporting EEH in making the right assumptions about:

- The needs and ambitions of the people who live and work in the Heartland, including minority and vulnerable groups
 - How our policies reflect and benefit the characteristics of the diverse places located in the Heartland
 - Whether our policies are targeted correctly, for example in terms of modal shift, reducing the need to travel and behaviour change
- 2.4. Attendees on the Influencers' Group include: Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Sustrans, Campaign for Better Transport, Chilterns Conservation Board, and representatives of younger groups of society.

3. EEH Regional Evidence Base

- 3.1. Members of the Strategic Transport Forum will be aware that EEH Regional Evidence Base is ready and available for use by our partners.
- 3.2. Beyond our partners, there continues to be a growing interest in the EEH Regional Evidence Base. Most recently, Homes England and DEFRA/Environment Agency.
- 3.3. EEH Business Unit recently provided demonstrations to both MHCLG and DfT Officials of the suite of tools within the Regional Evidence Base. The demonstrations were well attended and very well received. As a result, there continues to be strong support for our approach from amongst DfT analysts, modellers and more recently social scientists.

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