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28<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Transport for London  
[consultations@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@tfl.gov.uk)

Dear Sir,

**DRAFT MAYOR OF LONDON'S TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2017  
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance established the Strategic Transport Forum in February 2016. England's Economic Heartland stretches from Oxford through Milton Keynes across to Cambridge and from Northamptonshire to Luton.

The Strategic Transport Forum will form the basis of a proposal to establish a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.

The Strategic Transport Forum is the focus for a single conversation on strategic transport issues across the Heartland area. The Forum is jointly funded by the Strategic Alliance partners and the Department for Transport. The Forum's purpose is to:

- Maintain a single overview of strategic transport priorities
- Co-design investment programmes with Government and its agencies
- Establish joint project teams to deliver strategic proposals
- Enable a sharing of resources and rationalisation of standards, practices and policies to improve the operation of the transport system
- Work with the Strategic Alliance partners' delivery partners to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of scheme delivery

There has been, and will continue to be, a strong economic linkage between the Heartland area and London. The Strategic Transport Forum is seeking an active and on-going dialogue with the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL); one that includes the other emerging Sub-national Transport Body (Transport for the South East). A tri-partite approach on matters of strategic significance is appropriate and in the best interests of transport users and businesses across the greater South East.

### *Strategic Context*

England's Economic Heartland is a focus for science, technology and innovation with an economy worth £92bn per annum. The National Infrastructure Commission in its Interim Report (published November 2016) identified the critical importance of the area's economy to the long term future of the UK economy. However it went on to point out that its future success is not guaranteed.

The Commission identified that the economic opportunities across the corridor are of such a scale that in 30 years the economy could be worth an additional £85bn - £163bn per annum. It went on to identify improved connectivity as being one of two key issues putting future success at risk.

The Commission identified the delivery of a new multi-modal spine between Oxford and Cambridge as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to improve east-west connectivity in support of realising the economic opportunities.

Improved east-west connectivity across the Heartland corridor will in itself be of strategic importance to London, offering as it does the opportunity to travel between economic centres along the corridor without the need to travel in and then out of London.

### *London's Links with the Wider South East and Beyond*

**The Strategic Transport Forum's support for Policy 16 is conditional.** The Mayor of London's commitment to support improvements to public transport that enhance travel between London and the rest of the UK is supported. However, the Strategic Transport Forum seeks clarification on the practical implications of the suggestion that regional and national public transport schemes are integrated into London's public transport system.

It is accepted that there will continue to be a strong relationship between London and the surrounding areas. The Heartland continues to experience growth on a scale that is comparable to that experienced in London. It is therefore essential that in determining the justification for additional capacity and the allocation of available capacity on inter-regional and national public transport schemes, there is greater recognition that the interests of London must be balanced with the interests of the surrounding area.

The establishment of the Strategic Transport Forum and the commitment to develop a proposal for a statutory Sub-national Transport Body provides an appropriate mechanism for enabling a discussion between strategic bodies that respects the interests of both areas, whilst enabling strategic decisions to be made in a timely and effective way.

It will be important to ensure that implication of the continued expansion of the digital and shared economies on future travel demand and patterns is properly taken into account moving forward.

**The Strategic Transport Forum supports Proposal 70.** Figure 35 identifies a number of strategic infrastructure investment corridors within and around London that are located within the Heartland area. The Forum welcomes the opportunity that this Proposal provides for enabling the strategic importance to London of corridors such as the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Bedford – Cambridge to be added to strategic business cases in support of specific investment proposals.

**The Strategic Transport Forum notes the content of Proposal 64** which commits the Mayor of London to work to encourage investment in rail corridors to accommodate rail freight that currently utilises rail paths within London.

Delivery of the East West Rail infrastructure is potentially a key investment for enabling the Mayor of London's ambition to be realised. It is potentially a key investment for improved connectivity from some of the UK's major ports and inland markets. The Strategic Transport Forum welcomes the opportunity to work with the Mayor of London and TfL to ensure that the investment in East West Rail infrastructure supports this proposal.

### *West London*

Proposal 70 identifies the Great Western/Reading corridor as being of strategic importance to London: **this recognition within the draft Transport Strategy is welcomed by the Strategic Transport Forum.**

Strategic drivers of change in this area include the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport and the realisation of the growth opportunities identified for the Old Oak Common/Park Royal area (65,000 jobs and 25,000 homes).

The Strategic Transport Forum welcomes the introduction of Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) services along this corridor. In addition it supports:

- Investment in the upgrading of rail infrastructure linking the Chiltern mainline with the Old Oak Common/Park Royal transport hub. The strategic case for promoting this has been set out in the recently published Network Rail Route Strategy for Chilterns and East West Rail. Delivery of services on a north-south axis through Buckinghamshire and on to Milton Keynes and into Northamptonshire will be facilitated by the delivery of the East West Rail infrastructure. The addition of 'chiltern' services to the range of interchange opportunities provided at the Old Oak Common transport hub will significantly increase travel choices for residents and businesses in the Heartland area **(consistent with Proposal 71).**
- Investment in delivering the Western Rail Access to Heathrow. The Strategic Transport Forum considers improved public transport access to Heathrow Airport a strategic priority. **The Forum supports Policy 20** - that any proposal to expand Heathrow Airport must demonstrate how the surface access networks will be invested in to accommodate additional demand. **The Forum also supports Proposal 96** – through which the Mayor of London will seek a commitment from Government to fund and deliver the transport measures required to support the expansion of Heathrow Airport. The Forum considers that Western Rail Access to Heathrow is one such measure.

**The Strategic Transport Forum seeks clarification on the potential implications of Proposal 61.** Whilst the Forum acknowledges the benefits achieved by TfL taking a leading role in integrating public transport services within London, the Forum does not support any proposal that would result in further devolution of responsibility to the Mayor of London for local rail services operating between the Heartland and London.

In seeking to work with the Mayor and TfL on a tri-partite basis, the Strategic Transport Forum (as the emerging Sub-national Transport Body) considers there is an appropriate mechanism by which issues of strategic importance – such as the specification of local rail services – can be resolved.

### *Access to International Gateways*

**The Strategic Transport Forum supports Proposal 95** – the commitment to promote the improvement in surface links to London's airports.

The Forum notes and welcomes the explicit reference to the need for longer trains to serve Luton Airport as part of the Thameslink programme. It also notes and welcomes the explicit reference to the provision of a new automated people mover to better connect Luton Airport with the rail network.

### *Major Road Network*

The Strategic Transport Forum has been a strong advocate of the merits of identifying a Major Road Network – one that embraces both Highway England's Strategic Road Network and the more significant local transport authority owned roads.

The Department for Transport in its Transport Investment Strategy set out its support for the Major Road Network concept and the intention to consult later this year on proposals to take the concept forward.

The Strategic Transport Forum is working to develop its proposal for the Major Road Network across the Heartland area. The identification of the Major Road Network needs to be undertaken in partnership with the Mayor of London/TfL. The Forum would look to use the tri-partite working arrangement as an appropriate mechanism for taking forward the discussion on the Major Road Network.

### *Cross Boundary Bus and Coach Services*

**The Strategic Transport Forum supports Proposal 72** – which seeks to ensure that coach facilities are well connected with London's public transport system. The provision of inter-regional coach services is an important part of the transport system across the greater South East.

The Forum notes that the Mayor of London expects that part of Victoria Coach Station will become unavailable from 2023 – due in part to works associated with Crossrail 2 and the expiry of leases. The Forum welcomes the commitment of the Mayor of London to work with stakeholders to identify and deliver replacement facilities.

The Strategic Transport Forum notes the commitment in Proposal 53 to adjust scheduled bus services as part of the co-ordinated approach to reducing car use. It is noted that specific reference is made in the supporting text to redistributing resources to reflect changing patterns of demand. The intention to redistribute some bus resources from central London to outer London as part of this approach is noted.

***Customer Focus***

Recognising the strong linkage between the Heartland area and London, the Strategic Transport Forum is keen to explore with the Mayor the potential opportunity to extending smart and integrated ticketing initiatives beyond London and into the Heartland area. The Forum would welcome an early discussion on this particular issue as it believes the potential benefits to users and businesses could be significant.

As the emerging Sub-national Transport Body, the Strategic Transport Forum would welcome the opportunity for an early discussion of the issues raised in this consultation response.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Heather Smith**

Chairman, Strategic Transport Forum  
Leader Northamptonshire County Council