



Strategic Transport Forum

24th January 2020

Agenda Item 4: Decarbonisation

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum agrees the proposed approach to developing EEH's response to decarbonisation of the transport system.

1. Context

- 1.1. The engagement phase of the England's Economic Heartland's *Outline Transport Strategy* ran until 31 October 2019. During that phase, EEH Business Unit undertook over 35 engagement events and received over 100 responses to the consultation.
- 1.2. Most notably across the responses was the significant and growing expectation of the role that Sub National Transport Bodies must play in seeking to respond to climate change. Respondents almost universally encouraged England's Economic Heartland to further develop its policy and approach to decarbonisation, including climate change and other carbon related issues.
- 1.3. As a result, and in discussion with Transport Officers, EEH Business Unit has begun exploring options for developing a programme of work to better define England's Economic Heartland's policy and approach to decarbonisation.
- 1.4. As a Sub-national Transport Body, there is a requirement to align with national policy as outlined in subsection 8 of section 102I of the Cities & Local Government Devolution Act 2016: that 'In preparing or revising its transport strategy an STB must ... have regard to ... (b) the social and environmental impacts in connection with the implementation of the proposals contained in the strategy, [and] (c) any current national policy relating to transport that has been published by or on behalf of Her Majesty's Government'.
- 1.5. In July 2019, the UK Government set its legislative requirement for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Sub-national Transport Bodies have a key role to play in supporting the Government and local partners in responding to this requirement.
- 1.6. To avoid the worst effects of climate change, an industrial, technological, and economic transformation at a pace and scale that is utterly without precedent is required. England's Economic Heartland can be an exemplar and torch bearer for the UK in this arena. In doing so, Forum Members will be aware that bold decisions are likely to be needed.

2. Approach

- 2.1. The Outline Transport Strategy, and emerging vision and principles for the draft Transport Strategy acknowledge the reality that realising economic potential will require investment in transport infrastructure and services. However it also sets out how innovation, together with the introduction of new operating models – consistent with the Government's Industrial Strategy – provide the opportunity to use economic growth as a catalyst for achieving net environmental benefit and a net zero carbon pan-regional transport network by 2050.



- 2.2. Developing a clear understanding of how England's Economic Heartland can best approach its pathway to decarbonisation is a key priority. Forum Members will be aware that, following the conclusions of the study work, there will be a need at pan-regional level to consider how the Forum wishes to respond to the policy options available, some of which may require challenging decisions to be made.
- 2.3. The pathway to decarbonisation cannot be developed in isolation: it requires collaboration from Government and continued partnership working with local partners. Forum members will agree that the pace in which England's Economic Heartland can respond to the decarbonisation agenda is also at the dependence of other policies and strands: such as place making and innovation
- 2.4. To further develop advice and options for the Forum, the EEH Business Unit proposes to commission of two discreet studies. These will support the development of the Transport Strategy and help define the choices that the Forum can make in seeking to set a pan-regional response to climate change. The studies will be designed help to satisfy the requirements outlined above and support the development of a robust strategy.

3. Research – Pathways to decarbonisation.

- 3.1. The first project proposes working with a UKRIC (UK Collaboratorium for Research on Infrastructure and Cities) funded academic partnership DAFNI (Data & Analytics Facility for National Infrastructure to advance UK infrastructure research) and the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University. Through this partnership, England's Economic Heartland proposes the commission of a wide-ranging piece of research work that will support the development of the preferred regional approach to transport decarbonisation.
- 3.2. Complementary to this proposed work, EEH Business Unit is also exploring the potential for a further partnership with the Oxford University Transport Studies Unit. Through this, England's Economic Heartland will be able to capture their existing knowledge and expertise around behavioural economics and the impact of transport behaviour change.
- 3.3. The research will set out a series of key policy recommendations and priorities to inform Strategic Transport Forum decisions on their preferred approach to decarbonisation. This will build on existing expertise and the consolidation of existing models that have been commissioned for the wider work being developed for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc initiative. The work being commissioned will be on England's Economic Heartland's geography.
- 3.4. A key output from the project will be a web-based analytical tool kit designed to inform spatial planning and policy decisions at the sub regional level. The tool will also have the capacity to provide insight for individual local authorities as well.
- 3.5. The proposition will also consider a series of scenarios, developed in consultation with partners, including options for transport strategy decarbonisation pathways analysis.
- 3.6. Though focused on transport, these pathways will highlight the interdependencies inherent in the transition to a low carbon transport system including energy generation and transmission, digital connectivity, the build environment, land use and carbon sequestration.
- 3.7. A report on progress and conclusions of the project will be presented to a future meeting of the Forum. This will outline proposals for work, and recommendations for the pathways options that Forum Members will need to consider in their quest for pan-regional decarbonisation of the transport system.



4. Transport emissions calculator

- 4.1. A second project proposes the development of a simple iterative calculator to help local partners consider carbon reduction pathways for the transport systems across England's Economic Heartland
- 4.2. The proposed model will capture an emissions baseline for carbon within the region and demonstrate the possible impacts of different interventions that could be made to England's Economic Heartland's transport system to 2050.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. If agreed, both tools will be developed over the forthcoming months. This will ensure they are completed in advance, and therefore can inform the key decisions on policy options, that the Strategic Transport Forum will be making during summer 2020.

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