

## Strategic Transport Forum

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. Context

- 1.1. Improved transport connectivity is fundamental to enabling the economic potential of the Heartland area to be realised. For that potential to be realised requires a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of future investment and services.
- 1.2. At the same time digital connectivity is both changing the nature of the economy (and as a consequence businesses requirements of the transport system) and enabling the transport system to be managed in an integrated way for the benefit of the user.
- 1.3. It is therefore essential that the overarching Transport Strategy is in fact a Connectivity Strategy; one that brings together consideration of both strategic transport and digital infrastructure.
- 1.4. The added value of such a Strategy is that it:
  - Enables investment by different infrastructure owners and service providers to be aligned in support of the common objective of realising economic potential
  - Provides a long-term framework, including pipeline of improvements, that provides clarity and greater certainty for private sector investors
  - Provides a framework that enables innovators to work with public sector leaders to accelerate the introduction of user focused services
- 1.1. However improved connectivity alone will not be sufficient if the economic potential of the Heartland is to be realised.
- 1.2. In order to maximise the benefits of future investment, improvements in connectivity must be taken forward as part of a wider approach: one that sees the overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy integrated with work on an Local Industrial Strategy and improvements to the co-ordination of planning for housing.
- 1.3. In this way the overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy will contribute to:
  - Improving connectivity between homes and employment, thereby supporting the delivery of development opportunities identified through the Local Industrial Strategy and planning framework
  - Improving co-ordination of investment in connectivity and new development, in particular supporting delivery of development opportunities focused around transport hubs and interchanges
  - Delivering a transport system that supports the place shaping agenda and accelerates the delivery of planned growth

- Acting as a catalyst for private investment in improvements that enable economic potential, thereby unlocking broader local and national benefits
- Acting as a framework for enabling local authorities and government to capture a more appropriate share in the uplift in land values for the benefit of local communities

1.4. In addition, this approach will provide the Forum with the ability to:

- Ensure investment is targeted in ways in that brings direct benefits to the user (both residents and businesses)
- Encourage an improved range of user focused services that better reflect the needs of different age groups within the population
- Encourage the introduction of services that provide access to mobility solutions that are user focused.
- Reduce the cost of delivering investment through the efficient planning and delivery of an agreed pipeline of interventions.
- Enable additional opportunities for third parties to invest in long-term economic success.

## **2. Purpose**

2.1. The Strategic Transport Forum has been established as the focus for taking forward the work on the overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy. In doing so it is the precursor to the establishment of a Sub-national Transport Body.

2.2. The Forum is responsible for:

- a) Preparing the overarching Transport Strategy for the area covered by its membership: a Strategy that provides the framework within which the long-term management, operation and development needs of the transport system can be identified
- b) Preparing and maintaining the regional evidence base upon which the Transport Strategy is prepared: the regional evidence base will be made available to all partners as a baseline that can be used in support of the preparation of economic and spatial planning documents
- c) Identifying, as part of the overarching Transport Strategy, the levels of service that transport users (businesses and individuals) might reasonably expect and using this as a basis for identifying investments (in infrastructure and services).
- d) Identifying, as part of the overarching Transport Strategy, investments (infrastructure and services) that improve the resilience of the transport system.

- e) Preparing and maintaining the pipeline of strategic transport investments (infrastructure and services) that are required to enable the delivery of the overarching Transport Strategy
  - f) Identifying, as part of the overarching Transport Strategy, the Major Road Network for the area covered by its membership.
  - g) Working with Highways England to ensure that the requirements identified through the overarching Transport Strategy are reflected in successive Roads Investment Strategy
  - h) Working with Network Rail to ensure that the requirements identified through the overarching Transport Strategy are reflected in successive Control Period investment programmes.
  - i) Working with the Department for Transport to ensure that the requirements identified through the overarching Transport Strategy are reflected in passenger rail franchise specifications.
  - j) Identifying, as part of the overarching Transport Strategy, opportunities where the powers available under the Bus Services Act 2017 support the delivery of the Transport Strategy
  - k) Working with the Department for Transport and other partners to enable the widespread adoption of 'smart ticketing' services as a means of widening user choice and improving user experience.
  - l) Identifying, as part of the overarching Transport Strategy, opportunities where innovation in services, including digital services, widen user choice and improve user experience
- 2.3. The Forum is responsible for preparing the proposal that would enable a Sub-national Transport Body to be established.
- 2.4. The Strategic Transport Forum will work closely with adjoining Sub-national Transport Bodies (or equivalent groupings) on strategic transport issues.
- 2.5. The Strategic Transport Forum will work closely with the Greater London Authority and Transport for London on strategic transport issues.

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1. The Strategic Transport Forum is the precursor to establishing a Sub-national Transport Body. Under the legislative framework for Sub-national Transport Bodies it is the Local Transport Authorities who have the statutory responsibility for promoting and establishing the Sub-national Transport Body.

- 3.2. However, in developing the overarching Transport Strategy it is essential that membership of the Forum reflects the need to have a strong working relationship with Local Enterprise Partnerships (in respect of economic and skills development) and local planning authorities (in respect of spatial planning).
- 3.3. Membership of the Forum shall be:
- |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Local Transport/Highway Authorities | Full Member      |
| Local Enterprise Partnerships       | Associate Member |
| Growth Boards                       | Associate Member |
| Wider Stakeholder Reference Group   | Observer         |
| Department for Transport            | Observer         |
| Highways England                    | Observer         |
| Network Rail                        | Observer         |
| Bus Operators                       | Observer         |
| Rail Operators                      | Observer         |
| Delivery Partners                   | Observer         |
| Transport Systems Catapult          | Observer         |
- 3.4. Associate Members and Observers are entitled to participate in the meetings. Only Members are entitled to vote.
- 3.5. Local Transport/Highway Authorities will be represented by the relevant Cabinet member.
- 3.6. Local Enterprise Partnerships will be represented by a private sector representative from their governing Board.
- 3.7. Where 'Growth Boards' are established as formal joint committees they will be represented on the Forum: the representative from a Growth Board will be an elected member from one of the constituent Local Planning Authorities. Where proposals for 'Growth Boards' are being developed the Forum may extend an invitation to them to be represented on the Forum.
- 3.8. The Forum secretariat will work with the bus operators and rail operators to identify an appropriate representative to sit on the Forum.
- 3.9. The 'delivery partners' have identified a Single Point of Contact who provides the linkage between them and the Forum secretariat. The Single Point of Contact will be the delivery partners representative on the Forum.
- 3.10. Substitutes may attend meetings of the Forum if the nominated representative is unable to attend. Substitute members shall have the same rights of speaking and voting at the meeting as the member for whom the substitute is made.

- 3.11. Individual members of the Forum will be responsible for ensuring their organisation is kept briefed on the work of the Forum.
- 3.12. In agreeing to work collaboratively, individual partners retain their roles and responsibilities as Local Transport/Highways Authorities. Collaborative working also recognises that individual partners retain the ability to work collaboratively with other organisations on other issues where that is appropriate.
- 3.13. The Forum may invite other organisations to be involved in its activities where their participation is seen as adding value to its work.
- 3.14. Any Local Transport Authority may apply to become a member of the Forum: any request to be considered by the Forum at the next available meeting. The Forum may approve the request where there is an evidential economic linkage (or potential economic linkage) to the area covered by the Forum and they agree that this linkage (or potential linkage) would benefit from a strategic approach to transport planning.
- 3.15. Any Local Enterprise Partnership may apply to become an associate member of the Forum: any request to be considered by the Forum at the next available meeting. The Forum may approve the request where there is an evidential linkage (or potential linkage) to the area covered by the Forum and they agree that this linkage (or potential linkage) would benefit from a strategic approach to transport planning.
- 3.16. In considering any request to become a member or associate member, the Forum will also take into consideration the need to ensure that the geographical extent reflects economic geographies (recognising that functional economic geographies will change in response to improved connectivity).

#### **4. Voting**

- 4.1. Each full member of the Forum shall have a vote. The Chair of the Forum will have an original but not a casting vote.
- 4.2. Normal rules as to declarations of interest and conflicts of interest will apply to all Local Authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct and LEP members in respect of the LEP Assurance Framework
- 4.3. Members' votes are only valid when they have made their financial contribution towards the Strategic Transport Forum (see below).

#### **5. Meetings**

- 5.1. Meetings of the Forum will be held quarterly as a minimum: additional meetings will be arranged with the agreement of the Chair if required. All papers and meetings will be in public, with all interested parties able to attend meetings. Papers for the

meeting will be issued one week in advance of the meeting and will be published on the Forum's website at the same time.

- 5.2. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum will be elected at the first meeting of the Forum in each calendar year. The Chair and Vice-Chair must both be a representative of a Local Transport Authority, who will serve in the role for at least one year but for no more than two years.
- 5.3. The Forum secretariat will provide the administrative support to the Forum. It will work with the Chair and Vice-Chair to ensure that the agenda for each meeting supports the delivery of the agreed programme of work.
- 5.4. Interested third parties may request the opportunity to address the Forum in respect of an item on the Forum's agenda, or in respect of an issue pertinent to the work of the Forum. Where an interested third party addresses the Forum they will be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes per organisation.
- 5.5. Requests to address the Forum have to be submitted to the Forum secretariat at least three working days before the meeting itself. The Forum secretariat will advise the Chair of any requests. The Chair will have the right to defer a request to address the Forum if they think such a deferment is appropriate.
- 5.6. Interested third parties may be invited to participate in meetings of the Forum where this would add value to the Forum's debate on a specific issue.
- 5.7. The Forum may decide to establish sub-groups where this is appropriate in order to address specific issues: sub-groups may be either time-limited in their duration or standing sub-groups where the issue is on-going. Interested third parties may be invited to be members of task and finish/sub-groups established by the Forum.
- 5.8. The core programme team will be responsible for the Forum is appropriately represented on the governance arrangements established in support of specific projects.

## **6. Ways of Working**

- 6.1. The Strategic Transport Forum will be supported by the core programme team who will be responsible for delivering the agreed work programme in accordance with the set budget.
- 6.2. The core programme team will work closely with the Transport Officers Support Group in delivering the agreed work programme. The Support Group will be chaired by a senior officer from a Local Transport Authority.

6.3. The benefits of the Forum's collaborative approach include:

- More efficient use of staff resources – collaborative working enables a collective position on strategic issues to be developed, thereby enabling staff resources to focus on local issues confident that strategic positions are also protected
- More efficient use of commissioning budgets – collaborative working enables partners to share the cost of commissioning specialist advice on issues of strategic importance, thereby enabling more efficient use of revenue budgets
- More effective sharing of knowledge – collaborative working enables partners to benefit from centres of excellence within individual partners to the wider benefit of residents and businesses.
- More effective engagement on strategic issues – collaborative working enables a more effective engagement with Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail and more widely with infrastructure owners and service providers (all of whom operate at a scale larger than individual local transport authorities)
- More effective influence in shaping national investment programmes – collaborative working is more effective in aligning investment programmes managed nationally to take account of local priorities

6.4. In this way the Strategic Transport Forum provides the opportunity to:

- Share technical expertise and resources across the partners to assist with the development, assessment and implementation of proposals.
- Enable a more effective and meaningful engagement with the Department for Transport, infrastructure agencies (such as Highways England and Network Rail) and service providers (such as bus and train operating companies).
- Provide the focus for a single conversation on strategic transport and infrastructure related activities.
- Establish joint bidding teams to undertake and commission technical work (including the development of business cases) to secure investment funding to enable the delivery of strategic proposals.
- Work with Government and its agencies to co-design nationally delivered transport investment programmes.

## 7. **Accountable Body**

7.1. The Accountable Body for the Strategic Transport Forum is Buckinghamshire County Council, which will undertake Section 151 and Monitoring Officer roles on behalf of the Forum.

## **8. Forum Secretariat and Support**

- 8.1. The secretariat and support for the Strategic Transport Forum will be provided by the core programme team.
- 8.2. The core programme team will be hosted by the Accountable Body. It will be responsible for preparing and overseeing the delivery of the agreed work programme for the Strategic Transport Forum.
- 8.3. The core programme team will provide the Forum with quarterly reports on the delivery of the work programme, including a financial report.
- 8.4. The core programme team will comprise a combination of dedicated staff resources recruited to the team and/or individuals seconded from constituent members of the Forum. Where dedicated staff resource(s) are recruited these will be hosted by the Accountable Body.

## **9. Funding**

- 9.1. As the emerging Sub-national Transport Body, the work of the Forum is funded through a combination of financial contributions from constituent members and funding received from the Department for Transport.
- 9.2. The core programme team will prepare and maintain a three-year Business Plan on a rolling basis. The 3-year Business Plan will provide the medium term planning framework within which the annual work programme will be prepared for consideration by the Strategic Transport Forum.
- 9.3. The annual work programme will be set in the final quarter of each financial year and reflect the overall budget available for the subsequent financial year.
- 9.4. The constituent members will make a financial contribution towards the cost of the Strategic Transport Forum. The level of the financial contribution will be set in the final quarter of each financial year, payable in the subsequent financial year.
- 9.5. The core programme team will be responsible for securing the financial contribution from the Department for Transport.

## **10. Scrutiny Arrangements**

- 10.1. Decisions made by the Strategic Transport Forum shall be subject to the usual scrutiny arrangements of each constituent member.

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