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19<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Dear Andrew,

**MOBILITY STRATEGY FOR MILTON KEYNES 2018-2034 (LTP4)  
Consultation Draft**

I am writing on behalf of England's Economic Heartlands Strategic Transport Forum – the emerging Sub-national Transport Body for the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.

The draft document provides a timely reminder of the opportunities and challenges that Milton Keynes faces in realising its ambition for significant growth.

As section 3 of the document illustrates, delivering that ambition requires consideration not only of the travel needs within Milton Keynes but just as importantly the transport linkages with the surrounding area.

The dominance of the private car in the latter case reinforces the importance of Milton Keynes needing to work closely with a range of partners from both the public (i.e. Local Transport Authorities) and private sector (service providers) if a range of travel options are to be available moving forward.

The support for 'Mobility as a Service' solutions is strongly welcome but will be dependent upon the availability of viable and attractive options that meet the requirements of individuals. As the consultation document highlights, the delivery of LTP3 provides many examples of successful investment on which this Strategy can build. However it is clear that the scale of the challenge facing Milton Keynes is considerable moving forward.

A particular issue that may be worth further exploration is whether there is a digital divide across the community as a whole, and in particular whether all sections of the community are able to afford access to 'Mobility as a Service' solutions.

The work undertaken on the 'first mile/last mile' as part of the National Infrastructure Commission's recent study of the Oxford to Cambridge corridor provides a solid foundation on which to build.

The Strategic Transport Forum's document 'Planning for Growth' highlighted the strategic importance of first mile/last mile considerations as part of the overarching Transport Strategy for the corridor. As work on the overarching Transport Strategy is taken forward this year we will look to work closely with Milton Keynes to ensure that we build upon that foundation, and

indeed look to draw on the knowledge gained by Milton Keynes in considering the needs of other major urban areas across the corridor.

The Strategic Transport Forum has already identified a number of strategic priorities that provide a strategic context for the Mobility Strategy, some of which are already referred to in the consultation document:

- Delivery of the East West Rail project – a national priority with a commitment from the Secretary of State for Transport to deliver the project faster and at lower cost. The Western Section of East West Rail is now scheduled for delivery no later than 2024, and hopefully sooner. The East West Rail Consortium has championed the provision of an eastern access at Bletchley Station in recognition of the key role that rail services potentially has to play in enabling growth opportunities at Bletchley.
- North-South Connectivity – whilst the focus of East West Rail is initially on restoring east-west connectivity, the combination of East West Rail and HS2 provides opportunities in the period post-2026 to consider how capacity on the West Coast Main Line might be better used to support economic opportunities across the corridor. The Strategic Transport Forum has identified the strategic opportunity to develop rail services on the Northampton – Milton Keynes – Bletchley – Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common axis. Network Rail's Route Strategy for the area sets out the strategic case for this, and at the beginning of this month the Secretary of State identified that passive provision is to be made for a 'Chiltern' platform at Old Oak Common.
- The consultation document includes reference to the Highways England-led 'Expressway' study. However it is also important to bear in mind that Budget 2017 announced that England's Economic Heartland is being commissioned to undertake a 'connectivity' study – the primary focus of which will be to ensure that investment in the 'expressway' is supported by investment in linkages that connect it to the rest of the major road network. We will look to work closely with Milton Keynes (as well as other local transport and planning authorities) in defining the scope of the 'connectivity' study to ensure that it takes into account local needs.
- The Strategic Transport Forum's work on developing the overarching Transport Strategy will take a similarly long term view (i.e. up to 2050) to that underpinning the work of the MK2050 Commission. This will include the need to take into consideration the transformational implications of investment in the delivery of the 'multi-modal spine' – implications that will need to be taken into account in the work to identify the Major Road Network.

It is clear from the above that the strategic context within which the Mobility Strategy sits is going to evolve in the short to medium term. The Mobility Strategy provides a strong foundation on which to build. The strategic objectives – set out in Section 4 of the consultation document – set out a framework that is both ambitious and forward looking. We would look to work closely with Milton Keynes (and other local partners) as work on the overarching Transport Strategy is taken forward.

The recognition within the consultation document of the importance of freight/logistics is welcome. An area of opportunity that the overarching Transport Strategy will look to explore is the extent to which opportunities exist in the logistics industry to fundamentally change the

way in which business is conducted. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Milton Keynes on this particular topic.

In taking the Mobility Strategy forward you may wish to give further consideration to the prioritisation of specific objectives. The delivery plan is ambitious and will require considerable investment by both public and private sectors: an indication of priorities may assist in maximising the ability to leverage partnership funding with the private sector.

Overall I would like to commend Milton Keynes for its work in developing the 'Mobility for All' Strategy. We look forward to continuing to work with Milton Keynes Council to support the delivery of this Strategy.

Yours sincerely,



**Martin Tugwell**  
Programme Director