

Strategic Transport Forum

14th October 2016

Agenda Item 9: Work Programme

It is recommended that the Strategic Transport Forum note the contents of this report.

1. Context

- 1.1. An update on the original work programme was given to the Strategic Transport Forum at the meeting held on 22nd July.
- 1.2. That work programme had been prepared at the start of 2016 and had focused very much on the need for the Strategic Alliance to be well positioned ahead of the 2016 Autumn Statement and in anticipation of the need to be in a position to feed into the work associated with the next round of planning for strategic investment in roads and rail (which also starts for real this autumn).
- 1.3. The Officer Group is currently reviewing the work programme, to identify priorities for the year ahead and to consider potential timescales.

2. Proposed Work Programme

- 2.1. An initial assessment of potential work activities for the next 12-18 months has identified the following:
 - a) *Overarching Transport Strategy* – Hilary Chipping leads the Task and Finish Group working on this subject. The initial work has focused on preparing an Overarching Transport Strategy, one that brings together the work of individual partners into a single overview. Moving forward there is a need to begin work on a more detailed piece of work that could form the basis of a statutory Transport Strategy adopted by the Sub-national Transport Board. Given its status, the strategy will need to go through a process that enables stakeholders across the Heartland area to engage in its development. An outline project brief for the Transport Strategy needs to be prepared and resources required identified and considered by the Strategic Alliance partners.
 - b) *Highways England* – there are potentially three key areas of activity. Firstly there will be a need to continue to work collaboratively with Highways England as part of the process for developing the next Road Investment Strategy. Secondly there is a need to continue to engage in the Strategic Studies currently underway in the Heartland area, and the implementation of their recommendations. Finally there is a need to continue to engage with Highways England on broader issues arising from the Growth Agenda across the Heartland area, this will include the need to work collaboratively on implementing the concept of a Major Road Network.

- c) *Rail (Infrastructure)* – similar to strategic roads, there will be a need to work collaboratively with Network Rail as part of the process for developing the next investment programme for the agency. Delivery of East-West Rail will continue to be a priority for the Strategic Alliance, with the EWR Consortium continuing to act as the focal point for local partners engaged with the DfT and Network Rail. There will also be a need to engage with the process of Route Utilisation Strategies, of which the Chiltern Main Line is the most current.
- d) *Rail (Strategy and Franchising)* – with delivery of Phase 1 of the Western Section due to be completed by the end of 2016, and work on Phase 2 moving forward, the priority will shift towards the specification of a future franchise for EWR. This will be particularly important if we are to ensure the franchised rail service aligns with planned growth across the Heartland.
- e) *National Infrastructure Commission* – whilst the Commission is scheduled to make its interim report to the Chancellor this autumn, the final report is not scheduled until autumn 2017. It is anticipated that the second stage of the Commission's work will involve consideration of potential solutions in greater detail. A key priority for the Strategic Alliance will be to work closely with the Commission and ensure that its deliberations reflect the wider policy context across the Heartland.
- f) *Total Transport* – the Strategic Transport Forum has received a briefing on Northamptonshire County Council led pilot project: however this is one of a number of such projects across the Heartland area. The Forum was very supportive of the work to date and identified the opportunity to use the experience to date as the basis for developing a broader proposition at scale. Continued pressures on public sector budgets provide the opportunity to operationalise the experience gathered through the Total Transport pilots. It is proposed that a priority for the Forum should be to develop a detailed proposition at the earliest opportunity.
- g) *Transport Safety* – the first meeting of the sub-group established to develop this proposal was held in August: this built upon the discussion at the Officer Group. Interest in the concept remains high and a detailed proposition is being developed as a priority: this will build upon discussions that are on-going with the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety (PACTS).
- h) *Enhanced Partnership (Buses)* – the Strategic Transport Forum agreed that work should begin to develop a proposal for an Enhanced Partnership. An initial piece of work will need to begin to identify the outcomes sought and to then establish a representative sub-group with the public transport operators that looks to develop a more detailed proposal
- i) *Smarter Travel* – both Oxfordshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council have strong programmes of activity focused on enabling the potential of ITS solutions to be realised. There is clearly the potential to build on existing collaborative working between Alliance partners as a means of accelerating the development and

commercialisation of 'smarter travel' type solutions: realising the ambition for the Heartland to be seen as a 'working laboratory' for such initiatives.

- j) *Network Resilience* – the economic impact of disruption to the transport system (from both planned and unplanned incidents) is significant. Quantifying the scale of the impact and identifying opportunities to use 'smart' solutions that enable transport networks to be managed more effectively on a co-ordinated basis should be viewed as priorities: both would be consistent with the Government's Industrial Strategy

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. The meeting is invited to comment on the potential activities and to identify those which it sees as priorities for the year ahead: the Officer Group will develop a more detailed work programme (including resources) for consideration by the next meeting of the Forum.

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