wsp

England's Economic Heartland

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Post Adoption Statement

England's Economic Heartland

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Post Adoption Statement

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CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

1.1.1.   England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is responsible for developing a transport strategy for the EEH region to 2050. The Transport Strategy has been developed to set the direction on how strategic connectivity must be planned and delivered in order to realise the economic potential of the region whilst ensuring the principles of sustainable development are followed to maximise social and environmental benefits.

1.1.2.   The Transport Strategy provides the key mechanism for expressing how EEH will realise its vision, and the four key principles that underpin it. These principles are as follows:

- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040.
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel.
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities.
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways, in a way which lessens its environmental impact.

1.1.3.   The development of the Transport Strategy has provided the opportunity to take a different perspective on the connectivity requirements in the region. This involved taking a strategic policy view, focusing on transport's role in supporting and driving the economy, whilst ensuring the principles of sustainable development are followed to maximise social and environmental benefits (or mitigate dis-benefits). The strategy has been developed with EEH partners, working in an iterative manner.

1.2   THE APPRAISAL OF SUSTAINABILITY

1.2.1.   An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) was undertaken alongside the development of the Transport Strategy to ensure that sustainability aspects were incorporated into the Strategy.

1.2.2.   The ISA included the following assessments:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA);
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA);
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA); and
- Community Safety Assessment (CSA).

1.2.3.   Further details on these assessments and their relationship to the ISA of the Transport Strategy is provided in Section 1.3 below.

1.2.4.   Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are required by European Directive EC/2001/42 (SEA Directive), which was transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations).

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 6 of 28

1.2.5.   An SEA is mandatory for plans (including strategies) and programmes which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste or water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive.

1.2.6.   SEA is an iterative process of gathering data and evidence, assessment of environmental effects, developing mitigation measures and making recommendations to refine plans or programmes in view of the predicted environmental effects. The effects predicted at this stage have remained at a strategic level.

1.3   RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PROCESSES

1.3.1.   Figure 1-1 below sets out the relationship of the assessment components that make up the ISA.

Figure 1-1 – ISA and Component Processes
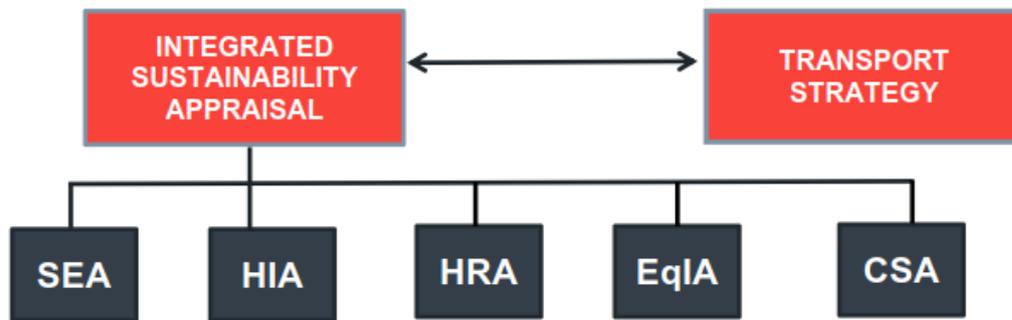
1.3.2.   An **Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)** under the Equality Act 2010 has also been undertaken for the ISA. Public bodies have a duty to assess the impact of their policies on different population groups to ensure that discrimination does not take place and, where possible, to promote equality of opportunity. The approach adopted for the EqIA of the Transport Strategy was combined within the ISA process, with 'equalities' included as a topic for assessment alongside the environmental topics, as well as the production of a standalone EqIA.

1.3.3.   A **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** was undertaken for the ISA. Although health considerations are a requirement of the SEA Regulations, undertaking a separate HIA process is not a statutory requirement. However, due to the desire to undertake an integrated approach to considering sustainability in the Transport Strategy, a separate HIA was undertaken. The approach adopted for the HIA of the Transport Strategy was to combine it within the ISA process, with 'health' included as a topic for assessment alongside the environmental topics.

1.3.4.   **Community safety assessments (CSA)** are used to identify where potential community safety issues could arise, e.g. through level of use, accessibility, vehicle speed, or proximity to sensitive receptors. There is no statutory requirement nor any adopted formal methodology for CSA of plans or programmes. The approach adopted for the CSA of the Transport Strategy was to combine it within the ISA process, with 'community safety' included as a topic for assessment alongside the environmental topics.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 7 of 28

1.3.5. A strategic level **Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment (HRSA)** was undertaken for the ISA in line with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Habitats Regulations) to consider whether the Transport Strategy may have significant impacts upon areas of nature conservation importance that are designated to be of European importance. Whilst feeding into the ISA process (specifically the 'biodiversity' topic), the HRSA was undertaken as a standalone assessment.

1.3.6. It has not been possible to rule out the potential for significant effects on European sites associated with the Transport Strategy due to the strategic nature of regional transport strategies. Therefore, further, detailed assessment through additional screening and, if required, Appropriate Assessment is considered necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

1.3.7. It will only be possible to undertake this level of assessment once specific schemes are proposed and sufficient geographical and project detail is available to identify the potential for effects and enable a thorough and robust analysis to be carried out.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE POST ADOPTION STATEMENT

1.4.1. Post adoption statements are a key tool for improving transparency in the plan (or strategy) and decision-making process. This document allows stakeholders to see how environmental and sustainability factors have been considered throughout the development of the Transport Strategy. It demonstrates how consultation comments have been taken into account throughout the process and outlines the measures for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the Strategy

1.4.2. The post adoption statement satisfies a requirement of the SEA Regulations (Part 4, Regulation 16, [4]) which states that as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a Plan, the following information is provided:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed in response to consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 8 of 28

2   HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED

2.1   INTRODUCTION

2.1.1.   Environmental considerations were integrated into the preparation of the Transport Strategy throughout the ISA process. The identification of an ISA framework allowed likely significant positive and negative effects to be identified. This process assisted in the development of policies, driving them in a direction more likely to achieve sustainable development.

2.1.2.   Environmental considerations of the draft policies and potential spatial corridors for future study work identified during the preparation of the Strategy were also evaluated. Measures to avoid, reduce and, as much as possible, offset any significant adverse effects were incorporated into the development of the Strategy. The process began with the preparation of the ISA Scoping Report to support the preparation of the draft Strategy. Each stage of the ISA process informed and influenced the development of the Strategy.

2.2   SCOPING

2.2.1.   An ISA Scoping Report was prepared, which included: a review of relevant plans, policies and programmes; identification of the characteristics of the Heartland region and its key sustainability issues and opportunities; and an outline of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Strategy. The Scoping exercise was proportionate to the nature of a regional transport strategy.

2.2.2.   This work was used to develop the ISA Framework. The ISA Framework included 13 SA objectives, which were compiled in order to guide the future assessment of policy options and strategic corridors.

2.2.3.   Following consultation with the public, stakeholders and statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) during March 2020, the assessment was carried out.

2.3   ISA REPORT

2.3.1.   For this stage each of the draft Transport Strategy policies and potential spatial corridors were assessed against the ISA Framework. In addition, an EqIA, HIA, HRA and CSA were carried out in order to inform both the ISA and the development of Transport Strategy.

2.3.2.   Following consultation with the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders, between July and October 2020, a number of amendments and recommendations were identified. An updated ISA Report was provided, which took into account consultation comments.

2.4   ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

2.4.1.   Consultation was integral to the development of the Strategy and the ISA process. Continuing engagement with stakeholders helped to ensure that consideration has been given to environmental and sustainability issues throughout the development of the Transport Strategy.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 9 of 28

2.4.2. EEH engaged with its partners and a broad range of stakeholders during the development of the Outline Transport Strategy (2019), the development of the draft Transport Strategy, the Strategy consultation period and finalisation of the Strategy.

2.4.3. The Strategy's overall direction was steered by the Strategic Transport Forum of elected cabinet members and leaders, supported by the Transport Officer Support Group, which consists of senior local authority transport officers from across the region. EEH also formed an Influencers Group, which contains a diverse range of experts, gathered to act as a critical friend.

2.4.4. In 2019, EEH engaged on its Outline Transport Strategy, starting a conversation with stakeholders on the future of the region's transport system. EEH attended approximately 30 meetings with partners and external stakeholders (including roundtable events with MPs and Peers at the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative 2019 party conferences) and more than 100 detailed responses were received.

2.4.5. Twelve key messages were identified from this engagement, which helped shape the Draft Transport Strategy. These are as follows:

- The imperative to respond to the climate emergency
- Harness technology and innovation
- Work closely with planning authorities
- Put the environment at the forefront of the strategy
- The need to be bold – not business as usual
- Reduce the need to travel
- Increase emphasis on sustainable modes
- Support health outcomes
- Place greater emphasis on wider strategic linkages
- Use nudges and demand management
- Remember smaller schemes and maintenance
- Show how EEH will deliver

2.4.6. Using feedback from the Outline Transport Strategy consultation, a Draft Transport Strategy was developed, working alongside partners and stakeholders to ensure views were incorporated into the Strategy during the development phase. The iterative drafts of the Strategy and the ISA were used to inform the decisions of the Strategic Transport Forum and views of the Transport Officer Support Group throughout the development of the Strategy. Papers for the Strategic Transport Forum can be found on EEH's website[1].

2.4.7. During consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy, EEH attended around 20 meetings with partners and external stakeholders. In total 210 formal consultation responses were received, which consisted of survey responses (via the website) and written responses.

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[1] http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/consultation-responses-and-reports.aspx

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 10 of 28

2.4.8.   A webinar was held on the launch of the Transport Strategy and attracted 300 delegates. EEH's annual regional conference on 15th September (held online due to COVID-19) was attended by nearly 500 delegates. Comments made by delegates at both events also informed the development of the final Strategy.

2.4.9.   Throughout the period of engagement, the evidence base underpinning the Transport Strategy has also been in development. This includes:

- the Freight Study;
- Passenger Rail Study Phase 1;
- Pathways to Decarbonisation; and
- the First Mile Last Mile Toolkit.

2.4.10.   Each of the technical studies was supported by engagement with steering groups, with progress reported to the Transport Officer Support Group and Strategic Transport Forum, as well as presentations to a number of stakeholders (such as the freight industry and interest groups). In addition, five Influencers Group meetings took place.

2.4.11.   Throughout, there was specific engagement related to the development of the ISA, working iteratively and alongside consultation activities on the Transport Strategy. Both the Transport Strategy and the ISA were consulted on during the period 14th July – 6th October 2020.

2.4.12.   Environmental interest groups and stakeholders have been engaged via the Arc Environment Group meetings, with EEH presenting updates, throughout the development of the Strategy.

2.4.13.   Meetings were also held with statutory ISA stakeholders in the development of the final version of the Transport Strategy. There will be further continued engagement via the development of EEH's programme of connectivity studies.

2.4.14.   Public consultation that informed both the ISA process and development of the Transport Strategy is summarised in Table 2.1 below. Please note that not all individual meetings are shown in the table below.

Table 2-1 – Summary of Consultation and Engagement

Consultation/ Engagement	Date	Description
Transport Officer Support Group	November 2018	The Transport Officer Support Group provided feedback on the overall approach to what became the Outline Transport Strategy.
Strategic Transport Forum	December 2018	The Strategic Transport Forum agreed the approach to the development of the Outline Transport Strategy and agreed in principle the vision and principles for what became the Outline Transport Strategy.
Transport Officer Support Group	March 2019	The Transport Officer Support Group considered the process and timeline for developing the Transport Strategy.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 11 of 28

Consultation/ Engagement	Date	Description
Strategic Transport Forum	May 2019	The Forum agreed in principle the draft text for the Outline Transport Strategy.
Outline Transport Strategy Consultation	2019	EEH produced and consulted on an Outline Transport Strategy. There were several emerging themes from the consultation on the Outline Transport Strategy (outlined in paragraph 2.4.4).
Arc Environment Group	November 2019	EEH presented the Outline Transport Strategy to the Arc Environment Group.
Transport Officer Support Group	November 2019	A paper was presented to officers to outline the potential approaches to environment assessment associated with the Transport Strategy. Officers discussed that a proportionate but integrated approach to sustainability appraisal be undertaken.
Strategic Transport Forum	January 2020	An update on the Outline Transport Strategy and resulting themes was presented. The Forum agreed the vision and principles for the Draft Transport Strategy. There was an update to the Strategic Transport Forum on the approach being taken with the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (the decision to proceed with an integrated and proportionate approach to assessment was agreed).
Transport Officer Support Group	January 2020	Key messages from the Outline Transport Strategy engagement were presented to help inform the development of the Transport Strategy. Review of updated vision, principles and outcomes for the Transport Strategy.
Meeting with Sustrans (sustainable travel charity)	January 2020	Meeting to discuss incorporation of active travel within the Transport Strategy; there has been ongoing liaison since this meeting.
ISA Scoping Report Consultation	March 2020	The Scoping Report was issued for a five week consultation period. EEH sought the views of the statutory bodies and other stakeholders on the context, baseline and methodology for the ISA.
Transport Officer Support Group	March 2020	Officers reviewed the developing Draft Transport Strategy, considered and provided feedback on emerging Transport Strategy policies.
Influencers Group	March 2020	Inaugural meeting of the Influencers Group. The group received a presentation on the development of the Transport Strategy.
Transport for Counties (rural connectivity)	March 2020 – July 2020	Series of workshops discussing the challenges and opportunities for areas characterised by a polycentric nature and large rural populations. The series of workshops focussed on themes such as public transport, placemaking,

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 12 of 28

Consultation/ Engagement	Date	Description
		decarbonisation, short journeys and smart mobility (amongst others). The outputs were used to help inform the approach to rural connectivity in the Transport Strategy.
DFT/EEH/WSP ISA discussion	April 2020	EEH, WSP and DfT discussed the approach to the ISA, including initial feedback.
EEH Team ISA/ Transport Strategy iterations	April 2020	The Transport Strategy and Integrated Sustainability Appraisal were developed in tandem. In order to iteratively develop the strategy against the ISA, team sessions were held to discuss the outputs of the ISA and inform or amend drafts of the Transport Strategy. In addition, the ISA was a frequent agenda item on weekly EEH technical team calls.
EEH indicators discussion	April 2020	Following performance indicator development workshops in 2019 and engagement with EEH partners, EEH discussed which indicators should be included in the Transport Strategy for further comment by partners. An environmental indicator workshop, attended by a number of environmental stakeholders, had been facilitated in April 2019.
EEH/ WSP Natural Capital Discussion	April 2020	In order to understand the ISA technical advice arising on natural capital, a meeting was held between the WSP ISA Natural Capital Lead and the EEH Project Manager.
Influencers Group	April 2020	The Influencers Group considered policies around decarbonisation and the future of mobility.
ISA Stakeholder workshop	April 2020	ISA Stakeholders were invited to a workshop (held online due to COVID-19). The workshop consisted of a presentation on the process and progress of the development of the ISA. It also highlighted themes and messages from the ISA scoping stage.
Transport Officer Support Group	May 2020	Officers reviewed the emerging Draft Transport Strategy. Consideration of policies and narrative for decarbonisation, rural economies and freight. Discussion of emerging ISA feedback and themes for iteration to the Transport Strategy.
EEH Team ISA/Transport Strategy iterations	April 2020, May 2020, October 2020	During the development of the Transport Strategy, EEH considered outputs from the ISA, iterating the Transport Strategy as appropriate. A series of ISA check and challenge sessions were held internally and ahead of any revisions to the strategy.
National Policy shaping	Various, including meeting in June 2020, and	Liaison with Government departments in relation to shaping policy/appraisal process with due regard to decarbonisation and the environment. This includes meetings such as DfT Decarbonisation Unit (ongoing); Cabinet Office Behavioural

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 13 of 28

Consultation/ Engagement	Date	Description
	ongoing discussion	Insights Team (June 2020); and HMT (Green Book Team) – June 2020.
Transport Officer Support Group	June 2020	Officers considered and commented on the revised Draft Transport Strategy. The draft ISA was presented to officers, including the main themes arising and proposed resulting changes to the draft Transport Strategy.
Strategic Transport Forum	June 2020	The revised draft Transport Strategy was presented to the Strategic Transport Forum. The revised Strategy reflected feedback from the previous Strategic Transport Forum, the ISA and outputs from the Pathways to Decarbonisation project. Themes and considerations arising from the ISA for the draft Transport Strategy were presented to the Forum for comment.
Influencers Group	June 2020	The Influencers Group considered policies within the Transforming Journeys and Making the Heartland Work for the UK chapters.
Transport Officer Support Group	July 2020	The final version of the Draft Transport Strategy was presented to officers ahead of consultation.
ISA Report and Draft Transport Strategy Consultation	July 2020	The ISA was issued for a 12-week consultation period alongside the Transport Strategy. EEH sought the views of the statutory bodies and other stakeholders.
Influencers Group	September 2020	The Influencers Group considered emerging feedback from the Draft Transport Strategy consultation, most notably on decarbonisation and the environment, and accessibility and inclusion. The group included two new members with expertise on inclusive travel.
Arc Environment Group	September 2020, November 2020	Updates on progress of the Transport Strategy have been presented at Arc Environment Group meetings. The EEH Business Unit has also liaised with the Arc Environment Group to draw on their expertise and ensure wording included in the Strategy reflected the ambitions of the Arc Environment Group in a way proportionate to the Transport Strategy.
Transport Officer Support Group	October 2020	Feedback and discussions with officers from the Draft Transport Strategy consultation analysis and themes arising.
Transport Officer Support Group	November 2020	Officers considered the implications of the consultation responses for the final version of the Transport Strategy and were asked to comment on the draft introductory section for the final version of the Transport Strategy.
Strategic Transport Forum	November 2020	The Forum considered the implications of the consultation responses for the final version of the Transport Strategy and

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 14 of 28

Consultation/ Engagement	Date	Description
		were asked to comment on the revised introductory section for the final version of the Transport Strategy.
Influencers Group	November 2020	The Influencers Group considered the six key messages identified from the draft Transport Strategy consultation. It also fed back on the revised opening narrative proposed for the final Transport Strategy.
Accessibility Discussion	December 2020	Meeting with Leonard Cheshire Foundation to discuss improving accessibility information within the Transport Strategy.
Transport Strategy check and challenge	December 2020	The EEH team held a series of check and challenge sessions and discussed updates to the Transport Strategy following consultation on the draft Strategy. The ISA had a designated session to agree changes to the Transport Strategy following ISA consultation comments. The officer dedicated to the ISA attended all the check and challenge sessions to ensure any proposed changes were in line with the ISA.
Project Team liaison	Fortnightly	Fortnightly progress meetings between WSP and EEH to discuss the development of the ISA and Transport Strategy.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 15 of 28

3 HOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ISA HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

3.1.1. The development of the ISA was iterative alongside the development of the Transport Strategy. EEH utilised the outputs from the ISA to challenge and inform the narrative and policies within the Transport Strategy and to drive towards greater sustainability.

3.1.2. A dedicated member of the EEH team managed the process of iteration between the development of the ISA and the Transport Strategy. A number of check and challenge sessions were held during the development of the ISA to consider outputs from the ISA and proposed resulting changes to the Transport Strategy.

3.1.3. At each stage detailed consultation comments were considered by EEH before advising the Transport Officer Support Group and Strategic Transport Forum of proposed changes. The proposed changes were presented to the Transport Officer Support Group for discussion and the Strategic Transport Forum for decision. The same member of the EEH team led the process throughout for continuity, liaising with WSP on a bi-weekly basis.

3.1.4. The ISA process (as documented in the ISA Report) helped to identify key issues and opportunities by gathering data and evidence. It proposed mitigation measures and made recommendations to refine the Strategy in view of the predicted economic, social and environmental effects.

3.1.5. Finally, a monitoring framework has been developed, which sets out the strategic priorities and indicators. These indicators have been informed by the ISA and will help to assess the implementation of the Transport Strategy and identify significant environmental effects arising from implementation of the Strategy.

3.1.6. Table 3-1 below outlines how the Transport Strategy took into account the ISA, at each of the key ISA stages.

Table 3-1 – Integration of the ISA

ISA Appraisal Stage	How the Transport Strategy has taken the ISA into account
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	The Scoping Report provided policy context, a baseline of the EEH Region and identified key sustainability issues and opportunities, which fed into the development of the ISA Framework. The scoping report themes, issues and opportunities helped inform the development of the Transport Strategy. A review by the ISA specialist team provided some initial thoughts and suggestions on the emerging Transport Strategy, which was fed back to EEH. The feedback was utilised by EEH, taking the themes raised in the consultation to consider changes to the draft Transport Strategy ahead of consultation. Internal team check and challenge sessions were held to discuss the ISA scoping report feedback and proposed iterative changes. The proposed changes were presented to the Transport Officer Support Group for discussion and to the Strategic Transport Forum for agreement.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 16 of 28

ISA Appraisal Stage	How the Transport Strategy has taken the ISA into account
Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects	The assessment of the draft policy and spatial alternatives was undertaken, from which feedback was provided to EEH and amendments were made to the emerging Strategy. Section 2.4 of this PAS outlines the engagement and iterative manner in which the development of the Transport Strategy was undertaken against the development of the ISA.
	The assessment of environmental sensitivities of the potential corridors and areas of future connectivity study work was utilised within EEH's high level technical assessment of a long list of corridors in order to help inform a shorter programme of study work.
	The assessment was utilised as part of the EEH consideration of the four draft Transport Strategy principles to help inform the development of a programme of future studies. This including reviewing the corridors against the principles achieving net zero carbon and quality of life (which considered environment sensitives of the corridor and the potential for increase in active travel modes). Of the indicators used in the assessment of the corridors roughly half related to themes in the ISA.
	The final programme of work is outlined in the final version of the Transport Strategy, following presentation to the Transport Officer Support Group and agreement by the Strategic Transport Forum.
	An EqIA, HIA, CSA and HRA also assessed the draft Transport Strategy which provided a number of recommendations which were taken into consideration within the further development of the Transport Strategy.
Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report	The ISA Report set out the results of the ISA – incorporating the SEA, HIA, EqIA, CSA, and a summary of the HRA Screening – and constitutes the 'Environmental Report' under the SEA Regulations.
	In addition, mitigation measures were proposed within the ISA Report in order to avoid or reduce the effects identified through the corridor and policy assessments.
	The ISA Report also presented a number of monitoring measures and indicators to help measure the sustainability outcomes of the Transport Strategy, and to measure the performance of the Strategy against environmental objectives and targets.
Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public	The ISA Report was issued to consultees in July 2020 for a 12-week consultation period, alongside the Transport Strategy. EEH sought the views of statutory bodies and other stakeholders on the results of the ISA.
	Following the consultation, a number of recommendations and amendments were suggested. In light of these comments an updated ISA Report was produced. New or revised policies within the updated draft of the Transport Strategy were also assessed.
	EEH utilised the consultation outcomes, using themes of feedback in internal check and challenge sessions, advising officer and the forum of potential iterations to the Transport Strategy. Themes for amends

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 17 of 28

ISA Appraisal Stage	How the Transport Strategy has taken the ISA into account
	arising from the ISA consultation were presented to officer for comment and to the Strategic Transport Forum for agreement.
Stage E: Post Adoption Reporting and Monitoring	EEH will use a set of indicators to monitor the outcomes of the Transport Strategy. The proposed indicators are set out in Table 6-1 of this document. These indicators will also be used to identify significant environmental effects arising from implementation of the Strategy, building on those identified within the ISA.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 18 of 28

4   HOW OPINIONS EXPRESSED DURING CONSULTATION HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

4.1   INTRODUCTION

4.1.1.   The SEA Directive requires consultation at various stages of the process and the responses to consultation to be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption. At each stage of the preparation of the Strategy, the Strategy and the ISA has been publicly consulted on, with statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), the general public and other interested parties.

4.1.2.   The consultation undertaken has been summarised in the sections below.

4.2   SCOPING CONSULTATION

4.2.1.   The Scoping Report was issued for consultation to statutory consultees along with 52 other key stakeholders. The report was issued to consultees in March 2020 for a five week consultation period. There were 19 responses to the consultation from a wide range of respondents, including statutory consultees, several local interest groups and members of the public.

4.2.2.   Consultation responses: helped to provide more detail within the baseline and review of plans, policies and programmes; suggested wording changes to the SEA objectives; sought clarifications on methodology and how objectives were linked; and emphasised the social aspects of the ISA. There were also recommendations for the development of the Transport Strategy.

4.2.3.   Feedback arising from the ISA scoping consultation was used to inform decisions made by the Transport Officer Support Group and Strategic Transport Forum. The themes arising from the scoping consultation were outlined and advice provided was integrated into the development of the Transport Strategy.

4.2.4.   Comments were addressed in the main ISA Report and its subsequent appendices. A summary of the action taken was provide in Appendix H of the main ISA Report. Some comments and suggestions (e.g. consideration of listed buildings) required a level of detail not currently available given the strategic nature of the Strategy and the ISA. However, these suggestions should be considered in future scheme development and project level assessment stages and mitigation measures to that effect were incorporated into the ISA Report.

4.3   CONSULATION ON THE ISA

4.3.1.   The ISA Report was issued to consultees in July 2020 for a 12-week consultation period (14th July until 6th October), alongside the Transport Strategy. EEH sought the views of statutory bodies and other stakeholders on the results of the ISA, in order to ensure a robust assessment of the Transport Strategy.

4.3.2.   EEH received a total of 210 responses to the Transport Strategy consultation, comprising a mix of online responses and additional written responses.

4.3.3.   During the consultation period two questions directly related to the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal were posed:

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 19 of 28

- To what extent do you agree or disagree that the independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is a robust assessment of the Transport Strategy?
- Any additional comment about the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

4.3.4. In total, 152 organisations responded to the ISA consultation via the online portal. Of the responses, 40% either agreed or strongly agreed the ISA was a robust assessment of the draft Transport Strategy. A further 14% of responders either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the ISA was a robust assessment of the Transport Strategy; the remaining responses were either unsure or neither agreed or disagreed.

4.3.5. In addition, a number of the written responses to the Transport Strategy and ISA consultation were received from a wide range of respondents, including statutory consultees, several local interest groups and members of the public. Feedback from the written responses were included in the analysis of the ISA to further inform the finalisation of the Transport Strategy.

4.3.6. With regards to statutory consultees, both the Environment Agency and Historic England provided written feedback to the ISA consultation, whilst a verbal meeting was held with Natural England. Ongoing engagement will take place through subsequent connectivity studies and ongoing liaison.

4.3.7. A number of specific technical ISA comments were raised as part of the consultation. The response to these is outlined in Section 4.5 - 'Changes to the ISA following consultation'.

4.3.8. A number of themes emerged from the ISA consultation. These themes were considered and additions and iterations made to the Transport Strategy (as outlined in Section 5.2 of this document). Some of the predominant themes arising from the ISA consultation were:

- Level of information about historic/ heritage assets (and access to these assets)
- Access to green space and infrastructure
- Health and wellbeing benefits of active travel
- Upcoming environmental legislation
- Water management
- Ageing population (how is the ageing population accounted for)
- Preservation of the visual landscape
- Extreme weather events
- De-carbonisation of the transport system
- Accessibility (including affordability) and inclusion
- Road safety and community Safety
- Net gain principles

4.3.9. In addition, there were comments relating to the ISA process, namely: how the ISA and Transport Strategy worked in iteration; the level of environmental assessment; and assessment of alternatives.

4.4 CHANGES TO THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY POST-CONSULTATION

4.4.1. Following consultation on the draft Transport Strategy and the ISA, a number of changes were made to the Transport Strategy.

4.4.2. EEH Business Unit reviewed the specific points made in the consultation responses in order to inform and further strengthen the final version of the Transport Strategy. Six key themes emerged from the consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy which are as follows:

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 20 of 28

- Decarbonisation and the environment
- Alignment with wider geographies/ initiatives
- Reflecting levers for change
- Consideration of the balance of modes/ schemes
- People and safety
- Rural connectivity

4.4.3. The final version of the Transport Strategy therefore contained further narrative about the key emerging themes:

- To place decarbonisation of our transport system front and centre of our strategy, with an ambitious approach to decarbonisation for the region.
- To place investment in ubiquitous digital connectivity (both fixed and mobile) as being a key strategic requirement for the future of our transport system.
- To prioritise investment in strategic public transport schemes as the preferred means for making medium-long distance journeys, on the basis that they have a lower carbon footprint than the private car.
- To ensure that investment in strategic public transport is complemented by increased investment in local connectivity.
- Recognising the on-going critical role that freight and logistics has to play, in terms of being fundamental to supply chains supporting businesses within the region and elsewhere in the UK, as well as being essential in terms of enabling individual businesses and residents to have access to goods and services (through use of e-commerce).

4.4.4. Expressing the philosophy of the Transport Strategy in this way made it clearer as to what is required of EEH's transport system moving forward, consistent with the commitment to be more ambitious in terms of de-carbonisation, whilst at the same time recognising that the future shape and demand for travel continues to undergo change in response to external circumstances and that we need to encourage and embed responsiveness to change for the longer term.

4.4.5. Themes specifically arising from the ISA consultation are listed in 4.3.8. The themes arising from the ISA consultation were considered in tandem with those arising from the Transport Strategy consultation and iterations were made to the final Transport Strategy.

4.4.6. A large number of specific comments were also made in the Transport Strategy consultation responses which has led to iterations to the Transport Strategy. In particular, comments were made with regard to:

- Presentation – the document is easier to read and more succinct
- Vision and Principles – amendments to the vision and principles
- Heartland Today chapter – amends to the places of Strategic Importance table/map, such as including additional places and/or categories and changes to terminology
- Policies – amendments proposed to policies and suggestions for additional principles
- Narrative – feedback that specific topics and issues deserved greater emphasis and/or clarity within the strategy
- Schemes – suggestions for a number of specific schemes to be added to policies, narrative and/or the investment pipeline, and for the investment pipeline to contain additional information on how schemes meet the strategy's vision and principles

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 21 of 28

■ Corrections – to wording and mapping

4.4.7. Table 4-1 below highlights new or significantly revised policies within the final Transport Strategy. Those policies which had only minor amendments or amendments which do not alter the intent of the policy have not been listed below.

Table 4-1 - Transport Strategy Policy Amendments

Policy	Amendments
Policy 1 (previously Policy 3 in the Draft Transport Strategy)	In identifying future investment requirements, we will prioritise those which contribute to a reduction in car journeys in line with the recommendations delivered by the UK Climate Assembly: to facilitate a reduction in the number of private car journeys by a minimum of 5% per decade (of total traffic flow compared with 2019).
Policy 4 (previously Policy 4 in the Draft Transport Strategy)	We will work with infrastructure owners and operators to ensure that proposals brought forward for the development of the transport system reduce reliance on the private car by considering the needs of users on the basis of the following Travel Hierarchy: ■ Active travel modes (pedestrians and cyclists) ■ Enabling access to services and opportunities without the need to travel ■ Public transport and shared modes (bus, scheduled coach and rail) ■ Low emission/ zero carbon private vehicles, and two wheeler vehicles including motorcycles ■ Other Motorised modes ■ All proposals to be prepared on the basis that they provide inclusive and accessible travel options for all users.
Policy 6 (new policy)	New transport development in the region should conserve and where possible enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
Policy 7 (new policy)	We will aim for zero deaths on the Major Road Network by 2040.
Policy 14 (new policy)	Taken forward by our programme of connectivity studies, identify proposals that strengthen east/west connectivity within the following areas: ■ Oxford-Milton Keynes ■ Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford ■ Oxford- Didcot – Swindon ■ Watford-Aylesbury-Bicester-M40 ■ North Northamptonshire Oxford – M40 Junctions
Policy 20 (new policy)	We will work with Government and Network Rail to develop a long-term solution to the challenges on the London – Bishop's Stortford – Cambridge Corridor.
Policy 21 (new policy)	Taken forward by our programme of connectivity studies, identify proposals that strengthen north/south connectivity within the following areas:

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 22 of 28

Policy	Amendments
	- London – Buckinghamshire – MK – Northampton - Luton – Milton Keynes – Daventry - Luton – Bedford – Northamptonshire - Northampton – Milton Keynes
Policy 26 (previously policy 23)	We will work with local planning authorities and local enterprise partnerships to align decision making on strategic infrastructure with that associated with land use planning and economic development in order to enable growth that is sustainable for the long term.
Policy 28 (previously policy 23)	We will support the establishment of 'mobility hubs' in areas of significance as locations where interchange between travel modes will be prioritised. We will work with public transport operators and the Government to enable frictionless, affordable travel using a combination of travel modes.

4.5 CHANGES TO THE ISA POST-CONSULTATION

4.5.1. The ISA Report that was developed alongside the draft Transport Strategy was also subject to public consultation. ISA consultation responses highlighted a need to greater reflect on some 'process' based elements of the ISA and Transport Strategy, namely: how the two documents were iterated; how alternatives were assessed; and the level of environmental assessment undertaken.

4.5.2. A summary of changes to the ISA have been outlined in Table 4-2 below.

Table 4-2 – Summary of Changes to the ISA

Section/ Themes	Amendments
Section 3.3 – ISA of the Transport Strategy	Further details of the consultation process and comments received have been added.
Section 4.2 – Historic Environment	The inclusion of 'designated and no-designated heritage assets and their settings, as well as cultural heritage assets that are part of the Heritage at Risk programme' as a new issue. The inclusion of 'Archaeological investigation undertaken for schemes associated with the Transport Strategy would contribute to an increased understanding of our historic environment and of heritage assets' as a new opportunity.
Section 4.3 – ISA Framework	Amendment to the historic environment objective to 'To conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets (designated and non-designated), and their settings, and the character of the Heartland's built and historic environment'.
Section 5.3 – Assessment of Strategic Policies	The summary section was updated to take into account the assessment of new policies. Updates have been taken into account within Table 5.1 – Policy Assessment Summaries.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 23 of 28

Section/ Themes	Amendments
Section 5.5 – Interaction with other Assessments	The summaries were updated to better take into account the findings from the EqIA and the HIA.
Section 5.8 – Monitoring	A slight amendment to one of the key principles was made - 'Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050' now read ''Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040'.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 24 of 28

5 REASONS FOR CHOOSING OPTIONS IN LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

5.1.1. The assessment of strategic alternatives for the Strategy covered two key areas:

- The general transport policies (i.e. the 'policy alternatives')
- The 19 corridors that have been identified for further assessment within the development of a programme of connectivity studies (i.e. the 'spatial alternatives')

5.1.2. The Transport Strategy sets out policies for addressing the challenges faced in the EEH Region, aimed at facilitating economic growth, whilst also enhancing social and environmental benefits. The ISA informed the development of these policies by identifying potential impacts on the environment, economy and society. The iterations of these policies therefore represented the 'policy alternatives' assessed through the ISA process.

5.1.3. In addition, the scoping exercise considered the future baseline of the EEH Region, thereby identifying likely trends in the region without the Transport Strategy in place.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ALTERNATIVES

5.2.1. Policies within the Transport Strategy were iterated during the development of the strategy.

5.2.2. Using the evidence base underpinning the Transport Strategy, engagement with stakeholders and EEH partners, key messages from Outline Transport Strategy consultation and assessment from the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, the policies were continually revised as the development of the Draft Transport Strategy progressed.

5.2.3. The first draft of policies was presented to the Transport Officer Support Group and Strategic Transport Forum in early 2020, following feedback from consultation on the Outline Transport Strategy and the underpinning evidence base. This represented the first draft of policies.

5.2.4. During the development of technical programmes such as the Passenger Rail Study, Pathways to Decarbonisation and the ISA, the draft policies were iterated with the EEH Business Unit considering the outcomes of the evidence base underpinning the emerging Strategy. This includes the policy assessment undertaken as part of the ISA and themes arising to help inform the Strategy narrative.

5.2.5. The iterations of the policies (alongside outcomes and suggestions from the technical programmes) were presented to the Transport Officer Support Group for discussion and Strategic Transport Forums for decision in order to consider the impact and resulting changes to policies and narrative within the Draft Transport Strategy. This process took place throughout the development of the ISA and Transport Strategy. The programme of engagement, including meetings at which policy and strategy iterations were presented, is outlined in Section 2.4 Engagement with Stakeholders.

5.2.6. The policies presented in the Draft Transport Strategy for consultation were the culmination of the iterations to policies (and narrative) during the development of the Transport Strategy.

5.2.7. Following consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy and ISA, policies were again revised in line with consultation comments. The revised and new policies were assessed within the updated ISA

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 25 of 28

Report, and can be found in Section 5 of the ISA Report. Further details on policy changes can be found in Section 4.4 of the document.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL ALTERNATIVES

5.3.1. A programme of connectivity studies has been included in EEH's Transport Strategy Investment Pipeline. The programme presented is the result of an iterative process of corridor assessment and refinement over the period of the development of the ISA and Transport Strategy, identifying areas or corridors for future study work.

5.3.2. Working with partners, EEH will use the connectivity studies to agree desired connectivity outcomes for the study area and identify the solutions required to enable those outcomes to be realised. The studies will be multi-modal and therefore it is anticipated that the measures identified are likely to be a package(s) of interventions (including digital). The output from the studies will be taken forward as part of the region's Investment Pipeline associated with the Transport Strategy.

5.3.3. The programme of studies were identified during the period of the development of the Transport Strategy. An original long list of around 60 corridors were assessed at a high level against the principles of the draft Transport Strategy. The long list of corridors had been identified through previous engagement exercises (such as consultation on the Outline Transport Strategy in 2019).

5.3.4. A shortened list of 19 corridors were taken forward to assessment in the ISA, identified through the high level sifting exercise of the original 60 corridors. The assessment represented broad corridor geographies (with no defined boundaries), due to the strategic nature of the studies and status of the corridor identification at the time of writing. The geographies of the corridors continue to iteratively evolve through technical work (such as the ISA) and engagement with partners.

5.3.5.   The corridors assessed in the ISA represented the geographies in scope at the time of assessment. The corridors were assessed with a focus on sustainability sensitivities within the corridors. The ISA corridor assessment was utilised in the technical assessment of the corridors against the principles of the Transport Strategy, ensuring programmes within the EEH team were linked.

5.3.6. The final programme of corridor studies is outlined in the Transport Strategy.

5.3.7. The ISA has therefore informed the development of the Transport Strategy by identifying potential sensitivities and opportunities for each of these corridors from an environmental and social perspective. As such, the corridors assessed in the development of the programme of connectivity studies represent the 'spatial alternatives' assessed through the ISA process.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 26 of 28

6 HOW SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS FROM THE ISA WILL BE MONITORED

6.1.1. The SEA Regulations require that monitoring is undertaken on a plan so that the significant effects of implementation can be identified, and remedial action taken.

6.1.2. The purpose of the monitoring is to provide an important measure of the environmental outcome of the plan, and to measure the performance of the plan against environmental objectives and targets. Monitoring is also used to manage uncertainty, improve knowledge, enhance transparency and accountability, and to manage environmental information.

6.2 MONITORING

6.2.1. The Transport Strategy states that a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Strategy will be established. EEH will use a set of indicators to monitor the outcomes of the Transport Strategy.

6.2.2. The proposed indicators are set out in Table 6-1. These indicators will also be used to identify significant environmental effects arising from implementation of the Strategy.

Table 5-1 – Monitoring Measures

Principle	Indicator	Measure
Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040.	Delivering a net-reduction in CO_2 emissions at 5-year intervals.	Baselining and measuring the region's aggregated CO_2 estimates
Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040.	Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment: Conserving and enhancing the provision of ecosystem services from the region's natural capital and contributing to environmental net gain. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Baselining and measuring environmental assets and ecosystem services within the Arc
Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040.	An improvement in air quality arising from transport related vehicle emissions at identified sites.	Baselining and measuring air quality at identified sites
Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel.	An increase in the number and percentage of journeys made by walking and cycling between 2-5k and public transport between 5k-60k.	Baseline and measure data at a regional level to measure method of travel to work by distance travelled.

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 27 of 28

Principle	Indicator	Measure
Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel.	Greater levels of accessibility and inclusivity available to all transport users.	Undertake bespoke research with partners to develop appropriate measure.
Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities.	Reduced journey time variability of the strategically important road network.	Baseline and monitor journey time variability of the strategically important road network
Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities in a way which lessens environmental impact.	An increase in the number of people able to access fixed and mobile broadband.	Baseline and monitor digital coverage data
Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities in a way which lessens environmental impact.	A decrease in generalised journey time between the Heartland's key rail nodes.	Baseline and monitor journey time speed.
Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways in a way which lessens environmental impact.	Increase the number of rail freight movements and its market share.	Baseline and monitor rail freight volumes and percentage of freight moved by rail than by road.
Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways in a way which lessens environmental impact.	Reduction in time taken by public transport to international airports.	Baseline and monitor travel times to international airports

INTERGRATED SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
Project No.: 70068182 | Our Ref No.: 70068182
England's Economic Heartland

CONFIDENTIAL | WSP
January 2021
Page 28 of 28

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