APPENDIX 1 –DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

1.   Does the draft vision ("connecting people and places with opportunities and services") provide sufficient focus for the Transport Strategy?

Yes, the Council believes that the draft vision is appropriately balanced to connect people, places and skills through infrastructure provision. The additional focus of improving freight infrastructure to ease pressure on local road infrastructure is also welcomed.

EEH is also advised to review the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Strategy. The consultation concludes on the 27th September 2019.

2.   Is the ambition to have a zero-carbon transport system by 2050 sufficiently challenging?

Any target to achieve zero carbon by 2050 is going to be extremely challenging. The Council supports this principle, which accords with its corporate place objectives to create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment.

To assist in achieving this aim the draft transport strategy should include the following interventions: linking to high quality open space; integrating environmental considerations including biodiversity net gain throughout development of the future transport network; and ensuring that all new transport schemes cause minimal disruption to the environment both during construction and operation. Investing in the electrification of local taxi fleets and running buses on sustainable fuels should also be championed. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority mention within their draft Local Transport Plan that they are undertaking trials of electric and hybrid buses to understand and examine their operation on the local network; rapid electric vehicle charging points are also being installed in Peterborough. The Combined Authority is also working towards Cambridge Autonomous Metro network which has the potential to service outlying areas within Huntingdonshire. Support of these objectives would help to ensure a joined up approach across the Region in terms of strategic priorities.

It is recommended that lessons are learnt from other countries and districts that are also working towards achieving zero carbon and traffic free town centres. Many academic studies have been undertaken on such projects. Linking potential project ideas with such studies could prove beneficial in the long run and help to identify the projects best suited to achieve the objective. Engagement with national / sub national sustainable transport bodies would also be beneficial.

3.   Do the three key principles (enabling economic growth; accessibility and inclusion; quality of life and environment) provide an appropriate framework within which to develop the Transport Strategy?

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Yes, this is reflective of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's draft Local Transport Plan and Huntingdonshire's Corporate Objectives of making Huntingdonshire:

- a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and support people to be the best they can be; and
- support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and provide value for money services for the people of Huntingdonshire

4. **What are the key factors influencing people's choice of travel mode?**

Opportunities to provide multi-modal transport corridors should be identified and promoted. Additional focus should also be attributed to the 'first mile' and 'last mile' of journeys. Enabling multi-modal transport hubs and improved cycling, walking and public transport connections for residents and commuters is vital to encourage commuting and sustainable travel by providing a variety of travel options in both rural and urban areas. This should be mainstreamed through all modes of transport infrastructure.

Currently the frequency, reliability and availability of public transport in rural areas are main influencing factors in the choice of travel modes. Public transport in these cannot accommodate the needs of certain business types in rural areas, for example shift workers and night workers have no, or limited access to public transport. In such cases safety is also a key influencing factor e.g. waiting for public transport at night or in areas with no natural surveillance can deter use. The cost of public transport is also a major barrier to those on low incomes.

5. **What are the key barriers that need to be addressed if we are to achieve frictionless travel?**

Please note: Some of the key barriers to frictionless travel are addressed in question 4 (above).

Connectivity of cycling and walking routes within the district is limited outside key locations in Huntingdonshire. Greater emphasis should be afforded to resolving missing links and capturing opportunities for longer distance cycle routes for commuting and recreation. It is recommended that additional focus should also be attributed to the 'first mile' and 'last mile' of journeys to encourage commuting and sustainable travel by providing a variety of travel options in both rural and urban areas and making them more desirable to get to and from by bicycle.

Cooperation from public transport service providers will also be essential in relation to frequency and cost of services. Engaging with local businesses will also help England's Economic Heartlands to better understand the needs of businesses in terms of operational and employee needs and barriers.

In some cases the largest barrier to achieving frictionless travel will be to address the culture change required by the public and businesses. This will

require greater engagement and understanding of how to bring about that shift in thinking.

6. What performance measures should be used to identify the levels of service users require of the transport system?

There needs to be ingoing engagement with communities to understand evolving needs beyond any initial set up. This would be more effective in the form of focus groups with key stakeholders from across the patch. This would be more effective than a blanket email which may likely lead to low returns.

7. Should the strategy include and define appropriate 'nudge principles' (small changes which can influence user behaviour) to encourage more people to use public transport in the Heartland area?

Integrated ticketing systems and rural travel hubs will enable rural areas to benefit economically and socially from enhanced public transport opportunities. Subsidised ticketing in rural areas would also help to achieve a greater frequency of travel as financial accessibility to public transport is also a major barrier to usage.

Schemes identified to improve rural transport infrastructure should also include projects to join up cycling infrastructure where missing links exist creating a comprehensive cycle network and the establishment of longer routes that could be used for both recreation and commuting.

Multi-modal transport hubs with easy access to cycling facilities and inter-urban high frequency and direct public transport would also encourage changes in user behaviour.

Definition is required so all user groups can see themselves in the shift and understand how their contribution contributes toward the higher aim of net zero carbon but without additional financial burden, particularly for those on lower incomes.

8. What weight should be given to the changes in travel demand arising from the delivery of transformational infrastructure?

Weighting is a complex question. When the question of weighting arises, the context of the question is not clear. Clearly, assuming the change in travel demand is to that of public transport, positive weight should be attached, however to give the degree of weighting one would need to know all the factors being weighed upon in that scenario.

9. What weight should be given to the potential of the rail network to accommodate a higher proportion of future travel demand?

Again, same answer as No. 8.

10. Have we identified the key strategic transport corridors?

The A141 is a major strategic link within the Huntingdonshire District; it is considered a major link for rural communities and Ramsey market town to Huntingdon. Ramsey is identified in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 as a Spatial Planning Area and one of four market towns within Huntingdonshire suitable for sustainable growth. The Spatial Planning Areas are responsible for providing approximately three quarters of the district's objectively assessed need for housing and the majority of employment and retail. The A141 is the key to opening up and sustaining growth towards the North of the district and will provide additional transport infrastructure for strategic development sites such as Alconbury Weald. The A141 has not been identified as a strategic transport corridor on the map on pages 16-17 of the FfE and the Council recommends its inclusion.

11. **Are there specific issues that should be taken into consideration as part of the connectivity studies?**

The Council supports the promotion of greater connectivity, especially to enhance inclusivity for our more rural communities. However, there are challenges in the Fens that can be challenging to overcome, namely flood risk. It is noted that the document does not refer to physical challenges that require mitigation in delivering connectivity. This is a key issue in the north east of our District, around the Market town of Ramsey.

12. **To what extent should we look to the growth in digital services to change the nature and scale of future travel demand?**

The Council approves of the ambition to provide faster, more reliable digital connectivity, with digital infrastructure such as fibre ducting delivered alongside transport infrastructure where possible. Faster and more reliable digital infrastructure is a key component to achieving alternative working behaviours such as home working and video conferencing which can decrease the need to travel and contribute towards reducing congestion on our roads. Another key area of investigation with regard to digital infrastructure is the potential cost of internet and data packages for low income households and small businesses; it is recommended that further work is conducted in this area to understand the implications of achieving a comprehensive and accessible digital infrastructure network.

13. **What are the core connectivity requirements for businesses operating from the region?**

The core connectivity issues for businesses operating in Huntingdonshire include an uncongested reliable transport network which enables just in time delivery in terms of supply and dispatch. Fast reliable internet is especially important for all businesses, but is currently lacking in rural areas and can limit flexible working patterns. Straightforward connections to the strategic rail or road network are also essential.

14. **What are the key performance measures for the Transport System from a business perspective?**

Time is money. There is a need to minimise delays; There are also concerns around mileage costs for congested roads. Goods need to be delivered on time and businesses need to be able to attract staff – both of which rely on a healthy network, along with a choice of transport modes.

15. **What measures should the overarching Transport Strategy include in order to enable the potential that exists within the four Grand Challenges of the Industrial Strategy to be realised?**

The key measure will be the increase in GVA across the patch.

16. **To what extent is investment in digital infrastructure more significant and/or urgent than physical infrastructure?**

The Council approves of the ambition to provide faster, more reliable digital connectivity, with digital infrastructure such as fibre ducting delivered alongside transport infrastructure where appropriate. Faster and more reliable digital infrastructure is a key component to achieving alternative working behaviours such as home working and video conferencing which can decrease the need to travel and contribute towards reducing congestion on our roads. Another key area of investigation with regard to digital infrastructure is the potential cost of internet and data packages for low income households and small businesses; it is recommended that further work is conducted in this area to understand the implications of achieving a comprehensive and accessible digital infrastructure network.

17. **How will the way we access goods and services continue to change, and what are the key issues that need to be addressed in the Transport Strategy?**

As we move to a more digital platform we need to ensure transport corridors actively incorporate the ability to integrate and update digital platforms.

18. **What freight and logistics services are important for people and businesses? For example, accessing goods (via delivery or in person); a thriving high street; access to health, education and leisure facilities?**

All of the above are equally important to all sectors of the community. Without a transport network that can accommodate all of the above we will fail to deliver inclusive communities.

19. **Just in time and last minute operations are affecting the way people and businesses access goods and services. How should this growing trend affect the way we plan transport now, and in the future?**

Planning for future developments in transport needs to be a more collaborative process, not just within the public private sectors but within the education sector to understand what technologies are emerging and therefore future trends.

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20. Is the approach to investment the right one? If not, why not?

The Council agrees with the approach to investment (pages 88-99) in terms of using evidence to identify investment programmes. However, there is little else to comment on in this section as there is no real indication of how the investment programme will be decided upon. It is advised that this is clarified in the draft Transport Strategy.

An integrated approach to investment and delivery from a regional, local and Combined Authority perspective will be essential and it is recommended that any project that span all three areas are discussed and assessed across agencies to ensure a joined up approach.

The Council is supportive of the intention to explore whether the current level of funding available to local partners to support the development of infrastructure proposals is sufficient and look forward to the findings.

21. Is the approach to delivery the right one? If not, why not?

The Council agrees that many of the ambitions set out within the FfE will be dependent on the commitment and ambition of partners. Decisions on preferred approaches to solutions will most definitely require the support and oversight of the bodies that are responsible for their successful delivery including: partner Local Authorities, Highways England, Network Rail, East West Railway Company, and the bus and train operators, amongst others. An integrated approach to investment and delivery from a regional, local and Combined Authority perspective will be essential and it is recommended that projects that span all three areas are discussed and assessed across agencies to ensure a joined up approach.

It is also agreed that delivery partners (the companies providing professional services) will provide an invaluable source of knowledge and experience in the development, design and implementation of investment in strategic infrastructure and services. Involving these partners in the development of an investment programme will ensure that project delivery is feasible and achievable.

Final Thoughts:

It is considered that the questions, as framed are rather ambiguous. It would have been for helpful to have fewer, more focussed questions.