

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Responses

Draft Transport Strategy: Vision and Principles

Vision

To realise sustainable growth opportunities and improve the quality of life and wellbeing for Heartland residents and businesses, by harnessing the Heartland's globally renowned centres of innovation to unlock a world class, de-carbonised transport system.

Principles

- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
- Improve quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all, which emphasises sustainable and active travel
- Support the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
- Ensure the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways

1. To what extent do you support or oppose our vision?

- Strongly support Support Neither support nor oppose Oppose
 Strongly oppose I'm not sure

2. To what extent do you support or oppose each of our principles?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	I'm not sure
Achieve net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all, which emphasises sustainable and active travel	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support the regional economy by connecting	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

people and businesses to markets and opportunities

Ensure the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways

3. Please provide any further comments you have about the vision and principles.
Comments:

The vision is appropriately balanced to achieve net-zero carbon by 2050, provides an inclusive transport system accessible to all, supporting the economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities, and enabling the efficient movement of people and goods. It is welcomed that the strategy acknowledges the continued role of locally based Transport Strategies, such as the Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan which utilises local knowledge of the area.

HDC welcomes the aim within the vision of 'Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel'. In particular Policy 27, which states that '*We will work with partners to develop tailored solutions for our smaller market towns and rural areas that improve local connectivity, including exploring options for centres of mobility*'.

Notwithstanding the above, HDC is somewhat concerned that the text and policies presented misses an opportunity. The text is very vague and does not address the issue of accessibility to public transport in terms of affordability and service provision. See also the response to question 8, below.

4. To what extent do you support or oppose investment in the following areas?

Strongly support **Support** **Neither support or oppose** **Oppose** **Strongly oppose** **I'm not sure**

Digital infrastructure both fixed (e.g. broadband) and mobile (e.g.

4G/5G) to enable business growth, improve access for residents to services and opportunities, in ways that also reduce the need to travel (where appropriate)

Our existing infrastructure assets to improve its resilience and connectivity, thereby improving business productivity and supporting our communities

Repurposing existing infrastructure and services, particularly within larger urban areas to actively encourage active travel modes and user-centred services, and reduce reliance on the private car

Greening travel routes to encourage walking or cycling and therefore improve both physical and mental health, whilst at the same time



acting as green corridors for wildlife

New infrastructure capacity and capability to enable delivery of planned economic and housing growth

Improved connectivity for rural communities to enable small market towns to support their rural hinterlands

Draft Transport Strategy: Policies

Policies in the strategy are divided into four themes. These are:

- a transport system for the future
- transforming journeys
- connecting people with opportunities
- making the Heartland Work for the UK

5. To what extent do you support or oppose the policies set out in the following themes?

Strongly support **Support** **Neither support nor oppose** **Oppose** **Strongly oppose** **I'm not sure**

A Transport System for the Future - policies targeted towards decarbonising the transport system and enable more people to travel using sustainable modes

Transforming Journeys -

policies to transform the way people travel through the region, including east to west, and north to south

Connecting People with Opportunities - policies for improving local connectivity across the region

Making the Heartland Work for the UK - policies aimed at improving the way people and goods travel through the region, for example to airports, or as part of the freight and logistics sector

6. Please provide any further comments you have about the Draft Transport Strategy's policies.
Comments

HDC supports the four themes set out in the strategy. These are high level and will, if secured through investment and implementation, enable significant transformation of transport networks within the region.

HDC supports the decarbonisation of the transport network by 2050. In particular, the two routes to decarbonisation of the network, as set out on page 31, through wholesale measures to create a highly connected transport system and enabling a policy-led behavioural shift where levers are applied to reduce the number of car trips. Securing choice for communities of bus, train and active travel modes is not easily accessible for rural communities and we look forward to engaging with EEH and its partners in securing realistic and deliverable solutions to this challenge for our rural communities. Value for money in the typical sense may not always result in deliverable solutions for rural communities with lower populations and further distances to travel and solutions will need to address this if an equitable transport network is to be the end result. Although, the desired output would be long-term

value to communities and the economy through increased economic opportunities and access to leisure, culture and retail.

The provision of East-West Rail is strongly supported by HDC to improve east-west connectivity. HDC is committed to the delivery of an interchange at Sandy / St Neots and is working with the partners to support this. This will support housing growth and the economy if it is planned to include freight capabilities and delivery greater opportunities for digital connectivity.

HDC welcomes the identification of places of Strategic Importance within the district. It supports the inclusion of Huntingdon, Alconbury and St Neots as Areas of Significant Change. Similarly, we are pleased to see that Huntingdon and Alconbury Weald are included as an Area of Economic Opportunity. Please note that the document should be made clearer by referring to Alconbury Weald rather than Alconbury, as these are two separate settlements and distinctly different. We would also suggest that Godmanchester is not included at this time as it lies within the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area

Policies that prioritise investment in the development of public transport-based solutions, decarbonisation, and support economic growth, deliver digitally enabled corridors and secure in the Strategic Road Network and Major Road Network, where appropriate, are supported.

Policy 24, which includes support for CAM, is welcomed. This scheme will deliver significant benefits to Huntingdonshire.

Page 45 refers to *'Measures to encourage active travel and co-ordination with onward local bus services are particularly important, both to residential areas and areas of economic activity within the surrounding urban area. Where possible, this should be supported by investment that repurposes the existing infrastructure in favour of such measures.'* HDC supports such measures and is keen to build connectivity for active modes. As a rural area this is a different challenge and will require ambition and investment. Any support this Strategy provides to this is welcomed.

HDC is very supportive of policy 27, which addresses rural connectivity. It acknowledges the role towns have in supporting their rural hinterlands, importance of delivering digital connectivity, encourages low carbon modes of travel, and introduces the concept of 'mobility hubs'. These types of measures are crucial to ensuring rural connectivity can be achieved and are very much welcomed. HDC is keen to see set out in the DTS how this will be delivered. It does not address the issue of accessibility to public transport in terms of income and service provision, which needs to form part of the implementation plan.

St Neots is the largest Market Town in the District of Huntingdonshire and lies within the Cam-Ox corridor. A rail connection to Cambridge would unlock significant economic and housing opportunities and therefore the Council strongly supports the inclusion of a North-South / East-West rail interchange with the East Coast Main Line. We would welcome the opportunity to realise the potential of rail freight investment here also.

The need to continue to support road freight is realistic and supported. Any improvements relating to the A14 and A1 at Huntingdon are supported.

Draft Transport Strategy: Implementation and delivery pipelines

These chapters (nine and ten) set out how we plan to implement and deliver the Transport Strategy. The investment pipeline table can be found on pages 57-59 of the Draft Transport Strategy and in map form on pages 60-63.

7. To what extent do you support or oppose the implementation and delivery approach we've outlined?

- Strongly support Support Neither support nor oppose Oppose
 Strongly oppose I'm not sure

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the investment pipeline reflects the region's connectivity priorities?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Oppose
 Strongly oppose I'm not sure

9. Please provide any further comments you have about implementation and the investment pipeline.

Comments

As a strategic plan, the DTS presents EEH's planned 'whole system' approach covering strategic influence, co-ordination, accelerated delivery. This is supported and does not seek to duplicate or replace local Transport Plans. The proposed Connectivity Studies are a sensible approach to implementation, providing the framework for delivery. As stated above, HDC is concerned that it is unclear how its area fits into these studies due to the mapping and unclear references to the geographical areas covered. The district is well connected and the opportunities to build on this to the benefit of wider region must not be overlooked.

The District Council would value continued involvement in the development of further site, or infrastructure specific, Transport Delivery Plans especially those focussing on areas which involve or are in proximity to Huntingdonshire District Council's area. These include but are not limited to: The Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro Cambridge to Cambourne and St Neots route; the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and dualling of the A428, delivery of a new railway corridor between Bedford and Cambridge, Alconbury Weald transport and infrastructure improvements; A1 and A141 capacity enhancements, public transport enhancements, Wyton Airfield access, transport accessibility to St Ives and St Neots.

It is noted that the Investment Strategy will seek to provide a pipeline of co-ordinated proposals, having worked with infrastructure providers. HDC supports having a 5-year pipeline that is reviewed on a cyclical basis. HDC also supports the principle of Area/Corridor Studies (connectivity studies). From the mapping provided it is unclear how the studies relate to Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire lies within key economic corridors and there are a number of transport proposals under consideration and

these should be considered as part of any investment strategy. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the DTS is referring to Alconbury or Alconbury Weald, which are separate settlements.

Overall at this stage the Investment Strategy is unclear; for example, it states that *'This strategy provides clarity on where investment in strategic infrastructure and services is required to support the work of local authorities and growth boards as they look to plan and deliver planned growth in the longer term'*, yet it does not provide this detail.

HDC is concerned that the Infrastructure Strategy does not address the issue of who will be responsible for acquiring the investment. For it to be a useful tool for Local Authorities, it would be preferable that these investments were more specifically addressed somewhere (maybe in an appendix) identifying key delivery partners, potential costs, and delivery timelines so it can be used by LAs to inform their Infrastructure Viability Studies and Infrastructure Delivery Plans at district level.

It is unclear how rural areas within Huntingdonshire will benefit from investment based upon the Investment Strategy approach set out. It is considered that the strategy is unlikely to provide significant benefits for residents and businesses located away from key infrastructure measures such as East-West Rail and local measures are more likely to be necessary in order to ensure these areas receive investment to secure the transport connectivity improvements set out in the DTS.

HDC supports the investment strategy pipeline, which seeks to ensure that funding is available for key projects affecting Huntingdonshire including:

- Delivery of East West Rail – Central Section.
- A strategic interchange with traditional main-lines at Sandy/St Neots area – with East Coast Main Line.
- The CAM mass transit system.
- Delivery of A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements
- Delivering a long-term solution to the challenges of the A1 (East of England) corridor.
- Delivery of a high-quality cycleway (the Varsity Way) to form the backbone of a strategic cycleway across the region.

We are, however, concerned that investment needed to be able to achieve the desired 'step change in connectivity', is seemingly lacking. This is particularly so for rural areas, as per Policy 27 (page 47) which states *'We will work with partners to develop tailored solutions for our smaller market towns and rural areas that improve local connectivity, including exploring options for centres of mobility.'* As stated, HDC would like to see a clearer plan to invest in rural areas and more detail on the approach to investment in rural areas, including consideration of affordability challenges in some of our more rural areas, such as Ramsey, which is one of the four market towns in Huntingdonshire and has a rural hinterland that it serves.

Draft Transport Strategy: Overall view

10. Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the Draft Transport Strategy?

- Strongly support Support Neither support nor oppose Oppose
 Strongly oppose I'm not sure

11. Please provide any further comments you have about the Draft Transport Strategy

Comments

HDC supports the DTS in principle subject to the broader comments in this response.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

An independent *Integrated Sustainability Appraisal* (ISA) has been produced to accompany the Draft Transport Strategy. It assesses potential sustainability impacts of the Draft Transport Strategy's policies, and ensures sustainability aspects have been incorporated throughout.

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is a robust assessment of the Draft Transport Strategy?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree
 Strongly disagree I'm not sure

13. Please provide any further comments you have about the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.

Comments

It is welcomed that the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and as a result the Draft Transport Strategy addresses the issues of deprivation and rural connectivity however the Council believes that this should be comprehensively addressed, in terms of income deprivation in rural areas and how this and the more varied work patterns as a result of more limited job opportunities affects access to and use of the public transport network.

Currently the frequency, reliability and availability of public transport in rural areas are the main influencing factors in the choice of travel modes. Public transport in rural areas also cannot accommodate the needs of certain business types, 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.

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 this is addressed in order to understand the implications of achieving a comprehensive and accessible digital infrastructure network.

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 in section 5.4 of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal. In addition, there is no mention as to why this corridor has been excluded as a key transport corridor. However, if this corridor is covered in the "North Northamptonshire" (Northampton - Wellingborough -- Huntingdon/Alconbury) Transport Corridor, greater clarity should be provided to address this.

We believe reference to the "North Northamptonshire" (Northampton - Wellingborough -- Huntingdon/Alconbury) Transport Corridor, should read Alconbury Weald.

Statutory status

We have produced a document setting out plans for England's Economic Heartland to become a statutory body – the *Proposal to Establish a Statutory Sub-national Transport Body* document

14. To what extent do you support or oppose the approach set out in the Proposal to Establish a Statutory Sub-national Transport Body?

- Strongly support Support Neither support nor oppose Oppose
 Strongly oppose I'm not sure

15. Please provide any further comments you have about the Proposal to Establish a Statutory Sub-national Transport Body
Comments

Huntingdonshire falls within the remit of both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council for delivery of transport related matters. The addition of a further tier of policy making could result in competing interests and result in delays in delivery. As a consequence, it could be considered to be a risk to actual delivery. However, the provision of an overarching strategy that encompasses the interests of all partners is very welcome and will provide a shared vision that all levels of local government for the area can embrace.

About you

16. I am responding to this consultation as.....

- (Required) An individual resident An official representative of a business, local authority or other organisation An elected member or MP