



# Strategic Transport Forum

17<sup>th</sup> May 2019

## Agenda Item Number 4 – First Mile Last Mile

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting:**

- a) Discuss and agree the principles for a user-centred transport system which is complemented by improvements to the 'first and last mile' element of journeys within the Heartland**
- b) Discuss what additional outcomes should be sought from improvements to urban and rural mobility in the Heartland**

### **1. First/Last Mile Study: Overview**

- 1.1. The scale of transformative growth in the Heartland provides a once in a generation opportunity to embed internationally recognised, first/last mile connectivity principles into the decision making frameworks for investment in infrastructure and services.
- 1.2. The region's ambitions to double or triple the economy, deliver 'clean growth' through environmental net gain and pursue a zero carbon transport network will not be achieved through a 'business as usual' approach to transport connectivity. A high quality, multimodal first/last mile offer that enables choice is going to be fundamental in leveraging the change required to make our region compete on a global stage.
- 1.3. New forms of technology, new mobility models, and advances in data require a strategic approach to their planning and delivery. England's Economic Heartland has been charged with championing the regions connectivity aspirations, and in doing so, creating a network of accessible, inclusive places which connects communities to amenities through friction free transport.
- 1.4. A range of sustainable connectivity improvements along key corridors will transform travel patterns and deliver transformational levels of growth by expanding access to labour markets for business and increasing opportunities for our people. Journeys by public transport should 'break the mould' of traditional, radial, north south routes, and consider how orbital, east-west connections can rebalance economies and provide viable alternatives to motorised transport.
- 1.5. Our people require transport choices that are an attractive and viable means of assuring end-end access to a range of travel choices. Part of the way we will achieve this is through a strategic approach to the 'first-last mile' element of daily journeys.

- 1.6. 'First-mile last-mile' is typically used to describe the beginning or end of an individual journey to or from a transportation hub or service to the final destination. Within the Heartland, the definition of first-mile and last-mile represents a wider choice of both traditional and emerging transport models that enable access to opportunities and needs. The approach that the Strategic Transport Forum determines is right for 'First-mile last-mile' policy within the Heartland provides the fundamental baseline for the 'Connecting People' chapter in the EEH Transport Strategy going forward.
- 1.7. Connecting people and places at a regional level must consider the role a Sub-national Transport Body should, and can play in enabling choice in the way our residents access a range of services. First/last mile connections provide a vital link for those living, working, playing and creating prosperity within the Heartland.
- 1.8. To achieve this, it is essential that England's Economic Heartland (EEH) develops a richer understanding of the impact personal behaviour, society and lifestyle has on the perception of transport and willingness to access alternative modes. Equally, recognising the influence economics, typography, housing markets and commercial delivery models has on mode shift is also an essential requirement.
- 1.9. Regionally, the Heartland is on the cusp of a mobility renaissance. Connected and autonomous vehicles may soon open new travel opportunities for groups that have traditionally been unable to access transport and younger people less likely to hold a driving license than ever before. Nationally, the banning of new petrol and diesel cars/vans by 2040, at the earliest, and ambitions set out in the government's Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy reaffirms Whitehall's commitment to reduce the social, environmental and economic risks of a transport system that fails to keep pace with the level of change required.
- 1.10. The Strategic Transport Forum, in its role shaping the infrastructure needs of the region, recognises the way improvements to digital and transport connectivity is essential to unlock the attitudinal step-change we have seen in people's propensity to move around by cleaner forms of transport.
- 1.11. As a result, the EEH Business Unit has commissioned a study to analyse and recommend the role the STB should play, working with its partners, to unlock some of the strategic opportunities associated with improved first/last mile master planning. To achieve this, it will review the existing movement and place based characteristics within the Heartland and their conduciveness to different models of first/last mile solutions.
- 1.12. The project is beginning to analyse the different types of place in the Heartland and is using case study examples to define these based on movements, personal behaviour, size of population and economic potential. This will help develop a toolkit of first/last mile interventions that we can apply which respond to micro and macro first mile last mile challenges and opportunities based on an international review of what works best elsewhere.

## **2. First Mile Last Mile Connectivity in the Heartland**

- 2.1. The Heartland is a socially, economically and spatially diverse region, necessitating a detailed understanding of the diversity of place, movement patterns and the people who live work and play in the region. The urban form and individual's behavioural preferences have a substantial influence on movement patterns and modal choices. In response, a tailored approach is required to suit the patchwork of specific combinations of people and places.



- 2.2. For example, Primary Urban Areas, including Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford are sufficiently large in scale, and function to enable a proportion of residents to live, work, shop and play within the urban area. High levels of self-containment result in opportunities for local trips to be undertaken by a range of First and Last Mile mobility options. Primary Urban Areas also typically attract high levels of inbound travel from their surrounding sub-region due to their function as regional centres of retail, employment, healthcare and leisure resulting in opportunities for a range of Last Mile mobility solutions. Conversely, many other places in the Heartland do not share this level of service.
- 2.3. When compared with the rest of the United Kingdom, Heartland residents travel further to work than the national average, with a higher number of journeys made by car or van. More of the regions residents own cars than the national average despite over 80% of car and van drivers traveling to work within the region they live. The juxtaposition of high car trips for journeys within the region is indicative of the regions predominantly polycentric geography and spatial typography, for which investment in public transport is critical to achieving economic, health, social and environmental improvements.
- 2.4. The Government's Urban Mobility Strategy highlights the challenges left by a legacy of many UK towns and cities designed principally around the growth of affordable cities. These challenges have led to costs of circa £27 billion a year on deaths and health problems imposed by lack of physical activity and exposure to air pollution.
- 2.5. With access to international best practice, including high quality design standards in spatial form, urban design, location and density, England's Economic Heartland can create the right infrastructure templates based on local need that will provide people with choice to make smarter decisions.
- 2.6. A high quality, more frequent public transport network could be a catalyst in mirroring the attitudinal change we have seen in response to climate change and single use plastic. Much like national policy, England's Economic Heartland must reflect quickly on what outcomes it would like to see delivered to unlock its economic potential and deliver an aspiration of a zero carbon transport network that is truly accessible.

### **3. England's Economic Heartland's Connectivity Principles**

- 3.1. To date, the Forum has played a significant role in leading England's Economic Heartland's four 'connectivity' strands developed under our overarching aim of connecting people and places with opportunities and services.
- 3.2. The meeting will recall previous discussions on three other core elements of the Outline Transport Strategy. These have included:
  - **Connecting Places:** Coordinating delivery of investment in strategic corridors will support the ambition to deliver transformational levels of growth and access to labour markets for businesses; increasing the opportunities open to people.
  - **Connecting Opportunities:** The need for transport interventions to connect business clusters with skills, creating the optimum conditions to attract inward investment and drive innovation to ensure the Heartland's economic potential is realised on a global stage.
  - **Connecting Services:** The need to connect people and businesses with goods and services, planning for a physical and digital network that strengthens the supply chain and provides smooth access to goods, services and amenities – both now and in the future.



- 3.3. In this guise, it is timely for the Forum to also be considering England's Economic Heartland's principles for 'Connecting People' and in doing so, building the case for investment and grounding our understanding of what the region needs from the transport system, to be taken forward in the Transport Strategy. The Outline Transport Strategy, to be published in July 2019, sets out some of the key principles for 'first-mile last-mile' transport options in the Heartland. These will be developed, based on evidence gathered, during the forthcoming months, in order to inform and shape the final transport strategy in 2020.
- 3.4. The principles for Connecting People, of which first-last mile is one element, are referred to below:
- The regions transport system should balance the need **to shape a transport system which looks to the future**, owing to the rise in travel demand, new business models and cultural trends, with the need to address existing regulatory, franchising and connectivity challenges the region faces today.
  - The Heartland's transport system must be **user-centred and offer frictionless travel across the region**. A user-centred transport system should be about travel choice for the user. Easy access to information and integration of services will reduce the propensity for users to opt for the 'default' and sometimes, the only option of travelling by car.
  - Improving end-to-end journeys through a detailed study on **'first mile, last mile' connectivity**. A joined up approach that focuses on reliability and quality will complement a growing emphasis amongst the region's population to seek access to solutions that meets their mobility needs.
  - **High quality transport hubs** should encourage long distance trips onto sustainable, mass-transit rail and road-based modes. England's Economic Heartland should support the provision of accessible transport hubs at strategic locations that link people and communities to each other along our major corridors.
  - **Work with Government, national agencies and third sector organisations** to ensure regulatory framework enables innovation in mobility that helps meets the needs of our communities and businesses. It is essential that the provision and wide-scale adoption of shared travel modes and solutions that avoid the need for traditional car ownership models.
  - **Align and integrate planning** for the transport system with land use, economic and design policies across the region.
  - Achieve **a genuinely inclusive and accessible transport system** that removes physical, cultural and/or digital barriers to transport. In particular, focus will be given to ensuring that our approach empowers end users with a range of different needs to realise their full potential.
  - Continue to build on initiatives already underway with the region that are being led by operators as well as local authorities to enable seamless journeys between public transport journeys. This includes developing a detail proposal for **Integrated Ticketing** and pay-as-you-go pricing options for the journeys end users are choosing to take.
- 3.5. The Forum is invited to consider and comment on these principles ahead of publishing its Outline Transport Strategy in July 2019.

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**May 2019**



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