

Strategic Transport Forum 15th December 2017

Agenda Item 6: Draft Business Plan

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) Seek clarification from the Department for Transport in respect of future core funding for the work of the Strategic Transport Forum.
- b) Consider and provide comments on the draft 3-year Business Plan (Annex 1).
- c) Request that the Programme Director present an updated 3-year Business Plan to the Forum on 26th January for its approval.

1. Background

- 1.1. The 2017/18 work programme is co-funded through contributions from the Strategic Alliance partners (Local Transport Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships) and revenue funding from Government (channelled through the Department for Transport (DfT)).
- 1.2. The funding available for 2017/18 has enabled the work programme to be expanded in comparison with previous years. This has enabled the core programme team to be strengthened and technical work to be commissioned.
- 1.3. The final report of the National Infrastructure Commission (also considered on this agenda) acknowledges the added value that the Forum's work programme has brought. It goes on to advise both local and national government to capitalise on the hard work done to establish this Forum and on the momentum that has been built behind its current work programme.
- 1.4. As noted elsewhere on this agenda, the revised Terms of Reference explicitly addresses the Commission's advice about the importance of strengthening the linkages with the 'growth boards' across the arc.
- 1.5. What is clear – from both the Commission's final report and the Government's initial response - is that realising the economic potential of the arc is a national priority. There is a clear sense of urgency about the need to build on the momentum already generated, backed by commitments to invest in infrastructure, driven forward by effective strategic leadership.

2. A 3-year Business Plan

- 2.1. The 2017/2018 work programme has laid strong foundations. The core programme team has been able to secure a stronger voice in shaping strategic policy at the national level and in influencing proposals within national investment programmes.
- 2.2. Moving forward, the commitment to develop the detail of the overarching Transport Strategy and a proposal to establish a Sub-national Transport Body

represent a further step change in the level of activity. It also requires an expanded programme of commissioned work in order to ensure a robust, evidence based approach.

2.3. On that basis a draft 3-year Business Plan has been prepared (Annex 1): in overall terms the approach underpinning the Business Plan is:

2018/19 Continue to develop the evidence base: develop future scenarios; prepare and publish a draft overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy.

Develop an approach to the prioritisation of infrastructure and service improvements that is linked to economic and housing growth opportunities.

Work with the delivery partners to develop new mechanisms that improve the delivery of infrastructure improvements.

Develop and consult on the proposal to establish a Sub-national Transport Body.

2019/20 Revise the draft overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy in light of comments received, prepare and publish final Transport (Connectivity) Strategy.

Identify a prioritised pipeline of infrastructure and service improvements that are required in order to deliver the overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy.

Establish the delivery framework to be used in delivering the pipeline of improvements.

Submit the proposal to establish the Sub-national Transport Body and begin putting in place the organisational structures required to enable the Body to be established.

2020/21 Establishment of the Sub-national Transport Body.

Implementation of the overarching Transport (Connectivity) Strategy.

2.4. In this way the Business Plan will deliver:

- The preparation and publication of an overarching Transport Strategy – founded on a consistent evidence base but which is aspirational in terms of its strategic vision.
- The identification of a prioritised pipeline of investment requirements (both in infrastructure and services) that are required in order to deliver that Strategy – and through which investment programmes can be aligned.

2.5. The work programme set out in the Business Plan will see the overarching Transport Strategy (and its associated infrastructure pipeline) agreed by the end of 2019/2020: in their final report the National Infrastructure Commission identified the need to have an infrastructure pipeline identified by April 2020.

2.6. The draft 3-year Business Plan was discussed with the Strategic Transport Officers Group at its meeting on 14th November.

- 2.7. There is a need to review the 3-year Business Plan further to take account the Government's Initial Response to the final report of the National Infrastructure Commission.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. The Forum is invited to consider and comment on the draft 3-year Business Plan as presented in this paper.
- 3.2. In parallel the Programme Director is in an on-going discussion with the DfT in respect of future funding for the Forum's activities.
- 3.3. The 2017 Budget announced that the Government is commissioning England's Economic Heartland to undertake a bespoke piece of work in parallel with the work on the 'expressway'. This work – the 'connectivity study' will be funded by the DfT.
- 3.4. The Strategic Transport Forum has begun the process of developing a common evidence base that can be used to inform the identification of strategic transport investments moving forward. The 3-year Business Plan identifies how the Forum will build upon this initial work to develop a strategic scenario modelling capability.
- 3.5. The ability of the Forum to deliver the work programme set out in the draft 3-year Business Plan is dependent upon the level of funding available. Whilst the Strategic Alliance partners have agreed in principle to continue to provide a financial contribution towards the Forum's work programme, this has to be viewed in the context of continued pressure on budgets generally for individual partners.
- 3.6. Given the significance to the UK economy of ensuring the economic potential across the Heartland (and given the context provided by the funding agreements with other sub-national areas) the Forum needs to press Government for a more appropriate level of core funding (channelled through the DfT).

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. A final version of the Business Plan – one which can take account of the core funding available from DfT – will be presented to the Forum at its meeting on 26th January 2018 (this will be the first meeting of the Forum under its revised Terms of Reference).
- 4.2. The programme team will continue to work closely with the DfT to press the need for additional funding to deliver the Forum's Business Plan and negotiate their vital contribution for the next 3 years of work.

Martin Tugwell
Programme Director

December 2017

Annex 1

Draft Business Plan 2018-2021

The following page provides a programme overview of the draft Business Plan (*better printed on A3*).

Please see separate document for further detail (*Strategic Transport Forum 151217 - Draft Business Plan 2018-21*).

