

Strategic Transport Forum

20th January 2017

Agenda Item 7: Sub-national Transport Body

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting endorse the proposal set out in this paper for developing the detailed proposal for a Sub-national Transport Body.

1. Context

- 1.1. The leaders of England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance have set out their commitment to develop a proposal to establish a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.
- 1.2. The recent National Infrastructure Commission Interim Report into the Cambridge – Oxford Corridor identified the need for strategic transport infrastructure to be planned and managed at a strategic (whole corridor) level.
- 1.3. Now is an appropriate moment in time to take forward more detailed work on developing thoughts on the governance and working arrangements required for a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.
- 1.4. The National Infrastructure Commission's Interim Report identified the need to explore the working arrangements and governance necessary to develop an integrated strategic plan for infrastructure, housing and jobs across the Heartland corridor.
- 1.5. Taking the two pieces of work forward in parallel will ensure that the potential linkages and inter-relationships between a statutory strategic transport body and broader working on strategic planning are considered as an integral part of the National Infrastructure Commission's final report to Government.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. It is proposed that the Transport Forum take forward the work in a series of stages. In so doing the work will look to draw upon the experience of other emerging sub-national partnerships.

Stage 1

- 2.2. An initial piece of advice will be commissioned that seeks to set out more detail the issues that the Strategic Alliance will need to consider as it develops its proposal. This will include, inter alia:
 - What a formally constituted Sub-national Transport Body is, the different features of different options available.
 - The benefits of establishing a Sub-national Transport Body (in particular its role in supporting the delivery of planned growth across the Heartland area)

- The potential powers/responsibilities available to an Sub-national Transport Body, both in relation to transport policy generally and also in relation to specific modes
- Consideration of how the Sub-national Transport Body could interact with both local and central Government bodies and agencies
- The identification of any particular challenges that need more detailed consideration, including potentially issues relating to the proposed geography and membership of a Sub-national Transport Body
- Initial consideration of what might be included within the Transport Strategy that the Sub-national Transport Body is required to prepare and adopt
- Potential governance options for establishing a Sub-national Transport Body
- Potential financial arrangements required for establishing a Sub-national Transport Body

2.3. The output from this stage of the work programme would be reported back to the next meeting of the Strategic Transport Forum.

Stage 2

2.4. Following consideration of the output from Stage 1 the Strategic Transport Forum would be in a position to begin a wider engagement with stakeholders across the Heartland area, as well as adjoining local transport authorities (otherwise known as 'appropriate authorities').

2.5. The format of this engagement is to be determined but is likely to take the form of a series of workshop events and/or meetings that enable an informed discussion to take place.

Stage 3

2.6. Subject the outcome of the wider engagement with stakeholders, the next stage would be to develop a draft proposal for establishing a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.

2.7. This would set out in detail of the proposal, including the proposed membership, functions, interaction with other local and central Government bodies and agencies, as well as proposed governance and financial arrangements.

2.8. A round of consultation on the draft proposal would take place providing the opportunity for comment and amendment in the light of comments received.

Engagement with the Department for Transport and Other Stakeholders

2.9. It is envisaged that there will be on-going close working with officials from the Department for Transport throughout the process. Indications are that the DfT are keen to engage early with potential Sub-national Transport Bodies to ensure good working relationships are established from the start and to ensure that the process is managed efficiently and effectively.

- 2.10. In a similar vein, on-going close working with officials from Network Rail and Highways England will be important as work on developing the proposal for a statutory Sub-national Transport Body is taken forward.

Timescale

- 2.11. It is proposed that Stage 1 is commissioned initially, with a view to having the output presented to the next meeting of the Strategic Transport Forum, at which point a detailed programme of activity covering Stages 2 and 3 will be presented for consideration and approval.

Other Considerations

- 2.12. Concurrent with the work on developing the proposal for establishing a statutory Sub-national Transport Body, it is important that the Strategic Transport Forum continue to take forward its work on developing a long-term Transport Strategy for the Heartland area.

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