

## **Strategic Transport Leaders Board**

30 September 2022

### **Agenda Item 8 - Business Unit Update**

#### *Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting:**

- a) Approves EEH's draft response to Transport for the South East's consultation on their Strategic Investment Pipeline**
- b) Notes two technical level responses, submitted by the Managing Director:**
  - **DfT Circular 02/13; and**
  - **request for a meeting regarding the ULEZ extension**
- c) Notes the business unit update on:**
  - **Decarbonisation Playbook**
  - **Active Travel Strategy Phase 2**
  - **Ox-Cam Road Study**
  - **Future of Roads Study**

#### **Consultation Responses**

##### **1. Transport for the South East's Strategic Investment Pipeline consultation**

- 1.1. Transport for the South East (TfSE) is currently consulting on their Strategic Investment Pipeline (SIP).
- 1.2. The SIP is the culmination of technical work to determine the interventions included as their regional priorities.
- 1.3. TfSE borders the EEH region and therefore the consultation is of interest in terms of cross border interventions and interventions which would impact on the EEH region.
- 1.4. TfSE's draft SIP is set out in full on their website. The most pertinent areas of interest for EEH is in the 'Thames Wessex package', which includes (but is not limited to);
  - Western Rail Link to Heathrow
  - Improvements to bus access to Heathrow
  - A404 Bisham Junction improvements
  - A34 junction and safety improvements
- 1.5. The draft consultation response can be found in Annex 1.
- 1.6. The SIP is at a strategic level, with no scheme specific details included, EEH's draft response therefore reflects the high-level nature of the investment plan.

1.7. The deadline for the consultation was 12<sup>th</sup> September. In agreement with TfSE, EEH has provided a draft response, pending full consideration and approval by the Strategic Transport Leadership Board on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

## **2. 02/2013 Strategic Road Network and Delivery of Sustainable Development**

- 2.1. The government is proposing to make a number of changes to the Department for Transport (DfT)'s circular 02/2013: Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development. A technical response has been submitted by the Managing Director (attached at Annex 2).
- 2.2. The majority of proposed changes in the document relate to policy on National Highways' (NH) engagement in plan-making and decision-taking, responding to the government's commitments in the transport decarbonisation plan as well as planning case law.
- 2.3. EEH's response focuses on proposed changes that are most likely to impact the region. These include: needing greater clarity over new requirements for HGV roadside facilities; the principle against new connections to high-speed roads, notably the strategic road network and EV charging requirements.
- 2.4. EEH has engaged with transport officers in developing our response. While some partners see the changes as a welcome update that reflects changes in approach to achieving more sustainable development, others have highlighted concern and confusion over the responsibility for assessing the need for HGV facilities and future EV charging facilities.
- 2.5. EEH's response therefore seeks further clarity on these points, which we expect to take forward through discussions with DfT.

## **3. Transport for London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) proposed expansion**

- 3.1. Transport for London have recently consulted on the expansion of the current London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from 29 August 2023 from the north south circular to cover 96% of the GLA area.
- 3.2. EEH borders the proposed extension of the London ULEZ in both Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire and there are likely to be some impact in these areas as a result of the extension. EEH has requested a meeting with TfL to discuss the potential impact of the ULEZ extension in our region and this letter is included at Annex 3.
- 3.3. The main concerns being raised is around the impact of the scheme on residents, business and key workers such as nurses and care workers, required to make home visits in the border areas, as the extension of the Zone will introduce a £12.50 daily charge for cars, motorcycles, vans and other specialised vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight) which do not meet emission standards and concern of increased traffic of vehicles avoiding the zone.
- 3.4. HGVs, buses, and coaches will not be affected any more than the current LEZ impacts. Petrol larger vans and minibuses will be required to meet Euro 4 for NOx and PM in the extended ULEZ area while diesel larger vans and minibuses will be required to meet Euro 6 for NOx and PM. This represents an uplift from the current Euro 3 standard in the LEZ.
- 3.5. In order to ensure EEH and local partners' interests are considered from the outset, the Managing Director has asked TfL for ongoing and direct engagement about TfL's plans.

### **Other items**

#### **4. Decarbonisation Playbook**

- 4.1. The Decarbonisation Playbook project, which EEH are collaborating on with Midlands Connect is well underway and the phase one project report has been completed. The report identified a significant gap in the evidence base that will be used to underpin the work. Consequently, the project team, consultants and DfT are looking at undertaking modelling to address this. There will likely be some delay to the program (circa 3 weeks) however, it is still on track to be launched in line with DfT LTP update.



4.2. In addition to this work the in-year funded decarbonisation project work is progressing. Though reliant on the outcome of the “playbook” there are several aspects that are able to be delivered independently. Primarily, the standardisation of the carbon baseline and BAU net zero trajectories across the STB regions. We aim to release beta version(s) of element of the project as and when they are completed to support LTAs in policy development. LTAs will be invited to receive an update on the project and how it will integrate with the DfT’s LTP update.

## **5. Active Travel Strategy**

- 5.1. A key action point in EEH’s transport strategy is championing investment in active travel and shared transport solutions to improve local connectivity.
- 5.2. In September 2021, the DfT allocated £125,000 to EEH to develop its active travel programme. Of this £25,000 was allocated for the Varsity Way conditions report and options assessment and £100,000 for the development of an active travel strategy.
- 5.3. Working with partners, EEH developed Phase 1 of the Active Travel Strategy, which was agreed by Board in February 2022 and outlined the ambition for active travel in the Heartland; ‘to create an exemplar active travel network and culture that encourages mode shift for both shorter journeys and for the first and last mile of longer journeys’
- 5.4. Building on the Phase 1 document, EEH will now commence the development of Phase 2 of the Active Travel Strategy, which will focus on how we meet the ambition outlined in Phase 1 of the study.
- 5.5. Specifically, there will be five elements of Phase 2 of the strategy:
  - Baseline and (place based) target setting
  - Understanding the regional active travel network and future ambitions (‘missing links’ – network based)
  - Challenges to achieving the ambitions (location specific examples of challenges)
  - Modal integration
  - Delivery Plan
- 5.6. An Active Travel Strategy steering group was formed during Phase 1 of the study and we are continuing to liaise with this group during the development of phase 2, including four workshops over the study programme.
- 5.7. It is anticipated the technical work will conclude at the end of the calendar year/ beginning of the new year (Dec 2022/Jan 2023).

## **6. OxCam Arc Road Study**

- 6.1. National Highways’ is taking forward the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Road study, with EEH and DfT operating as co-sponsors.
- 6.2. The project is now well underway. Following assessment based on the agreed methodology and engagement, priority areas for further development were identified and the results of this were presented to and agreed with Local Authority officers and leaders. This was updated at the last EEH Board Meeting and as a result, priority areas are now being taken forward to concept development stage.
- 6.3. The project marks a new way of working between STBs and National Highways. National Highways have been willing to trial the development of an innovative approach that better captures how proposed interventions will benefit pre-defined levels of service (LOS) on the transport system, allowing both national priorities and those set out in the regional transport strategy to be captured.
- 6.4. However, in developing innovative approaches, there remains a risk that further development and technical assessment is needed. In the case of this project, the study team are taking a slightly extended timescale to allow for further development of the methodology for the strategic/economic case for the study.
- 6.5. It is expected that further outputs of the study will be presented to the Strategic Transport Leadership Board in December 2022.



## **7. Future of Roads**

- 7.1. To ensure that we have an understanding and clear direction of the role and future of roads in the region EEH has commissioned consultants Jacobs to undertake a “think piece” on the future of the region’s roads.
- 7.2. The EEH transport strategy recognises the important role that roads play in connecting our region – both people and goods – and in enabling economic growth. However, given the level of ambition and expectation amongst users and wider communities with regards to working towards net zero, it is clear that the highway network needs to be future proofed and that a transport system of the future must consider the role and function of the highway network.
- 7.3. The study is focused on strategically important roads in the region – primarily the major road network (MRN) and the strategic road network (SRN). However, it is not limited to these as it is understood that there are other A roads that form a strategic function.
- 7.4. Work on the project is progressing and included two workshops with local authority partners in June and July.
- 7.5. The next phase of the work will be to develop a vision and supporting narrative for strategically important roads to address key questions:
  - What should be the role of strategically important roads in the region in future? How do we make sure they are used in the right way?
  - How do we make sure strategically important roads deliver the aspirations in the EEH transport strategy?
  - How should we prioritise and justify investment in strategically important roads in future?
- 7.6. The project is in development, with the next stage being to develop priorities, objectives and service levels to assess road projects to ensure they are aligned with the transport strategy in order to direct and prioritise future investment in the region’s roads.

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**September 2022**

