

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

Response to the England's Economic Heartlands Draft Transport Strategy Consultation

This is a response to England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Draft Transport Strategy public consultation, provided by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. In our response we have grouped our comments below under a number of headings, which relate to the topic areas identified in the consultation materials.

Net Zero carbon to 2050

The emphasis on achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2050, which is one of the principles of the draft Transport Strategy, is supported. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have declared climate emergencies and are working toward net zero carbon by 2050. Work to support this includes developing net zero carbon evidence to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan¹, as well as energy masterplanning work supporting the emerging North East Cambridge Area Action Plan². The Draft Strategy outlines the challenges of achieving this target including the need to meet high levels of forecasted growth in the region (a 70% growth in GVA across the region by 2050) and higher than the national average levels of carbon emissions from transport in the region. It is agreed that a sea change is required to achieve Net Zero by 2050 and the policies put forward are generally supported. It will be important to carefully monitor the indicators listed at the end of the document to assess the progress against achieving the principles set out in the document. Beyond the above broad comments regarding the net zero target, in particular the councils:

- Support Policies 1-6, and in particular the goal of delivering East West Rail as an electrified route
- Support the focus on freight (Policy 30 in particular), and rail freight in particular, as having the potential to reduce carbon emissions as well as reducing traffic on roads and its associated environmental impacts.

¹ <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/>

² <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/north-east-cambridge-area-action-plan/>

- Support the focus on digital connectivity in supporting connectivity while reducing the need to travel.

Biodiversity and Environmental Net Gain

Although the document refers to Environmental Net Gain and includes an indicator to monitor ecosystems in the region and contributing to environmental net gain, further emphasis in the strategy should be placed on the importance of biodiversity and the natural environment. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have declared biodiversity emergencies³. As members of the [Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership](https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk)⁴, the Councils support the Partnership's vision to [double the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural greenspace within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough](https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Doubling-Nature-LR.pdf)⁵. The EEH Transport Strategy should be more ambitious in dealing with biodiversity in the region and it is recommended that Biodiversity/Environmental Net Gain be explicitly referenced in the strategy's Key Principles .

Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

The inclusion of Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system as a Key Principle of the Draft Transport Strategy is welcomed. It is important to recognise that, although the region is prosperous, there are areas of social inequality and deprivation which need to be addressed. The Draft Transport Strategy puts Active Transport (walking and cycling) at the top of the transport hierarchy which is supported. However, the document should go further in emphasising and linking the benefits of active transport and wellbeing; both physical and mental. One way this could be achieved would be to be more specific in promoting active travel opportunities as components of strategic transport interventions (eg supporting the provision of active travel routes alongside the provision of, for example, the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement project).

Mobility for the Future

The document recognises the importance of strategic transport schemes such as East-West Rail and the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro. The reference to East West Rail as the backbone of an intelligent transport network is welcomed, and we also support the references to the significance of the East West Rail Eastern Section, as well as the

³ Cambridge: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/biodiversity-emergency> South Cambridgeshire: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=78136>

⁴ <https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk>

⁵ <https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Doubling-Nature-LR.pdf>

Central Section, as being important components of enabling sustainable travel to and from the Cambridge sub-region.

In relation to the CAM, the draft strategy appears to suggest that CAM is a Cambridge-only scheme. We would note that the intention of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro is to support the Greater Cambridge sub-region as a whole, as well as providing connections to inter-regional routes, enabling sustainable travel between the market towns, villages and Cambridge, as well as within Cambridge itself. The strategy should reference this wider purpose and scope of the CAM project. Further to the above point about the CAM's purpose, we note that Greater Cambridge Partnership is already working towards delivering the public transport corridor enhancements that will underpin the first phase of the CAM and support growth contained in the adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans. These corridor schemes will complement the future full CAM scheme, which includes the Cambridge tunnels section, as well as wider regional routes, and which are intended to support further growth beyond the adopted plans.

The creation of a Southern Arc rail link to support planned growth is referenced four times in the document. Two of the references describe the Southern Arc as connecting Buckinghamshire, southern Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and two of the references (including the map on pg.60) describe it as connecting Buckinghamshire, Watford and southern Hertfordshire. Further clarification how the Southern Arc would link with Cambridgeshire is requested.

Targeted investment in the highway network as part of a system approach is listed as a strategic issue in the document. A number of projects are identified which England's Economic Heartland supports the delivery of investment towards. The inclusion of the M11 Junction 13 Cambridge West as an infrastructure opportunity for scheme development as part of RIS3 is supported (note typo on junction number on p.59).

Rural connectivity

South Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district made up of over 100 villages. The inclusion of improving connectivity as a principle of the Draft Strategy is supported. As 34% of the population of the region live in small market towns and villages, to ensure the strategy is inclusive, there needs to be an emphasis on both physical and digital connectivity of rural communities to jobs and service which support the nationally significant local economy of Cambridge. Drawing on the above we fully support the draft strategy's focus on first/last mile, improving local connectivity and rural

connectivity (including policies 24-6), noting that delivering on these priorities will support the Key Principle of Improving quality of life.

The role of the Local Authority

The document recognises the need to work with Local Authorities to use the opportunities created by investment in strategic transport infrastructure and services to shape the location of future economic and housing growth proposals. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council recognise the importance of working together to reach sustainable outcomes and look forward to working with England's Economic Heartland in the future. As such we have recently sought to engage with EEH under the Greater Cambridge Duty to Cooperate & Statement of Common Ground Proposed Approach for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan and provided the proposed approach for comment.