

Committee(s): Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	Date: 2 February 2022
Subject: Response to the Transport East 30-Year Strategy	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)	Public
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Summary

This report seeks approval on a formal response to the Transport East Draft Transport Strategy public consultation “A 30-year transport strategy for the East”. The strategy is informed by the East’s unique contribution to the UK and specific challenges throughout the region. It identifies a vision and four strategic priorities (decarbonisation to net-zero; connecting growing towns and cities; energising coastal and rural communities; and unlocking international gateways). It identifies six core corridors that play a vital role in the movement of people and goods in the East, two of which flow through the borough.

A proposed response to the consultation on behalf of the Council is set out in Appendix A. This is broadly supportive of the high level aims of the 30-year strategy but raises concern that some of the specific transport issues in the borough are not sufficiently referenced. A consultation brochure providing an overview of the strategy is set out in Appendix B.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

R1. Approve the response to the Transport East 30-Year Strategy consultation, as set out in Appendix A.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Transport East was launched in March 2018 as a new sub-national Transport Body to deliver a collective vision for the future of transport in Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. As a partnership, Transport East

brings together the local transport and planning authorities, and business leaders with Network Rail and National Highways. This enables the region to speak with one voice on the transport investment needed to drive transformational growth and improve the quality of life for all that live and work in the region.

2. Transport East is one of seven sub-national Transport Bodies covering England. Since its launch, Transport East has set out the objective to develop a Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan for the region to ensure that transport fully supports its members shared ambitions for economic growth, quality of life and prosperity.
3. Transport East has published their draft Transport Strategy, which is subject to a public consultation titled: “A 30-year transport strategy for the East”. This 30-year strategy provides the following context before identifying the strategic response (see Appendix B consultation brochure for further detail):
 - a) **The East’s unique contribution to the UK:** The East helps drive the UK economy, home to 3.5 million people and 1.7 million jobs with a strong and diverse economy including manufacturing, agriculture, information and communications technology (ICT), clean energy production, financial services and tourism. Some of its towns and cities are among the fastest growing in the country with population forecasted to increase by up to half a million by 2041 (566,000 new homes and 295,000 new jobs predicted by 2050). The region is also essential for the UK’s global trade, with 13 ports and 3 international airports. Half of the UK’s freight containers are moved through the region and there are plans to grow these gateways. In the energy sector, some of the world’s largest wind farms are being built off the region’s coastline. Following planned investment in renewables and nuclear power generation, the region will also be the leading supplier of renewable energy to the UK, providing power to 58% of the UK’s homes.
 - b) **Challenges:** The region covers a large area, with no major hub city. This means transport networks are particularly important in supporting the regional economy, by getting people to work and goods to businesses. Many journeys are difficult to make other than by car. This results in high transport related emissions and poor air quality in local areas, affecting people’s health and contributing to climate change. The Government has clear commitments to cut transport related carbon emissions and the East will need to drive forward the reduction of carbon emissions to net zero. Poor connections are a particular challenge for many people living in rural and coastal areas, making it difficult to access jobs, education and essential services, with communities cut off further

by poor broadband provision. Not only is the movement of people complex, so is the movement of goods. Ports connect Britain to the rest of the world, but constraints in connections to these hubs slow deliveries, add cost and, ultimately, make it harder for businesses to trade internationally. Critical investment is needed in transport networks to meet current and future challenges and allow the region to fulfil its potential. These challenges can be summarised into the following four themes:

- i. Rising emissions;
- ii. Dispersed communities;
- iii. Growth and congestion; and
- iv. Accessing international gateways.

4. The 30-year strategy has been in development since 2020 through engagement with the public and partners to ensure it aligns with local ambitions and needs. An improved transport network can bring about much-needed change to the region, connecting people to opportunities for work, education and leisure, and supporting local economies. Key to this is a regional Transport Strategy to guide investment in the East over the next 30 years. Through this strategy, Transport East aims to overcome some of the transport challenges experienced, while also delivering a fit for purpose, high quality, inclusive and sustainable transport network that will be able to accommodate future growth.
5. The overarching vision for Transport East is to have “a thriving economy for the East, with fast, safe, reliable, and resilient transport infrastructure driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.” Although the vision is region-wide, Transport East recognises the need for a tailored approach for the unique characteristics of different areas and communities, such as:
 - a) Rural and coastal communities;
 - b) Large urban areas; and
 - c) Ports and airports.
6. The 30-year strategy sets out a series of pathways to follow to deliver the vision, focussed on the following four strategic priorities for transport. These pathways are made up of Goals with identified Actions that Transport East will take to deliver against these goals:
 - a) **Decarbonisation to net-zero:** Working to achieve net zero carbon emissions from transport by 2040, building on the East’s status as the UK’s premier renewable energy region (and underpinning the other three pathways in the strategy).

- b) **Connecting growing towns and cities:** Providing enhanced links between the fastest growing places and business clusters. Improving access for people to jobs, suppliers, services, and learning; enabling the area to function as a coherent economy and improving productivity.
 - c) **Energising coastal and rural communities:** A reinvented sustainable coast for the 21st century which powers the UK through energy generation. Supporting productive rural communities and attracting visitors all year round.
 - d) **Unlocking international gateways:** Better connected ports and airports to help UK businesses thrive, boosting the nation's economy through better access to international markets and facilitating foreign investment.
7. Transport East has identified six core corridors that play a vital role in the movement of people and goods in the East. These corridors are the road and rail links between the region's growing urban areas, ports and airports, and the rest of the UK. Further investment in the corridors is needed if the region is to reach its potential as a thriving, connected and multi-centred economy. As well as cross-region initiatives, Transport East will be looking to deliver the four strategic priorities along these core corridors as part of the framework for future transport investment in the East. The corridors are (see Appendix B consultation brochure for more details and a map of the corridors):
- a) Midlands – King's Lynn – Norwich – Great Yarmouth;
 - b) London – Chelmsford – Colchester – Ipswich – Norwich and Suffolk Coast (this corridor flows through the borough, identified as the Central Brentwood Growth Corridor in the Council's Local Development Plan);**
 - c) Norfolk and Suffolk to Cambridge – Midlands – South-West;
 - d) Stansted – Braintree – Colchester – Harwich and Clacton;
 - e) King's Lynn – Cambridge – Harlow – London; and
 - f) South Essex – London – Thurrock – Basildon – Southend (this corridor flows through the borough, identified as the Southern Brentwood Growth Corridor in the Council's Local Development Plan).**
8. The 30-year strategy is informed by a detailed programme of technical work, including an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). The ISA is a process for assessing social, economic and environmental impacts of strategies and projects. It helps make sure sustainable development principles underpin the strategy to protect the environment, people's health and equality.

9. Transport East is also responsible for the region's transport investment priorities through an Investment and Delivery Programme (IDP). This will be an evolving programme of schemes and initiatives to deliver the strategy.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

10. Appendix A sets out a proposed response to the consultation. The strategic priorities and related goals of the 30-year strategy are laudable. It is proposed these should be supported as Transport East acts with the collective bargaining power of a regional authority.
11. Whilst it is understood why a strategy for the East should identify high-level priorities, it is important to identify specific issues in the borough and South Essex that are either omitted or need highlighting. This includes the need for reference to the Elizabeth Line in Brentwood and Shenfield (to realise economic growth opportunities and tackle potential changes in travel behaviour), and the Council's vision for sustainable transport-led growth in the South Brentwood Growth Corridor (through the delivery of improvements to create an interchange at West Horndon station). It also includes reference to issues relevant both locally and across the East, such as measures to improve air quality and behaviours for travelling to school.

Reasons for Recommendation

12. Transport East is setting a collective vision for the future of transport in Essex (and beyond), through a partnership that Brentwood Borough Council is part of. The proposed response set out in Appendix A on behalf of the Council expresses support for the 30-year strategy but challenges specific issues relevant to the borough that at present are not sufficiently covered. Ongoing partnership working with Transport East would enable these issues to be discussed and tackled.

Consultation

13. The draft strategy has been the subject of an eight-week public consultation, open from Thursday 2 December 2021 until Sunday 30 January 2022. This included virtual exhibitions and live webcast events.
14. The response drafted in Appendix A has been submitted to meet the deadline but is subject to approval and amendment by the committee.

References to Corporate Strategy

15. The Council's Corporate Strategy includes key priorities to grow the economy and develop communities, among other things. The quality and provision of

transport infrastructure is of critical importance to achieve the objectives identified under these corporate priorities.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and S151 Officer

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16. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. Investment in local transport infrastructure is being considered through the Local Development Plan and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This work is informed by joint working with Transport East and our highways authorities (Essex County Council and National Highways) and other transport providers. Local initiatives such as the creation of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), in addition to use of development contributions such as S106 and S278 agreements, are being progressed in 2022 as part of the Council's corporate objectives.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

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17. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning & Economy)

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18. The Transport East vision is of a thriving economy for the East, with fast, safe, reliable and resilient transport infrastructure driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come. Transport and the economy are intrinsically linked. The draft Transport Strategy sets out how this vision for a thriving economy is going to be achieved over the next 30 years.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager (Communities Leisure and Health)

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19. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
20. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for b) or c) although it is relevant for a).
21. The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

22. An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has been published to accompany the 30-year strategy. This is a process for assessing social, economic and environmental impacts of strategies and projects. It helps make sure sustainable development principles underpin the strategy to protect the environment, people's health and equality. The ISA includes:
- a) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
 - b) Health Impact Assessment (HIA);
 - c) Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA);
 - d) Community Safety Assessment (CSA);
 - e) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA); and
 - f) Natural Capital Assessment (NCA).
23. A key part of the ISA is an ISA Monitoring Plan, which will help measure progress against important objectives and targets to inform future reviews of the 30-year strategy and Investment and Delivery Programme, to identify any mitigation measures required. This will form part of our overall monitoring and evaluation plan.

Background Papers

- Transport East 30-Year Transport Strategy consultation portal, including document library (<https://www.transporteast.org.uk/public-consultation/>)

- Item 432, Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee, Lower Thames Crossing Supplementary Consultation 2020 and South Brentwood Growth Corridor Sustainable Transport Vision, 18 March 2020 (<https://brentwood.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=392&MIId=2106&Ver=4>)

Appendices to this report

- Appendix A: Brentwood Borough Council response to the Transport East Draft Transport Strategy
- Appendix B: Transport East “A 30-year transport strategy for the East” Public Consultation Brochure