

## **Brentwood Borough Council response to the Transport East Draft Transport Strategy “A 30-Year Transport Strategy for the East” (November 2021)**

### **Do you have any comments about the strategic priorities and goals set out in the Transport Strategy?**

1. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft Transport Strategy. The strategic priorities and related goals and actions are laudable and supported. It is understood why a strategy for the East should identify high-level priorities, but when considering the transport issues faced by Brentwood Borough and our position in South Essex working in partnership through the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), the following comments are offered.

### **Do you have any other comments about the Transport Strategy?**

2. The strategy and related work of Transport East needs to recognise the requirement of district councils (local planning authorities) to meet development needs through efforts to grow sustainably. Under the identified challenge “growth and congestion”, alignment is needed to assist with “connecting growing towns and cities”, and there will be specific issues faced both locally and across the East that partnership working can help unlock. The strategic priorities, goals and actions need to inform detailed delivery of projects.
3. In Brentwood Borough the transport priorities linked to accommodating growth can be summarised as below. Request is made for specific reference to projects through the strategy or Investment and Delivery Programme because this will assist in the delivery of solutions (project buy-in, funding bids etc):
  - a. Despite having some of the best rail infrastructure in the East, Brentwood is not mentioned either with reference to relevant corridors or through the complete omission of the Elizabeth Line. We need to collectively support sustainable growth to maximise opportunities from the Elizabeth Line and tackle the potential negative impacts from changing travel behaviour (increased demand for example). Therefore, it is important that reference is made to it. In the South Brentwood Growth Corridor (Brentwood Borough part of the Transport East identified “South Essex” corridor), reference should be made to our current work delivering a sustainable transport interchange at West Horndon station (see paragraph 3b below).

- b. We support mention of the South Essex Bus Metro as a case study (strategy figure 4.3.8). We request further work with Transport East to help deliver this scheme with partners, such as Essex County Council, recognising the importance and opportunity to create a sustainable transport interchange at West Horndon station. The Council's vision is for the station to become a gateway for growth across the South Brentwood Growth Corridor, supporting new development and a new community at Dunton Hills Garden Village. Partnership working is already underway with c2c Rail and others, capitalising on the opportunity for station upgrades to deliver required improvements rather than the request for an entirely new station (as is often the case elsewhere with new development).
  - c. In terms of strategic highways relevant to Brentwood Borough, in the South Brentwood Growth Corridor reference should be made to our work securing investment for increased capacity and/or better traffic flow at M25 junction 29 (M25/A127). In the Central Brentwood Growth Corridor (Brentwood Borough part of the Transport East identified "London – Chelmsford – Colchester – Ipswich – Norwich and Suffolk Coast" corridor), reference should be made to securing investment for increased capacity and/or better traffic flow at M25 junction 28 (Brook Street Roundabout, M25/A12). So far, the identification of development to meet needs has resulted in a struggle with National Highways to think strategically about highway infrastructure and growth (in Brentwood and beyond).
  - d. Opportunities to reassess carriageway space on the A127 should be realised, away from the current priority for cars by creating a dedicated two-way segregated cycle superhighway, linking-up with efforts to establish cycle priorities in London (Transport for London). This could also coincide with the project to deliver the South Essex Bus Metro (see paragraph 3b above).
  - e. A strategic solution and mitigation funding is needed to help resolve congestion and prioritise sustainable modes of travel at Wilson's Corner. This is the local central crossroads through which all traffic flows in Brentwood, highlighting the issue of old infrastructure (at or beyond capacity) supporting new growth.
4. The following strategic issues are raised that relate both to Brentwood Borough and the wider region:
- a. There is a need for funding and projects to reduce the impact of school trips by investing in active travel measures, such as segregated cycle lanes and electric buses from 'park and choose' sites, etc.
  - b. Delivering 'park and choose' (park and ride or walk) infrastructure to take away non-essential trips from towns, through the identification of

best practice at different scales (informing different size settlements and/or levels of growth).

- c. Using the collective bargaining power of a regional authority to undertake a bus contract across the East to help solve some of the rural bus issues identified (“dispersed communities”).
- d. Supporting the downgrading of speeds in towns and villages to 20mph (improving safety and air quality etc).
- e. Think to the future on parking standards and car ownership types, i.e. introduce ultra-low emission zones or similar around major towns and cities (again utilising best practice at relevant scales) and introducing flexibility for future fuel types (EV charging infrastructure and other technologies).
- f. Keeping freight where it should be if using roads (on the strategic highway network until needing to access local roads) but utilising rail freight to a greater degree.
- g. Support the net zero agenda for maintaining but not growing the capacity of major roads, such as the M25, A12 and A127, by identifying travel and health improvements that outweigh pressure for more lanes.
- h. Make active travel measures much better, even to the disbenefit of car journeys, so that they become a viable alternative. This could be through measures that fully consider the practical delivery of improved walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly in connecting rural areas, like replacing lost farming subsidies with lease agreements for strips of land on the other side of hedgerows for example, creating LTN120 super rural cycle paths adjacent to rural A-roads and covered by suitable lighting and CCTV, etc.

\*\*\*