

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Board Meeting

Paper C

Date **28th June 2023**

Title of report: **Strategic Transport Plan update**

Purpose of report: **To set out the latest programme for producing and approving the Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan and report on emerging findings from the Issues & Opportunities engagement**

Recommendations:

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. Approve the latest programme for producing and approving the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan.
- II. Note the emerging results from the engagement on the Issues & Opportunities paper.

1. Background

- 1.1 The importance of the Western Gateway's long term Strategic Transport Plan 2025 to 2050 to updated Local Transport Plans, providing the golden thread that links national, regional and local policies together, highlights the need to have the Plan in place. Whilst this is less urgent given the long awaited guidance for Local Transport Plans remains unpublished the need to have the Plan in place remains.
- 1.2 Engagement with key stakeholders on the Issues & Opportunities paper took place between 19 April and 19 May 2023. The intention is to use the responses to inform the draft Strategic Transport Plan 2025 to 2050 which is to go out to full public consultation later in the year.

2. Revised programme

- 2.1 The original intention was to bring the draft Strategic Transport Plan to the Board's meeting on 28 June 2023 for approval to go out to consultation over July/August 2023. This is no longer achievable. The Issues & Opportunities engagement started later than expected due to the need to make numerous amendments to and agree the final draft. This had a knock on effect on the

timescale for producing the draft Strategic Transport Plan. Resource issues have also hampered the production of the draft Plan.

2.2 A revised programme is now proposed as set out below. This will see consultation taking place over October/November 2023 with the revised Strategic Transport Plan going to the Board in January/February 2024 for final approval.

28 June 2023 Revised programme for Strategic Transport Plan and early results on the results of the Issues & Opportunities engagement to the Western Gateway Board meeting.

28 Sept 2023 Draft Strategic Transport Plan (using the results of the Issues & Opportunities engagement) to the Board for approval for public consultation.

Oct to Nov 2023 Public consultation on the draft Strategic Transport Plan begins

Jan/Feb 2024 Revised Strategic Transport Plan adopted by the Board

2.3 With the recent appointment of full time Transport Officer and Senior Transport Officer posts the Western Gateway is now better resourced to complete the work in the revised programme. Officer support from the local authorities will also be drawn upon.

2.4 As reported to the Board on 7 December 2022 the aim is to produce a short, high level transport Strategic Transport Plan providing the individual authorities with the policy and evidence base and steer for delivering their own Local Transport Plan policies and schemes.

3. Issues & Opportunities engagement

3.1 The Issues & Opportunities engagement focused on three key issues facing the Western Gateway region:

- Achieving Net Zero – carbon emissions and the environment
- Enabling economic growth
- Levelling up the region

3.2 At the request of the Board engagement was focused on key stakeholders drawn from but not exclusive to those attending the Western Gateway Business & Transport and Freight Forums or involved in our other activities. All engagement took place on-line and there were no public meetings.

3.3 In total 35 responses across a range of organisations were received. Whilst care should be taken in reviewing and using the responses, given their modest number, it should be stressed that this was aimed at key stakeholders and full consultation will be undertaken for the draft Strategic Transport Plan. Responses were received from organisations outside of the key stakeholder

list. These provide valuable contributions and are included in the summary of themes set out below.

3.4 Key themes to emerge from the engagement are:

- 70% of the responses agree with the issues identified, a third of the responses were from key stakeholders.
- Majority agree that Achieving Net Zero to be the Top priority and especially decarbonisation of transport.
- Recurring view that the Issues and Opportunities Paper favours road building and Business as Usual while lacking practical commitment to public transport and rail improvements.
- For the Issues in our region section, connectivity should focus on rail rather than road. Corridors to be viewed as transport corridors rather than mono-modal corridors
- Support for the opportunities mentioned with Rail being ranked highest in terms of priority, followed by Bus and Coach, Alternative Fuels and Demand Management.
- STB encouraged to adopt a different and collaborative approach for seeking solutions to achieve the desirable integrated outcomes for the region.
- Concern that it is unclear how achieving Net Zero by minimising road use will be balanced against the need for economic growth. The Strategic Plan will need to address this. Suggested that better integration with Active Travel, Public Transport and Technology will be key to success and should be the focus.

3.5 As mentioned above the intention is to use the responses to inform the draft Strategic Transport Plan 2025 to 2050. A full report on the responses received will be placed on the Western Gateway website.

4. Consultation, communication and engagement

4.1 Officers from the Western Gateway's constituent authorities have been consulted on the revised programme for producing the Strategic Transport Plan. Full consultation on the draft Strategic Transport Plan will be undertaken October to November 2023. A consultation strategy for the Plan will be produced and brought back to the Board for approval.

5. Equalities Implications

5.1 Delivering the Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan will open up new travel opportunities and improve accessibility for everyone. No adverse impact on any protected groups is expected.

6. Legal Considerations

6.1 The Western Gateway STB remains an informal non-statutory partnership.

7. Financial considerations

- 7.1 The Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan budget for 2023/24 is £50,000. The costs of producing and consulting on the draft Strategic Transport Plan and final approval will be met from within this budget.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Board is asked to agree the recommendations set out at the beginning of this report.

Contact Officer

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