

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Board Meeting

Paper C

Date **7th December 2022**

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

Purpose of report: **To update on progress towards producing the Strategic Transport Plan**

Recommendations:

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. Approve the proposed structure for the Issues and Option paper and the draft Strategic Transport Plan.
- II. Approve the Engagement Strategy for the Issues and Options paper as set out in Appendix One.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the programme and documents required for producing the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB) Strategic Transport Plan (STP). This expands on the report which went to the Western Gateway Board on 28 September 2022. It includes:

- Latest programme
- Engagement strategy
- Issues and Options paper for stakeholder engagement
- STP outline proposal/shaping document
- Transport Modelling update
- National Highways RIS3 Position/Direction of Travel paper

2. Programme

2.1 The programme as agreed at the Board on 28 September 2022 is unchanged and is shown below.

Task	Deadline
Issues and Options paper and Engagement Strategy produced for Board approval to go out to consultation	December 2022
Consultation on Issues and Option paper	January to February 2023

Position/Direction of Travel paper response to the Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) consultation	January 2023
Preparation of draft STP incorporating outcomes of Issues and Options consultation and DfT Local Transport Plan guidance	January to May 2023
Draft STP to Board to approve for consultation	June 2023
Consultation on draft STP June to July 2023	June to July 2023
Revisions to STP following consultation on the draft STP	July to September 2023
Final STP adopted by Board	October 2023

3. Engagement Strategy

3.1 An Engagement Strategy has been produced and can be found in Appendix One. This sets out how we intend to undertake engagement on the Western Gateway's Issues and Options Paper. It outlines all the ways we will inform and engage with our stakeholders and how they will be able to respond to the proposals including a questionnaire and other materials.

4. Issues and Options paper

4.1 The Issues and Options paper will form the basis of initial stakeholder engagement in early 2023. Responses will be used to inform the draft Strategic Transport Plan.

4.2 The Paper will draw on the evidence baseline report, the four corridor reports, the 'Business as Usual' and 'Do Something' technical assessments produced by the consultant and the Western Gateway's existing strategies and studies.

4.3 The aim is for a short (around 20 pages), colourful and glossy document which will be accessible, easy to read and use and evidence based. It will use a series of maps and information graphics to set out:

- Current position – road traffic and rail passenger flows, congestion hot spots, environmental, landscape and heritage locations, population characteristics and planned housing and employment growth
- Key issues around connectivity, the environment, carbon emissions, decarbonisation, health, housing and employment growth, congestion, delays, road safety and forecast growth in car use
- Objectives from the current short term Strategic Transport Plan
- What the 'Business as Usual' and 'Do Something' scenarios will look like in 2050 and years in between
- A range of possible options and interventions including but not restricted to connectivity improvements, decarbonisation, closer links between land use and transport planning, enhanced rail services, targeted highway schemes to reduce congestion and delays, reduced car dependency and modal shift to rail, bus cycling and walking

- How we will align and work with key partners such as National Highways, Network Rail and the Department for Transport on delivering their programmes

5. Strategic Transport Plan outline proposal

- 5.1 The overall aim is to produce a 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.
- 5.2 It will focus on the key areas and ambitions for the Western Gateway including rural mobility, decarbonisation, rail and freight and demonstrate how the STP adds value with clear priorities and the asks from Government.
- 5.3 It will facilitate delivery of Government policies, especially around decarbonisation and levelling up and work with partners such as National Highways and Network Rail on aligning with and delivering their investment programmes.

Concept

- 5.4 The concept like that for the Issues and Option Paper is for a short (around 30 pages), bold, glossy, colourful and graphics led approach which grabs the attention, is engaging and trustworthy and doesn't get lost in a long detailed technical document. Detail will be left to the individual local authorities and their Local Transport Plans and supporting documents.

Structure

- 1) Introduction and welcome – what the STB is, role and geography
- 2) Setting the scene
 - a) Key issues map with facts and figures/info boxes
 - b) Info graphic to show how the STP links to national, regional and local plans and policies
 - c) Need to act – 'Business as Usual' and 'Do Something' scenarios
- 3) Our vision and objectives to 2050 – set out a clear vision and ambition re-using/refreshing the economic, social and environmental objectives from the Short Term Strategic Transport Plan
- 4) How the STP has been shaped by consultation (Issues and Options paper and wider engagement)
- 5) Approach
 - a) Western Gateway wide interventions including decarbonisation – map with info boxes/supporting text
 - b) Four corridors – one map for each corridor with info boxes/supporting text setting out the challenges and the investment priorities needed to address them.
- 6) Making the Plan happen:
 - a) Set out a Strategic Investment Plan making the case for investment and the asks from Government
 - b) Set out clear roles for who will be developing and delivering the Plan

- c) Support the local authorities in the development of business cases for interventions, peer review and technical assistance
 - d) Work in partnership with Network Rail, National Highways, the Department for Transport and other key partners
 - e) Secure funding and finance
 - f) Monitoring and evaluation
- 7) Summary including how the STP will add value in taking the regional approach and speaking with one voice on our ambitions with clear regional priorities

6. Transport Modelling update

- 6.1 Using the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Model (WGSTM) modelling is being undertaken to provide part of the evidence base for the Strategic Transport Plan at a high level. Forecasts for 2031, 2041 and 2051 will be produced for a 'Business as Usual' scenario and committed development/infrastructure information from the local authorities within the Western Gateway STB area. A 'Do Something' scenario will follow including the transport schemes which are likely to form the Strategic Transport Plan.
- 6.2 National Highways undertook a review of the WGSTM Model Development Report and confirmed that the use of the model was acceptable for the high level assessment of transport schemes.
- 6.3 The DfT has highlighted the risks of the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Model is based on older models (South West Regional Transport Model 2015) and data (National Trip End Model 7). A statement on the possible impact of this being an older model is requested and assurance that results will not affect the high level STP. Updating to National Trip End Model 8 is a low cost (c£6,400) and straightforward update to make and can be met from the existing budget and will be carried out.

7. Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) Position Paper/Direction of Travel

- 7.1 National Highways' Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) is expected to be published towards early 2023. In response a position paper/direction of travel statement ahead of the STP is required. This will set out the Western Gateway's comments on RIS3 and demonstrate how it links to/supports the emerging STP. Depending on when RIS3 is published the statement will be taken to the Board for approval.

8. Consultation, communication and engagement

- 8.1 Officers from the Western Gateway's constituent authorities have been consulted on this report and their comments incorporated.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 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.

10. Legal Considerations

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

11. Financial considerations

11.1 The Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan budget for 2022/23 is £80,000. The work areas set out in this report are affordable within this budget. With consultation on and completion of the Strategic Transport Plan in 2023/24 some carry over of budget will be needed.

12. Conclusion

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

Appendices

Appendix One: Strategic Transport Plan Engagement Strategy

Background documents

None.

Contact Officer

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Appendix One

Western Gateway Issues and Options Paper

Engagement strategy

November 2022

Introduction

This strategy sets out how we intend to undertake engagement on the Western Gateway's Issues and Options Paper. This strategy outlines all the ways we will inform and engage with our stakeholders and how they will be able to respond to the proposals.

The Issues and Options Paper pulls together the issues arising from the evidence baseline, four corridor reports and the 'business as usual' and 'do something' technical assessments into a digestible and accessible format.

A questionnaire will be included in the Issues and Options Paper seeking views on, for example, whether all the issues have been captured, do the objectives need amending, is the range of options appropriate and any other views stakeholders may have. Stakeholders will be encouraged to provide detailed responses if they wish.

Responses will be used to inform the drafting of the Strategic Transport Plan for public consultation.

Timescales

The Issues and Options Paper engagement will take place over six weeks in early 2023. As it must finish before the pre-election period starts, it must launch by w/c Monday 30th January 2023 (as local elections are to be held on Thursday 4th May 2023).

Public engagement process

Identify key stakeholders

Listening to and understanding the views of stakeholders is an essential part of any plan-making process. As suggested at the STB Board meeting on 28th September 2022, our engagement will focus on key stakeholders rather than general public consultation to achieve an informed response as efficiently as possible.

Our list of stakeholders will be reviewed to focus on key stakeholders for this engagement. Stakeholder mapping and grouping will be undertaken to identify key groups that are to be kept involved as plans develop.

Notable stakeholders include: STBs, constituent authorities, neighbouring local authorities, LEPs, public transport operators, transport asset managers, transport user groups.

Publishing and promoting

Following approval by the Board to commence public engagement, the Issues and Options Paper will be publicly available on the Western Gateway STB website: westerngatewaystb.org.uk. A news story will link to the paper online, which will also be available in the dedicated 'Strategy' section on the site.

The news story will be posted on Twitter along with regular posts to remind and signpost to the ongoing engagement during the six weeks.

Key stakeholders including members of our Transport and Business Forum and strategic corridor partners will be informed directly by email with a stakeholder newsletter. Updates will be given as part of any meetings and workshops (for example the Business and Transport Forum, Corridor Group meetings and Freight forums) taking place within the engagement period. One consideration should be to make these meetings face to face rather than virtual where possible, to further enhance engagement.

Our constituent authorities will be informed by email with a press release and the communications teams will also be emailed links to our relevant Twitter posts, with a request to engage with and share the post.

Our monthly newsletter to the Board and stakeholders will include the news story and also flag our social media feed to encourage online engagement. Board members are requested to help promote engagement by encouraging their local authority communications teams to work with the STB communications lead to share these messages.

For consideration

It is not proposed that this engagement will include any public events. Printed hard copies of the paper will be limited.

WSP's online engagement portal PinPoint (pinpointcloud.co.uk), which was previously developed for the parked consultation in September 2021, could potentially be updated and used for this engagement. This is to be confirmed.

Draft Strategic Transport Plan consultation

The full public consultation on the draft Strategic Transport Plan, June to July 2023 will require its own strategy as it might be quite different to the engagement on the Issues and Options paper including for example events. Proposals will be brought back to the Board for approval.