

# Transforming Cities Fund *Call for Proposals*



## Application Form

### Applicant Information

**Bidding City Region:**

Hertfordshire's Economic Core

**Bid Manager Name and position:**

Mr Trevor Mason  
Team Leader – Strategic Transport and Rail

**Contact telephone number:** 01992 556117

**Email address:** Trevor.Mason@Hertfordshire.go.uk

**Postal address:**

Environment and Infrastructure (Postal Point CHN216),  
Hertfordshire County Council,  
County Hall,  
Pegs Lane,  
Hertford,  
SG13 8DN

**Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.**

The use of statistics, from both government bodies and well-respected independent sources, is encouraged. The suitability and validity of these will be scrutinised as part of the bid.

## **SECTION A – Definition and challenges**

This section will seek a definition of the bidding city. City regions should:

- Explain the city geography, with a clear city region identified
- Indicate workday population (the Fund seeks to target the larger city regions in England)
- Describe the key transport challenges across the city region at a high level. This could include a discussion of productivity, or how transport connectivity is affecting this.
- Further evidence to support this argument – such as congestion, air quality or journey time impacts.

### **A1. Constituent Local Authorities:**

### **A2. Geographical area:**

Please provide a short description of area covered by the bid (in no more than 100 words)

Hertfordshire's Economic Core covers the urban centres of Hemel Hempstead, Watford, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Stevenage. It has key employment growth sectors including pharmaceuticals, aerospace, and the Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone<sup>1</sup>, and is at the heart of the UK's Golden Research Triangle. Straddling the M1, A1(M), M25, West Coast, East Coast and Midland main lines, the city region is ideally placed for links to London and most major UK cities by both road and rail, and is close to both Luton and Stansted airports.

[89 words]

Please append a map(s) showing the location of the city region and its boundaries.

### **A3. Population**

Please include the **workday** population of the city region and relevant references.

The workday population of the key urban centres is 248,317 (2011 Census Journey to Work destination data<sup>2</sup>)

The residential population of 471,273 is forecast to grow 13% to 537,817 by 2031<sup>3</sup>.

### **A4. Discussion of key transport challenges:**

The key transport challenges have been assessed through the recently-adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (May 2018)<sup>4</sup> and evidence packs for the emerging "Growth & Transport Plans" for South West Hertfordshire<sup>5</sup>, North Central Hertfordshire and South Central Hertfordshire<sup>6</sup>.

The key issues are :

#### **Connectivity between centres**

Congestion between the urban centres increases journey times and reduces reliability, and reduces the attractiveness of bus journeys and cycling where these modes have to share roadspace. Inbound journey speeds during the am peak are 15 mph for both St Albans<sup>7</sup> and Watford<sup>8</sup>, and a maximum of 23 mph for the region<sup>16</sup>. Journey times are forecast to increase significantly by 2031 e.g. St Albans to Watford will increase by 38%<sup>7</sup>. There are 79 congestion hotspots<sup>9</sup>.

This hinders the city region acting as one economic unit, hence reducing the attractiveness to businesses considering establishing themselves in the area. The economic pull of London is already a constraint on local recruitment, and poor local transport links exacerbates this problem.

The pressure on the local network has national implications as traffic diverts onto the Strategic Road Network (e.g. M1, M25 and A1(M)) to make local journeys within the city region. Conversely the A414 serves as a diversionary route to the M25.

### **Connectivity within centres**

All six centres suffer from internal connectivity problems. The older centres of St Albans and Watford, in particular, suffer severe congestion which hinders bus times and reliability and creates an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists. It also compounds the problems of bus services running from centre to centre.

For the local economy, direct access onto the national network is a strength, but this is significantly weakened by the 'last mile' connections within the urban centres.

Similarly, access to railway stations (of which 8 have more than 1 million passengers per year) can be poor by bus and cycle links. Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield stations are some distance from the key employment areas.

### **Links to longer distance public transport**

Access to longer-distance public transport is relatively poor. For coach services, the weak link is from the motorway to a suitable pick up point within the urban centres due to the congestion noted above. For rail services, the region is poorly served by intercity trains. Watford Junction has only an hourly service to Birmingham, and no direct services to other key destinations such as Liverpool and Manchester. Similarly Stevenage has only an hourly service to Leeds or York, with no direct connections to centres such as Newcastle. On the Midland Main Line, intercity services can only be accessed outside of the city region at Luton, and this service is currently threatened under the proposed new East Midlands franchise. These problems are compounded by the lack of links between these radial rail lines (e.g. Stevenage to St Albans, only 19 km apart as the crow flies, takes a minimum of 67minutes by rail due to the need to travel via London).

[500 words]

Please limit responses in section A4 to 500 words.

## **SECTION B: Who & Where**

This section will seek detail on the city's key priority areas to invest in, and motivations. City regions should:

- Identify and prioritise **the main corridors or places for investment**, and why. This could include highlighting where opportunities for growth, productivity or business are within these areas of the city region.
- Identify **who would be affected** by this investment and how user needs are recognised.

Maps identifying the priority areas can be appended as an annex to this section.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

There are four points of focus which will lead to strategic improvements for the city region and provide the framework for more localised investment.

### (1) Access to Hemel Hempstead

This will provide improved access to the Maylands major employment growth area (currently over 650 businesses and 18,000 jobs<sup>10</sup>) which is a key element in the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan<sup>11</sup>. The two elements are:

- M1 J8a new junction  
A new direct road access to Maylands, providing significant relief to the current A414 access from the M1.
- East of Hemel Hempstead passenger transport hub / coachway

This will provide access to / from the developing Maylands employment growth area and wider urban centre to long-distance coach services using the M1. Access to the urban centre and rail station will be enhanced by the bus rapid transit system (see below).

### (2) Hub stations – connectivity to intercity services and local sustainable transport links

#### Watford Junction station

Watford Junction station handles 8 million passengers annually, served by five train operating companies. Major redevelopment of the station is required to ensure safe operation, enhance passenger transport and active travel links to the urban centre, and to support Watford Council's Watford Junction Masterplan for 2,700 residential units, 74,000 m2 employment floorspace and other mixed development<sup>12</sup>.

#### Stevenage station

Stevenage Council's town centre regeneration plans include re-building the station to ensure safety for growing passenger numbers, provide an attractive gateway to the town and to substantially improve walking and cycling routes across the railway corridor. International businesses in Stevenage have expressed concern over the poor impression given by the station as a gateway to the town. The station currently handles 4.8 million passengers per year, with substantial growth likely following the introduction of new Thameslink services in May 2018, which will connect into Crossrail in 2019.

Phase 1 of the regeneration includes 800 homes (3,500 overall), retail and civic hub and has secured over £31 million Growth Deal funding<sup>13</sup>.

(3) Strategic passenger transport links

A414 corridor Bus Rapid Transit

The Bus Rapid Transit system will provide greater speeds and reliability for passenger transport services. Phase 1 of the scheme will link Hemel Hempstead with St Albans, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. Later phases could link to Watford and out of the region to Hertford and Harlow / Gilston Garden Town. The system will be a mixture of segregated and on-road facilities, allowing implementation in stages linked to funding and planning opportunities. The system will be constructed such that it can be used by different vehicle types, allowing for future alternatively-fuelled buses and autonomous vehicles.

(4) Sustainable Travel Towns

Hertfordshire's new Local Transport Plan (May 2018) <sup>4</sup> has introduced the concept of sustainable travel towns, where significant and coordinated investment in walking, cycling and public transport, together with planning and behaviour change initiatives, will lead to major modal shift. Transforming Cities will allow the first sustainable travel town to be delivered, providing a blueprint for similar schemes across Hertfordshire. These sustainable travel towns will embed the concept of Healthy Streets.

[499 words]

## **SECTION C: Ambition for change**

This section will seek evidence of how investment will tackle these challenges, and wider fit with existing plans. City regions should:

- **Articulate their vision for improved connectivity** from the Fund and how this links to the assessment of need outlined in the previous sections.
- **Demonstrate support from stakeholders** for investment in the identified areas, such as from the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership(s), employers and transport providers. This could also include **commitments of further local and private funding**.
- Highlight ambition to align with existing funding streams and to **utilise new approaches and powers available** to improve public transport.
- Demonstrate how the Fund would link to **wider long term plans** and spatial strategies around housing, local growth, productivity and air quality.

Supporting letters may be attached as an annex.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

Hertfordshire is at a critical point in the development of improved transport. A three year process defining a transport vision to 2050<sup>14</sup> has culminated in the adoption of a new Local Transport Plan (May 2018)<sup>4</sup>. This involved an extensive range of local stakeholders, expert advisers and the development of a new countywide transport model to re-examine transport issues, consider how the extensive housing and employment growth can be accommodated, and investigate emerging technological solutions. A series of Growth & Transport Plans are providing detailed evidence packs and transport solutions with key stakeholders.

For rail, there are opportunities to capture the benefits from the Thameslink Programme and HS2, although without local investment the latter could be detrimental to the city region. The likely demise of the Metropolitan Line Extension is a severe blow to development plans in Watford, but Transforming Cities funding will allow alternative transport provision to be delivered.

The enhancement of connectivity within the city region will allow economic growth to be delivered without despoiling the green nature of the wider county, and will help define Hertfordshire's role as the bridge between London and emerging Sub National Transport Bodies.

The new approach is to embed improvements to sustainable travel at all levels, so that there it is a realistic choice for all journeys. The Transforming Cities Fund bid is also focussed on improving journeys to work within the region to reduce the reliance on London commuting and entice new employers who can have access to the local skilled workforce. The bid will deliver improved connectivity within the urban centres for sustainable transport, between the urban centres by all modes but particularly by public transport, and to external city regions by long-distance rail and coach services.

The key schemes have been taken from the new Local Transport Plan<sup>4</sup>, which also recognises key redevelopments in district plans, the current LEP Strategic Economic Plan and its emerging Local Industrial Strategy<sup>15</sup>. Letters of support are included in Appendix 3. Detailed programmes of smaller schemes and initiatives, with underling evidence bases, are being developed with local stakeholders through the Growth & Transport Plan programme.

The delivery of the Sustainable Travel Town will rely heavily on local planning decisions and funding sources, and existing county council programmes of behaviour change to support the capital elements.

The Bus Rapid Transit system will be linked to funding from new housing development along the A414 corridor, where 63,000 new homes are planned. The county council is working with partners on an A414 Strategy to establish the details of how this housing growth can be served by transport, but all work so far shows that the public transport system will be essential.

The Bus Rapid Transit system and other public transport infrastructure improvements will be supported by new powers under the Bus Services Act 2017. Work is underway to establish an Enhanced Partnership for Hertfordshire, building on existing voluntary arrangements established through the Intalink Quality Partnership, which has identified prioritisation of bus services in traffic as a key requirement.

[500 words]

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the Department, as part of the Government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within two working days of submitting the final bid to the Department. The Department reserves the right to deem the business case as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

**Please specify the weblink where this bid will be published:**

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/transport-planning/local-transport-plan.aspx>

### **Submission of proposals:**

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday, 8 June 2018**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to:  
[TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to [TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk)