

# **HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY**

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## **HERTFORDSHIRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

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### **1 Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to highlight the current position of transport strategy development within the county with regard to the ongoing Transport Vision and Rail Strategy work.

### **2 Background**

2.1.1 In 2014, the County Council's Highways and Waste Management Panel endorsed a series of recommendations to update the Council's transport planning framework to ensure our transport system is able to support growth. One of the main recommendations taken forward within this report was to develop a new spatial Transport Vision for Hertfordshire to 2050.

2.1.2 Following this recommendation, work has been proceeding over the last 12 months to develop an evidence base and undertaken some initial consultation with key stakeholders.

2.2.1 The rail network across the county will be undergoing significant change over the next 30 years, with the potential for substantial schemes to impact upon Hertfordshire and the effect of re-tendering of franchise operators.

2.2.2 The existing Rail Strategy has served as a useful tool for making the best of existing infrastructure in the short-term, but requires a fresh evidence-based approach in order to secure the maximum benefit over the medium- to long-term.

2.2 This paper highlights the current position of each of the work streams.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 It is requested that the Board note this report.

### **4. Overview**

4.1 Development of the Hertfordshire Transport Vision

4.1.1 The development of a long-term transport vision is important to shape our ongoing transport plans and strategies, communicate our ambitions with partners, and attract future transport investment funding from Government, the private sector and other sources. The ability to collectively and clearly articulate our long-term infrastructure requirements - and how they will contribute to a successful Hertfordshire (and wider UK) over the period to 2050 - is vital.

- 4.1.2 The County Council adopted its existing Local Transport Plan in 2011, which in effect establishes the current Transport Vision; however, the national context for transport and planning has changed considerably since then. The delivery of economic growth, in the form of housing and jobs, is now a high priority on the Government's agenda, and the national and local transport planning context has evolved significantly to reflect this.
- 4.1.3 The new spatial Transport Vision will set out a long-term transport map for Hertfordshire, identifying and evidencing the key challenges and setting out the areas and corridors where transport improvements and investment will be required in the period from now to 2050 to support the aspirations of local residents and businesses.
- 4.1.4 The development of the Vision would directly lead to the identification of long term priority schemes and packages for which business cases can be prepared to ensure the County holds a balanced range of well-developed schemes that can be utilised to exploit funding opportunities that arise (often at short notice).
- 4.1.5 The first stage in the development of the work programme has been to establish an evidence base built on an independent review of the key challenges facing Hertfordshire, and how these wider challenges may impact on the transport network and services. The focus for the independent review is to paint a picture for how Hertfordshire might look under a business as usual scenario alongside two differing scenarios (i.e. positive and negative) that could occur. The intention is for the review to highlight how these challenges may impact on the transport network. The County Council has then developed a number of high levels goals that are proposed to be used to underpin the next stage of work that is being entered into.
- 4.1.6 Following a series of workshops, engagement, seminars and a joint meeting of the Council's Highways and Waste Management and Community Safety and Planning Cabinet Panel's, and evidence base has been developed to act as a discussion document and will be consulted on with key stakeholders.
- 4.1.7 Highlights of the evidence and issues that have been raised include:
- Implications of an aging population
  - The role for technology and innovation
  - The extent to which employment markets may change
  - Keeping Hertfordshire an attractive place to live and work
  - What devolution or localism may mean
- 4.1.8 Five high level goals have been developed based on the evidence and issues that have been highlighted for discussion within the documents (n.b. these are not listed in an order of priority):
- Accessibility
  - Connectivity
  - Environment
  - Public Health
  - Reliability
- 4.1.9 Officers from the County Council will be starting to engage with key stakeholders
- 4.2 Hertfordshire Rail Strategy

- 4.2.1 The current Rail Strategy was adopted as part of the Local Transport Plan in 2011. The strategy sets out the need for greater capacity on particular lines, but focusses on getting the most out of the existing network for Hertfordshire residents and businesses.
- 4.2.2 Since publication there have been several Government and rail industry announcements that could provide major opportunities for Hertfordshire. Equally, without a clear approach the benefits could go to those areas which are better able to argue their case. The opportunities include HS2 (and in particular the capacity that this will release on the existing West Coast main line through Watford), Crossrail links to the West Coast main line, Crossrail2 and the development of East West Rail.
- 4.2.3 One of the results of these projects and other changes within the rail industry is that there is a greater willingness to consider new approaches to the rail network provided that there is clear evidential support.
- 4.2.4 The new rail strategy will therefore set out the need to provide new services and/or infrastructure, with a particular focus on economic benefits, as well as showing the support for these changes from local government and other partners.
- 4.2.5 The Rail Strategy will take information from, and inform, the new spatial transport vision. However, it is being produced as a standalone document as it is recognised that it is primarily a lobbying document to Government and the rail industry, rather than a plan which the county council will deliver itself.
- 4.2.6 Work began on the strategy in 2014, and stakeholder engagement has already been held with organisations including districts, the LEP, the chamber of commerce, rail consortia, airports, bus operators, Network Rail, the DfT, TfL and train operators.
- 4.2.7 The next key stage is to go out to public consultation in late May/early June, with the aim of completing a final draft by late 2015.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 Updates will be provided as the strategies reach key milestones.