

PENINSULA TRANSPORT – TRANSPORT STRATEGY

7 March 2024

Please note that the following recommendation/s is/are subject to consideration and determination by the Board before taking effect.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Board note the main outcomes of the consultation process on the strategy as set out in the Lead Officer's Report.
- (b) The Board note the changes made to the document in response to the consultation feedback and feedback from elected members;
- (c) The Board delegate authority to the lead officer in conjunction with the chair, to make any further presentational changes to the document prior to the publication of the document;
- (d) The Board approve the final Strategy document for adoption; and
- (e) That subject to Recommendation d), a copy of the approved Transport Strategy for the Peninsula be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport for consideration.

I. Background

It is a key requirement of the Department for Transport for each STB to develop and maintain a Transport Strategy for their region, as set out within STB Business Planning Guidance issued in December 2022 and reiterated in the draft Business Plan guidance issued in October 2023.

“Each STB should have a transport strategy for your region, which has been agreed by the Department and your board, which is comprised of Local Transport Authorities in your region.

In this way, there should be a “golden thread” of policies, from the national level to the regional level, then the local level. National policies should be reflected in your regional transport strategy. Your regional transport strategy should be reflected in local transport plans – and vice-versa.

This means that your transport strategy and the evidence base underpinning it should be regularly updated, to ensure it stays in-line with national policies and the priorities of your Local Transport Authorities.”

In response to this Business Planning guidance, Peninsula Transport developed a draft strategy document in collaboration with Local Authority officers and Members, as well as co-opted members.

The draft Strategy was presented to the Board in December 2023. Approval was given to consult on the draft strategy for a period of 8 weeks from 11 December 2023 to 5th February 2024.

Overview of Consultation Responses and Changes to the Strategy

The Peninsula Transport Strategy was subject to a full public consultation. This was predominantly digitally based given the geographic spread of the peninsula. An online survey asked participants questions related to their support for the strategy, its four main outcomes as well as support for the different types of proposed intervention. Offline activity and briefing events took place as well as a series of webinars. The survey also contained open questions where respondents could write their general views on the strategy or on specific elements of it. The consultation report, produced by Coast Communications, is appended to this paper.

The online survey received 339 responses, as well as 16 letters from other stakeholders including key agencies like National Highways, local authorities, other STBs and several focus groups. A joint response from the rail industry was received representing Network Rail and the relevant train operating companies.

There was a notable concentration of responses focussed on a single issue following a social media campaign. Approximately 120 responses explicitly mentioned removal of tolls from the Tamar Bridge.

The volume of single-issue responses partially skews the overall consultation results. However it is considered that the sample of responses not focussed on a single issue is significant enough to gauge the public level of support for the strategy.

In general, the overall strategy was supported, and many comments were received outlining the support for the relatively short length of the document and that its brevity and focus were strengths that meant more people would read the full document and comment.

Over 51% of respondents were supportive of the overall strategy, with a further 37% neutral. Therefore only 12% respondents stated they did not support the overall strategy.

Overall, there was good support (strongly support or support) for each of the strategy outcomes:

- Easier journeys – 89%
- Going electric – 44%
- A connected peninsula – 84%
- Completing the transport network – 78%

The full consultation report, produced by Coast Communications, is appended to this paper.

Transport Strategy and Consultation

The Strategy, appended to this report, is a short, user-friendly document, supported by the extensive evidence base and a series of supplementary notes. The Strategy is intended to reflect the position of the STB and the ambitions of the member authorities and co-opted members.

The Strategy sets out the unique strategic transport challenges that exist in the peninsula region and sets out a strategy to 2050 with a series of proposed outcomes around which the activities of the STB will be based over coming years. The Strategy reflects the national government's priorities of growth and levelling up; reducing environmental impact; and improving transport for the user.

2. Key Outcomes of Strategy

The Strategy is based around a 'strategy for the user' and sets out a series of key outcomes vital to achieving a high quality, integrated strategic transport network for the future. These outcomes are summarised below:

- **Easier Journeys** – making travelling by public transport, walking and wheeling easy and the preferred choice with a consistent level of service; establishing a single source of travel information; and integrating and simplifying the ticketing system wherever possible.
- **Going Electric** – establishing a comprehensive, fairly charged public EV charging network which meets demand; meeting the alternative fuel needs of freight, fleet, passenger transport and commercial users.
- **A Connected Peninsula** – establishing a resilient, safe and reliable network of road and rail links to and through the peninsula; improved freight driver facilities as well as options for sustainable freight movements and intermodal freight connections.
- **Completing the Network** – achieving a fully integrated, resilient, sustainable safe and reliable transport network across the peninsula meeting the demands of all users and fostering economic growth across the region.

Alongside the four key outcomes, a series of immediate priorities have been identified which will form an action plan for the STB core team. This Action Plan will be reviewed and revisited on a regular basis, in order to monitor and evaluate progress.

3. Changes to the Strategy

Considering the responses made to the strategy consultation, minor changes have been implemented. The general structure of the strategy remains unchanged and as a result of supportive comments regarding the brevity and easy to use format of the strategy document, the strategy remains similar in length and structure to the consultation draft.

An informal briefing session for elected members was held on 22nd February 2024 where themes from the consultation responses were reported along with suggested changes to the strategy. Members provided useful feedback to officers which has informed the minor changes made to the strategy presented to the Board.

Additions and changes to the strategy are summarised as:

- Additional wording to reference existing, adopted Peninsula Transport STB strategies and evidence base such as the Rail Strategy, Freight Strategy and Rural Mobility Strategy (also inclusion of hyperlinks in the online version) to point the reader towards the considerable body of background evidence that informed the Strategy;
- Additional wording explaining the benefits of delivering the four strategy outcomes;
- Additional wording to clarify the roles of the STB;
- Additional wording to emphasise commitment to improving accessibility to transport for all users;
- Emphasise that the ‘Going Electric’ outcome relates not solely to electric cars but to other electric vehicle modes such as electric buses EVs;
- Additional wording to emphasise the STB’s role in supporting local authorities with their sustainable transport objectives;
- Additional wording to emphasise the importance of maintenance and renewals to ensure reliability and resilience of our existing transport networks;
- Additional wording to emphasise the importance of the STB’s remit with respect to intra-regional, cross boundary strategic travel rather than simply strategic transport within the Peninsula.

- Additional wording to emphasise the importance of collaboration and partnership working with other STBs

4. Strategic Implementation Plan

The DfT Business Planning Guidance also sets out the expectation that ‘*STBs should then develop Strategic Investment Plans based on your transport strategies, which set out the key priority investments which are needed to deliver the transport strategy*’.

The Transport Strategy and the four key outcomes will form the basis upon which schemes across the peninsula will be identified and prioritised. The STB will publish a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) in the late Spring 2024. This will be accompanied by an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which will include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as well as other impacts, to consider the cumulative environmental effects of identified prioritised schemes, and help to inform the develop of the final SIP.

It is anticipated that the draft SIP will be presented to the Board for consideration in Summer/early Autumn 2024.

5. Financial Considerations

The Strategy has been produced within the allocated budgets of the STB for FY23/24. Additional funding has been allocated from the budget to cover the consultation and communication activities detailed above.

The Transport Strategy and it’s identified outcomes will drive the Business Plan for FY24/25 and beyond.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

As noted above, whilst this strategy does not identify specific schemes, the Strategic Investment Plan which will be produced following the approval of the final Transport Strategy will be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment to inform the choice of preferred priority schemes based on the relative forecast environmental impacts.

7. Equality Considerations

There are no equality considerations associated with this paper. Relevant equality impacts of the SIP will be considered as part of the SEA and associated Integrated Impact Assessment.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations associated with this paper.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The Peninsula Transport Programme Management Group reviews risk and assigns the required mitigation actions across the Peninsula Transport workstreams on at least a monthly basis.

A full risk register has been produced as part of the final Business Plan for FY23/24. This risk register is monitored and reviewed regularly in conjunction with the DfT. The risk register includes consideration of the Transport Strategy

10. Public Health Impact

There are no public health impacts associated with this paper. Relevant health impacts of the SIP will be considered as part of the SEA and associated Integrated Impact Assessment.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

This paper provides a summary of the consultation on the draft Transport Strategy for Peninsula Transport to 2050 that was approved for a public consultation by the Board in December 2023. This paper also highlights themes arising from the consultation activity and recommended changes to the strategy as well as an updated strategy, which the Board is recommended to approve.

The Strategy will form the basis of the activities of the STB for coming years. Developing and maintaining a transport strategy for the peninsula region is one of the core functions of the STB. It is recommended that should the Board be minded to approve the updated strategy, that the strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport for consideration.

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