
Meeting:	Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee
Subject:	Strategic Transport Plan Policy Development – Active Travel, Spatial Planning and Multi Modal Hubs
Author:	Lucy Jacques, Acting Head of Policy and Strategy
Sponsor:	Tim Foster, Interim Strategy and Programme Director
Meeting Date:	12 January 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To seek Scrutiny Committee's views prior to seeking Board agreement to a number of policy position statements.
- 1.2 These positions will be embedded within the revised STP and used by TfN and partners to shape TfN programme activity and also to influence Government policy by shaping future statutory advice we may issue.

2. Main Issues:

- 2.1 In September 2021, TfN Board agreed that TfN should commence work on a new programme of work to revise and update the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) and seek adoption of the new plan no later than Spring 2024.
- 2.2 The TfN STP contains a wide range of policy positions, outlining how TfN would work with Partners and stakeholders across the North to deliver the STP. The policy positions are used to inform statutory advice when required, ensure a consistent approach across TfN workstreams and help us turn our policies into actions, which will be a central theme in our revised STP. In preparing the programme for the revised STP, these have been assessed and, where appropriate, updated and strengthened to reflect the latest evidence, national and local policies.
- 2.3 As part of the STP programme approach, we agreed with TfN Board to take all evidence and policies that will be embedded within the revised STP through TfN governance for formal sign off in phases as and when work is complete. The rationale for that was to ensure we can carefully manage our resources over the next 12 – 18 months and also allow ample opportunity for TfN partners to review and comment on the emerging evidence base and policies before we get to a near final draft.
- 2.4 These policy positions clearly set out the challenges and opportunities for TfN across a range of policy areas and propose some pan Northern policy positions we can use to provide statutory advice to Government, will be embedded into our revised STP and also identify short – medium term actions TfN can take to support implementation.
- 2.5 These position statements have been worked up by TfN officers and TfN partners via TfN's Strategic Oversight Group and have also been supported by external engagement with industry bodies such as Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Homes England.
- 2.6 The first wave of these policy positions focuses on Active Travel (Appendix 1), Spatial Planning (Appendix 2) and Multi modal hubs (Appendix 3).

The second wave, which we expect to bring through formal governance for discussion and sign off in March 2022, will focus on International Connectivity including aviation and Rural Mobility.

Further positions will be developed early next financial year and taken through governance in due course, policy areas currently identified as a priority for early next financial year include developing TfN policy positions on Social Inclusion and Local Connectivity.

3.0 Active Travel Policy Position

3.1 The Strategic Transport Plan makes a number of statements in relation to our role in supporting active travel:

- Continue to work with Partners to support the development and implementation of local plans and strategies, to deliver packages of improvements that support a more seamless, integrated end-to-end experience. By targeting short trips that could be taken on public transport or active travel, collaboratively we could encourage a modal shift and promote active transport, and further develop public transport networks as important sustainable modes of travel.
- Work with Partners to ensure that future strategic housing, commercial and industrial developments are well connected and have high expectations on developers to provide access to public transport facilities, high levels of cycle parking and storage, wide, attractive and safely lit walking routes, and provide electric charging facilities to support a greener and cleaner road network as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Work to identify and deliver interventions which improve sustainable transport access to the North's key public transport hubs, including better walking and cycling provision and improved local bus access.
- Support Partners to develop and promote measures that improve local sustainable travel options, such as strategic cycle networks, and encourage their use to make best use of the North's existing and future strategic transport networks.

3.2 There are several challenges with regards to delivering active travel schemes and raising participation levels in the North of England and nationally, specifically.

- A lack of clear and consistent active travel infrastructure standards across the North and nationally.
- Methods of estimating benefits of active travel schemes are less developed and embedded than those for other transport interventions.
- Funding for active travel is often given in short cycles, with a requirement to bid. This does not allow for long term planning of programmes and schemes; and leads to inconsistencies.
- Whilst the majority of active travel journeys are short, integration with the SRN, MRN and rail is key to enable multi modal journeys.

Local spatial and transport planning policy often does not enable the use of active travel for short trips and incentivises car use.

3.3 As a statutory sub national transport body, TfN's role is to set the overall transport vision, and to provide statutory advice on planning and priorities for large scale transport investment. Within this context, TfN supports the ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys and will work with local transport authority partners who have responsibility for local transport strategies and managing their local transport infrastructure.

3.4 There are four key roles TfN can play to proactively support this agenda:

- Promote and support sustained investment in active travel at local level, to enable partners to plan and implement more ambitious and longer-term schemes. TfN will ensure that the pan Northern schemes in the Investment Programme embed and prioritise active travel within the design and development process.
- Support partners and continue to raise the profile of active travel generally.
- Collate and promote examples of 'best practice' and innovation across the North from partners, that can be used by partners.
- Outline how the TfN Analytical Framework can support partners with analysis of active travel and make these tools and data available to partners where possible. For example, based on locally specific evidence highlighting the potential for increases in active travel within specific localities.

3.5 A key objective for the revised STP is to turn our policies into action, as such the active travel position statement (Appendix 1) outlines a number of specific actions TfN can take in the short – medium term to achieve tangible results, these are.

- Build relationship with Active Travel England in order to be able to discuss how the need for schemes is evidenced, funding, and how this is allocated. Primarily with regards to longevity of funding, given that Urban Transport Group (UTG) and Active Travel England's (ATE) remit will include best practice and scheme design. Signpost those partners who require it to best practice.
- Prioritise and embed active travel within pan Northern Schemes.
- TAME to apply existing tools and techniques to show the co-benefits of active travel increases as part of wider TfN workstreams.
- TfN's Analytical Advisory Group to showcase appraisal techniques
- Inclusion of active travel in TfN's Northern Evidence Hub.

3.6 At this stage, it is not proposed that TfN gets involved in sharing examples of best practice and scheme design other than to signpost partners who require it, as this is already covered well by UTG and other bodies and will also be picked up by Active Travel England.

4.0 Spatial Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The Strategic Transport Plan made a number of statements in relation to our role regarding spatial planning:

- Continue to work with Partners to develop and implement their local plans and strategies, ensuring they complement the policies and proposals set out in the Strategic Transport Plan, to deliver packages of improvements that support a more seamless, integrated end-to-end experience. Where possible, this should encourage modal shift and promote active transport, and further develop public transport networks as important sustainable modes of travel.
- Work with Partners to ensure that future strategic housing, commercial and industrial developments are well connected, and have high expectations on developers to provide access to public transport facilities, high levels of cycle parking and storage, and provide electric charging facilities to support a greener and cleaner road network.
- Ensure that improvements to the strategic transport network align with local spatial plans and other key strategies and are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Ensure that necessary strategic transport interventions are delivered in the right place and at the right time to support the delivery of major development proposals, including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project developments, Enterprise Zones and Garden Towns/Villages.

- 4.2 For TfN, there are several challenges to address as we develop our spatial planning policy framework, which are:
- As a STB, TfN has the remit to influence and promote strategic transport interventions, and our STP is a formal plan that should be a key consideration for any spatial or transport plans within the North. However, until we have developed a defined position on spatial planning, we have not had the ability to administer this function.
 - There is current uncertainty for planning reform on a national level with future policy decisions for spatial planning yet to be defined.
 - With a remit across the entire North, TfN's resources have responsibility across a broad range of policy development and strategy implementation. This limits the extent to which TfN can review and engage in detail on partner's plans and strategies.
 - Currently, many of the spatial planning ambitions of partners are localised based on local authority boundaries. However, cross-boundary collaboration does take place, such as at a Combined Authority level.
 - Some of TfN's partners are not local planning authorities, for example Combined Authorities, reflecting that strategic transport and planning are often undertaken at different levels.
- 4.3 As a statutory sub national transport body, TfN's role is to set the overall transport vision and to provide statutory advice on planning and priorities for large scale transport investment. Within this context, TfN will seek to encourage collaborative spatial planning across the North, to support partners in developing local plans and strategies which reflect TfN's pan-northern priorities outlined within the STP and wider TfN workstreams. TfN will share our evidence base to support plan development and work proactively with partners to encourage cross-boundary collaboration.
- 4.4 There are four key roles TfN can plan in proactively supporting this agenda.
- Early engagement with partners in their development of spatial plans and working openly to support appropriate development of infrastructure options.
 - Share our evidence base to support the development of consistent and robust analysis of the likely relationship between proposed developments and TfN's strategic transport vision for the North. This includes our Transport Decarbonisation trajectories, Northern Evidence Hub and TAME capabilities.
 - Share knowledge and experience of how TfN's strategic transport vision aligns with the proposed development, to ensure future spatial plans are aligned with the delivery of future transport infrastructure.
 - Work collaboratively to support partners to prepare strong policies and proposals that are sustainable, practical and well-designed.
- 4.5 A key objective for the revised STP is to turn our policies into action, as such the Spatial Planning Framework (Appendix 2) outlines a number of specific actions TfN can do in the short – medium term to achieve tangible results, these are.
- Build links with local planning partners to showcase the added value TfN can offer in local plan development and spatial planning policy. This includes showcasing our modelling capabilities, Future Travel Scenarios work and wider evidence base to gain feedback and potential future extensions of key TfN workstreams.
 - Collate evidence from partners to understand partners' current spatial planning policy and future local plan refresh and adoption timescales. Explore opportunities to collate this information centrally for the North and to quantify the scale of development proposed across each area of the North.

- Work with partners to recognise the varying requirements for Government funding applications and support applications which reflect the place-based approach embedding TfN's key workstreams.
- Continue to maintain the D-Log/I-Log through TAME's annual data collection process and engage with partners on the capabilities and added value these modelling tools can provide for spatial planning across the North.
- Formalise the forum in which TfN can engage with partners on all elements of spatial planning.
- Engage with wider stakeholders to consider their perspectives on spatial planning and how this aligns with TfN and local planning partner ambitions.

5.0 Multi Modal Hubs Policy Position

- 5.1 The STP states that "TfN will support the development and delivery of improved multimodal transport hubs at key national and international gateways in the North", and that TfN will "work with Partners to develop and implement their local plans and strategies, ensuring they complement the policies and proposals set out in the Strategic Transport Plan, to deliver packages of improvements that support a more seamless, integrated end-to-end experience."
- 5.2 For TfN, there are several challenges to address as we develop our multi-modal hubs policy, including:
- As a Statutory Transport Body, TfN has the remit to influence and promote strategic transport interventions, and our STP is a formal plan that should be a key consideration for any transport plans within the North. Through developing a defined policy position, TfN have the opportunity to support partners further in this area.
 - The creation of a TfN multi-modal hub policy position creates greater certainty for partners around what TfN's defined role is and the added value which TfN can provide.
 - Multi-modal (M-M) hubs can vary significantly both in size and demand levels, and TfN recognises the need for a flexible 'Place based' approach to supporting M-M hubs.
- 5.3 TfN as a statutory sub national transport body has a statutory responsibility to support and implement transport strategies across the North, promoting the investment priorities of the North on a national scale. Our STP is a formal plan and therefore as part of our role within multi-modal hubs, we aim to ensure the ambitions and priorities of our STP are included as a key consideration for any spatial or transport plan developed within the North by local partners.
- 5.4 Furthermore, we believe there are five key roles TfN can plan in proactively supporting this agenda.
- Making the case for financial investment in multi-modal hubs in the North.
 - Supporting partners through access to expertise.
 - Providing partners with an evidence base of potential multi-modal hub demand.
 - Collation of best practice for partners to apply to their areas.
 - Undertake work to identify multi-modal hub locations which would benefit from improved passenger information / marketing.
- 5.6 A key objective for the revised STP is to turn our policies into action, as such the Multi-Modal Hubs Policy Position statement (Appendix 3) outlines a number of specific actions TfN could do in the short – medium term to achieve tangible results, these are.

- Work with local partners to identify locations for future development of multi-modal hubs or improvements to existing multi-modal hubs, and work with local partners in making the case to Government for investment.
- Partners can seek support from TfN around their proposed development plans for multi-modal hubs. This can include seeking advice from TfN officers on making the case within business case development (i.e. ensuring TfN plans are represented in the Strategic Case) and also using communications between TfN and central Government to gain insight into future funding opportunities and Government direction.
- Through the TfN Analytical Framework, TfN can provide data to local authorities which reflects the regional scale of travel patterns and accounts for cross-boundary trips, for both baseline demand for multi-modal hubs and forecast demand in various future travel scenarios. This can support partners in developing business cases through providing evidence of the wider spatial context, alongside support for submitting funding applications for investment in multi-modal hubs.
- There is an opportunity for TfN to collate existing best practice which considers examples across the North, across England and internationally. This could also consider different planning requirements relevant to multi-modal hubs. This repository could be made available to local partners, for their reference in the development of multi-modal hub plans, and business case development.
- Share the findings of TfN's Rail Station Study to inform future investment and decision making and to assist in identifying effective measures for multi-modal hub enhancement.

6. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 6.1 No direct financial implications of these policy positions beyond resource implications noted below. However, TfN's ability to undertake this work in full will be subject to its 2022/23 funding allocation and the 2022/23 business planning process.

Resource Implications

- 6.2 There are potential human resource implications associated with adopting these policy positions, namely ensuring adequate resources within TfN to deliver on the actions identified. These have already been fully considered and will continue to be worked through as part of on-going business and budget planning process for FY2022/23 aligned to TfN's overall financial position post-CSR.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 The statutory obligations on TfN under the Local Transport Act 2008 as amended by Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 in preparation of the STP will be kept under review to ensure the STP is legally sound and complies with the legal requirements.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 6.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment. TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes risks associated to the continual embedment of the 2019 Strategic Transport Plan (STP). TfN will undertake a risk assessment during the development of the new STP. TfN's ability to undertake this work in full will be subject to its 2022/23 funding allocation and the 2022/23 business planning process.

Environmental Implications

6.5 To accompany the STP we will be revising our existing Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), the extent to which changes to the existing ISA may be required will depend on how fundamentally different the revised STP is from our current one, as such a full review will be undertaken in due course and we will be seeking external advice on what is required in the next financial year.

Equality and Diversity

6.6 To accompany the revised STP we will also be undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

The results of the current Transport Related Social Exclusion workstream being undertaken by TfN will allow TfN and its partners to better understand the distribution and causes of TRSE in the North and will form an important part of the evidence base for the STP.

Consultations

6.7 A consultation is not required at this time; the statutory consultation planned for the revised STP in Summer 2023 will be undertaken in due course.

7. Background Papers

7.1 N/A

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Active Travel Policy Position Statement

8.2 Appendix 2 – Draft Spatial Planning Policy Framework

8.3 Appendix 3 – Draft Multi Modal Hubs Policy Position Statement

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

- a) Strategic Transport Plan – STP
- b) Strategic Road Network – SRN
- c) Major Road Network – MRN
- d) Urban Transport Group - UTG
- e) Active Travel England - ATE
- f) Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review – NPIER
- g) Royal Town Planning Institute - RTPI
- h) Transport Related Social Exclusion – TRSE
- i) Transport Appraisal Modelling Economics (TfN team) – TAME
- j) Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review – NPIER
- k) TfN’s Development Log (used for modelling) - D-Log
- l) TfN’s Investment Log (used for modelling) - I-Log
- m) Multi-modal hubs – M-M hubs