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**Meeting:** Transport for the North Board  
**Subject:** Strategic Transport Plan Policy Development  
**Author:** Lucy Jacques, Acting Head of Policy and Strategy  
**Sponsor:** Tim Foster, Interim Strategy and Programme Director  
**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 25 January 2022

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**1. Recommendation:**

1.1 That the Board agree the draft policy position statements.

**2. Purpose of the Report**

2.1 Once agreed by the Board these statements will be embedded within the revised STP. They will also be used by TfN and partners to shape TfN programme activity and to influence Government policy by shaping future statutory advice we may issue.

**3. Main Issues:**

3.1 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.

3.2 The STP contains a wide range of policy positions, outlining how TfN works 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 policy positions are being assessed and, where appropriate, updated and strengthened to reflect the latest evidence, national and local policies.

3.3 As part of the STP programme approach, all the evidence and policy positions will be taken 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.

3.4 These policy positions clearly set out the challenges and opportunities for TfN to add value across a range of policy areas. In addition, they 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.

3.5 These position statements have been worked up by TfN officers and TfN partners via TfN's Strategic Oversight Group.

3.6 The first wave of these policy positions focuses on Active Travel (Appendix 1), and Multi modal hubs (Appendix 2). A third paper – relating to Spatial Planning – is undergoing further refinement following feedback from the Executive Board.

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.

- 3.7 All of these policy positions have been developed and will be taken forward in a way that will help us deliver on the ambitions set out within our Decarbonisation Strategy and are aligned to help government achieve the net zero 2050 target.

#### **4.0 Active Travel Policy Position**

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 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.

- 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 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.

- 4.4 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 in their development of proposals as appropriate 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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 Urban Transport Group and other bodies and will also be picked up by Active Travel England.

## **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 strategic case for investment in multi-modal hubs in the North.
  - Supporting partners in the development of their proposals through access to expertise within TfN.
  - Providing partners with access to the regional evidence base to support the identification of potential multi-modal hub demand.
  - Collation of best practice for partners to apply to their areas.
  - Undertake work in support of partners 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.
  - Undertake further work to explore multi modal hubs from a freight perspective exploring freight interchanges and working with partners to explore potential locations.

## **6. Scrutiny and Executive Board Feedback**

- 6.1 TfN Scrutiny Committee and Executive Board were consulted to seek their views on the report and appendices in advance of sharing with TfN Board for sign off.

6.2 Engagement with TfN Scrutiny Committee took place on Wednesday 12 January 2022, a high-level summary of the feedback from Scrutiny and detail on how that has been considered in the final report is provided below.

- Scrutiny was very welcoming of the policies put forward and agreed the actions identified in the policies are important areas for TfN to undertake moving forward.
- Scrutiny asked for the report to contain more reference to the alignment between these policies and TfN and National Governments Decarbonisation targets, this has been actioned in paragraph 3.7 of the report.
- Scrutiny Committee felt there is a clear role for TfN to be a depositary for best practice across these policy areas and it was confirmed that was a key action we plan to take forward.
- Scrutiny Committee welcomed the work on multi-modal hubs but noted the policy to date is focused on passenger multi-modal hubs as such they have asked for further consideration to be made to explore what this looks like for freight. In response to this a further action has added to the position itself, will be included as an additional recommendation to the final TfN Freight & Logistics Strategy and will be prioritised for further development early next financial year (2022/2023).

6.3 Engagement with TfN Executive Board took place on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, a high-level summary of the feedback received and detail on how this has been considered in the final report is provided below.

Executive Board were supportive of the approach taken and recognised the importance that these positions will have in shaping the revised STP. Executive Board identified a number of additional actions to be considered in the report and positions which have now been added. These included

- Making more explicit reference in the Active Travel paper to DfT's Gear Change document, which was published in July 2020,
- Including an additional action into the active travel paper to identify the role TfN can play in exerting our influence with partners and the academic sector to help develop the skill sets required to properly plan active travel needs of the future.
- Add an additional action into the active travel paper for TfN to explore how we brand our technical tools, so more people are aware of and have access to the assets.
- On multi modal hubs, the Executive Board noted the need for TfN to be seen as supporting partners in this space.

6.4 The discussion at the Executive Board identified a couple of more general points that TfN officers will consider moving forward:

- Options for improving the visibility and branding of the tools that TfN have and which are available for use by third parties – the point that was made that this would help reinforce TfN's role as a source of trusted analytical capability.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen relationships with educational and training providers with a view to helping improve the availability of key skills within the transport profession that support the shift in emphasis in policy development, the identification of investment priorities and the development of proposals.

6.5 The Executive Board acknowledged the need to set out the role of TfN in terms of spatial planning. It was pointed out that their planning agenda is one that continues to undergo change and accordingly TfN officers consider that on

balance there is further work to be done on this policy position before bringing to Board for sign off.

## **7. Corporate Considerations**

### ***Financial Implications***

- 7.1 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***

- 7.2 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***

- 7.3 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***

- 7.4 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***

- 7.5 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***

- 7.6 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***

- 7.7 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.

## **8. Background Papers**

- 8.1 N/A

## **9. Appendices**

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Active Travel 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) Transport Related Social Exclusion – TRSE
- h) Transport Appraisal Modelling Economics (TfN team) – TAME
- i) Multi-modal hubs – M-M hubs