**REPORT TO CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**BOARD MEETING**

Subject: Cheshire & Warrington Transport Strategy

Author: Roy Newton

Meeting date: 14th November 2018

**Purpose**

1. To update the Board on the development of the sub-regional transport strategy and the main comments arising from stakeholder engagement, as well as to seek approval for the final draft version attached at Annex A.

**Recommendations**

1. The Board is asked to approve the sub-regional transport strategy, subject to any final amendments agreed by the Board.

**Background**

1. The Local Transport Body has been overseeing the development of a draft Transport Strategy to support the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). It is one of a number of plans being developed which set out in more detail how priorities of the SEP will be delivered. The strategy sets out how transport provision within Cheshire and Warrington should be developed over the next 20 years and identifies short term (5 year) priorities.
2. The draft strategy:
   * summarises the economic and spatial context;
   * analyses existing accessibility and travel patterns;
   * identifies transport challenges which need to be tackled to support achievement of the SEP objectives;
   * describes potential key design principles;
   * sets out how the sub-region could address the challenges; and
   * proposes transport infrastructure priorities
3. Engagement with stakeholders has been a key component of the development of the strategy, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to input and sense check the various elements of the strategy

**Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback**

1. Stakeholder engagement on the draft strategy was undertaken from Monday 14 May for 12 weeks, though some comments were received after this period and have also been taken into account. A targeted engagement process was undertaken to avoid stakeholder fatigue and also make best use of available resources. It made use of existing meetings and events, and utilised electronic methods of communication, including:
   * Emailing a copy of the strategy to those organisations engaged during the development of the SEP together with the transport organisations engaged by Transport for the North as part of their Strategic Transport Plan consultation;
   * Placing a copy of the draft strategy on the LEP website;
   * Creating a new LEP email address specifically for consultation responses;
   * Advertising the launch of the draft strategy through a press release;
   * Undertaking one event in each Borough open to the general public similar to the approach used for the SEP; and
   * Presentation/discussion of the draft strategy was also undertaken with the following organisations:
     1. Cheshire Business Leaders; and
     2. Cheshire Association of Local Councils.
2. Responses have been collated from the 4 events, 28 organisations and 5 individuals. The main messages were:
   * Broad support for the aims of the strategy;
   * Support for improving east-west corridors (both road and rail);
   * Support for including schemes and identifying short, medium and long-term infrastructure;
   * Calls for:
     1. more emphasis on improving infrastructure for walking and cycling
     2. better bus and rail services;
     3. taking more account of the needs of motorcyclists;
     4. improving access to Manchester and Liverpool airports;
     5. improving rail stations (increasing parking, new stations and improving facilities);
     6. focussing on off-peak trips as well as peak trips especially for tourism
     7. improving bus journeys – ticketing, real time info, adapting to changing work patterns/demand, serving rural communities;
     8. more delivery/quick wins;
     9. taking older users more into account – better public transport (access to hospitals and towns, evening services, conveniently located bus stops, more seating at waiting areas, working lifts at stations) plus more parking for families and carers visiting older people;
     10. including the role waterways can play in supporting walking and cycling;
   * Support for tackling pinch points and highway corridor improvements, particularly along A49, A50, A51, A54 and A537;
   * Concerns over ability to fund delivery of the identified infrastructure; and
   * Concerns over ability to accommodate transport impacts of development.
3. The comments received were a mixture of general and specific. Some were simple statements which require no changes to the document. Most of the comments were supportive of the overall direction of the strategy hence fundamental changes are not proposed, however there were a number of suggestions which it is considered would strengthen the strategy. The LTB considered and agreed proposed changes at the formal, public meeting on 21 September 2018. The final draft strategy attached at Annex A incorporates the amendments agreed at the meeting.

**Next Steps**

1. The strategy identifies a number of studies required to identify solutions and schemes which need business cases to be developed. There will not be the resources available to take all of this work forward simultaneously. There will need to be an appropriate balance of studies and business case development in order to maintain the pipeline of schemes to be available for bidding for government funding as this becomes available. The Transport Advisory Group will be responsible for establishing a robust process to do this, and will need to look at the degree to which each study/business case supports the delivery of the objectives of the SEP and Transport Strategy, their estimated costs and likelihood for attracting additional third party funding (e.g. TfN, Highways England). It is proposed that the process and emerging results will be presented to the LTB for discussion/decision at the formal, public meeting on 21 December 2018.