

PENINSULA TRANSPORT: CONSULTATION ON REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY VISION

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Richard Chesterton

Responsible Officer: Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery

Reason for Report: To provide an opportunity for Members to consider a response to Peninsula Transport's consultation on a Regional Transport Vision.

RECOMMENDATION: That members consider the proposed vision and consider the key elements of a District Council response.

Financial Implications: There are no direct impacts on the District Council's budgets arising from this report; however the emerging Regional Transport Strategy is likely to inform national and regional funding allocations.

Budget and Policy Framework: There are no budgetary implications arising from this report. However the emerging Regional Transport Strategy is likely to inform strategic investment decisions in the South West. Strategic Transport is relevant to many of the Council's land use policies.

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Assessment: There are no risks identified with responding to this consultation.

Equality Impact Assessment: The proposed 'Goals' section of the consultation document recognises the importance of improving transport provision for more communities and more people; however our consultation response could include a request that wider equality issues are more explicitly referred to in the vision.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Enhanced transport provision underpins and supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

Impact on Climate Change: The emerging Regional Transport Strategy places great emphasis on climate change and includes a goal to deliver a net-zero carbon transport system across the peninsula.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Sub-National Transport Body (STB) for the South West Peninsula (Peninsula Transport) was established in 2019. It was created to transform transport and boost economic growth. It includes representatives from five

local transport authorities: Somerset County Council, Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council and Torbay Council and the two Local Enterprise Partnership, Heart of the South West & Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. It is responsible for defining and delivering the strategic transport priorities for most of South West England. Peninsula Transport will work with central government to help shape and outline strategic priorities for the region which will influence strategic investment decisions.

- 1.2 'Peninsula Transport' is currently developing a regional transport strategy, which will plan and prioritise strategic infrastructure across the peninsula over the next thirty years. It is currently consulting on its vision and goals for the South West transport network. This is a key milestone in developing the longer term regional transport strategy, as the vision will define the overall direction and principles of the strategy. The deadline for comments is 17 September 2021. Responses will inform a Full Transport Strategy which will be developed next year.

2.0 The Consultation Document

- 2.1 The consultation document is included in Appendix 1. This document incorporates a number of **proposed goals** summarised as follows:

- To improve connections between people, businesses and places; investment into road and rail networks. Better access will reduce inequality in society with better access to education, skills and employment;
- To enhance resilience and reliability of transport networks; journeys more efficient, increase productivity and improving region's ability to respond to climate change;
- To deliver affordable, zero-emissions transport for everyone; promote walking/cycling, reduce demand for cars;
- Improve the health and wellbeing of communities; give choice and access to better transport; including safety and opportunities; and
- Make the peninsula a great place to live and work; by supporting the delivery of new homes and jobs, giving people the travel choices they need and the information they need.

- 2.2 The consultation document also sets out a number opportunities and challenges:

- Urbanisation: since Covid-19 evidence suggests that people are moving away from cities and areas of high population density
- Digitalisation: Covid-19 lockdowns demonstrated the potential for 'apps' and online platforms to deliver improvements in the transport sector. This includes travel apps to help customers maintain social distancing.
- Decarbonisation: The need to consider ways to reduce demand for transport or reduce carbon emitted by transport.
- Flexible Lifestyles: Covid-19 saw a sudden shift towards working from home and many employers plan for a longer-term shift away from office working. Online shopping increased.
- World of Work: productivity in SW is below average. In part this is due to poor transport connections. Improvements in logistical and freight corridors could transform our economy.

3.0 Proposed Consultation Response

3.1 The consultation document sets out three questions. The following paragraphs sets out those questions followed by a number of proposed issues that could form the basis of a District Council response:

Question 1: How much do you support or oppose the Peninsula Transport vision of “Transforming transport across the Peninsula to enable our society and economy to thrive and our unique and outstanding environment to flourish”?

Response: It is suggested that the District Council support the creation of a Regional Transport Strategy and its vision. A response could also suggest more explicit reference within this vision is made to tackling climate change and addressing inequalities.

Question 2: How much do we support or oppose the Peninsula Transport goals?

- *We will improve connections between people, businesses & places*
- *We will enhance the resilience of the transport network*
- *We will deliver affordable, zero-emissions transport for everyone*
- *We will help to improve the health and wellbeing of communities in the Peninsula*
- *We will help the Peninsula to be a great place to live and work*

Response: It is suggested that these goals could be strongly supported.

Question 3: What are the transport challenges, opportunities and priorities you feel should be focused on in the next 30 years within the Peninsula Transport region?

Response: It is suggested that the following challenges, opportunities and priorities are identified in the District Council’s response:

Challenges:

- **Rural transport disparity: limited public transport coverage, high cost and infrequency**
- **Journey time reliability: A need to make improvements to allow our businesses to compete effectively**
- **Barriers to the growth agenda with current infrastructure often at capacity**
- **How to encourage non-vehicular trips with a lack of adequate cycling/walking provision within and between local communities**
- **Rural Road Maintenance**
- **Sparsity of electric charging points**

Opportunities:

- **To build back our local economy around greener transport solutions**
- **Provision of improved public transport serving our market towns and their rural hinterland**

- To make a step change in pedestrian and cycle improvements in our Market Towns
- Improvements to our strategic highway network such as at J28 and J27 of the M5 Motorway, Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, A361 Tiverton Link Road
- Reopening of Cullompton Railway Station

Priorities:

- Support our businesses through improved strategic connectivity such as M5 enhancements including J28 upgrade to unlock strategic developments
- Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road and Tiverton A361 Link Road to unlock development and help regenerate our town centres
- Reopening of Cullompton Railway Station
- Greater cycle/pedestrian investment in our market towns
- Increased electric charging point investment
- Rural public transport investment
- Road maintenance investment

3.2 It is suggested that the above comments could form the basis of a District Council's response supplemented by further suggestions members may wish to make at this meeting.

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List of Background Papers: Peninsula Transport Vision (see Appendix 1)