

Hertfordshire County Council



Freepost
Transport for London
Consultations

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Email:
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Dear Mayor Khan,

Hertfordshire County Council's Response to the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy

I am writing to you to offer Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) views on the recently published draft Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (MTS). HCC supports the majority of the content contained within the MTS and in particular the focus on London's future growth which we recognise as substantial. Given the expected revisions to population growth projections and further unmet housing needs which need to be accommodated outside of London, we believe it is imperative that London works together with the wider East and South-East of England to plan collaboratively for housing and the transport infrastructure required for this, supporting the MTS principle of 'good growth'.

The interrelationship between London and the local authorities over its boundary are substantial, and residents of both areas expect seamless travel across the boundary. In view of this Hertfordshire County Council has always supported Transport for London (TfL) taking over suburban rail services. London cannot plan its transport system in isolation, and the draft MTS pays insufficient regard to cross boundary movement. We support growth being facilitated in a sustainable way and support the targets for cutting pollution and congestion, however working better together to manage this growth and the required transport infrastructure is critical. The MTS should include greater consideration of transport links across its border particularly where there are areas experiencing substantial growth, such as in Hertfordshire.

Linked with the above is the pressing need for a wider political grouping for London and its hinterland. As a result Hertfordshire County Council is interested in the concept of establishing a Capital Region Transport Board. As a first step we would like to see representation for authorities bordering London on the TfL Board.

The MTS aligns well with the county council's own Local Transport Plan currently in development, supporting our own ambitions of achieving travel behaviour change and modal shift. However, it should be recognised that we are making every effort to achieve our objectives in a very different position than London which has more powers over transport provision and funding.

Before providing comments on specific MTS content and proposals, I would like to highlight the some of the interrelationships referred to already between Hertfordshire and London, which reinforce the need for closer cooperation on planning for growth and transport.

Travel Patterns

There are very close links and common issues between Hertfordshire and London. 26% of commuter journeys which originate in Hertfordshire are to London (15% to central areas and 11% non-central areas). Significant trip pairs exist between outer London and Hertfordshire include

Cheshunt and Enfield, Borehamwood and Barnet, Watford and Harrow, Hillingdon and Brent, Potters Bar and Barnet. There is a high car mode share for these trips ranging from a car mode share of 57% from Brent to Watford, to as high as 86% from Watford to Hillingdon.

In addition to forming much of London's northern border, Hertfordshire is a significant source of London workers, and destination for London residents. London's population growth needs are likely to strengthen this relationship in future decades. Given this interaction it is important the transport offer is consistent and the connections exist to support movement by non-car modes.

Common Issues

There are also a lot of common issues between Hertfordshire and the outer London areas it borders such as difficulties making orbital/ east west movements by public transport, high car mode shares, deficiencies in the cycling network/ provision, the quality of urban realms reduced by traffic dominance, and deficiencies in multi modal interchange at public transport hubs.

Because of these links and common issues mentioned above, we would like to work with TfL more on areas of innovation and provide a more consistent transport offer for London commuters such as with shared mobility (the shared use of a vehicle, bicycle, or other mode) options and smart ticketing etc.

Comments on MTS content and proposals

Bus and Cycle Links between outer London areas and Hertfordshire

HCC supports the intention to redistribute resources to outer London and areas of housing growth to maximise potential mode shift to buses. This should include better bus links with Hertfordshire. The MTS includes mode share targets (P276) with an aim from 2015 to 2041 to increase the share by walking, cycling and passenger transport from 20% to 30% for trips from Outer London to external areas, and 55% to 80% for inner London to external areas. Given the travel patterns outlined in the previous section, better connections by bus and cycling could support these aims.

Figure 4 on page 53. We welcome the opportunities to improve London's cycling network, however, few of the cycle routes extend beyond the London boundary. We would like to suggest the inclusion of links to Potters Bar, Borehamwood and Watford given the significant travel patterns.

Crossrail 2 (p74) and West Anglia Main Line Four Tracking

HCC supports Proposal 56 for the delivery of Crossrail 2 by 2033. The scheme is vital for adding required capacity to the West Anglia Main Line.

HCC also supports Proposal 79 of Crossrail 2 and would like to highlight the need for it to "be complemented by a network of streets that enable and encourage walking and cycling and deliver a reliable and clean bus and freight network" to reach its full potential and optimise the places it serves. We believe this should apply to stations outside greater London. We look forward to working with Crossrail 2, TfL and the Mayor, as well as Broxbourne Borough Council to develop plans for the stations in Hertfordshire. This includes working with these partners and Network Rail on new Turnford station proposal in Broxbourne.

HCC supports early upgrades and Four Tracking of the West Anglian Main Line in advance of Crossrail 2, which could accelerate the delivery of the growth Crossrail 2 is forecast to support (p223). Importantly, Stansted Airport is expected to exceed 35 million passengers per annum by 2025 and aims to make full use of its remaining capacity within its existing runway which could mean as many as 45 million passengers per annum. Stansted is already successful in attracting trips by sustainable modes however, the upgrade to the West Anglian Main Line will support the further expected growth by improving transport access by a sustainable mode and providing economic benefits by creating more jobs.

Metropolitan Line Extension (p179)

Our Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport wrote to you in letter dated 9th August 2017 concerning the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) project in Watford. We are deeply concerned that the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX) is not included in the investment programme included in Proposal 58. We would urge this to be reconsidered considering the project plays a critical role in providing significant opportunity to support London's continued growth and wider economic impacts over the coming years.

The MTS supports improvements to public transport to enhance travel into and out of London, and to strengthen the transport links between London and areas beyond the GLA boundary to support growth. The MLX will contribute to London's future housing requirements, generating additional fare revenues for TfL and exhibit the 'good growth' principle promoted in the MTS. Given this, we strongly believe that the MLX scheme should be mentioned in the MTS.

The MLX scheme already has a significant amount of funding committed to it and can be delivered in the short term. It is critical to delivering sustainable growth in Watford and the North London area bringing significant economic benefits not just to Hertfordshire but to residents and businesses in London. In previous correspondence, you indicated the need for the MLX project to have full funding in place before it can be progressed further however, we note that the MTS includes a number of potential proposals around new rail links or extensions that appear to be unfunded. Failure to include the MLX scheme in the MTS could give the impression to other local authorities and potential investors that London is not looking at the impacts of its growth agenda on the areas surrounding London, or recognising the need to co-invest in infrastructure schemes that would support its growth plans.

Extension of Suburban Rail Management by TfL (p157)

HCC supports the aim for suburban rail services to equal the frequency and reliability standards of TfL run lines as set out in Proposal 60. This will improve journey times, capacity and help provide seamless interchanges, delivering a more consistent level of service for customers to areas beyond London.

HCC also supports the devolution to TfL of Moorgate services outside of London (i.e. to Welwyn Garden City and Hertford / Stevenage under Proposal 61). We would like to see this as a first step in more formal coordination of passenger transport services between London and its immediate neighbouring authorities.

M25 reliability and capacity (p33)

HCC supports managing the M25 as a strategic road jointly with Highways England and TfL to cater for essential journeys, without increasing car dependency within or outside of London. The government's recently published Transport Investment Strategy includes plans to consult on a Major Road Network (MRN) of important locally managed A-roads. The A414 and A405 North Orbital Road through Hertfordshire should be included in the MRN, and these form an outer parallel route to the M25 north of London. The roads play an important role in providing resilience to the M25 when there are incidents, and sections of them already accommodate longer distance strategic traffic flows seeking alternatives to the Highways England network. We are currently developing a strategy for the A414 in the county including the A405, which will further develop plans for investment and improvement to it. We would welcome your support when our plans are agreed, given the potential benefits to the M25's operation.

Rail capacity (p140)

Rail is the dominant mode share for trips into central London from Hertfordshire, with the most significant origins being St Albans, Watford, Cheshunt, Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City, Hemel Hempstead, Borehamwood and Stevenage. We would like the MTS to include more support for investment and improvements to commuter stations, and a commitment to work closely with partners to improve station connectivity, accessibility and capacity overall.

HCC recognises the importance of rail travel and that overcrowding is a major problem meaning there is no appealing alternative to car use for many. Given this, we support in principle Policy 14 of TfL working with Network Rail and train operating companies to increase capacity by at least 80 per cent by 2041 to tackle over-crowding. However, HCC would wish to ensure that this is not to the detriment of Hertfordshire commuters wishing to directly access central London. HCC also supports improving information which informs the public of the best modes, routes and times to avoid the most crowded parts of the network such as by walking.

Mini-Radial Rail Hubs and Networks (p160)

HCC supports the development and integration of outer London rail services from Hertfordshire and multi-modal interchange hubs to create 'mini-radial' public transport links to town centres. This will benefit London and also Hertfordshire towns on the West Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line, East Coast Mainline and West Anglia Main Line by providing improved 'orbital' public transport connectivity. It will potentially connect centres and communities to each other and reduce car dependency, making it easier to switch between rail, bus, walking and cycling at the strategic and 'other' interchanges.

Rail freight Proposals (p163)

HCC supports the Mayor's intention to reduce freight traffic in London to free up capacity for additional passenger services (Proposal 64). This would be by improving rail networks outside London, in particular, using the existing unfilled rail paths on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton corridor and upgrading and electrifying this line. This could benefit the West Coast and East Coast Mainlines in Hertfordshire.

Ultra-Low Emission Zone (p89)

In December 2016 HCC responded to the Mayor of London's new proposals to improve air quality by introducing a new Emissions Surcharge and for improving the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone in London. HCC continues to support the action to improve air quality in London. The proposals could have benefits to Hertfordshire with cleaner vehicles travelling through the county to get to London however, we would like to see more detail and any impact assessments before we can fully support the proposals on the ULEZ as there is a risk Hertfordshire could experience an older and dirtier fleet mix of vehicles diverting or avoiding the extended ULEZ. There are also concerns over the impact to contracted school bus services and community transport vehicles where these services may face additional costs if they cross the border into London, for example taking children from Hertfordshire over the border to school.

Air Quality (p86)

HCC supports Proposal 27 aiming for the whole TfL bus fleet to emit zero exhaust emissions by 2037 with the phasing in of more efficient vehicles starting from 2018. Given a number of TfL buses operate in Hertfordshire, we strongly support the efforts to tackle air quality problems.

Public Transport Link to Airports (p246)

HCC strongly supports improved public transport links to airports, notably rail, which as mentioned in the MTS, have a "key role to play in making the best use of existing capacity while supporting a shift to more sustainable ways of travelling". In particular we support:

- New, longer trains for Gatwick and Luton airports as part of the Thameslink Programme and Brighton Main Line upgrade.
- Upgrading the West Anglia Main Line serving Stansted airport, including four-tracking, to be followed by increasing frequencies associated with Crossrail 2.
- Enabling new routes and frequencies to Heathrow airport, with the delivery of the Elizabeth line new automated people-mover to better connect Luton airport with the rail network.

HCC also supports extending the Milton Keynes to East Croydon service to Gatwick Airport.

The MTS highlights the role of coach services in providing surface access, and the need of airport operators to provide a fair share of funding for this. We believe there is an opportunity here for the potential of coachways and rail/coach park and rides to provide access to London and its airports

(particularly Heathrow given its expansion proposals) as a means to relieve demand on the M25 and support the Mayors aspiration avoid M25 improvements increasing car dependency.

Improving public transport accessibility

The county council supports the implementation of step-free access at Underground stations (Proposal 52), and would like to see those stations in Hertfordshire included early on in the programme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hertfordshire County Council supports much of the content of the London transport strategy in particular, the focus on healthier streets, improving public transport and opportunities to reduce car use/modal shift. Many of these themes are common to the new Local Transport Plan we are developing which we will be consulting on later in 2017.

I hope this letter underlines the support HCC have for Mayor's Transport Strategy and highlights areas we believe could be strengthened, in particular in regards to more collaborative working and the inclusions mentioned for Hertfordshire which we believe necessary to facilitate the growth expected in and outside of London. We hope that the points raised in this letter will be taken into consideration when producing the final MTS and please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further detail and clarity on the points above.

Yours Sincerely
Hertfordshire County Council