

TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

REPORT TO COUNCILLOR PETER CRASKE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 8 JANUARY 2010

MAYOR OF LONDON'S TRANSPORT STRATEGY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT

Decision ref: ETR 57/09-10

ISSUES

On 12 October 2009 the Consultation Draft of the Mayor's new Transport Strategy (MTS2) was published, at the same time as the consultation draft of the replacement London Plan and the Economic Development Strategy. The Transport Strategy is a statutory document required by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and is intended to define the Mayor's transport policy framework over the next 20 years. MTS2 sets out 35 'strategic policies' and 129 transport proposals, including long term ones up to the year 2031. Comments and feed back have been invited by the Mayor with an aim to publish the final strategy in spring 2010.

OPTIONS

- (a) Approve the response to the Mayor of London on his new Draft Transport Strategy as set out in this report, subject to any amendments by the Cabinet Member for Transport.
- (b) Do not offer any comments.

DECISION

The Deputy Director of Environment and Regeneration Services (Strategic Planning & Transportation), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, be authorised to submit Bexley's response based on this report by the deadline of 12 January 2010.

REASONS

The Mayor of London's Transport Strategy forms an important context for the development and implementation of Bexley's transport policies and programme as well as the basis of the Local Implementation Plan. It is, therefore, in the Council's interest to ensure that the new Transport Strategy is consistent with Bexley's own policies and priorities.

Signed: Councillor Peter Craske

Date: 11/01/10

LAST DATE FOR CALL-IN: 22/01/10

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1. Introduction and Background

Exactly nine years after the publication of the Consultation Draft of the previous Transport Strategy, the draft of the new Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS2) has been published for public consultation. This is a statutory document required by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and is intended to define the Mayor's transport policy framework over the next 20 years (i.e. up to 2031). The deadline for submitting responses is 12 January 2010. In November 2008, the Mayor published a document entitled "Way to Go!" offering his first set of ideas to help inform his new Transport Strategy. This was followed by 'The Statement of Intent', produced in May 2009, which contained the Mayor's initial thoughts on a new transport strategy for London. Finally, on 12 October 2009 the Consultation Draft of the Mayor's new Transport Strategy (MTS2) was published, together with the consultation drafts of the replacement London Plan and the Economic Development Strategy, demonstrating the Mayor's intention to improve the integration of transport and land use planning. It is, however, not clear if the three strategies have followed a joined-up approach. A considerable amount of analytical work is stated to underpin the new MTS.

2. Purpose and scope of this Report

The purpose of this report is to approve the submission of a response to the Public Consultation Draft of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (MTS2).

3. MTS document format

Following the publication of the earlier two documents, the expectation was that unlike the previous Mayor's transport strategy, MTS2 would be more high level and less prescriptive and was expected to give boroughs increased input to develop the transport solutions that are most appropriate to their local situations.

In reality, the current Consultation Draft is quite similar to the previous MTS, both in terms of the format and contents. It runs into 352 pages and is hardly a 'short and sharp strategic document'. Although the total number of 'Strategic Transport Policies' has been reduced to 35, compared to the previous document, there are some 129 'Proposals' to take these policies forward. This compares with 57 policies and 157 proposals in the first transport strategy. It is hoped that the Final Strategy will be more streamlined and oriented to strategic direction only, leaving scope for more detailed proposals on specific aspects separately.

4. Vision and objectives

The Mayor's overarching vision for London to 'lead the world in its approach to tackling urban transport challenges of the 21st century', is intended to be implemented through six goals:

- support economic development and population growth;
- enhance quality of life;
- improve safety and security;
- improve transport opportunities;
- reduce transport's contribution to climate change and improve its resilience; and
- support delivery of the London 2012 Olympic Games and its legacy.

The MTS2 also seeks to respond to all of the *London Plan* objectives (in particular, the one relating to accessibility and efficient transport system) as well as the national transport policy. This is certainly welcomed.

In regard to his first goal to support economic development and population growth, the Mayor has listed a number of proposals to meet 'the needs of a larger London in 2031' (paragraph 35). This list should not, however, be seen as exhaustive. In our view, there should be another bullet point indicating the recognition of the need for further transport infrastructure improvements, particularly in the Outer London boroughs, to support economic growth, housing and regeneration.

A 'challenge' for the goal entitled 'Improve transport opportunities for all Londoners' is rightly described as 'supporting regeneration and tackling deprivation'. However, the stated outcome needs to be more specific and should perhaps read 'supporting wider regeneration outcomes *by the provision of necessary transport infrastructure and services*'.

5. Strategic Policies and Transport Proposals

Most of the strategic policies are described in Chapter 4 (entitled 'Challenges and Strategic Policies') whilst a few policies relate to implementation (Chapter 7) and resources and funding (Chapter 8). Six of the policies deal with the 'delivery processes'. These include the Mayor's intention to develop five sub-regional plans and the need for boroughs to produce the next Local Implementation Plans. Chapter 5 specifically deals with 'Transport Proposals' and all 129 proposals are mode-based and considerably detailed.

The Strategy indicates the Mayor's welcome intention to consider network improvements 'whether funded or not'. However, Figure 3, illustrating enhancements to London's transport infrastructure, does not include further public transport improvements in the Thames Gateway boroughs, such as Bexley, apart from Crossrail.

It has been correctly recognised that orbital transport corridors are also important to overall levels of connectivity, but in Outer London they are less developed compared to Inner London. MTS2 will, therefore, be expected to rectify this anomaly. The Consultation Draft seems to focus on better journey planner information and integration between transport modes rather than much-needed new infrastructure or services.

As in the previous transport strategy, the role of the car in Outer London is recognised, particularly for medium to longer distance trips. However, the strategy specifically encourages the use of low emission cars.

Whilst a reference to future extensions of Crossrail has been made in Proposal 6, there is no specific recognition of the need for extension to Gravesend/Ebbsfleet to support regeneration. Although trams have a significant role in providing sustainable rapid transit links at appropriate locations, the potential for further tram schemes seem to have been left out of consideration in the Strategy.

The Strategy has proposed to progress a package of river crossings in east London, in consultation with the relevant London boroughs. This includes consideration for a longer-term fixed link at Gallions Reach, to which Bexley is opposed.

Predictably, the Mayor has attached a very high priority to encourage cycling as a mode of transport and has dubbed his vision as a 'cycling revolution'. Considerable emphasis has been placed on proposals for cycle hire schemes and cycle superhighways. Although it has been recognised that there is a fundamental need for the improvement of necessary infrastructure to facilitate safe cycling (something that is difficult to achieve in Outer London), one would expect a progressive and realistic approach on the improvement of infrastructure, training and safety for cycling, in conjunction with walking. For example, there is a potential for Greenways to combine safe cycling and walking routes.

MTS2 has proposed to deliver 'significant investment to improve walking conditions across London', including high street revitalisation through good quality public realm. There are also proposals for improving London's street spaces by encouraging the concept of 'better streets' and shared space, that should be sensitive to location and context and should be the subject of consultation.

The Strategy has recognised the 'essential role' of parking and provision for loading in supporting economic development, particularly in Outer London. This is significant, as some Outer London boroughs like Bexley which share borders with local authority areas outside Greater London have consistently faced the problems associated with different levels of permissible parking standards. Accordingly, the Draft London Plan has recommended more flexible parking standards in town centres where there are identified issues of vitality and viability and for Outer London boroughs wishing to promote a more generous standard for office developments. However, although flexibility in setting local parking standards is recognised for B1 use, this should be extended to other land uses through Development Plan Documents if required by local circumstances.

Although the analysis for the MTS focused on the outcomes of the committed investment programme until 2020, as indicated in TfL Business Plan and the HLOS (High Level Output Statement) process, the Mayor has rightly recognised that 'these investments will not be sufficient to meet London's needs and the Mayor's desired outcomes for 2031'. This is clearly a key issue and the needs and aspiration of Outer London boroughs like Bexley for long-term major transport infrastructure improvements (such as the need to connect the borough to the London Underground network and/or Docklands Light Railway), not yet identified in the MTS, must be seen in this context.

Whilst the Strategy has indicated the Mayor's intention to maintain the affordability of public transport 'to the maximum possible extent', there is a proposal to 'ensure that fares provide an appropriate and necessary level of financial contribution towards the cost of providing public transport services'. It is not clear if these intentions will prove contradictory to each other. London is already one of the most expensive cities in Europe to travel by public transport.

Consultation with Scrutiny Members

- a) Consultation Proposed [before decisions are taken affecting the Policy Framework]

No such consultation will be required.

b) **Consultation Undertaken**

Not applicable

6. Summary of Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly arising out of this report. However, the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy forms an important context for the development and implementation of Bexley's transport policies and programme as well as the basis of the Local Implementation Plan. The latter provides the basis of TfL's funding support for the Borough's transport infrastructure.

7. Summary of Legal Implications

The Mayor is required by Section 142 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to prepare and revise a transport strategy. The Mayor must consult with the Council under Section 42 of the Act as part of that process. Once the strategy is published, the Council is under a duty to have regard to it where carrying out its own functions. The Council must then also prepare its own Local Implementation Plan.

8. Summary of Other Implications

Equalities

HR Implications

Community Safety

Environmental Impact

Human Rights

Health and Well-Being of the Borough

Risk Management

Asset Management Implications

There are no direct implications under the above headings directly arising out of this report.

Local Government Act 1972 – Section 100d
List of Background Documents

1.	Greater London Authority: <i>Mayor's Transport Strategy: Public Draft for Consultation</i> , October 2009.
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