

**Communities, Environment & Highways  
Select Committee**

1 July 2019



**Rethinking Transport**

The Select Committee is asked to,

- a) review the output of the Rethinking Transport discovery engagement;
- b) share its views on current transport arrangements and how we might be able to meet transport and travel demand in more sustainable ways; and
- c) consider how it can support subsequent phases of the Rethinking Transport project.

**Introduction**

1. The Rethinking Transport project has been set up to fundamentally reimagine transport in Surrey: developing new, sustainable transport and travel options where journeys are wanted or needed, while also thinking about how residents can access communities, employment, health and social care, education and other key services more easily to avoid unnecessary travel.
2. The project forms part of the council's transformation programme, and will contribute to achieving the ambitions of Surrey's 2030 Vision and our Health and Wellbeing Strategy. As such, links with other transformation workstreams across the county are key – looking at work in the round to ensure engagement, policy development and decision-making processes are joined up.
3. Starting with a deep understanding of how and why people travel, Rethinking Transport is seeking to develop innovative solutions by drawing on innovative practice, behavioural insight techniques, design principles and the council's new strategic commissioning framework. The current discovery work constitutes the first phase of a project that is expected to last two years in total.
4. Close collaboration with partners and communities is central to the success of the project and to realising the potential of Surrey's collective capacity. Throughout May and June, a programme of engagement has sought the views of borough and district councils, education settings, health care providers, residents, businesses, service users and transport providers to understand where transport is working well and where there are opportunities to improve and innovate.
5. Similarly, Surrey County Council Members and officers have been invited to share their views on the same themes. In the case of Members, the project team held a drop-in session on 10 June, and

a corresponding questionnaire enabled those unable to attend to contribute.

6. In total, over 30 sessions have been held to date – ranging from one-to-one conversations to focus groups – through which over 100 individuals have taken part in the engagement.
7. This discovery work has also sought to understand levels of ambition and spheres of influence, with a view to developing a shared vision for transport in future and – crucially – understanding how the local system can realise its shared ambitions.

## Key themes

### The Challenges

8. Engagement to date has surfaced three key ambitions that are common amongst a range of stakeholders:
  - a) Reducing congestion
  - b) Improving air quality
  - c) Increasing flexible and independent travel options
9. In turn, these ambitions point to a range of issues that Surrey's pressurised transport system risks exacerbating, including,
  - a) health, wellbeing and environmental concerns;
  - b) difficulty recruiting and retaining a workforce with the right skills and experience – NB this is a challenge shared by businesses, health providers, education settings and local government
  - c) difficulty accessing communities and services (particularly for vulnerable residents)
10. Surrey's transport system is complex, and provides both inter- and intra-county travel across a large and diverse geographical area. Traditional transport infrastructure solutions alone will not provide sustainable solutions to growing demand and the issues indicated above. In other words, we cannot simply build our way out of the challenges we are currently facing.
11. The county therefore needs to find innovative ways of meeting the needs of people living, working and studying in the county in order to safeguard the environment, promote economic growth, and maximise the welfare of residents and communities.
12. Due to the strategic nature of transport, it is crucial that policy development, local planning, decision-making processes and transformation activity is coordinated. Currently, there is a risk that organisational priorities across the county are inconsistent, and consequently that decisions made for sound reasons in one part of the system may unintentionally have a negative impact on another.
13. While it is clear that good partnership working is already taking place in a number of forums, the engagement process has revealed

scope to further develop collaboration, and to increase coherence across the system.

### **Emerging solutions**

14. It is important to recognise that there is no ‘quick fix’ for these challenges: developing a sustainable, progressive transport system for Surrey will require leadership, a sustained effort to tackle problems, and shared commitment to culture and behaviour change.
15. Each of the organisations that combine to form Surrey’s local system has a role in providing the leadership required to agree our collective ambitions and to undertake the required action.
16. Such collective action would be aided by developing a system-wide vision for transport that clearly articulates shared priorities, informs decision-making, and guides investment. In turn, this would contribute to realising the ambitions in Surrey’s 2030 Vision and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
17. The engagement process has also revealed actions that could be taken to realise the ambitions identified in paragraph 6, including,
  - a) making better use of existing assets;
  - b) reducing the need to travel through smarter working;
  - c) embracing innovative solutions linked to emerging technology and open data;
  - d) encouraging a shift to sustainable and active modes of transport; and
  - e) establishing the required infrastructure – including digital solutions – to enable residents to make their own travel arrangements and access a wider variety of transport options (including Surrey’s most vulnerable residents).
18. Designing and agreeing measurable targets for the above – possibly increasing over time – would further help to stimulate and focus activity across the system.

<b>Next steps</b>
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19. The discovery phase – and corresponding engagement – will conclude in July 2019, at which point the project team will produce a report that brings together the output of engagement, supply and demand analysis, insight into trends and examples of innovation.
20. Beyond the summer 2019, the next phase of the project will focus on developing and implementing pilot projects to test the viability of solutions identified in the discovery phase. Options for pilot projects will also be set out in the report.
21. This first phase has drawn on external expertise, expertise across the system and a blended project team to help shape and deliver the discovery phase. As next steps are agreed with partners, it will

be important to identify roles and responsibilities across the system and the resources required to take this work forward.

22. It is anticipated that the Rethinking Transport project will require two years in total to identify, define and develop options to move to a sustainable transport system. In addition to its long-term focus on realising our 2030 ambitions, it is hoped that this project will also identify improvements that can be made in the short- and medium-term.

## Conclusions

23. As the Rethinking Transport project moves towards the conclusion of its discovery phase, the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee is asked to consider, comment on and add to the themes emerging from engagement to date.
24. The Committee is also asked to consider how it can support work to develop a shared vision for transport in Surrey, further develop partnership working and help to shape next steps for the project.

## Recommendations

25. It is recommended that the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee,
  - a) notes the output of engagement to date;
  - b) shares its views on current transport arrangements, where there may be scope to make improvements and innovate, and how work across the local system can deliver shared ambitions; and
  - c) considers forming a task group to help take the Rethinking Transport project forward, possibly with a view to bringing together related work on tackling congestion and addressing environmental concerns.

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