| | | | **Item** |
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| | **Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability** | | |
| | **21 January 2022** | | |

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| **Report of** | Assistant Director of Place and Client Services | **Author** | Jane Thompson<br>☎ 508642 |
| **Title** | Transport East Consultation – Transport Strategy and Draft Investment and Delivery Programme | | |
| **Wards affected** | All | | |

## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 Transport East (TE) is inviting responses to their Transport Strategy (TS) and draft Investment and Delivery Programme (IDP) for the eastern region. This consultation asks for views on the vision, overall approach and priorities contained in the TS and the IDP.

1.2 The TS and the IDP set out a strategy for investment to the year 2050. It is a cohesive transport strategy which looks at all modes including road and rail links and promotes sustainable transport. TE has worked closely with County Council's (the Highway and Transport Authorities, Network Rail, rail operators, sea and airports with, linking sea ports and air ports as well as travel. ECC (the transport and highway authority for ECC) have been involved in drafting of the TS and have work with TE on a range of initiatives which are included in the consultation documents. These initiatives include a number of schemes which will impact on Colchester's future housing and economic growth.

## 2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To agree the response (see Appendix 1) to the TE consultation, which will help secure investment in transport infrastructure in the region, thereby helping the Council meet its sustainability objectives, and improve connectivity within and beyond the region.

2.2 To request that CBC is closely involved with developing the emerging IDP it aligns with the Council's plans and policies.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 The public consultation on the Transport East regional Transport Strategy and draft in the draft Investment and Delivery Programme. The IDP comprises a regional transport investment pipeline to assess and prioritise strategic transport projects in the East and supporting mechanisms to identify and help progress projects through the pipeline, from early ideas to business case development to delivery.

3.2 The Council has a number of strategies and policies that reflect the importance it places on encouraging sustainability, including in the choices for sustainable modes of transport. Documents such as the Strategic Plan, the Local Plan, the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic document and the evolving Sustainable Modes of Transport and Electric Vehicle Strategy show the Council's aspirations to encourage greater modal shift from private cars to sustainable transport.

3.3     The Colchester Local Plan Section 1 (North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan) identifies that North Essex is well placed in the context of connections by road, rail, air and sea to the wider region and beyond.  The challenge is to provide North Essex with a sustainable transport system that provides good access to jobs and services, to support economic growth.  Growth promoted through the Local Plan provides an opportunity to prioritise, facilitate and deliver larger scale transport infrastructure projects that can significantly improve connectivity across and within the area.  A focus on sustainable transport in and around urban areas and the Garden Community will positively alter travel patterns and behaviour to reduce reliance on the private car.  To achieve this, the Plan states that the local planning authority will work with partners to deliver the infrastructure required to support development in the Local Plan.  Responding to this consultation will help to ensure that the emerging Transport Strategy for the East is closely aligned with the policies in the Local Plan, delivering a sustainable transport network that can accommodate future growth.

3.4     This is also supported by the Council's Strategic Plan which includes walking as cycling as a key component as well as ensuring new developments support the Council's promotion of carbon neutrality; Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategic document and the upcoming Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy.

3.5     This theme is also echoed in the Council's emerging Economic Plan 2022-25.  One of the four economic priorities underpinning the Plan is 'Planet' and the way that businesses can reduce their environmental impacts.  The aim is: 'to work with partners to improve the environment of our place and accelerate the decarbonisation of Colchester economy.

## 4.     Alternative Options

4.1   To not respond to the consultation. This would mean missing the opportunity to influence the TS and IDP and investment opportunities which would benefit the Borough.

**5.      Background Information**

**5.1     Transport East**

5.1.1   In March 2018 Transport East was launched, as a new Sub-National Transport Body to deliver a collective vision for the future of transport in Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

5.1.2   As a partnership, bringing together the local transport and planning authorities, and business leaders with Network Rail and National Highways, enables the region to speak with one voice on the transport investment needed to drive transformational growth and improve the quality of life for all that live and work in the region.

5.1.3   Transport East has been tasked by its partners and Government to set a Transport Strategy for the region and advise the Secretary of State for Transport on the East of England's transport investment priorities.

**5.2     Transport Strategy and Investment Delivery Plan**

5.2.1   Transport East has produced a draft Transport Strategy which sets a series of priorities for better transport for everybody living, working, and learning in the region covering the period up to 2050. Also, supplementing the Strategy is the Investment Delivery Programme which sets out the approach to enable delivery of the Transport Strategy.

5.2.2   As the Transport Strategy has been developed by the partners in identifying the transport investment needed to fully support members' shared ambitions for economic growth, quality of life, development, and prosperity in the region. The aim is to do this through the broad activities set out in figure 1, with specific actions agreed annually in the Business Plan.

**5.3     The Vision**

5.3.1   The vision for the Transport Strategy is a thriving economy for the east, with fast, safe, reliable, and resilient transport infrastructure driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.

5.3.2   The vision has been developed together with councils, business leaders and other partners. If the transport strategy is successfully delivered, then by 2050 our region will have:
   • Better public transport connections accessible to everyone
   • Places that make it easy and attractive for people to move around sustainably
   • More reliable business and freight journeys, due to less congestion and fewer incidents
   • A healthier, more active population – by making it easier to walk and cycle more often
   • Cleaner, greener transport, helping to protect our local environment and the world for future generations
   • People needing to make fewer journeys, partly due to better online connections bringing services into our homes.

5.3.4   Although the vision is region-wide, we recognise the need for a tailored approach for the unique characteristics of our different areas and communities. The TS suggests the following priorities:

**5.3.5   Large urban areas**

   • Fast, efficient and interconnected public transport networks

• Comprehensive, safe and attractive walking and cycling networks
• More reliable and faster road and rail links between major towns and cities
• Enhanced public realm in town/city centres with limited access for private vehicles
• Sustainable development concentrated around existing public transport hubs

### 5.3.6 In rural and coastal communities

• Comprehensive electric vehicle charging network
• Flexible, innovative public transport network
• Efficient, safe and well-maintained local road network
• High-quality walking and cycling routes to local centres and public transport hubs
• Ultra-fast broadband connections for all

### 5.3.7 Ports and airports

• High speed strategic road and rail links for freight journeys between gateways and major distribution centres
• More reliable strategic road and rail links for passenger and employee journeys between gateways and important destinations
• Efficient local transport networks connecting to urban areas and tourist attractions
• Infrastructure to enable the movement of freight via decarbonised modes of transport Ports and airports

5.3.8 The draft Strategy recognises that good transport is a means to an end, and not an end itself. Improving transport will help reduce carbon emissions and lead to a better quality of life for people in the region, levelling up by providing better access to more opportunities for work, learning and leisure. It will support businesses and drive economic growth by reducing costs, increasing productivity, and providing access to more markets and workers. It will also enable new development and housing.

## 5.4 Strategic Priorities

5.4.1 The draft Strategy for the region sets out four strategic priorities:

• **Decarbonisation to net-zero –** working to achieve net zero carbon emissions from transport, building on our status as the UK's premier renewable energy region.
• **Connecting growing towns and cities** – enhanced links between our fastest growing places and business clusters. Improving access for people to jobs, supplies, services, and learning; enabling the area to function as a coherent economy and improving productivity.
• **Energising coastal and rural communities** – a reinvented sustainable coast for the 21st century which powers the UK through energy generation. Supporting our productive rural communities and attracting visitors all year round.
• **Unlocking international gateways** – better connected ports and airports to help UK businesses thrive, boosting the nation's economy through better access to international markets and facilitating foreign direct investment.

5.4.2 The draft strategy proposes a delivery pathway for each of the four strategic priorities, which sets out the types of projects and schemes that are needed to achieve them.

## 5.5    Investment and Delivery Programme

5.5.1    The Investment and Delivery Programme outlines the process of and how the various projects will be developed and delivered and how performance will be monitored and the programme updated.

5.5.2    Transport East will not deliver individual projects, but it will:
- manage the Investment and Delivery Programme;
- advise government on priorities; and
- develop and deliver a programme of technical work and business cases, in partnership with local and national partners, to development; to improve and maximise delivery of transport outcomes in the region.

## 5.6    Investment in our region

5.6.1   Although all of the Strategic Priorities are relevant to the Borough, the most relevant are Decarbonising to net-zero, Connecting growing towns and cities and Energising coastal and rural communities. The strategy sets out goals and actions to help achieve to achieve them. See Table below

**The pathway to decarbonisation**

| Goal 1 | Zero carbon growth Support authorities and developers to plan new development that reduces the need for people to make carbon-intensive transport trips. |
|---|---|
| Action | To help our partners deliver zero carbon transport developments, we will:<br>• Create a 'future network plan' and lead 'strategic corridor connectivity studies' to support local authorities with new evidence to:<br>    - Deliver new housing which is closer to local jobs and in areas with accessible sustainable transport<br>    - Review planning applications to make sure transport proposals maximise opportunities which support the use of alternatives to traditional motor vehicles<br>• Identify opportunities to consolidate freight transport at a strategic scale in the East.<br>• Provide evidence and support local authorities and the Government to strengthen carbon reduction requirements. |

| Goal 2 | Reduce demand for carbon intensive trips Make it easier for people to access services locally or online. |
|---|---|
| Action | To help our partners deliver zero carbon transport developments, we will:<br>• Create a 'future network plan' and lead 'strategic corridor connectivity studies' to support local authorities with new evidence to:<br>    - Deliver new housing which is closer to local jobs and in areas with accessible sustainable transport - Review planning applications to make sure transport proposals maximise opportunities which support the use of alternatives to traditional motor vehicles<br> • Identify opportunities to consolidate freight transport at a strategic scale in the East.<br>• Provide evidence and support local authorities and the Government to strengthen carbon reduction requirements. |

| Goal 3 | Shift modes Support people to switch their journeys from private car to walking, cycling and passenger transport. |
|---|---|
| Action | To help our partners deliver zero carbon transport developments, we will:<br>• Create a 'future network plan' and lead 'strategic corridor connectivity studies' to support local authorities with new evidence to:<br>    - Deliver new housing which is closer to local jobs and in areas with accessible sustainable transport<br>    - Review planning applications to make sure transport proposals maximise opportunities which support the use of alternatives to traditional motor vehicles<br>• Identify opportunities to consolidate freight transport at a strategic scale in the East. |

| | • Provide evidence and support local authorities and the Government to strengthen carbon reduction requirements. |
|---|---|

| Goal 4 | **Switch fuels Support residents and businesses to switch all private, passenger transport, fleet and freight vehicles to net zero carbon fuels as quickly as possible.** |
|---|---|
| Action | To support the region to switch fuels, we will:<br>• Lead an electric vehicle infrastructure task force across the region to accelerate the rollout of charging infrastructure.<br>• Partner with National Grid and UK Power Networks to make sure the roll-out of charging infrastructure in the East aligns with plans for upgrading electricity supply networks.<br>• Coordinate partner organisations, including Net Zero East, Hydrogen East, National Highways, Network Rail and local authorities, to elevate and promote the need for investment in the East to decarbonise vehicle fleets and networks, including operational fleets, buses, taxis, private hire, trains and freight.<br>• Working with National Highways, accelerate the roll-out of ultra-rapid EV charging points on key routes across the region.<br>• Work with the Government and partners to identify what stops people and businesses from switching fuels and make the case for solutions that will work best in the East, including financial incentives. |

**Connecting growing towns and cities**

| Goal 5 | **Enhanced sustainable transport Improved access and connectivity for walking, cycling and passenger transport to enable sustainable travel for education, training, employment, leisure and access to services.** |
|---|---|
| Action | To better connect our growing towns and cities with each other and the rest of the UK, we will:<br>• Lead regional network analysis and corridor studies to support the need for investment on our key routes.<br> • Lead strategic thinking on the enhanced role of rail in the East to 2050.<br>• Improve the business cases for investment in our rail priorities in the East.<br>• Promote new thinking on the future use of roads in the region in collaboration with our key partners.<br>• Enhance the case for investment in and maintenance of our high priority roads. |

| Goal 6 | **Faster and more reliable transport connections Deliver improved transport connections between our growing towns, cities and corridors, and the rest of the UK to support business growth, skills development and employment.** |
|---|---|
| Action | To better connect our growing towns and cities with each other and the rest of the UK, we will:<br>• Lead regional network analysis and corridor studies to support the need for investment on our key routes.<br>• Lead strategic thinking on the enhanced role of rail in the East to 2050.<br>• Improve the business cases for investment in our rail priorities in the East.<br>• Promote new thinking on the future use of roads in the region in collaboration with our key partners.<br>• Enhance the case for investment in and maintenance of our high priority roads. |

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| **Goal 7** | **Fully integrate transport networks, services and operations through a customer-focused approach, enabling seamless and safe end-to-end journeys by sustainable modes of transport.** |
|---|---|
| Action | To create an integrated and customer-focussed transport network in towns and cities, we will:<br>• Work with local authorities to make sure their transport plans are developed with users at the centre.<br>• Coordinate with partners, including the police, for more investment to reduce road danger across the region |

**Energising costal and rural communities**

| **Goal 8** | **Increase access to education, training, service and employment for rural communities**<br>• **Support residents and businesses travelling in rural areas to switch modes or fuels.**<br>• **Support communities to make more local trips by encouraging goods and services to be provided locally.**<br>• **Support partners to provide alternative options to travel through better access to ultrafast broadband and digital communications. The pathway to energised coastal and rural communities** |
|---|---|
| Action | to increase access for rural and coastal communities to education, training, essential services and employment, we will: • Develop a centre of excellence for improved rural mobility in the East and tackle regional and national blockers to better rural transport services. • Lead an action plan to progress regional-level projects to deliver better rural bus services e.g., integrated ticketing or cross-border travel. • Showcase the region's best practice and develop a supporting business case which will help us to secure funding and deliver these initiatives across the region. • Working with local authorities, set out plans for investment in active travel to encourage more active lifestyles, supporting our public health aspirations and tourism industry. |

| **Goal 9** | **Improve connectivity along our coastline Connect our coastal communities to the rest of the region and the UK to support levelling-up and boost our coastal industries, such as energy, shipping and tourism.** |
|---|---|
| Action | To improve connections to our coastal communities, we will:<br>• Promote the transport needs of our coastal towns to improve connections from our coast with the rest of the region and the UK.<br> • Work with the Government and Network Rail to prioritise investment in rail to better connect our coastal communities.<br>• Co-ordinate our key partners and local authorities to establish an investment programme to tackle severance and level-up communities along our 500-mile coastline, identifying the best value projects potentially including water-based transport for coastal communities. |

The full list of Goals and actions can be found within the Public Consultation document

**5.7    Core Corridors**

5.7.1  As well as the Goals and Actions, the strategy identifies six core corridors where the four strategic priorities will be focussed for investment. The core corridors play a vital role in the movement of people and goods in the East. These corridors are the road and rail links between the region's growing urban areas, ports and airports, and the rest of the UK. Further investment in the corridors is needed if the region is to reach its potential as a thriving, connected and multi-centred economy. As well as cross region initiatives, we will be looking to deliver the four strategic priorities along these core corridors as part of our framework for future transport investment in the East. These are shown in TS Plan

5.7.2  The two corridors relevant the Borough are:

Number 2    London – Chelmsford – Colchester – Ipswich – Norwich and Suffolk Coast
   This corridor running north-south through the 'Heart of East Anglia' provides connections to important and fast-growing towns and cities and serves some of the major gateway ports.
Number 4    Stansted – Braintree – Colchester – Harwich and Clacton
   This corridor provides vital resilience for freight to the east Coast ports, while also supporting growth

**5.8    Investment and Delivery Programme, pipeline schemes and scoring schemes to identify priorities.**

5.8.1  TE is responsible for identifying the region's transport investment priorities through the IDP which will be an evolving programme of schemes and initiatives to deliver the strategy. It sets out the investment priorities to Government. To establish the initial pipeline of projects a long list of potential schemes was collated through research and engagement and were categorised by how developed they were into: Idea, Development and Delivery pools. These have then been assessed against our strategic priorities to give a consistent approach to identify the regional priorities.

5.8.2  The TS contains details of the assessment criteria and the assessment results from the 55 schemes which are currently being considered. The IDP set out some projects which have already been identified for investment. And lists the schemes which are contained in the Investment Delivery Plan.

5.8.3  Some schemes are region wide and will benefit the Borough, for example developing programme of traffic demand management measures to support Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Urban Active Travel, smart ticketing and regional rail improvements, but schemes included which are located within the Borough are:
- A120 Braintree to Marks Tey
- North Essex Rapid Transit phase 2
- A12 Strategic package south (M25-A14)

**5.9     Delivery**

5.9.1   Following the adoption of the TS and the IDP, Transport East will continue to bring together partners across the region to realise the collective vision for the future of transport in the east. Although not directly responsible for delivering individual transport projects, TE will support local authorities, Government, national agencies and private sector partners to prioritise projects, build the case for more investment and speed up the processes involved to get projects delivered on the ground.

**5.10    Next Steps**

5.10.1  Following the review the draft Transport Strategy and Investment and Delivery Programme in light of the feedback we receive through this consultation, along with recommendations from the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal. Approval will be sought from the Transport East Forum before submitting to the Department for Transport.

5.10.2  Once adopted, the Transport Strategy and Investment and Delivery Programme will set our future work programme and inform the plans of the Government, local authorities, operators and partners across the region. The Investment and Delivery Programme will be regularly updated to reflect the delivery of projects and the evolving transport challenges the region faces. This flexible approach will make sure the region continues to improve the quality of life for everyone, alongside supporting the Government in achieving wider national aspirations for new jobs and homes, levelling up, boosting international trade, and achieving net zero.

**6.      Policy Alignment**

6.1     The Transport East Transport Strategy aligns with local policies, listed as follows:
   - Adopted Colchester Borough Local Plan (2013-2033) Section 1 and the emerging Section 2 Colchester Local Plan
   - The Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023
   - The Council's Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy: for consultation
   - Colchester Positive Parking Strategy
   - Air Quality Action Plan – Healthier Air 2016 – 21
   - Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) and Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020, 2021).
   - Colchester Future Transport Strategy
   - Colchester Borough Council upcoming Sustainable Modes of Travel and Electric Vehicle Strategy.

**7.      Standard References**

7.1     There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

**8.      Strategic Plan References**

8.1     The Transport Strategy assists with implementing the Council's  five strategic imperatives  of:

1. Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability (including air quality improvements)
2. Creating safe, healthy and active communities (Health & Wellbeing)
3. Delivering homes for people who need them (Quality of life)
4. Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits (Economic growth)
5. Celebrating our heritage and culture (Health & Wellbeing).

## 9.0     Environmental and Sustainability Implications

9.1     TE has carried out an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) to inform and improve the Transport Strategy. ISA is a process for assessing social, economic and environmental impacts of strategies and projects. It helps make sure sustainable development principles underpin the strategy to protect the environment, people's health and equality.

## Appendices

**Appendix A – the Borough Council's response to the TE consultation** (see below)

## Background Papers

Transport East
www.transporteast.org.uk/public-consultation
A 30-year transport strategy for the East FINAL.pdf
Investment Delivery Plan

Colchester Borough Council
Local Plan Section 1
Climate Emergency Action Plan - CBC-Sustainability-Climate-Emergency-Action-Plan-2021-23-Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-23.pdf (windows.net)
Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy - Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes (windows.net)

**Appendix A**

**Transport Strategy Consultation Questions and suggested Borough Council response**

- To what extent do you support the vision set out in the Transport Strategy – *'A thriving economy for the East, with fast, safe, reliable, and resilient transport infrastructure driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.'?*

  Support
  The Borough Council supports the vision and is pleased to see the reference to sustainable growth.

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement *'The Transport Strategy identifies the right overall approach to transport development across the region'?*

  Support
  The Borough Council supports the Transport Strategy and its approach to transport development across the region. We look forward to working with TE in developing schemes which promote sustainability and economic benefits to the Borough and recognise the wider "eco system" for the region

- To what extent do you support the strategic priorities set out in the Transport Strategy?

  Decarbonisation to net zero
  Energising coastal and rural communities
  Connecting growing towns and cities
  Unlocking international gateways (ports and airports)

  The Borough Council strongly supports the strategic priorities set out in the Transport Strategy which will encourage investment in sustainable transport benefitting local residents accessing jobs and services as well as encouraging inward investment. Colchester Borough includes one of the fastest growing towns in the UK, but also has some very rural locations and coastal towns to support. The priorities of Transport Easts strategy reflect this and are aligned to meet the needs of this borough as a whole.

  Two specific issues to highlight would include -
  - increasing connectivity to rural areas, both physical (non-car) and digital, to minimise the need to travel and to offer greater access to online shops, service and employment where appropriate.
  - the need to reflect the changing world through matching investment in infrastructure to meet future needs is important. This could  include the increased capacity of the electrical grid as transport and building will continue to increase the demands on the national grid supplies in both urban and rural locations as energy and fuel sources change to cleaner electric.
  .

- Which of the following goals in each strategic priority do you think are the most important? Please rank the options (1=the most important, 2= second most important etc.)

  To what extent do you support the strategic priorities set out in the Transport Strategy?*

  **Decarbonisation to net zero –** working to achieve net zero carbon emissions from transport, building on our status as the UK's premier renewable energy region.

  - Zero carbon growth - Support authorities and developers to plan new development that reduces the need for people to make carbon-intensive transport trips. **Priority 1**

  - Reduce demand for carbon intensive trips - Make it easier for people to access services locally or online. **Priority 3**

- Shift modes Support people to switch their journeys from private car to walking, cycling and passenger transport. **Priority 2**

- Switch fuels Support residents and businesses to switch all private, passenger transport, fleet and freight vehicles to net zero carbon fuels as quickly as possible. **Priority 4**

**Connecting growing towns and cities** – enhanced links between our fastest growing places and business clusters. Improving access for people to jobs, supplies, services, and learning; enabling the area to function as a coherent economy and improving productivity

- Enhanced sustainable transport - Improved access and connectivity for walking, cycling and passenger transport to enable sustainable travel for education, training, employment, leisure and access to services. **Priority 1**

- Faster and more reliable transport connections - Deliver improved transport connections between our growing towns, cities and corridors, and the rest of the UK to support business growth, skills development and employment. **Priority 3**

- Fully integrated transport - Fully integrate transport networks, services and operations through a customer-focused approach, enabling seamless and safe end-to-end journeys by sustainable modes of transport. **Priority 2**

**Energising coastal and rural communities** – a reinvented sustainable coast for the 21st century which powers the UK through energy generation. Supporting our productive rural communities and attracting visitors all year round.

- Increase access to education, training, service and employment for rural communities **Priority 5**
- Support residents and businesses travelling in rural areas to switch modes or fuels. **Priority 4**
- Support communities to make more local trips by encouraging goods and services to be provided locally. **Priority 3**
- Support partners to provide alternative options to travel through better access to ultrafast broadband and digital communications. **Priority 1**
- Improve connectivity along our coastline - Connect our coastal communities to the rest of the region and the UK to support levelling-up and boost our coastal industries, such as energy, shipping and tourism. **Priority 2**

**Unlocking international gateways (ports)** – better connected ports and airports to help UK businesses thrive, boosting the nation's economy through better access to international markets and facilitating foreign direct investment.

- Better access - Improve road and rail capacity, journey times and reliability for freight and passengers accessing our ports **Priority 2**
- Alternative fuels - Support our ports and freight sector to increase their use of alternative fuels. **Priority 3**
- Shift modes - Modal shift of freight from road to rail or short sea shipping and increase the use of sustainable transport by port employees and passengers. **Priority 1**

**Unlocking international gateways (airports)** – better connected ports and airports to help UK businesses thrive, boosting the nation's economy through better access to international markets and facilitating foreign direct investment.
- Enhanced connectivity to airports - Improve connectivity to airports for passengers and employees through better connected and more sustainable transport options. **Priority 3**

- Net zero aviation emissions Support the Government and aviation industry to deliver net zero emissions by 2050. **Priority 1**
- Shift modes - Support all passengers and employees to access our airports by sustainable transport, such as by bus or train. **Priority 2**

**Do you have any comments about the strategic priorities and goals set out in the Transport Strategy?**

As a regional group, a strategic issue for Transport East to consider is the existing capacity within the electrical power grid. The electrification of vehicles (and energy sources) in the eastern region will only add to pressure on the network which is already beginning to reach limiting capacity in some areas of the region within the coming years. The Strategic priorities should specifically include reference to safeguarding the future capacity of the power networks to ensure that it meets the goals and ambitions set out. Some capacity in larger urban areas will be used within a short time frame and in order to support the strategic priorities of this plan, and growth in the region, in a decarbonised manner it will be essential to secure investment and increase in the capacity of the grid. This is a cross-counties issue that affects the whole of the region and it would be recommended that Transport East add focus on this to future-proof the electrical supplies needed to deliver their strategic objectives with Government, and relevant parties such as UKPN. An example of this is the Borough Council being advised that one primary connection point within the borough could costs in the region of £6-7m to meet future growth.

**Do you have any other comments about the Transport Strategy?**
While the Transport Strategy objectives are welcomed its highlighted that there could be operational issues and TE will need to play a role in coordinating, engaging and collaborating with private companies operating the public transport, for example the multiple bus operators running services within the region, and timing of services to link with rail services. Although infrastructure improvements are welcomed, unless the opportunity to subsidise those services which serve the rural need is explored, public transport that isn't profitable may not be an option for rural and suburban communities

**Investment and Delivery Programme - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Investment and Delivery Programme sets out the right approach for delivering the Transport Strategy?**

The Borough Council agree that the IDP sets out the right approach for delivering the TS and we welcome further engagement to help ensure schemes which benefit the Borough are promoted for investment.
The key schemes for Colchester are the A120, A12 and GEML improvements as well as the rapid transit service, and we look forward to working with Transport East in identifying and promoting further schemes which benefit the Borough.