

## Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Growth Options Consultation Response Form

Please return response form(s) by **email** if at all possible to **contact@gnplan.org.uk**

If you are unable to access email then responses by post can be sent to the Planning Policy and Research Team, Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG

**Consultation closes Monday 14 September 2020**

### PART A – YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

	Personal details	Agent's details (if applicable)
Title	Dr	Click here to enter text.
First Name	Philip	Click here to enter text.
Last Name	Thomas	Click here to enter text.
Organisation (where relevant)	Railfuture - East Midlands Branch	Click here to enter text.
Position in Organisation	Committee Member	Click here to enter text.
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**Which council area(s) do you live or have an interest in? Please tick (by clicking in box).**

- Broxtowe
- Gedling
- Nottingham City
- Rushcliffe



## **PART B – YOUR REPRESENTATION(S)**

### **Which consultation document or question do you want to comment on?**

Please tick only one consultation document per response form.

Please use a separate response form for each question you are commenting on.

<b>Consultation document</b>	<b>Tick (by clicking in box)</b>	<b>Question ref/number</b>
Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Growth Options – consultation questions are throughout the document	✓	OS4, IN1, IN2, IN3
Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – consultation questions are in Chapter 7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.

### **Please answer the question or provide your comments in this box.**

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for passengers and freight. We are a voluntary group representing rail users, with 20,000 affiliated and individual members. Railfuture is a one-member one-vote democracy which is not funded by train companies, political parties or trade unions. The comments provided are provided by members of the East Midlands Branch who either live in or have experience of the transport infrastructure of the Greater Nottingham conurbation.

Railfuture has no direct interest in the preferences for siting of new housing developments in the Greater Nottingham area but has concerns that new and existing residents have easy and efficient access from their homes to their employment, necessary amenities and their leisure activities. We therefore wish to make comments relating to the importance of the need for a sustainable, reliable public transport network to support any further expansion of the housing stock in the Nottingham area.

#### Question OS4

We believe it is critical that any further developments are located in areas where either there is existing good, efficient public transport infrastructure, or where improvements can be made to the existing system to support the proposed housing expansion. In this regard, we are disappointed that the local transport authorities have provided little or no plans for how the transport infrastructure will be expanded to support the proposed growth (both from the new housing identified in existing Local Plans and that suggested in this strategy document). There appears to be a very high reliance on the existing road network absorbing the additional traffic flow combined with the hope that 'carbon neutral' targets will be achieved by the switch to private electric vehicles, but little emphasis on promoting modal shift to public transport. Evidence from the road traffic chaos experienced in Nottingham following the partial closure of Clifton Bridge in January - February 2020 demonstrates the fragility of the existing road network, yet the reality of stressing the system with higher numbers of private cars in the future is not addressed in the strategy nor, more importantly, by the transport authorities.

Without more detail on how the transport authorities plan to improve the public transport infrastructure, we suggest it would be difficult to support the location of further developments. However, in our subsequent comments, we put forward some views on options, which we hope will be of assistance to the strategy.

## Questions IN1/ IN2 / IN3 – Infrastructure to support growth

The government evidence <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb01-modal-comparisons#travel-to-work> (spreadsheet TSGB0109) shows that the East Midlands region had only 1% of its population travelling to work by train, the lowest of any region in the country. There is already a huge reliance on travelling by private car. This is particularly frustrating within the Greater Nottingham area as there is still a reasonable 'heavy rail' network surviving into the post-Beeching era. We accept that the rail system has a significant role in connecting the Nottingham area to other major regions of the United Kingdom and any additional local rail activity must not compromise the planned improvements to inter-city and longer-distance regional services and, in time, the links to HS2. This importance of the latter is demonstrated in the document <http://www.greengauge21.net/wp-content/uploads/Greengauge-21-HS2s-Eastern-Arm.pdf>

However, we suggest that there is sufficient additional capacity within the existing rail network, with limited technical investment, to allow the heavy rail system to be integrated into a 'metro style' network including the NET tram system and fast bus routes through and around the conurbation.

It is clear from viewing the housing development options cited in the documents that most developments are on the edges of existing suburbs and towns within the conurbation, with major new employment and commercial opportunities being planned for the areas bounded by Toton, East Midlands Airport and Ratcliffe on Soar. Other major employment areas include the two universities, QMC, and developments on the former Boots and Plessey sites in Beeston.

The existence of the NET network is obviously a good starting point and consideration should be given to the impact of possible extensions that could support decisions on housing development. We note that there are plans for possible extensions along the old colliery rail line into Gedling and from Phoenix Park through to Kimberley and Eastwood, which would take pressure off the A610. We suggest that other possible extensions be considered, including extending the southern route along the old Great Central rail route from Ruddington Lane to Ruddington itself and possibly a Park & Ride facility south of the village that would support housing developments in south central Rushcliffe.

With improved physical links between the NET, rail services at Nottingham Station, and the nearby bus station, the full potential of the 'metro' network could be realised. A cross-Nottingham rail service (with services from the Mansfield area, Derby, Grantham, Newark and Loughborough, which also serve local stations within the conurbation) at a higher frequency than present would offer a significant improvement. The need for access both into the City and perhaps more importantly across the conurbation to the proposed Erewash Valley commercial developments from the new housing planned for the east and south-east of the conurbation could be served by the existing rail lines. The rail network into the Toton area, originally established to service the rail marshalling yards there, still exists and would allow north - south and east - west access. The link south, feeding East Midlands Parkway (which should be developed as a transport hub in its own right) would serve both the Airport area and the future developments at Ratcliffe on Soar including the power station site.

Both the NET from the south of the City and the rail line into Nottingham from Bingham and Radcliffe on Trent use bridges across the Trent which are presently under-utilised. More frequent services would remove the need for the expensive option of a new road crossing.

It is suggested therefore that limited investment in the rail network could absorb the additional pressure resulting from new housing on the edges of the conurbation, especially if the strategic plan focused on situating housing near to potential small transport hubs linked to existing rail stations. Where demand would justify it, new Park & Ride facilities should also be established; for example, at Bingham / Saxondale.

Although the Strategic Plan does not cover adjacent developments in Leicestershire, Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire, the existing rail services should continue to be extended to key centres in these areas, again allowing the new housing in Greater Nottingham to have access to work, education and leisure opportunities in the wider East Midlands.

Much of the proposed development of the local rail network could be achieved with the funding available from developers via s106 agreements, as there would only be the need for limited investment in the existing infrastructure. We believe that this would be a better use of these funds than plans to modify road junctions, as the existing plan does not promote modal shift from the private car.

The opportunity therefore exists to use the need to provide new housing to help fund a much improved 'metro style' transport network of rail, NET and express bus services in which the location of new housing is planned in areas where existing underutilised rail and potential new NET line extensions are situated. This in turn will encourage people to use the 'metro' system, taking advantage of clean, environmentally sustainable and integrated transport for access to employment, leisure and education, thereby reducing their reliance on cars and helping the carbon reduction targets set for Greater Nottingham to be achieved.

### **Data Protection**

The comments you submit will be used to inform the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan process and will be held for the lifetime of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan. Please note that your comments will not be treated as confidential and will be made available for public inspection. However, contact details will not be made public and will not be passed to external parties, apart from the Inspector, without permission.

**Please tick (by clicking in box) to confirm you are happy for your comments to be used in this way ✓**

### **Privacy Notice**

By responding to the consultation you will be added onto our joint consultation database and we will notify you when there is an update to the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan. The council(s) that you have selected will also notify you when they are consulting on their own planning policy documents. Further details are provided in our privacy policy which is available at this web link [www.gedling.gov.uk/jointprivacynotice](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/jointprivacynotice)

**Please tick (by clicking in box) to confirm you have read and understood the privacy notice ✓**

**Both boxes must be ticked so we can process your comments on this consultation**