



Strategic Transport Forum

15th May 2020

Agenda Item 5: Connectivity Studies

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) Consider the approach to the development of a strategic programme of connectivity studies for inclusion in the draft Transport Strategy**
- b) Note the proposed timeline for future connectivity studies will be presented at the Strategic Transport Forum in June 2020**

1. Context

- 1.1. The Forum has been consistently clear that, to inform the Transport Strategy and longer term investment plan for the Heartland, an evidence based understanding of the challenges and opportunities relating to connectivity in the area is required.
- 1.2. Connectivity studies will be the way of ensuring that the vision and principles within the Transport Strategy are translated into a programme of work that is evidence led. The programme of connectivity studies will form part of the Investment Pipeline in the draft Transport Strategy.
- 1.3. The studies will be taken forward as a programme over a number of years (replicating the approach used by Highways England with their programme of corridor studies). Individual studies will be taken forward according to both their regional priority and urgency. It is intended that the investment pipeline Strategy will set out some early priority connectivity studies, with an assumption that we will have funding to take forward two studies during 20/21 and three studies in subsequent years thereon.
- 1.4. This paper updates on the progress of the development of the programme of connectivity studies, outlines the process moving forward and next steps.
- 1.5. In January 2020, the Forum agreed the proposed approach to connectivity studies, including a map of 'long list' of corridors for consideration and initial approval. The list of corridors had been informed by previous discussions of the Forum and through analysis of the responses to the Outline Transport Strategy.
- 1.6. That long list of corridors has undergone a sifting process to identify a shorter list of corridors which meet the vision and objectives of our Transport Strategy (Annex 1).
- 1.7. Some 'short list' corridors already have studies underway, being led by Local Authorities. In those circumstances, we continue to work with partners to best determine the most appropriate way to consider those corridors and how to set



them out in the Transport Strategy (should those corridors be prioritised for early study work).

2. Overview of Approach

- 2.1. The Regional Evidence Base is being utilised to identify issues and opportunities for connectivity between places in the Heartland region. Using the Transport Strategy principles, short listed corridors are being assessed further to enable a programme of studies to be developed: the four principles of the Transport Strategy are:
 - Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
 - Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive and accessible transport system which emphasises sustainable and active travel
 - Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
 - Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to international gateways.
- 2.2. Corridors which score highly as part of a multi criteria assessment (sifting exercise) will form the programme of studies. The methodology underpinning the assessment has been shared with the Transport Officer Group.
- 2.3. The development of the programme will also take into account an element of 'sequencing', understanding which studies should come forward during different time periods (for example, based on housing and employment growth or constraints on the transport system).
- 2.4. The ambition is begin taking forward the initial studies following publication of the draft Transport Strategy. The shape and design of a connectivity study will be tailored to the specific issues of each locality in collaboration with local partners.
- 2.5. The short listed corridors reflect the strategic focus of EEH as a STB - i.e. connectivity at a strategic level rather than providing a focus on localised issues. The importance of local corridors is recognised but it is expected these will be a focus for local partners.
- 2.6. The long list of corridors presented to the Forum in January also included a number of suggestions that were inter-regional in nature. Those suggestions do not form part of the short list but are providing a basis for discussions with adjoining STBs.
- 2.7. The full draft programme of connectivity studies will be presented to the Forum in June 2020 for approval.

3. Interdependencies/Other Relevant Work

- 3.1. The approach being taken to develop the programme of connectivity studies allows the Forum to link together a number of EEH technical programmes.
- 3.2. The output from the Opportunities Mapping which identified opportunities for change and mapped planned growth and economic opportunities forms part of the methodology to develop the programme of corridor studies.
- 3.3. An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is running concurrently with the development of the draft Transport Strategy. An assessment of environmental sensitivity of the short listed corridors is being undertaken as part of the ISA options development and is informing the high level assessment of the corridors.



- 3.4. Where relevant, the development of the programme is taking into account of the outcomes from the Passenger Rail Study (for example, generalised journey times from key nodes in the corridor).
- 3.5. During study scoping phase (post July 2020), the following interdependencies will also need to be taken into account, as relevant, to future connectivity studies;
- a) Transport-related Studies/Projects, including:
 - The A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet
 - Connectivity Study options between Oxford and Milton Keynes
 - The A1(M) strategic study
 - East West Rail – Central Section
 - M25 SW Quadrant
 - b) Local Plans – adopted and emerging
 - c) Local Industrial Strategies and the corridor-wide Strategic Economic Vision
 - d) Growth Deals and the work of the Growth Boards

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Annex 1 – Short list of corridors for analysis

Corridors Proposed for Prioritisation (in no priority order)		
	Relevant Transport Authorities	Additional Comments
Oxfordshire -Milton Keynes Connectivity Study	Oxfordshire Buckinghamshire Milton Keynes	There remains a commitment and DfT funding for a connectivity study between Oxford and Milton Keynes. Subject to the outcome of the current review into the Oxford-MK section of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, EEH will work with Government and local partners to develop the connectivity study. The study will incorporate opportunities such as Aylesbury – Milton Keynes (A418).
A1 corridor North - South (through Central Beds)	Cambridgeshire Central Bedfordshire Bedford Hertfordshire Peterborough	The A1 East of England study (completed by Highways England) is currently being reviewed by MHCLG and DfT. Prioritisation of this scheme would be based on discussions with local partners to determine what preferred next steps would be needed to build on existing work completed.
A6 corridor (Linking Luton to Kettering)	Luton Bedford Northamptonshire	The A6 Kettering to Luton corridor could be extended geographically to consider connections up to Corby and beyond into the Midlands.
A420 corridor between Oxford and Swindon/ the South West	Swindon Oxfordshire	The A420 is an important principal route between Swindon and Oxford. At peak times the route is congested in some areas, particularly at the northern end near Botley.
(London) - Buckinghamshire-MK- Northampton	Buckinghamshire Milton Keynes Northamptonshire	Corridor includes road and rail connections between the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe as well as the rail link between High Wycombe and Old Oak Common where the Chiltern Railway service can link to HS2, Crossrail and the Heathrow Link.
A41 corridor (Watford - Aylesbury – Bicester – M40)	Hertfordshire Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire	A41 corridor linking Herts, Bucks, Oxfordshire.
A43/A45/A14 (East West corridor between M40 and M1)	Oxfordshire Buckinghamshire Northamptonshire	Incorporating Northampton-Towcester-Silverstone-Brackley-Bicester-Oxford
A505 (M11 - Luton)	Luton Hertfordshire Cambridgeshire Buckinghamshire	Herts CC currently undertaking an A505 corridor study. Proposals for this study would be a broader A505 (beyond Herts' border), building on existing work underway. The Study would incorporate Luton to Aylesbury (A505 - A418).

A10 corridor	Cambridgeshire Peterborough Hertfordshire	The A10 already has a series of studies underway, commissioned by Hertfordshire CC and Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority. The need for an EEH-led corridor study will therefore be subject to further discussion with partners.
Peterborough - Northampton - Oxford	Peterborough Northamptonshire Oxfordshire	The study would include exploration of rail opportunities between Peterborough and Northampton and Oxford.
Luton - East of Milton Keynes	Luton Central Bedfordshire Buckinghamshire Milton Keynes	This specific corridor will explore public transport and road connectivity, particularly the impact of the M1 and the growing volume of freight distribution centres in the area.
A34 corridor	Oxfordshire Swindon	A34 corridor between Oxford/ Abingdon and beyond. The A34 is the critical north-south route for Oxfordshire and is the main highway linking current and future growth areas in the 'Knowledge Spine'.
M40/ A34	Oxfordshire Buckinghamshire	Improved access to Heathrow and the deep sea port at Southampton. This is a key issue that could also be incorporated into the A34 corridor study (above).
"North Northamptonshire" (particularly strategic connections of the A14 and the A45)	Cambridgeshire Northamptonshire Bedford Milton Keynes	The A14 route, which runs from Felixstowe to the Midlands, and offers opportunities for freight transport. A14 has also been particularly mentioned in relation to Thrapston to Brampton (Huntingdon - A45).
A508	Northamptonshire	The A508 into Northampton is included as a corridor of interest in the Freight Study.
Northampton - Corby - Wellingborough	Northamptonshire	This corridor could be incorporated into the Peterborough- Northampton- Oxford proposal (above)
A414 (Hemel Hempstead - Hatfield - Harlow)	Cambridgeshire Hertfordshire	HCC have already carried out a corridor study on the A414, with a number of packages of recommendations. The need for an EEH-led corridor study will be subject to further discussion with partners.
Luton to Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Luton Central Bedfordshire	Presented in Outline Transport Strategy responses as key corridor movements for Luton.
Luton - Hemel Hempstead	Luton Hertfordshire	Presented in Outline Transport Strategy responses as key corridor movements for Luton.