

Strategic Transport Forum

Friday 22nd June

At

Transport Systems Catapult, Milton Keynes

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| Present: | Mayor Dave Hodgson | Bedford Borough Council (Chairman) |
| | Cllr Nigel Young | Central Bedfordshire Council |
| | Cllr Ian Bates | Cambridgeshire City Council |
| | Cllr Mark Shaw | Buckinghamshire County Council |
| | Cllr Yvonne Constance | Oxfordshire County Council |
| | Cllr Carol Paternoster | Aylesbury Vale District Council |
| | Helen Wylde | Transport Systems Catapult |
| | Richard Harrington | Bucks Thames Valley LEP |
| | Phil Southall | Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership |
| | Jan Hayes-Griffin | Hertfordshire County Council |
| | Roy Boulton | Northamptonshire County Council |
| | Steve Hayes | Milton Keynes Council |
| | Ben Whitlock | Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government |
| | Ruth Harper | Department for Transport |
| | Simon Amor | Highways England |
| | Andrea Haynes | Network Rail |
| | Simon Finnie | EEH Bus Operators Association |
| Jane Hamilton | Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust (<i>for item 7</i>) | |
| Martin Tugwell | EEH Business Unit | |
| Antony Swift | EEH Business Unit | |
| In Attendance | John Disley | Oxfordshire County Council |
| | Rikki Hansen | Oxfordshire County Council |
| | Jason Humm | Swindon Borough Council |
| | Hannah Bishop | Buckinghamshire County Council |
| | Alan Francis | Milton Keynes Green Party |
| | Mark Kemp | Buckinghamshire County Council |
| | Graham Hughes | Cambridgeshire County Council |
| | Keith Dove | Luton Borough Council |

Minutes

| | | ACTION |
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| 1. | <p>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN</p> <p>Martin Tugwell opened the meeting and advised that Mayor Dave Hodgson had been nominated by the Strategic Leaders group as Chairman of the Strategic Transport Forum.</p> <p>The Forum agreed and endorsed the appointment of Major Dave as the Chairman.</p> | |

- The Strategic Business Case being developed reflects planned growth in the corridor over the next 10-20 years. There is recognition of the strategic potential offered by OCC due to the synergies with other major infrastructure projects, and availability of services to other key destinations.
- A conceptual drawing of OOC was shown confirming that HS2 and DfT are working together to understand the design of the station and identify opportunities. Network Rail is working hard to understand the impact a dedicated Chiltern platform at OOC will have.
- Cllr Constance raised a concern that Bicester would become even more of a commuter town for London, although she supported the proposal to develop the linkage through to OOC. When asked whether this scheme had 'national priority' status – Network Rail confirmed it didn't. However Forum members were advised that this link is a priority for the Secretary of State and that the work is a response to the conclusions of the Route Study.
- Forum members stressed the importance of doubling the single track section from Aylesbury to High Wycombe as part of any overarching proposal to improve north-south connectivity.

The meeting AGREED to support the need to develop a proposal that delivers improved north-south connectivity on the Northampton – Milton Keynes – Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common corridor.

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b: Strategic Rail priorities

Martin Tugwell introduced the paper: key points made during the subsequent discussion included:

- Cllr Shaw advised that he was had recently elected as Chairman of the East West Rail Consortium. He shared his passion for getting something delivered. He noted a challenge remains the need to understand the preferred route for the Central Section (Bedford to Cambridge).
- Martin Tugwell noted that the recent changes to the governance framework for the EWR Consortium included provisions that enable the Consortium Chairman/Vice Chairman to be part of the EWRCo governance.
- Cllr Constance expressed her thanks for the Forum's support for the work being taken forward through the Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study. Forum members were advised that the EWR Consortium had already agreed to make a contribution of £25,000 as part of the 'local match' funding requirement.
- Steve Hayes stated that the Forum needed to reflect on the strategic rail agenda. Particularly the impact of 6 trains' p/h stopping in this region as a result of HS2 delivery and the wider opportunities that would be unlocked from better east bound connections to/from Milton Keynes.
- Cllr Bates supported the need for improved eastern connectivity, confirming that a study was being done [focusing on freight] exploring links with Felixstowe through to the Midlands.

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| | <p>The meeting AGREED to:</p> <p>a) Endorse the progress being made with Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study</p> <p>b) Agree to make a contribution of £25,000 as 'match funding' required for the study</p> <p>c) Agree that the train service planning associated with the Western Section of East West Rail must consider relocating existing capacity between Oxford and Didcot to support improved connectivity in the Heartland area</p> <p>d) Agree that the train service planning associated with West Coast Main Line (subsequent to the opening of HS2) must give equal consideration to the potential to achieve improved north-south connectivity.</p> <p>c: Western Rail Access to Heathrow</p> <p>Martin Tugwell introduced the agenda item, advising that Network Rail is undertaking a pre-application consultation in support of the proposed Western Rail Access to Heathrow. The draft response was circulated with papers.</p> <p>The meeting AGREED to support the consultation response to Western Rail Access to Heathrow.</p> | |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>RAIL FRANCHISING</p> <p>a: East Midlands Trains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Tugwell made Forum members aware that following the East Midlands Rail Franchise Consultation (July – October 2017) the DfT Invitation to tender (ITT) had been published on the 7th June. Prospective bidders are now assembling bids. The Forum position had been established in previous discussions and this would be used as the basis on which to engage with the bidders. • It was proposed that the focus for the Forum should continue to be: making the case as to the national significance of the Heartland, emphasising the importance of improved connectivity, improving journey times and improving the passenger experience. • The members agreed with these four areas, but also placed a focus on quality of infrastructure at rail stations. • Cllr Ian Bates raised the point that consultation and tender documentation had omitted to place a strong importance on improved access to rail-station. The Forum was unanimous that this was an issue to be raised with bidders. <p>The meeting AGREED to support the 4 strategic areas of focus, but a request that the inclusion of rail station provision was added.</p> <p>b: Cross Country Franchise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Tugwell advised members that the Department for Transport had launched a consultation on the Cross Country rail franchise (June 7th) with the response deadline being 30th August. • The Forum collectively acknowledged the strategic importance of the franchise – | <p>EEH BU</p> |

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| | <p>particularly the links to the eastern part of the heartland area – in particular the role it plays in connecting the EEH population with Stanstead airport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Bates expressed the importance of emphasising the importance of the new franchising serving south of Cambridgeshire. • The Forum agreed that the franchise should integrate itself with other modes of transport, particular the first mile / last mile links with bus operators. <p>The meeting AGREED that EEH would work with The Transport Officer Support Group to develop a response to the consultation, before sharing the response with forum members and agreeing sign off.</p> | <p>EEH BU</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>STRATEGIC INVESTMENT: ROADS</p> <p>a: Expressway Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum members were invited to reflect on the Secretary of State’s response, dated 4th May, to the points raised by EEH. • Cllr Bates stressed that time was of the essence. The Universities in Cambridge had concerns that uncertainty over expressway detail would stifle business. • Cllr Paternoster confirmed that Local Plan examination is to occur next month; there was disappointment that existing housing growth could not be timed with clarity over the corridor/route. There were wider questions about how the needs of Luton Airport and Silverstone Enterprise Zones will be reflected in the expressway. • Martin Tugwell confirmed that EEH will work with DfT and other local authorities to develop the brief for the connectivity study. This piece of work will feed into the overarching Transport Strategy. • Helen Wylde stated that this work might present exciting opportunities, with a focus on innovation. • The Forum agreed that the absence of clarity over the corridor/route meant many local authorities were ‘reverse engineering’ the approach to joined-up planning – building in first and last mile problems. • Cllr Young noted as an authority he was heavily dependent on the route of the expressway as well as the A1 corridor. A delay in the detail of this information could raise questions about the longer term planning horizon. • When asked [Highways England] confirmed they were committed to the A428 Black Cat scheme and will work with DfT and MHCLG to progress this. <p>The meeting acknowledged the Secretary of State’s response and AGREED to wait to hear developments as they are brought forward in the coming months.</p> <p>b: Major Road Network: Early Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum was advised that the Department for Transport had approached all of the emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies inviting them to put forward a prioritised list of potential ‘early entry’ MRN schemes for consideration. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan Hayes-Griffin provided an overview of the A414 Corridor (Hatfield to Watford Capacity Improvements) to the Forum. The A414 fulfils a number of strategic functions and is located between Hemel Hempstead and Hertfordshire; there are 50,000 new homes planned on this corridor by 2031. The bid, which focuses on junction upgrades to improve capacity, aligns with their recently adopted local plan. The Forum supported Hertfordshire's bid and were made aware that detailed design for the scheme continues to be worked on. • The Forum was made aware that Buckinghamshire County Council had submitted a number of proposals for consideration. This information had not been received by the deadline and as such it had not been possible to include them within the paperwork before the Forum. The priorities included the dualling of the Eastern Link Road (Aylesbury) and the A355 (Beaconsfield – Amersham) and a relief road/package of improvements on the A4010 (Princes Risborough). Richard Harrington and Cllr Mark Shaw talked in support of the bids. • After a short discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Buckinghamshire would be asked for additional information on their proposals, including seeking a view from Buckinghamshire on the relative priorities of their proposals. The Programme Director would then advise the Chair on a way forward for the Buckinghamshire proposals: in principle there was support for some of the proposals being put forward to the DfT. <p>The meeting AGREED that EEH would support the proposed package of improvements included in Hertfordshire's proposal. It would consider the bids submitted by Buckinghamshire virtually before a decision is made to submit these to the Department for Transport.</p> | <p>EEH BU</p> <p>EEH BU</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>BEDFORD – MILTON KEYNES WATERWAY PARK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Hamilton presented an overview of the proposed waterway park between Bedford to Milton Keynes. The vision is to create a nationally recognised Waterway Park that brings about social, economic and environmental benefit for local communities. • The new link would close the circle for a section of the canal network that also provides a missing link in the national network. • There are 9 members on the Trust Board and the Waterway Park is promoted through a series of subgroups. The 3 year business plan governs the work and this is due to be updated in 2019. • The presentation slides gave an overview of the strategic case and benefits of the waterway park, these included helping create a sense of place, improved mental health, greater biodiversity and possible flood mitigation. • The Waterway Park would be within a 2 hour drive of 50% of the UK population and could be a sought after visitor attraction within the corridor. Consultants have been commissioned to quantify the benefits. • The route has been protected in three Local Plans. Central Bedfordshire has | |

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| | <p>asked that new development contribute to and help deliver part of this waterway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A421 upgrade scheme provides an opportunity to secure some of the route. Work is being carried out with Highways England to explore funding options. Work was also afoot with the Environment Agency to get it 'locked in' the Oxford – Cambridge corridor. • Richard Harrington recognised the financial viability it could bring developers by integrating the water with sustainable drainage and flood risk management. • Cllr Young praised the project, reminding members that the Environment Agency, MHCLG and DfT are promoting natural capital assets (set out in DEFRA's 25 Year Environment Plan). The government is placing a value on natural assets and the linkages this had with national policy was highlighted. <p>The meeting AGREED that EEH would circulate the presentation and business case before a decision is made on whether this is something the forum may look to champion through the emerging Transport Strategy and wider infrastructure.</p> | EEH BU |
| 8. | <p>MIDLANDS CONNECT: SUB-NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY CONSULTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum members were invited to comment on and/or support in principle the establishment of a Sub-national transport body for the midlands. <p>The meeting AGREED that EEH would support the establishment of a Sub-national transport body in the midlands and its proposed functions.</p> | EEH BU |
| 9. | <p>BUSINESS PLAN</p> <p>Martin Tugwell provided a short verbal update on the 3-year business plan.</p> | EEH BU |
| 10. | <p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 21st September : 11:00 – 13:00 @ Transport Systems Catapult • Friday 7th December : 11:00 – 13:00 @ Transport Systems Catapult <p>Martin Tugwell made forum members aware that the EEH programme team are identifying dates for later in 2018.</p> | EEH BU |