

Strategic Transport Forum

12th July 2019

Agenda Item 3 - Major Road Network/Large Local Major Programme

It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) Considers the outcome of the process associated with the development of the first 5-year (2020 – 2025) investment programme for Major Road Network/Large Local Major Programme**
- b) Approves the programme of schemes to be submitted to the Department for Transport.**
- c) Notes that where applicable, the EEH Business Unit will continue to work with scheme promoters to achieve the best possible outcome following their submission to the Department.**

1. Context - Major Road Network and Large Local Major Programme

- 1.1. As the Sub-national Transport Body for the Heartland this Forum is tasked with preparing the region's advice in respect of investment priorities for the MRN, along with the Large Local Major schemes. The Forum is required to submit its investment priorities for the first five year programme (2020 – 2025) to Government by 31st July 2019.
- 1.2. In order to achieve this, DfT has required each region to put in place and maintain a Regional Evidence Base which, coupled with evidence submitted by scheme promoters (local authority partners), is to be used to inform the regional prioritisation.
- 1.3. England's Economic Heartland, through the Strategic Transport Forum's early sponsorship of its Regional Evidence Base in 2017, has been very well placed to meet this requirement.
- 1.4. Providing an STB-level regional perspective is the first stage in the MRN/Large Local Majors process; schemes submitted as a strategic priority by EEH will be considered by the Department for Transport for a funding decision later this year.
- 1.5. Previous meetings of the Forum have ensured the approach, process and timeline for developing the EEH programme of investment for the MRN/Large Local Majors programme for the first five years (2020-2025) has been robust, challenging and outcome-driven.
- 1.6. Whilst each STB has been asked to recommend up to ten MRN schemes, and an additional small number of Large Local Major schemes, this Forum has consistently taken the view that it will not necessarily be constrained by this guidance, given the need to secure additional investment in order to support the delivery of planned growth set out within local plans.
- 1.7. In a similar vein, and in the absence of a clear funding envelope within which to form its views, the Forum has been consistent in its view that it will consider the proposals as a programme of investment, as opposed to one that is a prioritised list.



2. **Approach and Process**

- 2.1. At its last meeting, the Forum agreed the MRN/LLM assessment criteria that would be used to identify which of the schemes submitted should be considered regionally significant.
- 2.2. Schemes have been reviewed through the use of a multi-criteria assessment framework (MCAF), developed and agreed in partnership with the Transport Officer Support Group and the Delivery Partners.
- 2.3. The MCAF allows the Forum to consider the extent to which a scheme meets both its priority principles (as agreed by the Forum earlier in the year) and the DFT's MRN/LLM Objectives, as well as its Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST)
- 2.4. In May 2019, EEH partners submitted scheme proposals for consideration for the first 5-year programme (2020–2025). The total number of schemes submitted was limited in number: a reflection of the work that had been undertaken by the partners to identify their most important schemes and an understanding on their part of the importance for those schemes to be deliverable within the 5-yr programme.
- 2.5. The EEH Business Unit, working with its Delivery Partners, reviewed the submitted schemes. Drawing on the experience of EEH's Officer Group and Delivery Partners has ensured the right level of expertise and quality assurance is reflected in the process.
- 2.6. Following review of submissions, moderation sessions were facilitated by EEH with its Delivery Partners to ensure consistency across the review process.
- 2.7. The outcome of the assessment, together with feedback, was shared with scheme promoters individually and the subject of a discussion at the Transport Officer Group at its meeting on the 5th July.
- 2.8. The EEH Business Unit has worked closely with the promoters of individual schemes throughout the process, building on their own processes throughout – e.g. the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority advice on priorities for the sub-region was developed by the Combined Authority in the context of its agreed Business Plan.
- 2.9. A technical note has been prepared for each submitted scheme that summarises how it is supported by the Regional Evidence Base (REB).
- 2.10. All of this is brought together in a 1-page summary note for each scheme: the format of that note is attached as Annex A; the summary note for each scheme is attached as Annex B.

3. **Weighting of Priorities**

- 3.1. At its previous meeting the Forum considered whether one or more of the objectives used to assess schemes should be given added weight. That meeting agreed to seek a view on this issue from all Forum members electronically.
- 3.2. Only a handful of responses were received from Members. Overall, there was no clear consensus on the matter.
- 3.3. As a result, the Forum is recommended to proceed without any additional weighting or minimum standards applied.
- 3.4. Our advice, as the EEH Business Unit, is that the outcome of the assessment process would not be materially affected if a weighting or minimum standard were applied to any of the objectives. The Forum should therefore be reassured that the merits of each scheme are robust and consistent with the vision and ambition of the Outline Transport Strategy.



4. Consideration

- 4.1. Following completion of the review process, the Forum is invited to agree that all the submitted schemes be included in the programme of investment to be submitted to the Department for Transport.
- 4.2. The resulting programme of schemes is geographically spread across the region and clearly deliverable with the timeframe of the programme.
- 4.3. Schemes being proposed are not ranked or in competition with each other, they have been reviewed on their own individual merits for inclusion in the regional programme.
- 4.4. Where necessary, meetings have taken place with the Department for Transport and Highways England to give them advance sight of submissions.
- 4.5. The Forum should note that 1-page scheme summaries are not intended to be exhaustive rather they provide a 'snapshot' overview of how each scheme performs against the review process, supported by scheme description and regional narrative. More granular detail, appropriate to a schemes stage of development, is provided in each submissions respective business case. The EEH Business Unit will continue to support scheme promoters ahead of submission to the Department.

5. Submission Preparation – July 2019

- 5.1. Following the Forum's consideration promoters have the rest of July to finalise submissions before the Department's closing date of 31st July 2019.
- 5.2. During the review process, the EEH Delivery Partners have provided invaluable independent technical and professional advice. As a result, they have developed a strong understanding of the schemes as recipients and reviewers of proposals (as the DfT will be) rather than as drafters or promoters. The acquired knowledge and insight gained during the process offers an additional pool of expertise that scheme promoters might wish to draw on, offering the opportunity to help support scheme promoters strengthen the case before it is formally submitted to the DfT.
- 5.3. The EEH Business Unit has advised scheme promoters that it is prepared to work with them with a view to drawing on this acquired knowledge where this may serve to strengthen the final submission to the DfT.
- 5.4. Such an approach complements the work underway to develop the case for establishing a shared capacity and capability resource at the regional level that individual promoters can draw on as required. Any additional costs attached with providing the support will be met by England's Economic Heartland, as the Sub National Transport Body.

Naomi Green
Head of Technical Programme
July 2019



Annex A – Explanatory Notes about scheme summaries

RECOMMENDATION: provides the Forum with a recommendation on whether a scheme should proceed as part of EEH's Programme

SCHEME DESCRIPTION

Short scheme summary

MAP

Map showing scheme location

REGIONAL EVIDENCE BASE – SUMMARY

This section provides Forum Members with a summary of the Regional Evidence Base, captured through EEH's shared data set: Project View.

DELIVERY AGAINST EEH PRIORITIES

The Forum has agreed three strategic priorities for England's Economic Heartland: Economic Growth (ECO), Accessibility and Inclusion (ACC & INC) and Quality of Life and Environment (QOL&ENV). Each scheme has been reviewed against the extent to which it delivers these priorities.

OVERAL RATING (RAG): schemes are provided a RAG rating against each priority.

RAG categories are:

-  Strong Fit
-  Partial Fit
-  Weaker Fit






DELIVERY AGAINST DFT MRN/LLM OBJECTIVES

DfT have five core objectives for the programme, each have been reviewed as part of the programme.

- Reduce congestion (CON)
- Support economic growth and rebalancing (ECO)
- Support housing delivery (HOU)
- Support all road users (NMU)
- Support the Strategic Road Network (SRN)

OVERAL RATING (RAG): schemes are provided a RAG rating against each DfT Objective and an overall assessment of the DfT EAST framework.

RAG categories are:

-  Very significant improvement
-  Significant improvement
-  Some improvement
-  Limited improvement
-  No change or disbenefit

EAST REVIEW

All proposals receive an overall RAG rating to demonstrate their ability against the DfT's Early Assessment and Sifting Tool.