



STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM:Minutes

Friday 12th July 2019

11:00 – 13:00

Committee Room 1, Borough Hall, Cauldwell St, Bedford, MK42 9AP

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Present:	Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Castleman	Luton Borough Council
	Cllr Nigel Young	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Maureen Penny	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Yvonne Constance	Oxfordshire County Council
	Hillary Chipping	SEMLEP
	Phil Southall	OXLEP
	Chris Cole	Network Rail
	Yolande Herbath	Transport Systems Catapult
	Matthew Taylor	Highways England
	Robin Knight	EEH Bus Operators Association
	Rob Smith	Buckinghamshire County Council
	James Povey	Milton Keynes Council
	John Disley	Oxfordshire County Council
	Ian Boll	Northamptonshire County Council
	Nigel McCurdy	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Patsy Dell	Hertfordshire County Council
	Martin Tugwell	England's Economic Heartland
	Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
	Antony Swift	England's Economic Heartland
Apologies:	Cllr Mark Shaw	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Angela Macpherson	Aylesbury Vale District Council
	Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
In attendance:	Alan Francis	Milton Keynes Green Party
	Melanie Macleod	Bedford Borough Council

		ACTION
1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>Mayor Dave welcomed Forum members to the meeting. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting were discussed and agreed as accurate.</p> <p>Naomi Green updated the Forum on the outcome of the electronic poll taken to decide whether the Forum wished to weight one or more of the objectives used to assess MRN/LLM schemes. Overall there was no clear consensus on the matter, subsequently the Forum agreed to proceed without any additional weighting or minimum standards applied.</p>	None Arising
2	<p>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</p> <p>Alan Francis representing Milton Keynes Green Party raised his concerns that the MRN/LLM supporting papers did not reference the importance of addressing the impact of climate change. Particularly given the way road schemes risk increasing traffic and levels of CO2.</p> <p>Naomi Green emphasised that scheme overviews were intended to provide a summary of the proposed intervention. The full assessment criteria, agreed by the Forum, provided detail on the way each scheme demonstrates the way it addresses its impact on the environment.</p>	None Arising
3	<p>MAJOR ROAD NETWORK / LARGE LOCAL MAJORS</p> <p>Naomi Green confirmed the deadline for MRN/LLM submissions to the DfT is the 31st July. The Forum had previously agreed the assessment process used to arrive at the programme of eleven transport schemes presented for consideration. The supporting paper provided the outcomes of this assessment process for each scheme against the pre-agreed criteria.</p> <p>Naomi Green outlined how all the schemes were supported by EEH's Regional Evidence Base (REB). The REB demonstrates the regional significance of the scheme, for example how it supports planned housing and the economy. In addition, the EEH Business Unit has prepared a report to accompany the programme of investment; setting out the assessment process that has been followed.</p> <p>The DfT will be reviewing schemes from August 2019 onwards and Highways England has had visibility of schemes put forward for consideration. An ensuing discussion took place on the outcomes of the assessment process.</p> <p>Clr Nigel Young highlighted the need to invest in the existing MRN network, parts of which are operating over capacity and have deteriorated as a result of growth that has already taken place. More investment in current infrastructure is as important as investment to support additional growth. Examples such as the A1/M1 were cited.</p> <p>Hillary Chipping agreed that EEH's MRN/LLM programme of investment were regional priorities and endorsed by SEMLEP. A point was made regarding the total capital cost of all EEH schemes (c.£720 million) against the National Roads Network total funding pot of £3.5 billion. The Forum agreed that the programme was reasonable given the pressures on the region's transport system, the net contribution the Heartland makes to the economy and the need to invest in the region to sustain that.</p> <p>Matthew Taylor advised that Highways England will be part of DfT's four assessment panels to review schemes. He thanked the Business Unit on its collaborative approach, providing Highways England with early visibility of the programme of investment.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell confirmed that party conferences, scheduled later in the year, will provide an opportunity for EEH to continue to make the case for investment in the region's connectivity.</p>	



<p>5</p>	<p>EAST WEST RAIL</p> <p>Martin Tugwell led a discussion on developments associated with the delivery of the Western Section of East West Rail.</p> <p>A key concern identified at the last meeting of the East West Rail Consortium is the delivery of what is referred to as the 'Calvert Box'. This forms an integral part of the Western Section of EWR and is scheduled to be delivered by HS2. There is concern that potential slippages to the HS2 programme may cause a delay to the delivery of the Calvert Box. Subsequently, the EWR Consortium will be encouraging DfT and EWR Company to explore alternative arrangements to the delivery of the 'Calvert Box' in view of this uncertainty.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell confirmed that other work being taken forward by the EWR Consortium is shaping the timetable planning and delivery of the railway. This includes reinforcing the strategic importance of running EWR services through Oxford and onward to Didcot Parkway. Forum members were invited to discuss these two issues.</p> <p>John Disley noted that emerging stage one findings of the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study supported connectivity into Didcot by East West Rail. The findings of this study would be shared with the Forum.</p> <p>Cllr Maureen Penny commented on the way replacing the existing shuttle services between Oxford and Didcot, currently operating at three trains per hour, would provide a significant step forward for greater connectivity into Swindon.</p> <p>Mayor Dave concluded the discussion by requesting that the Forum have early sight of the preferred route for the Central Section, given the way interchange at Bedford would provide new connectivity into Nottingham and Derby.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED:</p> <p>a) To note the update on the work of the East West Rail Consortium, and</p> <p>b) Endorse and support the Consortium's work in respect of the two issues identified by it as being of concern</p>	<p>Martin Tugwell</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>SUB-NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY: TRANSPORT FOR THE SOUTH EAST</p> <p>Naomi Green briefed the Forum on the powers and responsibilities sought in Transport for the South East's (TFSE) proposal to become a statutory sub-national transport body. The TFSE consultation runs between 3 May and 31 July. Naomi Green noted that in comparison, EEH will be aligning its proposal to government to become a statutory body with the development of the Transport Strategy.</p> <p>TFSE have requested a number of statutory functions, these range from rail/highway powers, capital grant provision, bus service provision, smart ticketing, air quality and other general powers.</p> <p>EEH's draft response is supportive of the proposed functions, setting out a requirement for joint working between the two sub-national transport bodies, particularly should the ambitions for bus franchising, quality bus partnerships and integrated ticketing be approved.</p> <p>Robin Knight supported the need for contiguous collaboration with TFSE but did not recognise the need to request franchising powers. This view, shared by Phil Southall, was that historically, those transport bodies that have sought to adopt franchising powers have inadvertently created market stagnation. The EEH Bus Operators Association urged caution to requesting similar powers.</p>	



	<p>Rob Smith questioned whether the previous Secretary of State's view not to announce any more statutory sub-national transport bodies might influence the types of shared powers being requested.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell confirmed that EEH, along with the other STBs have reflected on this announcement and will be responding to the Secretary of State's letter in due course. This is likely to emphasise that where the case for a statutory body can be made then the expectation of the STBs collectively is that the proposal will be considered by the Secretary of State as a matter of priority.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED the EEH response to the Transport for the South East consultation</p>	<p>Naomi Green</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>EEH OUTLINE TRANSPORT STRATEGY</p> <p>Building on the findings of the Forum's previous meeting, Naomi Green presented an engagement plan for the Outline Transport Strategy. The engagement plan's principles, events, stakeholders and timescales were set out in detail. The engagement process will conclude with a detailed analysis of the feedback at the Forum's meeting on the 22 November.</p> <p>A stakeholder mapping exercise has been completed. The presentation slide illustrated the organisations EEH would be engaging with, grouping them by level of influence and their extent of technical expertise. A focus of engagement will be to capture the views of a diverse range of transport users who have been traditionally hard to engage with.</p> <p>EEH will, as part of the engagement, launch a competition that invites young people to share their thoughts/perspectives on the future of the region's transport system. In addition, a series of round table meetings with politicians/policy makers and senior officer briefings are being programmed, before engagement concludes on the 31st October.</p> <p>Mayor Dave, with the consensus of the Forum, supported the engagement plan. A plea was made by the Chair for all members to provide the EEH Business Unit with a point of contact to help disseminate engagement material. The Forum was also asked to provide dates for committee meetings and suggest other engagement opportunities. EEH will be sending relevant partners a slide deck of information pertaining to the engagement of the Outline Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Yvonne Constance stressed the point that the ambition of the Outline Transport Strategy, connecting people and places with opportunities and services, needs to come through strongly in all engagements events and associated materials. This messaging would allow those sceptical of major infrastructure projects to understand the benefits that may be brought about by their delivery.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED:</p> <p>a) To support the developing engagement plan;</p> <p>b) To provide the EEH Business Unit with appropriate steers about specific engagement opportunities that they would like EEH Business Unit to pursue.</p>	<p>Adam King</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>EEH BUSINESS UNIT UPDATE</p> <p>Naomi Green confirmed EEH will launch its Outline Transport Strategy and Freight Study at its third Regional Conference. The Forum was thanked for their insight and support in developing these milestone documents.</p> <p>EEH has prepared a response to Highways England’s public consultation on the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme. The focus of this response is to ensure the scheme itself is developed with due consideration of the wider connectivity requirements for the region. Nigel Young suggested the environmental net-gain of the scheme should be quantified.</p> <p>Naomi Green advised that Highway’s England Programme Lead for the scheme will attend the next Forum meeting on the 27th September and provide the Forum with an update.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED the draft response to the consultation on the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet.</p> <p>Forum members were updated on Heathrow Airport’s consultation on its expansion proposals. This consultation closes on the 13th September 2019. The EEH response will focus on the need for transport investment to improve surface access from key routes such as the M25, A23044 and the A4. This includes improving north south rail connectivity and understanding Heathrow’s strategy to achieve its mode shift targets. The EEH Business Unit will circulate a copy of the letter to Forum members for comment prior to its submission.</p> <p>Finally, an update on the work being taken forward on the EEH Capacity and Capability Project was provided. The second phase of this work involves developing a detailed proposition to develop a shared resource, available to local partners, to oversee the development and delivery of major infrastructure projects. Mayor Dave, supported by the Forum agreed this was an important piece of work, given the way delivery of infrastructure schemes, and the skills to execute projects vary between each local authority.</p>	<p>Naomi Green</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>FUTURE MEETING DATES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27th September 2019, Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP • 22nd November 2019, Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP 	