



Strategic Transport Forum

27th September 2019

Agenda Item 6: Rail Delivery Group

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the meeting considers the presentation from the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and identify ways to strengthen the relationship with the RDG

1. Context

- 1.1. At its previous meeting on 12th July 2019, the Strategic Transport Forum identified the significant role that the Rail Delivery Group plays in shaping the views and influencing the long term outcomes of the rail sector. Forum Members agreed that a further discussion with the Rail Delivery Group, in the form of a presentation, would mark a positive continuation and deepening of the opportunity for collaboration.

2. Overview

- 2.1. England's Economic Heartland Business Unit has developed a strengthened relationship with the Rail Delivery Group, driven by the importance both parties place on the need to grow the rail market across the Heartland. There is a shared view, supported by the Outline Transport Strategy, that investment in the rail network is central to our ambition to accelerate the region's economy on journey towards a zero carbon transport network.
- 2.2. A meeting hosted by the Rail Delivery Group in August 2019 has kick-started a period of closer engagement with train and freight operator companies. The meeting discussed priorities common to England's Economic Heartland and the Rail Delivery Group, namely around developing accessibility/inclusivity offer of rail for the user, the role and impact of rail on unlocking growth sustainably and the role of rail in accelerating productivity and the economy by linking high performing centres of employment.
- 2.3. In similar vein to the strategic relationship that England's Economic Heartland is shaping with the Network Rail System Operator, there is a recognised ambition for the Rail Delivery Group and England's Economic Heartland to collaborate is shaping and supporting our respective desired outcomes.
- 2.4. The Rail Delivery Group's engagement and response to the Outline Transport Strategy has been informed by presentations at their Planning Oversight Group (POG), made up of senior train and freight operators, chaired by Network Rail and responsible for providing the industry's view on strategic long-term planning. The Outline Transport Strategy received further discussion at Network Rail Route Investment Group, taken to the meeting by the Rail Delivery Group on behalf of England's Economic Heartland; demonstrating a clear commitment on behalf of the RDG to contribute to the development of the Transport Strategy.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. The Terms of Reference for the Strategic Transport Forum makes provision for the rail sector to be represented at its meetings. Forum members will be aware that the Chair of the EEH Bus Operators Association sits as a member of the Forum. The Forum may wish to consider whether to invite a representative from the RDG to join the Forum. This would be in addition to Network Rail being a member of the Forum.

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