



## **Strategic Transport Forum**

29<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### **Agenda Item 6: Future transformational growth schemes**

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the Forum:**

**a) Notes the presentations from:**

- **Network Rail on West Coast Main Line – released capacity**
- **London Luton Airport Limited on growth ambitions for the airport**

**b) Considers the way that such connectivity schemes across the Heartland with wider growth potential should be supported**

**1. Context**

- 1.1. Delivering the vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, as set out in the March 2019 Spring Statement, and particularly achieving its economic ambitions will only be delivered if investment in infrastructure and services support delivery of development opportunities at the local level.
- 1.2. Recently, there has been an emphasis at the national level on the two significant growth schemes that the Government committed to develop or bring forward in the Heartland: East West Rail and Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. While both these schemes offer important transformational growth opportunities for the Heartland area, the scale of opportunity (and ambition) for the region is such that they alone will not be sufficient.
- 1.3. The Forum will receive presentations on two strategically important transport interventions.

**2. West Coast Main Line – Released Capacity, presentation from Network Rail**

- 2.1. Network Rail is currently undertaking a review of provision in the London North West South area, looking at options for the use of capacity on the West Coast Main Line following the opening of HS2. The work is part of Network Rail's long term planning process for the rail industry.
- 2.2. The Strategic Transport Forum will note the importance of developing north-south rail services, which includes a Northampton-Milton Keynes- Aylesbury-High Wycombe – Old Oak Common axis. The opportunity to realise this ambition occurs through a combination of the opening of East West Rail and the first phase of HS2. Over and above the on-going work being taken forward by East West Rail Company to deliver East West Rail, there is a piece of planning underway that is pertinent to realising the opportunity to deliver services on this north-south axis.

2.3. England's Economic Heartland, on behalf of its partners is partaking in this study and a working group is being established to ensure our needs and requirements are reflected throughout the work. This study provides England's Economic Heartland with the platform to rethink how this core part of the rail network is used and its synergies with East West Rail and Old Oak Common design. Building on agreed positions with the Strategic Transport Forum to date, England's Economic Heartland will want to consider how the development of new service patterns can serve the Heartland's planned and future growth, opportunities and choice that arise through improved East-West rail connectivity and new connections into London and future requirements for freight services.

### **3. London Luton Airport Limited's growth ambitions**

- 3.1. London Luton Airport (LTN) opened as Luton Municipal Aerodrome on 16 July 1938 and has grown to becoming the UK's fifth largest airport by passenger numbers, and one of the fastest growing, with the number of passengers using the airport increasing by 44 per cent from 2013-16.
- 3.2. In February 2019 London Luton Airport Limited confirmed its ambitions for the long-term and sustainable expansion of London Luton Airport. Using the existing runway, LLAL is targeting expansion of the airport to 32 million passengers per annum (mppa) from its current cap of 18 mppa. The preferred option for expansion will involve construction of a new second terminal to the north of the runway.
- 3.3. London Luton Airport is a major growth generator, recognised by its Enterprise Zone status. Alongside growth of the airport itself, a number of key projects are being developed:
  - New Century Park provides the location for an ambitious, well-designed, high-quality, high-yield mixed-use development, incorporating business, commercial and light industrial units, on the doorstep of London Luton Airport, and within easy reach of both London and the North. Interventions required to unlock the site include the construction of a new access road; a scheme which is expected to be submitted to the Strategic Transport Forum for consideration under the Major Road Network/Large Local Majors Programme (2020-2025).
  - London Luton Airport has started work building a new Direct Air-Rail Transit system (Luton DART) to service London Luton Airport. The DART will be a fully automated and driverless system, approximately 2.1km in length, and will transport passengers between Luton Airport Parkway station and the terminal. Planning permission has been received from Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The DART system is scheduled to become operational by 2021.

### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1. Forum members will want to consider the presentations and reflect on how England's Economic Heartland can support interventions to ensure maximum benefit for the wider Heartland area. It is likely that schemes such as these, and others across the Heartland, will form an important part of the long term investment plan, work on which will commence shortly.
- 4.2. The imminent Spending Review provides a significant opportunity for the Heartland to begin to set out the case for a commitment by Government to long term investment plan for England's Economic Heartland. Ensuring our Spending Review submission is supported by a clear, evidenced-based investment plan will put EEH in a very strong position going forward.

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