

Strategic Transport Forum 15th December 2017

Agenda Item 3: Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Note the presentation from the Expressway team.
- b) Note the update on the 'connectivity study'.

1. Context

- 1.1. The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) identified the delivery of the multi-modal spine as a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to provide a step change in connectivity across the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge arc: delivery of the spine will transform both the functional economic geography and strategic housing market areas.
- 1.2. Government in turn has identified the need to take forward the development and delivery of the 'expressway' as being of national significance.
- 1.3. The 'expressway' team will provide the Forum with an update on the work now underway.

2. Timeline Moving Forward

- 2.1. Building on the publication of the initial stage of the 'expressway' Strategic Study (delivered for Highways England by consultants WSP), the timeline for moving forward with the next stage of the project is as follows:
 - Summer 2017 – appointment of Jacobs to work with Highways England to take forward next stage of the project work (funding for this work identified in 2016 Autumn Statement).
 - Summer 2018 – decision on Expressway corridor choice : Autumn 2019 – identification of route options within the chosen corridor : Autumn 2020 – Preferred Route Announcement (all dates relate to the whole route M4 to M11).
 - RIS2 (2020-2025) – commence construction of Expressway; Road investment Strategy 3 (2025-2030) - completion of construction of the "missing link".

3. Key Linkages

- 3.1. The Study Team are moving forward with a programme of work that enables the timeline identified above to be realised. In terms of taking the work forward the Forum is invited to note the following key linkages:
 - The scope of the project extends right across the arc – from the M4 Junction 9 to the M11 at Cambridge.

- Linkages with, and implications of delivery of the East West Rail (EWR) project are being taken into account by the Project Team as part of a broad collaborative approach to other schemes in the 'expressway' area.
- Linkages with, and implications of a connectivity study (to be commissioned by England's Economic Heartland) will be taken into account by the Project Team.
- The stakeholder engagement arrangements have been designed to ensure that the project takes account of growth opportunities being identified through (emerging) Local Plans and Strategic Economic Plans.
- Focus of the initial stage of stakeholder engagement is to understand (from all stakeholders) the issues on both sides that need to be addressed through the project.

4. Engagement Arrangements

4.1. The Study Team have placed a high priority on engagement with stakeholders across the study area. To that end, the Forum is invited to note the following:

- An initial round of engagement is now underway – designed to outline the purpose of the groups: to build trust; establish the engagement framework; and listen to stakeholder perspectives.
- Engagement is taking place on a number of levels:
 - Meetings of Stakeholder Reference Group (functional) Forums for: Growth and Development; Strategic Employers (Traffic Generators); Strategic Road Users; Strategic Infrastructure; and Strategic Environment being held before Christmas; a more in depth continuation of the engagement undertaken during the strategic study.
 - Elected Member Forum – invitation to be extended to all local partners (Local Transport Authorities, Local Planning Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships): builds on experience of collaborative working on EWR – supported by a senior officer group: first meeting to be in January.
 - MPs across the route will be briefed on the study as part of the engagement process.
 - Detailed discussion with individual organisations (including Local Planning Authorities and Local Transport Authorities) on specific issues will take place as required – reflecting the approach used with EWR.
- The Strategic Transport Forum (as emerging STB) is a member of the Strategic Stakeholder Group (represented by the core programme team), which advises the Project Committee on matters at the strategic level – first meeting held 28th November 2017.
- The Expressway Project Team will keep the Strategic Transport Forum updated on progress and seek views/input as required.

- Options are being explored to provide a dedicated website to provide access to project material.

5. The 'Connectivity Study'

- 5.1. As part of the 2017 Budget there was an announcement that 'the government will commission England's Economic Heartland to study how communities not on the Expressway itself can still benefit from it'.
- 5.2. The core programme team is working with the Department for Transport with a view to setting out the scope of this study – referred to as the 'connectivity study' at the earliest opportunity. As part of those discussions the opportunity is being taken to ensure that any work commissioned in respect of the connectivity study complements both the work of the 'expressway' Study Team and the work that needs to be taken forward by the Forum as part of the overarching Transport Strategy.
- 5.3. The latter will include the work required to identify the Major Road Network for the arc. As noted previously by the Forum, the delivery of the multi-modal spine – the combination of the 'expressway' and EWR – will have fundamental implications for the transport system moving forward. In this regard the work on the overarching Transport Strategy (including the work of the connectivity study) will require close working with both the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Planning Authorities.
- 5.4. A further update on the work of both the 'expressway' and the connectivity study will be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

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