



Strategic Transport Leadership Board Minutes

Thursday 9th December 2021

*Notes of hybrid meeting held at the Best Western Buckingham Hotel
and via Microsoft Teams*

In Attendance:

Richard Wenham	Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council (Chair)
Liz Leffman	Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Martin Tett	Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Dave Hodgson	Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Emily Darlington	Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council
David Renard	Leader, Swindon Borough Council
Michele Mead	Leader, West Oxfordshire District Council
Robert Roche	Luton Borough Council
Wayne Fitzgerald	Leader, Peterborough City Council
Lucy Nethsingha	Leader Cambridgeshire County Council
Phil Larratt	Cabinet Member, West Northamptonshire Council
Graham Lawman	North Northamptonshire Council
Phil Bibby	Hertfordshire County Council

Apologies:

Richard Roberts	Leader, Hertfordshire County Council
Nik Johnson	Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined
Neil Gough	Deputy Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Andrew Smith	Chair, Buckinghamshire LEP
Peter Horrocks	Chair, South East Midlands LEP
Hilary Chipping	CEO, South East Midlands LEP Authority
Paddy Bradley	CEO, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP
Jonathon Nunn	Leader, West Northamptonshire Council
Bev Hindle	Executive Director, Arc Leaders Group
Dave Taylor	Cabinet Member, Luton Borough Council
Lewis Banks	Transport Planning Officer, Peterborough City Council
Andrew Down	Deputy CEO, South Oxfordshire District Council
Jeremy Smith	Head of Transport, Cambridgeshire County Council
Ian Thompson	Executive Director, Buckinghamshire Council
Mike Batheram	Director, Atkins
Matt Gamble	Principal Consultant, Atkins
George Candler	Executive Director, North Northamptonshire Council
Jon Shortland	Chief Officer, Bedford Borough Council
Antony Swift	Principal Transport Planner, Luton Borough Council
Paul Thomas	Director, Milton Keynes Council
Chris Cole	Strategic Planner, Network Rail
Paul Raynes	Delivery & Strategy Director, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Richard Leonard	Head of Network Development, Strategy & Planning, National Highways
Carew Satchwell	Head of Strategic Planning North West & Central, Network Rail

Also in Attendance:

Paul Moorby	Chair, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP
Rowland Potter	Head of Transport, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Andy Rhind	Deputy Director, DfT
Phil Southall	Managing Director, Oxford Bus Company
James Povey	Strategic Lead Transport Policy & Planning, Milton Keynes Council
Emma Walker	Senior Strategic Planner, Network Rail
Andrew Davie	Assistant Director Development & Infrastructure, Central Bedfordshire Council
John Disley	Infrastructure Strategy & Policy Manager, Oxfordshire County Council
Matthew Taylor	Strategy Manager, National Highways
Richard Bell	Director, Swindon Borough Council
Sue Frost	Service Director Sustainable Development, Luton Borough Council
Mark Kemp	Director, Hertfordshire County Council
Alan Francis	Milton Keynes Green Party
Naomi Green	EEH Interim Director
Fiona Foulkes	EEH Business Manager
Adam King	EEH Communications Manager
Beth Dormer	EEH Executive Assistant
James Golding-Graham	EEH Decarbonisation Manager

Item	
1	<p>Welcome & Actions</p> <p>Richard Wenham (RW) opened the meeting and asked attendees if they were content with the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting. Robert Roche (RR) highlighted that he was recorded under 'in attendance' and 'apologies' in the minutes. It was agreed this mistake would be amended.</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) noted that all actions are either complete or agenda items during this discussion.</p>
2	<p>Public Questions</p> <p><i>Attending members of the public are asked to register the wish to speak in advance. Comments will be invited on any of the listed agenda items. Speakers will be invited to ask a question, a supplementary question and to make a short statement.</i></p> <p>RW invited Alan Francis (AF) to speak. AF referred to the rail package mentioned in item 4 and suggested that there is not enough emphasis on the link between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes in the proposed letter to Secretary of State. AF highlighted that the letter asks for the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes link to be delivered as soon as possible after the Oxford to Bletchley link is operational and suggested that more urgency is given to that section of the letter. In the main report of the rail package, AF noted that Oxford to Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes to Luton and Luton to Stevenage are not included in the list of high value-added links. AF requested that more emphasis is given to the towns within the EEH region and the links between them. Martin Tett (MT) agreed.</p>

	<p>RW noted that AF's requests would be considered during the appropriate agenda items. NG requested that AF email her the list of links mentioned to share with Network Rail for discussion.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to: a) Consider the requests made by AF</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>3 Spending Review - Implications <i>To consider the implications of the 2021 Budget and Spending Review for EEH and the region</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Considers the outcomes and implications of the 2021 Budget and Spending Review b) Continues to press for investment in the region, for the benefit of local communities and businesses, and the UK as a whole c) Agrees to press for clearer, single pots of transport investment that can be better prioritised and planned at the local and regional level d) Agrees to refresh the investment pipeline to capture outputs from connectivity studies and thematic work. <p>NG said that the purpose of this paper is to provide a brief update on the conclusions of the 2021 Budget and Spending Review and to seek the Board's approval on the way forward, particularly around the investment pipeline. A summary of the Budget and Spending Review relevant to EEH announced by the Chancellor in October 2021 are included in annex 1.</p> <p>NG said that, separate to the capital funding part of the Budget and Spending Review, there is an element of core funding for EEH as an STB. A decision around that funding has not yet been made by DfT but is expected in January 2022. This will allow EEH to finalise the business plan for three-years ahead to be shared with the Board for approval in 2021.</p> <p>NG noted the above recommendations with the meeting. RW opened the meeting for discussion.</p> <p>Emily Darlington (ED) suggested that the Board should advocate for a longer-term infrastructure investment plan from the government that members can contribute to and use for areas of deprivation, climate change and economic activity.</p> <p>ED noted that the A5 study was not included in annex 3 and asked that it be included within the discussion in future meetings.</p> <p>MT expressed disappointment in the lack of investment in this area set out in the Budget and Spending Review considering the pockets of deprivation within the EEH region. MT highlighted the government's priority around Global Britain and stated that it is the industries in this area that are leading Britain in terms of global presence and funding is therefore essential.</p> <p>Liz Leffman (LF) requested that the Board highlight to the government the revenue costs and the costs to local councils to deliver infrastructure projects.</p> <p>ED requested the Board emphasise the need for investment to reach the climate change ambition.</p> <p>NG suggested that the EEH business unit compile the comments from this discussion into a single narrative to be shared with the Board for approval. The meeting was content with this proposal.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to: a) continue to press for investment in the region, for the benefit of local communities and businesses, and the UK as a whole</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) press for clearer, single pots of transport investment that can be better prioritised and planned at the local and regional level c) refresh the investment pipeline to capture outputs from connectivity studies and thematic work
<p>4</p>	<p>Rail Investment Priorities <i>To agree to make the continued case for investment in East West Rail and to note the emerging opportunities for rail investment across the region, through Great British Railway's expected engagement on its 30-year-plan</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agrees to part-fund work to create an evidence-based, regionally-led strategic narrative for East West Rail b) Subject to amendments, agrees to send a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport confirming the region's full support for East West Rail c) Notes the need to continue to press more broadly for rail investment in the region, particularly preparing for Great British Railway's expected call for evidence on a 30-year plan for rail <p>NG began the discussion around EWR. NG agreed to amend the paper in response to AF's earlier comments. NG suggested that the letter reemphasise the significance of the Aylesbury EWR link. The Board was content with this proposal. Mayor Dave Hodgson (DH) highlighted that the paper shows no link between Bedford and Cambridge and suggested that the whole route should be illustrated. David Renard (DR) asked that the letter emphasise that east west connectivity goes beyond Oxford and Cambridge. DR requested that the letter mention the Swindon to Oxford element.</p> <p>ED suggested the letter needs stronger wording around the potential damage caused by lack of investment.</p> <p>RW commented that the purpose of the letter is to convince government that the EWR project must go forward and as such, this should be the focus of the letter. RW proposed drafting a broader letter that covers the concerns the Board has around rail more broadly.</p> <p>NG agreed to redraft the letter taking on board the comments made during this discussion.</p> <p>NG noted that one core part of pressing for EWR is an additional piece of evidence base that will stress the points made around better capturing the role of EWR in sustainability and climate change. The evidence base will demonstrate that the region cannot function without investment. The meeting was content for that work to begin.</p> <p>NG said that the paper sets out some of the conclusions of the rail work being done by EEH. These fit in to two parts. One is that some of the conclusions around east-west connectivity needs to be significantly improved in the region. Section 6.4 shows some of the emerging conclusions that came out of Network Rail which is about a large northern east-west arc that connects the core towns and cities in the north of the region and a southern east-west arc. The transport strategy discusses the southern east-west arc being about mass rapid transit.</p> <p>The paper summaries the conclusions of the Passenger Rail Study Phase 2, undertaken by EEH and Network Rail.</p> <p>NG said that Great British Railway's call for evidence would soon be commencing. NG proposed that the EEH Business Unit bring a suggested response to the 30-year plan for rail for the Board's consideration in February.</p>

	<p>The Board were given hard copies of the Passenger Rail Study Phase 2 and it was noted that members who did not join in person would be sent a copy.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) part-fund work to create an evidence-based, regionally-led strategic narrative for East West Rail b) send a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, subject to amendments, confirming the region’s full support for East West Rail c) note the need to continue to press more broadly for rail investment in the region, particularly preparing for Great British Railway’s expected call for evidence on a 30-year plan for rail
<p>5</p>	<p>Regional Evidence Base <i>To receive a demonstration of the regional evidence base, including an explanation of how it has been made more accessible for Board Members</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Notes the update on work to make the evidence base more accessible to Board members b) Receives the presentation on the evidence base and the brochures showcasing it for individual areas <p>RW noted the appetite for EEH’s evidence base to be more accessible to Board members and wider partners. NG introduced the item and shared that she would be providing a demo of the evidence base. Members and MPs can access the evidence base via the EEH website and have been set up with logins for Project View, the ‘geographic information system’ (GIS) based databank and the first mile, last mile toolkit. This information was provided in brochures that include examples of evidence from the relevant individual local authorities. Brochures will be posted to MPs and members who did not attend the meeting in person. DH asked if local authority officers would also have access to the evidence base. NG confirmed that officers are welcome to have access.</p> <p>The meeting noted the update and received the evidence base presentation.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>In Year Funding Packages <i>To consider and provide a steer on the emerging proposals for additional in year support from DfT</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Notes the proposals for additional in-year funding submitted to DfT by EEH in partnership with other STBs <p>James Golding-Graham (JGG) introduced the item and explained that DfT have offered STBs additional in year funding to support local authority delivery of DfT priority policy areas. DfT have asked for proposals to be no longer than two pages and to be progressed jointly with neighbouring STBs. The core priority areas include decarbonisation; buses; electric vehicle infrastructure; and local authority capacity.</p>

	<p>EEH has made two submissions under decarbonisation. The first is in collaboration with Midlands Connect and looks to understand how different policies and transport interventions can impact carbon in different geographies.</p> <p>The second creates several interventions to deliver against the pathways to net-zero agreed by this Board.</p> <p>The theme of buses helps local authorities to deliver commitments in the Bus Back Better work to develop an effective interregional bus network. EEH have made a joint submission with TfSE on this.</p> <p>Thirdly, a joint submission with Transport East on EV infrastructure. The funding will be used to better understand the requirements of local authority partners and rapidly facilitate infrastructure delivery.</p> <p>The final area is on local authority capacity. This will play a role in building capacity and capability within some of the resource constrained local authorities which will help with the planning delivery of local transport infrastructure. EEH is the lead STB in this area and proposed to host the centre of excellence and major project delivery.</p> <p>It is likely that project specifics will evolve further once engagement with DfT and wider partners has taken place.</p> <p>STB submissions are with ministers for sign-off and it is expected this will be completed by mid-December. JGG proposed to update the Board in February with further details.</p> <p>DR noted that the proposal does not specifically mention hydrogen technology and requested that the work being done by the EEH business unit is linked to Western Gateway and other neighbouring partners around hydrogen.</p> <p>Phil Southall (PS) highlighted that the bus service improvement plans have been submitted to DfT but the allocations are yet to be confirmed and could be confirmed as late as March 2022. PS shared that from the 45 bus service improvement plans being submitted, the £1.2billion that is available will be oversubscribed. PS suggested it will be difficult to allocate in-year funding to projects across the EEH area with the uncertainty around the bus service improvement scheme.</p> <p>LF emphasised the importance of bus companies receiving support to change travel patterns and achieve net zero ambitions.</p> <p>Andy Rhind (AR) shared that the EEH submission was a strong one due to the quality of thought, the collaboration with other STBs and the clarity of deliverability.</p> <p>ED asked AR what understanding Ministers have of the crucial role investment in infrastructure within the EEH region has on the economic future for the UK, for climate change ambitions and levelling up in its poorer areas. AR stated that Ministers do understand that and emphasised that articulating evidence appropriately is essential.</p> <p>The meeting noted the proposals.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Business Plan <i>To consider and provide feedback on proposals for a three-year business plan</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Considers the proposal to develop a three-year business plan for England’s Economic Heartland for the period 2022-2025, subject to confirmation of funding from DfT b) Agrees that the future business of EEH should be taken forward with three equal priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To bring forward infrastructure priorities into investable propositions

	<p>ii) To support a regional centre of excellence, providing capacity and capability for partner authorities</p> <p>iii) To continue to develop programmes of work that support delivery of the regional transport strategy</p> <p>c) Provides a steer on any other areas of work that should be included</p> <p>d) Notes the likely increase in partner contributions to EEH, in line with inflation</p> <p>NG introduced the item and noted that the three-year business plan will be based on the Spending Review proposal agreed by the Board and build upon it to reflect the priorities of members.</p> <p>The paper sets out that over the next three years the focus will be on three areas noted in the recommendations above.</p> <p>The proposal to develop a three-year business plan for EEH, subject to confirmation of funding from DfT was agreed by the meeting.</p> <p>MT asked for further clarification around the plan for centre of excellence. NG shared that the plan for the centre of excellence is to support local authorities to take forward their own priority schemes.</p> <p>MT asked if the Board is discontinuing its work around digital connectivity. RW said, subject to funding, there is no intention of discontinuing that activity.</p> <p>With regards to the likely increase in partner contributions to EEH, in line with inflation, RW requested that NG circulate details of the increased funding needed to Board members for consideration.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <p>a) the proposal to develop a three-year business plan for England’s Economic Heartland for the period 2022-2025, subject to confirmation of funding from DfT</p> <p>b) the future business of EEH to be taken forward with three equal priorities:</p> <p>i) To bring forward infrastructure priorities into investable propositions</p> <p>ii) To support a regional centre of excellence, providing capacity and capability for partner authorities</p> <p>iii) To continue to develop programmes of work that support delivery of the regional transport strategy</p> <p>c) Provide a steer on any other areas of work that should be included offline</p> <p>d) Note the likely increase in partner contributions to EEH, in line with inflation</p>
8	<p>Business Unit Update</p> <p><i>To note updates on: connectivity studies; active travel strategy; Transport for Counties; Union Connectivity Review; EEH conference; and communications priorities</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the meeting notes the updates</p> <p>RW introduced the item by updating the Board on a meeting himself and NG had on 8th December with Minister Trudy Harrison who is responsible for transport decarbonisation.</p>

	<p>The meeting covered several themes. Firstly, the link that STBs can provide between the DfT and local authorities. EEH has commissioned some of the work to inform the LTP process that is currently ongoing within DfT. Minister Harrison agreed to consider that as part of this process. NG committed to delivering that by February 2022. Other discussions included, hydrogen and LPG infrastructure, first mile last mile and the importance of cross-departmental working particularly with DLUHC and DCMS.</p> <p>NG shared that the connectivity studies programme is continuing, and the next study (Swindon to Oxford) is currently out for tender. Feedback from consultants tells us that there are benefits in looking at the geographies of the connectivity studies and learning the lessons to avoid duplications.</p> <p>NG shared that EEH are taking forward a regional active travel strategy which DfT are providing funding for.</p> <p>Finally, the Union Connectivity Review stated the importance of the Heartland to UK connectivity.</p> <p>The meeting noted the updates.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 February 2022 11am – 1pm - 13 May 2022 11am – 1pm - 15 July 2022 11am – 1pm - 30 September 2022 11am – 1pm - 9 December 2022 11am – 1pm <p><i>It is proposed that three meetings per year be held virtually, with two meetings in person</i></p>