



# Strategic Transport Leadership Board

15 July 2022

## Agenda Item 5: Connectivity Studies

### *Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the Strategic Transport Leadership Board:**

- a) Agrees the packages of interventions of connectivity studies 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' (subject to local agreement on supporting narrative)'**
- b) Notes the requirement for outputs of the connectivity studies to be part of the future investment pipeline prioritisation workstream based on transport strategy principles, subject to further consideration and approval by the Board**

**c) Notes the update on the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study**

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To update the Board on EEH's connectivity studies and seek their approval for the packages of multimodal interventions for 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford'.

**2. Key points to note**

- 2.1. The 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' connectivity studies are nearing completion.
- 2.2. Board agreement on the multimodal package of interventions for each study area is being sought.
- 2.3. The interventions are the result of extensive engagement and technical analysis throughout the study period, which included objective setting and modelling.
- 2.4. The connectivity studies will feed into EEH's investment pipeline.
- 2.5. The third connectivity study, 'Swindon-Didcot-Oxford' is underway.

**3. Context**

- 3.1. A core part of the EEH work programme is the connectivity studies, as set out in the transport strategy. The studies are multimodal, including digital connectivity.
- 3.2. The first two connectivity studies, 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford', commenced in May 2021 and are now drawing towards completion.
- 3.3. The third connectivity study, 'Swindon-Didcot-Oxford' commenced earlier this year.
- 3.4. The future programme of connectivity studies was agreed at the May 2022 Strategic Transport Leadership Board with two further studies commencing this financial year – 'Thames Valley-Bucks-Milton Keynes-Northampton' and 'Southern East West corridor'.

#### **4. 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' connectivity studies**

- 4.1. Earlier phases of the studies, working with partners through the study steering group, have set study objectives, critical success factors and identified optimal infrastructure scenarios. These phases have set out what we want from the studies and what intervention 'types' might help us achieve these ambitions.
- 4.2. Following engagement with the project steering group, stakeholder group and public call for evidence a long list of interventions was developed for each project, which was further assessed to form a shorter package of interventions. The shortlisted schemes form the basis of the packages of interventions for each study.
- 4.3. Each study contains packages for:
  - Digital and demand management (to be tailored based on local requirements)
  - Making the best use of re-allocated road space
  - Supporting rail to provide fast, reliable strategic connectivity
  - Supporting mode shift to active and sustainable modes
  - Sustainable and efficient freight solution
  - Enabling sustainable, planned development and a decarbonised road fleet
- 4.4. The package for 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' is included as Annex 1 and the packages for 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' is included as Annex 2.
- 4.5. It should be noted that several interventions were put forward which were felt to be better placed for consideration in future studies. This is because they did not meet the critical success factors of the study or that the geographies of future studies were better placed to consider these interventions. A specific example of this is interventions put forward relating to the A5. These areas will be reflected in the narrative contained within the connectivity studies.
- 4.6. The agreed packages for each study will be tested using England's Economic Heartland's land use model EEHELUM. EEHELUM is a high-level strategic model, agreed by the Department for Transport as appropriate for the strategic nature of the connectivity studies.
- 4.7. The outputs of the modelling are designed to show how the agreed packages of interventions support delivery of the transport strategy principles.

#### **5. Investment pipeline development**

- 5.1. The outputs of the connectivity studies, alongside other technical programmes provide an important input into the investment pipeline prioritisation workstream, which was outlined in EEH's business plan for 2022/23.
- 5.2. As EEH's investment pipeline evolves, there will be a need to prioritise interventions and understand the delivery mechanism (and lead organisation).
- 5.3. The future prioritisation method is to be developed but will align with the transport strategy's policies, specifically policy 5: 'In identifying future investment priorities we will prioritise proposals on the basis of value for money, their contribution towards net zero carbon targets, and their contribution to wider sustainability, environmental net gain and health outcomes'. The DfT has advised that deliverability should also be a key consideration in the investment pipeline iteration.
- 5.4. The more detailed methodology for investment pipeline prioritisation is yet to be scoped. We will continue to work with officers and the Board in the development of the investment pipeline.



## **6. Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study**

- 6.1. A third connectivity study covering the area Swindon-Didcot-Oxford has now commenced.
- 6.2. Working with the study steering group, its objectives and critical success factors have been set.
- 6.3. The critical success factors set by the steering group are:
  - Improved digital infrastructure reduces the need to travel
  - The carbon emissions of transport are reduced to zero by 2050
  - Improved transport connectivity enables sustainable and high-quality development growth, helping to address inequalities and accessibility issues
  - A high quality, integrated and accessible transport network connects the studies centres of strategic importance and strategic economic assets
  - Rural communities are well connected to key opportunities by the public transport network
  - The transport network supports safe and sustainable distribution of goods within and through the study area
  - Active travel mode share of journeys within and to/ from our towns and cities increases
- 6.4. The study evidence base has already been established and the next step in the project is identification of the long list before we move on to the shortlisting and modelling of options.
- 6.5. In July we held stakeholder engagement exercises comprising of a steering group meeting, stakeholder group and member engagement session.

## **7. Next steps**

- 7.1. The outputs for 'Milton Keynes-Oxford' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' will be incorporated into the connectivity studies reports, which will include options assessment reports (OARs) – one of the defined DfT processes for intervention identification. The reports will be shared with each study steering group for comment ahead of publication.
- 7.2. The outputs of the initial connectivity studies (and other technical programmes) will be integrated into the investment pipeline prioritisation workstream, which was outlined in EEH's business plan 2022/23.
- 7.3. The two studies identified in the future programme of connectivity studies, beginning 2022/23 will be scoped working with partners on the study specific strategic context. The two studies due to commence this financial year are 'Thames Valley-Bucks-Milton Keynes-Northampton' and the 'Southern East West corridor'.

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