



Strategic Transport Leadership Board

Minutes

08 December 2022

11:00 – 13:00

Milton Keynes City Council Chamber,

Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

Present:

CLlr Richard Wenham (Chair)	Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council
CLlr Liz Leffman (Vice Chair)	Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
CLlr Martin Tett	Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
CLlr Emily Darlington	Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council
CLlr Graham Lawman	Executive Member, North Northants Council
CLlr Phil Larratt	Cabinet Member, West Northants Council
CLlr Phil Bibby	Executive Member, Highways & Transport
CLlr Robert Roche	Executive Member, Luton Council
CLlr Lucy Nethsingha	Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
CLlr Wayne Fitzgerald	Leader, Peterborough Council
Emma Ward	Director General, Department for Transport
Phil Southall	EEH Bus Operators Association
Hilary Chipping	Chief Executive, South East Midlands LEP

Apologies:

Mayor Nik Johnson	Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
CLlr Anna Smith	Deputy Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
CLlr David Renard	Leader, Swindon Borough Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Mayor, Bedford Borough Council

EEH Team Members Present:

Naomi Green	Managing Director
Suzanne Winkels	Principal Technical Lead
Fiona Foulkes	Business Manager
Abi Nichols	Project Lead
James Golding-Graham	Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager
Nathalie Mazhunga	Project Officer
Adam King	Communications and Policy Manager
Hanane Elmaarouf	Business Operations Assistant
Erin Pitcher	Business Operations Assistant
Sherin Francis	Capacity and Capability Lead

<p>1</p>	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Cllr Richard Wenham opened the meeting and welcomed Emma Ward, Director General for Roads, Places and Environment Group, DfT.</p> <p>Cllr Wenham passed on the Board’s best wishes to Mayor Nik Johnson.</p> <p>He asked attendees if they were content with accuracy of previous meeting minutes.</p> <p>A correction was sought to Cllr Graham Lawman’s wording in section 6.</p> <p>It should read ‘<i>Cllr Lawman advised that North Northamptonshire is part of a scheme with Liberty Charge to provide on-street charging points in a mix of town centre and residential locations.</i>’</p> <p>Naomi Green (EEH) informed the meeting that most of the actions from the previous meeting were complete, there are three ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New venue for future meetings – the option of rotating future in-person meeting locations was being actively considered by the business unit • Biodiversity offsetting proximity – to be raised at an upcoming Ox-Cam environment group • Future agenda item on Oxford-Cambridge Roads Study – this has been postponed as it awaits ministerial sign-off.
<p>2</p>	<p>Public Questions</p> <p>There were no questions from the public.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Current priorities - Department for Transport</p> <p>Emma Ward (DfT) provided the Board with an update on key priorities for the DfT and updated on the ministerial team portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of State: Mark Harper MP • Rail and HS2 Minister: Huw Merriman MP • Decarbonisation and Technology Minister: Jesse Norman MP • International – Aviation, Maritime and Security PUSS: Baroness Vere • Roads and Local Transport PUSS: Richard Holden MP

Cllr Phil Bibby (Hertfordshire) said BSIP funding for his authority was welcomed but was concerned by a delay in getting the funding and asked if there was flexibility on how they spend the money.

Cllr Liz Leffman (Oxfordshire) said consideration of rural transport was very important. There are frustrations on the tight schedule they have to deliver on active travel funding. Cllr Leffman shared Cllr Bibby's views on flexibility and to avoid very tight timeframes.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (Cambridgeshire) agreed on the importance of delivery and buses. She expressed disappointment at not receiving BSIP funding.

Cllr Martin Tett (Buckinghamshire) said Buckinghamshire had also not received BSIP funding and he has asked for clarity on how funding was allocated.

Cllr Emily Darlington (Milton Keynes) asked if there would be some clarity on funding and expressed a desire for more certainty to allow for better planning.

Cllr Graham Lawman (North Northamptonshire) spoke about how rising costs are delaying project delivery, with developer contributions no longer adequate to cover these costs.

Emma Ward said DfT is in communication with the Treasury regarding funding and affordability of schemes.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha said that due to climate change and the hot summer, roads in some areas across the region, including the Fens, have been badly damaged however there is not the budget to repair them. She said it would be helpful to talk to about innovation funding and how we manage climate change.

Cllr Emily Darlington said that roads on the Bucks-Milton Keynes borders are congested and that the need for investment between Oxford and Milton Keynes should a priority for DfT.

Cllr Martin Tett agreed with Cllr Darlington and added that there are multiple corridors which need improving including the routes down from Milton Keynes to Aylesbury and Bicester. Bucks supports East West Rail, however the key missing part is the link from Winslow down to Aylesbury. He added that residents are unhappy with road damage caused by HS2 and EWR's construction and that it can be tricky to get recompense.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha said multiple funding pots made delivery more challenging, citing the example of the A34. She asked if there was a way to simplify funding.

Cllr Phil Larratt (West Northamptonshire) agreed with Cllr Tett's point regarding HS2's construction, and getting recompense for damage done to the highway network. He said funding the authority was given to repair roads damaged by HS2 only covered half the cost. He added that East West Rail is an important project for Northamptonshire as well.

Cllr Liz Leffman, (Oxfordshire) raised Lodge Hill interchange on A34, which is a development in line with housing growth in the area, as an example of funding siloes across government. Funding is coming from three separate pots, so difficult to identify where the money is as in different stages. To complete the project, all the funds need to come forward - this adds complication to major projects.

	<p>Emma Ward said that she was interested in hearing the Board’s views on issues associated with repairing roads damaged by infrastructure construction and utility works.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>New government priorities - EEH response</p> <p>Naomi Green introduced the paper, reflecting on the priorities of the new government. She said there have been significant changes since the last Board meeting, including the Autumn Statement which recommitted to East West Rail. The East West Main Line Partnership’s Better Connections brochure allowed the region to show the economic story of the Heartland through the voice of business.</p> <p>Naomi said six immediate action areas have been identified for EEH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the most of investment planned for the region • Securing the investment needed to support sustainable economic growth • Delivering more for less and with greater certainty • Restoring trust in public transport • A clear plan for roads • Innovation at the heart of what we do <p>Naomi also proposed small scale review that will be undertaken independently to understand what the Board wants from EEH as the region’s STB. EEH will send questions to the Board in advance if they wish to be involved. This review will help prioritise funding as we go into the 2023/2024 business planning process.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Larratt mentioned that he is supportive of the review and understands that this will help to prioritise things and give a clear opinion as to what is and what isn't feasible.</p>

	<p>Phil Southall (Bus Operator) said that buses don't just face one single challenge, rather it is lots of challenges. He said the first issue is to look at long term bus funding as there have been challenges that have occurred due to the pandemic, this being concessionary fares and the bus service operators grant. He asked that these reviews be included in a timely way to ensure stability on the bus market. He also added that there is mixed review on ZEBRA funding as it's been successful for Oxford and not in Milton Keynes. Phil Southall also urged that EEH engage more fully with the bus operators' association.</p> <p>Cllr Lawman agreed with section 6.3 of Naomi's report states '<i>Limitations on the capacity of local authorities to develop high quality business cases, particularly given uncertainties of funding for schemes beyond SOBC stages</i>'. He said when producing business plans it has proven to be difficult due to the skills and the availability of staff. He also said that while innovation was welcome, his residents simply needed bus services to call to their towns and villages. He added that West Northamptonshire is part of the freight golden triangle, which impacts on the attractiveness of the A14 to the logistics sector.</p> <p>Cllr Lucy Nethsingha referred to Emma Ward's interest in ensuring roads are repaired properly, and that this be included as part of the EEH work stream on 'more for less'.</p> <p>Cllr Emily Darlington pointed out that there are currently trials around DRT and keen to explore how these could be scaled up as this would ensure we are maximising the success of innovations within our region.</p> <p>Naomi Green agreed to meet with the bus operators and the EEH team would be in contact to get this moving forward. EEH is moving forward on skills agenda and working with corporate directors with support from DfT. She said that at the recent Transport Select Committee the Permanent Secretary had expressed interest in understanding lessons learnt from East West Rail's construction and has asked for evidence on EWR impact. EEH would work with Buckinghamshire Council. Lastly Naomi explained that EEH can work on innovation request and look at how this can be built into the narrative.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Wenham asked for the Board's comments to be taken on board for EEH's immediate priorities, as well as including an item on buses for the March agenda.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcomed the early clarity provided by the Chancellor announcing his commitment to East West Rail, alongside his focus on supporting sectors including life sciences, advanced manufacturing and digital. ● Reflected on the proposed approach for EEH in response to emerging new priorities for the government, particularly in the current economic climate ● Noted the small-scale review of EEH's approach to ensure it is adding the maximum value to partners and, if appropriate, agrees to contribute to the review.
5	<p>Investment Pipeline</p> <p>Naomi Green stated that the creation of an investment pipeline is a core function for EEH. This will be evidence based and will help identify which schemes are contributing towards a certain priority outcome so that when funding opportunities arise, EEH is in a strong position to respond. Naomi then handed over to Abi Nichols (EEH) who said the investment pipeline is a way of clearly articulating our regional priorities and where investment is required. EEH is seeking to iterate its investment pipeline.</p>

	<p>The investment pipeline is intended to be sufficiently flexible so that it can respond to emerging government and local priorities and can provide a structure that LAs can build on for their own investment pipeline work, should they wish to.</p> <p>The investment pipeline was not intended to slow work down – there are some things that need to be done and EEH can continue to work with partners to take those forward. It is also not a commitment for EEH to fund the development and business cases of all the schemes within the pipeline. This would be for identified sponsors and lead organisations to undertake.</p> <p>Abi outlined the proposed process for developing the investment pipeline, including stakeholder engagement with papers being presented to Board throughout the development of the pipeline.</p> <p>Board were supportive of the development of the investment pipeline. Cllr Graham Lawman noted he felt it was one of the most important elements STBs can undertake.</p> <p>Hillary Chipping (SEMLEP) emphasised it would be helpful to understand DfT’s investment timescales for local transport schemes and for those to be considered.</p> <p>Naomi Green responded by saying that EEH would liaise with DfT.</p> <p>The Board: Agreed to the development of an updated investment pipeline for the region. Endorsed the proposed methodology and approach to developing the investment Pipeline.</p>
6	<p>EV Tool Demonstration</p> <p>James Golding-Graham introduced John Hutchings and George Godfrey (WSP) who presented the EV tool. James explained that the EV tool has been brought together by England’s Economic Heartland and Transport East. It provides a high level overview of the potential numbers of EVs coming into the fleet and indeed the scale of the infrastructure required to facilitate those.</p> <p>John added that the EV tool shows electric vehicle forecasting and electric vehicle charge point requirements across the region for every single year up to 2050. He and George Godfrey presented the slides which will be attached.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Wenham said EEH can arrange individual council demonstrations if requested and that everyone will have a link to the tool once it is ready.</p> <p>Naomi Green added that it was important that this tool was shared with the Board as soon as possible so that everyone was aware it was being developed.</p> <p>Cllr Wenham sought clarity in how the data is updated so that it provides the latest information.</p>

James Golding-Graham said EEH is working with Transport East to ensure that there is sustainability and longevity in the tool. He also added that the information is DfT's own data, this is a case of simply updating on an annual basis.

Cllr Wenham questioned how changes to grid infrastructure and local distribution infrastructure would be updated.

James Golding-Graham said EEH is looking at whether there are opportunities to procure jointly across the STB community to reduce the costs of doing some of that updating. EEH keen to understand how the points are actually being utilised in the future. So, whether we can have access to some of these app map data for example, the national Charge point registry data to understand how the infrastructure is being used on the ground.

Emma Ward asked whether EEH have any plans to incorporate usage and reliability data to enable understanding of where are the peaks and demands are?

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha also questioned whether this useful information is going to be shared not only with councils but also with the private sector? She also spoke about the opportunities for EV infrastructure in supermarket car parks.

Cllr Emily Darlington explained that MK struggled with EV charging points on streets where parking is at a premium and that they are trialling the use of lamp columns so that they're not creating additional pressures. Cllr Darlington mentioned that this is another area of innovation that MK can share results with the Board.

Phil Southall sought clarity if the EV tool only covers private individual motorists or if it's considering buses and commercial vehicles he also questioned if it will flag hotspots as well.

Cllr Graham Lawman agreed with what Emma suggested and highlighted that DNO's charging regime will change from next March but that the tool will be very useful when applying for funding.

James Golding-Graham advised that EEH working on another project looking at bilateral relationships between charge point operators and trip attractors in regards to the private sector. He added that a link to the tool has been sent to officers to access to the tool already. EEH will be asking for a couple of adjustments to make sure everyone's getting what they want out of the tool and it's being presented in the best possible way. James then responded to **Phil Southall** and said that at the moment this is just focused on private vehicles and that EEH are doing another piece of work which is looking at alternative fuels for freight.

The Board:

Received a presentation by WSP on the electric vehicle infrastructure planning tool.

Considered the opportunities the tool offers in the roll out of strategic electric vehicle infrastructure.

Connectivity Studies

Abi Nichols presented an overview of the connectivity studies. Two studies Oxford-Milton Keynes and Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford are now concluding. Reports have been circulated as part of the meeting packs. Following discussions with members the reports were updated to reflect wording that:

The connectivity study does not consider or influence options for future locations of growth, this is the decision of the local planning authority through the established local plan process. Published local plans and national travel forecasts (based on the government's National Trip End Model (NTEM)) are the evidence on which demand on the transport system has been mapped to inform this study.

The reports were re-circulated.

Some main themes from the Oxford – Milton Keynes study are:

- Making best use of East West Rail in full (including the Aylesbury link), including local connectivity
- East West connectivity through targeted road interventions, leading to the right traffic on the right roads
- Supported by active travel and bus solutions to connect into strategic transport

Some main themes from the Peterborough – Northampton – Oxford study are:

- Strategic corridors across the region, including A34, A43, A54, A605 – reliability, safety and freight facilities
- Public Transport through interchange via EWR, with bus connectivity between towns
- Supported by active and sustainable modes

In addition, a Swindon – Didcot – Oxford study is currently in progress and two further studies 'Thames Valley – Buckinghamshire – Milton Keynes – Northampton' and 'Southern east west movements will commence with steering groups in the New Year.

Cllr Martin Tett was pleased to see the inclusion of the Aylesbury EWR link and A421 in the Oxford-Cambridge connectivity study but expressed disappointment about the lack of focus on the A418 and A41, which are a focus for growth. Cllr Tett also said that small villages such as Wing become congested and dangerous due to HGVs and it is a similar situation with routes towards Waddesdon. He said that these routes need serious investment in order for them to cope.

Cllr Emily Darlington said that we need to look at road space in relation to some of our ambitions about improved public transport and to ensure the economic importance of links in the study area.

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Cllr Liz Leffman said she was pleased to see demand management measures referenced in the report and felt that it was also important in the context of freight.

	<p>The Board: Agreed the packages of interventions for connectivity studies 'Oxford-Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' Agreed the publication of the final report for the 'Oxford – Milton Keynes' and 'Peterborough – Northampton – Oxford' connectivity studies Noted the requirement for outputs of the connectivity studies to be part of the future investment pipeline prioritisation workstream based on transport strategy principles (agenda item Noted the update on the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Business Unit Update</p> <p>Adam King said there were 208 delegates at EEH's conference, which is 90 more than last year. The presence of Board members helped to energise the entire day and all the other delegates. There has been positive feedback from delegates in the post event survey.</p> <p>Adam explained that the highest scoring sessions included the Chair and Naomi introducing EEH's work; Cllr Darlington's innovation sessions; and the 'next steps' session with councillors Renard and Leffman. This shows there is genuine interest in EEH and our work as a partnership. Adam added that EEH are currently planning the next conference and thinking about how to involve more Board members. He encouraged Board members for feedback on the conference.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Wenham thanked EEH team for all the hard work that was put into the conference, the turnout was excellent and received plenty of positive feedback.</p> <p>James Golding-Graham provided an update on smart junctions technologies.</p> <p>Abi Nichols updated the board with an overview of what EEH is currently doing on active travel and specifically Varsity Way. Abi added that EEH has started working with officers on phase 2 of the active travel strategy. She also provided an update on what EEH are doing on places of strategic importance.</p> <p>Suzanne Winkels went through EEH's response to BEIS Net Zero review. She highlighted that this was a technical response and that EEH's key message was the role of high quality and strategic regional connectivity has in delivering both net zero and sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Larratt said his authority is open to any assistance on smart junctions to help speed up traffic and reduce air pollution.</p> <p>The Board: Noted the business unit update.</p>

10 Proposed Future Meeting Dates

The Board agreed the following 2023 dates:

3 March 2023 (virtual)

26 May 2023 (virtual)

14 July 2023 (in-person)

29 September 2023 (virtual)

1 December 2023 (in-person)