



## **Strategic Transport Leadership Board**

14 July 2023

### **Agenda Item 6 - Innovation Spotlight on Oxfordshire**

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the Board:**

- a) Welcomes the presentations from Oxfordshire County Council and Milton Park officers**
- b) Notes the ongoing approach to delivering low-cost innovation**
- c) Recognises the opportunity and 'value add' in private sector collaboration**

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1. The regional transport strategy, published 2021, sets out EEH's commitment to supporting innovation, recognising the pivotal role of the region's authorities in developing new mobility solutions to improve connectivity and enable low carbon growth.
- 1.2. In July 2022, the Strategic Transport Leadership Board approved EEH's proposed approach to supporting innovation. This included the continued support of the Innovation Working Group, directly funding pan regional projects and providing direct financial support for bid development to authorities in the region.
- 1.3. The EEH Innovation Working Group has continued to meet and engage with private sector partners. The group commissioned a study looking into the potential benefits of developing an integrated smart junction management system across strategic corridors in the region and has supported the development of the CAV HERT consortium - delivering a feasibility study for connected autonomous vehicles on Hertfordshire County Council's mass rapid scheme.
- 1.4. Despite the offer of 'pump prime' funding for EEH authorities to develop multi authority bids to secure UKRI/Innovate UK funding, there has been no uptake of this funding. This is largely due to resource constraints in local authority transport/ mobility/ planning teams.
- 1.5. Several EEH authorities have developed successful models and approaches to developing capacity to engage with innovation programmes. The largest of these programmes has been developed by Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Innovation Hub (iHub). iHub is a dedicated service for the council supporting and encouraging innovation, promoting innovative ideas and technologies to drive efficiency, improving services, and benefiting the residents of Oxfordshire.
- 1.6. iHub has been involved in more than 70 projects with a collective value of £150M, building a reputation with government and the private sector for effective delivery and strong partnership working.

- 1.7. Milton Park has been a regular project partner, project participant and host to several key projects including the Mi-Link autonomous bus. On the bus, all steering, acceleration and braking is done automatically, and the vehicle will respond to other traffic, road conditions and external events. This is the first time an autonomous vehicle has been used to deliver a public service.
- 1.8. This paper and a presentation from Oxfordshire County Council's Head of Innovation and from Milton Park's Sustainability/Specialist Transport Advisor, seeks to highlight the potential of Oxfordshire's approach to members. It aims to showcase how working with the private sector can maximise the benefits of innovation to solve real world challenges.

## **2. Next steps**

- 2.1. The EEH Innovation Working Group will continue to meet – and invite Oxfordshire and other successful authorities to continue to share best practice and novel approaches to mainstreaming innovation in day-to-day delivery.
- 2.2. Where there is appetite, EEH will continue to support the formation of consortium to address and improve connectivity issues in the region.
- 2.3. EEH will undertake to engage further with academic activity on the innovation space – supporting multi-disciplinary bids to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).
- 2.4. EEH is committed to the development of the future mobility forum to support the region's connected autonomous vehicle ecosystem, highlighting the work of the region's authorities in supporting the sector. We will work to encourage programmes to improve connectivity, continuing to support thought leadership and the potential of connected and intelligent transport systems (C-ITS).

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