



Strategic Transport Leadership Board

Minutes

14 July 2023

11:00 – 13:00

Bee House, 140 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Oxfordshire, OX14 4SB & Online

Present:

CLlr Liz Leffman (Interim Chair)
CLlr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew
CLlr Graham Lawman
CLlr Phil Larratt
CLlr Phil Bibby
CLlr Robert Roche
CLlr Lucy Nethsingha
CLlr Anna Smith

CLlr Mary Walsh
CLlr Susan Brown
CLlr Jim Weir

Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council
Executive Member, North Northamptonshire Council
Cabinet Member, West Northamptonshire Council
Executive Member, Hertfordshire County Council
Executive Member, Luton Council
Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
Deputy Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Combined Authority
Executive Member, Central Bedfordshire Council
Chair, Future Oxfordshire Partnership
Deputy Mayor, Bedford Borough Council

Apologies:

Mayor Nik Johnson
CLlr Martin Tett
CLlr Adam Zerny
CLlr Wayne Fitzgerald
CLlr Jim Robbins

Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council
Leader, Peterborough Council
Leader, Swindon Borough Council

EEH Team Members Present:

Naomi Green
Suzanne Winkels
Fiona Foulkes
Abi Nichols
Trevor Brennan
James Golding-Graham
Nathalie Mazhunga
Adam King
Hanane Elmaarouf
Erin Pitcher
Helen Fallon
James Gagg

Managing Director
Technical Programme Manager
Business Manager
Project Lead
Project Lead
Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager
Project Officer
External Affairs and Policy Manager
Business Operations Assistant
Business Operations Assistant
Freight Lead
Project Lead

<p>1</p>	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) opened the meeting asked attendees if they were content with accuracy of previous meeting minutes.</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) gave an update on the actions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ox-Cam Roads Study - The agenda item is on hold pending Ministerial decision-making timelines. 2. Cllr Steve Broadbent requested an action for Cllr Barry Wood, in his role as Shadow Board Chairman of the Oxford-Cambridge PRP, to reach out to Cllr Martin Tett and its formal addition to the actions list. The independent chair for the OxCam PRP, Dipesh Shah, was appointed on 29 June 2023. EEH will ensure Cllr Wood extends this action to the new Chair as part of the handover process. 3. Alan Francis, Milton Keynes Green Party, sought detailed responses on issues regarding the East West Railway Company’s route announcement – Written response from EWR has been circulated. 4. Cllr Phil Larratt said that West Northamptonshire would like to work with EEH to develop their first LTP - We await LTP guidance from DfT, but in the meantime are exploring the level of support that can be provided to local authorities (pending a funding settlement from DfT). 5. Cllr Graham Lawman raised a number technical questions regarding the study methodology for the active travel strategy, which Abigail Nichols agreed to answer in correspondence - EEH business unit is liaising directly with North Northamptonshire Council on the matter. 6. Cllr Graham Lawman asked if EEH could put contact details into the reports - Contact details for lead officers have been included in the email sent to Board Members with EEH Board papers. It was also clarified that Board Members are welcome to send requests or questions via the EEH mailbox, businessunit@englandseconomicheartland.com, and the Business Operations Team will get it to the most appropriate EEH contact. <p>Request from the Chair to discuss closure of ticket offices consultation response on item 4 – Strategic Rail Update</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Public Questions</p> <p>Alan Francis (AF), Milton Keynes Green Party welcomed proposed schemes in the rail report on item 4 but raised concerns that the proposed strategic rail objectives did not directly reference direct services on the EWML to Milton Keynes from the east. From this direction, passengers would require changing twice to get onto WCML high speed services. AF asserted that there would be limited infrastructure cost due to changes made eight years ago in the Bletchley area. He then asked if EEH will be extending the East West Rail services from the east to the rail strategic objectives.</p> <p>Action – EEH business unit would discuss further with Network Rail to coordinate a response.</p>

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Supporting Roads Investment

Suzanne Winkels (SW) opened the item and explained EEH's proposed updated position on road investment in the region and the current consultations on the Third Road Investment Strategy. **Richard Leonard (RL)** provided a presentation on the RIS3 Publications and Consultation.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN) asked what the timescales are for getting things into RIS3.

RL said that this depends on what it is as there is a process for identifying areas of need, **RL** & **LN** to catch up offline to identify the scheme in question.

Naomi Green (NG) encouraged members to let EEH know if they have any specific RIS questions. The team will send out our responses to local authority officers next Friday (21 July). Officers will have a two-week consultation period prior to submission of the EEH response to National Highways.

Phil Southall (PS) asked whether will bus be prioritised on SRN.

RL said the government's policy is pushing more towards holistic journeys including decarbonisation outcomes. Challenges have been around the impact on individual locations. Push back from STB's and bus operators around priority at junctions. National Highways are committed to integrated transport systems.

Cllr Robert Roche (RR) asked how to get the public to change their mindset and suggested advertising campaigns.

RL explained that there is a behavioural change team within National Highways, but costs do play a part.

Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) asked if there are any plans for supporting and installing EV infrastructure, as we do want people to change from existing petrol cars to electric vehicles.

RL explained that National Highways are delivering **Project Rapid** - which is installing EV chargers across the network. A few challenges have been getting connections into National Grid, but NH are continually investing into it.

Cllr Brian Milnes (BM) questioned how National Highways add in considerations for active travel & public transport.

RL explained that National Highways have a programme of investments through designated funds.

NG said that this is a live issue and EEH are talking to DfT about investment in transport infrastructure.

Cllr Mary Walsh (MW) raised a concern that charging points need to be sorted to support electric bikes as well as cars.

Cllr Susan Brown (SB) agreed with **MW** and expressed concerns around air quality, including particulates. They also added that we need to reduce all road traffic and private vehicle traffic including electric vehicles.

Abi Nichols (AB) drew the Board's attention to EEH's proposed response in Annex 3, clarifying that EEH has been granted an extension to the consultation deadline to allow for Board consideration.

SW introduced EEH's proposed position statement on roads (Annex 2) and explained EEH's updated position on roads and major road investment in the EEH region.

(PS) said that we've referred to modal shift but this doesn't come out explicitly in the paper and that it is personal travel rather than freight.

LL requested that air quality to be added to annex 2.

LN suggested that the 4 bullet points in annex 2 under 'Need for Roads' to be moved to the top to recognise importance.

Cllr Phil Larratt (PL) supported the air quality points but is concerned that management of road congestion is not referred to.

SB suggested that tackling congestion by modal shift rather than building new roads to be made clear in consultation response.

PL disagreed with **SB** and thinks congestion needs to be considered and new roads.

Action – Board members to let EEH know if they have any specific RIS questions.

Action – EEH to circulate National Highway Slides.

Action – Air quality to be added to Annex 2.

Action – Move the 4 bullet points to the top of Annex 2.

Action – Further discussion on Annex 2 needed – Board did not agree to recommendation b regarding the draft position statement on roads for EEH.

The Board agreed the proposed SRN initial report consultation response – approval of recommendation c.

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Strategic Rail Update

Helen Fallon (HF) presented the paper and mentioned that in response to the ticket office closures, EEH have contacted neighbouring STBs, local authorities, and partners to gain views, as keen to not see any diminishing user service. HF also added that London TravelWatch recommendations (following their review of ticket office changes on the London Underground) should be considered.

James Gagg (JG) gave an example of Chiltern Railways in the EEH area adding customer service points that are more customer focused.

Cllr Phil Bibby (PB) said that Hertfordshire have drafted a response and are happy to share this.

HF requested board approval for the STB proposal for the Wider South East Rail Partnership, as set out in detail in Annex 1 and proposed governance arrangements for this.

JG asked the board to endorse the strategic rail objectives, included in the report in Annex 2, as the basis for on-going EEH rail work priorities, including those progressed through the new partnership proposal.

Cllr Phil Bibby (PB) said that he would like to see mention of regional economic hub connections and important we have connectivity within the wider network.

JG added that EEH have focused on interchanges/key gateways to improve connections across the wider network, rather than direct. **JG** also said that EEH are working with other STB's to improve rail linkages.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN) questioned why the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements scheme is not flagged with sufficiently high priority.

HF clarified that Ely enhancements would be needed to enable many of the freight objectives.

Phil Southall (PS) said that there is a lot of reference to multi modal but not about ticketing and added that we shouldn't lose sight of ticketing as a strategic point.

JG said that he is mindful of different approaches to ticketing around the country.

Cllr Brian Milnes (BM) added that the technology is there however the willingness isn't. Ticketing price options on certain routes are disappointing.

Naomi Green (NG) EEH have been championing Ely, and need to keep on this hard to see if we get the right outcome before recess. EEH are working closely with Transport East and both have a joint approach.

Andy Rhind (AR) praised EEH and Transport East for their excellent example of joint working and key priority for rail but noted significant pressures and demands on rail investment were presenting difficult decisions for Ministers.

Gavin Dowland (GD) added that its positive to see objectives in one document. Next steps would be to take if from strategic objectives into conditional outputs jointly with Network Rail.

Cllr Phil Larratt (PL) said on the document there is a lot of reference to release capacity from HS2 but now that Euston is being delayed how has the impact been considered. In EWP6, Northamptonshire was not included. **PL** added that there needs to be greater recognition of the aspirations for Northampton to have direct links to the North.

GD said that Network Rail are about to publish its strategic view on what to do with West Coast mainline release capacity for Euston to Crewe. Implications of changes in phasing will have an impact. He also said that there is lots of work about Northamptonshire that EEH officers have been part of for the last 18 months.

Ian Barnham (IB) liked the map and said he would like to see dotted Aylesbury link explained.

Cllr Mary Walsh (MW) questioned how we deal with the affected communities, and if we have objectives around communication particularly freight and the construction.

JG explained that the objectives are focused on connectivity, but any proposal will still have to go through statutory and relevant processes. He also said that freight is considered from multimodal perspective - demand for freight will be there but we need to make sure that its moved in the most sustainable way.

HF explained that she is developing a freight strategy as well as minimising impact to communities as part of this, discussions with transport officers will be in September then it will come back to Board in December.

BM supports Ely but expressed concerns around electrification of lines.

Action – Collective response to ticket office closure consultation be circulated.

The Board agreed to endorse the rail objectives presented, subject to minor changes, in particular ensuring Ely is appropriately referenced in freight objectives and Northampton added to objective EWP6.

The Board agreed to endorse the STB proposal for the Wider South East Rail Partnership.

<p>5</p>	<p>Investment in the Region</p> <p>Abigail Nichols (AN) introduced the paper and outlined the proposed approach to the iteration of EEH’s investment pipeline and the proposed levels of service against which interventions will be assessed.</p> <p>Cllr Susan Brown (SB) suggested that the following three points to be covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Reduction of individual private car journeys • Accessibility for people with disabilities <p>Suzanne Winkels (SW) went through the Swindon – Didcot – Oxford connectivity study slides. SW mentioned that there has been extra engagement following local elections.</p> <p>The Board agreed the proposed methodology, approach and levels of service to inform the regional investment pipeline (recommendation b).</p> <p>The Board agreed the package of interventions for Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study and publication of associated documents (recommendation c).</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Innovation Spotlight on Oxfordshire County Council</p> <p>James Golding Graham (JGG) opened the item, introducing Laura Peacock (LP) Head of Innovation at Oxfordshire County Council and Veronica Reynolds (VR) Sustainability and Community Manager at Milton Park</p> <p>LP presented on the IHub Business Strategy explaining that IHub performs three key functions for OCC presently. These include: (1) Innovation, (2) Policy and operational output and (3) Evaluation and data science. Through these functions, OCC have benefited from new business models, reputational gains and asset creation.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Bibby (PB) understands that OCC are piloting ChargePoint cable pavement gullies and wanted to know when results will be published.</p> <p>LP said that they expect results by the end of July and happy to share these results.</p> <p>VR presented the Milton Park travel initiatives and encouraged attendees to jump on the Mi-Link Autonomous Bus after the meeting.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Business Unit Update</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) introduced the paper and explained that EEH have received a £1.35m settlement from DfT, £76k under what we expected. The EEH Business Unit will come back to board in September with a revised programme proposal based on this reduction in funding. She also said that the LTP guidance from DfT is now expect to be published post summer recess. NG also added that Bus summit has been set up for the 15 September.</p> <p>Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) emphasised that the bus summit needs to be a workshop rather than only speeches.</p>

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Proposed Future Meeting Dates

The Board agreed the following 2023 dates:

29 September 2023 (virtual meeting, via Teams)

1 December 2023 (in-person – Hertfordshire/Northamptonshire possible location)

Bus Summit: 15 September 2023 10.00-16.00, Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton

Board members are also invited and encouraged to attend our EEH Annual Conference on 1 November 2023 at the Guildhall, Cambridge.