



# Strategic Transport Leadership Board

29 September 2023

## Agenda Item 9 Business Unit Update

### *Recommendations:*

#### **It is recommended that the Board:**

#### **Receive updates on:**

- DfT Local Transport Plan guidance
- Investment Pipeline project progress
- Successful innovation bids
- East of England Net Zero Conference
- East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group

#### **Notes the Consultations that EEH is/has provided technical responses to:**

- London Luton Airport Expansion proposals (The Planning Inspectorate Examination) – closed
- Train Station Ticket Office Consultation (closed)
- Freight, Logistics and Planning System Call for Evidence – led by DfT & DLUHC (closes 6 October)
- Future of Freight and Logistics APPG Survey (open)
- Plan-making reforms: DLUHC consultation on implementation (closes 18 October)
- Transport for the North Revised Strategic Transport Plan consultation (closed)
- EEH's Response to National Highways RIS Consultation

#### **1. DfT Local Transport Plan (LTP) Guidance**

- 1.1. The Department for Transport has been developing new LTP guidance and accompanying Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR) guidance.
- 1.2. It was initially anticipated that draft LTP guidance would be released for consultation before the summer, with final guidance expected in the autumn. Unfortunately, DfT has not been able to keep to the intended timeline.
- 1.3. It was anticipated the LTP guidance would be an updated version of the current guidance, reflecting best practice and Government policy.
- 1.4. Despite the delays in publication, local authorities across the region and country have been progressing their LTPs to varying degrees. Examples include: undertaking an update of a previously adopted LTP; progressing the development of a new Local Transport Plan in the absence of LTP guidance; and developing a new LTP alongside the Local Plan process – aligning the timing of both documents.
- 1.5. As delays to the LTP guidance continue, partner authorities are encouraged to consider how they wish to review/develop their LTPs.
- 1.6. To support the development of their Local Transport Plans, England's Economic Heartland is providing a programme of support. Work commenced on 22 September with a day of collaboration and a showcase of EEH tools available.

## **2. Investment Pipeline Project Progress**

- 2.1. In July 2023, the Strategic Transport Leadership Board received an update on the EEH's investment pipeline.
- 2.2. Following feedback from the Board, the outcome based 'levels of service' for the investment pipeline have been updated. Changes to the levels of service include the addition of affordability and options for inward investment within the appropriate level of service.
- 2.3. The final levels of service can be found as annex 1 of this report.
- 2.4. Engagement sessions to understand stakeholder priorities of the interventions within the investment pipeline are being planned for Board members (where desired) and local authority officers during October.
- 2.5. It is the ambition that the assessment of interventions and modelling will be undertaken in the Autumn, with a draft matrix pipeline complete by the end of the calendar year. The investment pipeline will be presented to the Board in early 2024.

## **3. Successful innovation bids**

- 3.1. Two innovation projects formally supported by EEH have received government funding to progress.
- 3.2. 'Project DARE' was awarded £10m from DfT, National Highways, HS2 Ltd, Network Rail and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to launch a new national research hub that will develop innovative ideas to ensure future transport infrastructure is low-carbon and resilient.
- 3.3. EEH provided support to the proposal, submitted by a collaboration of University of Cambridge, Newcastle University, Heriot-Watt University and University of Glasgow in support of the project: The consortium lead will be invited to present to Board after the project formally launches in November. EEH is keen to provide a conduit to authorities and delivery partners in the region in supporting the development of solutions to address real world challenges.
- 3.4. Secondly, EEH has supported the bid from 'England's Connected Heartland – Where Connectivity meets Innovation'. The funding application was developed by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of Buckinghamshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Berkshire authorities to enhance 5G connectivity in the region – with a specific focus on two key use cases.
- 3.5. The consortium and technology partners are looking to leverage the investment made into East West Rail trackside fibre (which EEH helped to secure) by linking that to 5G communications infrastructure. This will not only enhance train/trackside operations and passenger experience, but will also improve connectivity for communities along the route. The consortium are also looking to deploy 5G connectivity in the region's high value science and technology clusters, developing the business case for this through an initial deployment in Harwell.
- 3.6. EEH looks forward to collaborating with the successful consortium – and understanding how this connectivity can support future business case development for projects in our strategic investment pipeline.
- 3.7. EEH continues to support local and regional partners as they bid for innovation funding. There are several 'live' submissions currently with funders for consideration. We are confident that we will be able to update the Board of further regional success in the near future.

## **4. East of England Net Zero Conference**

- 4.1. The East of England Net Zero Conference took place in Cambridge on 20 September.
- 4.2. The event was hosted by the East of England Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, and supported by England's Economic Heartland and Transport East.



- 4.3. Hertfordshire County Council leader Cllr Richard Roberts compered the event. EEH interim chair Cllr Liz Leffman provided a keynote speech on the opportunities to reduce transport emissions, while EEH's decarbonisation lead James Golding-Graham appeared on an expert panel on designing out carbon.
- 4.4. The event, which focused on energy decarbonisation in the morning and transport decarbonisation in the afternoon, reinforced the commitment amongst political leaders in the region to achieving net zero. It was well attended and has attracted excellent feedback from delegates.

## **5. East of England All Party Parliamentary Group**

- 5.1. Managing Director, Naomi Green, was a panel member at the East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting on roads connectivity on 12 September 2023.
- 5.2. Joining the panel was Richard Holden MP, Minister for Roads. The Minister outlined the importance of roads within the East. He acknowledged that given the limited rail connectivity in the East, roads will remain the primary method of travel for most residents and businesses in the region.
- 5.3. The discussion included:
  - Recognising the national decision to move improvements planned for RIS3 into RIS4, that DfT commits to maintaining momentum on the development of the current SRN projects early in the RIS4.
  - The need for Ministerial sign off of National Highways' Oxford to Cambridge roads study, for which the Department and EEH were sponsors, and to ensure that there is funding to progress the interventions identified in the study.
  - That we look forward to positive funding announcements for the region's MRN projects which already have business cases submitted to government. These schemes are essential for managing localised capacity constraints, and support improvements to public transport and active travel.
  - We noted that local authorities are finding the requirement for a financial contribution of 15% towards the total cost extremely challenging in the context of increased inflation and wider pressures on local government services and finances.
  - Integrated roads funding to understand the Department's view on how multimodal solutions to roads-based challenges are appraised and funded. For example, the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement project will significantly improve rail freight capacity from Felixstowe to the Midlands and North and reduce congestion by 5.6m hours per year by removing 98,000 HGVs a year on the A14 and other roads.

## **Consultation Responses**

### **6. London Luton Airport**

- 6.1. EEH responded to the Planning Inspectorate's Examination of the Development Consent Order for Luton Airport Expansion
- 6.2. EEH recognises the economic significance of the United Kingdom's aviation network and Luton Airport is the only major airport located within the EEH region. It is a significant asset: as a key international gateway, a major regional employer and a key contributor to the economy. The airport provides the ability to connect regions economically enable trade links to be established both domestically and internationally and such linkages support economic activity across the region.
- 6.3. The expansion of Luton Airport has impacts beyond Luton itself and our response has focused on the surface access strategy.
- 6.4. Some of the key points raised in our response included:



- Investment in the delivery of public transport infrastructure to provide enhanced travel options for those accessing the airport from all areas of the EEH region, with greater east west connectivity. This should include better connections to Aylesbury, Hertfordshire and Oxford in terms of coaches and regular bus services. There is a real opportunity for reinstating the previous 61 bus route or the existing F70 route to be extend to Aylesbury and beyond to Oxford.
- Car parking –increases to on-site car parking should only be considered once opportunities to improve local connectivity and public transport infrastructure and services have been fully exploited.
- Investment in improved highway infrastructure should prioritise improvements that support local connectivity and public transport infrastructure and services. There is a need to address potential issues on A505 through Hitchin, Luton’s MRN and potential impacts on local villages in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, especially through the construction phase.
- Midland Main Line – we will support the applicant to explore with local train operators (currently East Midlands Railway and Thameslink) the levels of service required to enable Luton Airport Parkway station to serve as a gateway to the airport with seamless connectivity with the DART.
- EEH will continue to work with Luton Airport and Luton Borough Council in order to ensure improved links with the future East West Rail route.
- Bus and Coach Provision – the proposal to establish a new coach station and a new bus station is welcomed. However, there is a need for the applicant to work with service providers to identify the level of services required in order to ensure sufficient funding is provided to increase both existing service frequencies and the range of destinations focusing on wider regional east and west connectivity.
- Freight traffic should be restricted to using the SRN and MRN to ensure there is not impact of increasing freight movements on local communities.
- It is unclear how the Sustainable Transport Fund would be determined or administered and it is suggested to ensure a strategic and fair focus that EEH are part of any decision-making group to ensure that funding is focused where it is likely to have the most impact.

## **7. Train Station Ticket Office Consultation**

- 7.1. EEH submitted a response to the recent ticket office changes consultation which closed on 1<sup>st</sup> September after being extended for 5 weeks. It was one of 680,000 received by the Transport Focus and London Travel Watch watchdogs on this consultation. Our response was drafted in the context of input and comments from local authority partners, with the draft also circulated to board members prior to final submission.
- 7.2. In line with partner concerns, the response highlighted the importance of further engagement on changes with affected communities, as well as setting out 4 key principles that should guide consideration of any changes. In summary, these are:
  - Any proposed changes need to consider the issues of passenger safety, security and assistance carefully- all passengers should easily be able to access help and support when using stations on the rail network.
  - Any shift to provision of electronic vending machines over provision of manned ticket offices should ensure that the same range of ticket products are still available, and that customers are clear on where they can seek assistance on ticketing options and machine operation if required.
  - Any changes to ticket office facilities should not disadvantage those with particular accessibility needs, or who are not able to use relevant technology. The impacts and opportunities to help such customers should be thoroughly assessed.
  - Changes to provision of ticket office facilities should not lead to confusion or lack of clarity on provision of help to passengers using the rail network
- 7.3. The response also urged the rail industry to undertake wider engagement with local authorities, including through the EEH board.



- 7.4. The consultation proposals have raised significant concerns by many different groups, and since closure of the consultation there have been debates by MPs in Westminster, as well as a Transport Select Committee assessment of changes as part of their inquiry on accessibility issues in transport.
- 7.5. Under the process set down in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement, the next steps are for the watchdogs- Transport Focus and London Travel Watch- to go back to individual train operating companies to say if they agree or don't agree with proposed changes at each station. It is understood that this will be done by the end of October, and be based on issues such continuation of station staffing, accessibility, alternative proposals for purchase of tickets and continued access for passengers to station facilities. If these watchdogs object to changes, the train companies can refer its proposal to the Secretary of State for a final decision, which will be made in line with the guidance published in February 2023.<sup>1</sup>

## **8. Freight, Logistics and Planning System Call for Evidence (closes 6 Oct)**

- 8.1. The Department for Transport and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published a call for evidence for Freight and Logistics and the Planning System.
- 8.2. In 2022, DfT published the Future of Freight (FoF)- a long-term vision to support a sector that is cost-efficient, reliable, resilient, environmentally sustainable and valued by society.
- 8.3. The FoF identified the main opportunities and challenges facing the cross-modal freight and logistics sector and identified priority actions to begin addressing those opportunities and challenges. It set out the importance of the planning system to achieving the objectives for the sector.
- 8.4. The purpose of this call for evidence is to better understand the practical issues in planning for the right infrastructure to best support the freight and logistics sector, and to help them build a comprehensive picture of where the planning system can appropriately support the sector, including what is working well, what could work better and receive case studies for best practice.
- 8.5. The freight and logistics sector has a critical role supporting UK supply chains. It underpins the UK's prosperity, health, wellbeing and security by maintaining the flow of goods into, out of and across the country.
- 8.6. Supply chains rely upon multiple modes of freight transport along road, rail, air and maritime routes with transfers between and within modes at ports, airports, rail freight interchanges and at distribution centres and warehouses.
- 8.7. All of these transfer points require the right infrastructure in the right place for the system as a whole to function effectively.
- 8.8. It is our Local Planning Authority partners who take these decisions and will be submitting evidence on how they currently plan for this and include it in their Local Plans and Local Transport Plans. However, the primary objective of this call for evidence is to seek views so that the planning needs of the freight and logistics sector can be properly and effectively considered.
- 8.9. The Freight and Logistics sector operate nationally and therefore are likely to engage less at a local level. EEH have a role to play in facilitating the conversations and helping provide the evidence to help our Local Authority Partners understand how and where they operate, and what their requirements are in the region. This will enable them to identify and plan for the right infrastructure to support the sector, in the right places and identify and or safeguard land for logistics through their Local Plans.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-for-transport-ticketing-and-settlement-agreement-ticket-office-guidance/secretary-of-state-for-transport-ticketing-and-settlement-agreement-ticket-office-guidance>



- 8.10. In our role as an STB, we can help make the case for infrastructure for logistics , particularly as our evidence based Freight and Logistics Action Plan is developed. We will therefore be submitting a response and are liaising with partners to ensure we reflect their views.
- 8.11. In our response we will be setting out our policies on freight infrastructure that supports mode shift from road to rail or more sustainable last mile modes supporting the ambitions of our Transport Strategy, for example Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFI's) rail connected warehousing, consolidation centres etc. We will set out the role we, alongside the other STBs nationally can take to support collaboration and ensure planning authorities have the right guidance and mechanisms from Government to take decisions on land uses and planning applications that will support the aims set out in the FoF.
- 8.12. We have invited our Freight Officers to provide input into our response, in liaison with their planning colleagues.

## **9. Future of freight and logistics APPG**

- 9.1. Running in parallel to the Government's call for evidence, is the establishment of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Freight and Logistics. EEH sit on the steering group for this APPG.
- 9.2. There is a survey open, aimed at the sector, and the responses from this will help the steering group shape this APPG inquiry, to ensure the Government can deliver on the aims set out in the Future of Freight Plan. The APPG want to hear from freight operators and customers on where they think the government should be helping, where there are opportunities, they can build on and where better collaboration is needed to respond to challenges.
- 9.3. EEH have shared the survey with the Freight Officers Group, our stakeholders in the sector and will also be responding to the survey ourselves. The key points we will make to this survey will also be setting out the value the STB community has, how our strategies and plans provide the evidence for where infrastructure is needed to support mode shift and decarbonisation and how we can support the collaboration needed between Government, Industry and Local Authorities to respond to the challenges identified and build opportunities to support the sector.

## **10. Plan making reforms**

- 10.1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are currently consulting on proposed changes to how local plans are produced.
- 10.2. The consultation is focused on the process of how local plans are developed and delivered, including the timescales for producing plans, consultation arrangements and how new plans will be structured.
- 10.3. Overall, a more standardised project and programming approach to proposed, including a proposed new project initiation document for each local plan. The proposals are most relevant to those responsible for developing plans- i.e. planning authorities, rather than those inputting and supporting, such as local highway authorities and sub-national transport bodies, but there are some areas of relevance to EEH work.
- 10.4. The consultation gives little specific detail on topic areas such as transport, but there are proposals to help standardise evidence base to support local plans should data be readily available to support this, with transport assessments given as an example of where this could be the case. It is noted that EEH already provide support to local authority partners across our region through providing transport evidence and tools, and it is recognised that some of this can help support planning policy, as well as transport policy development. We can continue to support partners as further evidence base and tools are developed, including in relation to any updated guidance in this area.



- 10.5. Another area of interest in the consultation is the proposal for local authorities to develop a vision for their local areas at the early stages of plan preparation. The consultation specifically makes reference to ensuring wider strategies are considered as part of this process, noting that, 'we propose to encourage planning authorities to make links more explicitly between the vision and other relevant corporate or thematic strategies produced by other authorities, public bodies and partnerships, to help secure more buy-in for local plans as vehicles of change.'
- 10.6. There is therefore, is an opportunity for EEH to support our local authority partners in ensuring that such visions take into account transport priorities outlined in our strategy and evidence base documents such as the connectivity studies.
- 10.7. It is proposed that EEH respond to the consultation highlighting the key points noted above.

## **11. Transport for the North Revised Strategic Transport Plan Consultation (closed)**

- 11.1. EEH have responded to Transport for the North's draft Strategic Transport Plan. The draft plan lays out the strategic transport priorities in the North, many of which are shared by EEH. EEH has welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.
- 11.2. EEH's response highlighted key shared opportunities and challenges across our two regions. EEH and Transport for the North share populations with large rural communities, high car dependence and the pressing need to cut emissions.
- 11.3. EEH's response discussed three key areas highlighting the importance of a decarbonised transport system, that facilitates the crucial role of freight and seeks better connectivity through sustainable infrastructure investment.
- 11.4. The need for investment and innovation and understanding the 'right share approach' to travel were also highlighted.

## **12. EEH's Response to National Highways RIS3 Consultation**

- 12.1. EEH business unit undertook a technical response to National Highways publication to its Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) consultation. This included a response to nine documents published by National Highways including, Connecting the Country – National Highways Long terms strategic plan to 2050, and eight Route Corridor Strategies that cross the EEH region:
  - Route 6 – London to Leeds,
  - Route 10 London to Scotland West (south),
  - Route 11 London to Scotland East,
  - Route 12 East of England,
  - Route 13 Felixstowe to Midlands,
  - Route 15 Solent to Midlands,
  - Route 16 London Orbital, and
  - Route 20 London to Leeds.
- 12.2. The EEH region has the highest number of route strategies which show the strategic and central nature of the region and not surprisingly that through traffic, especially high levels of HGVs travelling through the region from ports to the midlands, is one of the main contributors to carbon, air quality and noise issues in the region.
- 12.3. In the development of our responses EEH met with local authority partners to ensure that the responses reflected local priorities and included key points that they raised in relation to the corridors.
- 12.4. Each of the responses included feedback that related to the specific corridors but also included response to some common themes including:
  - Concern over the delay to the RIS programme and RIS3 moving into RIS4



- Proposal for the SRN to be categorised into national corridors, inter-regional routes and regional connections, with associated 'levels of service' for each which EEH highlighted as a concern over how funding would be allocated.
- Consistency between the SRN Initial Report and the Route Strategies objectives and the missed opportunity for specific objectives on carbon, integration, and the environment.
- The need to consider the transport system as a whole and integration of strategic networks and local networks to allow seamless transition between the two as part of the customer experience with equal access to funding for all road types.
- The need for a multi-modal approach with recognition that roads are a key to many transport modes and users, including public transport and active travel. There should be recognition that some road issues could be addressed by rail solutions.
- Using technology to maximise the existing asset, especially with the focus moving towards maintenance and small-scale enhancement schemes
- The recognition of severance caused by the SRN and support the focus on minimising the SRN's impact on communities and AONB across the region.
- Better information provision and focus on safety and journey experience, including a choice of travel, and consideration of accessible and inclusivity of all users.
- Clarification on how planned housing growth and employment were determined as not all planned growth featured in all reports.
- The need for facilities for freight operators including rest, EV and alternative fuelling infrastructure.
- Highlighted LTAs responses towards potential de-trunking and the concerns over this.

### **13. Next Steps on the RIS Programme**

- 13.1. National Highways are currently analysing the feedback from the consultation and are due to publish updated route strategies towards the end of 2023, which will be accompanied by the publication of a detailed analysis of the consultation responses.
- 13.2. In parallel to this EEH will continue to work with DfT and National Highways to ensure that local priorities are continued to be progressed across the region. We are optimistic that the OxCam Road Study, which highlights key areas of focus in parts of the region both on the SRN and MRN, will receive ministerial sign-off so that it can be published and shared with EEH local authority partners.
- 13.3. In addition, through EEH's continuing work programme, such as through the Investment Pipeline and connectivity studies, we will continue to develop and support the narrative for the investment in strategic priorities across the region.

**Suzanne Winkels**  
**Technical Programme Manager**  
**September 2023**





## Annex 1: Investment Pipeline Levels of Service

| Transport Strategy Principle   | Criteria Title        | Criteria description  |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040  | Embodied emissions    | Avoid a net increase in GHG emissions resulting from construction   |
|  | Operational emissions | Likely to reduce net operational GHG emissions of the transport network   |
|  | Modal shift           | Increase the number and percentage of journeys using active travel and public transport                                   |
| Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel | Environment           | Conserve and enhance the region's natural and historic environments   |
|  | Accessibility         | Provide greater levels of inclusivity, affordability, and accessibility   |
|  | Health and wellbeing  | Improve air quality and the quality of life of local communities  |
| Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities   | Journey time          | Reduce journey time variability (across all modes)  |
|  | Economic growth       | Support sustainable economic growth and inward investment in all areas  |
|  | Local connectivity    | Improve the connectivity in and/or between places of strategic importance and key economic centres                        |
|  | Regional connectivity | Encourage the safe and sustainable movement of people and goods throughout the region(s) and/or to international gateways |
|  | Strategic routes      | Ensure strategic journeys can use and keep to strategic routes  |

|  |                    |   |
|--|--------------------|---|
| <p>Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways, in a way which lessens its environmental impact</p> | <p>Interchange</p> | <p>Facilitate more frictionless transfer between modes for people and goods</p> |
|--|--------------------|---|