



# Strategic Transport Leadership Board

## Minutes

03<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

11:00 – 13:00

*Online*

Present:

Cllr Liz Leffman (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Emily Darlington  
Cllr Graham Lawman  
Cllr Phil Larratt  
Cllr Phil Bibby  
Cllr Robert Roche  
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha  
Cllr Wayne Fitzgerald  
Cllr Anna Smith  
Cllr David Renard  
Mayor Dave Hodgson

Leader, Oxfordshire County Council  
Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council  
Executive Member, North Northants Council  
Cabinet Member, West Northants Council  
Executive Member, Highways & Transport  
Executive Member, Luton Council  
Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council  
Leader, Peterborough Council  
Deputy Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  
Leader, Swindon Borough Council  
Mayor, Bedford Borough Council

Apologies:

Cllr Richard Wenham (Chair)  
Mayor Nik Johnson  
Cllr Martin Tett

Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council  
Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough  
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council

EEH Team Members Present:

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

Managing Director  
Principal Technical Lead  
Business Manager  
Project Lead  
Project Lead  
Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager  
Project Officer  
External Affairs and Policy Manager  
Capacity and Capability Lead  
Business Operations Assistant  
Business Operations Assistant

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Liz Leffmann</b> opened the meeting asked attendees if they were content with accuracy of previous meeting minutes.</p> <p><b>Cllr Graham Lawman (GL)</b> sought correction of the wording in page 3 &amp; 5</p> <p>On page 3 it should read '<i>spoke about DFT decision and pace of timing affected costs</i>'</p> <p>On page 5 it should read '<i>He added that Northamptonshire is part of the freight golden triangle, which impacts on the attractiveness of the A14 to the logistics sector.</i>'</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Public Questions</b></p> <p><b>Alan Francis (AF), Milton Keynes Green Party</b> provided a statement to outline the future of buses. The statement is below:</p> <p><i>I just wanted to raise some points for your discussion that you're going to have in a few minutes time about the future of buses. Ever since the 1985 Transport Acts, privatized bus services in England, everywhere except London. They've been basically in decline. The system isn't working, so we need to go back to either buses operated by councils, then municipal model, which many places had prior to 1985 or some sort of franchising system similar to what they have in London.</i></p> <p><i>There's mentioned in the paper of demand responsive transport systems, DRT, we have one of those in Milton Keynes that's been running for about 2 years now but it should not be seen as a substitute for fixed route &amp; fixed timetable bus services. It satisfies if you niche requirements that aren't time critical, but for people wanting to make journeys to schools, to work, to colleges, to health appointments, to catch a train, to visit cinema or theatre, it doesn't work because you cannot guarantee to be somewhere at a particular time. So it's not an adequate substitute for fixed route bus services.</i></p> <p><i>The next thing is electric buses. I didn't see anything in the report about electric buses. We really do need to electrify the bus services, some towns within the EEH area have got Zebra grants and are taking them up. Oxford and Stevenage, I know are Milton Keynes got the grant but hasn't been able to do a deal with the main operator. And so looks like that grant will lapse. So I think the report ought to be arguing for much more electrification of the bus services.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of funding, there are sources of funding for things like the workplace parking levy that Nottingham is introduced and I believe a few other places are considering ULEZ, clean air zones, all sorts of things like that, sources of funding to support bus services. And my final point, I know you have a bus forum which has bus operators on it, but it doesn't seem to have any representative of the passengers. There are many active bus user groups within the EEH area and I would suggest that a representative of one of those groups is added to the bus forum so that there is the passenger view as well as the operator view. Thank you very much.</i></p>

**3****EEH Value Proposition and forward work programme**

**Naomi Green (NG)** opened the item and said that the primary purpose of the paper was to look at EEH's work programme for 2023 & 2024. She also expressed gratitude to all the board members for taking part in the programme and meeting with Mark Mulcahey.

Naomi added that in section 5 of the paper which talks about the PAN regional partnerships, beyond transport there are currently two PAN regional partnerships in our region:

- The Western Gateway
- Oxford to Cambridge

Paragraphs 5.5 & 5.6 set out EEH's position on the OxCam PRP. EEH have not signed a proposal to government however EEH has a seat on the board. This ensures that synergies and data evidence and expertise between the two organisations are shared. Naomi welcomes any comments on feedback on this.

**Mark Mulcahey (MM)** thanked the board members for taking the time and meeting with him, Mark then went through the paper and gave some feedback.

**Cllr Barry Wood (BW)** said that we need to be confident all the time that there is no duplication between EEH and PRP. He added that scope for EEH to import & export knowledge between PRP and Western Gateway, which would add value & challenges. Barry also suggested that an understanding needs to be made between EEH and PRP about who does what & borders as the economy is a "broad church".

**Cllr David Renard (DR)** said that Western Gateway powerhouse have been working with Western Gateway STB on a rail strategy. The level engagement on rail strategy is not at level desired, however the team is rectifying. He also added that there is a growing interest in connecting to Oxford.

**Cllr Steve Broadbent (SB)** added that Buckinghamshire have not been engaged or been formally approached with PRP, he also said that the PAN regional partnership does not include Buckinghamshire so suggested that there is a need for definition of who is included/excluded.

**Cllr Barry Wood** responded to **Cllr Steve Broadbent** saying he is happy to speak to Martin Tett offline and agree on how to proceed.

**Cllr Liz Leffmann (LL)** said that EEH needs to work across the various divides and need to have a good relationship with other STB's and organizations

**Naomi Green** provided a summary on the work programme and said that the work programme builds on EEH's 3 year business plan. EEH moved from strategy towards investable propositions. Naomi also added that we learned a lot on economic narratives last year from EWR work. Centre of Excellence work is growing and proposing putting 10% towards this programme, this shows a real intention that this is important to us. Annex 2 sets out what the programme will look like based on principles.

**Cllr Robert Roche (RR)** said that unfortunately Luton cannot agree to 2% increase and will be having an offline meeting with Naomi Green to discuss further.



**Andy Rhind (AR)** added that the team have done a tremendous job in squeezing value into the programme and great to see the Centre of Excellence intent.

**Cllr Steve Broadbent** suggested that it may be worth identifying expected impacts in the work programme.

**Cllr Emily Darlington (ED)** said that the centre of excellence has been supportive to the Milton Keynes team and doesn't want to lose the long-term strategic considerations because its crucial in the move to projects. Cross border impact can happen for e.g., between local plans and transport needs to be joined up in a broader perspective.

**Mayor Dave Hodgson (DH)** said that he is content to support the 2% increase given EEH have been helpful to Bedford's transport planning and LTP 4.

**The Board agreed on the 2% increase (Luton as exception)**

## Future of Buses

**James Golding – Graham (GGG)** went through the paper and added in response to **Alan Francis’s** comments, we would be happy to invite Passenger Reps with agreement from the partners. EEH is clear that this needs to involve the bus operators and consider wider challenges of equity and accessibility, however reiterating that there’s been a 30% drop in passenger numbers since 2019 covid we urgently need to challenge the current paradigm.

**Cllr Phil Bibby (PB)** mentioned that it’s a struggle to get bus operators to maintain routes, and we also need to think about more integrated transport e.g. Swiss model. He also added that DRT has a role to play in rural transport.

**Cllr Emily Darlington** said that the current system is not working for Milton Keynes and anyone across the EEH region, we are held to ransom by private providers. Devolution discussions differ across EEH, and need to be aware of some additional bus powers that are potentially being introduced. Would be useful to understand the different models and what could/should Milton Keynes do. More understanding on single ticketing and model for cross border journeys from EEH.

**Mayor Dave Hodgson** agreed with Cllr Emily Darlington and said why cant we level up our transport infrastructure to that of the metropolitan areas. Carbon footprint and transport is greater because we don’t get the same funding for public transport. He also added that he would like to have a conversation with **James Golding – Graham** around the data and sample in the paper.

**Cllr Robert Roche** said Luton have an enhanced partnership and they are looking at single ticketing, also an open invite to EEH to attend these meetings. He also requested a breakdown of survey to look at Luton’s data.

**Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN)** also agreed with Emily’s summary and added that not all mayors solve all the problems as it is difficult to franchise without funding stream, money is needed to be able to use the power. She also said that home to school transport needs to be part of the conversation, particularly rural bus services.

**Cllr Anna Smith (AS)** agreed with Lucy and said that school transport is vital. We fall into a trap if we assume devolution is about structures, it is about powers and funding. She also added that the more join up the better when reflecting on the National Rail system. Cross boarder cooperation is needed and thinking about linking in all the different transport systems. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are keen see that we are pushing on franchising, funding and proper powers.

**Cllr Steve Broadbent** said he is a huge fan of buses and fundamental point in report that only four of our areas got funding through BSIP, but where are we going with the service experience as well as the key drivers across borders of the county. He also questioned the DRT cost.

**James Golding-Graham** explained that DRT doesn’t work without significant subsidy.

**Phill Southall (Bus Operator)** said that the paper over simplifies the current situation. Local authorities subsidized services due to budgeting pressures. Paper also doesn’t acknowledge the state of flux in the industry. He also said that concessionary fares and EV’s are not being sorted until steady state funding in April 2024, fundamentally all the elements in the paper are about funding and not about control.

	<p><b>Cllr Brian Wood (BW)</b> suggested that a supplementary agenda item to be added to the next board meeting and for Phil Southall to author or co-author</p> <p><b>Cllr Liz Leffmann</b> ran through the points raised around concessionary fares, ticketing, technology and home to school transport. She also proposed looking at having a workshop.</p> <p><b>Cllr Emily Darlington</b> agreed with the workshop proposal.</p> <p><b>Cllr Lucy Nethsingha</b> also agreed and questioned if there is anywhere in the country that we feel it's going well, perhaps Cornwall? As they are further ahead.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed to have buses as an agenda item in the next board meeting as well as a bus workshop.</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Future of Mobility Workstreams</b></p> <p><b>James Golding-Graham</b> went through the paper and explained that EEH feel there is a huge amount of benefits having this research, from trying new approaches to managing assets with LA partners to developing better data management and modelling capabilities that will support a resilient transport network.</p> <p><b>Hillary Chipping (HC)</b> said that she is keen to work with EEH in the PAN Regional Partnership role. She also added that she is surprised around the wording "confusion" and perhaps a lack of clarity on how we work together however she has spoken to Naomi about this.</p> <p><b>Rupert Thacker (Herts)</b> went through 'The Hert' slides. This project will be on the East West Route across Hertfordshire, 100, 000 new homes to be built and about 50% to be built within 5 KM of the A414 corridor. There are currently many people that already live within 1km. The A414 is the most heavily trafficked A road in Herts. He also said that one of the biggest challenges is the funding resources for development phase, conventional transport appraisal does not recognise the wider benefits.</p> <p><b>Darren Granger (Herts)</b> said that the complimentary schemes include Watford to Croxley link (W2CL), new project that looks at concept designs for disused rail corridor and these studies to be conclude in November 2023.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Great British Railways</b></p> <p><b>Hellen Fallon</b> introduced the paper and explained that the purpose was to provide an update on Great British railways, key points from Mark Harper's Bradshaw Address and working with neighbouring STB's to identify EEH's rail priorities.</p> <p>No comments were made.</p>

<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Mobility Hubs</b></p> <p><b>Trevor Brennan (TB)</b> read through the paper and explained the work was in partnership with our local authorities, developing a business case guidance for those who are keen to develop the concept of mobility hubs. Also has a focus on rural opportunities. EEH would like to the document as we have had a positive response from EEH partners and DfT. Further development on the guidance for second phase of work which will help authorities identify where opportunities for mobility hubs.</p> <p><b>Cllr Robert Roche</b> said that Luton has just done a feasibility study for mobility hub on Luton business park. He also welcomed EEH to getting involved and sharing best practise.</p> <p><b>Cllr Graham Lawman</b> raised that Wellingborough railway station to be a potential site for mobility hubs.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Business Unit Update</b></p> <p><b>Suzanne Winkles (SW)</b> explained that the paper provided an update on connectivity studies, Transport Select Committee responses, capability and capacity, places of strategic places and lastly active travel strategy.</p> <p>No questions were raised.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Proposed Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>The Board agreed the following 2023 dates:</p> <p>26 May 2023 (virtual)  14 July 2023 (in-person)  29 September 2023 (virtual)  1 December 2023 (in-person)</p> <p><b>The board agreed for July meeting to be in Harwell/Oxfordshire area and December in person meeting to be in Hertfordshire/Cambridgeshire area.</b></p> <p><b>EHH conference to be held in Northamptonshire.</b></p>