

Strategic Transport Leadership Board

12th July 2024

Agenda Item Number 4: Connectivity Studies 4 and 5

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Strategic Transport Leadership Board:

- a) Agrees the package of interventions for connectivity studies 'Thames Valley – Northampton' (Study 4) and 'Southern East West Movements (Study 5) as previously presented to May's Board subject to any final edits suggested by members.**
- b) Agrees the publication of the final summary reports for both studies (see Appendix 1 and 2), noting that the supporting evidence base reports and the wider call for evidence note will be published at the same time.**
- c) Notes that Study 4 and 5 package of interventions will be fed into the investment prioritisation framework.**

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The paper outlines the final packages and summary reports for the 'Thames Valley – Northampton' (Study 4) and 'Southern East West Movements' (Study 5) connectivity studies, as previously presented to May's Board for agreement.
- 1.2. As key members were unable to attend, the Chair proposed that final agreement on the studies adoption and publication be considered at next Board meeting of the 12 of July 2024.

2. Key points to note

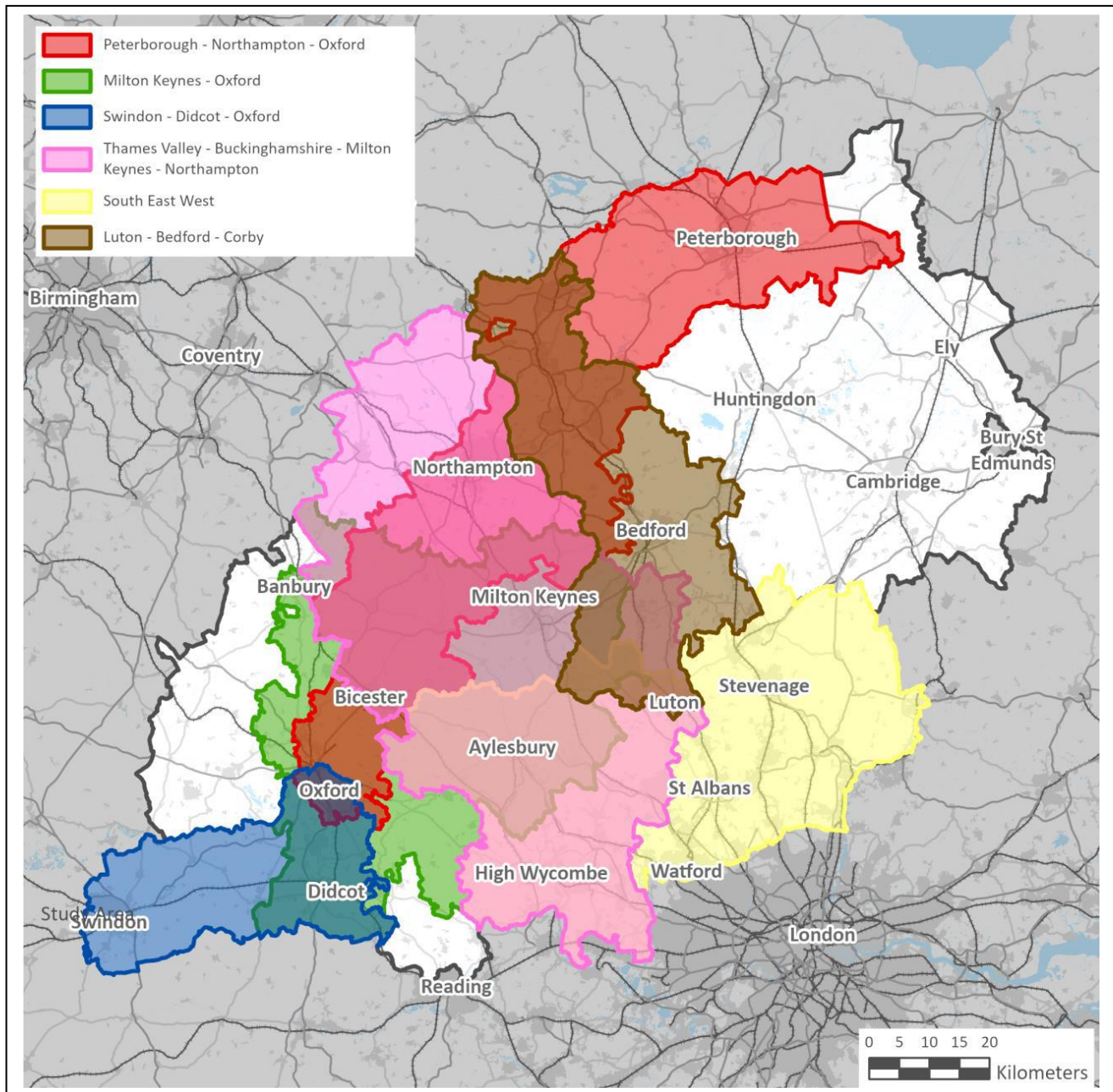
- 2.1. EEH's multimodal connectivity studies have been a major part of our work programme over the last three or so years and a keyway in which we are growing the regional evidence base.
- 2.2. The studies covering 'Thames Valley-Northampton' and 'Southern East West Movements' are being presented to the Board for agreement. They have been subject to extensive engagement over the period of their development, working with local authority and other stakeholders throughout.
- 2.3. They are based on the principles and policies of EEH's transport strategy and are framed in both the context of national policy and work being undertaken by local authorities. The packages of interventions build on the existing evidence base of our partners, bringing this together alongside wider evidence to identify strategic priority measures within each of the study geographies.

- 2.4. EEH will continue to support local authority and other strategic partners to progress planning for interventions identified within the connectivity studies, particularly in the context of the investment prioritisation framework development and EEH's range of investment brochures.
- 2.5. It is recognised that this is based on the evidence base available through development of the studies, and that further evidence on required interventions may well come forward in the future. It will be important that EEH capture any key changes to priority interventions through the on-going review and updating of the Investment Prioritisation Framework.

3. Context

- 3.1. EEH's programme of connectivity studies:
- Identify opportunities that improve current and future connectivity across the EEH region.
 - Provide an evidence-based list of transport interventions for inclusion in the EEH investment prioritisation framework. Providing advice to the Secretary of State for Transport on regional transport priorities is a core function of an STB
 - Provide a broad strategy for the area/ corridor to help achieve EEH's regional transport strategy ambitions.
 - Be multimodal in nature, including digital.
 - Be cumulative, with each study building on previous priorities identified, rather than duplicating work already being undertaken by partners and local authorities, to provide additionality to already committed and funded interventions.
- 3.2. Studies 4 and 5 have been in development since January 2023, working extensively with local authority partners and stakeholders to progress each of the studies to shape packages of the interventions for each study area.
- 3.3. The full schedule of stakeholder meetings and briefings held for both studies are outlined in Annex 1. In summary this included undertaking eight steering group meetings, four stakeholder meetings, six EEH Board Member/local authority officer briefing sessions and also included as part of the six more recent EEH Board Member briefings on EEH's Investment Prioritisation Framework, as well as a wider call for evidence process. This extensive engagement has been invaluable in enabling completion of these studies.
- 3.4. Study 4 and 5 are part of EEH's existing programme of multimodal connectivity studies, with previous studies relating to 'Oxford-Milton Keynes', 'Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford' and 'Swindon-Didcot-Oxford' (please see location map overleaf) are already complete and published.¹ The map overleaf shows Thames Valley – Northampton in pink and the South East West Movements in yellow (with an overlap with the pink area through Aylesbury and High Wycombe).

¹ <https://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/our-work/connectivity-studies/>



Connectivity Study 1 to 6 Locations Map

- 3.5. A sixth connectivity study covering Luton-Bedford-Corby continues to be developed. It is anticipated that this study will be completed by end of 2024 and presented to the Board for approval in December 2024. In keeping with the previous studies, this is also being progressed with extensive engagement with local authority and stakeholder groups.
- 3.6. The outputs from the connectivity studies will be integrated into the regional investment prioritisation framework.

4. Key Outcomes

- 4.1. The packages of interventions included in the studies (including road, rail, bus and active travel modes) have been tested using a strategic land use model (EEHELUM) and their impact compared to a business-as-usual scenario by 2049. Overall, the model results show an increased use of rail, bus and active travel across each of the study areas because of the interventions identified, as well as an increase in Gross Value Added and decrease in carbon emissions.
- 4.2. The study packages for enabling sustainable, planned development and a decarbonised road fleet includes targeted interventions for highways measures, addressing known issues, planning for a future ready network as well as placing communities at the centre of interventions, specifically where the strategically important road network impacts the communities along them.
- 4.3. The packages for each study include both place-based and theme-based packages and are summarised and shown in Annex 2 maps. Overall, they work as one for each study, building the picture of connectivity across each defined area in an evidence-based manner. This approach has enabled a balanced package of options which could be progressed.

5. Study 4 (Thames Valley-Northampton)

- 5.1. The full detail of each package for Study 4 is set out within the summary report in **Appendix 1**, but include the following six packages:
 - **West Coast Mainline, A5 and M1 Corridor**- this package focuses on maximising the benefits from released rail capacity associated with HS2, alongside sustainable transport connections in this corridor. It includes proposed interventions for new and improved rail stations, bus infrastructure and active travel network improvements.
 - **Northampton-Brackley-Aylesbury**- this package focuses on improvements to sustainable travel connections, including several new mobility hubs, bus services and active travel links.
 - **Thames Valley and London Connections**- this package focuses on the opportunity through delivery of several interventions to develop a new rail corridor from Northampton/ Milton Keynes to Old Oak Common via Buckinghamshire, opening new rail markets and providing important new economic linkages. It also includes interventions on the Strategic Road network that will improve road safety and access for all road users.
 - **Sustainable Rural Connectivity**- this package includes interventions that will improve transport access for more rural areas, including longer-distance active travel routes, targeted road improvements, and measures that help provide further transport choice.
 - **Future Freight and Rail Electrification**- this package focuses on measures that will enable decarbonisation of rail operations, alongside measures to support better management of road freight.
 - **Creating an Integrated Transport Network**- this package includes interventions that will help develop an integrated, decarbonised transport network, including Electric Vehicle charging and working in partnership to better integrate bus and rail services.

6. Study 5 (Southern east-west movements)

- 6.1. The full detail of each package for the Study 5 is set out within the summary report in **Appendix 2**, but includes the following five packages:
 - **Aylesbury-Luton-Stevenage**- this package includes several bus priority interventions including some to be delivered as part of the Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit (HERT) network, alongside sustainable transport access from across the corridor to Luton Airport and active travel network development.



- **Amersham-Watford-St Albans**- this package includes the opportunity to develop a significant new bus and active travel corridor between Watford and Croxley, as well as sustainable travel improvements such as mobility hubs in the area.
- **Hemel Hempstead-St Albans-Stansted**- this package includes proposed delivery of a core section of the HERT network following the A414 corridor, alongside upgrades to station access and active travel network development.
- **Sustainable Rural and Freight Connectivity**- this package includes interventions to improve sustainable transport access in rural areas such as cycle links to Aylesbury, as well as proposals that would help shift freight from road to rail.
- **Creating an Integrated Transport Network**- this package includes interventions that will help develop an integrated, decarbonised transport network, including Electric Vehicle charging and working in partnership to better integrate bus and rail services.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. The outputs of both Study 4 and 5 (and other supporting technical programmes) will be integrated into the investment prioritisation framework.
- 7.2. The Luton-Bedford-Corby Study 6 will continue to be delivered with stakeholder engagement throughout. Updates on the work will be provided and presented to future Board meetings.

James Gagg, Trevor Brennan
Project Leads
July 2024

Annex 1: Stakeholder engagement

The below table summarises the external stakeholder engagement sessions for the connectivity studies '**Thames Valley – Northampton**' (Study 4) and '**Southern East West Movements**' (Study 5).

* The steering groups was formed of Local Authority officers (Local Transport Authorities and Local Planning Authorities), National Highways, Network Rail and DfT.

** The stakeholder groups involved organisations such as (non-exhaustive list), Natural England, Historic England, public transport operators, Sustrans, statutory environmental bodies, Chamber of Commerce

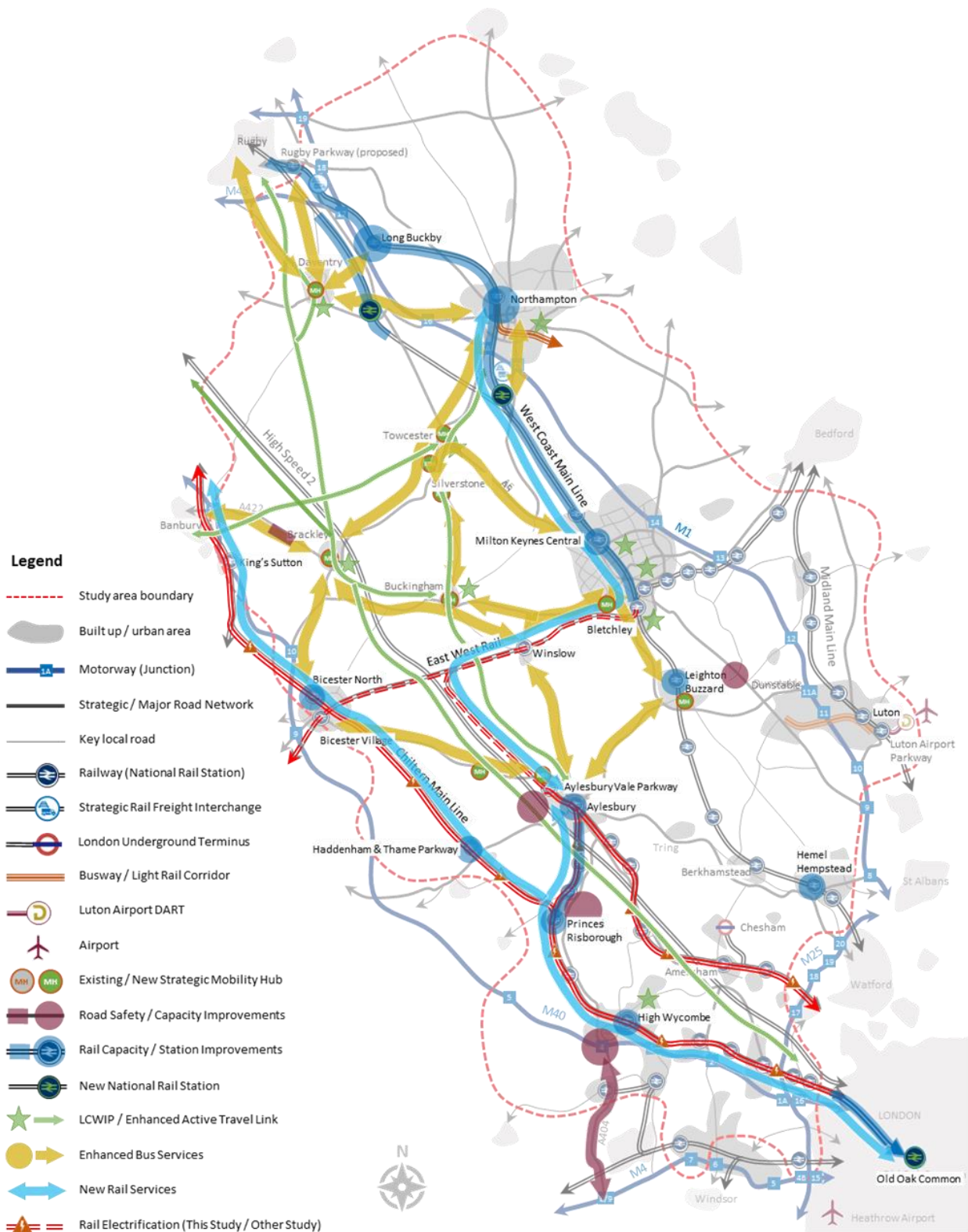
Updates on study progress have been provided to Transport Officer Group, Strategic Transport Leadership Board updates throughout and written comments from officers were invited on all outputs of the study.

Date	Meetings
24 th Jan 2023	Steering group * 1- Study 4
25 th Jan 2023	Steering group 1 -Study 5
27 th Feb 2023	Steering group 2- Study 4
1 st March 2023	Stakeholder group ** 1 – Study 5
8 th March 2023	Steering group 2 - Study 5
14 th March 2023	Stakeholder group 1 – Study 4
20 th April 2023	Member Briefing – Bedford Borough Council
24 th April 2023	Member Briefing – West Northamptonshire Council
31 st May 2023	Member Briefing – Buckinghamshire Council
9 th May to 11 th June 2023	A general call for evidence, inviting wider groups and the public for comments on transport issues within the study areas to help inform the study
21 st June 2023	Member Briefing – Luton Borough Council
10 th July 2023	Steering group 3- Study 5
12 th July 2023	Stakeholder group 2 – Study 4
17 th July 2023	Steering group 3 -Study 4
19 th July 2023	Stakeholder group 2 – Study 5
2 nd Aug 2023	Member Briefing – Milton Keynes City Council
18 th Sept 2023	Member Briefing – Central Bedfordshire Council
13 th Nov 2023	Steering group 4- Study 4
15 th Nov 2023	Steering group 3- Study 5
3 rd Jan 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session - Luton Borough Council
23 rd Jan 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session Members – West Northamptonshire Council
31 st Jan 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session Members – Central Bedfordshire Council
5 th Feb 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session Members – Hertfordshire County Council

1 st March 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session Members – Milton Keynes City Council
16 TH April 2024	Member Briefing for Connectivity Studies and Investment Pipeline Engagement Session Members – Buckinghamshire Council

Annex 2: Intervention Summary Maps Study 4 and 5

Thames Valley – Northampton' Study 4 Intervention Summary Map



'Southern East West Movements' Study 5 Intervention Summary Map

