



Strategic Transport Leadership Board

Minutes

1st December 2023

10:30 – 13:00

In Person

Present:

Cllr Liz Leffman (Chair)	Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew	Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Graham Lawman	Executive Member, North Northants Council
Cllr Javed Hussain	Executive Member, Luton Council
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Jim Weir	Deputy Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Steven Broadbent	Cabinet Member, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Adam Zerny	Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council

Apologies:

Mayor Nik Johnson	Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA
Cllr Martin Tett	Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Mayor Tom Wootton	Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Phil Bibby	Executive Member, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Susan Brown	Chair, Future Oxfordshire Partnership
Cllr Gavin Elsey	Member, Peterborough City Council
Cllr Jim Robbins	Leader, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Phil Larratt	Cabinet Member, West Northants Council
Cllr Mary Walsh	Executive Member, Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Anna Smith	Deputy Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA

EEH Team Members Present:

Naomi Green	Managing Director
Suzanne Winkels	Technical Programme Manager
Abi Nichols	Project Lead
Trevor Brennan	Project Lead
James Golding-Graham	Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager
Nathalie Mazhunga	Project Officer
Adam King	External Affairs and Policy Manager
Hanane Elmaarouf	Business Operations Assistant
Erin Pitcher	Business Operations Assistant
Helen Fallon	Freight Lead
James Gagg	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. No amendments were requested.</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) gave an update on the actions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ox-Cam Roads Study as forward agenda item for December Board meeting - <i>The agenda item is on hold pending Ministerial decision-making timelines.</i> 2. Cllr Phil Larratt (PL) said that West Northamptonshire would like to work with EEH to develop their first LTP - <i>We await LTP guidance from DfT, but in the meantime EEH are exploring the level of support that can be provided to local authorities (pending a funding settlement from DfT).</i> 3. EEH business unit to develop the proposal further for Board Champions - <i>Board Champions were due to be elected today (see below)</i> 4. Ox-Cam PRP on the agenda in future meeting – <i>EEH is liaising with OxCam PRP staff to identify dates to provide key project updates from the PRP programme.</i> 5. EEH business unit to work with Transport East and local authorities on gaps in the Connectivity Studies - <i>EEH is reviewing the connectivity studies alignment with Transport East and local authorities as part of work programme going forward.</i> <p>Board agreed to the Board champions:</p> <p>Cllr Steven Broadbent – Strategic Connectivity Champion Cllr Graham Lawman & Cllr Jim Weir - Integrated Transport Champions Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew - Decarbonisation and Innovation Champion</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Public Questions</p> <p>There were no questions from the public.</p>

3**National Transport Policy and Strategy Updates**

Naomi Green (NG) opened the item and said that the Prime Minister's Network North announcement on 4 October 2023 saw future HS2 phases cancelled and the money saved funding other projects including the region's MRN schemes and Ely Junction. Network North includes a commitment to fully fund the schemes within the current MRN programme and, significantly, it removes the requirement for local authorities to contribute 15% of capital funding towards scheme costs. This follows representations from EEH and its partners regarding the funding challenges for local authorities. While the removal of the requirement for a local contribution is to be welcomed, there remains a challenge to find the funding required for scheme development from within already constrained local government finances. EEH continues to make representation of these challenges to Department for Transport (DfT) on behalf of those partners who have raised this with us.

NG encouraged members to reach out to EEH if they are concerned about their MRN schemes. Rail minister Huw Merriman described Ely as a superb project and will be pushing to get this delivered. EEH would like Board support to write a letter to the Secretary of State, welcoming the decision and encouraging the re-establishment of Network Rail's Ely team at the earliest possible date.

She said HS2 has had a significant impact on communities and businesses within the EEH region. EEH is working with Network Rail on implications of cancelling the northern leg of HS2 on released capacity on the West Coast Main Line, this will be brought to Board once there is greater clarity. Network North also included local integrated transport settlements for local authorities in the Midlands and North. **NG** said that EEH would keep pushing for long-term local authority transport funding settlements to be introduced nationwide.

She said key takeaways from the Autumn Statement are detailed in annex 2. The National Infrastructure Commission's National Infrastructure Assessment contained several recommendations that should be welcomed, including greater funding certainty for local authorities, but its focus on the needs of major metropolitan areas was disappointing. The King's Speech announced bills for the implementation of autonomous vehicles and Great British Railways – it is proposed that EEH leads the region's response on these. The Department for Transport has new ministers, including Cambridgeshire MP Anthony Browne – EEH will formally write to them welcoming them to their new roles.

Graham Lawman (GL) wanted to know the current status of the major road budget and the distribution of funds to local authorities. He welcomed the long-term funding for local authorities but asked how will it affect funding for major infrastructure.

Dan Taylor (DT) advised talking to the Department for Transport (DfT) teams about the figures, he also said that there will be a second round of MRNs, MRN2 will be announced in spring next year which will be for bigger schemes.

GL asked if the 5 year funding will be affected by the allocations.

DT said that the funding for local integrated transport settlements is old HS2 money which will not change new funding that would be available for major projects.

NG said MRN 2 funding should be able to cover bus-based infrastructure solutions.

Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) agreed and said funding for roads needed to be more flexible.

	<p>Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN) said she would like more details on timescales in regard to the Ely scheme.</p> <p>DT said that he doesn't have details but both teams at Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail are working through it.</p> <p>The Board agreed to support a letter to the Secretary of State on Ely Junction.</p>
4	<p>Second National Infrastructure Assessment</p> <p>Andrew Jones (AJ), Senior Policy Adviser, National Infrastructure Commission shared slides on the overall principles of the National Infrastructure Assessment 2 that was published in October. These are published every five years and gives the government a 30 year look ahead. The second assessment is focused around 3 key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting levelling up • Building climate resilience • Delivering net zero <p>Cllr Javed Hussain (JH) said that the questions of recruitment and retainment of bus drivers is missing in the NIA2 and should be included as its crucial.</p> <p>AJ said that a clear and consistent pipeline of infrastructure investment was important to allow for development and delivery of long-term strategies to ensure there were the required skills across the transport sector.</p> <p>JH said there should be subsidies to change over to HVO (Hydrogenated vegetable oil), and there is an urgent need to think through how to get towards hydrogen and electric ahead of 2050.</p> <p>AJ said that it is a key message they have highlighted and is a key part of the emissions trajectory.</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) added that Transport for the North (TfN) are considering some of the wider workforce issues. She recommended that EEH works with TfN on this.</p>

5

Transport Priorities in Hertfordshire

Rupert Thacker (RT), Head of Highways Strategy & Implementation, Hertfordshire County Council and Darren Granger (DG), Group manager for the HERT, Hertfordshire County Council gave a presentation on their transport ambitions, successes and lessons learnt.

This included an update on the Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit, work to improve journeys across roads, rail and bus.

Cllr Jim Weir (JW) asked how Hertfordshire tackled moving small numbers of people economically in rural areas.

RT said that existing bus services in their rural communities are a challenge, however they are using technology to help deliver different services in different ways, while still ensuring that people have connectivity to key services that are likely to be in towns that are no more than 10 miles from the rural areas.

Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) asked how many miles is the HERT and how many stops does it have.

RT said that it runs 45km east west, with roughly 15 stops. **RT** also said analysis showed end to end journeys aren't very common, rather it was the shorter trips between intermediate stops at economic centres which were more important. He added that they are keen for HERT not to compete with existing bus services.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN) thanked the pair for their presentation and raised the importance of authorities learning from each other. **NG** suggested that EEH coordinate lessons learnt across the region that include schemes and benefits realisation.

Cllr Graham Lawman (GL) asked if the HERT will have a separate operator.

RT said the operator would be a separate brand.

Action – EEH to circulate Hertfordshire showcase slides.

Action – EEH to coordinate lessons learnt/ benefits realisation.

6**Programme Update**

Abi Nichols (AN) provided an update on the investment pipeline matrix. EEH is developing a flexible matrix rather than a rigid 'list' of priorities. This will allow EEH and its partners to react quickly and identify projects which deliver outcomes based on various criteria. EEH is providing a methodology note to local authorities so this approach can easily be replicated.

Cllr Graham Lawman (GL) asked what the timeline for the pipeline is.

AN said that it's a long-term pipeline up to 2050. A lot of schemes are in early development.

Adam King (AK) provided an update on the investment brochures, EEH is developing six brochures, these are largely based on the geographies of the connectivity studies. They will be underpinned by economic analysis by Cambridge Econometrics. EEH is working with partners to ensure consistent messaging and use of data.

Dan Taylor (DT) said the investment brochures & investment pipeline matrix will be very useful for Department for Transport (DfT) to understanding priorities.

Trevor Brennan (TB) gave an update on EEH's work on improving bus journeys, the agreed priorities have been amended and the focus of work will be the following:

- Total Transport
- Bus delivery models
- Supporting LTAs with bids (BSIPs & Zebra funding)
- Rural agenda
- Journey planning

There will be a range of tools and advice, and the outcomes of the work will be presented back to transport officers and Board in early summer.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (LN) asked if EEH is looking at home to school transport.

TB said yes, EEH is also looking to potentially develop an AI driven model to help meet the challenge of 'total transport'.

Cllr Graham Lawman (GL) asked if more work was required on rural connectivity.

Andrew Summers (AS), Chief Executive, Transport East said Transport East is the lead STB on rural mobility and is working closely with EEH on this. Transport East has just completed an inquiry into challenges around rural mobility and a set of recommendations that will be going to Parliament soon and will provide an update to the EEH team.

TB provided an update on mobility hubs, EEH is currently rolling out access to the regional location assessment tool to officers. Most authorities will have access to this in the next two – three weeks. EEH is also working with consultants to understand if there are any investable propositions for mobility hubs within the region.

GL added that there may be an opportunity in Northamptonshire on one of their new stations.

James Gagg (JG) provided an update on the East West Railway Company's plans for how the stations along the route can be better connected to local communities. Early engagement on a strategy has commenced with EEH particularly pressing for a long-term plan to support funding for door-to-door solutions. It is anticipated East West Railway Company will attend an upcoming Board to present on the strategy (March 2024).

Tim Bellamy (TB) raised concerns on interchange points and boundaries and would like to work with EEH on the geography.

Naomi Green (NG) expressed her desire for a door to door strategy to be developed collaboratively and to be back by funding.

Antony Swift (AS) said that the Development Consent Order (DCO) is clear on the need for complementary, supplementary infrastructure and in order to be stress tested against decision makers there needs to be a budget set aside.

Cllr Steven Broadbent (SB) asked if all connection stages are being looked at.

JG said the strategy and principles the Company are developing are at a high level however funding associated with those improvements remain unclear.

Cllr Adam Zerny (AZ) echoed the points that have been made and raised concerns about the consistency of engagement from East West Railway Company.

JG then provided an update on the rail main line priorities work. The rail strategic objectives report was endorsed by the EEH Board in July 2023 and published in October 2023. The Rail Main Line Priorities is the next stage and expected to be undertaken over the next six months. A key focus will be around passenger service expectations.

AN went through the roads update and said that there will be a future MRN2 programme and that the 'Oxford to Cambridge connectivity: Roads study' by National Highways, sponsored by EEH and DfT, is currently awaiting ministerial sign-off.

Cllr Liz Leffman (LL) asked what will happen to the A34.

NG said that it is pending a decision in RIS and suspects that because of the size, cost and environmental constraints it will be very difficult to deliver. **NG** recommended approaching National Highways post RIS publication to discuss improvements and alleviate any pressures.

Helen Fallon (HF) gave an update on the freight and logistics action plan; this has been drafted and will be presented for Board approval in early 2024.

GL asked whether EEH was looking at where freight and logistics infrastructure could potentially be located.

HF said that EEH is gathering an evidence base that's looking at the origin destination point for rail and road freight and where warehousing may be. Using this analysis will allow possible locations for infrastructure to be identified.

	<p>James Golding-Graham (JGG) gave an update on innovation. EEH supported the 'England's Connected Heartland' 5G project which recently received funding and is looking to leverage the investment in the fibre network that's been put inside East West Rail.</p> <p>JG went through the connectivity studies update. Three studies have been completed and a further three are underway – two of the studies are expected to be presented to Board in March, with the 'Luton – Bedford- Corby' study expected to be reported to the Board in by end of 2024.</p> <p>NG updated the Board on skills, capacity & capability. EEH continue to build on these projects as it is a big focus going forward. Keen to do more work so forming an EEH talent bank of people with expertise to help delivering major schemes. Development of two careers networks – early and mid-stage.</p> <p>GL asked what EEH are doing to engage students in developing an interest in the transport industry.</p> <p>NG said that EEH has a relationship with Hertfordshire University which has a transport planning masters course. EEH would like to coordinate a regional graduate programme or an apprenticeship programme, to achieve this EEH would need certainty over funding in the role of STBs beyond the general election.</p> <p>AS added that he would like to be involved in the business case masterclasses.</p> <p>Board members noted the programme update.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>2024/25 work programme priorities</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) introduced the 2024/25 business plan which would be submitted to DfT. This is currently based on the draft business planning guidance from DfT which lists three core functions for STBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a transport strategy for the region. • Provide advice to Ministers on prioritising transport investment. • Grow the capability of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in your region by developing a Regional Centre of Excellence. <p>NG said the plan will focus on EEH's analytical capability, delivery of Board priorities, speaking with a single voice and supporting local authority partners.</p> <p>Dan Taylor (DT) said that the publishing of the business planning guidance will be imminent.</p> <p>The Board agreed the proposed work programme for 2024/25.</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>Business Unit Update</p> <p>James Golding-Graham (JGG) introduced the paper and highlighted the consultation responses sent by EEH on behalf of local authority partners, this was the NPPF Planning Policy Changes consultation and the Freight Call for Evidence. The rural transport strategy has been published, EEH continue to work with Transport East (TE) and keen for rural to be area of focus.</p> <p>Adam King (AK) updated Board members on the conference feedback. Around 200 delegates attended the conference, the survey that followed had a positive response.90% rated the conference good to excellent, positive feedback on breakout sessions and the work that EEH are currently doing. Planning for next year’s conference is underway and will have more of a focus on networking and launches of EEH work.</p> <p>Board members noted the business unit update. Action – board members to have a discussion on more hybrid meetings.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>The Board agreed the following 2024 dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 March 2024 - 24 May 2024 - 12 July 2024 (in person) - 27 September 2024 - 6 December 2024 (in person)