



# Strategic Transport Leadership Board

## Minutes

19<sup>th</sup> March 2026

11:00 – 13:00

*Virtual*

### Present:

Cllr Steven Broadbent (Vice Chair)	Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Thomas Broom	Cabinet Member, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Paul Zukowskyj	Executive Member, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Alex Beckett	Cabinet Member, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Richard Butler	Cabinet Member, West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew	Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes City Council
Cllr Jim Weir	Deputy Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Chris McGiffen	Executive Member, North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Liz Leffman	Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Nicola Gribble	Portfolio Holder for Environment, Bedford Borough Council
Phil Southall	Managing Director, Strategy and Performance at Go-Ahead Group

### Apologies:

Cllr Adam Zerny (Chair)	Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Bethia Thomas	Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Javed Hussain	Executive Member, Luton Council
Cllr Chris Watts	Cabinet Member, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
Mayor Tom Wootton	Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Mayor Paul Bristow	Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority

### EEH Team Members Present:

Naomi Green	Managing Director
James Golding-Graham	Head of Analysis and Innovation
Adam King	Head of Partnerships and Policy
Suzanne Winkels	Head of Transport Planning
Hanane Elmaarouf	Business Unit Coordinator
Fiona Foulkes	Capability, Excellence & Governance Manager

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Steve Broadbent</b> opened the meeting.</p> <p>There is one ongoing action, this is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Oxford - Cambridge Growth Corridor infrastructure</b> - <i>Representatives from NESO have been invited to attend a future meeting. We are currently coordinating with them to agree on a suitable date for the board.</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Public Questions</b></p> <p>No public questions had been received.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Managing Director's Update</b></p> <p><b>Naomi Green</b> introduced the item and updated the Board on the progress for a longer-term funding settlement for EEH and to feedback on actions from the recent Regional Leaders Summit. She said that a £1m funding settlement had been confirmed for 2026/27, that discussions with DfT on additional funding were ongoing and positive, and that a ministerial submission was expected. She recommended that a three-year business plan be brought to the Board in June 2026 once funding clarity is available, and that agreement on local contributions should therefore be delayed until June.</p> <p>Regarding the Regional Leaders Summit, Naomi said that there had been strong attendance, including from Lord Vallance and the Housing Minister. Actions focused on mission-led delivery, with key priorities including inward investment, mass transit and funding/financing.</p> <p><b>Cllr Paul Zukowskyj</b> asked about feedback from the Supercluster presentation delivered at the summit.</p> <p><b>Naomi Green</b> said that the Office for Investment had presented and showed strong interest in coordinating inward investment across the corridor, noting that there was an opportunity to align local authorities to maximise regional investment.</p> <p><b>Cllr Paul Zukowskyj</b> asked whether Naomi could circulate the presentation slides to him.</p> <p><b>Cllr Steve Broadbent</b> said that engagement with the Office for Investment would be important in shaping a coordinated regional approach.</p> <p><b>Cllr Jim Weir</b> asked about governance challenges and requested analytical support. Naomi said that EEH could produce an evidence-based analytical pack including data, lessons learned and neutral comparisons of governance models.</p> <p><b>Action: Naomi to circulate Regional Leaders Summit slides to Cllr Paul Zukowskyj.</b></p> <p><b>Action: EEH to explore the development of an analytical pack on governance and funding models.</b></p>

3	<p><b>Board noted the update on funding for the financial year ahead</b></p> <p><b>Board noted the proposal to delay final agreement on local contributions until June 2026, to allow them to be confirmed alongside a fully developed business plan.</b></p> <p><b>Board received a progress update on the set of actions agreed by elected leaders at the Regional Leaders Summit, held on 25 February 2026.</b></p>
4	<p><b>Infrastructure Supporting Growth</b></p> <p><b>Fiona Foulkes</b> introduced the item and said that significant planning reforms were underway, infrastructure-led development was essential to support growth, and transport must be integrated with wider place-based planning. She said that EEH should continue supporting partners with data and insight, continue pursuing an infrastructure-led approach, and not respond to the live consultation on Spatial Development Strategies.</p> <p><b>Cllr Steve Broadbent</b> said there are major funding barriers affecting infrastructure delivery. He said the Treasury Green Book methodology and static economic ratios are continuing to cause difficulties, and he asked whether EEH’s work is considering alternative or innovative financing mechanisms such as land value capture. He said he wanted to know whether these approaches could work in practice, how EEH is engaging with government on these issues, and how local authorities could support the case for new funding models.</p> <p><b>Fiona Foulkes</b> said there are significant systemic issues with using mechanisms such as land value capture. She said some of these mechanisms can only work under certain types of devolution arrangements, and only where specific criteria are met. She said the Treasury has reviewed the Green Book to take a more place-based approach, but the process is still rigid. She said there has been some work on land value capture, but many of the barriers remain.</p> <p><b>Naomi Green</b> said that the Treasury was open to proposals, but practical delivery remained difficult, and that a task-force approach would help test real-world solutions.</p> <p><b>James Golding-Graham</b> said that a working group was being explored, chaired by Martin Reeves, and that engagement with the National Wealth Funds was planned.</p> <p><b>Board noted the contents of this report and agreed that EEH should continue to pursue an infrastructure-led approach to economic growth in the region</b></p> <p><b>Board agreed that it is not appropriate for EEH to respond to the live consultation on proposed geographical areas for spatial development strategies (Paragraph 5.4)</b></p>

**5****Integration Update**

**James West** introduced the item and gave an update on the Integration Programme. He said that an Integration Taskforce had been established with national experts, its role would be advisory, the first meeting would take place in May, and outputs would be reported to the Board in June. He said that progress continued on the Universal Transport Opportunity Plan, funding had been secured from the DfT and EEH would chair the Sustainable Transport Board.

**Cllr Tracey Wye** said that Central Bedfordshire should be prioritised and that bus-based solutions were needed before rail delivery.

**James West** said that Central Bedfordshire was included and that bus integration and interchange would be key priorities.

**Cllr Liz Leffman** asked for Bicester to be considered.

**James West** said that Bicester was included in the wider shortlist.

**Cllr Jim Weir** asked about timelines.

**James West** said that a two-year DfT-funded programme was underway and early interventions were required before Universal opens.

**Cllr Steve Broadbent** asked how the taskforce fitted within EEH governance.

**Naomi Green** said that the Taskforce was advisory and all decisions would remain with the Board.

**Board noted the launch of the Integration Taskforce and the proposed role that this leading group of transport professionals will play in realising the EEH Integration work.**

**Board supported the approach relating to the Universal Transport Opportunity Plan.**

**Board noted the progress being made towards a Transport Opportunity Plan at Silverstone.**

**Ben Feeney-North** introduced the agenda item and presented the new stations toolkit and released capacity report. He said that the toolkit provides guidance for developing new stations and that a regional evidence base had been created. He said that the released capacity work explores opportunities arising from HS2 and East West Rail. He said that opportunities included faster services on the West Coast Main Line, potential new fast-line stops such as Hemel Hempstead and Leighton Buzzard, extended East West Rail services, and Milton Keynes acting as a major interchange hub. He said that challenges included infrastructure constraints, unfunded schemes and the need for national alignment.

**Cllr Alex Beckett** said he was concerned about the implications of the NPPF changes, particularly how the reforms could affect the way local authorities view new stations and development around them. He said the NPPF proposals could have major consequences for planning decisions, including the possibility of building on green belt land, and he said this may change how stations are prioritised or opposed locally. He said further integration work would be needed so local authorities understand the planning impacts and how they relate to the new stations toolkit.

**Ben Feeney-North** said he understood the concerns about the NPPF changes and said he was happy to take this issue away for further work. He said the new stations toolkit was produced before the NPPF announcement and does not currently reflect the planning implications of the reforms. He said the toolkit focuses only on new station proposals submitted by local authority partners and does not consider wider impacts such as housing policy or green belt changes. Ben said he would take Alex's concerns back to the team and look at how EEH could support local authorities with the integration work needed in light of the proposed NPPF reforms.

**Cllr Tracey Wye** said she wanted to understand the feasibility and timing of the proposed rail changes. She said she wanted to know how realistic the suggestions were and when they could be delivered.

**Ben Feeney-North** said the work focuses on timetable and service opportunities rather than new infrastructure. He said the proposals relate to how services could run on the existing network, not major construction, which affects how feasible and how soon changes could be made

**Cllr Steve Broadbent** said he wanted a map or list of all planned stations in the region. He said he also wanted ongoing tracking of each station proposal, including its funding position and progress status.

**Ben Feeney-North** said he could provide the number of planned stations and the details behind them. He said a map already exists showing proposed and in-delivery stations, and he said he could create a tracker to show each proposal's progress and funding status.

**Adam King** said the map of proposed stations was already included within the stations toolkit. He said there are dozens of proposed stations across the region based on submissions from local authorities. He said the released capacity report will be brought back to the Board with recommendations, and it will be an important tool when engaging with Network Rail.

**Action: Benjamin Feeney-North to provide a map/list of planned stations and develop a tracker of station proposals, including funding and progress.**

	<p><b>Board approved the draft New Station Toolkit for publication (annex 1)</b></p> <p><b>Board received a presentation on emerging thinking around HS2 and EWR Released Capacity options</b></p> <p><b>Board noted the rail industry updates</b></p>
7	<p><b>Data insights</b></p> <p><b>James Golding-Graham</b> introduced the item.</p> <p><b>Fiona Foulkes</b> presented the new town data packs and said that they provide visual evidence across transport, infrastructure and place, highlight constraints and opportunities, and that deeper analysis would follow.</p> <p><b>Mingfei Ma</b> presented the In &amp; Out Trips Dashboard and said that it uses mobile data to analyse travel patterns and trip flows. Mingfei said that more detailed data is available in the background dataset, but she said access is limited by licensing rules. She said further refinement is being developed to provide more granular information.</p> <p><b>Alex Froom</b> presented the Journey Alerts system and said that it provides real-time travel information via messaging to improve accessibility and confidence. He said that the Bedford pilot showed strong uptake.</p> <p><b>Cllr Jim Weir</b> said that the Bedford rollout had been well received.</p> <p><b>Naomi Green</b> said that EEH could coordinate interest from authorities.</p> <p><b>Action: EEH to coordinate interest in the Journey Alerts rollout.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Mingfei Ma to share the Power BI mapping data with Cllr Tracey Wye.</b></p> <p><b>Board noted the development of tools and progress of the following work streams:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) New Towns Data Packs</b></li> <li><b>b) In-Out Trips Dashboard</b></li> <li><b>c) The success of the Journey Alerts pilot programme in Bedford</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Business Unit Update</b></p> <p><b>Fiona Foulkes</b> introduced the agenda item and said that EEH had submitted a technical response to the NPPF consultation, raising issues including infrastructure certainty and clearer definitions.</p> <p><b>Adam King</b> said that work on a regional visitor economy action plan was progressing, supported by opportunities linked to Universal, East West Rail and other major attractions. He said that the work was being led with local partners.</p> <p><b>Cllr Steve Broadbent</b> said the initiative was positive and said the APPG should reference the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor in its title.</p> <p><b>Adam King</b> said the correct APPG title should include "Growth Corridor." He said this was his error in the board paper and would be corrected.</p> <p><b>Naomi Green</b> said the RIS3 (National Highways Investment Plan) announcement was expected shortly. She said EEH would coordinate a response and provide a briefing once it was published. She said future route strategies would also begin soon and EEH would coordinate this work with partners.</p> <p><b>Thomas Cornwell</b> (National Highways) said National Highways would brief EEH once RIS3 was published. He said further updates would be provided in the same format as previous years.</p> <p><b>Action: EEH to coordinate a regional response to RIS3 following receipt of a National Highways briefing.</b></p> <p><b>Board noted the EEH consultation response to the recent national public consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework</b></p> <p><b>Board received an update on both the formation of an Oxford-Cambridge APPG and commencement of EEH's Visitor Economy Action Plan.</b></p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>2026 proposed dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 June 2026 (in person)</li> <li>- 24 September 2026 (virtual)</li> <li>- 3 December 2026 (in person)</li> </ul>