

England's Economic Heartland Board

24 September 2026

Item 6: Integration: Universal and Silverstone updates

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Notes the progress on the Universal Transport Opportunity Plan (TOP), notably the cross-stakeholder engagement and identified ambitions and challenges.**
- b) Notes the development of a gap analysis approach for Universal and other TOPs.**
- c) Notes the update on the Silverstone TOP.**

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide the Board with an overview of the progress being made on EEH's integration programme, including the Universal UK Resort and Silverstone transport opportunity plans (TOPs)

2. Key Points to Note

- 2.1. The Universal UK Resort transport opportunity plan (TOP) is progressing well, including identification of ambitions and challenges; development of a gap analysis approach; and wider stakeholder engagement from neighbouring authorities.
- 2.2. The Silverstone Transport Opportunity Plan is progressing is currently at the stage of identifying existing travel patterns and future ambitions. The work is being progressed by a working group made up of representatives of West Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire Councils that reports into Silverstone 2035 Board.

3. Context

- 3.1. There is considerable transformative development in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor: including major new attractions such as Universal UK Resort and Puy du Fou; housing and economic growth; proposed new towns; the delivery of East West Rail; and airport expansion.
- 3.2. These provides the opportunity for the region to be a testbed for integrated transport.
- 3.3. Communities must benefit from the opportunities the above development provides, including through a truly integrated transport network: providing seamless, multimodal, door-to-door journeys.
- 3.4. Working with local authorities and DfT, EEH's work aims to realise a transport system which is more than the sum of its individual parts: maximising the benefits of existing and new infrastructure; making public transport and active travel more attractive; reducing the impact of development on existing residents; improving access to jobs, education and healthcare.
- 3.5. EEH's integration work is supported by an Integration Taskforce of national experts, and the delivery of transport opportunity plans (TOPs) for specific places. The first of these is in relation to Universal UK Resort; and the second, Silverstone.

4. Universal TOP

- 4.1. The Universal Transport Opportunity Plan (TOP) continues at pace.



- 4.2. It will focus on key patronage flows with the core output being a series of costed, multimodal prioritised interventions. These will form an integrated network to support positive modal shift in the local area.
- 4.3. Recent work has included identifying the principal ambitions of the TOP, coupled with the principal challenges, as outlined below.
- 4.4. Principal ambitions:
 - Maximise, for public benefit, bus and rail service demand.
 - Establish a rail, bus and active travel network to support the future demand.
 - Design a network that will realise the DfT's Better Connected strategy for integrated transport, whilst supporting ambitions within Local Plans, Local Transport Plans and Local Outcomes Framework.
 - Creating a collaborative approach with LTAs, bus operators and other public sector partners to enable a collaborative approach in designing and delivering the network to support local and regional cross-boundary travel.

Principal challenges;

- Proposed shuttle services could impact the local bus network to serve Universal from local towns, especially limit the availability of drivers.
 - Shuttles may prevent the delivery of an effective public transport network to manage the flow of guests and workforce to and from the Universal site and across the locality in a sustainable manner as not all locations will be served by shuttles.
 - Management of the spatial allocation within the park transport hub to support the volume of vehicles required to support the proposed shuttle frequency
 - Integrated ticketing options and clarity on what those will offer for park staff and visitors
 - The impact of the road congestion across the M1, A421 and local road network and how that could also impact travel for the Universal site workforce and proposed guest experience.
- 4.5. The TOP has extended and will consider not only the Universal site and Bedford Borough Council area, but also wider impacts and benefits through the Marston Vale Line area that is linked to the identification of the study area set out below.
 - 4.6. To reflect this the TOP is being developed with representatives from Bedford Borough, Milton Keynes City, Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils, with meetings every three-weeks. Additional engagement sessions have also been held with West Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire councils on wider impacts.

5. DfT Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT) Group

- 5.1. The latest DfT Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT) group meeting was held on the 15th September, allowing local authorities and other stakeholders to update on key workstreams:
 - LTA Engagement
 - Gap Analysis
 - Car Parking
 - Integrated Journeys
- 5.2. A working group of DfT and local authority officers has been established to take forward the car parking workstream. The current area of focus is on identifying potential parking demand and identifying potential parking locations. Potential parking locations include locations within close proximity of the Universal site, park and rail locations and park and ride bus locations.



- 5.3. The Integrated Journeys workstream is considering ticketing options to and from Universal using public transport. This workstream also includes representatives of Universal to ensure that any ticketing options would be available and accessible to future staff, visitors as well as local residents.
- 5.4. EEH also presented the “gap analysis” approach to the SAT group who endorsed the process.

6. Gap analysis approach

- 6.1. EEH is establishing a baseline that can be used to identify the gap between existing and projected future demand identified for the Transport Opportunity Plans.
- 6.2. The gap analysis, ambitions and metrics are being reviewed across all modes with the LTAs that are in the Universal TOP project team, as a test bed, before rolling out the gap analysis process across the wider integration programme, including Silverstone (see below).
- 6.3. The gap analysis includes service provision, connectivity and performance of the current transport network.
- 6.4. The approach has also been endorsed by DfT through the Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT) Group.
- 6.5. The main stages in the process are:

Baselining – Where are we now?

- Map the current holistic demand, define the current transport network
- Determine the current utilisation, performance and cost of the network

Future 1 – What is coming?

- Map the new, likely demand
- Map how the network will be changing through existing plans
- Determine likely utilisation, cost and performance of the new network

Future 2 – Where do we want to be?

- Map the ideal demand and mode split
- Map the ideal network
- Determine the ideal utilisation and performance of a new network

Interventions – How do we get there?

- Creation of a long list of interventions through incorporating ambitions from existing local authority policy and plan documents

Evaluation of the long list to a short list of ideal interventions

- Determine and evaluate the ideal interventions and associated costs to develop the new network.

7. Silverstone TOP

- 7.1. Silverstone, on the borders of Buckinghamshire and West Northamptonshire, is home to the world-renowned Silverstone racetrack and is a significant employment focus and enterprise zone with: two Formula One teams, a significant business park with research and advanced manufacturing capabilities, a college, a hotel; and other leisure-focused businesses.
- 7.2. The Silverstone 2035 Board has developed an ambition to be the world’s premier destination for high-performance innovation, where sport, science, engineering, technology, and leisure converge to drive a sustainable future.
- 7.3. EEH has been working with key partners to develop a Transport Opportunity Plan for Silverstone to support the 2035 ambitions.
- 7.4. The transport opportunity plan is being steered by a working group that includes representatives from Silverstone and officers from West Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire Councils, that is complemented by Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire Council officers on account of the synergies and connectivity with Bicester, Banbury, Oxford and Milton Keynes.



- 7.5. In addition, EEH has been working with key stakeholders including the Silverstone Green Travel Group that includes Formula One teams, the museum and new hotel and have reached out to Silverstone College.
- 7.6. The working group have completed a data deep-dive to determine existing travel patterns to Silverstone and existing transport provision including public transport connectivity, active travel and alternative travel initiatives provided by Silverstone Park through their travel plan.
- 7.7. The data deep-dive included: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, Local Plans, Local Transport Plans, bus timetables, Travel Plan surveys from Silverstone Park, journey to work census data, mobile phone data and journey time isochrones for all modes using EEH's data hub. The journey to work data comparing MEPC actual staff data to mobile phone data (for any journey with over 10 staff movements) is shown in the figures below.

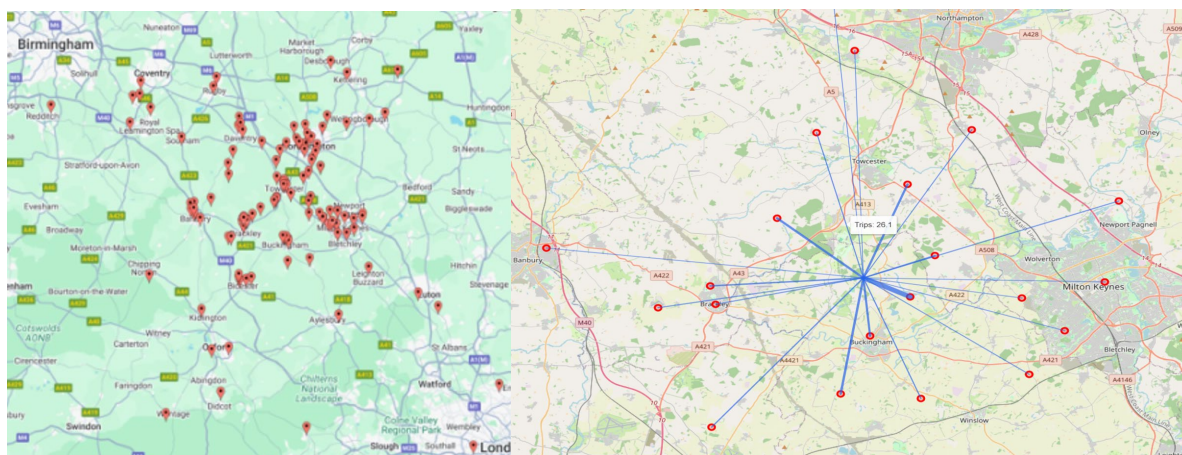


Figure showing actual staff post codes vs volume of journeys based on mobile phone data

- 7.8. The Silverstone Park Annual Travel Survey identified Northampton, Milton Keynes, and Brackley as accounting for 32% of worker homes, with the remaining 68% dispersed across less densely populated or further away areas (London, Oxford, Coventry etc.).
- 7.9. A SWOT analysis and an assessment of current connectivity using the DfT connectivity tool are being used to inform the future connectivity ambitions for Silverstone. The identification of measures to meet these ambitions is part of the next phase of work.
- 7.10. The results of the data deep dive and the work on establishing the ambition will be shared with Silverstone 2035 Board at their meeting on 25th September.

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