



Strategic Transport Forum

17th May 2019

Agenda Item 7: Business Unit Update

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Forum notes progress with a number of key work streams

1. **Spending Review: Strategic Investment Portfolio**

- 1.1. On 29th March 2019, members of the Strategic Transport Forum considered preparations for the Spending Review expected to be held later in 2019.
- 1.2. That meeting considered a draft scope of works that had been prepared by the EEH Business Unit in liaison with senior officers from partners across the region.
- 1.3. The proposition set out in the scope of works was to develop an ambitious Investment Strategy and Prospectus for Connectivity that can be agreed by members during summer 2019: the aim being that the proposal will:
 - Make the strongest case that the Oxford Cambridge Arc is the Place to Invest, based on a robust Investment Strategy;
 - Identify the mix of investment required, by type and time period up to 2050;
 - Demonstrate the linkage and alignment between Connectivity and the Vision for the Arc, the Local Industrial Strategy – including productivity and skills, the Strategic Transport Plan, and Spatial Planning documents (which together provide the strategic framework for the region);
 - Set out the role of the emerging sub regional transport body and the added value it will provide;
 - Identify the major connectivity programmes that require investment, including, Strategic Development Corridors, Public Transport (e.g. Rail etc.), Fibre and Mobile, and Freight and Logistics.
- 1.4. Subsequent to the Forum's endorsement of the proposed approach, EEH Business Unit has completed a procurement process and appointed specialist advisors experienced in the preparation of investment portfolios that speak to both public and private sector. This work is now underway with a view to having the work inform the 3rd Regional Conference.

2. **Williams Rail Review**

- 2.1. Members will recall the Strategic Transport Forum's initial response to the Williams Rail Review, submitted in January 2019.
- 2.2. This focused on the need for the rail network to play an even greater role in delivering our vision of connecting our people and places with opportunities and services. EEH continues to press the need to plan for and deliver investment in rail infrastructure and services which is user focused, genuinely integrated and take place within the broader framework provided by our Transport Strategy.

- 2.3. To ensure this happens, Economic Heartland is working with the Review team to help it understand how EEH (along with other STBs) might play a key role in mapping out the expectations of rail within the wider transport system.
 - 2.4. The EEH Business Unit met with the Williams Rail Review in April 2019 to discuss the suite of evidence papers following the call for evidence launch. Discussions centred around the need to move away from a traditional 'London-centric' radial route structure, the role rail can play in enabling the delivery of planned growth in the Heartland, a readiness to invest in strategic freight capability and the extent to which competition laws should enable, not constrain the realisation of a truly integrated transport system.
 - 2.5. The broader call for evidence will remain open until 31st May, with responses to the questions raised within the evidence papers and draft assessment criteria closing at the end of April.
 - 2.6. The EEH Business Unit continues to work with Network Rail, be it through our work developing rail priorities common to our colleagues at Midlands Connect, future planning to plan for released capacity on the West Coast Mainline or station design at Old Oak Common. Our rail study, to be commissioned to align with the Final Transport Strategy, will continue to take forward ways EEH can realise the full potential of rail next work across, and through the Heartland.
- 3. EEH Freight Topic Paper**
- 3.1. Forum members are reminded that the driver for this work was the recognition of the need to future proof the freight and logistic needs of our businesses, industry, and consumers and the impact that the movement of goods and services plays in realising the region's economic potential.
 - 3.2. Forum members received an update on the project in January 2019. Subsequently, the first draft of the Freight and Logistics Study has now been received. In terms of content and findings, the Study aligns with the NIC's final report on freight, 'Better Delivery', launched on the 17th April 2019. This provides a unique opportunity for the region to take forward recommendations relating to regulatory certainty to drive change, freight 'awareness' in planning and the use of data for informed decision making. The NIC and EEH Business Unit have worked closely on both of their respective studies.
 - 3.3. The report is currently undergoing an extensive review by our Freight Working Group. This is vital in enabling EEH to adopt key positions and refine recommendations before embarking on the next stage – implementing the recommendations.
 - 3.4. The Strategic Transport Forum will receive a presentation on the final conclusions of the Freight and Logistics Study in July 2019.
 - 3.5. Findings of the report suggest a range of opportunities for England's Economic Heartland to influence and improve the way freight is moved on the Heartland's roads, rail, urban/ rural areas, and airports against a backdrop of future trends, emerging technologies and the scale of transformational growth. Case studies of best practice and recommended solutions are provided and appraised based on their level of strategic priority, deliverability and levels of compatibility with the challenges and opportunities identified.

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