



## **STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM: Minutes**

Friday 27th September 2019

11:00 – 13:00

Committee Room 1, Borough Hall, Cauldwell St, Bedford, MK42 9AP

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| Present:       | Mayor Dave Hodgson    | Bedford Borough Council           |
|                | Cllr Nigel Young      | Central Bedfordshire Council      |
|                | Cllr Maureen Penny    | Swindon Borough Council           |
|                | Cllr Yvonne Constance | Oxfordshire County Council        |
|                | Cllr Ian Bates        | Cambridgeshire County Council     |
|                | Cllr Adam Mitchell    | Hertfordshire County Council      |
|                | Matthew Taylor        | Highways England                  |
|                | Lee Galloway          | Highways England                  |
|                | Andrea Hayes          | Network Rail                      |
|                | Robert Nisbet         | Rail Delivery Group               |
|                | Robin Knight          | EEH Bus Operators Association     |
|                | Melanie Macleod       | Bedford Borough Council           |
|                | Chris Pettifer        | Bedford Borough Council           |
|                | John Disley           | Oxfordshire County Council        |
|                | Steve Hayes           | Milton Keynes                     |
|                | Joan Hancox           | Buckinghamshire County Council    |
|                | Ian Achurch           | Northamptonshire County Council   |
|                | Mark Kemp             | Hertfordshire County Council      |
|                | Keith Dove            | Luton Borough Council             |
|                | Naomi Green           | England's Economic Heartland      |
|                | Adam King             | England's Economic Heartland      |
|                | Antony Swift          | England's Economic Heartland      |
| Apologies:     | Cllr Mark Shaw        | Buckinghamshire County Council    |
|                | Cllr Derrick Ashley   | Hertfordshire County Council      |
|                | Cllr Paul Castleman   | Luton Borough Council             |
|                | Cllr Martin Gowans    | Milton Keynes Council             |
|                | Phil Southall         | OXLEP                             |
|                | Graham Hughes         | Cambridgeshire County Council     |
|                | Hillary Chipping      | SEMLEP                            |
|                | Martin Tugwell        | England's Economic Heartland      |
| In attendance: | Alan Francis          | Milton Keynes Green Party         |
|                | Gerry Sansom          | Campaign to Protect Rural England |

|          |   | <b>ACTION</b>      |
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| <b>1</b> | <p><b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Forum members to the meeting. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting were discussed and agreed as accurate. Actions from the previous meeting were noted by the Forum.</p>   |                    |
| <b>2</b> | <p><b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Gerry Sansom representing Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) raised the following question:</p> <p><i>On the 11th September, Central Bedfordshire Council approved the development of a new A6 – M1 Link Road north of Luton. The road will carve through the southern part of the Chilterns AONB - severely impact 2 Ancient Woodlands and the important Sundon SSSI site – it is entirely within the Green Belt. The new road is opposed by Natural England, The Chilterns AONB Board, The Chilterns Society, The Wildlife Trusts, The Woodland Trust, Luton Borough Council and very many others. It is environmental vandalism on a massive scale. Can the Chair please advise us if, at this time of Climate Change and massive Biodiversity Loss, this new road is approved of by "The Transport Forum"? Can he also advise us if it complies with England's Economic Heartland's new "Outline Transport Strategy"?</i></p> <p>The Forum was asked what its position was on this scheme, the Chair asked EEH Business Unit to provide a written response.</p> <p>Alan Francis representing Milton Keynes Green Party noted his support that the Forum were looking at opportunities to increase rail's modal share. Alan Francis enquired whether Milton Keynes Central could be considered when exploring options for the introduction of services between Bedford – Leeds (post HS2). Alan was responded to retrospectively, during discussion of Agenda Item 5 where it was confirmed that the scheme focused on options along the Midland Mainline interchanging with East Midlands Hub, although options were still being tested.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED the EEH Business Unit should provide a written response to Gerry Sansom, CPRE regarding the A6-M1 Link Road</b></p> | <b>Naomi Green</b> |
| <b>3</b> | <p><b>OUTLINE TRANSPORT STRATEGY – ENGAGEMENT UPDATE</b></p> <p>Adam King provided an update: advising Forum members that England's Economic Heartland's (EEH) Regional Conference had served as a catalyst for a wave of engagement and stakeholder events. The Transport Strategy has been downloaded 2700 times and hits on the EEH website are up by 150% since the same point last year.</p> <p>Since the conference, a number of meetings have been set up with trade bodies, interest groups, policy makers, businesses and partners. The Outline Transport Strategy has received good coverage in the trade press.</p> <p>This period of engagement has given EEH a rich picture of what users of the network value most and what shouldn't be assumed. The responses received from the Business Unit will be coded by themes, leading to trends appearing in the feedback. Examples of emerging themes include representations on whether the ambition for a zero carbon transport system by 2050 is challenging enough; a stronger emphasis on the linkages between transport and the wider health agenda; and better alignment of housing, jobs and infrastructure, supported by digital connectivity.</p> <p>Cllr Maureen Penny was supportive of the approach being taken by the Business Unit to visit all of the partner authorities, which has in turn</p>  |                    |



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|                 | <p>stimulated debate.</p> <p>Cllr Ian Bates also supported the holistic approach to engagement and enquired whether public bodies such as Department for Transport and Network had been engaged with. Andrea Hayes confirmed Network Rail (NR) would be responding and supporting EEH with the development of their Transport Strategy. Naomi Green confirmed that the Department for Transport had reviewed the first draft of the Outline Transport Strategy and continue to work closely with EEH.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED:</b></p> <p><b>a) To note the progress with the ongoing engagement on the Outline Transport Strategy</b></p> <p><b>b) To identify any issues or opportunities that should be pursued by the EEH Business Unit as part of the engagement phase of the Outline Transport Strategy</b></p>   | <p><b>Adam King</b></p>    |
| <p><b>4</b></p> | <p><b>HEATHROW AIRPORT MASTERPLAN: CONSULTATION</b></p> <p>Antony Swift led a discussion on EEH’s proposed consultation response to Heathrow Airport Limited’s (HAL) expansion proposals.</p> <p>The proposed response supported the expansion of Heathrow Airport and recognises the strategic significance of Heathrow in meeting the Heartland’s passenger/freight needs; ensuring the region continues to compete on a global scale.</p> <p>Forum members focused on the fact that EEH support for HAL’s proposed expansion would be conditional on expansion being aligned with the implementation of a programme of investment in measures that deliver a step change in connectivity to/from the airport by non-car modes.</p> <p>Joan Hancox supported the need to deliver rail connectivity with Heathrow, but recommended that the response should be firmer in identifying the lack of alternative public transport choices, particularly between Heathrow airport and the southern part of the EEH region.</p> <p>Cllr Yvonne Constance suggested that HAL should more explicitly reference the opportunity to reinvest the revenue by the vehicle surcharge in public transport schemes.</p> <p>The Business Unit was subsequently asked by the Forum to reflect these two points in a revised response, before submitting it to HAL.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED, subject to the proposed changes being made, the EEH response to Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation</b></p> | <p><b>Antony Swift</b></p> |
| <p><b>5</b></p> | <p><b>STRATEGIC RAIL PROGRAMME: OVERVIEW</b></p> <p>Antony Swift updated the Forum on technical work strands that would be used to provide the evidence base to develop EEH rail policy.</p> <p>A number of ongoing projects set out in the paper were discussed and there was agreement from the Forum that rail will need to play an even greater role in delivering EEH’s three priority principles to stimulate economic growth, create an accessible and inclusive transport system and deliver environmental commitments.</p> <p>Andrea Hayes from Network Rail (NR) System Operator echoed these aspirations and recognised that the partnership between Midlands Connect, EEH and NR as being useful in identifying inter-regional opportunities to maximise the potential of the rail system. Opportunities to connect the Heartland with the East Midlands is also supported by work Bedford Borough Council is taking forwards as part of its rail study. Andrea Hayes signposted the London Rail Strategy, to which Antony Swift responded by confirming that</p>  |                            |



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|                 | <p>EEH were part of the working group.</p> <p>Cllr Ian Bates suggested any future rail services commission should pick up linkages with Norfolk and Suffolk, particularly given connection and interchange via East West Rail. Antony Swift confirmed that the brief of work was discussed at the East West Rail Consortium, during which colleagues from the East were present. NR has proposed undertaking the majority of the work set out in the commission and their proposal will guide the extent of the study area.</p> <p>An ensuing discussion took place on the way the success secured resolving issues with NR Shared Value policy could be extended to road schemes, specifically where the Department for Transport (DfT) has overestimated the land value uplift and the public sector's ability to secure it. This model is compounded by the fact there is already insufficient S106 funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure.</p> <p>Naomi Green confirmed the EEH Business Unit welcomed continued information about case study examples from partners where Network Rail Shared Value policy could be being misapplied in the hope that EEH could assist with identifying a solution.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED to note the work of EEH Business Unit in taking forward rail priorities on behalf of its partners</b></p>  | <p><b>Antony Swift</b></p> |
| <p><b>6</b></p> | <p><b>RAIL DELIVERY GROUP</b></p> <p>Robert Nisbet gave a presentation to the Forum on the role of the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), with a view to establishing a greater working relationship with EEH.</p> <p>In summary, the RDG represent the entire rail industry, merging with the Association of Train Operating Companies (TOCs) in 2016, including the inclusion of Network Rail and High Speed 2. Its main operation is revenue allocation from TOCs.</p> <p>The presentation confirmed that passenger numbers have doubled since privatisation, despite infrastructure and congestion challenges. The RDG has used its submission to the Williams Review to propose a fundamental change in how the railway is operated going forward.</p> <p>Robert Nisbet supported the approach EEH has taken to grow the rail network as a method of reducing greenhouse gasses associated with vehicle movements and its role in economic rebalancing. The RDG's response to the William's review focused on the need to establish an independent organising body to set franchise specifications and provide a layer of accountability between Central Government and TOCs. Included in this recommendation was the need to avoid the over specification of franchises and become outcome driven.</p> <p>The need to provide more 'open-access' opportunities was suggested by the RDG. This enables TOCs to take a commercial risk to run on infrastructure owned by a third party and purchasing paths on a chosen route, much like how the aviation industry operates. Other policy pillars included the need to simplify rail fares and pricing structures in the round.</p> <p>Forum Members stressed that a new independent body, designed to improve service specification must not add an additional layer of bureaucracy. A discussion took place on the way this body might in turn replace the RDG.</p> <p>Mark Kemp enquired whether the RDG viewed interchange and last mile connectivity as a priority. Robert Nisbet confirmed that the key to improvements lie in understanding travel data, something they are actively pursuing improvements to.</p> | <p><b>Naomi Green</b></p>  |



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|   | <p><b>The Forum AGREED to invite the RDG to become a member of the Strategic Transport Forum to strengthen the relationship with the rail industry.</b></p>   |             |
| 7 | <p><b>OXFORDSHIRE RAIL CORRIDOR STUDY</b></p> <p>John Disley provided an update to Forum members on the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study. The first phase of the study is nearing completion and quantifies rail travel demand arising from planned housing and economic growth up to 2031. The strategic questions it has sought to answer relate to the impacts of planned growth, additional growth and Oxfordshire's freight requirements. It has tested a number of different growth scenarios, some of which include East West Rail.</p> <p>The study has identified aspirational levels of capacity and connectivity. For example the need to release capacity/connectivity on Cross County services along the Oxford-Banbury corridor and Chiltern services along the Oxford – London corridor. The study has included interdependences between East West Rail and Heathrow and conditional outputs have also leant towards the need of new stations.</p> <p>The stage 1 study is due for completion by autumn 2020 and final outputs for this part of the work will be presented in January 2020. The Forum recommended that the next presentation included maps, something Andrea Hayes offered to support with.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED:</b></p> <p><b>a) Note the progress made on Stage 1 of the Oxfordshire Rail Study</b></p> <p><b>b) Consider the emerging outcomes of the study and provides any comments on these for feedback to the project team</b></p>   | John Disley |
| 8 | <p><b>A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET</b></p> <p>Lee Galloway provided an update to the Forum on the consultation phase for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet scheme.</p> <p>The preferred option focuses on a three tier junction and a preferred route to improve journeys between Milton Keynes and Cambridge. Following route announcement in February 2019, a statutory consultation took place from June-July 2019 during which EEH made a formal representation on the scheme.</p> <p>Lee Galloway confirmed that during the eight week consultation period, there were fifteen public events spanning the area of the scheme and beyond to Milton Keynes and Cambridge. A total of 2,500 people visited the consultation events and they received over 900 responses in total.</p> <p>Other engagement methods included mobile visitor centres, presence in shopping centres and schools, a bespoke VISSIM model and a range of digital techniques such as augmented reality and the application of Minecraft software. Media coverage reached approximately 3.2 million people.</p> <p>The responses will be analysed and form part of the Development Consent Order application. Going forward, a consultation report will be published at the end of 2019 with community forums being a part of ongoing stakeholder management.</p> <p>With respect to delivery, a series of ground investigations and surveys are underway, with most of these being undertaken during daytime working hours on private land, minimising disruption.</p> <p>Forum members thanked Lee Galloway for maintaining dialogue and Cllr Nigel Young confirmed his attendance at the strategic stakeholder board.</p> |             |



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|           | <b>The Forum AGREED to consider the update from Highways England on progress with the scheme.</b>   | <b>None</b>         |
| <b>9</b>  | <p><b>EAST MIDLANDS FRANCHISE</b></p> <p>The meeting was adjourned to allow for a presentation from the operator of the new East Midlands Railway franchise, Abellio, to present their plans for the franchise to a select number of interested partners.</p> <p>Edward Funnell on behalf of Abellio presented the proposed timeline of improvements to EEH partners representing Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>The presentation covered East Midlands Railway's successful bid following the invitation to tender. Edward Funnell discussed the need for rolling stock to prepare for electrification extension north of Bedford and enabling the economic and housing growth profile of the East Midlands by capitalising on benefits brought about by Midlands Mainline upgrades.</p> <p>Notable immediate changes to the franchise include the introduction of flexible season tickets, following this the introduction of new rolling stock (that include plug-in points and on-board wifi). Both initiatives are intended to help create a more inclusive railway. New rolling stock combined with more services will increase capacity by 80% into London St Pancras and 4% into Nottingham by 2022. Improvement plans also include a range of upgrades for those stations owned by East Midlands Franchise.</p> <p>Attending members of the Forum were frustrated in the proposed reduction in northbound services that stop in Luton/Bedford to the East Midlands (beyond Kettering), planned from December 2020. This decision has been made despite both Luton and Bedford being core to realising planned economic and housing growth in the Heartland and Bedford being integral to interchange with East West Rail.</p> <p><b>The Forum AGREED:</b></p> <p><b>a) To consider the presentation by the newly appointed franchise operator, Abellio, on its ambitions for the East Midlands Railway</b></p> <p><b>b) That interested parties within the Heartland area should continue to work together to ensure the right service provision is achieved at the southern end of the East Midlands Railway Franchise network.</b></p> | <b>Antony Swift</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <p><b>FUTURE MEETING DATES</b></p> <p>The Chair invited Forum Members to consider whether there was appetite for meetings to be hosted around the Heartland area, potentially with a visit included beforehand.</p> <p><b>The Forum agreed that, on occasion, Forum meetings would take place in different parts of the Heartland. Forum members were asked to submit suggested venues to Naomi Green.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Friday 22nd November 2019</b></li> <li>• <b>Friday 24th January 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Friday 11th September 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Friday 27th November 2020,</b></li> </ul> <p>All meetings at Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</p>  |                     |