



STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM: Minutes

Friday 24th January 2020

11:00 – 13:00

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

Present:	Cllr Nigel Young	Central Bedfordshire Council (Acting Chair)
	Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Yvonne Constance	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Steve Broadbent	BTVLEP
	Mark Kemp	Hertfordshire County Council
	Matthew Taylor	Highways England
	Graham Botham	Network Rail
	Phil Southall	OXLEP
	Melanie Macleod	Bedford Borough Council
	John Disley	Oxfordshire County Council
	Ian Achurch	Northamptonshire County Council
	Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
	Simon Bowers	Daventry District Council
	Rob Smith	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Giles Perkins	WSP
	Neil Poulton	WSP
	Martin Tugwell	England's Economic Heartland
	Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
	Abigail Nichols	England's Economic Heartland
	James Golding-Graham	England's Economic Heartland
	Antony Swift	England's Economic Heartland
Apologies:	Cllr Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
	Cllr Angela Macpherson	Aylesbury Vale District Council
	Cllr Mark Shaw	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Paul Irwin	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Paul Castleman	Luton Borough Council
	Cllr Maureen Penny	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Steve Cox	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Robin Knight	EEH Bus Operators Association
	Hilary Chipping	SEMLEP
	Alice Darley	Highways England
	In attendance:	Alan Francis
Gerry Sansom		Campaign to Protect Rural England
Victoria Harvey		Independent

		ACTION
1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</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>	
2	<p>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</p> <p>Alan Francis representing MK Green Party welcomed the emphasis on the environment that came through the Outline Transport Strategy engagement. He pressed for an earlier date than 2050 for carbon neutrality and a firmer position on the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell reaffirmed that the position on the Expressway had not changed and referred to the letter sent by SOS sent last year and recent correspondence setting out the Forum’s agreed position. The 2050 net-zero date is considered the maximum date to achieve decarbonisation and assumes that a robust pathway to decarbonisation will help to achieve that sooner.</p> <p>Victoria Harvey noted the focus Transport for the North was placing on Electric Vehicle targets and it was agreed this ambition should be embedded in EEH’s approach to decarbonisation.</p>	
3	<p>OUTLINE TRANSPORT STRATEGY</p> <p>Naomi Green led a discussion on the key messages identified through responses to the Outline Transport Strategy. This has led to revisions made to the vision, principles and outcomes. Feedback will shape the Transport Strategy to be published in in July 2020; which will set the region’s transport policy framework for the next 30 years.</p> <p>12 key themes came through the engagement phase, most prominent was the decarbonisation agenda. Subsequently, the vision and principles now explicitly reference a commitment to de-carbonising the transport system.</p> <p>Cllr Yvonne Constance cited examples of cities, including Oxford, which are implementing car-free zones. A question was subsequently raised as to whether the 2050 net-zero date should be brought forward. In debating this point the Forum recognised that other sectors and policy areas would accelerate the change, the 2050 date was agreed to serve as the appropriate way marker.</p> <p>Cllr Derrick Ashley noted that a key challenge is getting vehicles out of existing towns. Such is the need to link homes to hubs, to create sustainable settlements from the outset. Naomi Green confirmed that one of the key pieces of work EEH is supporting is CIHT’s Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places guidance. EEH expect to use this ambition to lever change in all new developments.</p> <p>The Forum noted the Government’s announcement of energy standards for new homes and recommended the updated National Planning Policy Framework (published July 2018, and amended February 2019) should reflect these.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent suggested the Strategy narrative should reflect the need to keep pace and adapt to technological and regulatory advancements. Equally, there was recognition the Strategy should become embedded alongside Local Industrial Strategies.</p> <p>The Forum felt that the vision, principles and policy narrative suitably captures a new level of interest and acceptability in sustainable transport.</p>	



	<p>The Forum AGREED:</p> <p>a) The key messages that have been identified from the responses to the Outline Transport Strategy</p> <p>b) The updated Transport Strategy Vision, Principles and Outcomes</p>	<p>N Green</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>DECARBONISATION</p> <p>James Golding-Graham introduced himself as the newest member to join EEH on a full time basis. Building on the engagement responses to the Outline Transport Strategy, EEH is developing a programme of work to better define a Sub-national approach to decarbonisation, building on government’s legislative requirements.</p> <p>To develop this policy approach, two pieces of technical work are being commissioned to support a pan-regional response to climate change.</p> <p>The first will be working with the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University and others to commission a piece of research that will support the development of the preferred approach to decarbonisation. This report will set out a series of policy recommendations and a web-based analytical tool kit to inform spatial planning.</p> <p>The second strand will be the development of a carbon calculator. This will baseline the region’s carbon emissions and demonstrate the possible impacts of different interventions on the transport system.</p> <p>The Forum were advised that the tool would show the impact of transport related variables, such as an increase in diesel vehicles, and the impact they have on this region’s pathway to decarbonisation. Cllr Nigel Young suggested it mapped the current offer of electric vehicle charging points.</p> <p>The carbon calculator will be developed in six—eight weeks. The Forum and Officer Group will be updated on its progress. Keith Dove recommended the project makes use of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research which has informed Luton Borough Council’s recent decision to declare a climate change emergency.</p> <p>Mark Kemp suggested this project should inform a response to Government’s decarbonisation strategy and serve as a tool to scrutinise its policy framework.</p> <p>The Forum agreed both projects will help demonstrate the scale of the challenges and the interventions necessary to respond if we are to realise our ambition of carbon neutrality by 2050. Naomi Green offered to brief Forum members on the work individually if this is required.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to the approach to develop EEH’s response to decarbonisation of the transport system</p>	<p>J Golding-Graham</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>LOCAL CONNECTIVITY</p> <p>Naomi Green reminded the Forum that the scale of transformational growth in the Heartland presents an opportunity to embed sustainable connectivity improvements in places, along key corridors and at the ‘first-last-mile’ element of daily journeys.</p> <p>These principles have been the genesis of a commissioned first mile last mile study that looks to identify the strategic approach an STB could place in delivering people led transport interventions. The outputs of this project have been an international best practice literature review and a local authority toolkit. This work will form the basis of pilot projects in areas of interest in the Heartland.</p> <p>Consultants WSP led a presentation on the methodology applied to the study. The tool takes a people, place, connectivity approach to understanding</p>	



	<p>people’s propensity to engage in different and new forms of first mile last mile solutions.</p> <p>The ‘people’ approach took Experian’s Mosaic data for geodemographic classification of households. This is overlaid with place conditions (measured as density) and connectivity (measured by DfT Accessibility data) to provide a ‘propensity’ for uptake of new mobility rating. Individual local authorities are able to compare statistical neighbours by their comparative mode shift percentages.</p> <p>This toolkit is complemented by a best practice report that sets out the relative challenges and opportunities for new mobility types and their associated failures and successes in the market place.</p> <p>Giles Perkins discussed some of the different mobility models that this region may wish to aspire to replicate should the conditions present themselves. The regeneration and agglomeration benefits of ‘mobility hubs’ placing themselves at the heart of urban areas was recognised by Forum members.</p> <p>Naomi Green confirmed that a user guide for practitioners will be circulated and the methodology will test a bike share scheme in Watford. Martin Tugwell summarised this work creates the evidence base from which non-car based solutions can prevail.</p> <p>Cllr Derrick Ashley supported the findings but noted that regulation is a major barrier to new mobility solutions, including transporting bicycles on buses. Phil Southall confirmed that transporting bikes on buses is at the discretion of the operator and is not illegal.</p> <p>Phil Southall proceeded to give a presentation on the role of the bus network in the region. There is on average 466,000 bus journeys per day and has the highest mode share percentage for public transport trips.</p> <p>The decline in bus trips in EEH is slower than that experienced in London, but there is a growing call in the industry for DfT to develop a National Bus Strategy.</p> <p>Congestion has led to an increase in bus journey times by 10%. To maximise the potential of the bus, a key focus must be on reducing congestion through investment and innovation. Forum members supported new trials for bus enhancements, be it through smarter forms of payment, on demand travel, multi operator ticketing or new fleets to take place in this region.</p> <p>Phil Southall noted that the £48 million funding from the DfT to support new electric fleets in cities is a helpful commitment, but more investment is required if this country is to lead the way on de-carbonisation. Other areas of policy focus for the EEH Bus Operators Association includes, price capped ticketing and solutions to the challenges of rural mobility.</p> <p>Cllr Yvonne Constance supported these ambitions and added that banning cars in the centre of Oxford would go some way to seeing these realised. In similar vein, Cllr Nigel Young suggested that Local Transport Plans should set out plans to increase the number of bus users.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) The conclusions of the EEH first mile last mile study</p>	<p>N Green</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>CONNECTIVITY STUDIES</p> <p>Abi Nichols presented the proposed approach to undertaking connectivity studies. These will form the basis of a strategic programme of studies by spatially identifying connectivity challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed.</p> <p>A longlist of over fifty corridors have been identified. These have been shaped</p>	



	<p>by the analysis of responses to the Outline Transport Strategy. A sifting exercise will reduce this to three broad corridors, to be published in the Draft Transport Strategy. In developing a sifting programme the EEH Officer Group will be consulted with, to ensure all local knowledge and available study information is captured.</p> <p>The Forum was asked for comments on the proposed approach to developing the study programme. In response, the Forum noted that scheme identification should remain outside of scope and assessment criteria should reflect the Transport Strategy's Vision and Principles.</p> <p>Cllr Derrick Ashley signposted the Business Unit to the A505 corridor which is the subject of its own study by a number of local authority partners. Similarly, the M1-A5 link road and M1-A6 link road (proposed) is being reviewed by partners in Luton and Bedfordshire.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED:</p> <p>a) The approach to undertaking connectivity studies</p> <p>b) The next steps and methodology developed in order to prioritise corridors for future connectivity studies</p>	<p>A Nichols</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>LUTON AIRPORT EXPANSION CONSULTATION RESPONSE</p> <p>Martin Tugwell discussed the principles of the Forum's response to Luton Airport's proposed expansion. Forum members were reminded that purdah had prevented an opportunity to meet earlier to discuss the issue.</p> <p>Airport expansion presents a potential contradiction between the need to decarbonise the transport system and grow the economy.</p> <p>The advice offered to the Forum is that the proposal does not currently provide adequate assurance until a suitable robust package of supporting measures is set out. These must go above and beyond the existing surface access strategy.</p> <p>Subsequently, the recommended position of the Forum is that support for expansion is conditional upon surface access proposals that align with the policy framework of the Transport Strategy. To achieve this it will require transformational levels of investment in the public transport system.</p> <p>Cllr Derrick Ashley confirmed that Hertfordshire County Council continue to oppose expansion in its current form, although support the principles of the EEH response.</p> <p>Phil Southall recommended that the model of investment in surface access should replicate Heathrow's. This being, kick-starting funding for bus services before airport expansion. Cllr Nigel Young summarised by recognising the huge economic impact of airport expansion whilst supporting the reservations set out in the letter. The Forum agreed expansion principles should also better consider the potential of alternatively fuelled vehicles.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED, subject to the proposed amendments, the response to Luton Airport's Expansion Consultation</p>	<p>M Tugwell</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY TIMETABLE CONSULTATION RESPONSE</p> <p>Antony Swift set out the Forum’s engagement history with the East Midlands Railway franchise process. The Forum expressed their continued concerns to the management of the franchise and its associated electrification programme.</p> <p>The proposed response to the December 2020 timetable consultation was discussed and agreed. Forum members noted the disproportionate focus the franchise has with London. Graham Botham advised that service patterns are driven, in part, by revenue potential.</p> <p>The Forum agreed that it should be put on record with the Secretary of State for Transport the need to address the current ‘London centric’ rail considerations and reflect the work EEH is doing with Network Rail System Operator and East West Railway Company to address this.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) The response to East Midlands Railway Timetable Consultation</p> <p>b) Place on the record with the Secretary of State for Transport its concern for the ‘London Centric’ nature of rail investment decisions</p>	<p>A Swift</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>OXFORDSHIRE RAIL CORRIDOR STUDY</p> <p>John Disley advised the Forum that resolving Oxford’s rail capacity challenges is essential in delivering a step change in rail connectivity and maximising the opportunities of East West Rail.</p> <p>The first Phase of the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study has concluded and identifies the capacity and connectivity improvements to seven key growth hubs. A proposed train service specification setting out these conditional outputs has been produced. The second phase of the work will take forward the priorities identified in Phase 1 for a more detailed level of analysis.</p> <p>The Forum recognised that the proposed train service specification is dependent on many services extending through Oxford Station and four tracking between Oxford and Radley. The Forum endorsed the study’s vision and outputs and agreed they should be adopted as the basis for strategic planning for the rail system in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) Welcome and endorse the recommendations of the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study Phase 1, including the recommended next steps.</p> <p>b) Endorse the following as regional priorities for investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of additional capacity at/through Oxford Station at the earliest possible opportunity • Delivery of a solution to the capacity constraint between Oxford North Junction, through Oxford and onto Didcot East Junction at the earliest possible opportunity • Re-instatement of the Cowley Branch <p>c) Endorse the need for rail services operating to/from and through Oxford Station to be developed in a co-ordinated way in order to support the delivery of planned growth</p> <p>d) Endorse the need to deliver enhanced rail connectivity between Oxford and Swindon, and onwards to Bristol</p> <p>e) Endorse the need for enhanced rail connectivity between Oxford and the Midlands, and support the work led by Midlands Connect to develop a detailed proposal</p>	



	<p>f) Support the need to promote the package of rail infrastructure investments for inclusion in the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline, with a recommendation that Government should support a Decision to Initiate as a matter of priority</p> <p>g) Support the need for additional and enhanced services in Oxfordshire (and beyond) to be available no later than 2028</p>	
10	<p>BUSINESS UNIT UPDATE</p> <p>Forum members were supportive of the draft letter intended to be sent to the Department for Transport which calls for EEH local authorities to have powers and controls to enforce HGVs in violation of environment and weight related Traffic Regulation Orders. This would bring Local Authorities outside of London in line with the powers available to Greater London Authorities. The Forum unanimously agreed to send this letter and suggested including this issue as a standalone agenda item next meeting.</p> <p>Business unit updates pertaining to the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, EEH Passenger Rail Study and Transport for Counties work were noted and supported.</p> <p>Naomi Green concluded by suggesting a meeting in June 2020 will be convened to approve the Transport Strategy ahead of consultation.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to send the HGV enforcement letter to the Department for Transport</p>	A Swift
11	<p>FUTURE MEETING DATES</p> <p>Friday 15th May 2020, Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</p> <p>Friday 11th September 2020, Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</p> <p>Friday 27th November 2020, Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</p> <p>All meetings will be held at: Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</p>	