



STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM

Friday 25th January

11:00 – 13:00

Committee Room 1

Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell St,

Bedford MK42 9AP

Present:	Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council
	Cllr Carole Paternoster	Aylesbury Vale District Council
	Cllr Nigel Young	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Mark Shaw	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Maureen Penny	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Graham Bull	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	Bucks Thames Valley LEP
	Hillary Chipping	SEMLEP
	James Povey	Milton Keynes District Council
	Phil Southall	Oxfordshire Bus Company
	Simon Finnie	EEH Bus Operators Association
	Philip Andrews	Department for Transport
	Helen Wylde	Transport Systems Catapult
	Graham Botham	Network Rail
	Jan Simpson	Highways England
	Simon Blanchflower	East West Railway Company
	Will Gallagher	East West Railway Company
In Attendance	Martin Tugwell	England's Economic Heartland
	Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
	Ian Brooker	WSP
	Ian Achurch	Northamptonshire County Council
	John Disley	Oxfordshire County Council
	Nigel McCurdy	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
	Graham Hughes	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Lee Galloway	Highways England
	Rob Smith	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Rupert Thacker	Hertfordshire County Council
	Alan Francis	Milton Keynes Green Party
	Melanie MacLeod	Bedford Borough Council
Apologies:	Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council

Agenda

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1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>Mayor Dave welcomed Forum members and informed the meeting that it was being held in public and being filmed for public sharing.</p> <p>The Forum agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were true and all actions had been completed or taken forward appropriately.</p>	None arising
2	<p>PUBLIC COMMENTS</p> <p>Alan Francis from Milton Keynes Green Party advised the Forum that Milton Keynes Council passed a motion on 23 January 2019 intending to be carbon neutral by 2030. Alan's view was that a number of other councils will be adopting similar positions and challenged whether these commitments were compatible with the Oxford - Cambridge expressway scheme.</p> <p>The meeting noted the comments.</p>	None arising
3	<p>EAST WEST RAIL – CENTRAL SECTION</p> <p>Simon Blanchflower led a presentation on the Central Section of East West Rail (EWR). Simon advised the Forum that this was a pre-briefing, setting out the process to be followed ahead of the consultation that will go live on the 28th January 2019.</p> <p>The Forum was reminded of the background to EWR. The purpose of the consultation would be to test a set of route options, set out the approach taken to develop these and understand the challenges and opportunities associated with each option, including approaching Cambridge from the south.</p> <p>The consultation would consider corridor characteristics and feedback would help assess the validity of options and how they aligned with wider strategic objectives.</p> <p>The Forum was given an overview of the consultation strategy. Forum members suggested that engagement approaches needed to be designed to take proper account of the communities affected by the route. The consultation would focus on some of the ways the proposed route options perform against key criteria and environmental considerations.</p> <p>An overview of options was shared with members privately, during which members of the public were asked to leave. The ensuing discussion focused on a high level summary of the proposed routes and how each may compare in cost, benefit and other strategic implications.</p> <p>The Forum was advised that following consultation a decision on the route would come later this year (mid-late summer 2019).</p> <p>Martin Tugwell noted that local authorities may wish to respond to the consultation individually.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) The proposed arrangements for preparing a response to the consultation on the Central Section</p> <p>b) Note the content of the briefing from the East West Railway Company</p>	Martin Tugwell
4	<p>FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS</p> <p>Ian Brooker gave a presentation on the work England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is taking forward on freight and logistics.</p> <p>Collaboration and engagement had been a core element of this work. The</p>	



	<p>study had sought to engage with policy makers, freight trade bodies, business and the wider industry through a major workshop and interviews. Work has been taken forward in partnership with Transport Systems Catapult and a Heartland freight steering group meets monthly to track progress.</p> <p>Ian Brooker invited the Forum to reflect on some of the emerging issues that were affecting freight and logistics. These included changes in distribution models, skill shortages, last mile innovation, and technological innovation and consumer expectations.</p> <p>Members of the Forum recognised that logistics is going through a period of unprecedented change, but that EEH were in a unique position to shape and deliver some of the strategic thinking set out in the NIC interim freight report.</p> <p>Ian Brooker suggested another opportunity EEH may want to consider is freight opportunities along East West Rail. The study has met with East West Railway Company, Network Rail System Operator and Transport for London to understand the potential of rail freight along the corridor.</p> <p>Graham Botham welcomed the study and felt it was helpful to look at freight on a sub-national level and in a multi-modal capacity.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell built on the discussion regarding strategic rail freight, particularly in light of the Williams Rail Review. The Forum’s initial submission to that review reflected some of the challenges set out in the presentation.</p> <p>The Forum agreed with a recommendation that EEH play a role in innovation and use the Heartland as a testbed to act as a pathfinder in using new data from private sectors; focusing on the theme of freight collaboration. Members agreed with the recommended standardised methodology for freight planning, a toolkit of restrictions for freight in urban areas and construction and a common approach to the implementation of lorry bans.</p> <p>The challenge of vehicles using inappropriate routes in rural areas was reflected on. Members agreed that the study should consider the impact of freight in rural areas and the needs of the agriculture industry. New technology may support enforcement, particularly when the Department for Transport (DfT) are not devolving powers of prosecution to local authorities.</p> <p>The use of a hydrogen technology, not electric, was considered by Helen Wylde. Setting the policy pathway and regulatory framework to deliver that would improve both air quality and potential damage to infrastructure.</p> <p>The Forum welcomed the linkages between freight and the economy and felt it aligned well with SEMLEP’s Industrial Strategy, particularly given that logistics is a key sector in this area. Hillary Chipping felt we need to use innovative technology, of which the Heartland has a legacy of applying, to develop smarter ways of delivering productivity to the sector.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) Support the emerging conclusions and recommendations of the Freight Topic Paper</p> <p>b) Note the progress made on the Freight Topic Paper and findings of stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>Antony Swift</p>
<p>5a</p>	<p>MAJOR ROADS CONNECTIVITY: MK – CAMBRIDGE CONNECTIVITY STUDY</p> <p>Naomi Green led a discussion on the work being taken forward on the Connectivity Study. Members agreed that establishing clear geographical principles was an important feature of the Connectivity Study, and that conclusions of the work would form the basis of identifying future investment requirements and priorities in the summer.</p>	

	<p>Naomi Green invited members to consider whether, as well as the planned connectivity study (west of the M1) that similar studies should proceed in the Heartland east of the M1, covering: Luton, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Bedford and Bedfordshire, and Northamptonshire.</p> <p>The work would ensure a deep understanding of transport priorities across the Heartland, which in turn would inform the EEH Transport Strategy and investment priorities through to 2050. This piece of work would be developed though the Transport Officer Support Group before bringing it back to the Forum. The forum acknowledged that a technical study in this area would help inform the MRN prioritisation process, the spending review and investment prioritisation.</p> <p>Cllr Nigel Young suggested the A1 may need to be considered as part of this study. Naomi Green confirmed that the A1 East of England study, amongst other strategic studies including the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet would be noted.</p> <p>Keith Dove advised that Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council and North Hertfordshire District Council are collaborating on an A505 study. Keith Dove agreed to feed the outputs of the first stage into the Connectivity Study and suggested to avoid future discrepancies it is important that consultants should have access to the EEH Evidence Base. Naomi Green confirmed that a line would be secured with the consultants and the Connectivity Study should service to complement existing studies rather than replace them.</p> <p>Mayor Dave Hodgson summarised by responding to the point raised by Alan Francis that there continues to be a view by many councils that a reduction in carbon by 2050 should be brought forward. Mayor Dave Hodgson requested this aspiration is fed into the study.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) Endorse the proposal to develop the Forum’s understanding of connectivity between Milton Keynes and Cambridge</p> <p>b) Proceed with the recommended programme of work to develop the required evidence base.</p>	<p>Naomi Green</p>
<p>5b</p>	<p>OXFORD – MILTON KEYNES SECTION OF THE EXPRESSWAY</p> <p>Building on the preferred corridor announcement in September 2018, Jan Simpson provided background context to the work HE are undertaking to explore the potential to build the expressway link between the M1 and the M40. Engagement is focused on understanding the opportunities associated with transformational growth and HE are six years away from construction (planned 2025).</p> <p>Jan Simpson advised the Forum of the corridor selection process.</p> <p>HE were now looking to understand how these corridors meet the strategic objectives and are setting the criteria to measure these by way of future technical studies and assessment frameworks.</p> <p>HE reported current engaging with a number of key technical, political and strategic partners along the corridor, acknowledging that all areas, including Swindon for example would be included.</p> <p>HE was also looking to receive feedback on how they might be able to invest ‘designated’ ring-fenced funds. John Disley recommended that designated funds should feature as a core component of the project as opposed to an optional add on, particularly given the way travel is likely to change by 2030 and conventional design will not meet future requirements.</p> <p>Hillary Chipping noted the designated funds opportunity and suggested how it</p>	



	<p>might be used to develop the natural capital assets programme This will be proposed in partnership with the local nature partnership and the Environment Agency. This would tie in strategically with the Local Industrial Strategies and using the Heartland for net environmental gain.</p> <p>Cllr Carol Paternoster reminded the Forum that local members along the route required focused engagement as they may view things at a more local level.</p> <p>Jan Simpson advised that stakeholder engagement planning would take place in the next two months and is anticipating at least 40 engagement events. Non statutory consultation was planned for autumn 2019 at which time HE will request feedback on circa 6-8 routes.</p> <p>There was a general view amongst the Forum that the expressway project needed to be visionary in approach, rather than simply another road. There was appetite to do this collectively as a Forum to help manage those concerns raised by the public. Dave Hodgson suggested that closer dialogue with the Secretary of State would help ensure that happens.</p>	None arising
5c	<p>A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET - UPDATE</p> <p>A brief update on the A428 scheme was provided by Lee Galloway, Programme Director for Highways England. Lee advised the Forum that following the delayed route announcement in December 2018, a route announcement will occur early 2019 – officially spring. Lee Galloway confirmed this would take place before the end of March, but if HE is in a position to do that earlier then they will.</p> <p>The Forum was advised that following the announcement, a public consultation would follow ahead of a Development Consent Order (DCO). The consultation would take place later in 2019 followed by submission of DCO in 2020. Construction should start in 2021/2022 with it expected to be completed in 2024/25.</p> <p>Philip Andrews responded to the Forum’s questions on the delay, stating that a project of this scale has required significant approvals.</p> <p>The Forum expressed frustration over the delay to the project had set out the implications of delays on on growth and productivity. The A428/A421 and the A1 are crucially co-dependent and there was a collective concern that growth is being hamstrung due to this slippage, including the detriment to air quality.</p> <p>The Forum welcomed the commitment that an announcement on the route would be made before the end of March.</p>	None arising
6	<p>MAJOR ROAD NETWORK AND LARGE LOCAL MAJORS</p> <p>Naomi Green set out the progress, guidance and methodology taken to date with respect to the Major Road Network and Large Local Majors scheme prioritisation. Forum members were informed that the Large Local Major project process has been incorporated within the MRN process. Both the MRN and Large Local Major project are being funded through the national roads fund.</p> <p>The Forum welcomed the guidance and the significant role STBs had in contributing and prioritising schemes to be put forward to the MRN and Large Local Major’s process. EEH are well placed to support the prioritisation process through the regional evidence base that is accessible to all partners and developed over a number of years.</p> <p>The first strand of work would focus on the first five years of the programme (2019/20 – 2025) and EEH were being asked to deliver a prioritised list of schemes by July 2019 to submit to government.</p> <p>To develop the prioritised list, Forum members would be invited to consider and approve the proposed prioritisation approach in May 2019. Subsequently,</p>	



	<p>the resultant prioritised list of schemes would be considered during the Forum meeting in July 2019.</p> <p>Members were reassured that the MRN and Large Local Major prioritisation and investment for the first five years of the programme would not operate in isolation from a longer term investment plan. The intention of a longer term investment approach would look beyond 2025 and align with the needs of the Transport Strategy and wider connectivity needs.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell alerted members to the fact that EEH Business Unit was the first STB to meet with DfT officials within the MRN team to discuss EEH's proposed approach. DfT complimentary of our approach, reporting it to be robust, striking a balance between what's challenging and achievable in the first five years.</p> <p>The Forum AGREED to:</p> <p>a) Welcome the publication of the Government's Major Road Network and Large Local Majors Investment Planning Guidance</p> <p>b) Ask all local partners – local transport authorities, local enterprise partnerships and local planning authorities – to provide an initial indication of prospective proposals for consideration by the 8th February.</p> <p>c) Request urgent clarification on the status of the 'early entry' proposals submitted for consideration in 2018.</p> <p>d) The proposed approach to developing the Forum's submission for investment priorities for the Major Road Network and Large Local Major.</p>	<p>Naomi Green</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 March 2019 Transport Systems Catapult, Milton Keynes • 17 May 2019 Committee Room 1, Bedford Borough Council • 19 July 2019 Committee Room 1, Bedford Borough Council 	