

**England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance
Strategic Transport Forum**

Friday 12th February 2016

**Transport Systems Catapult
Milton Keynes**

Present:	<p>Cllr Jim Harker Mark Kemp Cllr Mark Shaw Cllr Matt Clifton Mayor Dave Hodgson Cllr Nigel Young Cllr Paul Castleman Cllr Steve Bowles John Markham Ann Limb John Dowie Simon Amor Nick Jones Adam Tuke Robert Andrew Phil Southall Paul Morgan</p> <p>Tony Ciaburro Martin Tugwell</p>	<p>Leader, Northamptonshire County Council (Chairman) Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member, Buckinghamshire County Council Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council Bedford Borough Council Cabinet Member, Central Bedfordshire Council Cabinet Member, Luton Borough Council Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership Department for Transport Highways England Transport Systems Catapult Civil Engineering Contractors Association Stagecoach UK Oxford Bus Company Arriva – The Shires</p> <p>Executive Director, Northamptonshire County Council Programme Director, Strategic Alliance</p>
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1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>Jim Harker welcomed everyone to the meeting: the first meeting of the Strategic Transport Forum. He reflected on the journey that the Strategic Alliance had undertaken in the 12 months subsequent to the launch of the initial idea by the three County Councils. He highlighted in particular how the Strategic Alliance partners had identified the need to develop a strategic approach to transport as a key opportunity – which had led to the Forum being established and in turn this meeting.</p> <p>Jim Harker expressed his delight at seeing the Forum established and his pleasure at being its first Chairman.</p> <p>Ann Limb recorded her interest in the work of Midlands Connect.</p>													
2	<p>APOLOGIES: received in advance were noted:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cllr Rodney Rose</td> <td>Deputy Leader, Oxfordshire County Council</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Ian Bates</td> <td>Cabinet Member, Cambridgeshire County Council</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Barry Wood</td> <td>Chairman, Oxfordshire Growth Board</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ian Wenman</td> <td>Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maq Alibhai</td> <td>Arriva – The Shires</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graham Botham</td> <td>Network Rail</td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Rodney Rose	Deputy Leader, Oxfordshire County Council	Cllr Ian Bates	Cabinet Member, Cambridgeshire County Council	Cllr Barry Wood	Chairman, Oxfordshire Growth Board	Ian Wenman	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Maq Alibhai	Arriva – The Shires	Graham Botham	Network Rail	
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3	<p>INTRODUCTION TO TRANSPORT SYSTEMS CATAPULT</p> <p>Steve Yianni (Chief Executive) welcomed the meeting to the Transport Systems Catapult – a national facility promoting Intelligent Mobility. The facility had been officially</p>													

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	<p>opened in June 2014 since when it had grown to the point where it had 40 projects underway.</p> <p>Highlights of the first year had been the development work on the LUTZ Pathfinder (the ‘pods’ – two of which were on display); work on innovation in rail franchising and the installation of real-time Departure Planning Information in regional airports. Looking ahead Steve highlighted the ground breaking study of UK Traveller Needs (published in the latter half of 2015) as being a key part of the evidence base on which the roll-out of Intelligent Mobility will take place. He also highlighted the Catapult’s work on a Technology Strategy and the creation of its first ‘spin out’ company.</p> <p>The Catapult’s 2nd Festival was scheduled for the early summer; building on the success of last year’s inaugural event.</p> <p>Jim Harker thanked Steve for the Catapult’s hospitality and noted that the Festival would be of interest to many of the Forum members.</p>	
4	<p>PROPOSED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>The paper before the meeting set out the draft Terms of Reference. The intention was for the governance to be ‘light touch’, with the Terms of Reference reviewed in a year’s time – partly to enable reflection on the experience of the Forum in its first year, but also to enable consideration of the work underway in parallel to explore the potential for a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.</p> <p>A dialogue is underway with Peterborough Council and the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership as to whether the Strategic Alliance was of interest – a representative from Peterborough Council was in attendance. In addition, discussions on securing an appropriate level of representation from the train operators were on-going.</p> <p>Jim Harker flagged the importance of communicating the scale and scope of the Forum – the Forum area has an economy of £92.5bn, a population of 3.45 million, has over 175,000 businesses, employing over 1.64 million people.</p> <p>John Markham noted that Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership was included twice in the list of members; Dave Hodgson noted the need to ensure references to local transport authorities reflects that there are both County and Unitary Authorities.</p> <p>John Dowie welcomed the initiative to establish the Strategic Transport Forum; he noted that two of the seven national studies commissioned by the Department from Highways England were in the Alliance area – a reflection of the importance of the area’s transport networks for both the sub-national and UK economies.</p> <p>John continued by encouraging the Forum to be open to the need to evolve, but emphasised the need to be clear in its focus and stick to that: he noted that in many respects the area had punched below its weight and observed that the Forum provided an opportunity for a strategic conversation that would help redress that fact.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell emphasised that the remit of the Forum was to look at matters of strategic importance: the Forum would not seek to get involved in local matters which quite rightly continue to sit with individual partners.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that (taking on board the detailed comments made by Forum members):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Terms of Reference be adopted b) The Terms of Reference would be reviewed in 12 months 	<p>Programme Team</p>

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5	<p>STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROPOSITION</p> <p>Tony Ciaburro set out the context in which the original transport proposition had been developed and how it needed to evolve to reflect the broader membership of the Strategic Transport Forum.</p> <p>He stressed the importance of quickly developing a first draft of an overarching transport strategy – a framework within which the Alliance could respond to opportunities and initiatives over the course of the following months. He emphasised the importance of using the existing evidence base and material: an approach that would enable this work to be undertaken in a comparatively short period of time.</p> <p>The meeting was reminded that the work of the Forum would focus on genuinely strategic issues; leaving local matters to local partners.</p> <p>Ann Limb supported the approach outlined in the paper. She suggested that the Forum might look to opportunities to work with the private sector interests as it looks to develop its thinking. She also emphasised the need to articulate the critical importance of the Strategic Alliance area to UK plc, and the importance of both the east-west and north-south corridors across the Alliance area.</p> <p>Tony Ciaburro drew the Forum’s attention to the interest amongst the term-contractors working with the Local Transport Authorities: informal discussions to date suggested that there were clear opportunities to realise efficiencies by working at scale and within a longer term strategic framework. Discussions were on-going and positive.</p> <p>John Dowie drew the Forum’s attention to the fact that the Spending Review had included a £475m provision for ‘major majors’ – i.e. those schemes that were on a scale that was more than a single Local Transport Authority/LEP area could fund. He emphasised that the fund – details on which are still to emerge – is likely to have more than one bidding round and by definition is not about investing in schemes that have a wider benefit beyond a single Local Transport Authority/LEP area. In that regard he could see how the development of an overarching transport strategy offered the Alliance the opportunity to promote a small number of ‘major majors’.</p> <p>John continued by noting that the Government was expecting to receive the Shaw Report (looking at the structure of the rail sector) around the time of the Budget. It is likely that there will be change in the planning and delivery framework for rail infrastructure, potentially influenced by the emergence of the sub-national transport agenda.</p> <p>He continued by observing that funding from Government for the work of the Forum was possible, acknowledging that the Government had invested in both Transport for the North and the Midlands Connect. He cautioned though that this wouldn’t be a quick win but nonetheless encouraged the Forum to continue to develop its thinking in this regard over the course of the year.</p> <p>Finally, John noted that Lord Adonis – Chairman of the National Infrastructure Commission – had indicated an awareness of, and interest in the Strategic Alliance and its ambition.</p> <p>In supporting the approach in the paper Steve Bowles set out an overview of the thinking that had already taken place in Buckinghamshire – thinking that he would ensure was fed into the work on developing an overarching transport strategy. Ann Limb also offered to ensure that SEMLEP’s work on its transport strategy would be fed into the Forum’s thinking.</p>	

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	<p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Commission the preparation of an overarching transport strategy, drawing on the available evidence base b) Commission work to prepare a position statement in respect of the Forum's position on the rail sector c) Support further work to explore with potential partners the development of a potential project focused on improving network resilience d) Support further work to develop the case for investment in capacity and capability for considered by the Forum at a future meeting 	Programme Team
6	<p>INNOVATION PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Adam Tuke set out the context for the discussion paper prepared by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) – whose membership extends across the full range of scale of businesses. He noted the potential opportunities created by looking at procurement issues for larger schemes (schemes in excess of £10m) across a wider geography.</p> <p>He particularly emphasised the importance of clarity and certainty when talking about potential investment programmes – reminding the meeting that the adage ‘time is money’ remains true. Whilst recognising the existence of other procurement alliances – such as the Midlands Highway Alliance – he flagged to the Forum the new opportunities that its existence might offer. The key throughout will be the importance of having an intelligent client and being clear what outcome is being sought.</p> <p>Tony Ciaburro commented that informal discussions with contractors already operating across the Alliance area had been encouraging. If the Forum supported this approach the Officer Support Group would work with CECA to develop the thinking further.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to commission further work to develop the proposition around procurement in partnership with CECA</p>	CECA/ Programme Team
7	<p>HIGHWAYS ENGLAND</p> <p>Simon Amor presented an introduction to the work of Highways England – which had come into being at the beginning of April 2015. He outlined the strategic objectives for the company, which included explicit recognition of the role that the Strategic Road Network plays in supporting economic activity and growth.</p> <p>He went on to set out the programme of work underway as a result of the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1): a programme that included a number of significant schemes across the Alliance area. The presentation concluded with an overview of the two strategic studies underway in the Alliance area (out of 7 studies nationally).</p> <p>John Dowie observed that whilst RIS1 in some ways represented the opportunity to address known problems, RIS2 (work on which will begin in the autumn) offers an opportunity to invest in capacity that will support economic growth. In that regard the existence of two studies in the Alliance area was in part recognition of both the challenges and opportunities that exist: output from the studies could form part of the evidence required in order to consider investment proposals as part of RIS2.</p> <p>Nigel Young commented that his experience of working with Highways England was generally very positive: of greater concern was the difficulty in achieving an effective collaborative working arrangement with Network Rail. Specifically there was a concern</p>	

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	<p>at the difficult experienced in trying to align Network Rail activity with that of the Local Transport Authority and/or Highways England.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell noted that the establishment of the Forum would enable the partners to provide the strategic leadership required to achieve a single strategic conversation. Mark Shaw highlighted the collaborative approach between local and central Government through the East-West Rail Consortium served as to offer an example of how the Alliance might seek to work with Highways England.</p> <p>Dave Hodgson commented on the need to ensure that measures identified through the Highways England studies were taken forward into delivery at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Simon Amor re-emphasised the commitment of Highways England to establish and strengthen effective collaborative working arrangements with the Forum and its partners.</p> <p>The meeting thanked Simon Amor for his presentation.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>MAJOR ROAD NETWORK</p> <p>The meeting noted that Martin Tugwell is a member of the Advisory Panel for the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund study but not a member of the study team itself.</p> <p>The study is underpinned by an acknowledgement the reality that the key road network supporting economic activity and development is in fact a combination of Highways England's Strategic Road Network and the more significant Local Transport Authority roads.</p> <p>The meeting had before it a copy of an indicative Major Road Network that had been prepared by the study team. This served to emphasise the importance of a number of Local Transport Authority roads in supporting both the sub-national and UK economies.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell emphasised the study team's view that any indicative Major Road Network needed to be validated at the local level. John Dowie noted the power of a strategic overview of the Major Road Network and advised partners to look to maintain the power of that approach when looking at validating the study's work locally.</p> <p>The meeting welcomed the emerging thinking of the Rees Jeffreys study, noting in particular that the indicative Major Road Network offered the Alliance a solid foundation on which to engage the Government (and the RIS2 process), Highways England and the National Infrastructure Commission.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support the concept of a Major Road Network and express its support for continued engagement with the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund study b) Commission work to begin to develop a proposal for the Major Road Network across the Alliance area c) Invite the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund study team to brief it on their recommendations at a future meeting 	<p>Programme Team</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATE</p> <p>The meeting received a short update on four key areas of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Leaders the Strategic Alliance is taking forward the work required to develop a proposition to establish a statutory Sub-national Transport Body. Martin Tugwell emphasised that this was complementary to the work underway at a more local level around 'devolution deals' – a point that was clearly understood not only by the partners but by Government officials. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity around the National Infrastructure Commission continues to gather pace, with a consultation on governance of the Commission underway and a Body of Experts (chaired by Sir John Armitt - endorsed by Lord Adonis) calling for interested parties to begin feeding into the development of a National Needs Assessment. Responses to these, and subsequent consultations, are being prepared for consideration by the Alliance Leaders. • Martin Tugwell noted that the Government had set out its direction of travel on the Buses Bill in a Ministerial speech to the Buses Summit the previous day. The Bill is intended to be an enabling Bill, providing those with an interest in the sector with more options to secure improved services. Three principles identified by the Minister were a requirement to open up data sources; new options for partnerships and alternative approaches to franchising. • Comments had been made during the meeting regarding the likelihood of change in the rail sector as a result of recent reviews/reports. In terms of infrastructure planning (the Network Rail role) a proposed way forward was expected to be set out by Government around the time of the Budget. In terms of the letting of passenger franchises there was clear evidence of more opportunities being given to sub-national partnerships to input into the development of franchise specifications. <p>Matt Clifton welcomed the commitment by the Strategic Alliance to pursue the potential of a statutory Sub-national Transport Body: he saw the added value of working together on strategic transport issues and was keen to support this work moving forward.</p> <p>Phil Southall and Paul Morgan both reiterated the bus sector's commitment to continue to work collaboratively with partners on the identification and implementation of opportunities to improve the offer from the bus sector. Both were pleased to see the increased emphasis now being given by the Government to offering greater choice in the way local partnerships work.</p> <p>John Dowie commented that the Strategic Alliance was well placed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the legislation for Sub-national Transport Bodies.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the commitment on the part of the Strategic Alliance leaders to develop an Expression of Interest for the establishment of a statutory Sub-national Transport Body b) Note the Government's progress with establishing the National Infrastructure Commission c) Note the update on the Buses Bill d) Commission the development of a position statement in respect of the Partners' future requirements of the rail sector for consideration at a subsequent meeting of the Forum. 	Programme Team
10.	<p>NEXT STEPS</p> <p>Jim Harker reflected on the meeting – the inaugural meeting of the Forum. He observed that the programme set out in the paper reflected the discussion that the Forum had had during the course of its initial meeting. Nick Jones stressed the interest of the Catapult to support the work of the Forum.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell emphasised that the Forum was reliant upon partners working collaboratively – taking advantage of the opportunity to use the resources available more effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>The meeting endorsed the draft work programme set out in the paper before it</p>	Programme Team

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11.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>All meetings 10:30 to 12:30 – (venue to be confirmed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 13th May • Friday 22nd July • Friday 14th October 	

Also in attendance:

Cllr Paul Irwin

Duncan Sharkey

Glenn Barcham

Paul Cook

Keith Dove

Lee Sambrook

Richard Harrington

Hilary Chipping

Cora Robinson

Lewis Banks

Dominic Browne

Deputy Cabinet Member, Oxfordshire County Council

Milton Keynes Council

Bedford Borough Council

Central Bedfordshire Council

Luton Borough Council

Department for Transport

Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local

Enterprise Partnership

Chief Executive, South East Midlands Local Enterprise

Partnership

Arriva

Peterborough City Council

Surveyor Magazine