

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance Strategic Transport Forum

Friday 13th May 2016

**Transport Systems Catapult
Milton Keynes**

Present:	Cllr Heather Smith Cllr Rodney Rose Cllr Mark Shaw Cllr Rob Middleton Mayor Dave Hodgson Cllr James Jamieson Cllr Paul Castleman Cllr Ian Bates Andy Tatt Richard Harrington John Markham Hilary Chipping Cathy Miller Graham Botham Simon Amor Nick Jones Adam Tuke Gary Nolan Luke Merriott Maq Alibhai Tony Ciaburro Martin Tugwell	Northamptonshire County Council (Chairman) Oxfordshire County Council Buckinghamshire County Council Milton Keynes Council Bedford Borough Council Central Bedfordshire Council Luton Borough Council Cambridgeshire County Council Peterborough City Council Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership Department for Transport Network Rail Highways England Transport Systems Catapult Civil Engineering Contractors Association Stagecoach UK Oxford Bus Company Arriva – The Shires Executive Director, Northamptonshire County Council Programme Director, Strategic Alliance
-----------------	---	--

Minutes of Meeting

		ACTION						
1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>Heather Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting: her first as Chairman of the Strategic Transport Forum.</p> <p>APOLOGIES: received in advance were noted:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Patricia Hayes</td> <td>Department for Transport</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Steve Bowles</td> <td>Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ann Limb</td> <td>South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership</td> </tr> </table>	Patricia Hayes	Department for Transport	Cllr Steve Bowles	Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership	Ann Limb	South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership	
Patricia Hayes	Department for Transport							
Cllr Steve Bowles	Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership							
Ann Limb	South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership							
2	<p>NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.</p> <p>An updated action list had been circulated with the papers for the meeting: these were taken as read.</p>							
3	<p>EAST-WEST CONNECTIVITY</p> <p>a) Highways England: Expressway Study</p> <p>Alan Kirkdale (Highways England) introduced Helen Spackman and Andi Redhead from the team undertaking the Expressway Study. Alan set the scene for the ensuing presentation by placing the study into the wider context of Highways England's</p>							

	ACTION
<p>programme of studies.</p> <p>Key points referred to by Helen and Andi were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 of the study was largely completed: the interim report would be published later in the spring after which there would be a stakeholder reference group meeting held later in the summer • Stage 2 of the study would follow on from stage 1 over the course of the summer • Stage 3 (involving more detailed consideration of the opportunities along the corridor) would follow on after the summer <p>The study team highlighted the use made of data currently available that enables network performance to be assessed. They also emphasised the importance of understanding the role of highway infrastructure in support of employment opportunities.</p> <p>The study team highlighted their assessment of the conditions in three ‘city-regions’ – Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge.</p> <p>Responding to the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Jamieson expressed his concern at the narrowness of the study corridor in the eastern part of the study area – he expressed his strong concern that the study approach overly focused on longer-distance movements in the process underplaying the critical role of the highway network supporting economic activity over a much wider area than that defined by the study area • Ian Bates added his concern that the study approach failed to take account of planned growth in the wider Cambridge context: in this he supported the concerns expressed by James Jamieson • Dave Hodgson expressed his concern that the definition of the study corridor failed to take account of broader issue of east-west connectivity: he also expressed his concern that the focus on ‘city-regions’ underplayed the importance of planned growth in places such as Bedford: he emphasised the importance of the study team looking at economic data more thoroughly • Richard Harrington emphasised the need for the study team to look beyond simply ‘join-up-the-dots’ – by which he meant the larger urban areas: the need to address east-west connectivity reflected the economic opportunities across the wider Heartland area: in this respect Richard highlighted that improved north-south connectivity should be seen as integral to the need to improve east-west connectivity • John Markham supported the general concern about the need to look at a broader corridor than that shown by the study team and noted that improvements in east-west connectivity would have implications for the routing of traffic using north-south routes <p>The study team clarified that as part of their study they were using Highways England’s South East Transport Model: this model had recently been updated using mobile phone data.</p> <p>Further questions raised by the meeting in response to the study team’s presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a general concern at the extent to which the study appeared to be focused on linear movements between the larger centres of population • There was a concern that the study appeared to underplay consideration of public transport options 	

		ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a concern that the study would be reviewing the business case for East-West Rail – reinstatement of the rail corridor is critical to improving east-west connectivity and the meeting was united in its view as to the need to avoid any further delay to the delivery of the East-West rail: there was a general concern expressed by the meeting that both this study and the National Infrastructure Commission’s study might result in delays to the delivery of East-West Rail – in particular the Western Section of the project which was most directly linked to the current Control Period <p>The study team highlighted to the meeting that TRL had been commissioned to review the potential impact (and opportunities) arising from technology. They also confirmed that work was being undertaken to understand the needs of freight movements.</p> <p>Heather Smith thanked the study team for their presentation</p> <p>b) Network Rail: East-West Rail</p> <p>Erica Blamire (Network Rail) presented an update to the meeting on progress with the East-West Rail project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services on the first part of East-West (between Oxford Parkway – Bicester – London Marylebone) had begun in October 2015: it was expected that services from Oxford to London Marylebone would begin from December 2016 • The delivery alliance for the rest of the Western Section was in place – this was the same team that had delivered the Stafford upgrade works. • The start date for works on-site would be determined by the completion of the statutory processes and confirmation of the availability of the funding [The meeting noted that the East-West Rail consortium continued to press Network Rail and the DfT to enable a start of works within the current Control Period – i.e. before 2019/20 – this discussion is on-going] • Work on the Central Section had led to the identification of a preferred corridor which comprised 2-3 potential routes • Further work was required to develop a more detailed view on the potential routes – Erica advised the meeting that a further £400k of development funding had been agreed to take this work forward • It was noted that even at this stage the strategic business case for the Central Section was very positive (sitting in the medium to high value for money category): a reflection of the strategic importance of this scheme as part of a wider approach to improving east-west connectivity. • Network Rail saw the National Infrastructure Commission’s work on east-west connectivity as an opportunity to reinforce the contribution that the rail network has to play in improving east-west connectivity. <p>The meeting warmly welcomed the work being undertaken to deliver East-West Rail and were keen to emphasise the wider strategic linkages that would be possible as a consequence of improved east-west connectivity – for example offering opportunities to provide linkages through to the South West and Midlands</p> <p>James Jamieson reflected the consensus of the meeting when he summed up the message to Government was very simple – build it.</p> <p>Ian Bates noted the opportunities for new rail stations serving the broader Cambridge area.</p> <p>c) Strategic Issues</p> <p>Building on the content of the briefings, the meeting considered the paper before it</p>	

		ACTION
	<p>which sought to summarise the key strategic issues for the Strategic Alliance when it came to east-west connectivity: the paper also set out how the Strategic Alliance might set about engaging with the National Infrastructure Commission.</p> <p>The meeting endorsed the commitment by the Strategic Alliance Leaders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a short overview narrative of the Heartland area to the National Infrastructure Commission • Use the work to develop the overarching Transport Strategy for the Heartland as the basis for engaging with the Commission. <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the progress to date with the Expressway Study and the timeline for next steps – in doing so it looked to the study team to take on board the issues raised by the Forum • Welcome the progress being made in delivering the Western Section of the East-West Rail and called for the work to identify a preferred route for the Central Section to be taken forward as a national priority – in this respect the meeting noted the additional £400k of funding identified to take work on the Central Section forward • Reaffirm its willingness to actively engage with the National Infrastructure Commission on issues of strategic (sub-national) significance in support of its work on east-west connectivity 	
4	<p>‘MAJOR MAJORS’ FUND</p> <p>The paper before the meeting summarised the arrangements for the Large Local Major Schemes Fund – colloquially known as the ‘major majors’ fund. Cathy Miller highlighted that proposals needed to be submitted by 21st July, with bids being made through the Local Enterprise Partnerships. She highlighted the added value of a single strategic voice, and the focus on supporting investment in proposals that have a broader, strategic impact. Recognition of the importance of cross-LEP support for such proposals was also highlighted as being of great importance.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Collate a list of potential schemes suitable for the ‘major majors’ b) Prepare an initial programme of investment and identify those schemes that, from a Strategic Alliance perspective, should be prioritised c) Prepare for the Forum’s consideration a submission to the Government on behalf of the Strategic Alliance d) Take into account in its work, the on-going discussions with TfL on a potential joint proposal 	Programme Team

		ACTION
5	<p>TRANSPORT STRATEGY</p> <p>The meeting received a verbal update on progress with the overarching Transport Strategy. Tony Ciaburro highlighted the opportunity the Transport Strategy document provided for the Alliance partners to highlight the opportunity to build on work already underway to realise the potential of technological innovation, citing both the Total Transport and One Transport projects as examples of initiatives.</p> <p>Hilary Chipping provided an update of the work of the officer sub-group. All partners were engaged in the work and good progress was being made in terms of collecting information from each. The initial piece of work was timed to have an initial overarching framework reading for consideration by the Forum at its meeting on 22nd July. Building on this, the intention was to then develop a more detailed assessment of the issues, drawing on the evidence base available. Hilary highlighted the benefit of pressing Government and its agencies to use a single evidence base for the Heartland area, noting that there were a number of studies underway at present and questioning whether an opportunity was being missed in this regard.</p> <p>Cathy Miller welcomed the work being done by the Strategic Alliance, noting that the availability of an overarching Transport Strategy framework offered the partners the opportunity to be well positioned for forthcoming discussions on investment priorities.</p> <p>The meeting noted the update on the work to develop the overarching Transport Strategy</p>	Noted
6	<p>SUB NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY</p> <p>The paper before the meeting provided an update on recent activity in support of the development of a detailed proposal for the establishment of a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.</p> <p>The meeting noted the update on the work to develop a proposal for a statutory Sub-national Transport Body</p>	Noted
7.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 22nd July • Friday 14th October 	

Also in attendance:

Bob Menzies
Joan Hancox
Duncan Sharkey
Tom Blackburn-Maze
Glenn Barcham
Paul Cook
Keith Dove
Lee Sambrook

Cambridgeshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Milton Keynes Council
Milton Keynes Council
Bedford Borough Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Luton Borough Council
Department for Transport