



Strategic Transport Leadership Board Minutes

Friday 24 September 2021

Notes of Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

In Attendance:

Cllr Richard Wenham	Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council (Chair)
Cllr Liz Leffman	Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Leader, Buckinghamshire Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Mayor, Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Emily Darlington	Cabinet Member, Milton Keynes Council
Cllr David Renard	Leader, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Richard Roberts	Leader, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Wayne Fitzgerald	Leader, Peterborough City Council
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Leader Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Phil Larratt	Cabinet Member, West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Neil Gough	Deputy Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Graham Lawman	Executive Member, North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Phil Bibby	Executive Member, Hertfordshire County Council
Andrew Smith	Chair, Buckinghamshire LEP
Peter Horrocks	Chair, South East Midlands LEP
Hilary Chipping	CEO, South East Midlands LEP

Apologies:

Cllr Michele Mead	Leader, West Oxfordshire District Council
Dr Nik Johnson	Mayor, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Paddy Bradley	CEO, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP
Paul Moorby	Chair, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP
Cllr Jonathon Nunn	Leader, West Northamptonshire Council
Bev Hindle	Executive Director, Arc Leaders Group
Cllr Dave Taylor	Cabinet Member, Luton Borough Council
Lewis Banks	Transport Planning Officer, Peterborough City Council
Ben Smith	Director, Regions, Cities & Devolution Department for Transport
Phil Southall	Managing Director, Oxford Bus Company
Cllr Robert Roche	Executive Member, Luton Borough Council
Andrew Down	Deputy CEO, South Oxfordshire District Council

Also in Attendance:

Jeremy Smith	Head of Transport, Cambridgeshire County Council
Ian Thompson	Executive Director, Buckinghamshire Council
Mike Batheram	Director, Atkins
Matt Gamble	Principal Consultant, Atkins
George Candler	Executive Director, North Northamptonshire Council
Carly Freeston	Deputy Director, Department for Transport
Jon Shortland	Chief Officer, Bedford Borough Council
Antony Swift	Principal Transport Planner, Luton Borough Council
Sue Frost	Service Director Sustainable Development, Luton Borough Council
Richard Bell	Director, Swindon Borough Council
Mark Kemp	Director, Hertfordshire County Council
Paul Thomas	Director, Milton Keynes Council
Matthew Taylor	Strategy Manager, National Highways
Chris Cole	Strategic Planner, Network Rail

Paul Raynes	Delivery & Strategy Director, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Richard Leonard	Head of Network Development, Strategy & Planning, National Highways
Carew Satchwell	Head of Strategic Planning North West & Central, Network Rail
Alan Francis	Member of the public
Naomi Green	EEH Interim Director
Fiona Foulkes	EEH Business Manager
Adam King	EEH Communications Manager
Beth Dormer	EEH Executive Assistant

	Item
1	<p>Welcome & actions of the last Leaders Meeting & Strategic Transport Forum</p> <p>Cllr Martin Tett opened the meeting and explained that members will now be meeting as the Strategic Transport Leadership Board. This session of the meeting will confirm the remit of the Board and how it will operate.</p> <p>Mayor Dave paid tribute to Cllr Paul Castleman, a member of the Strategic Transport Forum who passed away in August 2021.</p> <p>Naomi Green began with the actions from the Strategic Transport Forum and noted that all the items are either complete or agenda items during this discussion.</p> <p>These included Transport Decarbonisation and the Spending Review submission which was shared with the previous Strategic Transport Forum in July 2021 with a request that it return to the governance of EEH in autumn 2021.</p> <p>With regards to the previous Leaders meeting, Naomi confirmed the actions from the meeting had been completed. Minutes of the previous Leaders meeting had been circulated to all members in August 2021.</p> <p>A final action from the Leaders meeting was to report on a letter that had been sent to the Minister for Transport regarding digital connectivity. Given Ministerial changes since the previous meeting, Naomi recommended that the Board write to the new Minister, Rachel Maclean MP.</p>
2	<p>Nomination of Chair and Vice Chair</p> <p><i>To nominate and appoint a Chair and Vice Chair for the Board</i></p> <p>Mayor Dave Hodgson proposed Cllr Richard Wenham as nominee for Chair and this was seconded by Emily Darlington. There were no further nominees and Martin Tett confirmed that Cllr Wenham was nominated as Chair unopposed.</p> <p>Cllr Wenham thanked the meeting for supporting his nomination and accepted the position as Chair. He then moved the meeting on to nominations for Vice Chair and nominated Cllr Liz Leffman which was seconded by Lucy Nethsingha.</p> <p>Cllr Leffman accepted the position as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Cllr Wenham thanked Cllr Martin Tett and Mayor Dave Hodgson for their significant contribution to EEH's development.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Public Questions</p> <p>Alan Francis raised a question with regards to the draft response to the Oxford to Cambridge Spatial Framework.</p> <p>He said EEH should challenge the concept of the Arc and stated that it is based on maximising profits for developers rather than what is good for the area and its residents. He requested that when the meeting discusses the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework Vision Consultation item, sections are added to the response that raise the problems of excessive growth which are proposed for the Arc and particularly highlighting the impact on the environment. Richard Wenham agreed to continue this discussion in item 8 of the agenda.</p> <p>Naomi Green advised members that EEH’s remit is quite clear in terms of its responsibilities as an STB and the response prepared reflects the EEH Transport Strategy which has been through an enormous amount of scrutiny and previous work done by the Forum. Therefore, Naomi advised that EEH respond on the matters that it has a role in dealing with.</p>
	<p>Remit of the Board</p> <p><i>To agree the remit of the Board, including its immediate work programme and medium-term plan, as set out in the proposed submission on the 2021 Spending Review.</i></p> <p>Naomi Green introduced the item and went over issues presented in the meeting paper.</p> <p>She said that DfT expect EEH to remain a standalone body with a clear remit to deliver sub-regional transport connectivity and a large part of that is ensuring that EEH work with the wider body of seven sub-national transport bodies. Both the DfT and DLUHC are supportive of this position.</p> <p>Naomi highlighted that the paper presented a proposal for the spending review that had been prepared to reflect the priorities of both the former Leaders group and the Strategic Transport Forum. The Board was recommended to consider the Spending Review proposal and agree to its submission.</p> <p>Cllr David Renard stated that the Spending Review report does not indicate what will happen once the Oxford-Didcot-Swindon connectivity study has been completed and there is no mention of a timeline. Naomi confirmed that the brief for this study has been developed and EEH was on the verge of approving the procurement mechanism with a view to starting work from December 2021. She views the pipeline of schemes coming through the connectivity studies process moving into EEH’s investment pipeline and subsequently scheme development fund.</p> <p>Cllr Emily Darlington asked if the reference to the London, Buckinghamshire, Northampton connectivity study is related to work on the A5. Naomi explained that it looks at the opportunity from the edge of London through the whole of Buckinghamshire up to Northampton. She said the A5 was in the geography of the Luton-Milton Keynes-Daventry connectivity study which is slightly further along the programme timeline. Cllr Darlington said that it is difficult to look at London, Buckinghamshire, Northampton without considering the A5 because it mirrors that route. She suggested bringing those two together in some way as they are a similar north-south route. The Chair stated that there are several meeting members who will have an interest in that and so a conversation offline to discuss this in further detail would be prudent.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Larratt requested a conversation offline with Naomi to discuss the situation in Towcester on the relief road. Naomi agreed that a discussion would be welcome.</p> <p>Cllr Graham Lawman suggested that the Scheme Development Fund should be considerably larger. Naomi said the £5m figure equates to around ten schemes over a three-year period. Mayor Dave stated that it would be logical to attempt to increase the figure. The Chair</p>

	<p>requested that Naomi take an action to look at what higher level of funding could be justified. Naomi agreed to circulate a potential figure that afternoon for members to consider. The Chair agreed with this course of action.</p> <p>All recommendations in the paper were agreed.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Schedule a conversation offline to further discuss the London, Buckinghamshire, Northampton and north south Buckinghamshire connectivity studies b) Schedule a conversation with Cllr Phil Larratt regarding the relief road in Towcester c) Naomi Green to look at what higher level of funding for the Scheme Development Fund could be justified
<p>5</p>	<p>Transport Decarbonisation</p> <p><i>To receive an update on strategic approaches to planning and supporting transport decarbonisation and to consider any implications.</i></p> <p>James Golding-Graham updated the Board on the government’s transport decarbonisation plan. The targets in the plan for the roll out of electric vehicles are world leading. More detail was required on the role of places and local authorities in reducing emissions. A letter from the Chair had been prepared which welcomed the decarbonisation plan and asked for a meeting to discuss it in more detail.</p> <p>James said EEH is developing a decarbonisation road map / strategy, the first part of which is complete. This is a tool that shows emissions levels and trajectories at a local authority level. James said EEH are in the process of commissioning the next stage of this work which looks at the different types of areas in EEH and what types of interventions can support decarbonisation in those different places.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Bibby asked if the meeting could anticipate some guidance from the DfT around electric vehicle charging infrastructure in order to make a clear, consistent approach and if not, should we be lobbying for this. James responded that we are expecting further output from OZEV (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles) later in 2021. OZEV is going to be publishing an infrastructure strategy in which it is hoped that there will be further guidance around the acceptable level of EV charging infrastructure.</p> <p>Cllr Emily Darlington seconded the need for guidance around electric vehicle charging infrastructure. She also expressed concern about the heavy emphasis in the transport decarbonisation plan on electric vehicles, as this alone won’t be enough to achieve net zero. She said that the plan put forward by the government contains very little about rail electrification. She asked for this to be included in EEH’s response to government.</p> <p>Cllr Martin Tett asked for clarity around EEH’s net zero target as there is reference to both 2040 and 2050. James said that 2040 is EEH’s ambition and 2050 is the UK’s legally binding target. Cllr Tett asked whether there are emissions hotspots in the region where we should be focusing our attention. James agreed that we can and should identify hotspots through EEH’s decarbonisation work.</p> <p>Mayor Dave commented that the case for electrifying East West Rail from day one continued to be needed to be made. Mayor Dave also referred to paragraph 2.7 and the planning reforms and stated local authorities should not be expected to choose between the development of active travel, affordable housing, schools, or health services.</p> <p>Naomi Green highlighted that EEH is the STB that is leading transport decarbonisation on behalf of all seven STBs. She said that if individual Board members would like a one-on-one conversation offline to understand the emissions situation for their areas, EEH is happy to do this. Naomi said that the DfT have given STBs the opportunity for some further in-year</p>

	<p>funding and would like to see how they can support local authority partners on electric vehicle infrastructure, so the comments made in the meeting give a helpful steer towards the proposal.</p> <p>Cllr Liz Leffman said DfT needs to be queried about its approach to modal shift as it was inconsistent that on the one hand we need to reduce the number of miles driven, but on the other the DfT's forecasts are for as much as 51% increase of the number of cars on the road.</p> <p>Cllr Graham Lawman said that hydrogen is perhaps more suitable for HGVs than electric is. He requested that reference to workplace parking levies be removed from the letter. The Chair supported this request.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <p>a) Approve the proposed response to 'Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain' with the provision that the discussed changes were made.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Strategically Important Road Network</p> <p><i>To receive a presentation from National Highways on the proposed scope for the Oxford-Cambridge Connectivity: roads study and to consider progress with delivery of the investment programme for strategically important roads across the Heartland.</i></p> <p>Naomi Green said that the purpose of the paper was to present an update from National Highways on the Ox-Cam Arc connectivity roads study. The study flows from the decision to cancel the expressway between Oxford and Milton Keynes and looks beyond that geography to how, across the region, improvements to strategically important road networks may be required.</p> <p>The scope of works had been developed in partnership with EEH and therefore it is important that the Board were content with the proposal.</p> <p>Naomi noted that work to address specific issues on strategically important roads was continuing, including on the A34.</p> <p>National Highways has just begun its route strategies development process and EEH will continue to work closely with them on this and ensure that the needs and priorities of the Board are delivered. Naomi stated that EEH are continuing to press for investment on the key areas which were not in RIS2 as expected including the A34, the A14 Junction 10a, and the A1 south of Huntingdon.</p> <p>She said that in July 2019 EEH submitted 11 priority schemes for investment through the MRN and Large Local Majors Programme. An update on each of those schemes is set out in annex 2. Naomi encouraged members to share any concerns about their schemes. Naomi raised that she would like to seek agreement from members on Century Park Access Road in Luton and highlighted that section 8 of the paper sets out the position to this. EEH recommended that the Board continues to encourage EEH to support Luton in investing in the business park around the airport as well as work with Luton Borough Council to renew the initial assessment of the strategic benefits which include the whole of Century Park Access Road to look at how we can quantify those benefits for stage 1.</p> <p>Richard Leonard introduced himself and gave a short presentation on the Ox-Cam Arc connectivity roads study. National Highways have been asked by DfT to look at developing a targeted road interventions package which supports connectivity, planned economic and housing growth, and addresses issues on the network. This work is core sponsored by DfT and EEH and is a valuable first step in developing the case for future investment in the area.</p> <p>He said National Highways recognises that there has been significant work undertaken in strategic planning through wider partners such as EEH. The study purpose sets out the</p>

	<p>ambition to develop a level of service for the region which allows National Highways to understand how to prioritise interventions. Furthermore, Richard explained that the key activities include how to consider delays, safety, and carbon impact.</p> <p>Richard shared that National Highways will be conducting engagement in autumn/winter of 2021 and developing solutions alongside further stakeholder engagement early in 2022. It will then provide a recommendation on the impact of potential investments.</p> <p>The Chair invited the Board to comment and ask questions however there was no comments at this time.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the additional updates on progress with supporting investment in the Strategic Road Network b) Note the updates to the Major Road Network and Large Local Major Programme c) the continued commitment for finding a solution to investing in Century Park Access Road in Luton, commencing with Phase 1
<p>7</p>	<p>Regional Bus Study <i>To receive a presentation from consultants Atkins on the Regional Bus Study, commissioned by EEH to inform and support develop of local authority Bus Service Improvement Plans.</i></p> <p>James Golding-Graham introduced the item and noted that EEH committed in its transport strategy to reduce reliance on private car use and increase modal share to public transport. Doing so is important in terms of decarbonising our transport system and addressing challenges such as congestions and journey times.</p> <p>James said that that when the Bus Back Better National Bus strategy was published, EEH identified an opportunity to look at cross boundary travel in a more analytical way and develop a regional strategic approach to supporting new bus and coach routes. The outcomes of this analysis will be published in time to inform local authority’s bus service improvement plans.</p> <p>Mike Batheram introduced himself and shared supporting slides with the meeting. Mike stated that the Regional Bus Study looked at the gaps in the strategically important bus network within the region and aims to provide an evidence space to support future investments and identifies cross boundary corridors which, by virtue of their poor connectivity by rail, could become the focus for bus service improvements.</p> <p>Matt Gable explained that the Bus Study identifies where people are moving around in the region and attempts to determine the volume of those movements. This is done by using mobile phone data which is focused on motorway and A road movements. Any movement between local transport authorities both within EEH and the neighbouring regions are taken into consideration.</p> <p>The Chair noted that it is interesting that the supporting slides show that the most used bus route was Luton to Dunstable and asked if demand is high because it is a reliable and quick route with a busway already established. Matt Gamble noted that the data being analysed from mobile phones and therefore covers all movements, not just bus or rail journeys. However, Matt agreed that the quality of infrastructure influences movement via public transport.</p>

	<p>Naomi Green highlighted that the study is designed to open discussions with bus operators and to explore what is possible beyond the boundaries of each individual’s local authority area. EEH have been working with the Bus Operators Association who are very enthusiastic about how EEH is supporting local authorities.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Bibby explained that from a Hertfordshire aspect it would be helpful to have some data between Hemel Hempstead and Stansted Airport and hopes this can be included. This area is where Hertfordshire are trying to improve sustainable links.</p> <p>Cllr Emily Darlington highlighted that EEH is helping Milton Keynes on its mass rapid transit plans. She noted how it is important to consider cross-boundary flows. Naomi Green said EEH’s role is to advise and share evidence with local authority partners and work with them on what they can achieve.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the emerging findings of the Regional Bus Study b) Discuss the key challenges and opportunities for bus services in the Heartland
<p>8</p>	<p>Oxford to Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework Vision Consultation <i>To consider and approve the proposed response from England’s Economic Heartland to the Spatial Framework Vision consultation.</i></p> <p>Naomi Green introduced the item and explained that the response that EEH prepared for the Board’s consideration is entirely based on the EEH transport strategy. The response sets out why the approach of the transport strategy is the correct one for connectivity in the region of Oxford to Cambridge.</p> <p>In May 2021, the Strategic Transport Forum agreed that the EEH Transport Strategy should be the regional connectivity strategy for the Arc and the Heartland. Naomi highlighted that the consultation on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc vision includes a line that suggests the spatial framework could determine nationally set transport policy, which EEH could not commit to supporting as we don’t currently know what those policies are and there is no funding. Naomi shared the Secretary of State for Transport will be a co-signatory for the Spatial Framework which allows DfT to ensure that its ambitions are met within the Spatial Framework.</p> <p>Cllr Martin Tett said he was abstaining from this agenda item as Buckinghamshire Council does not support the creation of a regional spatial strategy.</p> <p>Cllr Emily Darlington stated that from a Milton Keynes perspective it is important that EEH and the Arc work closely together as an opportunity to bring together specialities and noted that, if done correctly, this will benefit residents and businesses.</p> <p>The Chair commented that this is a challenging response as we recognise that EEH covers a geographic area much wider than just the Arc. That said, he was of the opinion that the paper finds an appropriate balance in focussing on its remit as a sub-national transport body.</p> <p>Naomi Green proposed that a clear line at the start of the consultation response should be added that states that the paper refers to connectivity in the region and it is on this basis that EEH was responding. The meeting endorsed Naomi’s suggestion.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to:</p>

	<p>a) endorse EEH’s response to the ‘Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc’ consultation subject to Buckinghamshire abstaining and with the provision that the discussed changes are made</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Business Unit Update <i>To note progress on some key programmes of activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EEH regional conference</i> • <i>Connectivity studies</i> • <i>Alternative futures</i> • <i>Active travel</i> • <i>Ubiquitous digital connectivity</i> <p>Naomi Green introduced the item and first highlighted that DfT have recently approached EEH with additional funding to deliver an active travel strategy for the region. Naomi shared that this builds upon the methodology done for rail and buses and looks at using mobile phone data to establish potential opportunities for active travel connections.</p> <p>The funding will also support the development of a feasibility study for the Oxford to Cambridge cycleway which is a policy in EEH’s transport strategy.</p> <p>Naomi proposed that the Board write to Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the new Minister for Future Mobility to raise the profile of its proposal for ubiquitous digital connectivity which is investment ready.</p> <p>Naomi highlighted that this letter has been shared with the Board for consideration previously and has been supported. Board members were supportive of this approach.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the additional funding commitment from the Department for Transport to support the development of an active travel strategy in the region b) Agrees to write (Annex 1) to the new Culture Secretary setting out the Heartland’s proposal for establishing the Enterprise Partnership in support of our ambition to achieve ubiquitous digital connectivity
<p>10</p>	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>Confirmed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 December 2021 11am – 1pm Buckingham <p>Proposed (subject to final agreement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 February 2022 11am – 1pm - 13 May 2022 11am – 1pm - 15 July 2022 11am – 1pm - 30 September 2022 11am – 1pm - 9 December 2022 11am – 1pm <p><i>It is proposed that three meetings per year be held virtually, with two meetings in person</i></p>