



# Strategic Transport Leadership Board

9 June 2023

## Agenda Item 5: Supporting our Local Authorities

### *Recommendation:*

- **It is recommended that the Board:**

**Notes the tools that EEH has available to help EEH's local authority partners to effectively deliver their future priorities and programmes.**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. This paper provides Board members with an overview of the tools that EEH has available to support local authority partners effectively deliver local priorities and programmes.

### **2. Key points to note**

- 2.1. EEH is increasing its support to local authority partners, helping them to achieve their ambitions for transport in their areas.
- 2.2. A recent table of support, requested by DfT and available in annex 1, illustrates the scale of support now offered by EEH.
- 2.3. During the meeting three particularly important areas will be highlighted: support with local transport plans, major road network schemes, and data.

### **3. Context**

- 3.1. During the independent review of EEH carried out last year, Board members commented on the value EEH provides with its support to local authority partners. It was noted how important this is, particularly given the increasing financial and resource pressures that local authorities are facing.
- 3.2. This support continues to increase and has become a fundamental part of our work.
- 3.3. Indeed, after a request from the Department for Transport, EEH recently compiled a table of the tools, 'products' and other support it offers local authority partners and included in Annex 1. The table serves to illustrate the range of support EEH now offers.
- 3.4. Below we have provided updates on three particularly important areas in which EEH provides support to partners.

### **4. Regional centre of excellence (supporting Local Transport Plans)**

- 4.1. The 2022 Levelling Up White Paper includes commitments to develop regional centres of excellence. DfT has tasked all STBs with developing plans for regional centres of excellence that focus on maximising local transport authorities' capability in four core work areas:
  - Updating local transport plans
  - Providing support on quantifying carbon reductions
  - Developing effective business cases
  - Ensuring each local transport authority develops and maintains a pipeline of future schemes.



- 4.2. In September 2022 EEH responded to the DfT to outline what EEH could offer in terms of the creation of a regional centre of excellence. This was previously presented to the Board.
- 4.3. EEH is intending to help build and strengthen our work in this area over the coming months to be able to fully support the development of local transport plans across the region.
- 4.4. We have had early indications of the key themes in the local transport plan guidance and provided feedback to DfT on behalf of our local authorities. While we still await the local transport plan guidance in full, we have been supporting our authorities through holding meetings and question and answer sessions with key members of the DfT LTP team to inform them of the likely key requirements in the guidance.
- 4.5. EEH will also be instrumental in supporting local transport authorities in the response to LTP guidance once published - anticipated to be during the summer. We are currently organising a one-day workshop with DfT local transport plan team for officers to attend in-person in early to mid-July and an additional meeting with DfT local transport plan team with EEH directors in August.
- 4.6. EEH has developed a number of tools to support LTP development including the new Cadence geospatial planning/mapping tool that is outlined in more detail below.
- 4.7. We have also commissioned and developed a quantifiable carbon reduction (QCR) baseline and policy impact tool. Developed in response to the forthcoming local Transport plan guidance update, EEH has provided authority partners with a "top down" transport carbon baseline. This fulfils part of the reporting requirement as set out by DfT.
- 4.8. The second element (under development) integrates a more comprehensive bottom-up carbon baseline (derived from local transport models) and the outputs of the Midlands Connect Decarbonisation policy playbook. This tool will allow officers to understand the decarbonisation impact of a combination of 30 policy interventions in their localities and build/develop bespoke program of interventions. It takes into account the place type and current trip rates allowing better, more impactful policy making.
- 4.9. The tools highlights how local policies will contribute to meeting the required national net zero pathways/trajectories.
- 4.10. Future iterations of this tool will facilitate a deeper understanding of the trips/journeys that will be impacted by certain policy interventions. For example: will a certain intervention disproportionately impact business related journeys or journeys in particularly rural localities.
- 4.11. In addition to this our Local Authority partners have indicated where they most need support and through the Centres of Excellence work, we are determining where we can best offer support. This will likely be in the form of supporting with: narrative(s) on regional priorities, freight and rail; to peer review and pipeline support.

## **5. Scheme development hub (peer reviews and project management)**

- 5.1. EEH is also working on strengthening client-side skill sets of our local transport authority partners when delivering major road network (MRN) transport infrastructure projects.
- 5.2. One of the key aspects of this work was the establishment of a capacity and capability forum to support and review the outputs of this project and to share best practice.
- 5.3. The forum has already met four times and is made up of local authority partner officers leading on MRN schemes and representatives from different departments of the DfT and National Highways. The forums have been well attended and included a dedicated session with the DfT MRN team. We were the first STB to offer this approach and it allowed LTA officers to bring their questions, challenges and issues on their MRN schemes to be addressed directly by DfT specialists.
- 5.4. The forum has been instrumental in identifying the areas where local authorities most need support in progressing their MRNs. This has formed the basis of the current support package that is being taken forward:



- Identification and enabling effective project management review: This is to de-risk the critical path of the project to expedite what is required from the business case process and accelerate delivery.
- Peer Review support: To support partners to be intelligent clients. This support will enable a robust review of deliverables to ensure minimal revisions to submissions to meet key government submission criteria.

5.5. In early March this support, funded by DfT, was commissioned and is currently being developed to meet our local authority partners' requirements. Part of this work will be an assessment of its effectiveness in achieving the project's objectives. A summary of the work commissioned is in the table below:

| <b>Major Scheme</b>              | <b>Local Authority</b> | <b>C&amp;C Support Focus</b>      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Eastern Link Road</b>         | Buckinghamshire        | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>A10 Broxbourne</b>            | Hertfordshire          | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>Vauxhall Way Improvements</b> | Luton BC               | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>Ely to Cambridge A10</b>      | CPCA                   | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>MRT</b>                       | Milton Keynes          | Peer Review                       |
| <b>A509 Isham Bypass</b>         | North Northants        | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>Bedford Western Bypass</b>    | Bedford Borough        | Peer Review<br>Project Management |
| <b>Swindon LEVI</b>              | Swindon                | EV Support                        |

5.6. Based on the progress that we are making on the project DfT have awarded additional funding of £150,000 for this financial year to continue and progress our work and have extended the deadline for the additional project and the expenditure of this additional funding to the end of the current financial year, March 2024.

5.7. A key part of the project is evaluating the effectiveness of the support in achieving the project outcomes as well as using this to steer where and how we focus future support.

5.8. To determine the focus of this next stage and to complete this review of the current stage we have engaged consultants Fourth Storey. They are tasked with reviewing the current commission and to develop an action plan to ensure we can continue to improve the offer to partners. The results of this work will be reported back to the Board in July.

## 6. Evidence base



- 6.1. EEH has recently procured a significant upgrade to its evidence base, which provides more analytical tools and datasets, including mobile phone travel data.
- 6.2. Cadence 360 is a flexible web-based geographic information system, which allows officers to create and share maps and relevant data with. With other officers, members and the public. It has more than 150 easily searchable transport related datasets. Users can also easily upload their own data local authority data.
- 6.3. Cadence allows users to undertake various advanced analysis tailored towards transport planning, including understanding journey times and transport poverty.
- 6.4. EEH has procured a mobile network dataset that will also be available on the platform. Users can better understand current journey patterns and demand in their localities, rather than relying, for example, on older census data.
- 6.5. The platform will also provide officers a simple way to interact with their transport models (SATURN) which should reduce costs and speed up some simple planning tasks.
- 6.6. EEH will facilitate monthly 'surgeries' for officers with the platform developer and share challenges and best practice across the EEH region.
- 6.7. This resource represents a significant improvement in the quality of technical /digital support provided to officers for planning and strategy work.

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