

Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Thursday, 18th July, 2019.

Present:-

Councillor Anderson	Slough Borough Council
Councillor Brunel-Walker	Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Johnson	RBWM
Councillor Page	Reading Borough Council
Simon Ratcliffe	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Councillor Richards (<i>deputising for Cllr Jorgensen, from 4.11pm</i>)	Wokingham Borough Council
Matthew Taylor	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Atkinson (Bracknell Forest Council)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Somner and Jorgensen, Stuart Atkinson, Charles Eales, Malcolm Kempton and Bob Mountain

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

2. Election of Chair 2019/20

Nominations were invited for the Chair of BLTB for the forthcoming municipal year. The Founding Document stated that a Local Authority Member should chair BLTB.

Councillor Page was proposed by Councillor Anderson and seconded by Simon Ratcliffe.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Page was elected as Chair for the next year.

Resolved – That Councillor Page be elected as Chair of BLTB for the 2019/20 municipal year.

(Councillor Page in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting)

3. Election of Vice-Chair 2019/20

Nominations were invited for the Vice-Chair of BLTB for the forthcoming municipal year. It was confirmed that the Founding Document of the BLTB required that the Vice-Chair be from the Local Enterprise Partnership members.

Charles Eales was proposed by Simon Ratcliffe and seconded by Councillor Brunel-Walker.

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There being no other nominations, Charles Eales was elected as Deputy Chair for the next year.

Resolved – That Charles Eales be elected as Vice-Chair of BLTB for the 2019/20 municipal year.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th March 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) held on 14th March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

5. Briefing Note - TVB LEP/BLTB 'How We Work'

Members noted a briefing note that summarised the process by which Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and the Berkshire Local Transport Body operated in investing in local transport schemes. The LTB would consider reports later in the agenda about the LTB Assurance Framework and Prioritisation Methodology which had been reviewed to ensure they remained fit for purpose and aligned to the TVB LEP Assurance Framework.

Resolved – That the BLTB 'How We Work' briefing note be noted.

6. Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal 2015/16 to 2020/21

A report was received on the progress of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal which set out the status of approved schemes, updated financial profile and identified risks.

A correction was noted to Table 4 – Completed Schemes, in that 2.19 Bracknell: Town Centre Regeneration one-year-on impact report had been submitted in March 2019.

Updates were provided by scheme promoters on each of the approved schemes:

2.01 Newbury: Kings Road Link Road – update noted.

2.02 Bracknell: Warfield Link Road – completed. The scheme was working well.

2.03 Newbury: London Road Industrial Estate – completed.

2.04: Wokingham: Distributor Roads – update noted. The Full Business Case had been submitted to DfT and a Ministerial Decision was awaited. A report would be considered later on the agenda.

2.05 Newbury: Sandleford Park – update noted.

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2.06 Reading: Green Park Railway Station – update noted. A report would be considered later on the agenda regarding the use of unallocated funds.

(Councillor Richards joined the meeting)

2.07 Bracknell: Coral Reef Roundabout – completed.

2.08 Slough: MRT Phase 1 – completed.

2.09.1 Sustainable Transport NCN 422 – update noted. Work was substantially complete.

2.09.2 Sustainable Transport A4 Cycle Route with Bucks – completed.

2.10 Slough: A332 Improvements – update noted. Work was due to be completed within the next month.

2.11 and 2.12 Reading: South Reading MRT phases 1 and 2 – update noted. Phase 1 was complete and Phase 2 was in construction and nearing completion.

2.13 Wokingham: Thames Valley Park & Ride (previously called 2.13 Reading: Eastern Park & Ride) – update noted.

2.14 Reading: East Reading MRT Phase 1 and 2.25 Reading: East Reading MRT Phase 2 – withdrawn.

2.15 Bracknell: Martins Heron Roundabout – update noted.

2.16 Maidenhead Station Access – update noted. Work on site was underway.

2.17 Slough: A355 Route – completed.

2.18 No scheme.

2.19 Bracknell: Town Centre Regeneration and Infrastructure Improvements – completed.

2.20 No scheme.

2.21 Slough: Langley Station Access Improvements – update noted. Second phase works would start next week.

2.22 Slough: Burnham Station Access Improvements – completed.

2.23 Reading: South Reading MRT Phases 3 and 4 – update noted.

2.24 Newbury: Railway Station improvements – update noted. The scheme was progressing well and was on track.

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2.25 – see 2.14.

2.26 Wokingham: Winnersh Relief Road (Phase 2) – update noted.

2.27 Maidenhead Town Centre: Missing Links – update noted. Detailed design was well advanced with construction due to start later in the year.

2.28 Bracknell: A3095 Corridor Improvements – update noted. Detailed design was progressing well with start on site due at the end of 2019 or early 2020.

2.29 Wokingham: Winnersh Parkway – update noted. The scheme was entering the planning process. A question was raised about pedestrian access in the vicinity of the site and the plans were explained.

2.30 Thames Valley Berkshire Smart City Cluster – good progress was being made and the scheme was on track. The focus of Phase 1 was on assisted living with a stronger transport element in Phase 2.

2.31 Slough: Stoke Road Area Regeneration – update noted. A report would be considered later on the agenda.

2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1 – update noted. Detailed growth modelling and design was underway.

2.33 GWR: Maidenhead to Marlow-Branch Line Upgrade – update noted. Progress was being made to overcome the challenges of the constrained site, but there had been a delay of circa 2 months as the track and signalling design process had not been agreed. It was anticipated that the Approval in Principle to Network Rail was due to be submitted later in July.

2.34 Slough MRT Phase 2 – update noted. Work was expected to start in the third quarter of the year.

2.35 Reading West Station Upgrade – update noted. Survey work was taking place and the scheme promoter was on track to bring the Full Business Case to BLTB in November 2019.

2.36 Wokingham: Coppid Beach Park and Ride – update noted. The planning process had been started. The Full Business Case was expected in 2020.

2.37 Bracknell: A322 A329 Corridor Improvements – update noted. A report would be considered later on the agenda.

2.38 Theale Station Park and Rail Upgrade – update noted.

2.39 Wokingham: Coppid Beech northbound – update noted.

2.40 Windsor: Town Centre Package – update noted. RBWM was reviewing its priorities for the town centre taking account of the emerging hostile vehicle mitigation scheme. The scheme promoter was working to bring the Full Business Case to BLTB in November, although the timescales were tight.

2.41 South Wokingham Distributor Road Eastern Gateway – update noted.

2.43 Wokingham: Barkham Bridge – update noted.

Resolved – That the progress made on schemes previously given programme entry status be noted.

7. Allocation of the remaining Local Growth Funds

A report was considered that recommended allocating the remaining £1.9m of Local Growth Funds (LGF) to an innovation project and two transport projects.

Thames Valley Berkshire LEP had secured £142m LGF through three Growth Deals with central government and only £1.9m remained unallocated. 2019/20 was the penultimate year of the six-year LGF programme and it was therefore necessary to allocate the remaining funds. The proposal was to invest a further £800k in scheme 2.37 Bracknell: A322/A329 Corridor Improvements to take the total LGF allocation to £2.00m; an additional £550k to 2.06 Reading: Green Park Railway Station to take the total to £9.7m; and £500k for a non-transport innovation scheme.

Members discussed each of the schemes in turn. The innovation scheme would unlock £1.65m ERDF to respond to the needs of SMEs in providing flexible business space. BTLB approved the £500k allocated to the scheme.

The A322/A329 improvements would tackle a significant bottleneck in the strategic corridor between the M4 and M3 and the reasons for the additional funding request were outlined. There was a significant amount of development in the corridor which would be supported by the scheme, including growth plans for around 6,400 new dwellings. The enhanced scheme could provide additional capacity improvements of 40% in the peak hours over and above the original scheme. Members discussed the potential risk of cross-boundary working; the possible displacement of congestion elsewhere in the corridor; and whether there were any future plans for bus priority measures. It was confirmed that the scheme was entirely in the control of Bracknell Forest Council and no cross-boundary issues were therefore envisaged. Bracknell Forest Council would closely monitor the impacts in the corridor and wider network, including the Two Bridges roundabout and would consider any improvements in the future although it was not considered likely that a bus lane would be appropriate on the route. BLTB agreed the additional funding for the scheme.

The Green Park Railway Station was a significant scheme to deliver a new station and multi-modal interchange. Members were updated on the recent progress that had been made to close the funding gap that had arisen due to

re-categorisation and subsequent redesign of the station to accommodate the projected higher passenger numbers. A bid had been submitted to the New Stations Fund and discussions had taken place with Network Rail and GWR to review scheme costs. The scheme promoter expressed a high level of confidence that the funding could be secured if the additional LGF contribution was agreed, although BLTB noted that it was not guaranteed. Members discussed the lessons learned which included the challenges arising from changing the delivery method from Network Rail to the local authority and “scope creep” resulting in rising costs. Members commented that the LEP would be making a significant investment of around £35m in rail schemes and emphasised the importance of rail partners working collaboratively to successfully deliver the schemes. The additional funding was then agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the remaining LGF be allocated to three different projects that would contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), including one non-transport project.
- (b) That, of these three projects, 2.37 Bracknell: A322/A329 Corridor Improvements receive a further allocation of £800k LGF, to take the total allocated for this scheme to £2.00m and that 2.06 Reading Green Park Railway Station receive a further allocation of £550k LGF, to take the total allocated for this scheme to £9.700m.

8. Financial Approval for scheme 2.04.4 Wokingham: Arborfield Cross Relief Road

A report was considered that sought approval for scheme 2.04.04 Wokingham: Arborfield Cross Relief Road. Due to the value of the scheme, it had been categorised by the Department for Transport (DfT) as a ‘retained scheme’ and ‘Assurance Framework’ matters were being managed by the DfT. Conditional approval was sought subject to Ministerial approval.

The Arborfield Cross Relief Road would provide relief to the existing A327 through the village of Arborfield and the Arborfield Cross Gyratory to accommodate and reduce the traffic impacts of strategic development at Arborfield Garrison and South of the M4. Members recognised the importance of the scheme in facilitating significant development in the area and asked for clarification about when the DfT would make a decision. A DfT representative confirmed that a recommendation had been put to the Minister and a decision was expected shortly.

After due consideration, the LTB agreed to give financial approval to the scheme, conditional on Ministerial approval.

Resolved – That conditional approval be given to the scheme, for £22,125,824 in 2019/20 and £1,000,000 in 2020/21. The terms of the funding agreement are set out at paragraph 14, step 5 of the report, and subject to the following condition:

That the scheme business case, submitted on 31 May 2019 to the Department for Transport, received Ministerial approval.

9. Financial Approval for scheme 2.31 Slough: Stoke Road Area Regeneration

A report was considered that sought financial approval for scheme 2.31 Slough: Stoke Road Area Regeneration. A total sum of £7,650,000 was requested over two years.

The Stoke Road corridor improvements comprised of sustainable transport infrastructure and highway works to promote the regeneration of six major brownfield sites at Stoke Road and improved interchange and parking at Slough station. The scheme had a high Benefit Cost Ratio of over 4 to 1 and was recommended for full financial approval.

The scheme would open access to the Slough Canal Basin and Members queried whether there was likely to be any local opposition from interested parties. It was noted that engagement had already taken place with Friends of Slough Canal and there was general support for the regenerations projects that would be unlocked by the scheme as they would enhance the area and access to the canal basin. The Stoke Wharf development was a joint venture with Canal & River Trust.

At the conclusion of the discussion the scheme was given financial approval.

Resolved – That scheme 2.31 Slough Stoke Road Area Regeneration be given full financial approval in the sum of £2,500,000 in 2019/20 and £5,150,000 in 2020/21 on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 11 step 5 of the report.

10. Review of Prioritisation Methodology

A report was considered on the prioritisation methodology used to form the “pipeline” of schemes for future funding. A review had been undertaken in light of the March 2019 LEP Assurance Framework 4.0 which set out the LEPs wider governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements.

The current prioritisation methodology had been in place since 2013 and it was good practice to carry out a review even though the system had been recognised to be sound, robust and effective. It was recommended that the structure of the methodology be endorsed, but that some changes be made to the pro-forma used to submit schemes for the long list; to the scoring criteria; and to the arrangements for granting programme entry status to schemes and monitoring their progress. The principle aim of the changes was to strengthen the scoring in relation to deliverability and ensure alignment with WebTAG at an early stage. The independent assessors, Hatch Regeneris had assisted in the review. The Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum had also held an additional meeting in June to give detailed consideration to the methodology.

Members commented that BTLB had invested a significant amount of time when the Body was established to develop the original prioritisation methodology and the overall success of the programme to date had demonstrated that the approach was sound. A Member expressed disappointment that the review had not recommended stronger weighting for sustainable transport. It was responded that long term, sustainable economic growth and contribution to the Strategic Economic Plan were the primary drivers set by Government in the Growth Deals, however, Berkshire had a strong track record in supporting a range of sustainable transport schemes including rail and mass rapid transit schemes. Members recognised the increasingly important role that sustainable transport schemes would play in the future and it was suggested that BLTB could engage with Government to emphasise that this should be a higher priority in future funding streams.

It was agreed that prioritisation methodology as at Appendix 2 and the detailed scoring methodology at Appendix 3 to the report be agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the six factors with their proposed weightings set out in appendix 2 to the report be confirmed.
- (b) That the detailed scoring methodology, including the revised arrangements for assessing Deliverability set out in appendix 3 of the report be adopted.
- (c) That the revised Bid Pro-forma set out in appendix 4 to the report be adopted.
- (d) That all future scheme promoters applying for programme entry status be invited to submit a Full Business Case Development Programme as set out in paragraphs 27-28 of the report.

11. BSTF & BLTB Assurance Framework

A report was considered on the revised Assurance Framework for BLTB and Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum. The document had been reviewed following the Thames Valley Berkshire's adoption of its Assurance Framework to take account of the updated National Assurance Framework for LEPs.

The process had taken place at the same time as the review of the prioritisation methodology. No significant changes had been required to BLTBs Assurance Framework which was set out fully at Appendix B to the report. The revised Assurance Framework was approved.

Resolved – That the BLTB Assurance Framework (Third Revise) as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

12. Heathrow Airport Expansion - proposed consultation 2 response

A report was considered on the public consultation on Heathrow Airport expansion and a recommended position statement in response was set out at Appendix A to the report. The consultation would close on 13th September 2019.

The LEP was participating in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) which would be providing a full response to the airport's proposals. The position statement was intended to set out the general position on Heathrow expansion with more detailed input through HSPG. The position statement highlighted the importance of Western Rail Access to Heathrow and emphasised that it should be an priority to improve connectivity to the existing airport and should not therefore be directly linked to expansion.

The position statement as set out in the appendix to the report was agreed.

Resolved – That the response set out in the appendix to the report be endorsed.

13. TfSE - Proposal to Seek Statutory Status - Formal Response

A report was considered on the formal consultation on the proposal for Transport for the South East to seek statutory status as a sub-national transport body. The proposed response set out in Appendix 2 to the report confirmed BLTBs support for the body being given statutory status.

Councillor Page, who stated that he was the BLTB representative and had been elected as vice-chair of TfSE, provided an update on the current position and it was noted that the Government had decided not to give statutory status to any sub-national bodies at the present time as it would require legislation for which Parliamentary time was not being made available. However, it was important that TfSE continued to work towards that objective and therefore approval for the BLTB formal response was proposed.

Members considered whether to make any further comments on the draft response and it was proposed and agreed to add a reference in the response to Question 2 about the role for TfSE to influence government policy to promote sustainable transport. With this additional comment noted the response was agreed.

Resolved – That the response set out in appendix 2 be endorsed, subject to the addition of a comment about TfSE's potential role in influencing government policy to promote sustainable transport.

14. BLTB Forward Plan

The BLTB Forward Plan which set out the matters to be considered at future meetings was considered and noted.

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Resolved – That the BLTB Forward Plan be noted.

15. Date of Next Meeting - 14th November 2019

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14th November 2019.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.01 pm and closed at 5.43 pm)