

## **Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Thursday, 14th July, 2022.**

<b>Present:-</b>	Councillor Page (Chair)	Reading Borough Council
	Councillor Fishwick	Wokingham Borough Council
	Councillor Haseler	RBWM
	Councillor Nazir	Slough Borough Council
	Councillor Somner	West Berkshire Council
	Stuart Atkinson	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Laura Fitzgerald	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Bob Mountain	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Nigel Nawacki	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Brunel-Walker and Simon Ratcliffe

### **PART 1**

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

#### **2. Election of Chair for 2022/23**

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 Nazir and seconded by Councillor Somner.

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 2022/23 municipal year.

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

#### **3. Election of Vice-Chair for 2022/23**

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.

Laura Fitzgerald was proposed by Bob Mountain and seconded by Stuart Atkinson.

There being no other nominations, Laura Fitzgerald was elected as Vice-Chair for the next year.

**Resolved** – That Laura Fitzgerald be elected as Vice-Chair of BLTB for the 2022/23 municipal year.

**4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th November 2021**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**5. Briefing Note - TVB/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.

**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 that set out the progress of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal schemes and those funded by the Business Rates Retention Pilots (BRRP) of 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the transport element of the Getting Building Fund released in September 2020.

It was noted that all funding was fully allocated. Fourteen projects were still onsite. On a risk basis, BLTB reviewed each of the red/amber rated schemes in turn to monitor progress. A summary of the updates was as follows:

- 2.01 Newbury: King's Road Link Road – work had stopped until planning issues were resolved and it was noted that negotiations were still ongoing with the developer.
- 2.06 Reading Green Park Railway Station – work was nearing completion prior to handing over to the rail industry with the station expected to open late in 2022.
- 2.24 Newbury: Railway Station – the issues with the station building had been resolved and the project was progressing well in line with the revised programme.
- 2.27 Maidenhead Town Centre: Missing Links – the final stage of bridge installation was due on site shortly.
- 2.29 Wokingham: Winnersh Triangle Park & Ride – there had been an issue with water main which was now resolved and work was progressing.

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- 2.31 Slough: Stoke Road Area Regeneration – one element of the scheme on the former Thames Valley University site had been outstanding but completion was expected by December 2022.
- 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Work Phase 1 – Five of the six roundabouts had been completed, however, there had been a delay to the Braywick roundabout which had been redesigned. Work was continuing with the Council to resolve the issues.
- 2.35 Reading: Reading West Station Upgrade – the issues had been resolved and the scheme would shortly move to Amber Green status.
- 2.38 Theale Station Upgrade – the water main issue had been resolved and the footbridge was due to be installed at Christmas with full completion expected in July 2023.
- 2.40 Windsor: Town Centre Package – further work was required to re-tender the scheme in light of increased costs.
- GBF1 Slough: Langley High Street Phase 3 – a re-designed layout had caused delay but it was expected to be complete by the end of 2022 or early 2023.

BLTB discussed the position regarding scheme 2.34 Slough: MRT Phase 2 as set out in paragraphs 16 to 19 of the report. The approved scheme had consisted of two elements – a new mass rapid transit (MRT) and park & ride facility. The MRT was being delivered, however, Slough Borough Council had approached the LEP seeking to re-focus the park & ride element due to anticipated changing demand for the facility arising from changes to planned land use in Slough town centre since the business case had been approved. The Council had proposed repurposing the park & ride site as a low carbon refuelling hub, incorporating electric vehicle charging points. It may also be possible to develop one of the UK's first public hydrogen refuelling facilities capitalising on energy produced by a nearby energy from waste facility.

Work was taking place to consider the revised proposal and assess what it would deliver and the most appropriate funding mechanism. It was proposed that a report on any revised proposal come back to BLTB in November 2022.

BLTB noted the update and discussed various aspects of the emerging proposal. It was commented that whilst the demand patterns may have changed in Slough town centre, improving public transport links to Heathrow remained a key sub-regional priority and was one of the benefits of the original scheme. Queries were raised about the rationale for the potential significant changes to the approved scheme and BLTB therefore requested that:

- The November report would need to demonstrate the evidence for the move away from park & ride and show that the original business case was no longer viable.

- The report should also set out any impacts on the overall business case for the approved MRT scheme so that BLTB could assess the value for money implications.

At the conclusion of the discussion it was agreed that a full report would be provided to the next meeting in November, alongside a revised business case if that was considered appropriate.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the progress be noted on the schemes previously given programme entry status as set out in the report.
- (b) That the proposed changes to scheme 2.34 Slough MRT Phase 2 be noted and that BLTB receive a full report in November 2022.

**7. Evolving Role of BLTB and BSTF**

The Chief Executive of the LEP introduced a report that outlined the way in which the role and function of the Berkshire Local Transport Body could evolve in future.

Consideration of the future role of BTLB was appropriate in view of the Government's review of LEPs and the fact the Local Growth Fund (LGF) had been committed and future funding was moving towards local authorities bidding for infrastructure funds. BLTB had approved almost £173m of capital funds since it had been established in 2013 and it had been acknowledged that the programme had been well managed. However, with the ending of LGF and other programmes capital funding for infrastructure would not be channelled through the LEP in future and BLTB would no longer have a role in making investment decisions.

*(Nigel Nawacki joined the meeting)*

There was still likely to be a role for BLTB and/or the informal Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum (BSTF) to provide a vehicle for sharing best practice, co-ordination and a pan-Berkshire voice on transport issues. However, the formal governance arrangements and assurance structures as they currently existed would not be required. There were residual issues to be resolved, including those discussed under the previous agenda item, therefore a BLTB meeting in November would be convened and at that meeting a decision would be made about whether the BLTB would continue or be merged into the BSTF.

Members recognised the value of a pan-Berkshire group focused on transport and infrastructure issues and commented that cross-boundary working would remain an important priority irrespective of the changing national and regional funding mechanisms. Private sector members commented that if the funding decisions would no longer be made by BLTB it could make it more difficult to

engage the private sector in what could be merely a discussion forum in future. This was acknowledged and would need to be considered in whatever future group or bodies were put in place.

At the conclusion of the discussion the update was noted and it was agreed to reconsider the future structures at the meeting in November 2022.

**Resolved** – That it be agreed to re-convene BTLB in November 2022 and at that meeting to take a decision on whether BLTB needed to continue or whether it could be merged into the activities of the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum.

## **8. Review of Approach to Impact Reports and One-year-on reports for schemes**

BLTB received one-year impact reports for the following schemes:

- Scheme 2.04 – Arborfield Cross Relief Road
- Scheme 2.26 – Wokingham: Winnersh Relief Road Phase 2
- Scheme 2.43 – Wokingham: Barkham Bridge
- Scheme 2.44 – Reading Buses: Completing the Connection

Representatives of the scheme promoters summarised the key points from each of the evaluations. Members welcomed the reports in providing valuable information to demonstrate the value of investments, identify lessons learned and inform future priorities. The LEP Chief Executive commented that the evaluation process had been reviewed and a less prescriptive approach had been trialled for these reviews. The LEPs contract with the consultants who had undertaken the independent reviews had ended and the process was being brought 'in-house'. The requirements for future reporting were set out and assurance was provided that it would continue to seek to demonstrate that value for money had been achieved and lessons learned were captured.

The revised approach was supported and the reports were noted.

**Resolved** – That the revised evaluation process be agreed and reports from scheme promoters be noted.

## **9. BLTB Forward Plan**

The BLTB Forward Plan which set out the matters to be considered at the next meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 was considered and noted.

The LEP Chief Executive gave a comprehensive update on the national 'levelling up' initiatives included the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Each local authority needed to produce an 'investment plan' by August and the LEP was working with the councils across Berkshire. DLUHC would then consider and approve investment plans with the first tranche of £2.6bn funding available over the next three years starting to be allocated. BLTB would receive an update in November.

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**Resolved –** That the BLTB Forward Plan be noted.

**10. Date of Next Meeting - 10th November 2022**

The date of the next meeting was 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 5.01 pm)