

Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Thursday, 13th March, 2014.

Present:-	Members	Authority
	Councillor Page (Chair)	Reading Borough Council
	Steve Capel-Davies (Deputy Chair)	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Councillor Baker	Wokingham Borough Council
	Councillor Brunel-Walker	Bracknell Forest Council
	Melvyn Hale	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Ian Frost	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
	Councillor Munawar	Slough Borough Council
	Councillor Simpson (deputising for Councillor Bale)	West Berkshire Council
	 Deputy Member in Attendance	
	Councillor Harrison	Bracknell Forest Council
	Councillor Turrell (Observer)	Bracknell Forest Council
Apologies for Absence:-	Councillor Bale, Hill, Robert Lynch, Kathy Matthews and Philip von Heydebreck	West Berkshire Council Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

PART 1

15. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2013

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) held on 14th November 2013 be approved as a correct record.

17. Future of the Local Transport Body

Richard Tyndall, TVB LEP, introduced a report setting out options for the future of the BLTB in the light of new guidance from the government concerning the establishment of Growth Deals and the merger of DfT funding into the Local Growth Fund.

The BLTB had been formed in response to a DfT initiative to devolve the control of capital funds for major transport schemes to LEP areas in line with the localism agenda. It was now proposed that transport capital schemes

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would be subject to a further change and be incorporated into the Local Growth Fund, with allocations made within Local Growth Deals which would be determined in response to the Strategic Economic Plans submitted by LEPs. There would be a guaranteed minimum allocation of £14.5m over four years, with any additional award being as a result of a competitive process. However, the Local Growth Fund settlement would be paid to RBWM as the accountable body for the LEP rather than Slough BC as the accountable body for the BLTB.

In preparation for these new arrangements to be introduced, two options were put forward for consideration, together with pros and cons of each:

Option A – Winding up of the BLTB and the transfer of responsibility for the delivery of major transport capital projects to the LEP Executive and Forum.

Option B – Status Quo: the LEP recognises the BLTB as the competent body for prioritisation of schemes for the implementation of major transport capital schemes.

The general view was expressed that the interest and expertise brought to the BLTB by the six unitary authorities was very valuable and provided a wider and effective partnership for assessing schemes and placing them in priority order. To lose these benefits would be a retrograde step and Option B was preferred. Concern was expressed that whilst the new arrangements would enable the BLTB to continue to prioritise between schemes, the final lists would be recommended by the BLTB and confirmed by the LEP instead of being confirmed by the BLTB. However, although the LEP could direct funds towards some schemes and away from others, transport schemes involving alterations or additions to the public highway could only be implemented with the consent and co-operation of the relevant highway authority.

Resolved –

- (a) That the BLTB be not wound up.
- (b) That the status quo be maintained, with the LEP recognising the BLTB as the competent body for prioritisation of schemes and for the implementation of major capital transport schemes.
- (c) Further consideration be given at a future meeting to the final governance mechanisms to be put in place to align LEP funding decisions with BLTB priorities.

18. Implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal

Tim Smith and Richard Tyndall, TVB LEP, introduced a report setting out progress on the development of the Strategic Economic Plan for Thames Valley Berkshire, with particular reference to the schemes included in packages D i, D ii and D iii Transport Infrastructure. A copy of the Strategic Economic Plan, 2015/16 – 2012/21 (Consultation draft) issued in December 2013 was tabled for members.

The Plan comprised a broad evidence base developed in dialogue with businesses, local authorities and other key stakeholders. Around 1,000 businesses had been involved in the very thorough consultation carried out

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and updates and changes were being made ready for submission of the final Plan by the deadline of 31 March 2014. The eight Berkshire MPs were also engaged in the consultations. The Plan included in its vision:

“Our overarching priority is to secure better access to talented people and bright ideas, and to use both more effectively”.

The final submitted plan would conclude with the summary (as shown at page 29 in the consultation draft); the following pages would be separately published as the Implementation Strategy, comprising four high level investment programmes:

- A: Promotion and international positioning of TVB
- B: Enterprise, innovation and business growth
- C: Skills, education and employment
- D: Infrastructure – transport, communications and place-shaping

The report went on to outline the schemes contained in the Transport Infrastructure Packages D i – Enhancing the Strategic Transport Network; D ii – Unlocking Housing Development; D iii – Enhancing Urban Connectivity; D iv – Encouraging Vibrant Town Centres; D v – Positioning TVB for a Digital Future; and D vi – Utilities Provision. A table showed how the BTLB schemes had been incorporated into Programme D. Attention was drawn to the emphasis being placed on the Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH) project, the sustainable travel and rapid transport schemes for the A4 in and adjacent to Slough, a new Thames Crossing east of Reading and a Southern Rail Access to Heathrow.

Resolved - That progress on the development of the Strategic Economic Plan for TVB be noted.

19. Progress on the Prioritised Schemes

Richard Tyndall, TVB LEP, introduced a progress report for each of the eight schemes given Programme Entry status at the meeting of the BLTB in July 2013. The DfT had confirmed that the financial allocation of £14.5m to TVB LEP as part of the emerging Growth Deal was guaranteed, would be exempt from the competition for Local Growth Fund allocations, and was to be divided into four equal payments of £3.625m for each of 2015/16 and the three subsequent financial years.

The report set out details in tabular form for the list of schemes in priority order, showing the estimated scheme cost programmed over the period to 2018/19, subject to the financial allocation year by year and the overall availability of funds. Information was also given about where schemes were included in the Strategic Economic Plan together with the dates projected for completion of the final business case for each scheme and the final approval for each scheme. An appendix for each of the Programme Entry schemes, prepared by the scheme promoters, summarised the up to date position on each.

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Consideration was given to the timing of final decisions on when schemes would proceed, the first of which were likely to be made in July 2014. Scope for delivery of the full programme would be heavily dependant on the scheme promoters ability to attract and allocate funds, to make the BLTB funding go further, Also, the Growth Deal settlement (due in July 2014) may or may not augment funding for the programme.

Members reviewed each scheme in turn, noting the significant steps in the development of each.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That each scheme retain Programme Entry status in the BLTB Prioritised List.

20. BLTB Forward Plan

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan for the period to March 2015. It was noted that an additional item be added for the July 2014 meeting for a further report on the mechanism for final approval of spending on schemes.

Resolved - That the Forward Plan, as amended, be noted.

21. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the BLTB would be held on Thursday 24th July 2014 at 4.00pm at The Centre, Farnham Road, Slough.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 5.00 pm)