

Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Wednesday, 15th July, 2020.

Present:-

Councillor Anderson	Slough Borough Council
Councillor Brunel-Walker	Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clark	RBWM
Councillor Jorgensen	Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Page (in the chair)	Reading Borough Council
Councillor Somner	West Berkshire Council
Stuart Atkinson	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Charles Eales	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Malcolm Kempton	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Bob Mountain	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Matthew Taylor	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

Also present:- Councillor Atkinson (deputy member, BFC)

Apologies for Absence:- Simon Ratcliffe

PART 1

14. Declarations of interest

Agenda item 7 (Minute 20) Financial Approval for Scheme 2.45 – as the report referenced the Western Rail Link to Heathrow, Councillor Jorgensen declared that she worked for British Airways.

Agenda item 10 (Minute 23) Financial Approval for Scheme 2.44 - Councillor Page declared that he was an elected Member of Reading Borough Council which owned Reading Buses.

Agenda item 17 (Minute 30) Proposed Letter of Support for TfSE Proposal to Government – Councillor Page declared that he was the BLTB nominated representative on TfSE and that he was the Vice-Chair of that body.

It was noted that Councillors Clark, Anderson and Jorgensen were elected members of local authorities seeking financial approval for schemes on the agenda, but they did not have disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests and would participate and vote on these matters.

15. Election of Chair 2020/21

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 Brunel-Walker and seconded by Councillor Anderson.

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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 2020/21 municipal year.

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

16. Election of Vice-Chair 2020/21

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.

Bob Mountain was proposed by Charles Eales and seconded by Matthew Taylor.

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

Resolved – That Bob Mountain be elected as Vice-Chair of BLTB for the 2020/21 municipal year.

17. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2020 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 4th June 2020

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) held on 12th March 2020 and the extraordinary meeting held on 4th June 2020 be approved as a correct record.

18. Briefing note – TVBLEP/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.

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

A report was considered on the progress of the Thames Valley Local Growth Deals and Business Rates Retention Pilot funded schemes which had invested a total of £172m between 2015/16 and 2020/21.

The full list of schemes was set out in the appendix to the report and scheme promoters reported any recent updates over and above the information included in the report. The key additional points noted were as follows:

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- 2.05 Newbury: Sandford Park – the western access was unlikely to proceed which would, if confirmed, return £900k to the pot available for allocation to other viable schemes.
- 2.30 TVB Smart City Cluster – the showcase event planned for May 2020 had had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions and it was now hoped to be rescheduled for December 2020.
- 2.35 Reading West Station Upgrade – GWR reported that funding requests to DfT had been accepted in principle.

A verbal update was also provided on the bids submitted by Thames Valley Berkshire LEP as part of various Government initiatives to promote economic growth as part of the recovery from Covid-19. A wide ranging package of schemes had been put forward for a share of the £900m Getting Building Fund of which Berkshire had been allocated £7.5m, the lowest of any LEP in England. The nature of the funding meant that it was focused on schemes that could be delivered quickly and these included skills and employment programmes.

The updates and progress reports were noted.

Resolved – That the progress made on the schemes previously given programme entry status, as set out in the composite report be noted.

20. Financial approval: Scheme 2.45 Langley High Street Widening Phase 2

A report was considered that recommended giving conditional financial approval of £1,033,000 to scheme 2.46 Slough Langley High Street Widening – Phase 2.

Phase 1 of the scheme had been given financial approval at the June 2020 BLTB meeting to enhance the High Street/Meadfield Road Junction. The new business case submission set out the case for investment in the widening of Langley High Street to both the south and north of the junction with Meadfield Road to provide a comprehensive solution to managing all traffic flows through the junction. A third phase was also proposed for future funding and the combined package of measures would deliver a step-change in provision along the Langley High Street corridor, supporting the planned closure of the parallel Hollow Hill Lane as part of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH), as well as enabling development growth across the corridor.

The scheme had a very high Benefit Cost Ratio of 10.8:1 and the Independent Assessor concluded that there was a strong strategic and economic case for the investment. Approval was recommended, subject to three conditions relating to reaching agreement with Langley Memorial Ground Trustees to acquire land; producing a revised assessment of costs; and receiving confirmation from the Council on their funding contribution and commitment to cover any cost overruns. Slough Borough Council representatives confirmed that it expected these conditions would be met and also commented that the scheme would provide opportunities to enhance public transport links in the

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corridor, which included a Crossrail station, and would seek to tackle noise and air quality issues.

After due consideration it was agreed to give conditional financial approval to the scheme on the terms set out in the report.

Resolved – That scheme 2.46 Slough Langley High Widening Phase 2 be given conditional financial approval in the sum of £1,033,000 in 2020/21 on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 14 step 5 of the report, subject to meeting the following conditions:

- (a) Slough Borough Council (SBC) to demonstrate positive discussions with the Langley Memorial Ground Trustees that result in an outline agreement for the acquisition of the land required to develop the scheme;
- (b) Production of a revised, and more robust, assessment of scheme costs, post-preliminary scheme design; and,
- (c) Formal confirmation (e.g. S151 Officer letter) to cover SBC funding allocation, along with confirmation that SBC will cover any potential cost overruns.

These conditions should be met at the earliest feasible date, but no later than 31st August 2020.

21. Financial Approval for 2.29 Winnersh Triangle Park & Ride - Addendum 2 Access, Turning Head and Urban Realm

A report was considered that recommended giving financial approval for £675,000 to Addendum 2, Access, Turning Head and Urban Realm Improvements to scheme 2.29 Wokingham: Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride.

The original scheme to redevelop the transport links at Winnersh Triangle was approved in March 2019 and a number of enhancements had since been proposed. Addendum 1 (Car Park enhancements) was approved by the BLTB in June 2020. Wokingham Borough Council, with the support of Frasers Property (the owners of the adjacent business park), were now seeking to promote an additional access and public urban realm scheme around the Winnersh Triangle station forecourt. This second addendum submission would bring the total LGF awarded for the three schemes to £4,240,444.

The scheme would allow improved access for buses, taxis and passenger drop-off by way of a new fourth arm directly off Wharfedale Road/A329(M) slip road roundabout; remove the existing right turn bus lane on Wharfedale Road; and provide an enhanced station forecourt turning head to be used by the Park and Ride buses, taxis and all passenger drop-off. The Independent Assessor had concluded that Addendum 2 could be delivered within the appropriate timescales and was a good strategic fit. The scheme had a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.9:1 and full financial approval was recommended.

Members asked a number of questions about whether disabled access and cycling facilities could be further enhanced. Frasers Property responded by explaining the practical considerations of such measures and BLTB noted that the scheme proposed had a limited budget but it could be possible for further enhancements to be delivered in the future if additional funding could be identified.

At the conclusion of the discussion the BLTB agreed to give the scheme full financial approval on the terms set out in the report.

Resolved – That Addendum 2 Access, Turning Head and Urban Realm Improvements for scheme 2.29 Wokingham: Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride be given full financial approval in the sum of £675,000 Local Growth Funds in 2020/21. This was on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 11 step 5 of the report.

22. Financial Approval Scheme 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1 (reprofiled)

A report was considered that recommended giving financial approval of £4,213,000 from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and £1,068,000 from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP) to scheme 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1, re-profiled.

The scheme had originally been submitted for financial approval and conditionally approved by BLTB in January 2019. Since then, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead had been required to amend its Local Plan, resulting in a reconfiguration of development site allocations. This had resulted in necessary amendments to the original scheme proposals, as well as revisions to the dependent development 'unlocked' by the scheme.

The revised scheme included capacity improvements at six key junctions around Maidenhead to provide congestion relief associated with background growth in traffic, alongside trips generated by specific residential and commercial development sites within the town centre that had been allocated within the Local Plan. The improvements to the junctions detailed in the report would include a range of measures including carriageway widening, signalisation, and junction reconfiguration, with some associated improvements to cycling provision. The Independent Assessor concluded that the case for the scheme was strong and the overall Benefit Cost Ratio was very high at 17:1. Full financial approval was recommended and agreed on the terms set out in the report.

Resolved – That scheme 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1 be given re-profiled financial approval in the sum of £4,213,000 from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and £1,068,000 from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP) funds in 2020/21 on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 12 step 5 of the report.

23. Financial approval: Scheme 2.44 Reading Buses Completing the Connection

A report was considered that recommendation giving conditional financial approval for £1,541, 243 to scheme 2.44: Reading Buses Completing the Connection.

The project aimed to provide a complete travel picture to existing and prospective public transport customers by enabling bus operators across Berkshire to securely store, manage and make available live bus time predictions to customers via the real time information (RTI) system; and to be scalable, by allowing, for example, the subsequent addition of new or upgraded screens at transport interchanges, bus stops and on-board buses.

It was anticipated to include:

- A new software platform and applications to underpin the RTI system using open data principles to calculate and disseminate to customers live departure information for multiple transport operators;
- Installation of audio-visual information screens and speakers on 51 local buses, to inform and help all passengers and specifically assist customers with aural or visual impairments;
- Installation of three large-format bus departure screens at two key railway stations, showing live departure information derived from the RTI system for multiple operators' bus and coach services; and
- Development of an online travel shop, allowing customers to purchase and receive tickets either on their mobile or in smartcard format.

The Independent Assessor concluded that there was a strong business case and the Benefit Cost Ratio was 3:1 over five years and 4:1 over ten years. The scheme had been given programme entry status in March 2020 and at this meeting Members had requested clarification on issues including State Aid compliance and access to other operators. In relation to State Aid it was confirmed that external legal advice had been sought and it was considered to be compliant.

Members were supportive of the aims of the scheme but some concerns were expressed that from the information provided it did not appear that other operators had been engaged. The scheme promoter confirmed that other operators could access the system and benefit from new information screens on buses, subject to them contributing to the running costs. Contact had been made with some other bus operators and it was highlighted that Reading Buses was the largest operator across Berkshire therefore passengers across the area would benefit from the investment.

Other questions raised included whether the online travel shop would be integrated with park and ride tickets and those of other operators. The scheme promoter confirmed that there was scope to sell other tickets in the travel shop.

Following confirmation that the scheme would provide equitable and open access to other providers and that the integrated ticketing would be available from the travel shop, BLTB agreed to give the scheme conditional financial approval on the terms set out in the report.

Resolved – That Reading Buses Completing the Connection project be given full financial approval in the sum of £1,541,243 Local Growth Funds in 2020/21. This was on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 11 step 5 of the report, subject to meeting the following condition:

(a) Agreement to provision of ongoing operating costs in relation to the investment to demonstrate compliance with state aid requirements. Details will be agreed with input from a solicitor with state aid expertise and added to the grant letter.

24. Financial approval: Scheme 2.40: Windsor Town Centre Package

A report was considered that recommended giving financial approval of £1,562,500 to scheme 2.40 Windsor Town Centre Package.

The proposed scheme would invest in public realm enhancements within proximity of Windsor Castle and wider, small-scale, wayfinding interventions, both of which aimed to increase visitor expenditure within the town. The public realm enhancements would be on Castle Hill and St. Alban's Street, directly outside the visitor entrance to Windsor Castle. The scheme support local businesses to improve their offer (e.g. through increased use of street cafes), as well as enhancing the look and feel of the area and improve the overall visitor experience.

The Independent Assessor had concluded that the business case was strong, although the risks would need to be carefully managed. The scheme had a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.3:1. BLTB recognised importance of maximising the economic opportunities from tourism as part of the recovery from Covid-19. It was agreed that the scheme be given full financial approval on the terms set out in the report.

Resolved – That scheme 2.40 Windsor Town centre package be given full financial approval in the sum of £1,562,500 Local Growth Funds in 2020/21. This is on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 11 step 5 below.

25. 2.09.2 Slough: A4 Cycle Route NCN422 - One Year Evaluation Report

In accordance with the requirement for BTLB to consider one and five year impact reports on completed schemes, a report was presented on the one-year impact report for scheme 2.09.1 Slough: A4 Cycle Route NCN422. The Appendices to the report comprised of the scheme promoter's impact report and review by the Independent Assessor.

The A4 Cycle Route was designed to improve the basic cycling infrastructure along the given stretch, to encourage an increase in cycling levels and to improved road safety for all road users, but primarily cyclists. The funded scheme was part of a wider ambition to improve cycling provision along the route. The scheme had been delivered close to budget and some delays had been experienced.

The Independent Assessor had concluded that the one-year impact report represented a well-constructed and balanced document that met many of requirements for a one-year impact report, relating to what and how the scheme has been delivered. However, it had limitations in the quantified assessment of the outcomes and it was unclear whether any significant modal shift had resulted and whether private car trips had reduced as a result of the scheme. Whilst Members recognised that some of the benefits were hard to accurately measure and quantify it was considered to be important that impact reports collect the necessary quantitative data needed to properly evaluate the schemes. A number of learning points as set out in the report were highlighted and recognised.

BLTB agreed to note the reports of the scheme promoter and Independent Assessor.

Resolved – That the reports from the scheme promoter and the Independent Assessor be noted.

26. 2.22 Slough: Burnham Station Access - One Year Evaluation Report

A report was considered on the one-year impact evaluation of scheme 2.22 Slough: Burnham Station Access. The appendices included the reports from the scheme promoter and the Independent Assessor.

The scheme promoters reports was considered to be a "...well constructed and balanced" document that met many of the requirements for a one-year assessment. The scheme had been delivered close to budget and a positive impacts had been identified in terms of traffic management and enhanced access to the station by a variety of modes. However, there were some limitations to the assessment and the report stated that there was a requirement to carry out traffic counts and journey time surveys, car parking usage counts, cycle parking/docking station usage, satisfaction surveys and reported crime levels to be able to more fully evaluate the scheme against its original objectives. A learning point was noted that in future there be closer alignment to monitoring and evaluation plan that were set out in the full business case to ensure the metrics were in place to quantify the evidence of the impacts of schemes.

It was agreed that the reports be noted.

Resolved – That the reports from the scheme promoter and the Independent Assessor be noted.

27. Requested scheme updates following June BLTB meeting

As had been agreed by BLTB at the meeting held on 4th June 2020, a report was received that updated on three projects approved:

- 2.24 Newbury railway station upgrade;
- 2.38 Theale railway station upgrade and
- 2.13 Thames Valley Park and Ride/ Wokingham Borough Council Bus Service Tender.

Members noted the progress that had been made in meeting the conditions attached to the approval of each scheme and asked a number of questions. It was noted that the GWR bid to DfT for funding for Newbury station had now been approved and that was welcomed by BLTB. A draft of the demand analysis study for the business start up units had been considered by the scheme promoters and it was expected the findings would be provided to TVB LEP by the beginning of August. The updates were noted.

Resolved – That the following update reports from the scheme promoters be noted.

28. Thames Valley Berkshire - Call for bids announce July 2020

A report was considered that set out the requirements to create a new call for bids in order to meet anticipated additional funding being made available for Berkshire. The amount, and source, of funding was yet to be confirmed, but it was considered important to ensure a strong pipeline of schemes was in place to be ready for future funding opportunities.

The report detailed arrangements for assessing and prioritising potential projects based upon the changes to the Prioritisation Methodology approved in July 2019 and proposed an update to the existing methodology in light of the current Covid-19 green recovery agenda by increasing the weighting of “investing in natural capital” from 10% to 15%. The proposed timetable was stated in paragraph 17 of the report and the aim was for BLTB to approve a new prioritised list of scheme as the next meeting in November 2020.

Members commented that the prioritisation methodology had served BLTB well since it was first agreed and the process was considered to be robust. The increased weighting to support the green recovery agenda was welcomed and agreed. The new call for bids as set out in the appendices to the report was approved.

Resolved – That a new call for bids be approved as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 to the report and as per the updated LGF prioritisation methodology.

29. Update to the BLTB re Business Rate Retention Pilot monies - Revenue Support

The BLTB received an update on the latest Business Rate Retention Pilot (BRRP) Revenue Support monies allocated to be spent on infrastructure project development within the six Berkshire local authorities.

Each authority had been allocated £100,000 and 56% of the funds provided had been spent as at June 2020. A summary of the activity in each area was detailed in the report. There was ongoing discussions with local authority officers and a commitment to spend the funding committed. The report was noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That Transport officers supply regular updates to the LEP with latest spend levels and developments on projects.

30. Proposed BLTB letter of support for TfSE Proposal to Government

A report was considered that sought approval to send a letter support for Transport for the South East's (TfSE) proposal to government for statutory status, both in terms of the strategic and economic case and the specific powers and functions TfSE has requested.

All six of the Berkshire Local Authorities, as constituent authorities, had already signed and submitted letters of consent regarding the proposal to government to TfSE, a letter of support from the Berkshire Local Transport Body would further endorse Berkshire's support for the vision and objectives of the emerging sub-national transport body. Subject to the consent of all constituent authorities, the TfSE Shadow Partnership Board was expected to submit it's final proposal to Government in September 2020 along with the final version of the transport strategy.

BLTB agreed to submit the letter as at Appendix A to the report.

Resolved – That the letter of support for Transport for the South East (TfSE) and their Proposal to government be endorsed.

31. BLTB Forward Plan 2020/21

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

Resolved – That the BLTB Forward Plan be noted.

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32. Date of next meeting: Thursday 12th November 2020, 4pm

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as Thursday 12th November 2020 at 4pm.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 6.02 pm)