

Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th November, 2022.

Present:-

Councillor Page (Chair)	Reading Borough Council
Councillor Brunel-Walker	Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Fishwick	Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Haseler	RBWM
Councillor Nazir	Slough Borough Council
Councillor Somner	West Berkshire Council
Stuart Atkinson	Berkshire LEP
Laura Fitzgerald	Berkshire LEP
Nigel Nawacki	Berkshire LEP

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

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

11. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

12. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th July 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body held on 14th July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

13. Briefing Note - TVB/BLTB 'How We Work'

Members noted a briefing note that summarised the process by which 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.

14. 2.34 Slough: MRT Phase 2 & Slough Energy Hub Schemes

The Berkshire LEP Chief Executive introduced a report on the park and ride element of Phase 2 of the Slough MRT scheme and the conclusion of work by consultants on behalf of the LEP and Slough Borough Council, on an alternative proposal for an Energy Hub on the site.

The background to the scheme was summarised. It was noted there had been two elements, an MRT scheme and park & ride. The MRT scheme was close to completion, however, it had become clear over the past two years that the park & ride element was not viable, partly due to changing

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circumstances including Heathrow airport expansion not proceeding at this time and similarly regeneration plans for Slough town centre being delayed. An alternative option of developing an electric vehicle and hydrogen hub was assessed and a summary of the conclusions were explained.

The overall position was that there was a potentially good scheme with a case for an energy hub but that the EV element should be able to be delivered by the market and that the hydrogen hub element carried significant risks in relation to timing and the use of public funds. There were also planning policy issues for the site, which was in the green belt. It was therefore recommended that the c. £5m did not continue to be allocated to the scheme and the BLTB should consider other ways to utilise the funding. After due consideration, this recommendation was agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report on the viability of the park and ride element of the 2.34 Slough MRT Phase 2 project and associated reduced funding allocation be noted and that it be agreed that this element of the scheme not be proceeded with.
- (b) That the report on the assessment of an EV and Hydrogen Hub carried out by UK Power Network Services be noted.
- (c) That it be agreed that the c.£5m previously allocated to the park and ride scheme be withdrawn, noting that the cost of the UK Power Network Services work and development costs for the park and ride needed to be included within the overall project costs.

15. Berkshire Capital Programme Update

The Berkshire LEP Chief Executive introduced a report that updated BLTB on the progress of the schemes funded by Berkshire Local Growth Fund (LGF) deals, Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP) and the transport element of the Getting Building Fund (GBF).

It was noted that there was now a very limited window to utilise all of the funding allocated to Berkshire and the priority was to maximise the available funds. Any underspends would therefore need to be clarified by the end of November to inform investment decisions. There were two transport projects with a red risk score:

- Scheme 2.34 Slough MRT phase 2 (as discussed earlier in the meeting); and
- Scheme 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1.

Members noted the current underspend on LGF of £16,395 from projects within the LEP skills and business programmes and the underspend associated with Slough MRT project as discussed earlier in the meeting. BLTB was advised of the need to reallocate the £16,395 underspend from

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LGF to BRRP in order for these funds to be included this in discussions regarding how they might be used at the Berkshire Strategic Transport Members Forum. This was approved.

BLTB then reviewed each of the amber risk rated projects and scheme promoters provided updates which were noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made on the schemes previously given programme entry status, as set out in the summary report, be noted.
- (b) That the reallocation of £16,395 LGF to BRRP for scheme 2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1 outlined in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the report, to remove the current underspend in LGF, noted at paragraph 2, be approved.
- (c) That the Berkshire Strategic Transport Members Forum be asked to consider possible options for reallocating the remaining funds.

16. One Year Evaluation Reports

BLTB received four one year evaluation reports under the revised evaluation approach agreed in July 2022.

(Nigel Nawacki joined the meeting)

Berkshire LEP and scheme promoters summarised the key findings from each of the evaluations which were noted:

- Scheme 2.09.1 – National Cycle Network 422 – the scheme had been delivered on time and budget. The scheme was aligned to LEP priorities and was considered to have delivered positive outcomes with improved infrastructure for cyclists. The impacts of the Covid pandemic did make the recording of cycling flows difficult to assess.
- Scheme 2.13 – Wokingham Thames Valley Park & Ride – the scheme was delivered successfully, although the Covid delays had resulted in the project going over budget. The lessons learned were set out and future extension opportunities were noted.
- Scheme 2.28 – Bracknell A3095 Corridor – the scheme was delivered 3 months earlier than had been planned due to reduced traffic volumes during Covid. There was an overspend of circa £2m which had been met by Bracknell Forest Council. The scheme had delivered significant benefits in terms of increased capacity and reduced congestion and the initial assessment was that the project had been very successful.

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- Scheme 2.47 – Bracknell Town ‘The Deck’ – the LEP funding was for the demolition of the former Bentalls retail unit to facilitate the proposed Deck scheme at the Lexicon in Bracknell town centre. The funding represented circa 4% of the total project costs. The scheme was different to transport schemes in that the impacts would be dependent on the future regeneration of the town centre. The development of the Deck had been delayed due to Covid and wider economic factors but it was hoped positive news would be announced soon.

The reports were noted.

Resolved – That the one year evaluation reports from the scheme promoter and the LEP conclusions for the following schemes be noted:

- Scheme 2.09.1 – National Cycle Network 422
- Scheme 2.13 – Wokingham Thames Valley Park & Ride
- Scheme 2.28 – Bracknell A3095 Corridor
- Scheme 2.47 – Bracknell Town ‘The Deck’

17. Transport for the South East

A report was considered that recommended approval of the annual subscription to Transport for the South East (TfSE) for 2022/23.

Councillor Page stated that he was the BLTB representative on the TfSE Partnership Board.

The subscriptions renewal would remain £58,000 for the year, to be split evenly across the six Berkshire authorities. In previous years Slough Borough Council (the BLTB accountable body), had collected the contributions and paid East Sussex County Council (the TfSE accountable body). However, for 2022/23 it has been agreed that TfSE would invoice each Berkshire authority individually for their subscriptions and they would pay directly. Councillor Page reminded members that any authority could choose to take out an individual subscription to TfSE rather than through the collective Berkshire agreement. BLTB agreed the recommended collective subscription renewal for 2022/23 and the revised payment arrangements. They also noted that subscription rates for 2023/24 were to remain at the same level and agreed in principle to support ongoing membership and payment of these fees, subject to individual authority’s budget setting arrangements.

BLTB was updated on the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which had been presented to the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum in July 2022. Berkshire LEP had submitted a response to the SIP consultation which was included as appendix 5 to the report and this was noted. It was envisaged that the BLTB would be invited to formally approve the draft final version of the SIP at the next meeting on 9th March 2023.

Resolved –

- (a) That a renewed annual BLTB subscription of £58,000 for TfSE to cover the period 2022/23 be agreed, with the amount to be split 6 ways between the constituent authorities and to agree in principle, subject to individual authorities budget setting processes, that a similar payment be made in 2023/24.
- (b) To receive a report of the final draft of the SIP for formal approval at the next meeting of the BLTB.

18. BLTB Forward Plan

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

Resolved – That the BLTB Forward Plan be noted.

19. Date of Next Meeting - 9th March 2023

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 9th March 2023.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 4.38 pm)