

Berkshire Local Transport Body – Meeting held on Thursday, 15th July, 2021.

Present:-

Councillor Brunel-Walker	Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Clark	RBWM
Councillor Jorgensen	Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Page	Reading Borough Council
Councillor Swindlehurst (deputy)	Slough Borough 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
Simon Ratcliffe	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

Also present:- Adele Taylor – RBWM (LEP Accountable Body S151)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Somner and Malcolm Kempton

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Councillors Brunel-Walker and Swindlehurst 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.

2. Election of Chair for 2021/22

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 Swindlehurst and seconded by Councillor Brunel-Walker.

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 2021/22 municipal year.

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

3. Election of Vice-Chair for 2021/22

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.

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Bob Mountain was proposed by Councillor Page and seconded by Simon Ratcliffe.

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

Resolved – That Bob Mountain be elected as Vice-Chair of BLTB for the 2021/22 municipal year.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body held on 11th March 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 on the progress of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal schemes.

The overall programme totalled £174.1m which comprised £135.9m of Local Growth Fund (LGF) Deal funding; £36m of Business Rates Retention Pilot in 2018/19 and 2019/20; and £2.1m from the Getting Building Fund for two transport schemes. In relation to the GBF funding it was noted that the Slough Langley High Street Phase 3 which had now received full financial approval as the conditions agreed by BLTB in November 2020 had been met. The use of the remaining £450,000 would be considered in a report later on the agenda.

Members had previously requested a more detailed breakdown of the types of schemes in Table 3 of the report to clarify the spend on sustainable transport schemes. A more detailed table was tabled which showed that £6.9m of LGF had been invested directly into cycle projects. It was noted that several other schemes included improvements to sustainable transport modes. The detailed breakdown would be included in future reports.

BLTB reviewed each of the uncompleted schemes and noted as follows:

2.01 Newbury: Kings Road Link Road – the completion date had been delayed due to planning issues and was now due to be December 2021.

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2.05 Newbury: Sandford Park – the scheme was ahead of schedule and was expected to be completed by late August 2021.

2.06 Reading: Green Park Railway Station – construction was due to be completed by October 2021 but it wasn't expected to open to the public until 2022 due to Network Rail processes. The scheme promoter would continue to discuss these directly with rail partners to open the station as soon as possible.

2.16 Maidenhead Station Access – update noted. The scheme was rated 'green' and was due to be completed in August 2021.

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

2.24 Newbury: Railway Station improvements – there had been some delays but good progress was now being made, including that work on the northern cycle hub was underway. A planning application had been submitted for the business units.

2.27 Maidenhead Town Centre: Missing Links – the scheme was expected to be completed in October 2021.

2.29 Wokingham: Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride – some delays had been experienced due to a change of contractor, however, it was now due for completion in January 2022.

2.31 Slough: Stoke Road Area Regeneration – work on the station forecourt had commenced earlier in the week and other detailed work had taken place with completion due by March 2022.

2.32 Maidenhead: Housing Sites Enabling Works Phase 1 – completion was expected by November 2021.

2.35 Reading West Station Upgrade – the programme was on track.

2.36 Wokingham: Coppid Beach Park and Ride – update noted.

2.37 Bracknell: A322 A329 Corridor Improvements – update noted.

2.38 Theale Station Park and Ride Upgrade – an agreement had been reached with Thames Water on an outstanding issue and progress was being made.

2.40 Windsor: Town Centre Package – completion was due by December 2021.

2.45 Slough Langley High Street Phase 1 – the scheme was on track.

BRRP Scheme: 2.34 Slough MRT Phase 2 (BRRP) – the scheme promoter stated that some issues had arisen with the original plans for the park and ride

element of the scheme and they were in discussions with the LEP about potential alternative proposals. The LEP would work with SBC and come back to BLTB with a revised business case.

GBF Scheme: Slough Langley High Street Phase 3 – completion had been delayed but was still expected to begin the GBF requirements.

A Member asked for assurance that the recent Section 114 Notice issued by Slough Borough Council not impact on their funding contributions to schemes in the programme. The SBC Officer confirmed that the capital programme had been reviewed and funding for schemes in the programme had been retained. The Section 151 Officer of RBWM (the LEP accountable body) provided assurance that there was regular dialogue between Section 151 Officers with Slough BC to monitor the position.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted.

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

7. Financial Approval: Scheme 2.37 Bracknell A322/A329 Corridor Improvements: Birch Hill Junction Upgrade

A report was considered that recommended giving financial approval of £450,000 of additional Getting Building Fund (GBF) funding to scheme 2.37 Bracknell: A322 A329 Corridor Improvements for Birch Hill Junction Upgrade.

BLTB had approved the allocation of funding for this part of the scheme in March 2021. The £450,000 had been returned to the funding pot following a reassessment of a previously approved skills project and as GBF projects needed to be fully delivered by 31st March 2022 the funding needed to be allocated quickly to a scheme that could be delivered within the required timescale.

The project would deliver upgrades to signalling equipment at the Birch Hill Junction and the scheme represented a relatively small-scale investment in the replacement of obsolete, and failing, signalling technology at the junction to improve resilience in the strategically important transport corridor. The scheme was an increment to the already approved Local Growth Fund Bracknell project. The additional GBF would take the total funding allocation for the scheme to £850,000. A full business case had been submitted and considered by the LEP's Independent Assessor. The scheme had a BCR of 2.33 representing High value for money and was recommended for full financial approval.

Members considered the report and asked whether the scheme promoter was confident it could be delivered by the end of March 2022 deadline. In response, representatives from Bracknell Forest Council confirmed they were ready to mobilise quickly if approval was given. After due consideration, the recommendation to provide the additional funding was approved.

Resolved – That scheme 2.37 Bracknell: A322/A329 Corridor Improvements be given full financial approval for an additional sum of £450,000 in 2021/22 for the Birch Hill Junction Upgrade on the terms of the funding agreement set out at paragraph 11 step 5 of the report. This brought the total funding for the project to £850,000.

8. Final update on One Year Scheme Evaluations

Members received an update to previous reports given at the November 2020 and March 2021 meetings regarding the One Year Scheme Evaluations that were due.

It was a requirement under section 19 of the agreed BLTB Assurance Framework process that: *“The scheme promoter will publish one- and five-year impact reports post scheme opening. These reports will be reviewed by the independent assessor and reported to the BLTB.”*

The continuing impact of Covid-19 had meant that the gathering appropriate and robust data for scheme assessments and evaluations had proved difficult. However, with the expectation of a continued gradual lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, it was anticipated that the ability for scheme promoters to gather appropriate data for scheme assessments and evaluations would now improve.

In total, six schemes were now due for evaluation:

- Scheme 2.04 – Wokingham: Arborfield Relief Road
- Scheme 2.09.1 - Sustainable Transport NCN 422
- Scheme 2.21 – Slough: Langley Station Access
- Scheme 2.10 - Slough: A322 Improvements
- Scheme 2.11 and 2.12 - Reading: Phase 1 & 2 South Reading MRT*
- Scheme 2.15 - Bracknell: Martin’s Heron roundabout

Department for Transport data indicated that nationally motor vehicles usage for the end of June was at 98% of pre pandemic levels. It was therefore anticipated that the evaluation reports due would be presented to BLTB at the meeting in November 2021.

Resolved – That the update be noted and that reports from the scheme promoters would be produced at the November 2021 BLTB meeting.

9. BLTB Forward Plan

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.

10. Date of Next Meeting - 11th November 2021

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 11th November 2021.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 4.47 pm)