

TRANSPORT EAST FORUM

Via Teams

10:00 – 11:45

Friday 20th October 2023

1	Welcome and apologies <i>Cllr Graham Plant, Vice Chair</i>	10:00
2	Minutes from last meeting <i>Cllr Graham Plant, Vice Chair</i>	10:05
3	Department for Transport Update <i>Dan Taylor, Deputy Director, Regional Partnerships and Delivery, Regions, Cities and Devolution, Roads and Local Group, DfT (verbal update)</i>	10:10
4	Investment Programme and Funding Update <i>Andrew Summers, Chief Executive, Transport East (paper attached)</i>	10:15
5	Strategy Hub Report and Presentation: Rural Mobility <i>Dr Scott Copsey, Smart Mobility Research Unit Director and Esme Yuill, Head of External Affairs (paper attached / presentation)</i>	10:30
6	Rail Plan for the East Update <i>Andrew Summers, Transport East & Sarah Jane Crawford, Principal Programme Sponsor, Anglia Route, NR (presentation)</i>	11:15
7	Communications Update <i>Esme Yuill, Head of External Affairs, Transport East</i>	11:25
8	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Programme update <i>(paper attached for information)</i> • Business Plan 2024/25 'Special Forum Meeting' December 2023 	11:35

**Transport East Forum
Wednesday 21st June 2023,
Via Teams**

Core Members		TESOG Officers		Observers	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chair)	Essex County Council	Andrew Summers	Transport East	Andy Rhind	DfT
Cllr Graham Plant	Norfolk County Council	Esme Yuill	Transport East	David Allfrey	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Suffolk County Council	Rebecca Rangi	Transport East	Thomas Lawman	National Highways
Cllr Tom Cunningham	Essex County Council	Suzanne Buck	Transport East	Mark Lambert	National Highways
Cllr Tim Adams	Norfolk District Council Rep	Ashley Lawson	Transport East	Ian Parkes	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Gabriella Spray	Essex District County Rep	Sharon Payne	Transport East	Andrew Cook	Suffolk County Council
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chambers of Commerce	Jo Hazell-Edwards	Transport East	Amie Lucas	Essex County Council
		Mark Lucas	UK Innovation Corridor	Richard Leonard	National Highways
		Alastair Southgate	Essex County Council	Simon Chapman	DfT
		Karen Chapman	Suffolk Growth Partnership		
		Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council		
		Graeme Mateer	Suffolk County Council		
		Mat Kiely	Thurrock Borough Council		
		Richard Doleman	Norfolk County Council		
		James Bradley	Network Rail		
		Neil Hoskins	Southend City Council		
		David Glason	Great Yarmouth District Council		
		Louise Flavell	Essex District Rep		

Apologies

Cllr Kevin Buck	Southend City Council
Cllr Ben Maney	Thurrock Borough Council
Suffolk District Rep	To be elected

<p>1 Welcome and apologies, and Declaration of Interest Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chair of Transport East</p> <p>Cllr Bentley thanked Cllr Plant and the team at Great Yarmouth Council for hosting the site visits and meeting today.</p> <p>Minutes approved from March 2023. Chair welcomed new Forum members.</p>	Action
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2. Transport East Business and Governance Update

Andrew Summers provided a summary of key activities over the last 3 months within Transport East (paper attached below)



20230621 Business
and Governance Updat

Key points:

- Transport East confirmed Cllr Plant as vice chair, extending thanks to previous vice chair Cllr Martin Wilby who has stepped down.
- The TE Business Unit will be conducting a review of TE Forum governance arrangements over next 3 to 6 months.
- Cllr Bentley notes his thanks to the partnership for the completion of the Transport Strategy and acknowledged receipt of letter from Minister Richard Holden confirming DfT will now pay due regard to it in future national policy.
- TE business plan is currently awaiting confirmation of funding from DfT. Cllr Bentley proposed letter to secretary of state regarding this delay.
- TE Annual Report 2022 /23 endorsed.



Annual Report.pdf


3 National Highways Roads Investment Strategy

Richard Leonard, Head of Network Development - Customer, Strategy and Communications, National Highways presented on the SRN Initial Report.

Presentation below and key points were:

- Cllr Bentley noted that Transport East region should be more prominently represented in the proposed documentation, given the need for investment and historic underinvestment. The proposed road hierarchy does not include major routes in the East.

ACTION: Transport East secretariat to send March 2023 Strategic Advice Note to new members

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum members echoed Chair comments and requests more recommendations to support infrastructure investment in the TE region to address imbalance and lack of provision for the East to ensure we continue to maximise our significant contribution to the UK economy. • It was acknowledged the consultation process is about framing the investment and should be used to emphasise the voice for the East. • Six strategic objectives set out at beginning of RIS resetting process, and TE were encouraged to frame responses within that context. • TE have already endorsed a strategic advice note to government on RIS3 and this will inform our response consultation response. It was that MPs will be engaged in the Transport East representations on RIS3. 	<p>ACTION: Chair to write to Secretary of State regarding investment in the East.</p> <p>ACTION: Officers to prepare TE response to the consultation and share with Members for endorsement in late June prior to submission.</p> <p>ACTION: Officers to prepare briefing material for MPs on RIS3</p>
<p>4. Rail Update</p> <p>Andrew Summers presented the latest developments in the proposed GBR Wider Southeast Rail Partnership and asked members for endorsement which was confirmed. (See below)</p>  <p>20230621Rail Update_.pdf</p> <p>Discussion took place on Ely/Haughley Junctions with key points from Members below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread support for both schemes. Acknowledged that Haughley is a smaller project than Ely but vital for rail movements and should be progressed. • Network Rail confirmed the two schemes in isolation don't deliver all the benefits. Both schemes are therefore required. • Members supported the 'Keeping Trade on Track; document jointly produced by Transport East and England's Economic Heartland. It was noted that Ely Junction has wider benefits for Thames ports and this needs to be strengthened in communications. 	
<p>5. AOB</p> <p>Update papers provided for information only in meeting pack.</p> <p>Communications Update</p>	



Comms slide
forum.pdf

Technical Work Programme Update



2023 06 21 Forum
Technical Programme

Comments included:

- TE's communication report set out significant progress in reaching our audiences and partners. We are able to set out our case for investment and evidence to a wider range of audiences, for example demonstrated by our huge uplift in online media following.
- TE will host a Rural-focused Forum meeting on 21st July 2023 to 'deep-dive' into the Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence work being led by the team.
- The next Forum meeting is set for 20th October.

No Further Business Recorded.

Transport East Forum

Date: 20 October 2023
Item: Investment Programme and Funding Update
Report by: Andrew Summers, Chief Executive, Transport East
Contact: Andrew.Summers@suffolk.gov.uk

Purpose

This report provides an update on:

- 1) The government's publication of 'Network North' and implications for Transport East
- 2) Transport East Business Plan Funding 2023/24

Recommendations

Forum members are asked to note the contents and agree the next steps.

1. Context

- 1.1 On 4th October, the Government published ['Network North: Transforming British Transport'](#), following the cancellation of the High Speed 2 (HS2) Northern section between Birmingham and Manchester.
- 1.2 'Network North' is a proposed programme of investment to be delivered across England. It includes a number of Transport East's priorities set out in our [Strategic Investment Programme](#) and submitted as formal advice to the Secretary of State as in our role as the Single Voice for transport in our region.

2. Network North: Transport East region investment

Strategic Rail

- 2.1 With regards to Transport East's **rail** priorities, the 'Network North' announcement included both **Ely** and **Haughley** rail junctions:

- *Ely Junction to be transformed: providing an extra six freight trains per day with access to the Port of Felixstowe, removing the equivalent of 450 lorries from roads in the East of England.*
- *Remodelling of the Ely North and Haughley Junctions, a vital part of East Anglia's rail network where five busy rail lines converge.*
- *Doubling train passenger services: on the Ely to King's Lynn and Ipswich to Peterborough routes.*

Source: [HM Government Statement, 5th October 2023](#)

- 2.2 The announcement on Ely and Haughley follows our formal advice to the Secretary of State and Chancellor earlier this year through the joint Transport East & England Economic Heartland prospectus – [Keeping Trade on Track](#) - launched in [Parliament in June](#), as well as

wider advocacy from MPs, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses, Local Authorities and other partners across the region and beyond.

- 2.3 This announcement does not guarantee delivery of the schemes, and indeed the full [Network North](#) document refers only to Ely and not Haughley. The region must work closely with Network Rail and Department for Transport to support the development of the final business case, funding approval and delivery for both projects. We are working with both organisations to accelerate the required process.

Strategic Roads

- 2.4 This Forum has consistently set out its priority list of **Major Road Network** schemes (on LTA owned roads) and **Strategic Road Network** schemes (on National Highways owned roads) to the Secretary of State through our MRN submissions to DfT in 2019 and 2022, and our broader Strategic Roads Advice (March 2023).

- 2.5 'Network North' includes most of our local authority-promoted scheme priorities on the **Major Road Network**, specifically:

- A140 Long Stratton Bypass, Norfolk
- A127/A130 Fairglens Interchange, Essex (also supporting Southend)
- A12 improvements (formerly A12 East of Ipswich and A12 Woodbridge schemes) (Suffolk)
- A13/A126 East Facing slip roads, Thurrock
- Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, Essex
- Norwich Western Link, Norfolk
- A10 West Winch Housing Access Road, Norfolk
- A127 Corridor for Growth – route improvements, Essex / Southend
- A140-A1120 Earl Stonham, Suffolk
- A17 Pullover Junction, Norfolk

- 2.6 Inclusion on the list does not indicate final approval. These projects are at different stages of business case development and final approval will still be subject to schemes demonstrating value for money and securing individual business case approval. Further details are being sought on the process and further updates will be provided verbally at the meeting by DfT.

- 2.7 The Government has also eased its requirements for local contributions to the schemes¹ (a further recommendation from Transport East in our Strategic Advice on Roads, 2023):

“These schemes, subject to successful business case approval, will benefit from an uplift in government contribution from 85% to 100% of their costs at the outline business case (OBC) stage. The increased funding will help ensure the delivery of these road schemes.”

Source: Network North (2023)

- 2.8 'Network North' did not include any details of the **Strategic Road Network** priorities for our region. At our June meeting, this Forum identified the need for the Roads Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) to deliver to the **four A47 schemes**, and the **A12 widening scheme** still outstanding from RIS1 and RIS2 periods, in addition to the **A14 Copdock**, **A120** and **A11 Fiveways Junction** which are next in the region's pipeline.

- 2.9 Since our last meeting in June, the Transport East partnership has actively sought to progress our RIS3 priorities through:

¹ Note – the 15% local contribution still applies to scheme development costs before Full Business Case stage, and that developer funding should still be sought and secured.

- a) Leading the East's response to the government's Summer 2023 consultation on the *Strategic Road Network Initial Report*
 - b) The LTA Portfolio Holder members of this Forum met with Nick Harris, Chief Executive of National Highways on 5th September to discuss schemes in the East.
 - c) On 12th September, Transport East presented our roads investment priorities with the Roads Minister, Richard Holden MP, at the [East of England All Party Parliamentary Group meeting](#) in Houses of Parliament, including a pre-briefing document identifying priority schemes.
- 2.10 This partnership will continue to work with National Highways and the Department for Transport to make the case for investment for these priorities through the next Roads Investment Strategy.

Buses

- 2.11 The £2 bus fare scheme will be extended until the end of December 2024 instead of rising to £2.50 as planned.

3. Transport East Business Plan Funding 2023/24

- 3.1 The Department for Transport wrote to Transport East on 20th July to confirm the Secretary of State's approval of Transport East's Business Plan 2023/24 and grant allocation of £762,000 for this financial year (frozen at 2022/23 funding level).
- 3.2 The Business Plan had been based on the indicative planning guideline previously given by DfT of £944,000, therefore the Transport East Business Unit and TESOG undertook a prioritisation exercise to match the work programme with available budget. Transport East shared the revised version of the Business Plan to voting members of this Board for approval via email between 4th and 18th August. **4 votes** were received to approve the updated Business Plan, and **none against**.
- 3.3 The [final Business Plan 2023/24](#) is subsequently approved and published on our website.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. Forum members are asked to note the contents of this report.
- 4.2 It is recommended that Transport East partnership:
- **Offers full support to Network Rail and DfT** to ensure rapid delivery of the Strategic Rail and MRN projects for the East set out in the Network North Programme
 - **Continues to work closely with National Highways and DfT** to ensure progression of our Strategic Road Network priorities not included in the 'Network North' document through the Roads Investment Strategy process.

Strategy Hub, Call for Evidence on Rural Mobility

Date: 20th October 2023

Item:

Report by: Esme Yuill and Sharon Payne

Contact: Esme.yuill@transport.east.gov.uk and Sharon.payne@transporteast.gov.uk

Purpose

To present to the Forum the work of the Strategy Hub to date and to inform of findings, recommendations and next steps.

Recommendations

To endorse/agree the report recommendations and forward programme as outlined.

Forum members to further engage with TE Officers to embed the report, findings and recommendations in local decision making and Local Transport Plan development.

1. Background

The Strategy Hub is a programme facilitated by Transport East to undertake a series of investigations into important transport issues facing those living, working and undertaking business in the East. The Strategy Hub will formulate policy recommendations for complex transport issues to influence local government and national transport policy. As the lead STB for Rural Mobility, encompassing one of the most rural areas in England, rural transport was a natural fit for the first investigation.

The objective of the Strategy Hub is to provide an impartial investigation with open and honest conversations from a wide range of stakeholders and experts focussing on a select topic area. This is to provide a deep dive into current issues and opportunities, and to produce a set of thorough recommendations to inform and influence future policy and strategy making at all levels of government and the wider transport sector stakeholders.

Department for Transport Future of Rural Strategy

In 2020 the department issued a call for evidence to understand the transport needs of rural users, as part of its' Future of Transport Programme. A total of 736 responses were received from individuals and organisations and are summarised in this [report](#).

The department published a policy paper [Future of Transport: helping local authorities to unlock the benefits of technology and innovation in rural transport](#) on the 2nd October 2023.

Transport East was asked by the Future of Transport policy team to provide strategic advice on the content and development of this paper during 2023, due to the clear direction and leadership provided through the Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence workstream. TE will continue to engage with DfT to pursue the next steps via the STB Officer group and RMCoe.

University of Hertfordshire Research

There has been limited research and policy work on transport policy in areas outside of cities and dense urban areas. Academic research and funding have mainly concentrated on urban transport and transport investment has leant towards these areas in parallel. This is understandable, given the concentrations of populations and economic activity in cities, but there is a strong case for a focus on transport outside cities:

- For decarbonisation: such areas have higher comparative carbon emissions from transport.
- For economic development: such areas host a lot of economic activity but face transport issues with labour markets, congestion and distribution.
- For social inclusion: such areas are car dependent and those without cars face reduced or in some cases no access to jobs, training, education essential services and social activity.

The University of Hertfordshire's Smart Mobility Unit has run several roundtables bringing together a wide range of practitioners, researchers, community groups, consultants and private sector companies with an interest in transport outside cities. This commenced in 2020, sponsored by the Department for Transport, with a subsequent series in 2022 sponsored by the DfT and partners. The findings of the roundtables can be found on the [SMU website](#).

This financial year, Transport East has made a financial contribution to SMU's roundtable programme and are using our own evidence to inform the programme's direction in alignment with our wider RMCoe activity.

2. Process

Six independent commissioners were invited to join the Strategy Hub, providing an independent voice about rural transport relating to and pertinent to their sector and how it operates in our region. The commissioners are;

- Dr Scott Copsey: University of Hertfordshire (Chair)
- Candy Richards: Federation of Small Businesses
- Caroline Whitney: Community Transport Association
- Jack Eagle: Transport Planning Society Eastern Region
- Nick Khan: East Suffolk Council
- Pete Waters: Visit East of England
- Rik Martin: Community Action Norfolk

In June, a written call for evidence was issued. This invited a wide range of stakeholders to submit their thoughts and evidence about rural transport through an online survey-based format. Respondents were also able to upload their own evidence to further supplement their response. The written call closed in mid-July with 115 individual responses, ranging from researchers, academics, businesses, organisations and individuals living, working or having an interest in rural mobility and transport in rural areas.

Questions were drafted to distinguish between challenges currently encountered and potential solutions for the future. Focussing on use of private transport connections (cars, walking, cycling) and public transport connections (bus, rail, community transport) separately. The survey also included asking respondents to evaluate how important certain areas of rural transport were to improve mobility. This allowed for high quality quantitative analysis to supplement the data collected through the Parish Access Survey in autumn 2022.

Four in-person oral evidence sessions were run during mid-September. The sessions focused on the following areas;

- Business and Tourism (two sessions)
- Charities, Community Transport and Further Education, and
- Local Authorities and Transport Operators.

29 stakeholders joined these sessions, (sectors represented include tourism, business, hospitality, universities, transport operators, community transport providers and local authorities) which have further informed the written call for evidence.

The analysis of the written submissions along with the analysis of the in-person sessions has enabled TE to draw out a range of themes across the rural transport provision available in the East and wider UK.

Analysis Method

- Written submissions categorised and sorted by common themes
- Quotes logged attributed to the themes
- Demographic analysis of respondents undertaken
- Identified high level themes
- Used high level themes to shape questions and define which stakeholders to invite to in person sessions to fill in gaps identified from the written submissions.
- Combine findings of written and oral evidence sessions to shape the draft recommendations for the report.

3. High Level Findings

Key issues raised within the call for evidence included:

Issues around journey choice and experience

- Frequency, connecting routes, delays and cancellations – especially for fixed route buses
- Frequency, station locations, onward journeys and reliability due to industrial action – especially for train services
- Fares and ticketing – complexity, cost and poor integration
- Access to real-time data for journey planning
- Poor active travel options
- Complexity and understanding options for Community and Demand Responsive Transport
- Reliance on family and friends to ensure mobility

Implications of rural transport mobility on lived experience

- Access to key services, shops, education, training, job opportunities and tourism destinations without private transport
- From businesses – recruitment and retention of staff, especially for lower-paid or seasonal roles, ability to get trainees to opportunities
- Social isolation and mental health, for both older and younger people
- Personal safety concerns for all types of travel
- Freedom for disabled people and physical accessibility challenges

Wider issues

- Integration of land use and transport, especially issues such as local AT connections and embedding car dependency
- Parking – availability, location, affect on other users, price
- Behaviour change and perceptions of rural sustainable transport
- Rural areas being left behind on net zero journey
- Links to digital connectivity and reducing the need to travel
- Maintenance of physical infrastructure

4. Insight and alignment with DfT research findings

The call for evidence has further established that there are significant challenges around transport provision and equitable access both in the region and widespread commonly found national issues.

Both the DfT call for evidence and Transport East's identified a clear need for **strong political leadership at national and regional government levels to ensure rural transport needs are not left**

behind but embedded into a range of levers available, including legislation, funding and clear strategic direction.

Similar themes from respondents to both calls include;

- Lack of access to essential services including healthcare, education, employment and business.
- Negative impacts on isolation, social mobility and mental health.
- Poor public transport provision leading to unwanted or forced car-dependency.
- Limited opportunity and safe on-road facilities for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Thoughts on the provision of public transport were similar, with regard to **frequency being inadequate for daily needs and challenges of commercial viability**. Respondents to the TE call highlighted a desire for better real-time information on bus services, improvements to fixed-route services and a continuation of the £2 fare cap. Interestingly, **views on Demand Responsive Transport services were varied**, with some viewing the current delivery models as unhelpful (due to advance booking requirements and extended journey times) and unusable due to restrained operating times and limited passenger capacity. While others felt they were a valuable connection and appreciated the flexibility.

Tourism featured in both calls, with respondents to TE highlighting **the lack of opportunity to access visitor attractions other than by car** and the absence of onward transport links from regional train stations. DfT respondents were concerned that **overcrowding on public transport during seasonal peaks made it difficult for local residents** to travel. Responses to TE raised issues around the **availability of destination EV charging in rural areas**, with the cost of installing EV chargers cited as unviable for many small businesses.

A key highlight from TE's research was **the lack of transport options for staff residing on-site in hospitality settings**. This can lead to staff being unable to leave the site when not working, meaning they are missing out on opportunities to socialise, access essential services including more affordable shops and services, attend appointments and interact with the wider local economy. Lack of public transport also affects the **ability of young people in apprenticeship and other training schemes to access high quality training** locations which are often in rural locations. This potentially impacts their future employment opportunities and ability to progress their careers.

There was a **strong voice for more and better collaboration across the TE region between SMEs, further education and transport operators**. With SMEs noting that despite a desire to 'do more' they were challenged by a lack of resources, knowledge and funding to do this as individual organisations.

Better utilisation of, and **doing more with what we already have** was mentioned. Through potential flexing and sweating assets of assets already based in the region and combined with access to technology solutions such as apps to help facilitate this.

Whilst the call did not focus on funding, **many respondents mentioned that funding allocations need to be more equitable**, with fewer competitive bidding type applications for local authorities.

4. Report Recommendations

The draft recommendations are outlined in the slides presented, for discussion and agreement for inclusion in the final report.

Recommendations are targeted at several audiences:

Central Government

Local Government

Transport East and Partners

Our next steps will be to finalise the report following discussion of the recommendations with the Forum and to share with the commissioners & stakeholders as outlined in the communications plan timeline in the slide pack.

The aims of the communications approach will be to raise the findings and recommendations with the relevant audiences, to elevate Transport East's role as the Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence, to continue to embed rural mobility needs within the wider policy environment and leverage additional funding for ourselves and partners to address the issues identified.

END