



**Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
Cheshire and Warrington Local Transport Body**

Friday, 10th January, 2020 at The Council Chamber -Town Hall, Sankey
Street, Warrington WA1 1UH

PRESENT

Members

Councillor Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors C Browne and H Mundry

COUNCILLOR IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor L Gibbon, Chester West & Chester Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Baxter, Cheshire East Council
David Bowyer, Warrington Borough Council
Philip Cox, LEP
Chris Hindle, Cheshire East Council
Steve Hunter, Warrington Borough Council
John Hope, Highways England
Roy Newton, C&WLEP
Sean Traynor, Cheshire West & Chester Council

29 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Shore and Richard Perry (DfT).

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

32 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Stephen Bratt of ASLEF attended the meeting and spoke in respect of HS2 and the reference to 5-7 trains per hour. It was felt that this phrase lacked clarity and needed to be more specific in terms of where trains from Crewe would connect with.

Andrew Needham of CPRE attended the meeting and stated that he was pleased to hear that a member from the TUC would have a role on the Transport for the North Board. He asked where the proposed location for the Crewe North Connection would be.

In respect of the question raised by Mr Needham, Chris Hindle, Head of Infrastructure advised that the junction shown at High Legh was a touch point and not the Crewe North connection. The precise location of the connection was not yet known and as it was a HS2 project the question would need to be referred to HS2.

33 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT UPDATE

Roy Newton, representing the Cheshire & Warrington LEP gave an update in respect of the Department for Transport. Highlighted within the update was information on the emerging DfT priorities:-

- Same Ministerial team as prior to general election;
- Decarbonisation key - transport had overtaken energy as the number one contributor to CO2 in this UK and that was “not the league table the Department wanted to be leading on”. Although much of this was a result of emissions from road transport it was also important to see decarbonisation in maritime, rail and aviation;
- Big priority was the reform of rail, in particular, White paper this year following the conclusions of the Williams Rail Review;
- Secretary of State noted there were big projects to deliver such as HS2 but he wanted to see Department not just focusing on infrastructure but also on delivery;
- Important to meet the concerns of people about their ability to get around and the importance of properly connecting people and places, especially in our smaller towns and cities.

In the Queens Speech, the key elements with implications for transport included:

- Delivering Brexit by 31 January;
- Maintaining the integrity of the UK (may have relevance to cross Border considerations with Wales);
- investing in the country’s public services and infrastructure whilst keeping borrowing and debt under control;
- prioritising investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills in order to unleash productivity and improve daily life for communities across the country.
- Giving communities more control over how investment was spent so that they could decide what was best for them;
- Ensuring people could depend on the transport network - measures would be developed to provide for minimum levels of service during transport strikes.

Further to this Members were provided with selected highlights relating to the Queen's speech which included:-

- The National Infrastructure Strategy
- Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft
- Airline insolvency legislation
- Railways minimum service levels legislation
- Rail reform
- The Government had also committed to a number of major investments in the railway, including: Midlands Rail Hub, to improve services around Birmingham and throughout the West and East Midlands; Northern Powerhouse Rail as well as reopening a number of the lines and stations closed under the Beeching cuts in the 1960s; and, significant upgrades to urban commuter and regional services outside London.
- High Speed Rail 2 (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill
- English devolution
- Environment Bill
- Climate Change
- Wales

Councillor C Browne commented that Cheshire East Council were Urgently awaiting a decision in respect of the A500 dualling project from the DfT. Whilst Cheshire East continued to commit its own funds this couldn't carry on indefinitely in the absence of a decision from the DfT.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

34 PRIORITISING BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

Roy Newton, representing the Cheshire & Warrington LEP, attended the meeting presented to the CWLTB the transport projects for the Body to consider recommending to Strategy Committee for funding in the financial year 2020/21.

Councillor H Mundry put forward a request for the CWLTB to consider the possibility of Warrington Borough Council being awarded £50,000 to undertake a feasibility study for all buses to be electric, which could capitalise on funding being made available by central government's for an all electric bus town/city.

It was advised that as the budget was a maximum of £400,000 it wouldn't be possible to include a further scheme costing £50,000, however there was a possibility that the LEP could work with all the Local Authorities to identify and prioritise an order of which schemes should be put forward potentially without requesting a specific amount or by scaling back all existing schemes which could accommodate Warrington's request. It was suggested this could be undertaken with further work by officers and discussed electronically rather than wait for the next meeting of the CWLTB.

It was pointed out that it would be unlikely the full £400,000 would be allocated to all transport schemes and that the Strategy Committee would also want an opportunity for some of the funding to be spent on non transport projects. It was felt it would be helpful if officers could provide the Strategy Committee with a prioritised list which ranked the schemes in order of preference particularly say if only £300,000 of the £400,000 was to be allocated.

Concerns were raised that if Warrington's request was accepted it would not be at the expense of any of the other schemes listed within the report.

It was noted that the A50 Corridor Study did not emerge as a priority and it was asked if it could remain as a consideration for any further round of funding should it become available.

There was funding from Government which set aside money for major route networks like the A50/A51/A500. It was noted that Highways England was very supportive of the A51 corridor.

It was agreed that outside of the meeting officers would look at the schemes and assess them against the criteria as well as taking into account Government priorities and the funding available alongside any match funding.

Furthermore, to avoid introducing delay in decision making, it was agreed that the list would be circulated electronically to members of the CWLTB to agree with an explanation as to the rationale behind the choices prior to being considered at a public meeting of the Strategy Committee.

RESOLVED

That a list, prioritising schemes to be put forward for consideration by the Strategy Committee be circulated electronically to members of the CWLTB to agree alongside an explanation as to the rationale behind the choices.

35 BUS STRATEGY UPDATE

Roy Newton, representing the Cheshire & Warrington LEP gave an update on the bus strategy. He outlined the summary of commitments as follows:-

- National Bus Strategy focussed on passenger priorities;
- Review of the £250 million bus service operators grant to ensure it supported the environment and improved passenger journeys;
- Over £20 million investment in bus priority measures in the West Midlands;
- All new road investments receiving government funding to explicitly address bus priority measures to improve bus journey times and reliability;
- Refreshing the government's guidance to local authorities to provide up to date advice on prioritising those vehicles which could carry the most people;
- Investing up to £50 million to deliver Britain's first all-electric bus town or city;
- Improving information for bus passengers through new digital services and at bus stops
- Challenging industry to deliver a campaign to attract people to buses;
- Incentivising multi-operator ticketing with lower fares;
- Trialling new 'superbus' network approach to deliver low fare, high frequency services and funding 4-year pilot of a lower fare network in Cornwall;
- Ambition for all buses to accept contactless payment for passenger convenience
- £30 million extra bus funding to be paid direct to local authorities to enable them to improve current bus services or restore lost services;

- £20 million to support demand responsive services in rural and suburban areas

Further to this the LEP, the three Local Authorities and bus operators had attended a workshop which identified the following key challenges that directly affect the usage of buses:-

- Traffic Congestion
- Lack of Priority Measures/Infrastructure
- Parking both provision and relative cost
- Complexity of Ticketing
- Lack of Information to passengers
- Perception/Awareness
- Marketing/Promotion
- Environmental
- Journey Times
- Economic
- Reduced town centre footfall
- Service Provision – poor on some routes, evenings, weekends
- Changing work patterns – moving away from Mon-Fri 9-5
- Cross Boundary
- Funding

Roy then outlined the next steps to set up an officer working group to develop options to tackle the identified issues taking account of:

- Bus Services Act 2017 eg opportunities for enhanced partnerships
- National bus strategy and emerging priorities

It was queried as to who was accountable for the bus strategy. In response it was confirmed that ultimately it was the LTB along with officers and the bus companies.

It was noted that the strategy was something that the LEP would be interested in and that the draft strategy would be shared for comment with the Chair of the LEP.

It was commented that one of the main reasons for people not using buses was because of the cost.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

36 HS2 AND CREWE HUB UPDATE

Chris Hindle, Head of Infrastructure at Cheshire East Council attended the meeting and gave an update in respect of HS2 and the Crewe hub.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

37 NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL UPDATE

Steve Hunter, the Transport for Warrington Service Manager at Warrington Borough Council gave an update on the Northern Powerhouse Rail.

RESOLVED

1. That the CWLTB noted both the progress made to date by the Department for Transport and Transport for the North in the preparation of a Draft Strategic Outline Business Case for Northern Powerhouse Rail.
2. That the CWLTB noted the key issues for Cheshire and Warrington with regard to the Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals.
3. That updates on both of these matters would be provided at future meetings of the CWLTB.

38 TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH UPDATE

Councillors C Browne and H Mundry and provided an update in respect of the issues discussed at the recent Transport for the North meeting. Key themes reported were as follows:-

- Poor performance of the Northern and Transpennine franchises;
- The East and West link required more joined up thinking;
- Northern Powerhouse Rail-in particular the need for HS2 to consider and take account of the key touch points with NPR;
- The need to look at NPR options for Piccadilly station which are future proofed;
- Inclusion of a TUC representative on the Board;
- Pausing the integrated/smart ticketing workstream and considering a different approach whereby local authorities bid to TfN to create a local ticketing system.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

39 HIGHWAYS ENGLAND UPDATE

John Hope, representing Highways England attended the meeting and gave a verbal update stating that he should hear about any major schemes in March once the budget had been confirmed. In respect of RIS 1 for Cheshire the M62 smart motorway, junctions 10-12 would be opening the end of March 2020. Work on the M56 between Hale and Bowden would commence once the M62 work had been completed. Public information events in respect of this scheme were due to commence 17 January 2020. In respect of the M6 junctions 16-19 work was due to commence in March 2020 to improve the bottleneck issues. Work in relation to the M56 express bridge, junctions 11-12 was due to commence in December 2020. Finally allocation of funding for the next five years was expected to be higher than previous years. Officers were currently working up a programme for year 1 and as soon as the details were available they would be shared with the three Local Authorities.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

40 UPDATE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY MAJOR SCHEME PROGRESS

Updates were provided for each Local Authority area:-

Cheshire East Council

- **Sydney Road Bridge Improvement**-now completed with the official opening ceremony taking place on 4 September 2019.
- **Congleton Link Road**-Scheme progressing. Major earthworks continued until mid-November and work had continued on the construction of several major structures including a crossing of the Rive Dane.
- **Poynton Relief Road**-The procurement process had been concluded and Graham Construction had been appointed as the design and build contractor for the scheme. The Final Business Case has been approved for submission to the DfT. Subject to DfT's approval of the final business case and the expected satisfactory resolution of the high court challenge, work was expected to commence on site in spring/summer 2020 and the road opening in 2021.
- **Middlewich Eastern Bypass**-Detailed ground investigation was now about to commence imminently after a slight delay due to the very wet weather. A contractor has been identified to deliver the scheme via a construction framework arrangement and the current programme (subject to completion of statutory processes and final funding approvals) is for the main works to start in 2021, with an estimated 30-month construction period.
- **North West Crewe Package**-A contractor has been identified to deliver the highway scheme via a construction framework arrangement and once the two housing planning approvals were achieved, a detailed programme could be published (subject to completion of statutory processes and final funding approvals).
- **A500 Dualling**-Work currently progressing includes land acquisition negotiations and early discussions with the newly appointed design consultant.

Cheshire West & Chester Council

- **A51 Tarvin to Chester Improvement Scheme**-Construction on the main components to commence in Summer 2020 with a Spring 2021 completion date.
- **Sutton Way Boulevard Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements**-Construction commenced in November 2019, with completion scheduled for March 2020.
- **Winnington Swing Bridge/A533 Corridor Improvements**-Consultancy support for this development funding allocation has now been procured and key outputs would be delivered no later than 31 March 2020.
- **Hooton-Helsby**-Work progressing due to be completed by the end of March 2020.
- **Middlewich Rail Study Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC)**-Scheduled for completion in March 2020
- **Middlewich Southern Link Feasibility Study**
- **Funding Stream: Provisional Local Growth Fund 3 (LGF 3) Allocations-Additional Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements**-Two further pedestrian and walking schemes with provisional LGF fund allocations were being developed by CW&CC, which would be taken to future CWLEP P&I Board meetings for full approval early in the New Year. These were the A5117 and Chester and Ellesmere Port canal tow path improvements.

- **Future Funding Stream Opportunity: Local Pinch Point Programme-** The Budget 2018 announced a competitive fund for local authorities to bid for high-impact schemes to help address congestion pinch points and to reduce congestion on local roads. The fund was £150 million in total, with £75 million in each financial year 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The DfT had advised what eligible type of projects should include.
- **Future Funding Stream Opportunity: Challenge Fund Programme-** Outcomes awaited regarding bid submissions made by CW&CC.
- **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)-**CW&CC have now appointed WSP to develop an LCWIP for the borough. The consultation exercise commenced late December 2019 with formal adoption to take place in Spring 2020.

Warrington Borough Council

- **Waterfront Western Link-**Submission case back to Government in late 2022, with any construction stage subject to DfT approval starting in mid-2023 for a period of circa 3 years.
- **M62 Junction 8-Local Growth Fund-**Completed.
- **Warrington East Ph1-Local Growth Fund-**Completed.
- **Centre Park Link-Local Growth Fund-**On site.
- **Warrington West Station-Local Growth Fund-**Opened 15 December 2020.
- **Warrington East-Phases 2&3-Local Growth Fund-**Phase 2 complete and Phase 3 almost completed. Opening ceremony was planned for 13 January 2020.
- **Sustainable Transport Project-Access Fund-Local Growth Fund-**This project proposed the addition or upgrade of three important links on the Warrington strategic cycling and walking network.
- **Omega Local Highways-Local Growth Fund-**Phase 1 construction planned to commence March 2020. Phase 2b construction planned to commence in early 2020. Phases 2a/2c complete. Phase 3b construction has commenced and phase 3c in development.

41 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting take place on 17 April 2020.

Prior to the close of the meeting it was agreed that Councillor H Mundry be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Cheshire & Warrington Local Transport Body.