

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 26 October 2007



Present:

Board Members

Cllr Nick Skellett (Chairman)
Cllr Tony Page
Cllr Cec Tallack
Simon Pratt
Clive King
Joan O'Byrne
Mark Pearson
Susan Stuart
Paul Harwood

Officers

Martin Tugwell
Andy Mak
Paul Lovejoy
James Renwick
David Cooper
Fiona Thorp
Richard Walker
Mike Ford
Pat Ayling
Lesley van Dijk

In Attendance

Cllr. Lt. Col. Tex Pemberton, West Sussex Council
Cllr. Matthew Lock, East Sussex Council
Michael Foster MP, Hastings and Rye
Greg Barker MP, Bexhill
Peter Hayward, East Sussex County Council
Kevin Travers, Hampshire County Council
Cllr. Nigel Collor, Dover District Council
Jeff Cousins, Member of the Public
Sheena Lamont, East of England Regional Assembly
Steve Hewlett, Medway Council
Robin Cooper, Medway Council
Iain Reeve, Surrey County Council
Oliver Barnet, McAlpine Construction

1. Election of Chair

- 1.1 Nick Skellett was duly re-elected Chair of the Regional Transport Board unanimously.

2. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

- 2.1 Apologies were received from John Peel and Gwyn Drake.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2007.

The Minutes were AGREED in full.

4. Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda

4.1 There were no matters arising.

5. Smarter Choices

5.1 Mobility Management

5.1.1 Martin Tugwell drew attention to the proposed four work packages that had been identified from the work undertaken by Addisons on behalf of the Assembly. The Board was invited to consider the proposed programme of work.

5.1.2 Cllr Tony Page highlighted the need to look for linkages with the work undertaken through the LGA on pathfinder projects that related to this topic.

5.1.3 Cllr Paul Watkins expressed a concern with regards to the consistency of advice received from the Highways Agency in respect of the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Mike Ford reaffirmed the Agency's commitment to engaging positively in the LDF process but emphasised the importance of Local Planning Authorities engaging at the earliest opportunity with the Agency.

5.1.4 Cllr Nick Skellett drew attention to work undertaken by Surrey County Council in respect of improving use of rail stations and suggested that this experience may be of some assistance in taking forward work package B on rail station travel plans. Paul Harwood indicated that a list of the medium-sized stations that were proposed as benefiting from the station enhancement fund would be included within Network Rail's response to the Rail White Paper.

5.1.5 An outcome of the recent dialogue meeting between the Board and the Highways Agency had been an agreement that there was a need for closer co-ordination between the Highways Agency and Local Transport Authorities in taking forward measures to manage demand. It was agreed that this should be taken forward as a matter of priority.

It was AGREED that the Board:

- i) Note the progress of the commission on accessibility and mobility management;**
- ii) Endorse the work programme set out in Annex I;**
- iii) Endorse the approach suggested in the report to take forward the four work packages set out in paragraph 3.4 (A to D) as priorities;**

- iv) **Request the secretariat to identify opportunities to use proposals included in the regional programme to act as exemplar projects.**
- v) **Request the Secretariat arrange a seminar between the Highways Agency and Local Transport Authorities with the focus on sharing work on implementing demand management measures.**

5.2 Bus and Coach

- 5.2.1 Richard Walker has been seconded to the Assembly from the Department for Transport for 18 months with a view to working with Local Transport Authorities to take forward the Board's work on this topic. He is in the process of meeting with key partners across the region as part of this work.
- 5.2.2 The initiative was warmly welcomed by the Board. The primary focus of the work programme related to ensuring proposals for implementing the Bus and Coach network in the Thames Valley are progressed along with the Sussex Coachway proposal. The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring the work programme maximised the opportunity to integrate bus/coach services with rail services.

It was AGREED that the Board:

- i) **Endorse the work programme set out in Section 2;**
- ii) **Note the funding support provided by the East of England Regional Assembly to assist in delivering the work programme;**
- iii) **Would encourage their organisations to provide appropriate support and assistance in taking the work programme forward;**
- iv) **Request a report for its meeting in April 2008 setting out the outcome of the work programme.**

6. Rail White Paper

- 6.1 Martin Tugwell gave a short update to the Board. He informed the Board that there were significant implications for the region as a whole arising from the publication of the White Paper. He suggested that the debate on the future of the rail industry for the next Control Period provided the Board with an opportunity to take a leadership role on behalf of the region.
- 6.2 Paul Watkins raised a concern about the difficulty of getting across London from Waterloo to St. Pancras following the forthcoming relocation of Eurostar services. It was agreed that the Board would take this issue up with TfL directly. Responding to questions raised in debate Paul Harwood indicated that the vacated Waterloo International station would eventually be used to provide additional capacity for South West Train services operating out of Waterloo.

It was anticipated that work would commence early in 2008 to change the infrastructure for use by domestic rail services.

- 6.3 It was noted that the process of re-letting the South Central franchise would begin in the first half of 2008. It was agreed that it was important for the Board to ensure that the region's priorities were fed into the preparation of the franchise specification. Susan Stuart agreed to arrange for a representative from the DfT rail team to attend the Board's next meeting in order to enable a fuller debate to take place.
- 6.4 Martin Tugwell highlighted the fact that the Assembly and SEEDA had supported further preparatory work on both the East-West Rail project and Airtrack. Both projects would be in a position to report back on the outcome of this work to the next meeting of the Board.
- 6.5 A map indicating which services the Mayor of London now had the power to propose increments/decrements in service levels was circulated to Board members. It was reported that there was still no clarity as to how the region's representation on the TfL Board would be determined.

It was AGREED that the Board.

- i) Welcome the support of Government to deliver capacity improvements at Reading Station and the Thameslink project;**
- ii) Write to the Secretary of State for Transport emphasising the importance of securing long-term safeguarding of the extension of Crossrail to Reading in order to support economic growth and development in the western part of the region;**
- iii) Write to the Office of Rail Regulation and Network Rail emphasising the importance of delivering capacity improvements at Oxford Station, Milton Keynes/Bletchley and at Gatwick Airport Station to delivering planned growth;**
- iv) Seek early engagement with Network Rail in the preparation of the updated Route Utilisation Strategies for the Great Western Main Line and Kent/Sussex areas;**
- v) Seek early engagement with the Department for Transport in the preparation of the franchise specification for the southern central franchise;**
- vi) Work with Local Transport Authorities and Network Rail with a view to identifying priority projects for consideration as part of Network Rail's fund for investment in medium sized stations;**
- vii) Write to the Mayor for London and the Secretary of State for Transport requesting urgent discussions in respect of the region's representation on the Transport for London Board;**

- viii) **Stress the importance of the East/West Rail route being implemented.**

7. Regional Programme 2008

7.1 Major Schemes Guidance

- 7.1.1 James Renwick informed the Board that the Guidance had now been published and that Local Transport Authorities were now expected to follow the approach set out therein. In particular it was noted that the Guidance clarified that where a scheme experiences a cost increase above the figure agreed with the DfT the scheme promoter will be expected to fund 25% of the said increase from sources other than the RFA.
- 7.1.2 The Board noted the transitional arrangements set out in the Guidance. It was confirmed that the protocol adopted by the Board for handling schemes with major cost increases was consistent with the new Guidance.
- 7.1.3 It was noted that the Guidance was unfortunate in that it used the term 'exceptional' in a number of situations, each of which had a different meaning. It was agreed that there was a need to clarify what constituted 'exceptional circumstances' once a scheme had begun on site; this was required in order to give clear guidance to scheme promoters. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would confirm which of the region's smaller Local Transport Authorities might need to consider sub-£5m schemes as being 'exceptional'.

It was AGREED that the Board.

- i) **note the publication of the new Guidance and the implications it may have for the regional programme;**
- ii) **seek clarification from the Department for Transport as to how the cost estimates used in the regional programme represent Quantified Cost Estimates or Approved Scheme Costs, and to understand what assumptions have been made by the Department with regards to the application of additional risk layers;**
- iii) **seek clarification from the Department for Transport as to what would constitute an 'exceptional' circumstance once a scheme has started construction on site.**
- iv) **Seek clarification from the Department on criteria for accepting exceptional maintenance bids**

7.2 Refresh of Regional Programme – 2008

- 7.2.1 Martin Tugwell updated the meeting on progress with the refresh of the regional programme. It was noted that work was on going with the updating of the scheme questionnaire. It was also noted that the Board would be provided with an opportunity to discuss the issue of 'weightings' at its next meeting.
- 7.2.2 It was noted that the programme for collecting information from Local Transport Authorities would slip slightly, although it was still anticipated that the request for information would be sent out towards the end of January 08.

It was AGREED that the Board.

- i) Note the progress made with the Refresh of the Regional Programme;**
- ii) Note the potential for slippage in the timing of the Refresh as a result of the publication of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the timing of the announcement on the future of the Highways Agency's schemes arising from the Nichol's report.**

7.3 Thames Gateway Sub-Regional Priorities

- 7.3.1 Andy Mak updated the Board on the work undertaken to identify potential schemes eligible for funding through the Community Infrastructure Fund. He emphasised that the work was not a revisit of the Regional Funding Allocation process rather it represented an opportunity for the Board to secure additional funds for the region.
- 7.3.2 Following a short discussion it was agreed that the list of schemes for the second three-year period (2011-2014) would be combined into one single list for simplicity. It was noted that the scheme totals expressed in the annex needed to be corrected.
- 7.3.3 The Board noted the concern identified by the Highways Agency with regard to the need to acknowledge the strategic significance of addressing the bottleneck at Junction 5 on the M2.

It was AGREED that the Board.

- i) Agree the ranked list of priorities for the period 2008-2011 as set out in Annex I as the Board's recommendation to the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership (TGSP);**
- ii) Highlight to the TGSP that the Medway Strategic Bus Corridor has previously been identified by the Board as a regional priority for investment.**

8. Policy Context

8.1 The South East Plan – Panel Report

8.1.1 The representatives from the Government Office left the meeting for this item on the Agenda.

8.1.2 Martin Tugwell introduced this paper and pointed out that the Panel had endorsed the philosophy and structure of the Regional Transport Strategy set out in the draft South East Plan. The Paper highlighted the Panel's recommendations in respect of what they considered to be the issues of strategic significance. It was noted that in the majority of cases progress was being made in taking forward schemes that will address these issues.

8.1.3 It was agreed that there was a need to consider at greater length how the recommendation in respect of the need to improve the corridor between London and the key Channel gateways (i.e. Dover/Channel Tunnel) might be taken forward.

The Board noted the publication of the Panel's report following the Examination in Public of the draft South East Plan.

8.2 Future of Local Transport Plans

8.2.1 James Renwick advised that the deadline for responses to the consultation had required that the Secretariat submit the paper as a draft response with a caveat that any additional views from the Board would be reported immediately after this meeting.

8.2.2 After a short discussion the Board confirmed their support for the draft response without amendment.

It was AGREED that the Board endorse the draft response to the consultation document.

9. Programme Management and Monitoring

9.1 Martin Tugwell introduced the report and took the Board through the proposal for handling the cost increase in the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road as set out in the paper. He drew the Board's attention to an error in the paper; he confirmed that the sum to be secured through 3rd parties should be £10.5m (25% of the cost increase).

9.2 Cllr Mathew Lock introduced the MPs for Bexhill and Hastings and Rye. Cllr Nick Skellett invited the MPs to address the meeting. The MPs stressed the importance of the Link Road to unlocking the potential of the Bexhill and Hastings area. They confirmed the cross party support within the local community for the scheme and they welcomed the Board's efforts to find a way forward that secured the future of the scheme.

- 9.3 They noted a concern regarding the implication for the A21 Baldslow Junction scheme. It was suggested that the wording of the recommendation be amended to clarify that the timing of the Baldslow scheme will be reviewed as part of the 2008 refresh. The Highways Agency expressed concern that such an approach could risk losing momentum on delivering the Baldslow scheme. The Board acknowledged these concerns but decided that the issue could be resolved as part of the refresh.
- 9.4 It was noted that the Simon Pratt recorded that he did not support the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road.
- 9.4 Moving onto Reading Station Cllr Tony Page supported the proposal that the Board's contribution towards the overall package be brought forward in the programme.
- 9.5 Cllr Tex Pemberton recorded his concern that the monitoring information did not include data related to the Highways Agency schemes. He considered this unfortunate as it gave an incomplete picture and runs the risk of members of the public raising concerns about the progress of the schemes. The Board agreed with his concern but noted that until such time as the DfT had agreed a way forward with the HA programme (post Nichols) it was not possible to secure monitoring information on HA schemes.

It was AGREED that the Board.

- i) Note the outcome of the monitoring of the RFA forward programme as a whole;**
- ii) Advise the Secretary of State for Transport that in respect of the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road it is recommended that:**
 - a) the scheme remain within the forward programme of investment;**
 - b) the majority of the increased cost to the scheme can be met by the promoter's intended contribution (£10.5m) and the reallocation of the A21 Baldslow Junction funds (£18m).**
 - c) An additional £12.21m will be allocated from the programme as a contingency.**
 - d) The total RFA amount for the scheme should now be regarded as £78.72m**
 - e) the timing of the A21 Baldslow Junction improvement is reviewed as part of the refresh of the forward programme;**
 - f) the Department for Transport be requested to undertake a revised value for money assessment of the scheme with a view to having the output of that work available in time for a potential Public Inquiry into the scheme;**
- iii) Advise the Secretary of State for Transport that the Board recommends its contribution towards the delivery of Reading Station be made available in 2008/09 to ensure progress is made with the delivery of this nationally significant scheme;**

and that this is possible due to slippage in programmed expenditure elsewhere in the programme;

- iv) **Write to the South West Regional Assembly, South West Regional Development Agency and Welsh Assembly Government with a view to securing financial contributions towards the cost of scheme development in 2008/09;**
- v) **Note the outcome of the meeting with Department for Transport regarding exceptional maintenance and request a report to its next meeting outlining the approach that will be adopted for dealing with such bids in the region.**

10. Items for Information

It was AGREED that the Board noted the contents of this report.

11. Date of Next Meetings

24 January 2008	Institute of Materials, London
24 April 2008	Institute of Materials, London
10 July 2008	Institute of Materials, London
23 October 2008	Institute of Materials, London

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 16.45