

EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM

Meeting held on Thursday 12 October 2006
At Highways Agency Regional Control Centre, South Mimms

MINUTES

Present:

Name	Organisation
Glenn Barcham	Bedfordshire County Council
Brian Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council
Natalie Blaken	EEDA
Brian Stewart	EERA
Sheena Lamont	EERA
Tony Ciaburro	Essex County Council
Colin Riley	Essex County Council
John Brown	GO-East
Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Stuart Pile	Hertfordshire County Council
John Wood	Hertfordshire County Council
Dave Humby	Hertfordshire County Council
Trevor Mason	Hertfordshire County Council
Alan Kirkdale	Highways Agency
John Pearman	Highways Agency
Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
Colin Chick	Luton Borough Council
Sid Rutstein	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Richard Rockliffe	Norfolk County Council
Mike Jackson	Norfolk County Council
David Watts	Southend on Sea Borough Council
Cllr David Garston	Southend on Sea Borough Council
Paul Mathieson	Southend on Sea Borough Council
Bob Preston	Southend on Sea Borough Council
Cllr Guy McGregor	Suffolk County Council
Lucy Robinson	Suffolk County Council
Peter Grimm	Suffolk County Council
Alastair Southgate	Suffolk County Council
Ed Vokes	Thurrock Council
Rob Bayley (for Item 3 only)	Atkins
Mike Salter (for Item 3 only)	Atkins

Cllr Derrick Ashley thanked the Highways Agency for hosting the meeting at the Regional Control Centre.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr John Reynolds – Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Leo Milan-Vega – Thurrock Council
John Wilson – Network Rail

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2006 were agreed.

3. Rail Study

Rob Bayley of Atkins presented the work undertaken to date on the regional rail study commissioned by the Forum.

It was noted that a number of specific issues/schemes were not mentioned in the presentation (e.g. CrossRail and Welwyn Viaduct). These however have been considered in the SWOT analysis and included in the draft report. Atkins will also consider whether and how other suggestions should be incorporated in the report.

It was agreed that the final report should include an aspirational list of schemes as an appendix, with the main body of the report focussing on schemes that are deliverable and affordable.

Officers from each authority have had the opportunity to comment on the SWOT analysis, and the draft document will be considered by the officer steering group on 23 October. The draft report will then be circulated to officers.

The report will look at how the interventions will deliver the objectives, but is not in the scope of the report to undertake a detailed cost benefit analysis of individual schemes. A scoring system similar to that used for RFA will be considered.

The report will be finalised by the end of November and will be considered by the Forum in January. The meeting will consider whether any changes are required in light of the RSS recommendations, and how the report will be used to respond to consultations and to lobby.

4. EiP Panel Report

Item introduced by Mike Jackson. It was noted that the key issues are:

- the new objective for an absolute reduction in traffic is unrealistic;
- there is a lack of clarity on inter-urban passenger transport and freight;
- the downgrading of the schemes list is a retrograde step;
- the approach to each of the sub regions is highly variable;
- there is concern that the Panel report does not follow through on implementation.

It was noted that the timetable for publishing the modifications had slipped to December. They will be considered by the Forum on 15 January, and by EERA on 2 February.

The Highways Agency's additional work will be completed shortly and reported to GO-East. The work will not be published further until the RSS modifications have been announced.

5. TIF

Item introduced by Natalie Blaken.

Three of EEDA's proposals for TIF Productivity have been included in the shortlist to be taken forward for business case development and appraisal:

- Nuneaton – Peterborough rail gauge enhancement;
- A14 corridor traffic management;
- A1, M1, M11 improvement of resilience and flexibility.

In addition the A14 widening: Ellington – Fen Ditton put forward by Highways Agency has been included.

Business cases have now been submitted, and the outcome of bids is expected in November. The Highways Agency agreed to circulate their business cases to the group.

ACTION: AK

Six bids had been submitted from the region for TIF Congestion funding.

It was noted that DfT had not yet responded to the letter sent by the Forum requesting that TIF should be used for regeneration as well as growth.

6. Regional Freight Study

Item introduced by Sheena Lamont

A draft brief has been sent out to officers for comment, with a deadline of 23 October. Once this has been agreed the project will be put out to tender.

It was noted that the study will look at lorry routeing, freight quality partnerships and consolidation centres, measures that will help to take lorries off inappropriate routes.

Brian Smith informed the group that DfT are working with the SatNav companies so that more appropriate routeing information is used.

7. Regional Prioritisation

Paper presented by Peter Grimm

The key issues are:

- Only the first three years of the programme are determined by the Secretary of State – however, local authorities need a longer agreed programme in order to plan and prepare sensibly.

- We will need to look at the outcome of the final East of England Plan to see how this will affect the RFA lists
- Should there be a “top slicing” to fund smaller schemes?

In discussion, there were mixed views on the need to top-slice for smaller schemes, and concerns on how this would work in practice.

It was agreed that a response to the consultation would be based on the issues raised in Section 3.1 of Peter Grimm’s paper. The issues will also be fed into EERA’s considerations.

ACTION: JW

8. Strategic Work Programme

Item introduced by Tony Ciaburro

It was noted that some schemes have been moved from “Priority List 1a” to “Committed Schemes”, and the spending profiles of all schemes updated where appropriate.

There is an overall £18m over commitment of 1a schemes, but this masks a £104m over commitment in 2006/11 with a £105m under commitment in 2011/16.

John Wood reported that monitoring of RFA is an issue to DfT at national level, and at a recent meeting they were impressed with the Forum’s monitoring process and protocol with EERA. The DfT may use it as a national model.

9. S106 Obligations

Paper introduced by Brian Smith as an information item

Attention was drawn to Section 3.6 which sets out the Audit Commission’s recommendations to improve the performance on S106 agreements, and to Section 5 which sets out how each authority is approaching the subject. One of the key issues for shire counties is the importance of working with districts.

10. Consultation on Planning and the Strategic Network

Paper introduced by Keith Dove

The paper set out a draft response to the consultations on:

- a new circular on Planning and the Strategic Road Network
- revised Guidance on Agreements with the Secretary of State for Transport under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980
- guidance on Transport Assessments

In consideration of the draft response, it was agreed that reference to specific road schemes should be removed. Subject to this change, the draft response will form the basis of the reply to DfT.

ACTION : KD/JW

11. RTF Working Arrangements

Item introduced by Dave Humby

It was agreed that:

- Suffolk will chair the Forum from April 2007;
- The rotating chairmanship should be extended to a two year term
- A forum letterhead should be developed

ACTION : JW

The protocol between EERA and RTF on monitoring the Region's transport priorities was noted.

12. Budget Statement

Item introduced by Dave Humby

The expected income for 2006/07 of £48,000 and the £35,000 expenditure on the rail study were noted.

All authorities are encouraged to send their agreed contributions to Hertfordshire as soon as possible.

ACTION: All authorities

13. AOB

Alan Kirkdale reported that initial discussions had been held between the Highways Agency and local authorities on the proposed M25 demand management measures. Further detailed discussions will be held at a later date.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 15 January 2007 – 10 am at Hertford.