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# LSCC Transport Conference

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THE UK'S INNOVATION CORRIDOR

**LSCC**  
London. Stansted.  
Cambridge. Consortium

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## Executive summary

The UK's Innovation Corridor, linking London with Cambridge, is the most important cluster of life sciences and technology in Europe.

The Corridor will be one of the world's top five regions for life sciences and tech by 2036 – competing with Boston, Silicon Valley and Singapore. To achieve this the Corridor needs world class transport: North to south, definitely, but more urgently, east to west.

With the projected growth in population within one of the UK's fastest growing economies we need to be ambitious, radical and innovative in our solutions – getting people out of their cars using high quality public transport and increasingly, walking and cycling. To achieve this we will need leadership, joined up policies, good working relations between public bodies (no silos!) and strong partnerships with the private sector.

The Innovation Corridor sits astride three sub-national transport bodies. This is why we brought together senior politicians and officers leading Transport for London (TfL) and two emerging sub-National Transport Bodies, England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Transport East, to debate how transport of the future will both stimulate this growth and ameliorate any down-sides of such rapid urban expansion.

In the spirit of debate, partnership and challenge, the conference discussed how vision and leadership combined with collaborative transport planning could join up the economic geography of the Corridor, along the road and rail networks with the sea ports and airports in the fastest growing regions in Britain.

**“Proper planning will create more productive areas. The opportunity falls to the Corridor to help join things up.” John McGill, LSCC Director**

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## Sub National Transport Boards

Although Transport for London has been in existence since 2000, Sub National Transport Boards (SNTB) are a relatively new model for devolution in the UK. More recently a transport board for England's Economic Heartland and Transport East have emerged as new entries. But what are their priorities and how do they work together to tackle the big regional issues for transport as we move toward the 2020's and beyond?

A panel of transport leaders, from business and local government, came together to discuss priorities for the sub national boards:

**Dave Hodgson MBE (Chair of EEH Strategic Transport Forum & Mayor of Bedford); Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chair of Transport East, Essex County Council); Alex Williams (Director of City Planning, Transport for London); Cllr Linda Haysey (Leader of East Herts District Council); Fatima Benzbir (National Express). And chaired by David Leam, director for infrastructure at London First**



**The panel made five main points:**

- Vision and leadership are essential to make the case to government that the East, England's Economic Heartland and London combined are the engine of growth for the UK. The SNTBs can provide this
- Capturing some of the benefits of economic growth will mean that the regions can solve their own problems – but government needs to provide the policy to allow this
- Local solutions are best devised at local level – business must be part of the discussion
- Planning must be innovative and future proofed for mid 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain
- Small scale solutions can be very effective and they are delivered quicker

And..... TfL and London First are willing to help – just ask!

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# Workshops:

## (1) East – West Links

**Chaired and presented by Martin Tugwell, Programme Director Buckinghamshire County Council and Adrian Hames, Director WSP.**

Historically, road and rail builders have favoured north to south routes such as A1(M), M11, GEML and WAML in place of East to West linkages. New planned schemes like Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc, heralded by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) as Britain's potential answer to Silicon Valley, go some way to redressing that imbalance. This group examined the need to better connect the East and West, considering the benefits and possible innovations to support this.

Plans for East West Rail are well underway which sees routes restored between Oxford and Cambridge and Aylesbury to Milton Keynes. It accounts for one half of the region's transport spine, and the western section is set for completion in the early 2020s, with the central section posing some issues. The scheme also opens opportunities for step-change connectivity north to south from Northampton to London.

Another answer to the region's connectivity issues is the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, creating a 'mile a minute' route between the cities. The scheme is in its infancy and is due to go out to public consultation next year. Along with East West Rail, this scheme is seen by the NIC as a catalyst for improving connections and delivering economic growth as a science and technology corridor.

If planned and delivered carefully, improving this connection could have many positive social and economic implications. Some opportunities considered included reimagined movement of freight with smarter logistics and distribution; a wider choice for a specialist labour market; and greater government trust in regions through the creation of an STB. The work could result in dynamic transport-led growth, creating new 'places' and 'destinations'.

There are many challenges to achieving these ambitions including the limited funding pots of local and central government and the complexity of the ecology and the landscape. It was also noted that the way regions develop business cases differed and prompted the need for collaborative working. Social aspects needed to be considered very carefully too, with a community planning thread fundamental to strategy.

### **Key points:**

1. A bold and joined-up national policy statement for the EEH
2. Plans must be future ready
3. STB should carefully consider its response to freight opportunities
4. STB should look at alternative ways to secure investment
5. STB should act as the coordinator between government and middle tier planning, helping to build confidence with house builders

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## (2) Harlow

**Chaired and presented by Claire Hamilton, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Director, Epping Forest District Council and Andrew Brambridge, Enterprise Zone Project Director, Harlow Council.**

Sitting at the heart of the innovation Corridor, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town proposes to deliver 23,000 homes through the creation of three new Harlow neighbourhoods and seven new villages. The scheme promises 5,000 new jobs, partly through science parks, along with new schools, medical facilities, leisure facilities including woodland and parkland, new shops, cafes, and an innovative transport plan with ambitions to make 50 per cent of all journeys sustainable, increasing to 60 per cent in the new communities.

The plans focus on flexible transport including excellent cycling and walking routes, car clubs, rapid electric bus system and attempting to create provision for driverless vehicles in preparation for future technology; all designed around an attractive, user-friendly environment which encourages alternative travel.

The project is complex, involving three district councils, two county councils and two LEPs. It faces many challenges like ensuring sustainable transport is delivered before housing – something which is intrinsically linked to developer cash-flow but critical in fostering behavior change. It also requires massive behaviour change for residents and in-commuters and encouraging new and existing employers to recruit locally despite a current skills gap.

Some solutions include early relationships with businesses and further close-working with the college and Stansted Airport to improve skills. Incentivising residents to use sustainable transport through reduced and affordable rates and reducing parking spaces are also potential solutions. Finances can also be supported by a new policy enabling local authorities to retain business rates created through Enterprise Zones for 25 years before pay-back.

### **Key points:**

1. Ease of use – frequent, fast and affordable. There is appetite from some for LA control over some transport services to ensure the right outcomes
2. A need to solve developer cash-flow issues to ensure transport infrastructure is delivered first
3. Community engagement – stakeholders need to feel part of it. They need to have a say, help design it. Clear and strong branding is also vital
4. Links to key employers and employment sites is critical. Consider if there is enough employment and if it's in the right places
5. Incentives – potential for free or subsidised travel for young people. Look at current parking levels and consider public sector intervention to make parking in the town centre harder.

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## (3) London's air quality initiatives

Presented by Alex Williams, Transport for London

Air quality is a major public health issue for London and one of the most significant challenges facing the capital. Areas of every London borough exceed legal NO<sub>2</sub> limits and the issue disproportionately affects the poorest communities. More than half of all air pollution is created by road transport.

Responding to the issue, The Mayor of London has set a target for 80 per cent of all journeys to be by foot, cycle or public transport by 2041, and for London to be zero carbon by 2050. To achieve this The Mayor's transport strategy comprises three components:

- Healthy streets and healthy people
- A good public transport experience
- New homes and jobs

The effects of these policies spread beyond capital boundaries due to the number of vehicles travelling into London because of its importance as an economy for business, workers and visitors.

Existing low-emission zones and toll charges are not sufficient to combat the problem and NEW Ultra Low Emission Zones will be implemented in a phased approach from next spring. Zero emission zones, banning the use of any internal combustion vehicles, will be piloted from 2025. This is popular with residents but requires a good deal of evidence to secure business support.

TfL is taking the lead by ensuring all London buses are emission free by 2037 and cabs are emission free by 2033.

Issues need to be considered such as the difficulty in evidencing business traffic due to some being prepared to pay a higher tariff when visiting occasionally. Other issues include mechanisms, the types of vehicles affected, supporting freight and servicing requirements, exemptions, enforcement, standardisation between boroughs and other UK cities and complementary measures.

### Key points:

1. Co-ordination on policy i.e. forcing developers to provide charging points in all new developments above a certain size. Similarly, for Consortium members to explore opportunities to engage with TfL to secure economies of scale for roadside equipment
2. To consider how to follow the London approach on low emission zones
3. Consider the case for a 'white van' scrappage scheme that will incentivise owners to upgrade in order to accelerate the change

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## Conclusion:

There is both a great need and great ambition for huge improvements and advances in transport across the Corridor. These plans have the potential to bring about enormous positive change, not just to the way people travel but to quality of life too.

They could create exponential economic growth, benefiting the whole country and encouraging and enabling levels of behavior change not seen in the regions before. And, if carefully and collaboratively planned and implemented, they have the potential to change the dynamics of the country's economy through the creation of further and specialised employment hubs, along with the ability for people to commute quickly and sustainably from far further afield.

There are many hurdles to overcome before this can become a reality. Bodies need to be prepared and willing to work collaboratively, joining up priorities wherever possible in order to create cohesive, wide-scale plans and be noticed by a 'cash-strapped' and 'harassed' central government.

Creative thinking and further partnership working with the private sector could hold keys to further investment opportunities; while making the most of existing assets could also bear fruit.

Future-proofing plans to ensure they can make the most of fast-paced advances in engineering and technology is critical to the longevity of a well-connected, prosperous economy.

And finally, bringing stakeholders along for the journey, listening, learning and allowing them to be part of it is fundamental in bringing projects forward.