

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 7 MARCH 2018****MIDLANDS CONNECT – SUB NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY****MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which would be submitted to the Cabinet on 9 March 2018 to advise of Midlands Connect's draft proposals to become a Sub-national Transport Body (STB) and to seek Cabinet's approval of the Authority's response to the proposals, with particular reference to the consultation on the proposed STB voting options and functions. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) Members welcomed the proposal as it appeared to be the only way in which Leicestershire would get funding for sizeable and meaningful transport infrastructure. The Commission was advised that the County Council had secured £92 million for transport infrastructure in the last five years but that the STB would be better placed than individual local transport authorities to lobby and bid for future funding. It would also be a statutory consultee on transport matters and would therefore be a body that the Government was required to interact with.
- (ii) The Director confirmed that officers were comfortable with the proposal that no single authority would have a veto on decisions. Only elected members would have voting rights and it was expected that decisions would normally be made by consensus, either through compromise or agreeing an approach. When a vote was required, precautions such as a super majority were in place to safeguard the position of each local transport authority. In addition, if the governance arrangements were not working effectively, the Midlands Connect Partnership Board would be able to agree to change them. The Commission suggested that officers request further details on the definition of consensus in this context.
- (iii) The Commission supported the recommendation that the Council's preferred voting option was to have voting weighted on a population base of one vote for every 200,000 people, as this was felt to be as fair as possible. Members were also pleased to note that representatives on the Strategic Board were fairly balanced between the East and West Midlands.
- (iv) The recommendation to the Cabinet to seek further clarity about the Scrutiny Committee proposal was welcomed. The Commission suggested that Midlands Connect should be advised that for transparent and effective scrutiny, membership of the Scrutiny Committee should be drawn from the scrutiny bodies of Local Transport Authorities. Executive Members of Local Transport

Authorities should be excluded. It should also be possible for the Scrutiny Committee to co-opt members, for example from transport operators, other transport bodies or service users.

- (v) The Commission requested that formal arrangements for the STP to report back to its constituent bodies were developed. Currently, any decision required by Midlands Connect was the subject of a report to the Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny Committee. It was acknowledged that this arrangement would need revisiting and formalising in the light of the proposal for Midlands Connect to become an STB.
- (vi) The governance arrangements for the STB took Combined Authorities into account. If any new Combined Authorities were established in the Midlands Connect area, discussions would be held with Midlands Connect to determine how this would affect voting arrangements.
- (vii) It would be important to ensure that Leicestershire's transport priorities continued to be recognised by Midlands Connect. The Commission was pleased to note that a number of Leicestershire's priorities were included in the Midlands Connect Strategy and were therefore likely to be recognised by the Government. In addition the Council, through its membership of Transport for the East Midlands, was working to strengthen relationships across the East Midlands Local Transport Authorities and to establish an agreed position on transport priorities for the region. It was expected that this would enable East Midlands Transport Authorities to be more of an equal partner in Midlands Connect.
- (viii) It was noted that the priorities in the Midlands Connect Strategy were at different stages of development and that feasibility would be tested at each stage. It was not possible for Midlands Connect to give a definite statement of intent in relation to its priorities. With regard to the proposal to develop an A46 Expressway it was confirmed that this was a priority for the region because of its benefits in relation to connectivity, resilience, allowing growth and providing some relief to the Birmingham motorway network. To that end, a feasibility study was being undertaken. Members suggested that some evidence of confidence in the scheme's deliverability would be welcomed in due course.
- (ix) The rail priorities for Midlands Connect were high level and did not include the Ivanhoe Line. Similarly, Leicestershire County Council's rail priorities were the direct rail link from Leicester to Coventry and enhancements to the Leicester to Birmingham rail connections. The Ivanhoe Line was not a priority as the proposal faced a number of challenges, including the cost and lack of a link to Leicester Railway Station. Work however was ongoing to establish if Government's rail strategy launched in 2017 could provide any support to the development of the Ivanhoe Line proposals.

Mr Bill asked for his concern to be placed on record that, by including the A46 Expressway as a priority in the Midlands Connect Strategy, the County Council was

promoting a major project without knowing its impact on the local road network, countryside and the population of Leicestershire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments now made be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 9 March 2018 and that the Cabinet's attention be drawn in particular to the view that that for transparent and effective scrutiny, membership of the Scrutiny Committee should be drawn from the scrutiny bodies of Local Transport Authorities;
- (b) That officers be requested to submit a further report on the Scrutiny arrangements to the Scrutiny Commission once the arrangements have been clarified.

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