

HoftSW Joint Committee

Meeting date – 25th May 2018

PENINSULA SUB NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY – PROGRESS REPORT

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report builds on the verbal update given to the last Joint Committee on progress with the proposal to establish a Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for the peninsula. It presents the current position on the proposal and next steps.
- 1.2. The report is for information only.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **The Joint Committee is recommended to note the report.**

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 It is important that the Joint Committee is aware of the progress on this work which is an important element of the transport theme under the Delivery Plan. The aim of establishing the Sub-National Transport Body is to enable the transport authorities to be able to respond effectively to the Government's request for more strategic thinking about transport investment. The focus of the new partnership will be on strategic, transformational and large scale activity with the aim of enabling improvements in regional productivity and sustainable economic and housing growth.

4. Background

- 4.1

Nationally three STBs have been formed and are working towards becoming statutory authorities. They are: Transport for the North, Midlands Connect and England's Economic Heartland. In addition, a shadow STB has been created for South East England and work has begun on creating a STB for East Anglia. The South West remains the only part of England not covered.
A recent consultation document on defining a new tier in the major road network for England (MRN), has highlighted Government's intention to

work with STBs to agree investment priorities. Authorities in the South West have identified that a failure to put STBs in place would present a considerable risk in missing investment opportunities.

5. Proposal for a Peninsula STB

- 5.1** The emerging approach is for two STBs to be formed in the South West. One likely to be called the 'Western Gateway' covering the West of England Combined Authorities with BANES, Bristol City, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch; and one covering the Peninsula Authorities of Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset and potentially Dorset (after their reorganisation). Swindon appear to be aligning with England's Economic Heartland. 'Corridor Alliances' such as the A303 alliance and A38 South Bristol Link group are likely to continue as an important mechanism to promote the need for investment on corridors that straddle STB areas. There will inevitably be cross boundary interests with the Western Gateway STB and it is likely that this will be recognised through the ability for an STB to have associate membership of another within the governance arrangements. The Department for Transport seem accepting of the proposal to have two STBs covering the South West but there is a need to develop a shared narrative on the reasons as part of a formal proposal to the DfT, and Ministers.
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- 5.2** A formal proposal is being prepared for the peninsula authorities of Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset and Dorset recommending the establishment of a Shadow Sub-National Transport Body at the earliest opportunity in the autumn. This will initially be an informal partnership and options for the governance and resourcing arrangements to be applied to the new body are being investigated. It is important that this joint working arrangement allows the transport authorities to engage effectively with Government on investment planning. The option to move towards establishing a statutory body status in due course remains but is not considered essential at this stage. As part of the governance arrangements it will be important to identify how the STB will relate to the Peninsula Rail Task Force and whether its creation provides the possibility to review existing governance arrangements associated with transport investment prioritisation.
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- 5.3** The informal partnership arrangement is likely to comprise a body of elected members from each authority together with representative of those other bodies responsible for transport infrastructure in the area (Highways England and Network Rail). Homes England representation would also be considered a valuable addition to the body. Discussions will be required to establish how the body would engage with and involve Local Enterprise Partnerships and draft terms of reference assume that the LEPs covering the area would be represented in the new body. An officer group would support the body and a stakeholder group is recommended to engage with District Councils, transport operators and other key stakeholders. A proposed timeline of key activities is set out below:

Activity	Target Timescale
Propose initial governance arrangements and framework to form a shadow SW Peninsula STB.	May 2018
Prepare resource plan to support the formulation, administration of the STB and technical workstreams.	May 2018
Prepare and implement communication and engagement plan.	June 2018
Draft and agree a resolution for Transport Authorities to approve to form the new shadow body as an informal partnership.	June 2018
Agree formal statement for Transport Authorities in the South West Region to recognise and support the formulation of the two proposed STBs.	June 2018
Transport Authorities approve resolution.	July 2018
Commence preparation of a formal business case.	July 2018
First formal meeting of Shadow Peninsula STB	September 2018
Submission to Government to confirm formation of a shadow body as an informal partnership and intent to consider the merits of forming a statutory body in due course.	By October 2018 to inform Autumn Budget Statement
<p>Progress key STB activities: (Indicative activities subject to further development likely to include):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Government. • Establishment of technical work streams. • Preparation of evidence base for strategic transport investments. • Communication and stakeholder engagement. • Development of investment priorities and programme. • Administering governance arrangements. • Finalisation of business case for consideration of statutory STB status. 	Tailored to Government investment timetable and roll-out of the Major Road Network Proposals.

6. Consultation, communication and engagement

- 6.1** Lead members from transport authorities across the South West have been engaged in developing the approach detailed for the South West. Member briefings on progress with the peninsula body have also been sent to the members of the peninsula authorities. The next stage in the process of establishing the body is to take a formal decision proposal through the governance arrangements of the transport authorities as per the timetable outlined above.
- 6.2** As part of developing a package of support for the informal partnership, there will be a need to develop a communications strategy. It makes sense to build on the communications strategy already in place for the Joint

Committee extended to recognise and include the authorities from outside of the HotSW partnership. It will be important for the sub-national body to engage effectively with MPs and Ministers.

7. Options considered and the reasons for rejecting them

- 7.1** The 'do nothing' option was not considered for the reasons set out in the paper. The move to develop the proposal for two sub-national transport bodies for the South West was necessary because it became clear during the early discussions that it was not going to be appropriate to establish a single body covering the whole South West due to the size of the area and diversity of the economic challenges and infrastructure investment needs & solutions. The South West Peninsula makes sense as a manageable and functional economic geography within which a coherent transport strategy can be developed along with manageable and effective prioritisation of strategic transport investment. The proposal for a peninsula based body is based on a collaboration of authorities that want to work together and this is the key to its success.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1** Equalities implications will be considered as part of the formal decision making process to establish the body.

9. Other Implications

9.1 Legal:

As stated the intention is to establish an informal advisory body initially and the governance arrangements to be developed will need to detail the functions of the body, together with decision making and accountability provisions. Legal implications will be detailed as part of the formal decision making process to establish the body.

9.2 Financial:

At this stage the work on developing the proposal has been carried by officers on an 'in house' basis and therefore no additional costs have been incurred. This approach will continue for the time being but a full assessment of the support requirements is a priority for the authorities. There may be an opportunity in the autumn statement to obtain funding from the Government to support the establishment and administration of the partnership.

9.3 HR

As stated above the work on developing the proposal has been carried by officers on an 'in house' basis. Part of the considerations yet to be had includes decisions on how this body will be resourced and supported. The plan will include the appointment of an administering authority to support the partnership.

9.4 Risk

The risk at this stage is of not establishing this partnership. Without it there is a real risk that the area will fall behind others that have such partnerships in terms of influencing Government and accessing funding. A loss of

influence and investment would be to the wider detriment of our businesses and communities.

9.5 Health and Well-being
No direct impacts at this stage.

9.6 Health and Safety
No direct impacts at this stage.

9.7 Sustainability
No direct impacts at this stage but this will be an important consideration for the peninsula partnership once established.

9.8 Community Safety
No direct impacts at this stage.

9.9 Privacy
No direct impacts at this stage.

10. Background papers

10.1. None

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.