



East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs
Secretary
Treasurer

Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP
Heidi Allen MP, Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP and Sandy Martin MP
Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP

NON-VERBATIM MINUTES

East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group

AGM and Sustainable Growth in the East of England: The Transport Implications

Tuesday 26th March, 17:00 - 18:30, The Thatcher Room, Portcullis House

Peter Aldous, Co-chair of the Group and MP for Waveney, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and asked for any corrections to the minutes of the last meeting held on 10th January. There were none so the minutes were agreed.

Daniel Zeichner, Co-chair of the Group and MP for Cambridge, said that there was one 'matter arising' regards the East of England's representation in Brussels, and the East of England Brussels Office's proposed closure. Mayor David Hodgson said that the reasons had been taken for financial reasons alone.

AGM

Steve Barwick for the Secretariat reported that no current officer had indicated they would not want to stand and all officers with their current roles were duly re-elected. A finance and expenditure sheet was prepared and signed by Co-chair of the Group, Peter Aldous MP.

Evidence session: Sustainable growth in the East of England: The transport implications

Peter Aldous MP introduced the session by remarking that the lack of adequate transport infrastructure is holding back the potential of the whole East of England. He also pointed out that as well as the CaMkOx and London Stansted Cambridge corridors that were to be discussed, there are a number of other vitally important growth corridors: A11, A14 and A47

Professor Sir Tim Besley, Lead Transport Commissioner on the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), presented a number of slides – available here – pointing out that the Government accepted that when it established the NIC it needed a long-term vision, not one circumscribed by the Parliamentary time-line. He also said that transport cannot be seen in isolation from other infrastructure and must therefore be connected to the housing and jobs agendas.

Regarding CaMkOx specifically he said NIC has brought all constituencies together but as this includes 20 District Councils, 4 County Councils, 1 Mayor and 1 Metro Mayor as well as 6 universities and other leading stakeholders, governance going forward is challenging. However, there is an agreed independent chair and a Ministerial champion. The other key challenge is to speed up delivery including East West Rail and the Milton Keynes housing deal.



East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs
Secretary
Treasurer

Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP
Heidi Allen MP, Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP and Sandy Martin MP
Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP

Dr Ann Limb, Chair of the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC), began her remarks by stressing that transport is integral to the growth potential of the corridor represented by the LSCC. It also places a strong emphasis on enhancing and supporting the area's natural capital. There are a number of key north-south routes including A1M, M11 and A10. These mean the LSCC connects to Norfolk and Suffolk as well as London and therefore is involved in 3 subnational transport bodies.

The major difference between the CaMkOx and LSCC corridors is that the latter does not include nationally significant projects such as East West Rail. However, there are a number of key projects that would have a regionally significant impact on prosperity and where investment is required to deliver improvements. These include Ely Junction, four tracking to Stansted (which, if Crossrail 2 is delayed, must be delivered separately) completion of the A14 improvements, Junction 25 on the M25 and the A10 north of the M25, Cambridge South station and the A414 east-west across Herts and into Harlow. In addition the area between south Cambridge and Uttlesford is in need of review.

Mayor Dave Hodgson, Mayor of Bedford and Chair of England's Economic Heartland, began his remarks by saying that he recognises shortcomings on day to day travel for current commuters. He pointed out that there are numerous projects that are very important including access to the expressway between Bedford and Cambridge in less than forty minutes and reducing the number of roundabouts on the A1 – with the replacement of the Black Cat the most urgent (four of the five roundabouts that remain on the A1 are in Bedfordshire).

He pointed out that the east west corridor was of extreme importance across East of England. He also said that the A47 east west corridor across the north of the East of England was of high importance. He ended by saying that in some respects transport is regressing – for example Bedford intercity services are being removed and bus rail replacement services have been introduced – but in other ways they are moving forward: the role of the Sub National Transport Body is growing and he looks forward to working with colleagues across the East of England.

Cllr Gagan Mohindra, Member of Transport East and Economic Development lead for Essex County Council, began his remarks by explaining that he was speaking in place of the Chair of Transport East, Cllr Kevin Bentley, who gives his apologies. He said that the importance of ports should not be overlooked: in fact, Essex has the second largest coastline of any county in England. Ports were, for example, critical to ensuring that businesses like Sizewell had been built and continue to function.

He also referenced Stansted which is the East of England's largest employer with 12,000 people working there but it needs better transport links both for employees and customers. Councillor Mohindra stated that there are plans for 180,000 new homes in Essex. Those who go to live there will need easier, better transport links. He said that bodies such as Transport East are critical in order that that we meet the challenges of the twenty first century.



East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs
Secretary
Treasurer

Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP
Heidi Allen MP, Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP and Sandy Martin MP
Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP

Questions, comments and discussion

Peter Aldous MP said there is a real need for integration given the large number of players. This is a disadvantage when compared to Greater Manchester or Liverpool City Region. The APPG will work with all areas, each of which has their own challenges, but together we can create a more integrated transport plan.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said when one considers what the Lander can do in Germany – this is what we should aspire to! – although questions arise with regards to the powers and resources available. He also pointed out London has the power to cross-subsidise bus routes. Currently powers and resources are distributed in an imbalanced way.

Daniel Zeichner MP asked about the advantages of a national policy statement. Certainty helps investors and a 30 year time horizon is what is required. For example, we have been talking about East West Rail for ten years but it won't be delivered for another 10 years.

Professor Sir Tim Besley said that there is a need to deliver on plans rather than simply have ambitions, and that success would boost the reputation of taking a strategic approach. Everything is in place for CaMkOx so we need to make it work. Highways England and Network Rail – both of whom are very divided internally - need to be at the table.

Duncan Symonds, IFM Investors, introduced his remarks by declaring that IFM invest in both Anglian Water and London Stansted. There is clearly a need for more investment but what is the role of the private sector? We are currently at an impasse and looking for more certainty given the uncertain future of our access to the European Investment Bank which has previously been a catalytic investor. Should there be a genuine decentralised finding model instead of having to go cap in hand to the Government, which is disempowering.

Ann Limb said that Milton Keynes is an example of how investment can be taken forward. *James Sloan, CBI*, wondered whether a development corporation would help? But who would be responsible – when one drills down into the specifics of a proposal for this kind of organisation there are lots of detailed issues to be ironed out.

Cllr Mohindra said development corporations could take away from democratic processes and we need to make these accountable. However local authorities actually have a good track record of delivering efficiently.

Daniel Johns, Anglian Water, said that CaMkOx does pretty much fit with Anglia Water's geography but there are 6 planning authorities so a great deal of fragmentation and it is very unlikely even if there was a common vision that it would be delivered. Do we need a strengthened regional development agency and regional planning committee?



East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs
Secretary
Treasurer

Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP
Heidi Allen MP, Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP and Sandy Martin MP
Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP

Jonathan Oates, London Stansted Airport (LSA), said transport infrastructure is absolutely the foundation of growth and airports are critical to the success of each region. LSA have done well getting users to arrive by rail – currently 52% compared to Heathrow which is just 17%. However, we need to see the West Anglia Mainline improved as this will expand Stansted’s catchment area and ultimately mean we can deliver more long-haul routes.

LSA plans to employ a further 5,000 more people most of which will be recruited in London – the commuter experience for them is therefore also very important. As there are doubts in regards to the Crossrail 2 timeline, we need clarity about when four-tracking will be delivered and how it will be funded. Finally, Stansted does not have a view on a development agency but would like to see a regional spatial strategy again.

Cllr Mohindra said that regional spatial strategies would need democratic accountability.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said some LEPs were well organised and very effective regards delivery. But some perform less well and cover overlapping other areas, which is problematic. The government recently decided that number of elected officials on a LEP board have been reduced to a third which is another retrograde step. That said, they do perform excellent service in some areas and a regional development agency may be too remote, except possibly on transport issues.

Professor Sir Tim Besley said the NIC works constructively with LEPs and it would be helpful if it was agreed for the long term that LEPs would be the guardian of local industrial strategies. On the matter of Crossrail 2, which has been raised a number of times, he hopes it will get back on track soon.

Ann Limb said that she had chaired SEMLEP which was England’s top performing LEP. Although it is true that LEPs do vary, we should stick with a *local* vehicle and work with the Council leaders; it is their role to agree priorities. Permanence is very valuable in Local Government.

Conclusions and upcoming meetings

Peter Aldous, Co-chair of the Group and MP for Waveney, said it was important for business and politicians to work together but electoral accountability is very important. The meeting has highlighted that there is a problem of fragmentation which needs to be looked at again. Finally, thinking about our planned representations to the Spending Review, we need to be careful what we are asking for; it is not just about money but the projects and processes we back. It will also be important we don’t go in as ‘lone rangers’ – we need to again agree one submission together.

The East of England APPG is kindly supported by:





East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs
Secretary
Treasurer

Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP
Heidi Allen MP, Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP and Sandy Martin MP
Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP