
To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Date: 4th November 2020

Subject: Very Light Progress Update

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) an update on Very Light Rail Progress since the last report in December 2019.

2 Recommendations

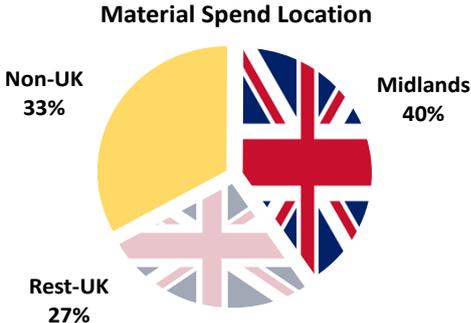
- 2.1 The Board are recommended to:
- 1) Support the ongoing delivery of the VLR Programme.
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Background and Information

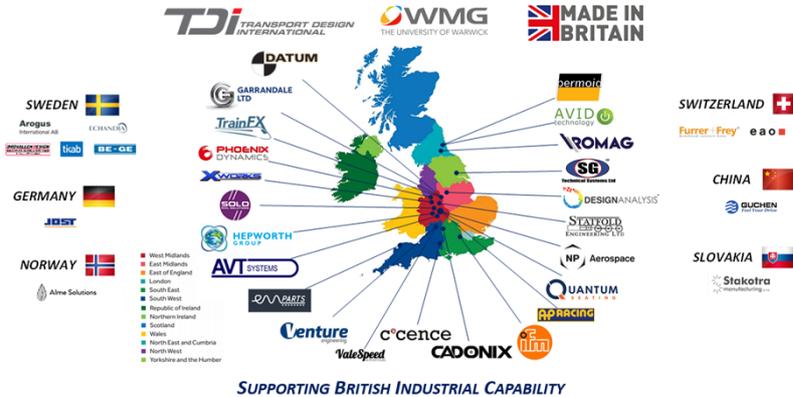
- 3.1 Since the last report, significant progress on VLR has been made, despite the challenges posed by COVID 19 and working from home.
- 3.2 This reports sets out progress made against the following work streams
- Vehicle
 - Track
 - First Route
- 3.3 Vehicle assembly is underway at NP Aerospace. Vehicle assembly commenced in July 2020 and Cllr O'Boyle visited the build site together with partners on the 19th August. The photo below shows progress made at that time:



- 3.4 The vehicle will be ready for Factory Acceptance Tests to commence in December and will move to Dudley in February 2021 to undertake 8 weeks of Site Acceptance Testing. The Dudley Innovation Centre Test Track facility and a workshop is currently under construction and is expected to be ready to receive the vehicle in early February.
- 3.5 The innovations and design within the vehicle are subject to Patent Applications which are currently underway.
- 3.6 It should be noted that TDI have sourced 67% of the supply chain for the prototype vehicle from the UK, as demonstrated by the image below:



- 3.7 The following image shows where the supply chain is located within the UK and overseas:



- 3.8 A key aspiration for the project is to ensure the product develops the manufacturing capability within the region. This will be key to the manufacturing strategy for both the vehicle and track form.

4 Track

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made on the track workstream. COVID 19 did delay the start to the track R&D whilst the partners ascertained how we would work together from remote locations. However, we were able to get into contract with our innovation partners WMG and Ingerop in May.
- 4.2 Since May, significant work has been undertaken to reach an agreed concept to take forward to detailed design. The concept to be progressed was approved at the end of September and is now in the detailed design phase, which is expected to be complete by May 21. Once the design has been approved, component testing will be initiated.

- 4.3 The track concept is subject to a Patent Application which is underway.
- 4.4 In order to build a Test Track of the new trackform to initiate integrated system testing, further funding is required. A bid to DfT is being developed to put forward a case for £8.8m investment to achieve Proof of Concept and progress the route workstream.

5 Route

- 5.1 CCC continue to progress the route workstream to develop the first route to University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire. Utilities and drainage surveys are currently underway to assess route alignment options and the team are about to commission a package of work to progress the outline design concept.
- 5.2 In addition, further feasibility work to explore a potential extension to Ansty Park has been commissioned as a Park and Ride facility could increase the Benefit to Cost Ratio of the proposed first route.
- 5.3 In parallel to the above, CCC are progressing work to develop and confirm city-wide transport objectives and future transport needs, taking into consideration last mile solutions (such as cycle super highways and e scooters) and how this will integrate with VLR. A VLR network plan will be developed over the coming months.
- 5.4 Funding to continue progress on the route workstream is required and will form part of the DfT bid, which is due to be submitted in late January 2021. To support the submission to DfT, an outline Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) detailing the benefits that VLR will deliver, through enabling R&D, mobilising a new manufacturing sector in the region and providing an attractive affordable rail based system for small cities, has been commissioned.

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