Purpose of report:

- To provide a verbal update to members on progress with the Government’s ‘plugged in places’ initiative in the East of England; and
- to set out proposals for EValu8 to continue to work closely with the East of England’s Local Transport Authorities, and with innovators, vehicle manufacturers, dealerships and ‘early adopters’ more widely, to help build the low carbon vehicle (LCV) market in the East of England and capitalise on the opportunities offered by the emerging regional charging network.

Recommendation:

1. Note the contents of this report and the verbal update provided at the meeting;
2. Provide comments on the proposal to establish an East of England Low Carbon Vehicle Network with the LTAs as founder members;
3. Give the RTF Secretariat, working with the STSG officer group, the authority to agree with EValu8 the detailed requirements that the LTAs might have from such a Network and to establish terms of reference and potential funding models.

1 Background

1.1 The Forum has previously received papers and presentations from representatives of EEDA and EValu8 Transport Innovations Ltd on the EValu8 ‘plugged in places’ initiative in the East of England and so members will already be aware of much of the background to this project.

1.2 In summary, however, the project:
- is part of a wider £30 million government initiative to provide match-funding for the installation of recharging points for electric vehicles and has a total value of around £7 million, with up to £2.9million match-funding from government, with the rest coming from EEDA, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and match funding commitments from private and public sector partners for recharging posts;
- is developing a network of EV charging points across the East of England composed of up to 1,200 post-mounted recharging points, 400 home charging points, installations in 500 ‘EV-ready’ Eco-Homes, and 8 rapid chargers;
- this network, known as Source East (see http://www.sourceeast.net/), will give member drivers unlimited access to charging points in the network. the project is
being delivered by EValu8 Transport Innovations Ltd, a not-for-profit company set up by the University of Hertfordshire to manage the delivery of EValu8 project following the proposed closure of EEDA who led on the early stages of the project;

- EValu8 will fund 50% of eligible costs for the installation of up to 600 double-headed recharging posts (1,200 recharging points) across the East of England, but can now fund 75% of eligible costs for installations by Local Authorities.

1.3 A verbal update on progress to date with the charging network, and EValu8’s wider work, will be provided at the meeting.

2 Proposed ‘Low Carbon Vehicle Network’ for the East of England

2.1 As the network of charging infrastructure develops across the East of England, and in the UK more widely, there is a need to build and support the low carbon vehicle market. To facilitate this it is proposed that a membership organisation, a ‘Low Carbon Vehicle Network’, is established in the East of England.

2.2 Early discussions on this were held at RTF in March 2011 and members were supportive. However this was not taken forward at that time as the view was taken that the initial focus should be on progressing the delivery of charging points.

2.3 With the coverage of the charging network continuing to expand, a number of LTAs have suggested that now is the time to develop and implement the previously discussed proposals for a membership network. There is also interest in this from the wider low carbon vehicle community including manufacturers and dealerships, and potentially from the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) who see economic benefits from this growing sector.

3 Potential tasks for the network

3.1 It is proposed that detailed discussion on the scope of work, and potential funding models, is delegated to the RTF Secretariat and the supporting STSG officer group. However, potential activities that the group could undertake, subject to the views of RTF members and further agreement, include:

- Establishing an East of England-wide network of key players in the low carbon vehicle arena, including both public sector and businesses, which could meet twice a year in conference-style format to explore key issues, exchange ideas, and develop key actions to promote the further take-up and use of EVs – the LTAs would be founder members;

- Co-ordinating and delivering on actions identified by the network, potentially including events to promote the uptake and use of EVs in the East of England;

- Establishing a members area on the EValu8 website as an on-line resource for EV-related material;

- Providing training sessions / CPD in the EV arena for key members and officers to better equip them with delivery in this fast-moving area;

- Supporting local publicity events such as post launches through marketing material and the provision of electric vehicles;
• Identifying potential funding sources to exploit opportunities for further investment in EV-related infrastructure and activity;

• Contributing to the co-ordination of funding bids on behalf of East of England LTAs;

• Other activities based on suggestions from RTF members.

3.2 EValu8’s resource is currently restricted to delivering the EValu8 project and roll out of the East of England’s recharging infrastructure. Additional funding would enable significant added value to be attained by providing the resource to make full use of the existing network, membership and learning gained through the EValu8 project. Subject to the approval of RTF members, potential funding models could be discussed in detail with the RTF Secretariat and STSG officer group.

4 Potential benefits

The proposed Low Carbon Vehicle Network would bring a number of potential benefits to the East of England’s LTAs including:

• Demonstrating their continuing strategic leadership in low carbon transport;
• Contributing to carbon reduction from transport in line with policy;
• Showcasing LTA joint working, and co-working between the public sector and business, in the low carbon vehicle arena;
• Providing a potential forum for cross-LEP engagement;
• Maximising use of limited resource;
• Providing national and local policy makers with direct link to business;
• Enabling collaborative work on the ‘live’ EValu8 project;
• Facilitating sharing of best practice on, for example, EV policy incentives;
• Providing local politicians with opportunity to ‘ride and drive’ EVs, and opportunities to access EVs for use at post launch and publicity events;
• Identifying other potential funding sources and such as those from the EU and providing support in co-ordinating joint funding bids, thereby reducing the burden on local authority officers.

5 In Summary

5.1 The views of RTF members on the proposals set out above to establish a Low Carbon Vehicle Network, and the potential scope of work of the network as it related to the LTAs, are welcomed.

5.2 Subject to RTF agreement, EValu8 will work with the RTF Secretariat to firm up and agree the detailed scope of work that could be undertaken with a view to launching the network during the Spring.

5.3 For further information on the work of EValu8, including details on the financial support available, please contact the EValu8 team at info@evalu8-ti.org.uk or call 01707 284742. Further information, including answers to a large number of ‘FAQs’, is also available at our website http://www.evalu8-ti.org.uk.