

Three-year Business Plan 2022 to 2025



CONTENTS

Foreword 3

Introduction..... 4

Our region: A unique opportunity for Global Britain 6

Vision led, evidence based..... 8

Making it happen..... 10

Three-Year Work Programme 12

Regional Evidence Base..... 13

Planning for Net Zero 14

Improving Strategic Connectivity 16

An Integrated Transport Network..... 18

Innovation..... 20

Regional Scheme Prioritisation and Development..... 21

Capacity and Capability to deliver 22

FOREWORD

This three year business plan marks a significant point in England's Economic Heartland's history. For the first time, EEH is able to produce a plan for the longer term thanks to the confidence the Department of Transport has placed in us by indicating its level of funding over the next three years.

The plan sets out a programme of work aimed at realising the vision in our transport strategy: to create a world class transport system which supports economic growth while working towards net zero.

This document details an exciting and ambitious programme of work. It sets out how EEH will:

- Significantly upgrade our evidence base while continuing to ensure it is accessible and free to use by all partners in the region.
- Continue to shape the national agenda on the need for localised, place-based approaches to planning connectivity and cutting emissions.
- Produce a robust regional investment pipeline based on our technical work, including the programme of connectivity studies which will complete by 2025.
- Help realise an integrated transport system with active travel and public transport at its heart.
- Strengthen engagement with the Heartland's world class innovators to harness their expertise and trial new solutions within the region.

EEH is moving into a new exciting phase. One with a focus not just on identifying investment priorities, but playing a proactive role in making and progressing the case for individual schemes, while supporting our local authority partners to do the same for their own projects.

Based on indicative funding from DfT, nearly £1 million will be allocated by EEH to supporting the development of strategic outline business cases by the end of this plan. Meanwhile, during 2022 we will develop our proof of concept for a 'centre of excellence' which will support local authorities on their individual early scheme development. Following the proof of concept stage, we will look to secure additional funding to realise the proposal for a Centre of Excellence in full.

Our core values will remain just as true over the next three years as at the time of our inception in 2015. We will continue to be collaborative and transparent; ambitious and evidence led; and operating at a scale which provides tangible benefit for the region.

Indeed, these values have never been more important as we seek to realise the ambitions of our region. Announcements made by government over the last year - including through the Spending Review and levelling-up white paper - have made it clear that our region will need to make the strongest possible case to secure investment in its infrastructure.

The rationale for that investment remains as strong as ever. As a hub of science and technology innovation we power the ambitions of Global Britain, while as a net contributor to the economy we fund levelling-up across the country. As a region, we have the potential to give even more but conversely, a lack of investment in our infrastructure risks putting a brake on that shared ambition.

As we deliver the work set out in this plan over the next three years, we look forward to working with partners and government to ensure the Heartland plays a leading role in its aspirations for the country.

Clr Richard Wenham
Chair, England's Economic
Heartland.

INTRODUCTION

England's Economic Heartland is at the forefront of planning and promoting the transport infrastructure and policy framework required to realise our region's economic potential while reducing the transport system's impact on the environment.

As one of seven sub-national transport bodies, we are jointly funded by the Department for Transport and our local authority partners.

Our strategic role includes the following areas:

- **PRIORITISING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT:** We advise government and its agencies on the infrastructure investment priorities that are needed to deliver the vision of the region's transport strategy, 'Connecting People, Transforming Journeys'. Our advice is based on our comprehensive evidence base and extensive engagement with our local authority partners.
- **SHAPING THE AGENDA:** We help shape the national transport agenda by offering fresh perspectives, challenging conventional wisdoms and representing our partners' interests and issues to Whitehall. Our collaborative relationships allows us to provide a new level of support and advice to government as policies and proposals are developed and implemented, including on the big strategic challenges facing the country such as planning for net zero (EEH leads the collaboration on net zero between the STBs).
- **DEVELOPING INVESTABLE PROPOSITIONS:** Beginning this financial year, we will be bringing forward infrastructure priorities into investable propositions by producing pre-strategic outline business cases, based on a robust prioritisation framework to be agreed by our partners.
- **SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL AUTHORITIES:** EEH helps local authorities realise the ambitions for their places. We develop the tools and facilitate the shared learning and best practice which allows them to understand how the big strategic challenges relate to their local areas and to identify the potential solutions. We are supporting the capacity and skills of our local authorities by developing a regional 'centre for excellence' – a hub for the development of our partners' early-stage transport schemes.
- **HARNESSING INNOVATION:** Our region is world-renowned for its centres of scientific and technological excellence, including in future mobility. We work with private and public sector partners to harness this innovation for the benefit of the region and the wider UK.
- **COORDINATING INVESTMENT:** Our regional scale allows us to join up strategic transport planning across borders and modes, with a focus on place based solutions which protect and enhance their environment and support net zero. We also help maximise the return on investment in strategic infrastructure, using it as a catalyst for improving local and digital connectivity and regenerating areas.

Informed by:

- Transport strategy (vision, principles and policies)
- Evidence base
- Investment pipeline
- Local, regional and national stakeholder priorities and policy landscape

Local partners



Local enterprise partnerships and growth boards

- Representing partners on the national and regional scale
- Delivering clear regional priorities
- Identifying and escalating local challenges and opportunities
- Driving capacity and capability in transport planning and infrastructure delivery skills across the region



- Ensuring regional investment priorities are clear
- Influencing the national agenda
- Grounding government decisions in the wider regional and local context
- Supporting delivery of government priorities



HM Government

Including:



Department for Transport

Collaborating with:

- Private sector innovators
- Network Rail
- East West Railway Company
- Great British Railways transition team
- National Highways
- Planning authorities
- Other STBs
- Academia
- Wider transport sector
- Statutory organisations
- Representative and interest groups

OUR REGION: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL BRITAIN

Stretching from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire down to Hertfordshire, the England's Economic Heartland region is of critical importance to UK prosperity. Our success contributes to the UK's success, while our geographic position makes the performance of our transport system of critical importance to the rest of the country.

EEH's work in helping to realise a world class transport system for the Heartland contributes towards:

- **GLOBAL BRITAIN:** Britain's competitiveness on the global stage is in part down to what happens in our region: our world class businesses, universities; science parks, laboratories, and iconic venues such as Silverstone, Pinewood and Elstree around which world class clusters have formed. The Heartland produces the innovation, enterprises and intellectual property which are then spun out beyond the region, creating jobs and prosperity right across the UK. Conversely, the region competes with economic powerhouses in Europe and beyond to attract major international investment. For these global investors, the choice is between the Heartland and, for example the Rhine-Ruhr area of Germany or Ile-de-France surrounding Paris, and not a different part of the UK. Improved connectivity will link clusters of excellence, connect labour to jobs and increase productivity levels (which remain below that of our global competitors).
- **CONTRIBUTION TO LEVELLING UP:** The Heartland is one of the few regions in the UK to be a net contributor to the Treasury. However, our future success cannot be guaranteed. Through investment in the right infrastructure in the right places, the constraints which currently limit our economic potential can be removed. Our region can continue to grow its contribution to UK Plc, required to fund levelling up across the country.
- **UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITIES:** Our headline economic success must not mask the daily struggles faced by many Heartland residents living in pockets of significant deprivation in both urban and rural areas. Improved connectivity will spread economic opportunities for people across the region, ensuring they have access to employment, housing, education, health and leisure. It will be a catalyst for the regeneration of our urban centres and is a key component of better place-making – for both for new and established communities.
- **UNION CONNECTIVITY:** The performance of the Heartland's transport system is vital to the UK. There are a high number of 'through journeys' across our region by HGVs and LGVs, as they travel to London and the ports to the south and east, while the northern part of the Heartland forms part of the 'golden triangle of logistics'. Luton, Heathrow and Stansted airports served more than 126 million passengers in 2019, and handled nearly 75% of the UK's air freight. The importance of the region is recognised in the Union Connectivity Review, where a significant number of corridors are included in the proposed UK strategic network.
- **NET ZERO:** The transport sector is the biggest single emitter of carbon in the UK. In the Heartland, where there is a higher than average rural population and significant car dependence, emissions from transport are 30% higher than the UK average. Supporting the move to electric vehicles is vital – but will not on its own be enough to reach net zero. Further intervention, including a shift to public transport, active travel and digital infrastructure, is required for the Heartland – and therefore the UK – to achieve its legal net zero by 2050 requirement.

KEY STATS

In 2019 the region's GVA stood at **£168 billion**, equating to almost **9% of UK total GVA**.

Economic growth between 2012-2019 was **35% compared to 30% nationally**.

Nearly 35% of Heartland residents live in small market towns (under 30,000 population) and their rural hinterlands, compared with **23%** in England and Wales.

More than **one in 10 of the UK's knowledge sector jobs** are in the region's cutting-edge science parks, research institutions, businesses and incubators

The number of enterprises in the Heartland grew by **28.3% between 2013-2019**, ahead of the UK average of **25.4%**.

Five of the six places identified in The Centre for Cities' Fast Growth Cities group – Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Peterborough and Swindon – are located in the Heartland.

The **universities of Oxford and Cambridge** continue to be ranked among the top three in the world.

Luton Airport is the biggest private aviation hub in the country and fourth biggest in Europe. It is the fastest growing major airport in the UK.

Luton, Heathrow and Stansted airports served more than **126 million** passengers in 2019, and handled nearly **75%** of the UK's air freight.

The ratio of median **house price** to median gross annual earnings in the region is around **9.25** compared to **8.15** nationally (2019). In Cambridge, Oxford and parts of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, the ratio is over 12.

Growth in current local plans will equate to **an increase in population of around 1.3 million people¹** – that's a **25%** increase from the current population of **5.1 million**. If delivery was to continue at the yearly rate of current local plans, the **population will have increased by around two million by 2050 (40%)**.

Business productivity levels remain a challenge for the region – only **11 out of 37** planning authority areas as at 2019 were above the English average for GVA per hour worked.

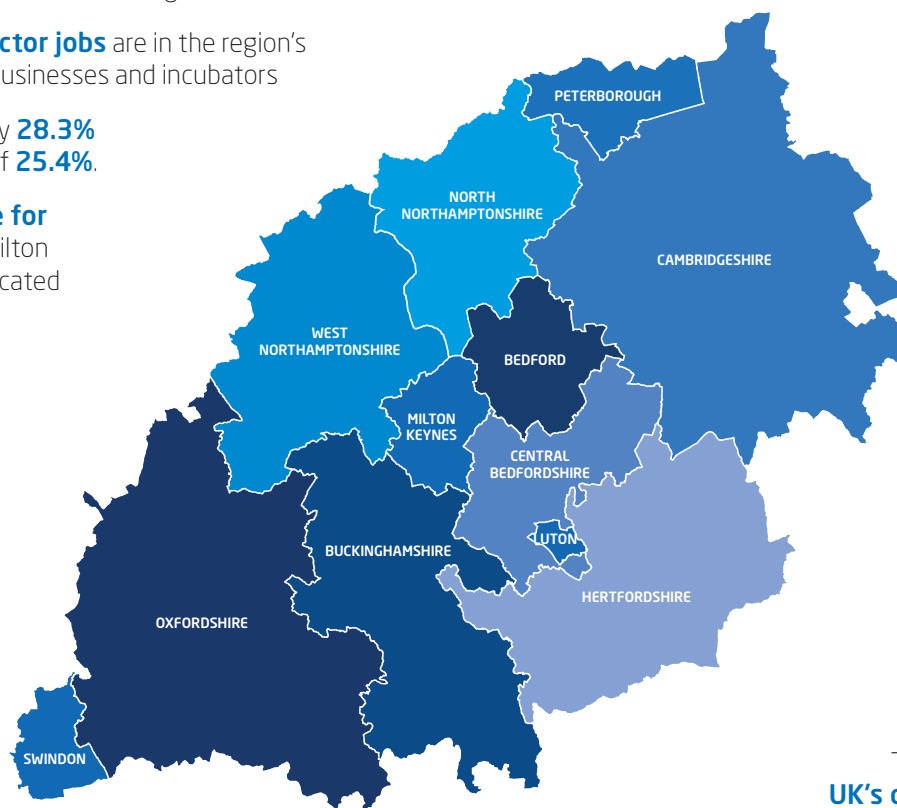
More than 800,000 people in the Heartland are living in the top third most deprived planning authority areas in England, accounting for **15%** of the total population.

Thirteen towns and cities in the Heartland contain **neighbourhoods which are amongst the top 10% most deprived nationally**.

The Heartland has high levels of inequality. As an example, in the Harpur ward in Bedford, life expectancy at birth for males is **71.6 years**; less than five miles away in the Oakley ward, it is **86.9 years**.

The Heartland accounts for approximately **10% of the UK's carbon emissions** from surface transport. **Emissions per capita are 30% higher** than the UK average (2005-2020), and are growing faster, too.

There are around **80 air quality management areas (AQMAs)** in place across the Heartland to improve air quality, with the vast majority caused by road traffic.



¹ Number of homes multiplied by average size of English household, 2.4

VISION LED, EVIDENCE BASED

Since it was established in 2016, EEH has developed and will continue to grow a comprehensive evidence base on behalf of the region. This informs our work as we identify and prioritise the investment required to support sustainable growth while working towards a net zero transport system.

The evidence base is always available to our partners (both within the region and nationally) ensuring that EEH, its partners and indeed government are working from a consistent evidence base line for the Heartland.

The evidence base includes:

Our transport strategy: Connecting People, Transforming Journeys

The culmination of extensive consultation and engagement, the transport strategy was launched in February 2021. It sets out how EEH will:

- Harness the region's expertise in clean mobility innovation to deliver a greener transport system.
- Use investment in East West Rail and mass transit systems as a catalyst for transforming public transport across the Heartland.
- Champion digital technologies to make transport smarter.
- Improve local and rural connectivity.
- Support the freight sector while reducing its environmental impact.

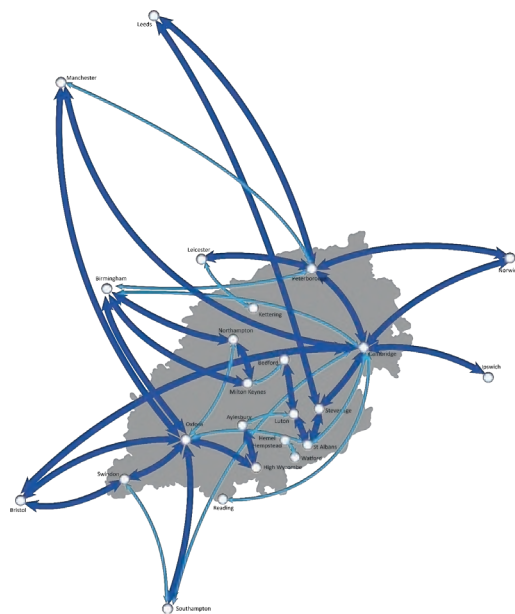


Figure 6 Map of the High and Medium Value Flows Identified. Dark blue denotes high value flows and light blue denotes medium value flows.

Project View

Our 'geographic information system' (GIS)-based databank contains up to date information on known plans for economic and housing growth, alongside environmental, demographic and transport data. It is updated annually using information supplied by local planning authorities and local enterprise partnerships. Over the next two years, Project View is likely to be replaced by a new enhanced tool, with new datasets and improved functionality, in consultation with our partners.

Population Segmentation (First Mile, Last Mile Toolkit)



EEH's pioneering first mile, last mile toolkit was developed during 2020 to ensure solutions better reflect the needs of the user. By using information held in commercially available datasets it was possible to develop a detailed picture of the personas of the Heartland's population and to better understand the specific propensity for sustainable and public transport choices in different places. The resulting toolkit factors in human behaviour around transport choice, particularly in respect of first mile, last mile (FMLM) travel.

Technical studies and strategies include:

Heartland in Context

To coincide with the release of our outline transport strategy in 2020, this provides a visual representation of some of our key spatial data.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

The ISA (and the original scoping report) for our transport strategy contains a vast amount of information on the region's environment, people and economy.

Bus strategy

The regional bus strategy provides a baseline assessment of cross-boundary bus services.

Freight study

Provides an assessment of the region's freight needs and the implications of future demands and trends up to 2050.

Passenger Rail Study phases one and two

Provides a baseline assessment and review of the existing rail network and levels of service in the region. Phase Two identifies and prescribes aspirational service level outcomes for priority journey pairings.

Working From Home Propensity and Capacity Release

Shows how the legacy of COVID-19 could transform capacity on the region's roads.

Decarbonisation roadmap baseline report

Key findings about the nature of surface transport emissions in the region. As part of this work, a tool identifying the emissions, emission sources and pathways of individual authorities was developed.

Pathways to Decarbonisation

Advanced modelling shows how the region could achieve a net zero carbon transport system by 2050.

First Mile, Last Mile International Best Practice Review

Case studies from around the world of first mile, last mile solutions to inform and inspire best practice in this region.

Active travel

Sets the overall ambition for active travel in the region. Phase two of the strategy, which will consider how the vision can be achieved, will follow later in 2022.

Oxford to Cambridge road study

England's Economic Heartland is working with DfT and National Highways to take forward the work. It will define what constitutes an appropriate level of service for the strategically important road network and consider how investment should best be prioritised to deliver that level of service in the region.

Connectivity studies

A series of studies along selected corridors in the region. The outputs will help identify measures that can deliver the transport strategy's ambitions in a balanced programme of multimodal interventions. The package(s) of measures identified in the studies will inform EEH's investment pipeline.

MAKING IT HAPPEN



England's Economic Heartland is a genuinely local partnership, fuelled by the ambitions of our member authorities.

The Strategic Transport Leadership Board comprises the leaders of all our member authorities. It sets EEH's overall direction and agrees all policies and strategies. The Board, chaired by

Cllr Richard Wenham, meets in public and its reports and minutes are available on our website. The direction provided by the Board ensures EEH is outcome driven and speaks with a unified, ambitious voice for the region. Our focus is making a tangible difference to the Heartland's people and businesses, ultimately through supporting the delivery of the right infrastructure in the right places at the right time – connecting people and places to opportunities and services.

The EEH business unit is responsible for implementing the work programme set by the Board. Led by managing director Naomi Green, it is a small, agile team. While planning the long term future of the transport system, the team can also be flexible to changing needs and demands on behalf of the region.

The business unit's activities are jointly funded by our local partners and the Department for Transport:

- DfT's allocation of funding for 2022/23 is £1,350,000. DfT funds are spent on dedicated work streams, to be agreed between EEH and DfT. In addition to covering work programmes, DfT has confirmed that funding can be used to pay for some staff resource, subject to additional conditions.

- DfT's settlement is supported by annual contributions provided by local partners. In 2022/23, this is expected to be £441,420 (an increase of 5.1% from 2021/22 contributions). Local contributions cover operational, communications and some staffing costs for permanent core staff. In addition, the East West Main Line Partnership contributes £30,000 towards the secretariat and project management functions performed by the EEH business unit on its behalf.
- DfT has also indicated its 'projected' allocations for the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. These are subject to change but provide a useful guide as to the potential scope of EEH's work over the next three years. The allocations are £1,426,000 for 2023/24 and £1,536,000 for 2024/25.

The next three years will see EEH continue to strengthen the evidence base required to identify investment priorities in the region. Concurrently, EEH will move into a new phase of scheme development: bringing forward infrastructure priorities into investable propositions.

The work programme, broken into seven key themes, is set out in more detail over the following pages. In addition, the outputs from a number of studies commissioned during 2021-22 will be completed during 2022/23.

Profile and leverage

Over the next three years EEH will increase its profile as a trusted and recognised body within the region, Whitehall, Westminster and the transport sector. Doing so will:

- Ensure the region's priorities are understood by both decision-takers and change-makers
- Demonstrate why investment in the region is so important for the UK as a whole
- Unlock beneficial new partnerships with the private sector, public sector and academia
- Ensure our expertise and capacity is fully accessed and utilised.

Two immediate priorities for improved engagement are:

Businesses: To harness the private sector innovation which is prevalent throughout the region, particularly around the future of mobility; to secure business advocacy for the infrastructure priorities within the region; and to explore how private sector investment in infrastructure can complement that of the public sector.

MPs: It is important that EEH understands and takes into account the views of the region's members of Parliament; and also to secure their advocacy for the region's infrastructure priorities.

Thought leadership

By contributing fresh thinking and expert insight, over the next three years we will help shape the transport agenda at both the national and regional levels.

Our contribution to that agenda is likely to include thought leadership on:

- Planning for net zero.
- Integration and ticketing.
- Local connectivity and good place-making.
- Delivery of Great British Railways and the role of STBs.
- Future funding models for accessing transport.

Board champions

Given the growing volume and profile of the EEH work programme there is an increased need to ensure Board members are able to oversee and steer our work, particularly capturing their own ambitions and expectations of EEH.

As a result, during the spring of 2022, 'Board Champions' will be elected who will take a greater interest and profile in one or more of the seven work programme themes being taken forward by EEH.

Our values

As an organisation, EEH has continued to evolve based on three core values which were established upon its inception in 2015.

These are:

- **COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSPARENT:** Working with partners across local authorities, government, and private sector to shape and plan the strategic transport infrastructure required to respond to the region's connectivity and economic growth ambitions.
- **AMBITIOUS AND EVIDENCE-LED:** Making the compelling case for investment in the region, and supporting early stage development of interventions which fit strategically with the needs and ambitions of our places.
- **OPERATING AT SCALE FOR THE REGION'S BENEFIT:** Improving the region's effectiveness through building economies of scale; setting joint ambitions; maximising the opportunity for shared expertise and resources; and creating shared learning and advice platforms.



THREE-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME

In December 2021, the EEH Strategic Transport Leadership Board set out its vision for EEH during the period from 2022 to 2025. It sees EEH moving towards complementing our already successful approach to strategy, policy and evidence to a body that also delivers investment propositions and supports the timely delivery of infrastructure in the region.

To date, EEH has focused primarily on building the strategy, policy and evidence base required to identify investment priorities in the region. There remains a need to continue this work – culminating in a clear investment pipeline and an evidence base to support it. Concurrently, EEH can start to move into a new phase of scheme development: bringing forward infrastructure priorities into investable propositions.

The Board is clear in its view:

a) that the ambition for EEH should remain as it has been since its inception:

“A commitment from leaders across 13 local and combined authorities to harness the power of collaborative working on strategic connectivity issues to deliver their shared ambition – realising the economic potential of the region, while preserving and enhancing its natural and built environment”

b) that digital connectivity and transport connectivity are inextricably linked.

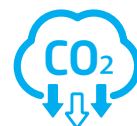
The Board recognises that funding for digital connectivity must be delivered outside of the DfT programme and will need to be secured from an alternative source before further substantive work can be commissioned.

c) that the regional transport strategy published in February 2021 provides the framework for a business plan that focuses on turning its policies into actions.

The programme of work falls into seven categories:



Regional evidence base



Planning for net zero



Improving strategic connectivity



An integrated transport network



Innovation



Regional scheme prioritisation and development



Capacity and capability to deliver major infrastructure projects

REGIONAL EVIDENCE BASE

The engine sitting behind our transport strategy and priorities for investment is a comprehensive regional evidence base.

The regional evidence base has been evolving since EEH's creation and comprises a suite of data and supporting study work. Together, they form a detailed picture of the region and its connectivity challenges and opportunities.

The evidence base also explores what the future may look like for the region. It does this by mapping the scale and distribution of economic and housing growth set out in local plans across the Heartland; and by plotting future economic and societal trends that may influence our demands on the transport system.

In the period covered by this business plan, the regional evidence base will be upgraded to reflect both user feedback and to make the most of advances in the way data is gathered and presented. It will provide an even more powerful tool which allows the region to make a compelling case for investment in the right infrastructure in the right places. EEH will also ensure monitoring progress on implementing the transport strategy is embedded within the new evidence base. The data will continue to be presented in a format that is accessible and user friendly.

We want to ensure that the evidence base is of benefit to a wide range of people and organisations including planning authorities, universities and MPs. That's why, during 2022 EEH will scope current usage and future aspirations for the evidence base amongst our partners

In addition to EEH's data, the development of potential additional evidence, funded by government in the context of its proposed Oxford to Cambridge Arc provides an opportunity for the region to review how we manage and host a wider data set. If efficiencies and better outcomes can be achieved by developing a single approach to data across the region, potentially with different front ends for different functions, EEH will work with local partners to explore those options. Any solution must be of benefit to all EEH partners, regardless of their status within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Work with partners to scope and design an upgraded regional evidence base, considering its effective application and utilisation.
- Develop and roll out the new evidence base, including prioritising resources to test and improve it.
- Strengthen the quality of data, working with government departments, Environment Agency, National Highways, Network Rail, EEH Bus Operators Association and Active Travel England to explore opportunities to create a single databank – accessible by all public sector partners, and others by agreement.
- Ensure the evidence captures and strengthens our knowledge of freight as well as passenger data.
- Incorporate outputs from ongoing technical work, such as the decarbonisation playbook.
- Ensure the database is fit for purpose to support development of the strategic case for early stage business cases.
- Review of the population segmentation tool, including its scale and granularity, particularly in the context of improved access to stations and planning for mobility hubs.

PLANNING FOR NET ZERO

Net zero is one of the biggest challenges for the transport sector over the next 30 years. Solutions will not be realised without targeted approaches at the national, regional and local level.

The Heartland's high number of rural communities and polycentric movements makes the pathway to net zero complex. Addressing it requires a commitment to realising change in all areas of transport planning and delivery. Cutting emissions will produce benefits for our residents and businesses which reach far beyond the environmental necessity for working towards net zero. Harnessing our region's innovation expertise, creating a highly connected, well managed transport system and making our neighbourhoods more liveable and less car dependent, we will improve our residents' quality of life and unlock new opportunities for economic growth.

The government has identified support for decarbonisation and provision of infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging as two of its top priority areas of shared working with sub-national transport bodies. England's Economic Heartland leads the collaboration between the seven STBs in planning for net zero. Working across the STBs and liaising with government, EEH is influencing the national agenda: advocating for government to make bold policy decisions, backed by funding.

We will continue to provide national leadership on the importance of place-based approaches to net zero. All our places are different, with their own challenges and opportunities: a one size fits all approach will simply not work. Our approach will champion an understanding of a place – its size, location, geography, existing transport network and demographics – and to develop the pathways best suited for its own unique characteristics. By doing so, we will empower our local partners with the information and data they require to create their own pathways for net zero – a truly bottom-up approach which can be owned by local communities. At the same time, we will ensure that regional decisions on policy and investment priorities are consistent with the government's transport decarbonisation plan and aligned to the regional transport strategy.

In 2022/23, EEH will develop a detailed road map to net zero for the region. The work, supported by additional funding from DfT, sets the role for STBs in working alongside local authority partners to inform and develop tailored approaches based on conditions in local places. Once the road map is completed, EEH will move its focus towards implementation and delivery of its recommendations.

Improved digital connectivity is a key component in achieving the ambitions for net zero. It can reduce residents' need to travel, enable more flexible/remote working and improve access to employment and opportunities. It can also make the transport system itself smarter, enabling more efficient management of networks and the deployment of connected and autonomous vehicles. Innovative new approaches to delivering digital connectivity, both through the deployment and reinforcement of physical fibre connectivity, and new approaches to 'over the air' delivered by 5G and emerging satellite technologies are critical to the economic and environmental success of this region.

At the same time, alternative fuels on the road and rail network, including electrification offers a significant opportunity to decarbonise our transport system. Delivering the utility infrastructure required to support electrification requires a focused partnership with local authorities and infrastructure owners in the energy sector to ensure this is enabled by the necessary investment in electricity supply and distribution networks.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Work with each individual local authority to provide the right evidence and support in planning for a net zero transport system.
- Support the roll out of local transport plans in the region – helping to manage links between local ambitions, the regional transport strategy and government policy.
- Scope a monitoring and evaluation plan for a net zero transport system.
- Facilitate a community of best practice for EEH local authorities to share expertise and experience of planning for net zero.
- Press the case for electrification of our railways, as soon as possible, including East West Rail.
- Work with neighbouring STBs, government and the freight sector to ensure decarbonisation of freight remains a priority area of focus.
- Work with Transport East to define how the sector can better work collaboratively to support and enable the most efficient and effective roll out of electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Work to shape and influence national and regional thinking around behaviour change.

- Support the discussion about new business models that can deliver revenue investment into place-based decarbonisation solutions.
- Continue to work with local authority partners to plan for and monitor net zero transport, including implementation of a regional monitoring and evaluation approach.





IMPROVING STRATEGIC CONNECTIVITY

Maximising the benefits and opportunities arising from the investment in strategic infrastructure is at the heart of realising our ambition for the region.

At present, the Heartland's principle transport arteries run north to south, providing linkages to London, the Midlands and the north of England. Being located at the heart of England, these corridors perform a nationally significant role in enabling flows of people and goods to reach centres of population within and beyond our geography.

To complement this, improving east-west connectivity provides the overriding transformational opportunity for the region, also unlocking opportunities to further improve north-south connectivity.

Taken together these connections will transform what is currently a series of discrete functional economic areas and housing markets, creating a better connected and interrelated region, delivering agglomeration benefits for businesses and levelling up opportunities for the region. Advocating for the delivery of East West Rail in full, including the Aylesbury link is a key priority for EEH during the life of this business plan.

Notwithstanding the growth in digital connectivity, the physical access provided through the UK's international gateways – including Luton airport alongside several others which are located outside our region – continues to be fundamental to the ability of our business community to retain its global competitiveness.

By 2025, EEH will complete its current programme of connectivity studies. Their outputs, alongside other work including the passenger rail study, Oxford Cambridge roads study and the regional bus study will form the basis of a regional investment pipeline for subsequent development and delivery.

The regional investment pipeline will be a key document in shaping EEH's expectations of the investment programmes of National Highways, Network Rail and eventually Great British Railways. It will also provide our partners with the confidence to allocate resources to develop detailed proposals for implementation.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Advocate for delivery of East West Rail in full, including the Aylesbury link.
- Ensure that the government's roads investment strategy and 30-year plan for rail reflect the region's priorities.
- Prioritise and develop an action plan for strategically important roads and rail, following completion of the passenger rail study and the Oxford to Cambridge road study.
- Complete the current programme of connectivity studies and, following this, review whether there are any further areas of study or evidence needed as a result of their conclusions.
- Identify priority schemes for the next round of Major Roads Network investment, ensuring future investment in roads is delivered in a way that responds to the policy framework set out in the regional transport strategy.
- Develop a long-term plan for regional bus and coach connectivity and work with the EEH Bus Operators Association to implement its recommendations.
- Work with Transport for the South East and Transport East to plan a consistent approach to improving provision for and reducing the impact of freight in the wider south-east, including the decarbonisation of freight, particularly considering the government's national freight strategy.
- Ensure investment in digital connectivity continues to be supported as a core part of the region's transport and connectivity offer (not DfT funded).



During the three years covered by this plan, East West Rail will go from construction site to operational railway. Here is the scene in Winslow in May 2022 and inset how its station would look when opened.



AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT NETWORK

Ensuring that local communities and businesses can access the services and facilities they need as seamlessly as possible is an important contributory factor to managing future travel demand. It can both help reduce the length of journeys and encourage greater use of active travel and public transport modes.

Over the next three years EEH will plan for an integrated regional transport system which provides a seamless journey from doorstep to destination. This will factor in ticketing and information provision; the first mile, last mile including connectivity to transport hubs; cost of travel; safety and perceptions of safety; reliability; and convenience.

Previously, EEH has developed region-wide tools to support the planning of first mile, last mile solutions, including the commencement of a small number of connectivity pilots. Ticketing and information, as well as better alignment between land use and transport planning will be critical success factors for this work strand.

Interurban and local bus travel is an essential part of the transport system, providing many with their primary means of access, as well as an alternative to the private car. Unlike rail, and unless segregated, the reliability of bus and coach services is dependent on a well-performing road network. The transport strategy's travel hierarchy states that the needs of the bus, as well as walking, cycling and other forms of shared mobility must be at the forefront of our approach to connectivity, and our associated investment plans.

High quality public transport connections, such as the rapid transit systems proposed in Milton Keynes, Hertfordshire and Essex and the greater Cambridge area all form the backbone of an integrated transport network that enable seamless and reliable end to end journeys for communities across the region.

The growth in user-focused transport services enabled by digital connectivity, and facilitated by the spread of contactless payment, continues to transform the opportunities for public transport to create new integration, ticketing and timetabling options, all of which enhance the user experience.



Walking and cycling is also a significant part of the region's overall transport system, particularly in Oxford and Cambridge. With additional support from the Department for Transport, EEH is developing a region wide active travel strategy that will seek to support walking and cycling levels continuing to grow across the region.

The establishment of 'mobility hubs' that serve local communities within a larger urban area offers the opportunity to offer 'frictionless' interchange between modes, primarily bus, rail and active travel. In addition, mobility hubs provide an opportunity for integrated planning of modes, integrating not just public transport but future mobility solutions and a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycling routes.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Publish a regional active travel strategy and set out plans for implementation of its recommended actions.
- Support early stage development of the business case for the Varsity Way – a dedicated cycle route across the region, forming the backbone of a region wide cycle network.
- Roll out a programme of mobility hub demonstrators, supported by work to inform the development of business cases for mobility hubs.
- Develop an initial programme of work following publication of the government's Future of Rural Transport Strategy.
- Explore options for improved ticketing and information provision to achieve pan-regional integration.
- Lead the national and regional commitment for better alignment between spatial planning, physical connectivity and digital connectivity (the 'tri-planning process').
- Continue to press for investment in bus services, supporting the roll out of BSIP ambitions beyond the first phase of funding.
- Strengthen links with the Canal and River Trust to maximise the opportunity for water-based travel and their associated pathways.



INNOVATION

Our region is home to world leading science and technology innovators who are developing the connectivity solutions of the future

EEH will strengthen engagement with regional partners in universities, research facilities and the private sector, to maximise the use of 'living laboratories' as a means of trialling innovation in the region at scale and speed. Working together, proposals will be developed that encourage the scaling up of trials to the regional level at the earliest opportunity.

The region is a leader in the development of the technology associated with the use of electric vehicles and connected autonomous vehicles, technology that has the potential to be a key part of our transport system moving forward. The work underway in and around Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Milton Keynes provides the region with access to experience on which it can build.

Delivering new approaches, ownership and business models that facilitate access to transport is a key part of the transition to net zero. 'Mobility as a service' (MaaS), car clubs, demand responsive transport (DRT) and shared mobility (including micro mobility) will be supported where appropriate. As new forms of mobility emerge and are tested, we will review the transport strategy's travel hierarchy to ensure it continues to be relevant/ fit for transport users.

The availability of fixed and mobile digital infrastructure is central to enabling the region to exploit its leadership in innovation in the transport sector to the full. Not only is digital infrastructure critical to the collection and use of the data underpinning user-focused services, it also offers the potential to help reduce the need for travel in the first place.

Harnessing the potential of our business community in the development of new solutions and businesses will not only benefit the region, it will also provide the UK with a competitive edge.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Collaborate on the future of mobility with the region's innovators in business, academia and local government. This includes developing a pump prime fund to support collaborative bid development on common challenges and priorities.
- Ensure a continuous approach to sharing learning and experience, to ensure new opportunities are strengthened by lessons learnt from the past. Through the continuing work of EEH innovation working group, facilitate a community of best practice for EEH local authorities, and enable a flow of information between them and the region's private sector innovators and universities.



REGIONAL SCHEME PRIORITISATION AND DEVELOPMENT



A key benefit of our work is the provision of a clear, prioritised and co-ordinated view of the strategic transport investments required to deliver on the region's shared strategic ambition.

During 2022, a refreshed investment pipeline will establish the priorities for investment in the region. Current fiscal and political pressures make it inevitable that a combination of public and private sector funding will be required to deliver those priorities, as will a mixture of capital and revenue investment.

As the programme moves towards the later years of spending, the investment pipeline will be well developed and well evidenced. The focus of activity will move increasingly into developing investable propositions.

Based on the indicative levels of funding provided by DfT, the proportion of funding expected to be allocated to scheme development is:

- 2022/23 – Around 15% of programme.
- 2023/24 – around 40% of programme.
- 2024/25 – around 65% of programme.

This implies that more than £900,000 could be allocated to supporting the development of strategic outline business cases by 2024. They will be delivered both in house (via project specific posts) and through consultancy support.

Through this investment, EEH will look to accelerate the development of a small number of regional priorities per year. Through the development of the strategic case to inform the early stage business case, EEH will aim to bring forward opportunities for funding regional priorities that may not otherwise be realised.

An important first step for this work will be for the Board to consider and agree which schemes need to be prioritised first. Recognising the challenges this may bring, the business unit will work with local authorities, growth boards and LEPs to align priorities and to develop a robust yet proportionate prioritisation methodology that can help the Board to agree which schemes need to be developed through to an investment proposition sooner than others.

During the period of this business plan, England's Economic Heartland will:

- Draw on conclusions from across the EEH study programme to develop a regional infrastructure pipeline.
- Shape and agree how regional strategic transport investment schemes will be prioritised, drawing from recommendations across policy framework and evidence work.
- Develop funding opportunities that may be viable for both government and investor/developer funding to attract new opportunities for infrastructure schemes.
- Undertake a programme of development of strategic cases for infrastructure priorities identified in the regional investment pipeline – moving the focus on to enabling scheme investment and, in time delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY TO DELIVER

EEH's long-term plans to create a centre of excellence for major early-stage scheme development in the region will make significant progress during 2022.

Through the £125,000 in-year funding from DfT for client-side capabilities, the concept will now be piloted. This will involve the undertaking of a holistic capability gap analysis which will lead to the identification of capabilities required at local authority, regional (EEH) and specialist pan-regional levels (for which the use of consultancies may be the most appropriate method). The pilot will also trial different forms of support on specific projects, based on the capability gap analysis completed.


The idea for the centre of excellence was identified as an opportunity in a review of the infrastructure delivery processes undertaken with partners in 2019. This identified a number of 'pinch points' due to depleted technical and professional capability within the 'client side' to oversee scheme proposal development.

It is envisioned that the Centre of Excellence will have a particular focus on developing the strategic narrative for transport infrastructure schemes at pre-SOBC stage. It will perform a dual role in the longer term: both the supporting of local authorities on individual early scheme development; and the broader challenge of developing future regional capability and upskilling existing people, for example through supporting of apprenticeships and transport planning students.

Securing additional funding to realise the full potential of the centre of excellence is a priority for EEH and discussions are continuing with DfT.




Get in touch

 England's Economic Heartland
EEH business unit
c/o Buckinghamshire Council
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

For general enquiries please contact 01296 383645
or email businessunit@englandseconomicheartland.com

 www.englandseconomicheartland.com

Sign up for our newsletter - just scroll to the bottom of our homepage

 @EconomicHeart

