

# Investment Prioritisation Framework

*[Styled cover image to be provided by EEH]*

## Final Report

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## Overview

England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is the sub-national transport body responsible for bringing together local transport authorities in a strategic partnership for the region extending from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and North Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire.

Our 2021 Transport Strategy, [Connecting People, Transforming Journeys](#), set an ambitious policy framework with the vision for our transport system:

*“To support sustainable growth and improve quality of life and wellbeing through a world-class, decarbonised transport system which harnesses the region’s global expertise in technology and innovation to unlock new opportunities for residents and businesses, in a way that benefits the UK as a whole.”*

Our strategy highlights that we are **one of the world's leading economic regions**, with its success founded on science and technology innovation, powered by a network of world-leading universities and research centres.

We work closely with our partners, infrastructure owners and operators to support the transition to a decarbonised regional transport network, while maximising economic opportunities, increasing resilience and access, and reducing car dependence.

Since 2021, with our local authority partners we have undertaken a wide body of work including; a programme of Connectivity Studies, regional Bus Study, Active Travel Strategy, Rail Objectives Study and Mobility Hubs Guidance alongside our existing technical evidence base.

This detailed body of work has formed the basis of our dynamic Investment Prioritisation Framework.

Our Framework is **intended as a core tool for EEH and its partners to make the case for investment in our region in an evidence led way. It can help us in the prioritisation of strategic transportation interventions** that have been proposed in, or will significantly benefit, the EEH region.

The Framework enables EEH and partners to understand how priorities identified meet the needs of the region, and respond to Government and transport infrastructure owners 'asks' to articulate the investment requirements of the region.

We need to be ready to communicate the strategic case for investment in the region to Government and transport infrastructure owners, and to advocate for schemes which are essential for our region. To do this, we have developed a Framework which is dynamic flexible, and able to respond to changing external factors.

## What is the Framework?

Our Investment Prioritisation Framework is not a static list of interventions in the form of a traditional investment pipeline. We know that priorities, needs and policy can and will change over time. To 'future ready' our approach to investment prioritisation, the Framework has been developed using a collation of all the priorities identified across EEH's body of technical work, alongside national strategies such as the Road Investment Strategy and Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

These interventions have been collated, with intervention detail captured and assessed against 'Levels of Service' criteria built on the principles of our Transport Strategy. The Framework can then be used to identify how interventions meet different Levels of Service and communicate the strategic rationale for investment in the interventions.

The interventions captured in the Framework include new and improved infrastructure or service changes, and vary in detail from opportunities defined at a high level through to schemes with business cases.

The Framework has two core elements, a Power BI dashboard to filter the interventions and the underlying intervention database that holds detailed information on each scheme.

Strategic interventions are identified as schemes that meet at least one of the following tests:

- Benefit two or more local authorities;
- Benefits two or more sub-national transport bodies or have national benefit;
- Covers at least one place of strategic importance (EEH Regional Evidence Base);
- Provides sustainable access to international gateways/markets;
- Supports improvements to regional east west connectivity;
- Supports improvements to regional north-south connectivity;
- Realises the potential for rail freight; or
- Support strategic road freight.

The database will be updated over time to reflect scheme changes and wider development. For example, an intervention recommended in a connectivity study will see its details and 'Levels of Service' criteria assessment evolve as the scheme moves from an opportunity to strategic outline business case (aligned to concept design stage), to an outline business case (aligned to preliminary design stage), then full business case (aligned to detailed design stage), and ultimately delivery.

## Created with and for our partners

EEH supports and works with our partners for the benefit of the wider region. Engaging and collaborating with stakeholders is central to all our work, including the Framework.

Development of the Framework has been a collaborative process, involving extensive engagement with our partners and a wide range of stakeholders.

This collaborative approach combined with the institutional knowledge of the EEH and project teams, has allowed the initial Framework to include a **comprehensive list of strategic interventions**.

## Why it matters

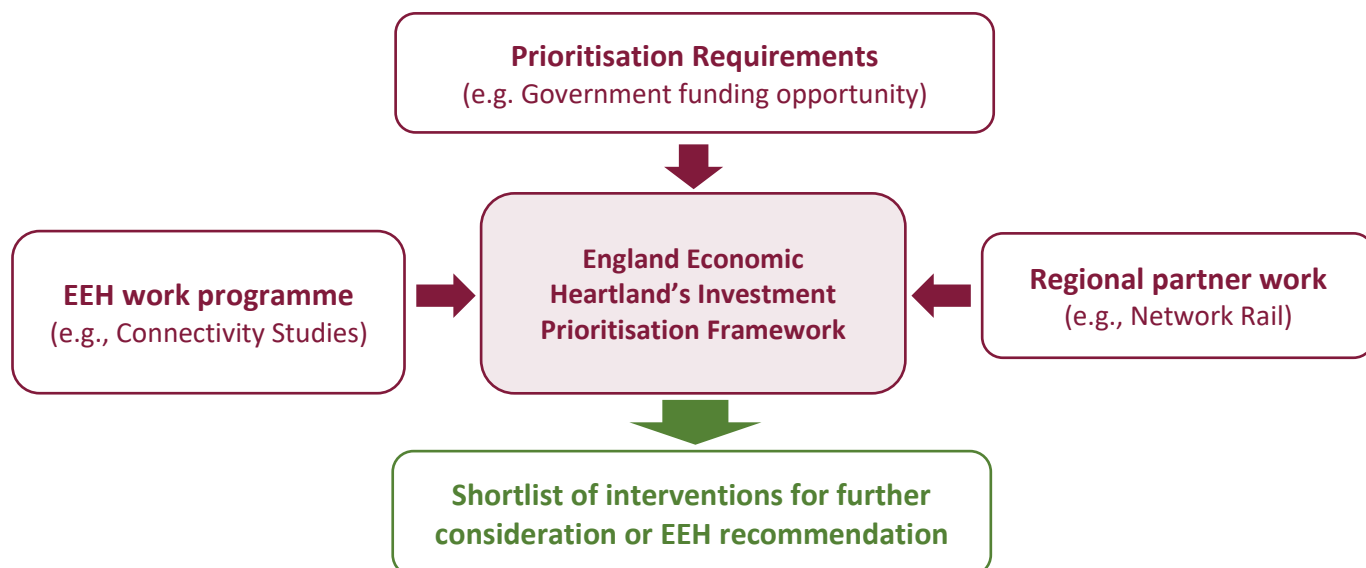
A principal role of EEH as a sub-national transport body is providing advice to government on prioritising transport investment across our region.

The purpose of our Framework is to support an evidence-led process, proportionate to regional scale working, that presents our strategic transport infrastructure priorities as a range of interventions in response to specific objectives ('levels of service'), rather than an explicit list. The Framework brings together interventions identified through EEH's body of work into a single dynamic list and filtering tool that can operate flexibly and be sustained and updated over time.

The benefit of a framework approach is that the most relevant interventions to deliver a particular improvement in levels of service can be identified and supported to secure investment through an appropriate funding mechanism. The approach also provides longevity to each proposed intervention and allows for further iterations as interventions are further developed and our technical work continues.

As detailed below, the Framework allows EEH and our partners to respond to changing prioritisation requirements based on the latest intervention information drawn from across the region. For EEH this is drawn from our ongoing work programme to identify the changes in transport services or infrastructure, needed to achieve the vision of our Transport Strategy. While for our partners this would include those strategic interventions relevant to the wider EEH region. Based on the criteria used, this produces a shortlist of interventions for further consideration or direct recommendation for investment.

✓ **Dynamic instead of static** ✓ **Proportionate to EEH scale** ✓ **Ongoing support for partners**



## A robust approach

The twelve (12) impact or “outcomes” based Levels of Service Criteria align with the four principles of the 2021 regional Transport Strategy. These are assessed using the latest available information against seven (7) levels based on terminology in line with that used by the Department for Transport, with A being the most positive and G being the least. These **Level of Service ratings provide the primary manner our Framework generates a shortlist of interventions based on the specific prioritisation requirements.**

The Level of Service Criteria include:

- Principle 1:
  1. Embodied emissions
  2. Operational emissions
  3. Modal shift
- Principle 2:
  4. Environment
  5. Safety and Accessibility
  6. Health and wellbeing

- Principle 3:
  7. Journey time
  8. Economic growth
  9. Local connectivity
- Principle 4:
  10. Regional connectivity
  11. Strategic routes
  12. Interchange

Each of these are also explained in further detail in the *Investment Prioritisation Framework Methodology Technical Note*.

Through collation of strategic intervention information across a wide range of criteria, our Framework also caters for a broad spectrum of different possible changes to transport services and infrastructure at varying stages of development.

Any shortlist produced from the Framework can be further filtered across any of the following 'Intervention Information':

- Framework ID
- Intervention Name
- Intervention Description
- Strategic Intervention
- Mode(s)
- Road Network
- Local Transport Area
- Likely Lead Organisation
- Supporting Organisation
- Project Stage (Completed)
- Project Stage (Next Step)
- Next Step Underway?
- Capital Investment
- Public Operational Investment
- Revenue Generation
- Timescale
- Deliverability
- Stakeholder Acceptability
- Source and References

While ease of use has been a key driver of the Framework's development, each of these elements is also explained in detail in the *Investment Prioritisation Framework Methodology Technical Note*. As with the Levels of Service assessments, as an intervention is developed (for example, with work to move from an outline to full business case), this information will become increasingly accurate as further development work is undertaken.

## What it can be used for

Our Framework is available to our partner local authorities and key stakeholder organisations.

The intention is that the Framework can and will be used in a variety of ways, including some that may not have been envisaged at the time of its initial development. The following highlight some (but not all) of the ways that our Framework can support the work of EEH and our partners:

## Central repository of interventions

The Framework and the core master project list is a valuable source of project information, which helps EEH quickly understand strategic transport interventions being proposed in particular area(s).

Similarly, our partners, can use our Framework to see what EEH currently understands of proposed transport projects affecting their area or mode of interest. This role also allows our Framework to be the primary source of information on an ongoing basis, updated at least annually to capture if or when the details of a proposed intervention change.

## Recommendations to Government

Our Framework allows us respond to requests quickly and dynamically to give recommendations or information on investment options based on changing Government priorities or funding opportunities. For example, a shift in policy focus could lead to a shift in priorities and the need to provide a refreshed list of top schemes for the EEH region.

The dynamic approach taken with **our Framework means EEH can respond to such requests and opportunities very quickly and on a rolling basis**. This is simply not possible if EEH had taken a more traditional approach with development of a static strategic investment plan updated every few years

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## Adaptability to latest science and data

The structure of our Levels of Service criteria and the intervention information fields allows EEH and our partners to use our Framework based on the current balance of priorities but also update scores as more information becomes available. For example, as scientific data on construction materials and techniques evolves, the rating in our Framework can be similarly updated and priorities accordingly.

This means our Framework can be updated in one or more areas without the need to undertake a wholesale update as would be required with a static plan or report.

## Tracking progress in the EEH region

With each update to the core master project list, EEH can track how many projects have been added, progressed over time, or even been cancelled. With so much activity and investment being undertaken across our region, this will be increasingly important for the work of EEH and our partners.

## Next steps

The Framework will be utilised to inform investment discussions with government, provide the strategic rationale for investment in the region and plan for the advocacy of schemes.

It is anticipated that sub-national transport bodies will be required to provide advice on regional strategic infrastructure, such as for future Major Road Network decisions (MRN2). The Framework improves EEH's analytical capability in this and other areas of our work.

An initial example of the use of the Framework is the development of forthcoming investment brochures, focussing on high potential interventions in a series of corridors across the region (based on connectivity study geography areas).

## How will it be updated?

Our Investment Prioritisation Framework is intended to be flexible and have further iterations as interventions develop. The outputs from EEH's ongoing technical work will be incorporated into future the Framework, such as our Freight Action Plan, Rail Study and Bus Study.

It will remain a live tool and will be iterated annually, working with our partners, to make sure the Framework is up to date and reflects EEH's and partner's priorities. Interventions contained in the Framework may change, develop or no longer be priorities.

## Further information

For further information please contact [businessunit@englandseconomicheartland.com](mailto:businessunit@englandseconomicheartland.com)

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