



# Three-year business plan: 2022-2025

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### **Foreword from Cllr Richard Wenham**

[TO COME FOLLOWING BOARD MEETING]

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### **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.

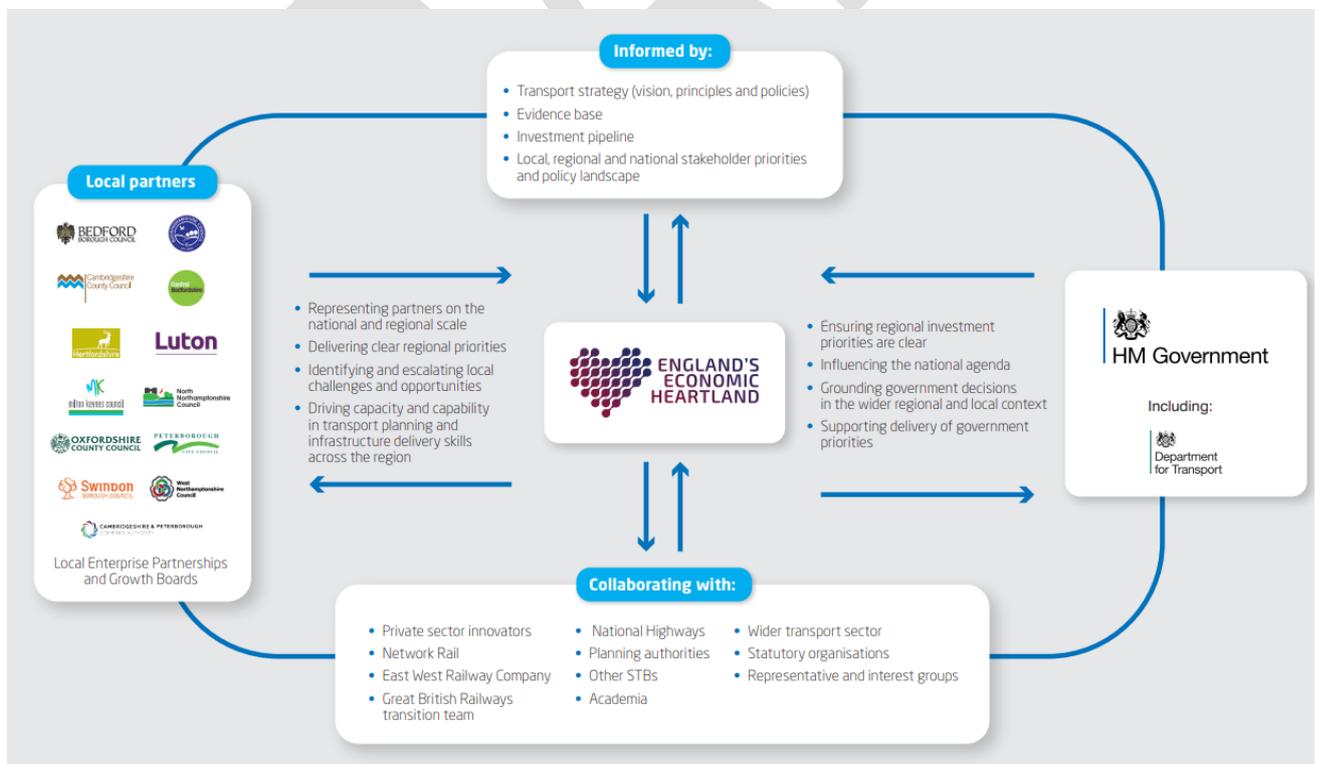
As one of seven sub-national transport bodies covering the entirety of England outside of London, we are jointly funded by the Department for Transport and our local authority partners.

Our work encompasses six key areas:

- **PRIORITISING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT:** We advise government and its agencies on the connectivity infrastructure priorities which will deliver the vision of our ambitious regional 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 relationship with government allows us to provide crucial support and advice as new policies and proposals are

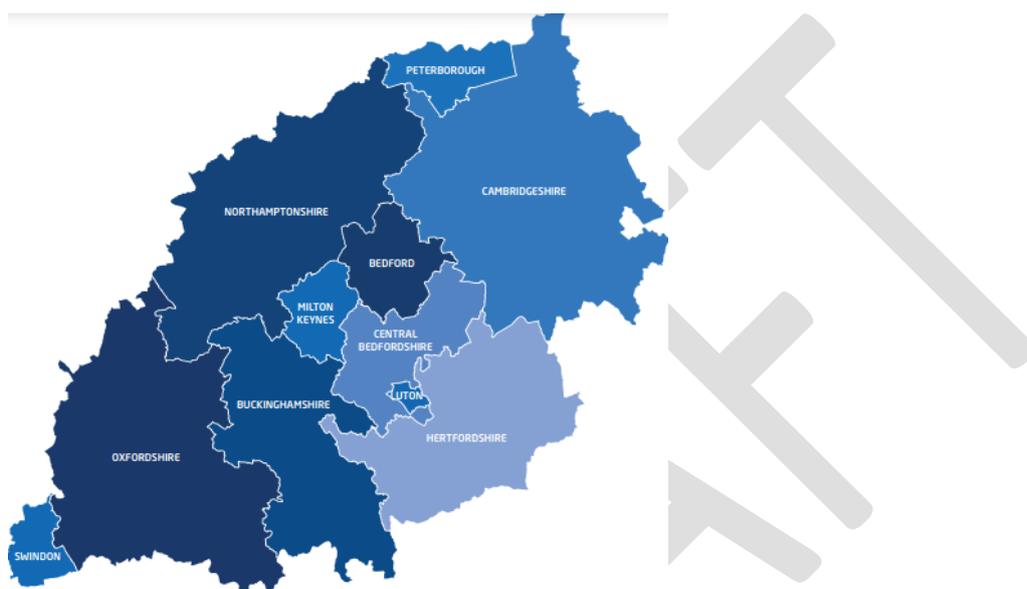
developed and implemented, including on the big strategic challenges facing the country such as planning for net zero (for which EEH is lead STB).

- **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 the potential solutions. And 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.
- **CO-ORDINATING 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.



## **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 fuels 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 large 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. 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. 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. 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 people<sup>1</sup> – 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.

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### ***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, to inform our work as we identify and prioritise the investment required to support sustainable growth while decarbonising the 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**

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<sup>1</sup> Number of homes multiplied by average size of English household, 2.4

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.

### **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 year, 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 Last Mile)**

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 forthcoming 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.

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### **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 to be 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 core staff, 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 Mainline Partnership contributes £30,000 towards the secretariat and project management functions performed by the EEH business unit on behalf of the Partnership.
- The 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**

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 in fields such as decarbonisation is fully 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**

EEH has an important role to play as a thought-leader. By contributing fresh thinking and expert insight we will help shape the transport agenda at both the national and regional levels.

Our contribution to that agenda is likely to include perspectives 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 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. They will oversee development of their priority area with greater engagement between them and EEH business unit staff inbetween Board meetings.

### **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.

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### Three Year Work Programme

Going forward and following our recent governance review, EEH is in a good position to plan and deliver a three-year work programme.

In September 2021, the EEH Strategic Transport Leadership Board set out its vision for EEH during the period from 2022-2025. 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. Over the immediate future, there remains a need to complete this – 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.

In scoping for the next three years, the Board is clear in its view:

- a) that the ambition for EEH should remain as it has been since its inception in 2015:
 

*“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 there should remain a focus on digital connectivity as well as transport connectivity – to achieve a transition to net zero, the two are inextricably linked. The Board recognises that funding for digital connectivity must be delivered outside of the DfT programme and funding 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

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### **Regional Evidence Base**

The engine sitting behind the regional transport strategy and identification of transport and connectivity 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 which together 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 –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. The upgraded evidence will need, at its core, to reflect its primary role of providing comprehensive and accurate evidence that allows the region to make a compelling case for investment in the right infrastructure in the right places. EEH will also ensure monitoring delivery of the transport strategy is embedded within the evidence base being set up. The data must be presented in a format that is accessible and user friendly.

A first step towards a new regional evidence base will be scoping current usage and future aspirations. An evidence base must only be developed if it is of benefit to a wide range of people and EEH will ensure partners across the region, including planning authorities, universities and MPs are able to access and use the database freely and intuitively.

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 a refreshed regional evidence base, considering its effective application and utilisation
- Develop and roll out a new upgraded evidence base, including prioritising resources to test and improve it
- Strengthen the quality of data, working with the OxCam Arc team, DEFRA and the 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, engaging with the freight sector as much as possible to do so.

- Incorporate outputs from ongoing technical work, such as the decarbonisation playbook.
- Ensure the database is fit for purpose to support development strategic case for early stage business cases.
- Review of the population segmentation work, including and the scale of granularity of the tool, particularly in the context of improved access to stations and planning for mobility hubs

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## **Planning for Net Zero**

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

The transport strategy sets the framework for a focused approach to planning for net zero. 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. However, through the region's innovation expertise and by maximising the opportunities available to support a highly connected, well managed transport system, the benefits of embracing the pathway to net zero will be universally shared.

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 seven STBs in planning the path to net zero. Working across the STBs and liaising with government, EEH is setting the national agenda: advocating for government to make bold policy decisions, backed by funding. For the Heartland region, decisions on policy and investment priorities set by government must be consistent with 'Decarbonising Transport: a better, greener Britain' and aligned to the regional transport strategy.

Improved digital connectivity is a key component in achieving the ambitions for net zero on the basis 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.

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.

### **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
- Facilitate a community of best practice for EEH local authorities to share expertise and experience of planning for net zero.
- Support the roll out of LTPs 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
- 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.
- With Transport East, undertake a sprint to define how the sector can better work collaboratively to support and enable the most efficient and effective roll out of EV 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.

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### **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 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 – most of which lie 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. The connectivity studies along with other evidence, such as the Passenger Rail Study, will ensure that

regional priorities are informing and shaping the future development of the strategic infrastructure network.

The outputs from the connectivity studies, the Passenger Rail Study, Oxford Cambridge Roads study and the Regional Bus Study and specifically the solutions identified in them 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 Heartland Passenger Rail Study and the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study. Ensure the needs of all parties in the region are considered equally and fairly.
- Complete the current programme of connectivity studies and, following completion, 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
- Across the wider south east, 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, 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).

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## **An Integrated Transport Network**

Ensuring that local communities and businesses can safely and efficiently access the services and facilities they need is an important contributory factor to managing future travel demand. Access to good quality services and facilities locally can both help reduce the length of journeys and encourage greater use of active travel modes. Integrating transport and land use planning and increasing digital connectivity to services will create additional opportunities to effect long-term change in travel patterns.

An integrated transport system requires a seamless journey from the first mile to the last mile, factoring in: information provision, 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 are shown to be critical success factors for this work strand.

Walking and cycling is already 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.

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.

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.

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.

In the next three years, EEH will develop region-wide solutions to first mile, last mile planning, building on work completed to date and drawing on the experience of the current and planned connectivity pilots underway. Ticketing and information, as well as better alignment between land use and transport planning will be considered critical success factors for this work strand.

**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 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 Future of Rural Transport White Paper.
- Explore options for improved ticketing and information provision to achieve pan-regional integration.
- Lead the national and regional commitment to better alignment between spatial planning, physical connectivity and digital connectivity (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.

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### **Innovation**

We continue to build on the leadership being provided within the region on the deployment of user-focused services. Through the EEH Innovation Working Group the framework has been set to use that knowledge to scale this capability across the region on a consistent basis, establishing better data sharing and interoperability.

As a focus for science and technology-based innovation in the UK, EEH can work better with partners, particularly our universities and research facilities, to maximise the use of 'living laboratories' as a means of trialling innovation in the region at scale and at pace. EEH can also work better with the private sector to develop proposals 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 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.
- Facilitate a community of best practice for EEH local authorities, and enabling a flow of information between them and the region's private sector innovators and universities.

## [Page 26-27]

### **Regional Scheme Prioritisation and Development**

A key benefit of a regional approach lies in the ability to provide a clear, prioritised view of strategic transport investments and to do so in a way that ensures investment in individual networks is co-ordinated to deliver on a shared strategic ambition.

An investment pipeline will establish the priorities for investment that are required to support delivery of regional infrastructure solutions. Delivering the pipeline will then be

dependent upon securing the funding and/or finance to enable the region's investment priorities to be developed and then delivered.

Current fiscal and political pressures make it inevitable that a combination of public and private sector funding will be required, 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 and the focus of activity can move increasingly into developing investable propositions. The pace of transition to scheme development work will vary according to the allocation provided, not least because there are some key strategy and evidence activities that must be delivered.

The proportion of funding expected to be allocation to scheme development is

2022/23 – Around 15% of programme

2023/24 – around 40% of programme

2024/25 – around 65% of programme

Based on indicative funding from DfT, this implies that over £900,000 will be allocated to supporting the development of strategic outline business cases by 2024. This funding will be delivered both in house (via project specific posts) and through consultancy support.

Through this investment, EEH would 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.

As EEH reaches its next level of maturity, the focus will increasingly shift towards preparation of strategic business cases for investment.

**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.

**[page 28-29]**

**Capacity and Capability to deliver**

EEH remains committed to our aspiration to create a centre of excellence for major early-stage scheme development in the region, with a particular focus on developing the strategic narrative for transport infrastructure schemes at pre-SOBC stage.

The centre of excellence idea was identified as an opportunity in a review of the infrastructure delivery process 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 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.

Through the £125,000 in-year funding for client-side capabilities, we will be piloting the centre of excellence. This pilot will undertake a holistic capability gap analysis and 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.

Continuing the work of the centre of excellence is a priority for EEH. It will be subject to securing additional funding outside of this settlement. Discussions are continuing with DfT to press for additional funding for the Centre of Excellence going forward.