



Strategic Transport Leadership Board

14 July 2023

Agenda Item 5: Supporting investment in the Region

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Strategic Transport Leadership Board:

- a) Notes that work on the next iteration of the regional investment pipeline is now underway and that individual engagement sessions with partners will be set up as required.**
- b) Agrees the proposed methodology, approach and levels of service to inform the regional investment pipeline.**
- c) Agrees to the package of interventions for Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study and publication of:**
 - **Final Report Summary Report**
 - **Evidence Base Report**
 - **Consultation Report**
- d) Notes that the outputs of the connectivity studies will be part of the investment pipeline.**

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed approach to the iteration of EEH's investment pipeline and to agree the methodology, including the proposed levels of service against which interventions will be reported.
- 1.2. The report also outlines the final packages and reports for the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study (summary maps are in the annexes below) and provides an update on the progress of current connectivity studies.

2. Key points to note

- 2.1. The government is clear on its expectation that STBs provide credible, clear advice on infrastructure investment priorities in the region. The Strategic Transport Leadership Board has previously confirmed its support for a process that presents our infrastructure priorities as a range of priority schemes, rather than an explicit list.
- 2.2. The regional transport strategy, agreed by partners and published in 2021, contained a first iteration of a regional infrastructure investment pipeline. At the time, the pipeline was based on 'known' priorities captured through stakeholder engagement.
- 2.3. Further technical studies and a more robust evidence base, developed since the transport strategy, have created an opportunity for a refreshed investment pipeline.

- 2.4. The overall aim of the project is to bring together interventions identified through our suite of evidence into a single investment pipeline. The outcome of the pipeline project will be a dynamic matrix that can operate flexibly and be sustained over a longer period of time.
- 2.5. EEH's connectivity studies provide an important contribution to the regional investment pipeline (along with the wider suite of evidence prepared by EEH and its partners).
- 2.6. The third connectivity study, Swindon-Didcot-Oxford, has now completed pending approval of the Board.

3. Context

- 3.1. As the sub-national transport body (STB) for the region, EEH's role is to look strategically across the region, working with local partners to identify priorities for future investment discussions with government and scheme promoters.
- 3.2. Our transport strategy, published in 2021, set the policy context for transport in the region. Building on the transport strategy principles and policies, the development of technical studies and our regional evidence base, England's Economic Heartland is iterating our static investment pipeline into a dynamic investment matrix.
- 3.3. A first iteration of the investment pipeline, building on priorities of partners and 'known' investment priorities, was outlined in the transport strategy. The intentions were for this initial pipeline to be iterated as future technical studies concluded and the benefits of additional proposed interventions emerged.
- 3.4. Since the publication of the transport strategy, further studies and technical work have progressed and therefore we are seeking to iterate our pipeline and increase its ability to remain useful in a dynamic funding environment. They include, but are not limited to, the Passenger Rail Study Phase 1 and 2, Freight Study, Bus Study, Active Travel Strategy Phase 2 and connectivity studies programme.
- 3.5. The pipeline iteration will be evidence-based, bringing together the transport investment opportunities for the region in a way that EEH can use to dynamically shortlist options for further investigation and possible investment.
- 3.6. The connectivity studies have been in development since winter 2021, led by a steering group made up by local authority partners, LEPs National Highways and DfT, with input from stakeholders and a public call for evidence which has shaped a package of the interventions to improve connectivity within a defined area. Six connectivity studies, when complete, will form a key part of the evidence base for the investment pipeline.
- 3.7. The third connectivity study, Swindon-Didcot-Oxford, has now completed pending approval of the Board.
- 3.8. The connectivity studies build on the principles and policies outlined in the EEH transport strategy and provide options to how connectivity could be improved across the study areas and builds on work already being undertaken by local authorities, providing additionality to already committed and funded interventions.
- 3.9. The studies consider all modes of transport, understanding that a holistic approach to transport planning is required to improve connectivity.

4. Investment pipeline: approach

- 4.1. The overall aim of the project is to bring together interventions identified through our suite of evidence into a single investment pipeline into an investment matrix proportionate to regional scale working.
- 4.2. The matrix will consider strategic and multi modal opportunities and interventions which provide large benefits to the region. In line with the transport strategy, the interventions considered will look ahead to 2050.
- 4.3. The strategic nature of STBs means that our focus for securing pan regional support for investment should be for interventions that are strategic in nature. This is likely to include (but is not limited to) schemes that:



- Benefit two or more local authorities in the EEH region
- Benefits 2 or more STBs or have national benefit
- Where the intervention covers at least one place of strategic importance
- Provide sustainable surface access to international gateways/markets
- Support improvements to regional east west connectivity
- Supports improvements to regional north south connectivity
- Realises the potential for rail freight
- Supports strategic road freight.

- 4.4. The outputs of our technical work have been collated into a list of interventions for potential inclusion in the matrix, these reflect extensive stakeholder and partner engagement at every stage of the process.
- 4.5. In developing the investment matrix, interventions which are concept level are planned to be listed but not explicitly included. This approach reflects their 'investment readiness' and our ability to justify, with evidence, why a particular intervention is needed. Schemes in construction or fully funded will also be listed separately.
- 4.6. The benefit of a matrix 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 schemes are further developed and our technical work continues.
- 4.7. Department for Transport (DfT) guidance to STBs suggests that the following should be considered within the context of investment pipelines: enabling economic growth, levelling up and achieving net zero. We are also aware that there is a need for pipelines to be affordable, deliverable and have high levels of stakeholder acceptability, with these informing each of the proposed criteria noted below.
- 4.8. Building on the above, alongside input from officers across the EEH partnership, the Board is invited to consider, and provide a steer on the following outcomes-based levels of service to be included in the matrix. The proposed levels of service have been grouped together under the principles within the transport strategy.

Principle 1: Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040

- Deliver a net reduction in GHG emissions and air pollution
- Increase the number and percentage of journeys using active travel and public transport

Principle 2: Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel

- Conserve and enhance the region's natural and historic environments
- Provide greater levels of inclusivity and accessibility
- Improve the quality of life of local communities

Principle 3: Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities

- Reduce journey time variability (across all modes)
- Support sustainable economic growth in all areas
- Improve the connectivity between places of strategic importance and key economic centres

Principle 4: Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways, in a way which lessens its environmental impact

- Encourage the safe and sustainable movement of people and goods throughout the region and to international gateways
- Enable strategic journeys to use strategic routes
- Facilitate more frictionless transfer between modes for people and goods

4.9. If agreed by the Board, the matrix will be built over the summer for the evaluation process to take place in the autumn.

4.10. We anticipate the investment pipeline will be completed early 2024 to be presented to the Board. Officers from across the EEH partnership will be involved at every stage of its development.

4.11. The matrix will be presented in final form alongside an investment pipeline summary report. This will provide the narrative about why investment in the pipeline is critical and how the interventions work together to meet the aims of the transport strategy.

5. Investment Pipeline: stakeholder engagement

5.1. To develop the pipeline, there will need to be strong stakeholder buy in and acceptability of interventions.

5.2. The Strategic Transport Leadership Board, and transport officers, will be engaged via agenda items and presentations at respective meetings.

5.3. Further engagement will take place in the form of individual engagement sessions with local authorities to understand priorities for investment and technical information related to interventions listed.

5.4. We would welcome member engagement in the individual engagement session. We will work with officers and member to schedule individual engagement sessions, as required, during July and August.

6. Investment Pipeline: next steps

6.1. If agreed by the Board, the levels of service will be incorporated into the investment pipeline matrix.

6.2. During July and August, we would also like to engage individually with local authority partners to understand intervention priorities. Further updates on the progress of the investment pipeline will be presented at Strategic Transport Leadership Board meetings.

7. Swindon-Didcot-Oxford Connectivity Study: approach

7.1. Subject to Board agreement, the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study has now been completed.

7.2. The study has been subject to extensive engagement over the period of its development, working with stakeholders throughout gathering evidence through:

- Steering group: local authority planning, local enterprise partnerships and transport officers, alongside National Highways and Network Rail to gain local insights into connectivity issues and opportunities.
- Stakeholder group: wider engagement with place and environmental stakeholder groups to gather insights on issues and opportunities and potential solutions.
- Call for evidence: providing the opportunity for wider participation from members of the public, businesses and interest groups.
- Expert Panel: panel of public transport, active travel, road and freight experts



- 7.3. The connectivity studies are based on the principles and policies of EEH's transport strategy and are framed in both the context of national policy and work being undertaken by local authorities.
- 7.4. EEH connectivity studies do not consider or influence options for future locations of growth – this remains the decision of the local planning authority through the established local plan process. Published local plans and national travel forecasts based on the government's National Trip End Model are evidence on which demand on the transport system have been mapped to inform each connectivity study.

8. Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study: key outcomes

- 8.1. The packages of interventions included in the study has been tested using a strategic land use model and their impact compared to a business-as-usual scenario by 2049. Overall, the model results show an increased use of rail, bus and active travel across the study area as a result of the interventions identified.
- 8.2. Working within a whole system approach, digital connectivity has been included in the scope of the work to facilitate access to digital modes and reduce the need to travel, especially in rural areas and to reflect new ways of working. This is in line with previous studies approach.
- 8.3. On advice from Strategic Transport Leadership Board in July 2022, regarding demand management, we are not proposing a region-wide demand management solution and therefore this has not been included in the modelling of the interventions.
- 8.4. The packages set out within the connectivity study are intended to be complementary, building the picture of connectivity across the study area in an evidence-based manner. This approach has enabled a balanced package of options that could be progressed.
- 8.5. The packages include:
 - Improved Inter-Urban Connections - Making the most of existing road and rail corridors with a particular focus on the A420 and A34, as well as electrification and extension of intercity rail services.
 - Reducing Congestion and Improving Sustainable Connectivity in Oxford Urban Area - Reducing car dependency in and around Oxford through improved active travel infrastructure, enhanced public transport services, and demand management
 - Reducing Congestion and Improving Sustainable Connectivity in Swindon Urban Area - Reducing car dependency in and around Swindon with logistics partnerships, improved active travel infrastructure, and enhanced public transport services.
 - Better Connecting Market Towns, Innovation Hubs, and Rural Areas - Reducing the number of unnecessary trips through improved digital connectivity, improving local roads and transport choice by making public transport more reliable and accessible.
 - Moving Freight More Effectively - Partnering with the private sector to reduce congestion caused by freight traffic, securing the future of regional freight terminals, and commissioning work to further understand local freight needs.

Creating a Sustainable Integrated Transport Network - Better integrating transport modes and reducing their overall cost and impact on the environment to encourage multi-modal journeys that more sustainably meet individual travel needs.
- 8.6. The package details are outlined in Annex 1 and the final reports are included as annexes to this report for agreement by Board.

9. Connectivity Studies – Next Steps

- 9.1. Pending agreement by the Board, the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study will be published by EEH. Annexes to be approved for publication by board include:
 - Annex 1 Final Summary Report - which provides the overview and recommended packages



- Annex 2 Call For Evidence Summary Report – providing the results of the public call for evidence
 - Annex 3 Evidence Base Report – providing the technical background to the study
- 9.2. Connectivity study 5 (southern east-west movements) and study 4 (Thames Valley – Buckinghamshire -Northamptonshire) are continuing to be progressed and long listing of their packages have now been developed ahead of the short-listing process.
 - 9.3. The final study, Luton-Bedford-Corby, and will be commissioned this summer pending confirmation of funding from the Department for Transport.
 - 9.4. The outputs of the connectivity studies (and other technical programmes) are being considered in the investment pipeline workstream as outlined above.
 - 9.5. Over the summer EEH will commission 'economic narratives' for the geographies covered by each of the six connectivity study corridors. The narratives will outline the 'economic hooks' present in each corridor, which can be used to make the case for investment in infrastructure to drive forward economic growth.
 - 9.6. The project will provide government, other key decision makers and local authorities with an evidence-based narrative around what makes each corridor an investable proposition, particularly in the context of its contribution to the economy, skills and labour markets.

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