

Strategic Transport Leadership Board

24 September 2021

Agenda Item 4: Board Remit

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Agrees that the body should be named 'Strategic Transport Leadership Board'**
- b) Notes the membership arrangements for the body, and agrees that discussions should continue with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to confirm its membership ambitions**
- c) Agrees the overarching remit for the Board, including its relationship with the Oxford-Cambridge Arc**
- d) Notes the forward look of decisions and priority areas of work to be considered by the Board over the next six months**
- e) Agrees EEH's Spending Review submission, covering 2022-2025**

1. Context

- 1.1. Between March and July this year, the EEH Leaders group reviewed the governance structure for England's Economic Heartland. Building on the success of the previous format and putting EEH in good stead for the future, leaders agreed that the preferred approach going forward was to consolidate EEH's two political-level meetings – the Strategic Transport Forum and EEH Leaders – into one single meeting.
- 1.2. The inaugural meeting of the new group takes place on 24 September 2021. The ambitions of the new body are framed by local partners' continued and shared commitment to the principles of partnership working in order to drive better outcomes for the region as a whole.

2. Name of the body

- 2.1. It is intended that the new group will provide leadership and oversight of all aspects of the sub-national transport body, merging the previous functions of the Strategic Transport Forum and EEH Leaders meeting.
- 2.2. As a result, and given the significance that the Department for Transport (DfT) places on EEH as a sub-national transport body, the name of the group needs to reflect its leadership role as a core partner in the region, driving forward strategic connectivity.
- 2.3. As such, it is proposed that the body be called the 'Strategic Transport Leadership Board'.

3. Board Membership

- 3.1. The legislative framework under which STBs are established is clear: the members of England's Economic Heartland are its relevant transport authorities.

- 3.2. In addition to core Board members, it is essential that membership of the STB reflects our strong and effective working relationships with sub-regional groupings, such as growth boards and national and regional infrastructure and delivery organisations. As such, there are a small number of additional bodies that, in July 2021, the Leaders group agreed should be associate members or observers on the Board.
- 3.3. Member arrangements for these groups are set out within the terms of reference for the Board, as amended by the Leaders group in July 2021. A final version of the terms of reference was circulated to leaders and associate members in August 2021.
- 3.4. Annex 1 sets out the list of members, associate members and observers of the new Board, as agreed by Leaders in July 2021. In line with the terms of reference, the list of associate members and observers may be updated in the future, as necessary and only with agreement of the Board.
- 3.5. At present, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority remains an associate member of England's Economic Heartland. The decision to not become a full member of EEH as an STB was made by the Combined Authority some time ago, reflecting at the time the desire of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to consider its long term relationship with sub-national transport bodies.
- 3.6. As an associate member, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has continued to develop and strengthen its relationship with England's Economic Heartland. In recent discussions, the Combined Authority have expressed their intent to become more closely involved with EEH, including becoming full members of the body.
- 3.7. Moving forward, members will be keen to continue on this successful trajectory of partnership working: bringing benefits to both EEH and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- 3.8. Subject to agreement by this Board, EEH business unit will continue discussions with officers and, where appropriate, members, to support Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's ambitions to become a full voting member of England's Economic Heartland.

4. Board Remit

- 4.1. As Board members are aware, EEH was established in autumn 2014 on the initiative of local political leaders in response to their understanding that:
 - Strategic infrastructure issues (and solutions) extend beyond any one single local transport authority area
 - Issues that are common to one or more areas can benefit from a co-ordinated response, and that in so doing it is possible to achieve change and realise efficiencies
 - Delivery of a sustainable transport system is dependent upon the integration of investment by government, its arms-length bodies, local authorities, as well as infrastructure owners and service providers.
- 4.2. These guiding principles continue to underpin the work of EEH and reflect the commitment amongst political and business leaders to harness the benefit of collaborative working to unlock added value that benefits residents, communities, and businesses.
- 4.3. The new Board will continue this focus, driving outcomes and delivering investment for the benefit of the region. Going forwards, the Board will continue to ensure that:
 - EEH complements the powers, responsibilities and accountabilities of its partners: collaboration is fundamental to our approach, allowing us to speak with one voice on issues of genuine strategic interest



- Whilst the focus of England’s Economic Heartland as a sub-national transport body is naturally on strategic transport, our work on decarbonisation has re-validated the original ethos underpinning England’s Economic Heartland: the need to adopt a ‘whole-systems’ approach to strategic connectivity, aligning strategic transport planning with digital connectivity and utilities
 - That all the tools and technical work undertaken by EEH is made freely available to all partners for their own use, providing significant added value, particularly in respect to the tools EEH has developed as part of its regional evidence base. Government departments and arms-length bodies likewise have free access to all tools and technical work.
- 4.4. England’s Economic Heartland works closely with adjoining sub-national transport bodies on issues of common interest. It is also an active member of the wider network that brings together all of England’s seven sub-national transport bodies.
- 4.5. Sub-national transport bodies are the DfT’s preferred sub-national mechanism for engaging with local transport authorities on strategic issues.
- 4.6. They are established under the terms of the Cities and Local Government Act 2008, as modified by the Local Transport Act 2016. EEH was recognised by DfT as an STB in 2016 and has the benefit of receiving funding from the DfT in support of its role as an STB.
- 4.7. DfT looks to each STB to be a single body:
- With a transport remit, responsible for developing, publishing and overseeing the implementation of the regional transport strategy informed by a regional evidence base
 - That works with DfT to prioritise investment
 - That has clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the work of DfT’s arms-length bodies, for example National Highways, Network Rail, and in due course Great British Railways. In EEH’s case this also involves work with the East West Railway Company
 - On which all local transport authorities are represented.
- 4.8. The DfT ministerial team has consistently set out the importance that they attach to the work of the STBs, with them having an increasingly key role to play in shaping the work of both National Highways and Network Rail. The level of influence achievable with the investment programmes of these organisations is measurably more significant when local transport authorities act in partnership as an STB.
- 4.9. DfT funding to STBs is currently determined annually. The STBs and DfT officials continue to work in a shared endeavour to secure multi-year funding settlements for all STBs.
- 4.10. It is in the context of the wider STB policy framework that DfT expects EEH to remain a standalone sub national transport body, working as it does with partnerships across the region: particularly the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.
- 4.11. In line with decisions made by the Strategic Transport Forum in May 2021, EEH continues to work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that the investment made in developing the transport strategy, including the regional evidence base, is shaping and informing the work being taken forward by the government in respect of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework.
- 4.12. Emerging discussions with MHCLG and DfT confirm the complementary role that EEH can play in supporting the ambitions of the Arc, building on EEH’s established evidence base, collaboration with partners to support key pan-regional initiatives and focus on delivery.

5. Programme of work – overall approach

- 5.1. DfT provides funding to sub-national transport bodies to enable them to prepare, and subsequently implement, regional transport strategies. The Secretary of State for Transport subsequently has regard to it in decisions relating to national investment programmes. It is on this basis that National Highways works with EEH as they develop their five-year investment plans (the Road Investment Strategy), likewise the rail sector works with EEH as part of the long-term strategic planning of the rail system (infrastructure and services). It is also why the DfT looks to EEH to provide advice in respect of the Major Road Network (MRN) programme.
- 5.2. In addition, the accumulated knowledge and experience held within the STBs provides DfT with the opportunity to better capture insight that informs the development of national policy. For example, through its work on transport decarbonisation, EEH has been a trailblazer for this kind of approach, with the input from STBs (collated by EEH) feeding into the transport decarbonisation plan.
- 5.3. Annex 2 sets out the work priorities for EEH going forward for the next six months. Building on that, a proposed forward look for decisions to be made by the Board is provided in Annex 3.

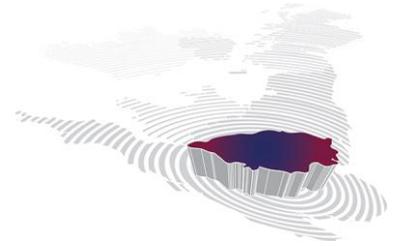
6. Spending Review

- 6.1. On 7 September 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a three-year Spending Review, due to complete in October 2021.
- 6.2. The Spending Review is set against a backdrop of significant pressures on public sector finances, making it all the more challenging to secure the additional investment required to enable the delivery of planned growth and to do so in a way that delivers on the legal requirement to achieve net zero carbon.
- 6.3. The challenge for the Heartland is heightened by the scale of growth already identified in adopted local plans (which typically cover the period until the early-2030s). The 2020 spending settlement included a commitment to prioritise transport investment away from London and the South East. The cessation of work on the development of Crossrail 2 was arguably an example of that emphasis having immediate implications for the Heartland.
- 6.4. The approaching Spending Review is therefore going to be particularly challenging, with a heightened risk of the gap increasing between high level statements of ambition and what it is possible to deliver on the ground.
- 6.5. The Strategic Transport Forum led the development of EEH's submission to the Spending Review, within the context of four key themes:
 - Securing the capital funding required to support the construction and/or delivery of known priorities before 2025: this includes securing continued support for the delivery of strategically important infrastructure projects that are already in national programmes (for example, East West Rail, including the link between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes) and also securing the additional capital funding required to enable construction and/or delivery of known regionally significant infrastructure priorities required in the period to 2025
 - Securing the additional resource funding for partners that will enable them to develop schemes identified in the regional investment pipeline, thereby enabling the detail of those schemes to be finalised to make them 'oven ready'
 - Securing a regional transport planning resource to increase technical capacity and capability in support of individual partners, enabling them to accelerate the development and delivery of schemes
 - Securing a multi-year funding settlement for the core functions of EEH as the sub-national transport body.
- 6.6. The publication of the transport strategy in February 2021 provides EEH and its partners with a vision-led, evidence-based policy framework that underpins each of the above themes.



- 6.7. In July 2021, members of the Strategic Transport Forum considered an earlier draft of EEH's proposed Spending Review submission and were invited to provide any further comments by 20 August 2021. Given the time that has been given to developing the proposed Spending Review submission, and given it is based on the transport strategy – which had significant input from partners, there were no further amendments provided in writing.
- 6.8. The final draft submission, for approval by the Board, is attached at Annex 4.

Naomi Green
Interim Director
September 2021



Annex 1 – Board Membership

1. Full Members

- 1.1. Each full member of the sub-national transport body has a single vote on Board decisions.
- 1.2. For decisions to be quorate, the body must have representation from at least 50% of members with voting rights, either members of the body or their delegates.

Bedford Borough Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Luton Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council
North Northamptonshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
West Northamptonshire Council

2. Associate Members

- 2.1. Associate members have been identified as having a role on the Board given the need for EEH to have a strong and effective working relationship with them.
- 2.2. Associate members and observers are entitled to participate in meetings but do not have voting rights on Board decisions.

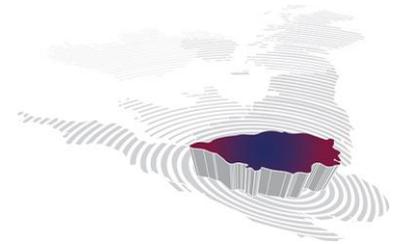
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority *
Future Oxfordshire Partnership
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Board
Central Area Growth Board
Buckinghamshire Growth Board
Swindon and Wiltshire LEP
EEH Bus Operators Association

(*) In recent discussions, the Combined Authority have expressed their intent to become more closely involved with EEH, including becoming full members of the body.

3. Observers

- 3.1. Observers are those bodies for whom EEH requires a close working relationship in order to ensure delivery and support for the Board's priorities.
- 3.2. Observers are entitled to participate in meetings but do not have voting rights on Board decisions.

Department for Transport
National Highways
Network Rail



Annex 2 – Programme of Work

Strategic Transport Leadership Board EEH Programme of Work

The table below sets out the key projects that are currently being delivered by EEH.

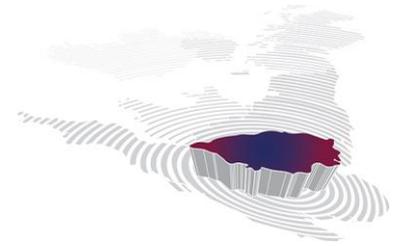
Priority 1 - Supporting the Heartland, including the Arc spatial framework	
Theme	Activity
Regional evidence base and monitoring	<p>In the next six months, EEH will prepare for its annual update of the regional evidence base, including gathering updated data from local partners on local plan delivery (housing and economic growth). The evidence base provides a single point of reference for all partners in the region and is already extensively used to inform decisions.</p> <p>This is the final year of maintenance of the current contract for the regional evidence base. Over the next six months, EEH will review options for a refreshed evidence base for future years.</p> <p>EEH will commission work to start monitoring delivery of the transport strategy to be undertaken and reported on an annual basis.</p>
Prioritising infrastructure investments	<p>The programme of connectivity studies is under way: Two studies have commenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford-Milton Keynes • Oxford-Northampton-Peterborough <p>A third study, Swindon-Didcot-Oxford, is scheduled for commission this autumn. The fourth project in the programme, London-Buckinghamshire-Northampton will be scoped in spring 2022, with a plan for work to commence early in 2022/23, subject to resources being available.</p> <p>Alongside the connectivity studies, EEH is taking forward a small project to consider 'alternative futures'. Working with partners, EEH is scoping future global and national uncertainties that may have an impact on demands on the transport system. This approach is common practice in strategic transport planning and allows us to more accurately test the resilience of investment priorities against future uncertainty.</p>

Priority 2 – Decarbonisation of the transport system

Decarbonisation road map	<p>Work is continuing to develop and publish a detailed road map against which progress towards decarbonisation can be monitored.</p> <p>In the next six months, EEH will also commence work on baseline mapping of current infrastructure provision in support of alternative fuels – including electric and hydrogen.</p>
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Priority 3 – Improving strategic connectivity	
Future rail (passenger) service requirements	<p>Building on the outputs from phases one and two of the EEH Rail Passenger Study (undertaken by Network Rail as part of its strategic planning function), EEH will commence work to develop conditional output statements that can be used to inform the future requirements for passenger rail services as they become direct awards and/or concessions.</p>
Express coach and scheduled bus services	<p>Work is underway to with local partners and the EEH Bus Operators Association to define a long-term future for mass transit in the region. The work will also identify intra-regional bus services that could be supported and prioritised in bus service improvement plans.</p>
Future roads requirements	<p>Preparation and support for the prioritisation of future roads investment – to inform EEH’s input into RIS3, future MRN investment as well as other investment priorities will form an important priority over the forthcoming months.</p> <p>National Highways has recently commenced work on its route strategies programme. National Highways will be seeking steers and evidence from EEH and our partners in the next six months.</p> <p>EEH will also be working with partners and the Board, to consider and develop input into the Oxford – Cambridge Connectivity study for roads in more detail.</p>

Priority 4 – Improving local connectivity	
Improving First Mile/Last Mile Connectivity	<p>Work is currently being scoped (in collaboration with the EEH innovation and decarbonisation working groups) to consider options for improving local connectivity in rural and semi-rural communities. This takes forward the concept of ‘mobility hubs’ as identified in the transport strategy.</p>



Annex 3 – Board Forward Look

Strategic Transport Leadership Board

Forward Programme

December 2021	
Transport Strategy – Delivery Update	To provide an update on progress with delivery of the transport strategy – to be provided on a six-monthly basis
Transport Decarbonisation – Regional Roadmap	To consider and agree the next phase in development of a road map for transport decarbonisation in the Heartland.
Roads Programme (including update from National Highways)	To receive an update from National Highways on progress with prioritisation and delivery of improvements to road investment in the region To consider and agree EEH’s approach to agreeing priorities for the Roads Investment Strategy 3 (2025 – 2030) and future MRN investment.
Active Travel	To receive an update on developing a regional active travel programme
Rail Passenger Study	To consider next steps for taking forward the recommendations of the ‘Rail Passenger Study’.
Programme of Work 2022/23	To consider and agree the STB’s priorities for 2022/2023
January 2022	
Transport Decarbonisation	To consider and agree options for a road map to transport decarbonisation in the Heartland.

Implementation Framework	To agree a proposed approach to implementing the outcomes of the 2021 Spending Review, including priorities for EEH's investment strategy, and capability and capacity programme.
Regional Evidence Base and Performance Measures	To receive options for the refresh of EEH's regional evidence base. To consider and provide a steer on the measures required to monitor delivery of the transport strategy.
The Future of Mobility	To consider the region's ambitions for the future of mobility, bringing in links with the 'future of mobility' programme being developed by the LEPs across the region. To agree EEH's proposed approach to enabling mobility hubs in place types across the region.
Network Rail Update	Introduce a regular update on programme delivery – opportunity for the Board to ask questions of Network Rail
March 2022	
Connectivity Studies	To consider the conclusions of the connectivity studies: Oxford – Milton Keynes and Oxford-Northampton – Peterborough and to agree next steps
Roads Programme (including update from National Highways)	To receive an update on progress with National Highways' route strategies and to feed in the Board's priorities To consider outputs from the study on road provision in the Heartland, due to be co-commissioned with National Highways and DfT.
Business Plan 2022/23	To agree the final business plan and programme of work for the year ahead
First Mile, Last Mile Update	To consider progress with EEH's work on first mile, last mile connectivity, including scoping work on mobility hubs.