



## **Strategic Transport Leadership Board**

3 March 2023

### **Agenda Item 3: Value Proposition and 2023/24 Work Programme**

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the Board:**

- a) Receives a presentation on the conclusions of the EEH Board Value Proposition project and considers its findings.**
- b) Notes EEH's relationship with emerging pan regional economic partnerships.**
- c) Agrees the proposed work programme for 2023/24, subject to final confirmation of funding available from DfT.**
- d) Notes that the final Business Plan for 2023/24 and beyond will be brought for Board approval in May 2023**
- e) Agrees to support a small (2%) increase in partner contributions to EEH, in line with increased staff costs**
- f) Notes the forward look of decisions and priority areas of work to be considered by the Board over the next six months**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The paper provides Board members with the conclusions of the Board review into EEH's value proposition and a recommended programme of activity for EEH for 2023/24.

#### **2. Key points to note**

- 2.1. EEH does not yet know the size of its financial settlement for 2023/24 from DfT, though it is expected to be based on the indicative figure provided by DfT as part of a three-year funding offer.
- 2.2. Over the next two years of the programme, there will be an increasing focus on scheme development.
- 2.3. Feedback from the Board review into EEH's value proposition has identified a number of strengths of EEH and some areas of development and improvement.
- 2.4. It is proposed that partner contributions to EEH increase by 2%.

#### **3. Context**

- 3.1. In May 2022, the Strategic Transport Leadership Board agreed a three-year Business Plan for EEH<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [EEH Three Year Business Plan 2022 - 2025](#)

- 3.2. The Plan set out how the investment provided by local authority partners alongside the indicative budget of funding provided by DfT for the three-year period from 2022 – 2025 would be used to deliver a programme of work that would allow the region to plan and deliver some of the ambitions and priorities of the regional transport strategy, published in February 2021.
- 3.3. In December 2022 the Strategic Transport Leadership Board indicated their support for a small scale review of the value provided by EEH, ensuring the EEH business unit was operating as effectively and delivering as much value as possible.
- 3.4. The conclusions of the review, alongside the three-year business plan, provide the framework for shaping EEH's 2023/24 Programme of Work.

#### **4. EEH Value Proposition**

- 4.1. The project sought to identify the extent to which current activities were adding value, how those activities aligned with individual partner priorities and how EEH could improve its added value further.
- 4.2. During January and February 2023, the small-scale review of EEH was undertaken independently, with individual interviews completed with 85% of Board members, corporate directors from across EEH's local authority directors and DfT.
- 4.3. The conclusions of the review are presented in annex 1.
- 4.4. The conclusions of the review, including recommendations for further action are, in the main, achievable within the current resourcing plan for the EEH business unit and therefore deliverable, subject to Board support.
- 4.5. Following the Board's discussion, the business unit will use the steer provided to prioritise areas for development and improvement. These will be incorporated into a final work programme for the financial year 2023/24 and presented to the Board for consideration and approval on 26 May 2023.

#### **5. Pan Regional Partnerships**

- 5.1. The Levelling Up White Paper set out the government's support for the development of pan regional partnerships as forums that could work with the private sector to provide 'an extended network of collaborators and a strong regional brand'<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.2. Citing their strengths in size and their 'distinct histories, strengths and challenges', the government has confirmed its ambition to strengthen and deepen partnership working to drive economic growth through pan regional economic partnerships.
- 5.3. Within the context of transport and connectivity, the sub-national transport bodies already provide the opportunity to deliver the ambitions of pan regional work to deliver economic growth. However, beyond transport, there are currently two pan regional partnerships that authorities in the region are members of:
  - Western Gateway Pan Regional Partnership
  - Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership
- 5.4. Swindon's membership of the Western Gateway Pan Regional Partnership provides an important link between the EEH region and wider south west England and Wales. There are strong economic links between the regions and Swindon's relationship with the partnership provides an ideal opportunity to maximise and strengthen the economic opportunities that transport can help enable between them.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



- 5.5. The Oxford Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership received government support in January 2023. Despite misleading press coverage otherwise, the EEH Board has not signed a 'proposal' to government to support the creation of the Oxford Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership. Given the wider geography of the EEH partnership, it would not have been appropriate for EEH to do so without the engagement and support of the full Board.
- 5.6. As the sub-national transport body covering the entirety of the Oxford to Cambridge region, EEH has a seat on the shadow board of the OxCam Pan Regional Partnership. In sitting on the shadow board, EEH is able to ensure: synergies in data, evidence and expertise between the two organisations are shared; that duplication of effort is removed; and that strategic transport and connectivity decisions affecting the economic success of the region remain, rightly, the decision of the EEH Strategic Transport Leadership Board.
- 5.7. The Board will be keen to ensure the ambitions for shared expertise, removed duplication of effort and the requirement for appropriate decision making are closely monitored and reported back. Lessons learnt will be transferred to relationships that are formed with any relevant pan regional partnerships both now, and in the future.

## **6. Progress during current financial year (2022/23)**

- 6.1. The EEH business unit is forecast to finish the financial year within our current overall funding envelope, and we expect to have fully committed the 2022/23 work programme funding by the end of the financial year. A small exception is £35,000 of programme funding which we have agreed with DfT can be managed across financial years. This is because spending the funds was dependent on the outcome of activities by other organisations outside of EEH's remit, notably publication of the Future of Rural Transport (DfT) and secondly the conclusion of the integrated ticketing pilots currently underway in the Midlands.
- 6.2. In addition to the core programme, the EEH Business Unit has led the work of the East West Main Line Partnership; collaborated with other sub-national transport bodies projects regarding alternative fuels; electric vehicles; and BSIP support; continued to work closely with National Highways to develop the Oxford-Cambridge roads study; and engaged with the rail sector on matters including strategic infrastructure planning, rail industry reform and integration of East West Rail with other modes and rail lines.
- 6.3. An interim financial update was provided to the Strategic Transport Leadership Board in September 2022. An end of year financial statement and draft annual report will be presented to the Board for approval in May 2023.

## **7. Work Programme 2023/24**

- 7.1. As yet, EEH has not received confirmation of a funding settlement for the financial year 2023/24 and beyond.
- 7.2. Reflecting the clear commitment that DfT has towards STBs, in 2022 DfT provided a funding guideline for future years to 2025. While a funding guideline doesn't allow the business to plan our future year's work programmes completely, it does mean we can set out a draft work programme for the Board's consideration with somewhat more certainty.
- 7.3. We expect the settlement from DfT to be around £1,460,000 for the financial year 2023/24. Confirmation is expected imminently, most likely towards the end of March 2023, allowing the business unit to prepare a full business plan for consideration and approval by the Board in May 2023. As well as a core settlement, DfT has also indicated a potential opportunity for further funding to support more ambitious development of our regional centre of excellence.



- 7.4. In May 2022, the Strategic Transport Leadership Board agreed a three-year Business Plan for EEH<sup>3</sup>. The Plan set out how the investment provided by local authority partners alongside the indicative budget of funding provided by DfT for the three-year period from 2022 – 2025 would be used to deliver a programme of work that responded to both the Board’s and the government’s ambitions and expectations of EEH.
- 7.5. The three-year business plan provided the opportunity for the Board to set out a next stage of development for 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.
- 7.6. As a result, in 2023/24 the proportion of funds to be spent on EEH’s work programme on Strategy, Policy and Evidence has been agreed to be around 60% of programme costs and Scheme Development (investable propositions) to be around 40%. This fulfils the two core functions of an STB: to develop and maintain a transport strategy for the region; and to provide advice to ministers on prioritising transport investment.
- 7.7. Additionally, the conclusions of the small-scale review, alongside the three-year business plan provide the framework for shaping EEH’s 2023/24 Programme of Work.
- 7.8. Within the Business Planning Guidance for Sub-National Transport Bodies 2023/2024, the DfT laid out an additional, third supplementary function: to grow the capability of local transport authorities within our region by developing a regional Centre of Excellence.
- 7.9. This latter requirement is in line with some of the key ambitions and expectations of the Board, captured during the Value Proposition review. As a result of this shared commitment to the creation of a centre of excellence, an altered ratio to the work programme is therefore proposed:
  - Strategy, policy and evidence: c55%
  - Scheme development (investable propositions): c35%
  - Centre of excellence: c10%
- 7.10. Funding for the centre of excellence is likely to be further supported by an additional provision from DfT but, as yet there is no confirmed indication of the level of funding available.

## **8. Local contributions**

- 8.1. In addition to programme funding from government, our constituent member authorities make ‘local’ financial contributions towards EEH. This is a very important part of the EEH funding programme as it provides important support to cover communications, effective engagement activities with the government, MPs and other key decision makers, some operational costs and a significant proportion of staff costs.
- 8.2. Whilst recognising the continued pressure on local government finances, balanced with the staffing level required to deliver our programme, Board members are asked to recognise the particular pressure on staff salaries in this financial year. As a result, Board members are invited to support an increase in local contributions of 2%.
- 8.3. By investing in EEH, local partners retain the organisation as a locally-led body with flexibility to deliver local priorities. At the same time, EEH’s local contributions are able to lever a significant uplift in government programme funding to plan strategic transport investment in the region. The staff within the EEH team are a regional resource that all partners are able to work with and benefit from.
- 8.4. The proposed rise does not reflect the likely cost increases that EEH will face in the year ahead, due primarily to inflation. While this may present EEH with potential challenges, it is considered a fair proposal to keep the cost increase as low as possible.

---

<sup>3</sup> [EEH Three Year Business Plan 2022 - 2025](#)



**Naomi Green**  
**Managing Director**  
**March 2023**

## Annex 1

### EEH Board - Value Proposition Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Report completed by Mark Mulcahey, Fourth Story

Where is EEH adding value, and where should EEH be focussing?

Report to the Board of England's Economic Heartland 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

We would ask the Board to note the general findings of the report (2.1) and agree with the list of actions (2.2)

#### 1.0 Introduction and scope of work

The following summary report is part of an external consulting project commissioned by EEH. **The objective:** To capture the views of the Board and corporate directors to evaluate their understanding of EEH's work programme and business unit, in particular to identify where is adding value and where it should be focussing.

The deliverables of the project are designed to allow for candid feedback and independent scrutiny of EEHs engagement:

- A clear understanding of how key stakeholders see EEH supporting their objectives and ambition.
- A clear understanding of how the Board view the value added provided by EEH – Where are current activities adding value? How could this be improved?
- A clear understanding of any trends and outliers in stakeholder perceptions and needs
- Provide a set of recommended changes in existing activity to provide additional value

Interviews were conducted with the Board over seven weeks from 4<sup>th</sup> January to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

Name	Organisation	Completed
Richard Wenham	Central Bedfordshire Council	Yes
Liz Leffman	Oxfordshire County Council	Yes
Emily Darlington	Milton Keynes City Council	Yes
Robert Roche	Luton Borough Council	Yes
Graham Lawman	North Northamptonshire Council	Yes
Phil Larratt	West Northamptonshire Council	Yes
Nik Johnson / Anna Smith	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	TBA
Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council	Yes
Phil Bibby	Hertfordshire County Council	Yes
Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council	Yes
Wayne Fitzgerald	Peterborough City Council	Early March
David Renard	Swindon Borough Council	Yes
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council	Yes
Corporate Directors	Various	Yes
Andy Rhind	DfT	Yes



Whilst an interview guide was circulated to the interviewees before each meeting (see appendix A), the interviews were informal to allow for candid feedback. No quotes or opinions can be attributed to individuals or organisations.

## **2.0 This report is split into three sections:**

- 2.1 General Findings
- 2.2 Recommendations for improvement
- 2.3 Potential areas for development

### **2.1 General Findings:**

1. The Board recognises the criticality of regional structures to organise, support and deliver infrastructure projects, and they recognise the significant contribution EEH make to their organisations, the region and beyond.
2. The Board believes that EEH's strategy and approach align with their own but recognises that the EEH's strategy and ambition need to be discussed and agreed upon regularly.
3. The Board believe that EEH delivers good value for money to their authorities. In particular:
  - a. The data sets developed and maintained by EEH are well-used and of value
  - b. The studies and reports produced by EEH are of high quality and used extensively within partner organisations
  - c. The focus, support and analysis that enabled investment projects such as East West Rail – providing valuable support to secure its continued government funding
  - d. The opportunity to collaborate across the region on multiple projects
  - e. The EEH conference, is well-regarded and well-liked
  - f. The impressive access to DfT provided by EEH allows the region and the individual authorities to 'punch above our weight' and delivers significant extra value to partner organisations.
  - g. The Board particularly appreciate face-to-face connections and conversations with senior department officials.
4. The Board recognise that all their organisations have significant resource constraints, and whilst individual needs differ, all look for increased support from EEH.
5. The Board recognises that they are often members of multiple regional and pan-regional bodies and that EEH needs to play its part in reducing confusion and repetition, ensuring its resources are focused on delivering for the region.
6. The Board are very complimentary about the EEH team, including:
  - a. Its leadership and organisation
  - b. Its campaigning on behalf of the region
  - c. Its responsiveness, sensitivity and interest in local issues and dynamics
  - d. Its increasing technical capability
7. The Board believes that meetings, documents, and processes are well-organised, efficient and effective. The Board members commented that the sessions are collaborative and supportive and offer a rare opportunity for genuinely strategic debate.

The EEH team recognise that they must remain focussed and a core contributor to their success has been clarity of purpose. The addition of any new activity should be sensitive to its impact on delivering for the region.

### **2.2 Recommendations for change**

The interviews highlighted a standard set of recommendations for change in EEH activities. These can be split broadly into two groups: administration of Board activity and potential additional areas of focus for the EEH team.





### **Administration:**

1. Increase the proportion of Board meetings that are face-to-face and move locations around the region.
2. Improve the accessibility of Board reports and supporting documents, including more effective online tools.
3. Quarterly reporting on the progress of projects, programmes and expenditure – potentially a RAG list with more detail available if requested by a Board member or if a programme is off track.
4. Create an annual report on expenditure and impact of EEH activity by local authority area.

### **An additional focus of activity:**

1. Increase operational focus to bring together further and support corporate directors:
  - a. This support could include a small number of longer corporate director face-to-face meetings, further development of the Centre of Excellence to match needs closely and more information sharing
  - b. The Board recognise the significant resource constraints across all local authorities; there is an opportunity for EEH to provide effective and timely support
2. Provide a forum to share innovative ideas, best practices and results. Create communities of interest within EEH focussed on areas of innovation.
3. Provide a more comprehensive view of government activity and build relationships with other departments beyond DfT.
4. The EEH team will develop and agree an ambition for the EEH Partnership to define its focus for the next 5 years of activity.
5. Develop a forward calendar of predictable requests (for example Local Transport Plans) based on contacts with government departments to help manage resources and plan appropriately to meet deadlines.
6. Continue to develop relationships with other STBs to provide insight into infrastructure needs beyond our region and to build a common agenda in response to emerging regional and government priorities and policies.

## **2.3 Potential Areas for development**

Areas for further development and specification by EEH to be brought to the Board later for discussion:

1. What next after the connectivity studies? How do we ensure that all the connectivity studies create a complete picture of the region, and how do we plan to go beyond these studies?
2. Opportunities to share experience at the Board
3. How do we improve our attractiveness for investment? Can we improve our success in attracting investment across the region by facilitating conversations with investment groups? Would better understanding their needs and working with these organisations create more compelling investment solutions?
4. Can we extend the Centre of Excellence offer over time to include:
  - a. Project management capabilities and advice
  - b. Business case development and financial modelling
  - c. Skills and available talent
  - d. Communication capabilities
  - e. Technical expertise
  - f. Response to specific government requests

**Mark Mulcahey February 2023**





## Annex 2

# EEH Draft Work Programme - 2023/2024

The proposed work programme, set out below builds on commitments made in the EEH Business Plan 2022 – 2025.

<b>Regional Evidence Base</b>
<i>Business Plan Commitment</i>  A core requirement of EEH is to develop and maintain a regional evidence base.  In the period covering the business plan, the regional evidence base will be upgraded to reflect both user feedback and to make the most of advances in the way data is gathered and presented. It will provide an even more powerful tool which allows the region to make a compelling case for investment in the right infrastructure in the right places. EEH will also ensure monitoring progress on implementing the transport strategy is embedded within the new evidence base. The data will continue to be presented in a format that is accessible and user friendly.
<b>Priority areas of work for 2023/24: Proposed DfT funding (including programme staff): £120,000</b>  Refreshing and improving evidence base will enable EEH and partners to continue to develop evidence led approach to policy and delivery - offering a consistent, single version of the truth to the regional partners/stakeholders and government. We will do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improving the quality of data available in the EEH evidence base, most notably through the capture of a proportionate level of mobile phone data.</li><li>- Exploring options to integrate data collected through other projects such as the Oxford Cambridge area connectivity: roads study, National Highways route strategies and the EEH connectivity studies.</li><li>- Working with central government where possible to develop new approaches to data collection</li><li>- Exploring options for better access/use of rail and freight data.</li><li>- Reviewing the FMLM tool and its scale of granularity of the tool, particularly in the context of improved access to stations and planning for mobility hubs</li><li>- Aligning activity with TfN’s Common Analytical Framework. TfN have received additional funding to develop a shared Common Analytical Framework for all seven STBs. We expect the work to add value to our capability and not duplicate. Any preparation costs surrounding the application of the Common Analytical Framework are expected to be met outside of EEH’s core work programme.</li></ul>
<b>Planning for a net zero transport system</b>
<i>Business Plan Commitment</i>  Net zero will be one of the largest challenges for the sector over the next 15 years – and solutions cannot be determined without regional support.

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

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £160,000**

Core priorities:

Continue to work with local authority partners to plan for and monitor net zero transport, including implementation of a regional monitoring and evaluation approach.

EEH will continue to shape and influence thinking around behaviour change as well as the discussion about new business models that can deliver revenue investment into place-based decarbonisation solutions.

In 2023/24, EEH will incorporate plans to disseminate the Quantified Carbon Reduction (QCR) Tool with local authority partners. Further work on the QCR is likely to be required to: improve place-based classifications, reinforce the tool's functionality and make provision for annualised updates to the tool's baselines. EEH has also set aside funds to deliver the roll out of the EV infrastructure tool and ensure its continued success in the long term. An important focus of EEH's planning for net zero work is supporting secondments that ensure EEH has access to high quality advice and networks.

**Improving Strategic Connectivity**

*Business Plan Commitment*

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

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

The regional investment pipeline is 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

EEH will continue its work with National Highways, Network Rail, coach and bus sector, freight and logistics and other partners to make the case and ensure core strategic connectivity priorities are prioritised and delivered in a way that reflects the region’s significant contribution to the UK as a whole. This strand of work will oversee and support key projects being funded through national programmes so they are being planned and delivered with due regard to the regional transport strategy.

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £440,000**

Continuation of connectivity studies programme, review of its coverage and impact and identification of additional study work required. In 2023/24, EEH will commission the final connectivity study Luton - North Northamptonshire. The full programme of planned connectivity studies will then be completed. In parallel, the business unit will undertake a review of the coverage and impact of the connectivity studies and identification of any next steps. Work is now also underway (to be completed by December 2023) to better define the region's investment pipeline, building on evidence captured across EEH's study programme.

Alongside the investment pipeline will need to be further work to capture any possible investment models that could enable delivery of the investment as soon as possible.

During 2023/24, EEH business unit will continue to work with National Highways, Great British Railways and the bus, coach, and freight sector to deliver the region's strategic priorities, working with the sector and government to do so. The 2023/24 work programme will develop a regional passenger rail action plan (capturing evidence from previous work) and delivery of a freight action plan, building on recent work to complete a national freight model.

We will continue to seek support to ensure investment in digital connectivity continues is supported as a core part of the region's transport and connectivity offer (not DfT funded).

## **Connectivity and integration**

### *Business Plan Commitment*

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

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

### **Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £110,000**

Core Priorities:

Mobility hubs and buses will form the basis of activity in this programme of work. We will seek to roll out a programme of mobility hub demonstrators, supported by work to inform the development of business cases for mobility hubs. Linked to that will be an initial programme of work following publication of the government's Future of Rural Transport Strategy.

Subject to views by the EEH board, we will continue to press for investment in bus services, supporting the roll out of BSIP ambitions beyond the first phase of funding. EEH's focus on bus services will expand: identifying options to support a regional bus network for rapid transport, off-line bus routes and increased use of innovative bus solutions in non-metropolitan areas.

## **Innovation**

### *Business Plan Commitment*



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.

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

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £40,000**

Core activity:

Continuing to collaborate on the future of mobility with the region's innovators in business, academia and local government. This includes a pump prime fund to support collaborative bid development on common challenges and priorities. In 2023/24, EEH will create a pan-regional cross-sector innovation network and community of best practice. This will be supported by EEH's existing innovation forum of local authorities.

Following the current work underway to make better use of the region's road network, funding is proposed for further development of options for pan regional smart corridors.

**Driving investment opportunities**

*Business Plan Commitment*

During 2022/23, a refreshed investment pipeline will be commissioned to establish the priorities for investment in the region. Current fiscal and political pressures make it inevitable that a combination of public and private sector funding will be required to deliver those priorities, as will a mixture of capital and revenue investment.

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

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £440,000**

Core activity:

Delivery of some key projects, moving them from design to investment and delivery. This includes: i) the next stage of the Varsity Way project. There was support from partners to consider in more depth the alignment of the Varsity Way in the Marston Vale area to more closely links with communities and rail, ii) strategic economic narratives to support core connectivity corridors, iii) mobility hubs, iv) delivering the case for investment in key rail and road projects - to be determined by the Board based on key findings from the Connectivity Studies and investment pipeline and v) pressing the need for urgent investment in schemes ready for development/delivery in RIS3 or CP7.

**Centre of Excellence**

*Business Plan Commitment*

This is a new area of work that has been identified by Government as a new priority for STBs. It builds on some of the core themes of the Value Proposition report where partners were keen to see EEH provide greater support, to varying degrees depending on individual authorities, across the strategic transport planning portfolio.

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £150,000**

*(further funding as an extension to the EEH programme currently being discussed with DfT)*

Core Activity:

Government has identified four areas of work for STBs to develop proposals for a Centre of Excellence. These are around:

- Local Transport Plans
- Quantified Carbon Reduction
- Delivery of Major Infrastructure Projects
- Investment Pipelines

EEH has developed an initial proposal for each area, which is being developed with local authority partners at transport officers and corporate director level. A full proposal will be brought to the Board in May 2023.

In addition, a universal area of challenge for partners has been skills. EEH will prioritise activity around a long term plan to address the transport planning skills challenge in the region as an immediate area of focus within the Centre of Excellence.

**Centre of Excellence client-side strategic infrastructure early stage development**  
(funded outside of core DfT funding) (**£150,000**)

*Business Plan Commitment*

There has long been an ambition in EEH for a dedicated Capacity and Capability Centre of Excellence. A small dedicated team comprising specialist technical and professional skills upon which all partners can draw to support their development of detailed scheme proposals. Such an arrangement will achieve significant economies of scale, providing value for money for taxpayers. The team will accumulate knowledge and experience that can be retained within the region to the collective benefit of partners.

The team will be funded primarily by pump primed funds through the business plan during this initial three-year period. However, the latter years in the plan will need to begin trialling small levels of charging (via a limited 'top-slice') so the unit can move towards eventually being self-funded.

**Priority areas of work for 2023/24:**

**Total funding allocated (including programme staff): £160,000**

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.

Through the current £125,000 in-year funding for client-side capabilities, we are developing the first stage of pilots for 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.

Further funding will build on the initial trial, moving the proposal further forward towards its medium term ambition to becoming a self-funding sustainable centre of excellence for the region going forward.

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, something EEH business unit continues to discuss with DfT.

**Supporting wider infrastructure strategic planning**

(funded outside of core DfT funding)

EEH is committed to supporting wider infrastructure strategic planning across the region. While digital connectivity is captured as part of the EEH Business Plan (subject to funding), there are wider infrastructure planning activities that EEH is already supporting with, such as utilities.

## Strategic Transport Leadership Board Forward Programme

<b>May 2023</b>	
<b>End of Year Review and Annual Report</b>	To agree the end of year budget and annual report for the previous year
<b>Work Programme 2023/24</b>	To agree the programme of work for the year ahead
<b>Future of Roads, including road investment priorities</b>	To discuss the Board's view on the future of roads, drawing on research undertaken, and to agree next steps. To consider the conclusions of the Oxford – Cambridge Area Connectivity: Roads Study and agree next steps
<b>Connectivity Studies</b>	To consider the conclusions of the connectivity study Swindon – Didcot – Oxford and agree next steps
<b>Centre of Excellence and Regional Client-Side Capability (C&amp;C)</b>	To agree the proposed approach to a regional centre of excellence and to consider the outcomes of supporting local authorities to develop their regional client-side capability and consider next steps for capability and capacity within the region
<b>Freight</b>	To consider the progress of developing a freight action plan for the region
<b>July 2023</b>	
<b>Bus Services</b>	To consider the outcomes of the joint work with Transport for South East and Transport East providing support to local authorities on BSIPs and to receive an update on progress with activity to deliver an improved bus service for communities across the Heartland region.



<b>Local Transport Plans and Decarbonisation Playbook</b>	To receive an update on next steps with the development of Local Transport Plans. To consider the outcomes of the joint work with Transport for South East and Transport East providing support to local authorities on quantifiable carbon reduction (QCR), including roll out of the tool.
<b>Regional Evidence Base</b>	To present the refreshed regional evidence base.
<b>Innovation</b>	To agree proposals for the form and launch of the regional innovation and future of mobility community of practice. To consider the conclusions of the Smart Corridors innovation study and agree next steps.
<b>Investment Pipeline</b>	To consider the progress of development and iteration of our regional investment pipeline of interventions.
<b>September 2023</b>	
<b>Mid-Year Review</b>	To review operational expenditure and programme progress at the mid-point in the financial year.
<b>Freight</b>	To consider the emerging freight action plan for the region.
<b>Rural Connectivity</b>	To consider the DfT's Future of Transport: rural strategy and its implications for the region and to receive an update of EEH rural mobility hubs pilots.
<b>EEH as a Centre of Excellence</b>	To consider the future direction of EEH in becoming a centre of excellence and agree any changes to governance that may be required.
<b>Skills</b>	To agree a skills plan for the region.