



ENGLAND'S
ECONOMIC
HEARTLAND



Department
for Transport

Operating Framework Between Department for Transport and England's Economic Heartland

England's Economic Heartland is recognised by Government as the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for the Heartland region.

A significant part of the Heartland has been identified by the Government as a national economic priority – the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

Central to the work of EEH is its understanding, based on the evidence base underpinning the development of the Transport Strategy, that realisation of its vision requires investment in strategic transport infrastructure and service requirements to be completed and aligned with investment in digital infrastructure, both fixed and mobile, as well as utilities (in particular energy systems) that are required in order to enable the Transport Strategy to be implemented.

The 'one voice' approach to consideration of strategic transport infrastructure enables EEH to act as a 'bridge' between the Government, national delivery agencies and local bodies.

Whilst the Secretary of State remains the final decision-maker in respect of nationally funded investments, EEH provides the mechanism by which the constituent authorities can advise the Government of their prioritised response to strategic transport issues and investment.

Purpose and Scope

This operating framework recognises and builds upon the significant commitment that EEH's constituent authorities and the Government have invested in establishing England's Economic Heartland.

Through this investment, the region has developed and published an ambitious Transport Strategy for the Heartland.

The framework sets out the expectations on the part of EEH and the Department for Transport in order to deliver the vision and policies set out in the Transport Strategy. It sets out the roles and responsibilities that both parties have committed to, an approach that builds on existing working arrangements.

Implementing the Transport Strategy

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the transport strategy, both parties commit to its effective implementation and monitoring, which will include:

- To report, in the EEH Annual Report, on the implementation of the strategy – with the report published on EEH’s website and open for scrutiny by local partners, Government, scrutiny bodies (such as the Office of Rail and Road) and Parliament.
- To review the requirements of the Operating Framework on a regular basis
- Regular dialogue between EEH, the Secretary of State for Transport and other relevant Ministers regarding the EEH Transport Strategy, its agreed priorities and its implementation.

Commitments

Through this Operating Framework, EEH and the Department for Transport make the following commitments.

i. Develop and maintain a transport strategy for the Heartlands

EEH will:

- 1) Maintain and develop the regional evidence base in support of the transport strategy and investment priorities
- 2) Provide all partners, including Government, its agencies and companies, with access to the regional evidence base for their own purposes and to do so without charge
- 3) Prepare and agree with the Secretary of State an Annual Business Plan within which the work of EEH is taken forward, taking into account other initiatives at national, sub-national and local level as appropriate
- 4) Prepare and publish an Annual Monitoring Report against which progress with the implementation of the transport strategy can be assessed and, as appropriate, subject to external oversight
- 5) Work with its partners to ensure that the EEH Transport Strategy is recognised and acknowledged in relevant local strategies and plans, and vice versa
- 6) Work with its partners to ensure the Transport Strategy is implemented in a way that both plans positively for future scenarios and responds ambitiously to the strategic challenges, including decarbonisation.
- 7) Support its partners and the Government in the development of evidence-led proposals that contribute to the implementation of the Transport Strategy and delivery of wider strategic priorities identified by both parties
- 8) Refresh the EEH Transport Strategy on a timescale and within a framework to be agreed between EEH and the Secretary of State for Transport

Government, its agencies and companies will:

- 9) Collaborate across government departments in the development and implementation of the EEH Transport Strategy

- 10) Provide timely input and advice in respect of the development, implementation and monitoring of the EEH Transport Strategy – at both official and Ministerial level
- 11) Ensure that the EEH Transport Strategy is understood and taken into account as part of national decision making across Government
- 12) Provide a formal response from the Secretary of State to future/updated EEH Transport Strategies within three months of submission

ii. Provide advice in respect of priorities for investment in strategic infrastructure

EEH will:

- 1) Maintain an evidence base that can inform the region's prioritised Investment Pipeline of future infrastructure requirements, in support of the implementation of the EEH Transport Strategy
- 2) Commission and manage the programme of connectivity studies identified in the EEH Transport Strategy, and to use the output from those studies to inform the Investment Pipeline
- 3) Work with its partners to support the development and delivery of detailed proposals consistent with the Investment Pipeline
- 4) Feed into early discussions with DfT and Highways England on the development of the Strategic Road Network funding programmes, including the Road Investment Strategy (RIS)
- 5) Work with the DfT and Highways England in the development and delivery of detailed proposals that are included within said funding programmes
- 6) Continue to work with its partners to prepare and submit to Government a 5-year programme of investment in the Major Road Network (MRN), within timescales agreed with the DfT
- 7) Continue to work with its partners and the rail industry to identify the need for investment in rail infrastructure and services in support of the implementation of the agreed EEH Transport Strategy
- 8) Prepare conditional outputs for the Heartland rail network that support the implementation of the agreed EEH Transport Strategy
- 9) Work the DfT, its agencies and companies in the development of detailed proposals for the rail network that are identified in, and delivered through nationally managed funding programmes
- 10) Ensure that its advice in respect of strategic infrastructure requirements take into account the needs of both passenger and freight movements
- 11) Ensure that its advice in respect of strategic infrastructure requirements are consistent with the legal requirement to achieve net zero carbon emissions
- 12) Work with the EEH Bus Operators Association, other public transport operators, and local partners to support the provision of a future-proofed shared transport system serving the region.

Government, its agencies and companies will:

- 13) Identify and acknowledge the role of EEH, the Transport Strategy and its Investment Pipeline when determining nationally funded programmes, including Roads Investment Strategies and Rail investment priorities.
- 14) Have regard to EEH's Transport Strategy when considering the requirements for new strategic road proposals.
- 15) Have regard to EEH's Transport Strategy in the consideration of future provision of rail services and capacity network
- 16) Provide timely information in relation to the planning, development and implementation of nationally significant infrastructure proposals that have implications for EEH

iii. Develop and deliver support mechanisms that improve and accelerate the planning, development and delivery of investment priorities

EEH will:

- 1) Work with its partners to identify the appropriate capacity and capability to enable the delivery of investment in a timely and cost-effective manner
- 2) Work with its partners, including private sector companies providing professional services, to develop and then implement a costed proposal that will support the provision of the required capacity and capability
- 3) Work with its partners, and infrastructure owners, to identify opportunities to streamline and accelerate the implementation of the EEH Transport Strategy
- 4) Work with its partners to identify measures required to enable the transport system in EEH meet the requirement to achieve net zero carbon emissions

Government, its agencies and companies will:

- 5) Work with EEH to support the establishment of the capacity and capability function as a means of accelerating the delivery of detailed proposals by scheme promoters
- 6) Work across Government to realise opportunities to streamline and accelerate the delivery of investment in infrastructure and services

iv. Operating with Transparency and Accountability

EEH will:

- 1) Conducting its business in accordance with an agreed governance and assurance framework
- 2) Ensure that meetings of the STB are conducted in public: where the meeting determines that the meeting (either in part or in full) is to be held in private EEH will provide a public justification as to why
- 3) Ensure that papers and presentations considered are made publicly available
- 4) Publish an Annual Business Plan and an Annual Report

Government, its agencies and companies will:

- 5) Provide clarity of its requirements of EEH as the STB in a timely manner to inform the development of the Annual Business Plan
- 6) Provide timely confirmation of Government funding in support of the work of EEH so as to enable effective and cost-efficient business planning
- 7) Demonstrate due regard to the content and priorities identified in the EEH Transport Strategy
- 8) Champion EEH within Government, ensuring that EEH has the right level of engagement and that, where necessary, Government departments work collaboratively with EEH

v. Working Beyond Boundaries

EEH will:

- 1) Work with the other English STBs and with London to ensure cross-boundary issues are considered jointly
- 2) Work with the STB network to contribute to, and provide leadership on strategic issues that are of shared interest

Government, its agencies and companies will:

- 3) Support cross-boundary working and to take the outcome of joint working into decision making at the national level

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