

## Strategic Transport Forum

### Agenda

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

11.30am – 1pm

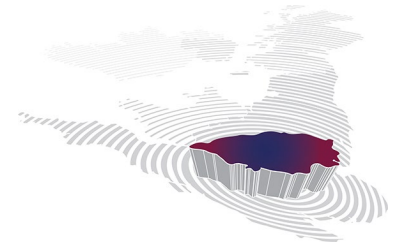
Virtual Meeting: Dial-In Details in appointment

*(Members of the public are asked to register attendance via*

*[communications@englandseconomicheartland.com](mailto:communications@englandseconomicheartland.com) by midday, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May)*

<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions and Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> <i>(including update on actions)</i>	Chair (10 mins)
<b>2</b>	<b>Public Questions</b> <i>Attending members of the public are asked to register the wish to speak in advance. Comments will be invited on any of the listed agenda items.</i> <i>Speakers will be invited to ask a question, a supplementary question and to make a short statement.</i>	Chair (10 mins)
<b>3</b>	<b>Transport Decarbonisation</b> <i>To receive a presentation from transport modelling specialists, City Science on place-based approaches to delivering transport decarbonisation and to consider any implications for the way Transport Decarbonisation is taken forward in the Heartland region.</i>	J Golding-Graham (30 minutes)
<b>4</b>	<b>Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail</b> <i>To consider the implications of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail for the region.</i>	M Tugwell (15 minutes)
<b>5</b>	<b>Spending Review</b> <i>To agree the submission for the 2021 Spending Review.</i>	Naomi Green (15 minutes)
<b>6</b>	<b>Forward Programme 2021/22</b> <i>To receive an update on the forward work programme for England's Economic Heartland, including decisions to be made by the Strategic Transport Forum</i>	Naomi Green (10 minutes)

<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Business Unit Update</b></p> <p><i>To note progress on some key programmes of activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>EEH regional conference</i></li> <li>- <i>First/ last mile toolkit</i></li> <li>- <i>East West Rail consultation – final response</i></li> <li>- <i>Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study</i></li> <li>- <i>Released capacity on West Coast Mainline</i></li> <li>- <i>Solent to Midlands freight study</i></li> <li>- <i>Network capacity release</i></li> </ul>	<p>Naomi Green (For Info)</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021</i></li> <li>• <i>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021</i></li> </ul> <p><i>All meetings to be held virtually or at Bedford Borough Council, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP</i></p>	



# Strategic Transport Forum

## Minutes

Friday 14th May 2021

11:00 – 13:00

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present:	<p>Mayor Dave Hodgson          Cllr Ian Bond          Cllr Steve Broadbent          Cllr Gary Sumner          Andrew Davie          Ian Thompson          Lorraine Bennetts          Graeme Kane          Claire Britton          Joan Hancox          John Disley          Colin Haigh          Tim Bellamy          Liz Watts          Jeremy Smith          Keith Dove          Sue Frost          Melanie MacLeod          Philip Martlew          Matthew Taylor          Emma Walker          Phil Southall          Hilary Chipping          Paul Moorby          Carly Freeston</p> <p>Martin Tugwell          Naomi Green          James Golding-Graham          Adam King          Abi Nichols          Antony Swift</p>	<p>Bedford Borough Council          Central Bedfordshire Council          BTVLEP          Swindon Borough Council          Central Bedfordshire Council          Buckinghamshire Council          Hertfordshire County Council          North Northamptonshire          Buckinghamshire Council          Buckinghamshire Council          Oxfordshire County Council          Hertfordshire County Council          Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority          South Cambridgeshire District Council          Cambridgeshire County Council          Luton Borough Council          Luton Borough Council          Bedford Borough Council          Swindon Borough Council          Highways England          Network Rail          OXLEP          SEMLEP          SWLEP          Department for Transport</p> <p>England's Economic Heartland          England's Economic Heartland          England's Economic Heartland          England's Economic Heartland          England's Economic Heartland          England's Economic Heartland</p>
In attendance:	<p>Alan Francis          Jonny Brownstein          Cllr Yvonne Constance          Ross Blumire          Paul Thomas</p>	

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted some of the changes to personnel as a result of the local elections. Martin Tugwell confirmed he will be leaving EEH as he has been appointed Chief Executive of Transport for the North. The external recruitment process to appoint a new Programme Director would be initiated as soon as possible.</p> <p>The virtual meeting protocol was discussed and observed.</p>	<b>None Arising</b>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING</b></p> <p>Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. The Chair noted the action log, with all actions either completed, ongoing or addressed as part of substantive agenda items.</p>	<b>None Arising</b>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Alan Francis requested consideration of several issues pertaining to agenda item 5 (the East West Rail Consultation). He called for stronger support for the Cambridge to Bletchley service to be extended through to Milton Keynes Central; proposed that where the railway bisects the East Coast Main Line it should call at the existing St Neots station; and suggested that the provision of additional capacity north of Bedford Station could be delivered without the need to demolish houses. The Chair noted his comments and agreed they would be considered as part of agenda item 5.</p>	<b>None Arising</b>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>PASSENGER RAIL STUDY PHASE 2</b></p> <p>Antony Swift led a discussion on the second phase of the Passenger Rail Study. The study sought to build on the baseline connectivity assessment (Phase 1) that was undertaken in support of the Transport Strategy. The aim of Phase 2 was to identify and prescribe new or improved service levels for strategic journey pairings where analysis has demonstrated stronger connectivity by rail would generate significant, social, economic and environmental benefits. The Forum were advised that the work was overseen by a steering group and primarily focused on the monetary value arising through better rail connectivity between the Heartland's key economic centres. The output of the study is 36 priority rail flows which have each been assigned a minimum service level target. Antony Swift requested the Forum's endorsement on the report's conclusions and agreement to develop a rail investment programme for the region.</p> <p>Mayor Dave Hodgson was surprised by the report's absence of enhanced services north to the East Midlands, with the notable exception of Kettering to Leicester. Antony Swift advised that the work had assumed the December 2019 timetable in the base which meant the East Midlands Railway May 2021 timetable changes were not reflected in this work. To address this, the report has specified that the proposed service level uplift between Bedford and Luton should extend through as a direct service to call at Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. Mayor Dave Hodgson raised a concern that by only assuming the historic timetable, it may fail to address future demand created by growth. Antony Swift advised that planned housing was considered through input from the steering group and 'existing population' was a criterion used to identify the 15 internal nodes chosen for analysis.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent asked about the service level aspirations contained in the report and its conclusion. He enquired what the timescales and selection criteria is with respect to developing a rail investment programme. Antony Swift confirmed that subject to the Forum being happy with the direction of</p>	



	<p>travel, EEH will look to develop a specification of work that could be tendered in autumn of 2021. This work will involve commissioning specialist consultants to develop scheme business cases.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell advised that this work also presents an opportunity to shape and influence Chiltern Railway services, as part of a move towards concessions in the longer-term. Antony Swift advised the Forum that an added benefit of this work is the way it gives us tangible outputs that can feed-into ongoing study work taken forward by Network Rail/GBR as part of its long-term planning function.</p> <p><b>The meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Endorsed the conclusions of the Passenger Rail Study Phase Two</b>  <b>b) Endorsed the service level aspirations identified in the draft report</b>  <b>c) Agreed the approach to developing the Rail Investment Programme</b></p>	<p><b>None Arising</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>EAST WEST RAIL CONSULTATION</b></p> <p>Antony Swift introduced the agenda item by outlining the engagement taken by East West Railway Company as part of their second non-statutory consultation on the route. A paper setting out the key strategic issues that should form the basis of the Forum’s response to the consultation was shared and summarised. Antony Swift recommended that based on the feedback of this meeting, the final response would be prepared jointly with the East West Rail Consortium. An ensuing discussion by the Forum took place in which several suggestions were made by members.</p> <p>The Forum agreed that the programme director should sign-off the report. A conversation took place centred around the consultation’s premise that construction of additional tracks north of Bedford would necessitate the demolition of houses adjacent to the existing track bed. Technical work commissioned by Bedford Borough Council has demonstrated that, supported by signalling enhancements, there is enough land available to deliver additional tracks without the need to demolish houses. Mayor Dave Hodgson concluded by making the point that Bedford Station master-planning work is focused on regeneration and should be referred to as ‘economic growth’, rather than trying to assume the exact composition of housing and employment.</p> <p>Phil Southall raised several points on East West Rail services serving Oxfordshire. He began by requesting the detailed response takes account of the fact increased rail services at Oxford Parkway should not, by default, result in increasing car parking spaces. John Disley added that it would be more appropriate to review car parking provision rather than assume more are needed. The Forum pressed the importance of ensuring the scheme aligns with the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study, the Oxford Station masterplan and recognises the importance of Didcot as an important through connection.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent emphasised the strategic importance of the Aylesbury connection and the discussion concluded with the Forum expressing their preference for station concept two (consolidation of stations) on the condition that East West Railway Company work with the relevant local authorities to agree an appropriate package of complementary measures that ensure the stations are well connected to their communities.</p> <p><b>The meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Noted East West Railway (EWR) Company’s non-statutory consultation</b>  <b>b) Provided a steer on the strategic issues within which a response is prepared</b></p>	



	<p><b>c) Agreed that a joint response would be prepared by EEH and the EWR Consortium</b></p> <p><b>d) Delegated approval of the response to the Programme Director</b></p>	<p><b>A Swift</b></p> <p><b>M Tugwell</b></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>BUS BACK BETTER</b></p> <p>Naomi Green presented an update on the Government’s National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better and its links with the region’s transport strategy. Launched on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Bus Back Better has at its core the aim to rejuvenate local bus services, making them attractive for passengers, cheaper, easier to understand and use, faster and more reliable and greener. The changes to local bus services place a greater emphasis on joint working between local authorities and bus operators and requires them to form statutory partnerships that can define bus networks, service levels and fares strategies. The Forum heard, as part of Naomi Green’s introduction, that investment in buses is essential if the industry is going to respond from the impact of the pandemic and the need to grow public transport use in order to respond to reducing carbon emissions from transport to net-zero by 2050. Through the support of the EEH Bus Operators Association, EEH is considering how best to respond to these announcements in order to support its local authority partners to develop ambitious bus service improvement plans that require submission to Government by October 2021.</p> <p>Naomi Green advised the Forum that EEH is proposing it undertakes technical work that will help identify opportunities to enhance the offer of intraregional bus services in the Heartland. The aim of the work is to ensure cross-boundary bus services with the greatest potential to drive modal shift away from private vehicle use are prioritised in emerging bus service improvement plans. The work will identify opportunities for high-density transport corridors, which, by virtue of not being adequately served by rail, should become the focus of bus service improvements. The Forum were briefed that longer-term, beyond the initial piece of technical analysis discussed, EEH would help support the review and further development of bus service improvement plans. Naomi Green concluded by confirming that EEH would support work taken forward by the DfT that encourages greater integration between modes and ticketing.</p> <p>In the context of the intraregional bus work stream, Keith Dove asked how engagement with local transport authorities would work. He suggested EEH convene a meeting with local transport authorities to exchange knowledge and share lessons learned as part of developing their bus service improvement plans. Naomi Green responded by confirming there was appetite from other partners for EEH to establish a task and finish group, which would include a discussion workshop, to draw on the expertise of others, in order to support partners through this process.</p> <p>Phil Southall expressed his support for the approach and recognised this work would provide a significant opportunity to identify cross-boundary bus connections. This would avoid local authorities inadvertently taking an inward-looking approach to developing bus service improvement plans. Phil Southall provided additional detail on the process set out by DfT in its guidance. He also stressed that local authorities should consider the option of bus franchising as an alternative to an enhanced partnership.</p> <p>Joan Hancox thanked Naomi Green for her support in this area. In doing so she reiterated her concerns that the timescales to develop the bus service improvement plans were unsympathetically short, particularly because guidance had, at the time of the meeting, not been published. Cllr Steve Broadbent asked whether the scope of the intraregional bus workstream would solely focus on the supply side of analysis (ie, gaps in bus service provision) or whether it would quantify the economic and social benefits of new bus services, and the cost of providing them.</p>	



	<p>Naomi Green responded by confirming that with the Forum’s consent she would discuss the timescales, including the challenges around capacity and capability to deliver bus service improvement plans as an area of concern with the DfT. Naomi Green concluded by confirming that due to timescales, the focus of this intraregional bus work is to quantify demand for services using mobile phone network data but would consider how the analysis could capture modal shift potential.</p> <p><b>The meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Endorsed that EEH work with local authority partners and the EEH Bus Operators Association to support the development of bus service improvement plans</b></p> <p><b>b) Agreed that EEH work with partners to identify key strategic intra-regional bus routes</b></p> <p><b>c) Agreed that EEH should lead options for pan-regional ticketing and integration solutions on behalf of partners</b></p> <p><b>d) Agreed that EEH would make representation on behalf of Forum members to the DfT with respect to the timescales imposed on local transport authorities to produce bus service improvement plans</b></p>	<p><b>N Green</b></p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>STRATEGIC ROADS UPDATE</b></p> <p>Naomi Green introduced the item, advising Forum members that this would be the first of a two-part discussion on strategic roads. The second more substantial discussion would take place at a future Forum, which would coincide with the timeline of the work being led by DfT and Highways England on the Oxford-Milton Keynes section of the former ‘Expressway’. Naomi Green confirmed that the purpose of this agenda item was to set out EEH’s strategy for future road investment.</p> <p>Naomi Green reiterated the DfT’s position in respect of the role that investment in roads must play in supporting public transport and active travel modes. It is on this basis that EEH plans to prioritise road investment. An update on several key roads-based schemes were discussed, this included the Oxford-Cambridge expressway, a scheme which the Secretary of State announced his decision to cancel between Oxford-Milton Keynes. Whilst this provided clarity on the project, EEH recognises the need to prioritise the infrastructure required to deliver planned growth between Oxford-Milton Keynes. These outcomes are driving the work underway on the connectivity study in this area. Highways England and the DfT have made funds available to investigate the need for highway improvements across the Oxford-Milton Keynes geography. The Forum heard that EEH is involved in supporting this work and would provide further updates to future meetings of the Forum.</p> <p>The second area of priority for EEH is the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet road enhancement. The development consent order (DCO) application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2021. On the 14<sup>th</sup> March the Planning Inspectorate confirmed the DCO had been accepted for examination. EEH has been working with Highways England during this process and Naomi Green recommended EEH attend the examination of the DCO to demonstrate its support. Naomi Green highlighted the need for connectivity solutions, potentially identified in Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3), along the A34 corridor between the M4 and the M40 as a regional priority, the A1 south of Huntingdon was also identified.</p> <p>Naomi Green updated the meeting on Highways England’s preparation for RIS 3. The Forum heard that there will be a clear role for STBs to play in the process of developing this strategy and several responsibilities for EEH were</p>	





	<p>referred to. The RIS3 process, now underway, is being supported by the development of route strategies. The route strategies are a series of studies that will assess the future infrastructure requirements from the network, these are due to start in July 2021. Naomi concluded by discussing the major road network (MRN) and large local majors (LLM). In March 2021, EEH met with the DfT MRN/LLM team to discuss the future of the programme. STBs have been encouraged to develop a long-term plan for the future of the MRN in their areas beyond the current programme of 2024/25. Transport officers have been asked to submit early stage scheme proposals to EEH by 30 June 2021</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent asked for the definition of a 'tranche' in RIS3 and any associated implications. Naomi Green advised she would find out the detail and respond to Cllr Steve Broadbent offline. Jeremy Smith noted that Cambridgeshire County Council's change in leadership means support for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet scheme would need to be discussed with the new administration ahead of the inquiry. Phil Southall concluded the discussion by encouraging greater alignment in terms of objective setting for road-based corridor studies, there is alignment between DfT and Highways England.</p> <p><b>The meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Noted the announcement in respect of the Oxford to Milton Keynes section of the Expressway and welcomed further updates at a future meeting</b></p> <p><b>b) Agreed for EEH to make a representation in support of the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Development Consent Order</b></p>	<p><b>N Green</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE ARC SPATIAL FRAMEWORK</b></p> <p>Martin Tugwell introduced the item by reminding the Forum that earlier in the year the Government published its introductory document to the spatial framework for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. There remains a firm commitment by the Government to realising the potential of the Arc and delivering that in a way that achieves environmental net-gain and net-zero carbon commitments. Martin Tugwell noted that whilst the geography of the Arc is smaller than EEH, the key priority sectors identified in the prospectus, such as aviation and advanced manufacturing, are equally important to the economies of Swindon and Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell summarised the narrative of the prospectus, specifically, the trends in working patterns and the implications this has for travel demand. The prospectus has posed questions on the future of town centres if the retail offer continues to change. The Forum was advised that the work developing the EEH regional evidence base is playing an important part in supporting the various workstreams in support of the prospectus. Martin Tugwell advised the Forum that EEH has begun to quantify the scale of change needed in terms of traffic reduction on roads and what is required in terms of electric vehicle infrastructure.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent placed on record that Buckinghamshire Council is not part of the Arc grouping. He described his reservations about the land use element of the emerging spatial framework and concerns about establishing new communities. Cllr Steve Broadbent advised the Forum he would abstain on voting on these matters, (and the recommendations set out in the paper).</p> <p><b>The meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Noted the update on the Oxford Cambridge spatial framework, including timings for its development</b></p> <p><b>b) Agreed that the transport strategy should form the basis for considering connectivity requirements as part of the spatial framework</b></p>	

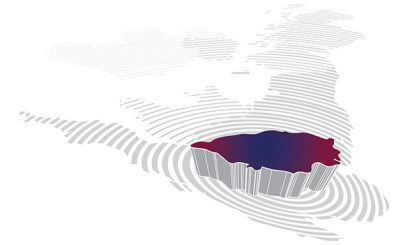




	<p><b>c) Noted the work underway to ensure the regional transport strategy, and its associated evidence base, is used to inform and shape the framework</b></p> <p><b>d) Noted the extent to which wider issues that influence future travel demand will need to be considered by both the regional transport strategy and the spatial framework</b></p>	<p><b>M Tugwell</b></p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>2021/2022 WORK PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>Naomi Green sought endorsement from the Forum for EEH’s proposed programme of work for 2021/2022. The Forum was reminded that significant financial contributions are received by DfT and local partners. The ambitions set out in the work programme reflects the Forum’s key priorities. These are separated by three key areas, firstly, delivering the known priorities through the existing investment programmes, secondly, ensuring the investment pipeline associated with the transport strategy continues to be developed and used to shape inputs to future fiscal events, thirdly, continuing to provide thought leadership in developing solutions to implement the Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Naomi Green provided an update on funding. She reiterated that DfT, as funders of STBs, are firmly committed to the importance of STBs. An example of EEH’s work on decarbonisation was cited as a way EEH are providing leadership and guidance to DfT and other STBs on a key area of transport policy. EEH will be working with the DfT to secure a multi-year funding settlement through the spending review. This will allow EEH to develop a 3-year work programme building on the work already being delivered.</p> <p>Paul Moorby identified the Swindon-Didcot-Oxford Study and advised that Honda would be vacating their Swindon plant at the end of July 2021. Panattoni have acquired the site for further development and Swindon Borough Council should have a planning application by Spring 2022. The SWLEP is funding £250,000 to develop a transport study, and how to incorporate green energy into the site.</p> <p><b>The meeting endorsed the 2021/2022 Work Programme.</b></p>	<p><b>None Arising</b></p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>BUSINESS UNIT UPDATE</b></p> <p>Naomi Green updated the Forum that the first two connectivity studies have now commenced and will be taken forward by WSP, Steer and 5<sup>th</sup> Studio. The projects are currently in the research and engagement phase and EEH is working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop each study’s evidence base. A steering group and stakeholder group has been established. The third study, Swindon-Didcott-Oxford is in the final stages of scoping and will start later in this financial year. Further connectivity studies will commence in due course, subject to resource.</p> <p>Naomi Green noted Government’s target to cut emissions by 78% (compared to 1990 levels) and recognised EEH’s Transport Strategy is consistent with this ambition. EEH is preparing to take forward work on its decarbonisation road map, a commitment set out in the Transport Strategy. Naomi Green advised Government’s Transport Decarbonisation Plan is expected in June 2021. It is the intention of the EEH Business Unit to provide an update on the Transport Decarbonisation Plan to the Forum and how EEH might choose to respond to its findings.</p> <p>Naomi Green updated Forum members that a piece of work on the capacity released on the transport network driven by changes to working patterns is complete. The emerging findings suggest that those people who used to commute by car that are now working from home continue to do so for two days per week, between 10% to 12% of peak hour traffic would be removed.</p>	



	<p>Naomi Green advised the Forum that the Government is intending on publishing an electric vehicle infrastructure strategy, the strategy is expected in the summer of 2021. Keith Dove asked whether this strategy would take account of the consultation responses that were submitted as part of the DfT's call for evidence in Autumn 2019. James Golding-Graham responded by saying the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy would focus on public access charge points rather than electric vehicle charging in new development, which was the original focus of the consultation.</p> <p>Details of EEH's annual conference were discussed, including information pertaining to sustainable access to the venue. Finally, the Forum were advised that a copy of EEH's response to Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan has been submitted and a copy of the response is included with the meeting papers.</p> <p><b>The meeting noted the updates.</b></p>	<p><b>None Arising</b></p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>FUTURE MEETING DATES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Friday 16th July 2021</i></li> <li>• <i>Friday 10th September 2021</i></li> <li>• <i>Friday 26th November 2021</i></li> </ul>	

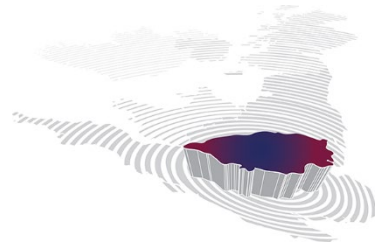


## Strategic Transport Forum

July 2021: Update on Actions

Action	Update	Status
<b>From 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021</b>		
<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Noted East West Railway (EWR) Company's non-statutory consultation</li> <li>b) Provided a steer on the strategic issues within which a response is prepared</li> <li>c) Agreed that a joint response would be prepared by EEH and the EWR Consortium</li> <li>d) Delegated approval of the response to the programme director</li> </ul>	Complete	A joint response was prepared by EEH and the East West Rail Consortium. A copy of the submission is included in Agenda Item 7 of the meeting.
<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Endorsed that EEH work with local authority partners and the EEH Bus Operators Association to support the development of bus service improvement plans</li> <li>b) Agreed that EEH work with partners to identify key strategic intra-regional bus routes</li> <li>c) Agreed that EEH should lead options for pan-regional ticketing and integration solutions on behalf of partners</li> <li>d) Agreed that EEH would make representation on behalf of Forum members to the DfT with respect to the timescales imposed on local transport authorities to produce bus service improvement plans</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Work has commenced to support local authority partners and the EEH Bus Operators Association in the development of bus service improvement plans. EEH's work will focus on intra-regional bus services.</p> <p>A letter has been sent to DfT in respect of the timescales imposed on local transport authorities.</p>
<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Noted the update on road connectivity between Oxford and Milton Keynes and welcomed further updates at a future meeting</li> <li>b) Agreed for EEH to make a representation in support of the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet development consent order</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Discussions continue with DfT and Highways England on the scope of works for a study to consider road connectivity in the region.</p> <p>EEH awaits a further update on progress with the development consent order for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet.</p>

<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Noted the update on the Oxford Cambridge spatial framework, including timings for its development</li> <li>b) Agreed that the published transport strategy should form the basis for considering connectivity requirements as part of the spatial framework</li> <li>c) Noted the work underway to ensure the transport strategy, and its associated evidence base, is used to inform and shape the framework</li> <li>d) Noted the extent to which wider issues that influence future travel demand will need to be considered by both the regional transport strategy and the spatial framework</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Government's publication of a vision to support the spatial framework is expected during the summer.</p>
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# Strategic Transport Forum

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Agenda Item 3: Transport Decarbonisation

**It is recommended that the Forum:**

- a) Considers the presentation delivered by City Science on a placed-based approach to decarbonisation and, identifies opportunities to build on the insight provided by the discussion through the work of EEH**
- b) Endorses the EEH approach to delivering placed-based decarbonisation trajectories as part of its decarbonisation roadmap work**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1. EEH's transport strategy outlines the ambitions of our regional partners to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from our transport system by 2040, 10 years ahead of the legal requirement of 2050.
- 1.2. Transport is currently the largest contributor of UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions. In 2019, the transport sector was responsible for 34% of the UK's carbon emissions. More importantly, in stark contrast with other sectors of our economy where there is evidence of progress being made with decarbonisation, for transport the picture is one of emissions remaining at levels inconsistent with our legal requirements.
- 1.3. The EEH transport strategy recognises that successful place-making and by extension decarbonisation requires a whole system approach, driven by an ambitious vision of the future and which joins-up public sector policy to deliver agreed outcomes.

### **2. Place-based approach**

- 2.1. The Strategic Transport Forum has long advocated a place-based approach to infrastructure provision. This is particularly pertinent given the need for our transport system to better reflect wider changes in society and the economy in a post pandemic landscape with decarbonisation a key priority for the Government.
- 2.2. A growing body of evidence points to the reality that in order to achieve the ambition for our transport system, there is a requirement for significant investment in transport infrastructure and services. It also requires investment in wider strategic infrastructure – improved digital connectivity and wider strategic infrastructure (particularly energy systems and new approaches to residential development).
- 2.3. Increasingly recognised by government is that the current approach (as a country) to investing in our transport system, and indeed wider strategic infrastructure, will not deliver on the legal requirement to achieve net-zero carbon by 2050.
- 2.4. There will be some difficult choices to make; government at all levels will be challenged. As we have seen with the introductions of low traffic neighbourhoods, change is not always universally welcomed or accepted.

- 2.5. A place-based approach can help mitigate these challenges, not only supporting an equitable approach to decarbonisation, but if developed in the right way, supporting growth, better access to goods, services and opportunities for communities across our region.
- 2.6. A place-based approach recognises that whilst there are universal elements in the approach to decarbonising transport and the wider economy applicable to the country at large (for example, demand reduction, electrification) it is equally important to develop solutions based on a place's unique characteristics: there cannot be a 'one-size fits all' solution to decarbonisation.
- 2.7. EEH has developed a range of tools to support the development of a place-based approach and to enable us, and our partners, to focus on delivering the right intervention in the right place. This includes work on first mile last mile transport options, the capacity release study and our baselining and transport decarbonisation trajectories.

### **3. Presentation**

- 3.1. Forum members are invited to consider a presentation on the value of a place-based approach to decarbonisation, based on research and modelling undertaken by LDA Design, City Science and Vectos.
- 3.2. The research explores how different places can achieve an 80% reduction in surface transport emissions by 2030, as part of a pathway to net zero by 2050. It combines advanced carbon modelling with stakeholder workshops in order to test the impact of 40 carbon reduction interventions in four place typologies:
  - A unacentric city
  - A polycentric conurbation
  - A regeneration town
  - A growing county
- 3.3. By setting out an emissions reduction pathway and spatial vision for each typology, it demonstrates the contribution of spatial planning and place-based solutions to transport decarbonisation.

### **4. Decarbonisation roadmap**

- 4.1. The Strategic Transport Forum has previously approved our proposal to develop a standalone 'roadmap' setting out a realistic pathway to decarbonising the transport ecosystem in our region, including a trajectory and non-binding carbon budgets/targets for transport.
- 4.2. It is proposed that the study be split into three phases. The initial stage (WP1) focuses on translating the Climate Change Committee's (CCC's) Sixth Carbon Budget and Pathways to 2050 (Transport) and the emerging TDP Pathways into a regionally specific decarbonisation roadmap.
- 4.3. EEH has commissioned City Science to develop the first package (WP1) of the decarbonisation roadmap for the Heartland region.
- 4.4. Being mindful of what may be published as part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), EEH and City Science are developing a methodology that is flexible enough to 'retrofit' emerging Government policy and pathways.
- 4.5. The approach will work with established UK pathways to decarbonisation, particularly the CCC's 'surface transport pathway'.
- 4.6. The draft outputs of the first work package (WP1) will be delivered imminently. EEH's decarbonisation sub-group will be kept updated and briefed on this work. Once completed EEH will look to take the outputs and commission the second work package, translating the baseline and nationally adopted trajectories into a place based approach to transport decarbonisation. This will support members and officers to develop a deeper understanding of



the challenges and opportunities that are emerging in a way that's most relevant and applicable to their localities.

- 4.7. Given the pressing requirement to rapidly decarbonise our economy and transport system, recent changes to the government's green book' are welcome. They offer the opportunity to consider investment proposals for their contribution towards agreed outcomes including decarbonisation that embrace social and environmental, as well as economic factors.
- 4.8. However, to implement these changes will require a shift in mindset in the way we approach the appraisal of proposals. We need to move away from using the appraisal to identify how we mitigate the impact of a proposal, towards a situation in which the appraisal is used to identify the solutions required to deliver the desired outcomes.
- 4.9. EEH's decarbonisation road map will support this new approach and will, with the support of this forum, form the basis of a regional transport decarbonisation strategy. This will support the developing economy wide approach to systemic decarbonisation.

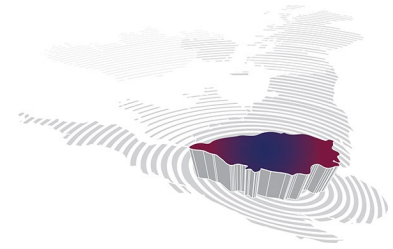
James Golding-Graham

**Innovation and Decarbonisation Manager**

**July 2021**







# Strategic Transport Forum

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Agenda Item 4: Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Forum:

- a) **Notes the reforms set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail**
- b) **Shares views on the reforms and identifies areas of interest**
- c) **Discusses the implications for EEH as the STB for the Heartland**

### **1. Strategic Context**

- 1.1. In 2018 the Williams Rail Review was set up by the Government. The aim of the review was to recommend the most appropriate organisational and commercial frameworks to support the delivery of the Government's vision for the railway. The review was chaired by Keith Williams in the wake of challenges introducing new timetables in the north of England and parts of the South East.
- 1.2. In 2019, EEH met with the DfT William's Review team to provide insight into the key strategic challenges facing the industry. The discussion with officials centred on the need for increased freight awareness in long-term planning, simplified and good value rail fares, and greater recognition of the railway's role in driving economic growth in a way that is consistent with net-zero carbon obligations by 2050.
- 1.3. The review's recommendations were expected in early 2020 but the publication of the report was delayed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic effectively ended rail franchising as a result of the decrease in demand. Consequently, train operator companies (TOCs) were placed on emergency measure agreements (EMAs) from April 2020 to September 2020 (in most cases).
- 1.4. From September 2020 onwards, the EMAs were replaced by emergency recovery measures agreements (ERMAs). The ERMAs are a further temporary amendment to the underlying franchise agreements and are of varying lengths up to a maximum of around 18 months.
- 1.5. The delay in publishing the White Paper has meant the Government has been able to account and plan for the effects of the pandemic on the future of the railway. It rebranded the review, the 'Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail'.

### **2. White Paper Commitments**

- 2.1. **A New Public Body:** A new organisation will run the rail network in the public interest. Network Rail will be absorbed into this new organisation, as will many functions from the Rail Delivery Group and Department for Transport. This organisation will operate as an arms-length public body called Great British Railways (GBR). GBR will maintain and enhance the infrastructure, specify rail services and procure and manage the contracts with TOCs. Work to deliver improvements for passengers and bring in interim

arrangements will start immediately. Alongside this, the Government intends to introduce legislation to formally establish Great British Railways.

- 2.2. **A New Industry Model:** As a consequence of COVID-19, the rail industry faced the almost total collapse of passenger demand. The issuing of EMAs and ERMAs has provided an interim replacement to the historical franchising system. The White Paper proposes a new structure that will see GBR oversee a concessions model to contract with private partners to operate trains. Passenger service contracts will be awarded (in most cases setting the fares and timetables), in which TOCs will be paid to deliver services, including any performance related pay. This new way of working with the private sector will focus on performance, efficiency and passenger satisfaction. The Office of Rail and Road will independently scrutinise GBRs delivery against these objectives.
- 2.3. **Fares and Ticketing:** GBR is seeking to simplify fares and ticketing by ending the current mass of complicated arrangements currently administered by TOCs. New products, such as flexible season tickets aimed at those commuting for two or three days a week will be introduced to reflect new working and travel patterns. There will be more convenient ways to pay using a contactless bank card, mobile or online. The plans propose better integration between buses and bikes and depending on the needs and capacities of different places, partnerships will include the ability for local leaders to integrate ticketing and fares with other local transport services.
- 2.4. **Reducing Industry Cost:** GBR will be mandated to increase efficiency and co-operation. One of the rationale's behind bringing the railways together into a single entity is the value saving that will be realised by providing a clear line of sight over costs, benefits and opportunities for efficiency and growth. Removing duplication, interface costs and complexity will build on Network Rail's existing programme of efficiencies which aims to deliver £3.5bn of savings to 2024. Industry experts suggest that after the initial five-year implementation period, cost savings should deliver additional savings of up to £1.5bn a year after five years.
- 2.5. **Long-term Railway Planning:** GBR will operate within a 30-year strategy which will provide the long-term plans for transforming the railways and ensuring investment in them responds to public priorities such as levelling up. GBR will develop five-year business plans across both services and infrastructure to inform government funding decisions. These business plans will develop 'in-life'- to reflect multi-year operational budgets set through the government's spending reviews, whilst preserving the five-year infrastructure settlement.
- 2.6. **Route and Region Structure:** GBR will consist of regional divisions that are accountable for the rail network in their area, including budgets. Each division will be led by a leadership team, working closely with operators and suppliers. They will decide priorities for investment and collaborate; operating an integrated national network. Within each division integrated local teams will bring decision making closer to the communities that the railways serve. They will be responsible for day-to-day delivery on routes of the network and will be integrated across track and train. These teams will be well placed to improve co-operation with local communities and local leaders.
- 2.7. **Trains:** Trains (rolling stock) will remain in the private sector and GBR will lease trains from rolling stock companies (ROSCOs). Currently, rolling stock is leased by TOCs.

### **3. Implications for the Strategic Transport Forum**

- 3.1. The Forum is expected to welcome the Government's long-term commitment to rail through the creation of an integrated body. The EEH transport strategy is clear that expanding the coverage and quality of our railways must be at the heart of the country's decarbonised transport system. Investment in rail should act as the catalyst for restoring passenger confidence and enabling sustainable economic growth. The Forum will agree that establishing a single, governing body for rail is essential to address the complexity that currently exists in the rail industry.

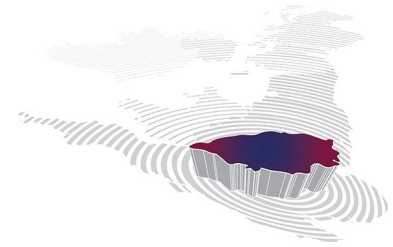


- 3.2. The reforms set out in the white paper provide a key opportunity for the new organisation to align its activity with the work of EEH. To ensure this happens at pace, EEH, supported by the other STBs, is already engaging with the DfT to influence the forming of the new GBR regional structures. Strengthened by the adoption of the Transport Strategy and its supporting technical work, EEH provides a solid foundation (politically and technically) from which GBR can deliver better regional and local rail services for communities.
- 3.3. Through the work of the Forum, EEH has spent significant time and resources developing and implementing the transport strategy. The importance of regional transport strategies is reflected in the commitment by Government to give them weight in shaping investment decisions at the national level. As such, it is critical the adopted transport strategy and investment plan is afforded equal consideration in decisions that will come to affect rail passengers and services. EEH expect GBR to give due regard to the strategic direction and priorities contained within our strategy and investment pipeline in the development of 5-year Business Plans.
- 3.4. Building on EEH's engagement with the rail industry as part of the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP), it is important that long-term infrastructure planning takes account of new economic geographies and travel patterns that are increasingly more complex and less radially focused on London. Whilst the legacy of Victorian infrastructure might determine the initial development of GBR (and five regional divisions), new movement patterns and demand for east-west connectivity in the north, and south of our region requires much greater consideration.
- 3.5. There is subsequently a role for EEH to work with GBR to develop the specifications for future rail concessions. Through its blend of technical analysis and political constitution, EEH can speak with a single voice on behalf of businesses and local authorities. This is a significant advantage when developing proposals for train services and fares, ensuring decisions have local/regional buy in. This is of greater relevance given the importance placed in national policy on rebalancing investment in transport between modes, in support of achieving net-zero carbon.
- 3.6. Recognising the role of EEH, and the work of the Strategic Transport Forum must be a key principle in delivering detailed industry transformation proposals. In the absence of more detailed plans, EEH expects that at a minimum, it should be invited to make representation in the proposed transition team tasked with implementing the White Paper and a statutory consultee in all major decisions effecting the letting of passenger service contracts and timetable changes. These arrangements should be set out in the form of a bilateral contract with GBR, expressing a convergence of will between the infrastructure owner and the sub-national transport body. EEH Business Unit has approached DfT to discuss these implications of the new body in more detail.

**Martin Tugwell**  
**Programme Director**

**July 2021**





# Strategic Transport Forum

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Agenda Item 5: Spending Review

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting:**

- a) Agrees the Spending Review submission that sets out our need for investment to enable four priority areas of focus:**
- **capital funding for immediate priorities that must commence delivery before 2025**
  - **funding to develop priority infrastructure schemes to the point that they are investment-ready**
  - **funding to increase regional capacity and capability in support of partners developing and delivering infrastructure schemes**
  - **a long-term funding settlement for core sub-national transport body functions**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1. On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer presented a single year settlement for 2021/22. This differed from the original plan to have a longer-term spending review, but was an understandable position given the continued uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2. While unconfirmed, it is widely anticipated that a three-year Spending Review will take place in autumn 2021. Given the time frames, we expect the timing of the Spending Review from announcement to conclusion to be extremely tight. The Spending Review will allow the Government to put in place the medium-term financial plans that it was not able to commit to in autumn 2020.
- 1.3. Forum members will be aware of the significance of this year's Spending Review, against a backdrop of significant pressure on public sector finances and the Government's ambition to 'build back better' from the pandemic.
- 1.4. As a net contributor to the Exchequer, investment in infrastructure to support and accelerate economic recovery in the Heartland region, and support the delivery of planned housing growth, will be fundamental to support the UK economy as a whole. As such, the commitment to invest in, and accelerate delivery of, infrastructure in the region should be a priority for the Government.
- 1.5. However, within the announcements made in autumn 2020 the Government set out its commitment to prioritise investment away from London and the South East. The cessation of work on the development of Crossrail 2 is arguably an example of this emphasis having implications for the Heartland.
- 1.6. Notwithstanding the identification of the Arc as a national economic priority we cannot assume that the case for strategic investments has necessarily been made and the

funding secured. It is clear that the forthcoming Spending Review will be particularly challenging and as the STB we need to use the recently published transport strategy – and its underpinning evidence base – to make the strongest possible case for the investment required to enable delivery in the short to medium term to be accelerated.

- 1.7. The National Infrastructure Strategy – published in autumn 2020 – highlighted the need for the UK to increase the overall investment made in our infrastructure. The fact that our transport strategy is grounded in the need to support the delivery of planned growth provides us with the evidence base to demonstrate how the investment sought will help deliver quantifiable outcomes.

## **2. 2021 Spending Review – EEH Priorities**

- 2.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek agreement to EEH’s priorities for a Spending Review submission. The submission builds on previous steers provided by the Forum and is focused on what is required to make a difference over the next three-year period.
- 2.2. In this context, it is proposed that the focus for the submission should be:
  - Securing the capital funding required to support partners commence the construction and/ or delivery of known priorities before 2025
  - Securing the revenue funding required to develop schemes identified in the investment pipeline through the planning and development phase to make them ‘oven ready’
  - Securing the funding to increase regional capacity and capability in support of partners developing and delivering investment priorities
  - Ensuring the Government’s commitment to sub-national transport bodies is appropriately reflected by a long-term commitment to their resourcing.
- 2.3. The transport strategy, with its associated investment pipeline, provides the Heartland with the evidence-led approach to the identification of specific priorities for the submission.
- 2.4. It is worth noting that investment priorities for the strategic road network and Network Rail investment pipelines are managed outside the Spending Review process. Through its work programmes, England’s Economic Heartland is working with Highways England and Network Rail to ensure our priorities are appropriately reflected in their investment pipelines.
- 2.5. The Forum is invited to comment on the proposed priorities for the Spending Review submission set out in Annex 1.

**Naomi Green**  
**Head of Technical Programme**  
**July 2021**



## Spending Review Submission 2021

### England's Economic Heartland

#### 1. Context

- 1.1. England's Economic Heartland's Spending Review submission seeks the delivery of infrastructure solutions where there are known issues on the transport network, while also ensuring the long-term planning of connectivity in the region supports sustainable economic growth while decarbonising the transport system.
- 1.2. The Heartland is a net contributor to the Exchequer. Our geography covers the entirety of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, a national economic priority. Investment in infrastructure to support a green economic recovery and growth in the Heartland, and enable the delivery of planned growth, will be fundamental to support the UK as a whole.
- 1.3. EEH's regional transport strategy *Connecting People, Transforming Journeys* was published in February 2021. It is a vision-led, evidence-based strategy agreed by the regional partners as the basis for developing the region's transport system over the next 30 years.
- 1.4. The strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive evidence base that includes a detailed understanding of the region's transport system and economy. The evidence base has highlighted how the implications of planned growth have not been addressed by the necessary investment in infrastructure. At the same time, the development of the transport strategy over a two-year period, emphasised the significance that local people, as well as EEH's partners place on delivering net zero. In response to this, the transport strategy has an ambition to achieve net-zero transport carbon emissions by 2040.
- 1.5. As we plan a transport system for the future, it will be essential that our priorities and planning for future demand considers the following:
  - The need for interventions to be consistent with our ambition to achieve net zero by 2040, and no later than the legal requirement of 2050 – this requires an approach that looks at the transport system as a whole (as opposed to scheme specific basis)
  - The imperative to consider the benefit of interventions in other policy areas to reduce the need to travel, most notably at peak times
  - The importance of taking advantage of trends in society that have been accelerated as a consequence of the pandemic – and which creates opportunities to reduce the need to travel and/or the distance travelled.

#### 2. Investment Pipeline – Construction/ delivery of immediate priorities by 2025

- 2.1. The investment pipeline in our transport strategy identifies key infrastructure priorities for the region.
- 2.2. A significant number of investment priorities are required to be delivered in the near future to enable the delivery of planned growth as set in out in current Local Plans.
- 2.3. Delivery of immediate infrastructure priorities by 2025 also achieves the triple-impact of:
  - Infrastructure costs being managed and avoidable costs (such as those incurred as a result of inflation and/or duplication of work) are kept to a minimum
  - Economic benefits arising from the delivery of required investment being realised sooner, to the benefit of the Heartland and the UK economy as a whole
  - Infrastructure delivery enabling progress to be made on realising the potential to achieve change in travel patterns that support the requirement to make real progress towards net zero carbon emissions.





2.4. Key infrastructure projects requiring a commitment for capital funding in the Spending Review, with delivery commencing no later than 2025, are:

- **East West Rail**
  - **Milton Keynes-Aylesbury section:** this link is a core part of East West Rail and commitment to its delivery is a key priority for the region, connecting two areas of major planned growth.
  - **Bletchley-Bedford section:** this involves improvements to the Marston Vale Line, which was recently subject to a consultation by the East West Railway Company.
  - **Electrification:** East West Rail should be opened as an electrified railway to avoid the additional costs inevitably incurred in retrofitting an operational railway.
  - **Digital spine:** EEH has secured funding to enable the Bicester-Bletchley section of East West Rail to be built as a digital spine, providing high quality broadband and 5G access to nearby rural communities. Providing this during construction is a fraction of the overall cost of East West Rail and 90% cheaper than retro-fitting. Future sections of East West Rail should be delivered as digital spines as standard.
- **Felixstowe to Nuneaton Rail Corridor:** finalising the business case in support of both proposals to address bottlenecks at Ely and Haughley Junction, identified as critical to enabling this corridor to play its strategic role in connecting global deep-sea shipping services operating out of Felixstowe with the rest of the UK.
- **Western Rail Link to Heathrow:** improved connectivity to Heathrow from the west has long been identified as a regional priority, benefiting businesses and residents in Oxfordshire and Swindon, as well as community's further west. The scheme has been developed to the point at which the application for the development consent order can be submitted
- **Cambridge South Station:** prioritising delivery once the Transport and Works Act Order has been granted.
- **Oxford Station (additional capacity):** this project is central to not only realising the potential of EWR, but more widely the ambitions for improving public transport serving Oxford and surrounding areas, as well as enabling inter-regional movements
- **Crossrail 2** – progress on this scheme was put on hold as part of the autumn 2020 announcements: the strategic importance of this scheme to the Heartland are significant
- **EEH Major Road Network Programme (2020-2025):** submitted to Government in summer 2019, delivery of the programme of schemes could be brought forward if decision making within Whitehall was accelerated. However, that would have to be complemented by Government making available additional revenue funding to enable the detailed development of individual schemes to be accelerated (see below).
- **Mass Transit systems** – securing the funding required to accelerate the development of three transformational projects to plan for mass public transport in Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Peterborough and Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit - HERT).
- **Oxford-Cambridge Cycleway** – additional funding (both revenue and capital) to enable the development of a green spine through the region, and an associated network to support this. EEH partners have access to the first mile/last mile toolkit to aid them in identifying opportunities at the local level
- **Digitally Enabled Landscape (BEIS/DCMS funded)** – establishing a region-wide programme through which it will be possible to deliver the ambition of 'always connected' across the region. Initial focus on building the public/private sector partnership that is necessary to deliver the infrastructure – particularly mobile – that is required to enable service transformation at scale across policy areas.





### **3. Scheme Development Fund – accelerating development of known priorities (£5m revenue funding over three years)**

- 3.1. Funding is required to cover the cost of planning and developing the detail of infrastructure priorities identified in the transport strategy. This investment will ensure the region has a viable package of 'investment-ready' proposals which are financially attractive to Government (and potentially other parties) to invest in. The fund would be managed by EEH on behalf of the region.
- 3.2. Through this investment, EEH would look to accelerate the development of two to three priority projects per annum, identified through to Strategic Outline Business Case, giving DfT or its agencies much greater sense of how investable projects are. Funding for the next stage of work, to move the project to full business case would be in addition.
- 3.3. Priorities for acceleration through this process include:
  - **A1 corridor:** identifying and taking forward a long-term solution for this corridor in support of planned growth and to inform development of future Local Plans
  - **Connectivity in North Cambridgeshire:** supporting the Strategic Outline Business Case in support of the detailed proposal for the improvement of rail services in North Cambridgeshire, including connections through to Wisbech
  - **Wixams Station:** prioritising the development of detailed proposals for the station
  - **London Road Level Crossing, Bicester:** identifying a long-term solution to this crossing is a key requirement to enabling the full potential of East West Rail to be realised: funding required to develop the business case that supports the solution with a view to enabling delivery in Control Period 7 (linked with delivery of East West Rail)
  - **Bedford Midland Station:** commissioning work to determine a long-term solution to realise the potential of Bedford Midland Station that arises from the investment in East West Rail: funding required to develop the business case that support the solution with a view to enabling delivery in Control Period 7 (linked with delivery of East West Rail)
  - **Milton Keynes to East Midlands:** commissioning Strategic Outline Business Case that will determine a long-term solution to improve connectivity between Northampton and Market Harborough (as part of a wider Milton Keynes to East Midlands project)
  - **Delivering priorities identified through the connectivity studies:** the connectivity studies programme provides the framework for identifying those schemes that are required to deliver the priorities of the Transport Strategy. This is likely to be a package of measures, including improvements to public transport and active travel. Once identified, there will be a need to act quickly on securing investment for them.

### **4. Developing Technical Capacity and Capability for Infrastructure Delivery (£3m revenue funding over three years)**

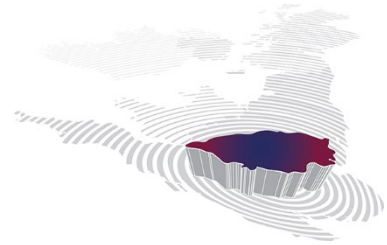
- 4.1. In parallel there is a need to secure the investment that will increase the capacity and capability within the region to create a long-term approach to planning, developing and delivering infrastructure proposals. This will require investment in the resources available to individual partners, supplemented by investment in specialist skills held regionally upon which individual partners are able to draw on as and when.
- 4.2. The benefit of establishing such a capacity and capability is recognised by DfT. Securing additional revenue funding from DfT would enable the team to be established before the end of the calendar year and would represent an 'invest to save', reducing the cost and risk associated with the development of regionally significant infrastructure.
- 4.3. This proposal is based on our 'capacity and capability' work with our partners which highlighted:



- The limited number of schemes developed to the point at which they were ready for implementation over the next five years
  - The lack of technical and professional capacity within the 'client side' to take over the work required to develop scheme proposals
  - The lack of access to specialist experience that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of that work
- 4.4. The principle of a regional 'Centre of Excellence' for capacity and capability has been endorsed by EEH leaders. The key features are:
- A (small) dedicated team comprising specialist technical and professional skills upon which all partners can draw to support their development of detailed scheme proposals
  - In this way partners will have access to specialist skills without the need to carry as overheads within their own structures, nor without having to secure access at commercial rates from external sources
  - As a regional centre of excellence the team would accumulate knowledge and experience that is then retained within the region and to the collective benefit of partners.
- 5. Sub-national Transport Body Core Funding (£5m revenue funding over three years)**
- 5.1. At present, funding for core sub-national transport body functions is set on an annual basis. The lack of certainty and timing of funding from DfT impacts our ability to take forward work to implement the Transport Strategy and ensure maintenance of the EEH evidence base. As such, a core part of EEH's Spending Review submission is for a long term (three-year) settlement from Government. This would be supported by local funding contributions, provided by constituent members.
- 5.2. The longer-term commitment to EEH's core funding would enable:
- Updates and maintenance of the regional evidence base: including in this would be a refresh of the regional evidence base to ensure it was ambitious in its approach and fit for purpose to support EEH's programme of connectivity studies; and to ensure that information and tools were available to support work on the Arc spatial framework.
  - Planning connectivity and infrastructure to support delivery of the EEH transport strategy: the programme of connectivity studies identified in the published transport strategy as the means by which EEH will work with local partners to identify and prioritise future infrastructure requirements in support of economic and housing growth while achieving net zero.
  - Enabling decarbonisation: through completion of the decarbonisation road map and implementation of its recommendations.
  - Improving connectivity in support of planned growth: through the ongoing engagement and development of work that can design and plan public transport and sustainable connectivity throughout the region.
- 5.3. The core funding would also support the creation of a region-wide innovation fund. This fund would seek to support the delivery of the transport strategy by harnessing the region's strengths in science and technology-based innovation. It would involve a series of 'grand challenges' linked with the need to transform the region's transport system, such as:
- Developing new public/shared transport models for rural and semi-urban communities
  - Freight and logistic solutions for urban environments
  - Integration of travel modes

**ENDS -**





# Strategic Transport Forum

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Agenda Item 6: Forward Programme 2021/22

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting:**

- a) Endorses the priority areas of work for the forthcoming six months**
- b) Notes the forward look for decisions to be made by the Strategic Transport Forum**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1. EEH's work programme focuses on the development and delivery of the policy and investment priorities set out in the regional transport strategy.
- 1.2. In May 2021, the Strategic Transport Forum agreed the programme of work for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 1.3. This paper sets out an update on the focus of EEH's work for the next six months. It also sets out a forward look for decisions planned to come before the Strategic Transport Forum up to March 2022.

### **2. Programme of work – overall approach**

- 2.1. Forum members will be aware that sub-national transport bodies are the Department for Transport's preferred structure for engaging with local areas and regions on strategic transport issues. Increasingly, and following the success of our engagement and contributions to date, DfT is also looking to sub-national transport bodies to support the development and delivery of national policy priorities (both existing and emerging).
- 2.2. DfT provides funding to sub-national transport bodies in order to enable them to prepare, and subsequently implement, regional transport strategies. The added value of EEH's work on the transport strategy is that the Secretary of State for Transport subsequently has regard to it in decisions relating to national investment programmes. It's on this basis that Highways England 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 look to EEH (and the other STBs) to provide advice in respect of the Major Road Network programme.
- 2.3. 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 forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

### **3. Priorities for the next six months**

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



<b>Priority 1 - Supporting the Heartland, including the Arc spatial framework</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Regional evidence base and monitoring	<p>In autumn 2021, 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"> <li>• Oxford-Milton Keynes</li> <li>• Oxford-Northampton-Peterborough</li> </ul> <p>A third study, Swindon-Didcot-Oxford, is scheduled for commission in 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>
<b>Priority 2 – Decarbonisation of the transport system</b>	
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>
<b>Priority 3 – Improving strategic connectivity</b>	
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	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.
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 (e.g., the levelling-up fund) will form an important priority over the forthcoming months.</p> <p>Highways England has recently commenced work on its route strategies programme. Highways England will be seeking steers and evidence from EEH and our partners in the next six months.</p> <p>In addition, Forum members will be aware that, following the Secretary of State’s decision to cancel the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway project between Oxford and Milton Keynes, there remains a need to identify the infrastructure required to deal with existing issues on the network and to enable the delivery of planned growth (economic and housing) in the region: a need that is identified as a strategic priority for the region in the transport strategy. To that end, and building on the insight already developed by Highways England, the Department for Transport has made funds available to investigate the need for more targeted road interventions.</p> <p>As the sub-national transport body, England’s Economic Heartland is working with DfT and Highways England to take forward this work. Together, EEH, DfT and Highways England officers are reviewing options for a scope of work. The work is expected to focus on defining what constitutes an appropriate level of service for the strategically important road network (i.e., both SRN and MRN) and consider how investment should best be prioritised in order to deliver that level of service in the region.</p> <p>Once a proposal is shaped, EEH will engage with members, and the Strategic Transport Forum as EEH’s governance and oversight body, to consider and develop the study in more detail.</p>

<b>Priority 4 – Improving local connectivity</b>	
Improving First Mile/Last Mile Connectivity	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.

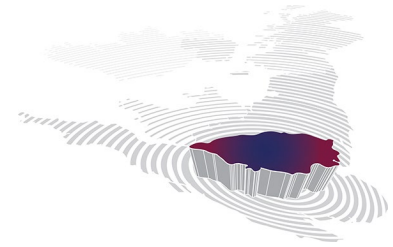
3.2. In addition to this work, in line with decisions made by the Strategic Transport Forum in May 2021, EEH continues to work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that the investment made in developing the transport strategy, including the regional evidence base, is shaping and informing the work being taken forward by the Government in respect of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework.

#### **4. Forum Forward Look**

Reflecting the work of the STB, set out above, a proposed forward look for decisions to be made by the Strategic Transport Forum is provided at Annex 1.

Naomi Green  
**Head of Technical Programme**

**May 2021**



## Strategic Transport Forum

### Forward Programme

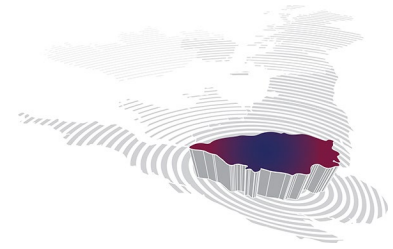
<b>September 2021</b>	
<b>Transport Strategy – Delivery Update</b>	To provide an update on progress with delivery of the Transport Strategy – to be provided on a six monthly basis
<b>National Bus Strategy – Regional Priorities</b>	To consider the outcomes of the commission into intra regional bus priorities, and to agree a vision for bus services across the region
<b>Walking and Cycling in the Heartland</b>	To consider and agree the next steps in the creation of a 'Green Spine' across the Heartland – defined by a pan regional network of walking and cycling infrastructure.
<b>Alternative Futures</b>	To consider the conclusions of the study into alternative futures, currently being developed to support the Connectivity Studies.
<b>Rail (including update from Network Rail)</b>	To receive an update from Network Rail and EEH on progress with prioritisation and delivery of improvements to rail services in the region
<b>November 2021</b>	
<b>Transport Decarbonisation – Regional Roadmap</b>	To consider and agree the next phase in development of a road map for transport decarbonisation in the Heartland region.
<b>The Future of Mobility</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>To agree EEH's proposed approach to enabling mobility hubs in place types across the region.</p>



<b>Roads Programme (including update from Highways England)</b>	To receive an update from Highways England 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.
<b>Rail Passenger Study</b>	To consider next steps for taking forward the recommendations of the Rail Passenger Study.
<b>Programme of Work 2022/23</b>	To consider and agree the STB's priorities for 2022/2023
<b>January 2022</b>	
<b>Transport Decarbonisation</b>	To consider and agree options for a road map to transport decarbonisation in the Heartland region.
<b>Implementation Framework</b>	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.
<b>Regional Evidence Base and Performance Measures</b>	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.
<b>Network Rail Update</b>	Introduce a regular update on programme delivery – opportunity for the Forum to ask questions of Network Rail
<b>March 2022</b>	
<b>Connectivity Studies</b>	To consider the conclusions of the connectivity studies: Oxford – Milton Keynes and Oxford-Northampton – Peterborough and to agree next steps
<b>Roads Programme (including update from Highways England)</b>	To receive an update on progress with Highways England's Route Strategies and to feed in the Forum's priorities  To consider outputs from the study on road provision in the Heartland region, due to be co commissioned with Highways England and DfT.



<b>Business Plan 2022/23</b>	To agree the final business plan and Programme of work for the year ahead
<b>First Last Mile Update</b>	To consider progress with EEH's work on First Last Mile connectivity, including scoping work on Mobility Hubs.



# Strategic Transport Forum

16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Agenda Item 7: Business Unit Update

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting note the update**

### **1. EEH Annual Conference**

- 1.1. The EEH Annual Conference is taking place in-person at Silverstone on 20<sup>th</sup> October. Forum members should have received the invitation and registration form for the event.
- 1.2. The conference programme is in development but is likely to include updates on EEH work-streams and major infrastructure projects, a spotlight on economic opportunities from decarbonisation, and showcase for schemes being developed by local partners, including a discussion of funding requirements.
- 1.3. An external 'innovation zone' where emerging approaches to mobility can be showcased and experienced hands-on has also been planned.
- 1.4. As part of the planning for the conference measures are being put in place to ensure there are sustainable options for accessing the event. To this end we are planning to provide a shuttle from Milton Keynes Station to/from Silverstone and exploring a number of other options, including carbon off-setting and live streaming.

### **2. First Mile Last Mile Toolkit**

- 2.1. Forum members will be aware of its support and oversight of the First Last Mile Toolkit that EEH designed in 2019/2020.
- 2.2. The toolkit was developed to ensure EEH and its partners were challenging the traditional methods to transport planning in order to reflect the specific propensity for sustainable and public transport choices in different places. The tool factors in human behaviour around transport choice, particularly in the area of First Mile, Last Mile (FMLM) travel. This approach gives EEH and its partners a much richer view of the potential mobility market of a place, taking into account emerging and future modes and services. In doing so the toolkit allows EEH and its partners to focus FMLM investment where it will make the most difference, providing the potential to achieve the most successful FMLM outcomes in the most cost-effective way.
- 2.3. The Toolkit has recently been awarded Highly Commended in the annual Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation awards, coming second only to Transport for the North's future scenario planning approach.
- 2.4. The FMLM Toolkit is available to all of EEH's partners.

### **3. East West Rail Non-Statutory Consultation**

- 3.1. East West Railway Company launched its second, non-statutory, consultation on the scheme on 31<sup>st</sup> March and the closing date for responses was 9<sup>th</sup> June. Key areas of focus for the consultation were: Oxford Station and its supporting infrastructure (including



[www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com](http://www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com)



[@EconomicHeart](https://twitter.com/EconomicHeart)

Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations); London Road level crossing in Bicester; how best to serve communities on the Marston Vale Line; options for improved stations in Bedford; and five alignment options for the section of new railway between Bedford and Cambridge.

3.2. A copy of EEH's final response is included in Appendix A.

#### **4. Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study**

4.1. On 30<sup>th</sup> June Network Rail published the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS). ORCS looks in detail at the county's predicted growth in jobs and housing over the next two decades and presents an industry vision for how the rail network can best support it. The study was funded by the Department for Transport, Oxfordshire Growth Board, East West Rail Consortium and England's Economic Heartland. The study has been a collaboration with industry partners and helped develop an overarching strategy for rail development in the area.

4.2. ORCS has recommended several potential future improvements to improve connectivity across Oxfordshire. Priorities include increasing capacity through Oxford station; reopening the Cowley branch line; and additional infrastructure to provide greater capacity in and around Didcot, including the proposal for a new station at Wantage/Grove, subject to additional main line infrastructure. The study's recommendation has been drawn together to form an overarching industry strategy for the county known as 'Oxfordshire Connect'

#### **5. West Coast Main Line Released Capacity**

5.1. On 1<sup>st</sup> July West Coast Partnership Development, the operator responsible for running existing intercity services on the West Coast Main Line and high-speed rail services on High Speed 2, invited EEH to a stakeholder workshop. Building on the operator's first strategic market report that was submitted to the DfT in 2020, the aim of the workshop was to understand the potential demand for integrated services (future high speed and conventional train services) and the travel related corridors.

5.2. EEH organised a pre-meeting with partners and used the basis of previously submitted consultation responses to West Coast Partnership Development to develop a cohesive, united position on this region's priorities for future rail services on the West Coast Main Line. These priorities included:

- Improving long-distance connectivity from Watford Junction to Birmingham. The current one train per hour (tph) to Birmingham (International/New Street) from Watford Junction constrains opportunities for economic agglomeration. To improve this service offer, EEH supports the need for 2tph from Watford Junction to Birmingham, calling at Milton Keynes.
- Improving long-distance connectivity from Watford Junction to Liverpool/Manchester. Lack of direct services constraints opportunities for economic agglomeration. EEH supports the need for a direct Watford Junction to Liverpool Lime Street service (1tph) and a direct Watford Junction to Manchester Piccadilly service (1tph)
- Providing faster journey times between Northampton and Birmingham. EEH supports retaining, at a minimum, the 3tph service to Birmingham (International/New Street) and configuring services in such a way that enables 1 fast train and 2 stopping services.
- Enhancing regional connectivity through a combination of East West Rail infrastructure and released capacity to connect Northampton-Milton Keynes-Bletchley-Aylesbury-High Wycombe with economic activity planned at Old Oak Common.
- Recognising the importance of HS2 services calling/terminating at Euston Station. For most of our region, accessing HS2 services will be via Euston, either through the



national rail network and/or use of London Underground. It is essential that HS2 services serve Euston at the earliest opportunity.

- 5.3. EEH will continue to work with West Coast Partnership to ensure released capacity is consistent with the ambitions of the region's transport strategy and supports planned housing and economic growth in the Heartland.

## **6. Solent to the Midlands Multimodal Freight Strategy**

- 6.1. Network Rail and Highways England published their Solent to the Midlands Multimodal Freight Strategy (Phase 1) on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The Solent to the Midlands route is one of the most important freight corridors in the UK and links the major port of Southampton with the numerous distribution centres and economic hubs of the Midlands, North and Scotland. The purpose of the study was to develop a long-term strategy for the movement of freight along the Solent to the Midlands corridor.
- 6.2. The study has been split into several phases. The first phase was primarily focused on understanding the current state of the market as well as assessing what demand for freight on this route might look like. The study was overseen by an industry steering group which included England's Economic Heartland and Transport for the South East and formed part of Network Rail's long-term planning process and Highways England's route strategy work.
- 6.3. The study findings show that whilst roads are critical to complete door-to-door regional and local freight movements, rail is most cost effective over longer distances and for higher volume loads. The study has recommended greater modal shift, from road to rail, to free up road capacity, especially for those journeys that are greater than 50 miles and greater than 100 miles for bulk and consumer goods respectively. Phase two of the study will focus on how the transport system can remove barriers to rail freight growth, unlock new markets for rail freight and decarbonise road freight. EEH will continue to support the development of this study.

## **7. Network Capacity Release (The Impact of Working from Home)**

- 7.1. The EEH Transport Strategy highlights the need to reduce car-based travel demand particularly at AM/PM peak times to both meet legally binding national carbon targets and reduce the costs and wider environmental impacts associated with traffic congestion.
- 7.2. Whilst measures such as road pricing, local access restrictions, (congestion charging/Workplace Parking Levy) and improved access to active travel and public transport must be considered, simply changing the way people access work/employment can be shown to have a notable effect.
- 7.3. At the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, more than 50% of the UK's workforce was able to work from home. This experience has accelerated trends towards flexible working and will to varying degrees become an embedded approach for many employers/employees. Recent surveys indicate that a likely outcome will be a blended approach, with the week roughly divided between home and office.
- 7.4. Assessing and understanding the impacts that these changes might have on network demand in a spatial context will support the development of EEH's approach to transport infrastructure investment.
- 7.5. England's Economic Heartland commissioned research to understand the impact of these emerging patterns on our highways network. The consultant, City Science, has developed a model that can be used to explore different future scenarios of the impact of residents working from home (WFH).
- 7.6. Through exploring demographics and employment classifications of our residents at a localised level, the model applies propensity/opportunity to Work from home geospatially. The effects are then "routed" through the EEH highways network to



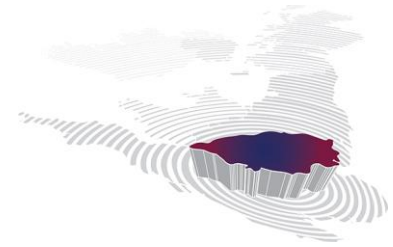
translate these demand effects into potential traffic and capacity release impacts along key corridors or routes. The modelling considers how the impact of changed working patterns differ spatially across the Heartland due to differences in demographics, the sector-mix in the local economy, and the flows of specific roads.

- 7.7. The study has now concluded. Through the work, the model predicts that if people who used to commute by car and who are now working from home were to continue to do so for two days per week, between 10% to 12% of peak hour traffic would be removed. This is consistent with independent findings from the University of Leeds who estimate that this level of home working would reduce morning car trips by 14%. This level of working from home has the potential to have significant impacts on the road network.

Naomi Green

**Head of Technical Programme**

**July 2021**



## **Annex A**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1. This is the response of England's Economic Heartland, a Sub-national Transport Body, to the East West Railway Company's non-statutory consultation entitled 'Making Meaningful Connections.
- 1.2. EEH welcomes the Government's continued commitment to restore the rail link between Oxford and Cambridge. Delivering and realising the full potential of East West Rail is the key transformational project for the region and beyond. The project will provide residents and businesses with genuinely new travel choices and opportunities, not just along the immediate corridor but as part of the wider transport system across the region.
- 1.3. The Oxford to Cambridge Arc is identified by the Government as a national economic priority, delivery of East West Rail is central to realising the ambition for the Arc.
- 1.4. This response is focused on the strategic issues in relation to the proposals published by the East West Railway Company. Where individual partners wish to comment on detailed aspects of the proposals these will be made separately by those partners.

### **2. Policy Framework**

- 2.1. In February 2021 EEH published its Transport Strategy: '*Connecting People, Transforming Journeys*': it provides the regional policy framework for the proposals published by the East West Railway Company.
- 2.2. This vision-led, evidence-based Strategy reflects the ambition of the region and its partners. It sets the strategic policy framework for the region's transport system for the period to 2050.
- 2.3. The ambition underpinning the Strategy is simple: to support sustainable growth and improve quality of life and well-being through a world-class, decarbonised transport system which harnesses the region's global expertise in technology and innovation to unlock new opportunities for residents and businesses, in a way that benefits the UK as a whole.
- 2.4. The Strategy is guided by four key principles:
  - Achieving net-zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040
  - Improving quality of life and well-being through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel
  - Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
  - 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.
- 2.5. It goes on to set out how 'business as usual' will not get us where we need to be. A step-change is required to deliver the region's ambition and meet the expectations of our residents, communities, and businesses. In response the Strategy sets out how the region will:

- Focus on decarbonisation of the transport system by harnessing innovation and supporting solutions which create green economic opportunities
- Promote investment in digital infrastructure as a means of improving connectivity
- Use delivery of East West Rail and other mass rapid transit systems as the catalyst for the transformation of the region's strategic public transport networks
- Champion increased investment in active travel and shared transport solutions to improve local connectivity to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential
- Ensure that the region's freight and logistics needs continue to be met whilst lowering the environmental impact of their delivery

### **3. East West Rail: Transformational Infrastructure**

- 3.1. Delivery of a new strategic railway connecting East Anglia with central, southern and western England, and with South Wales has been at the heart of the region's strategic transport priorities for over 25 years. The East West Rail Consortium established the strategic case in support of the new main line, which led to its identification as a project of national significance.
- 3.2. The work underpinning the regional Transport Strategy has identified the critical importance of improving east-west connectivity more generally: the strategy identifies two further east-west corridors – one linking north Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, the other linking Buckinghamshire with Hertfordshire. Public transport solutions along these corridors will complement East West Rail.
- 3.3. The National Infrastructure Commission in its report – Partnering for Prosperity – endorsed the strategic importance of the East West Main Line.
- 3.4. It is in this context that improving east-west connectivity is identified in the regional Transport Strategy as providing the over-riding transformational opportunity for the region. At the same time the Strategy sets out how this will also unlock opportunities to improve north-south connectivity thereby broadening the benefit of the investment across the Heartland region.
- 3.5. The commitment of Government to deliver the Oxford to Cambridge section of the East West Main Line represents a first step in realising the full benefit of this transformative link for the region, and beyond.
- 3.6. The regional Transport Strategy goes on to identify how the locations where the East West Main Line intersects existing main lines represent the opportunity to establish regionally significant transport hubs, with priority given to:
  - Oxford Stations
  - Bicester Stations
  - Aylesbury Station
  - Bletchley/Milton Keynes Stations
  - Bedford Midland Station
  - East West Rail/East Coast Main Line
  - Cambridge/Cambridge South Stations

The expectation of the regional Transport Strategy is that the locational advantages of these hubs will be taken into account by local partners when identifying opportunities for economic activity and future housing growth.



3.7. The regional Transport Strategy continues by noting that the longer-term potential of the East West Main Line to support planned growth and enable a further shift in passenger and freight movements on to rail will require additional investment beyond that planned by the East West Rail Company.

#### **4. Overarching Requirements**

4.1. Within the context provided by the regional Transport Strategy and the accompanying technical work commissioned by England's Economic Heartland, the East West Rail Consortium and associated partners, the overarching requirements arising from the proposals set out in this consultation are:

**a) Continued support in principle for the development and delivery of the proposals required to restore the rail link between Oxford and Cambridge**

The Government has previously set out its commitment to complete the restoration of the Oxford to Cambridge rail link by 2030. This commitment should remain given the key role that the rail link has in enabling the economic potential of the region to be realised, consistent with the requirement to achieve net zero carbon.

We welcome the commitment of the East West Railway to deliver a project that is net zero and running services that are themselves net zero.

The continued commitment of Government to its timeframe will enable partners along the corridor to bring forward long-term proposals for their communities with greater confidence. It will also give continued confidence to private sector investors when determining the location of their future investments.

**b) The importance of high quality and environmentally sensitive design**

The scale of the East West Main Line is significant, not just as a transformational project for the region, but in terms of the potential impact it has on the natural and built environment. In keeping with the principles of the regional Transport Strategy it is essential that the design of proposed works makes a positive contribution towards the requirement to achieve net environmental benefit. In addition, the proposed works need to deliver a positive impact overall on biodiversity.

The design of individual elements must respect and enhance the local environment. Particular attention must be paid to ensuring the setting and amenity of local communities is respected.

**c) A commitment by Government to deliver East West Rail section must include a commitment to fund the delivery of complementary improvements in local connectivity**

In order to maximise the benefit of the strategic investment being made in the East West Main Line it is essential that the scheme is supported by complementary investment in improved local connectivity. Measures to improve local connectivity must consider both the needs of existing communities and future growth.

Investment in active travel measures and connecting local public transport services will be essential in order to offer prospective rail users with a range of choices for their journey to/from the station. Where there is a need to make provision for car parking this should be at a level that does not undermine the ambition of encouraging access by non-car modes.

The proposals published by the East West Railway Company create a number of instances where there is a need for complementary investment: these instances are identified in the detailed requirements included herein. It is our expectation that the Company will work with individual local authorities to agree the package of complementary measures and that the Government will fund the East West Railway Company accordingly to enable it to deliver the agreed measures.

In developing the package of complementary measures particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the railway and its stations are 'future proofed': in this respect the delivery of East West Rail as a digitally enabled infrastructure corridor will be critical.

**d) The section between Bletchley and Cambridge should be designed to enable delivery of the full East West Main Line proposal**

Though each section of the East West Rail project will realise benefits for the communities and businesses it serves, the full transformational benefit will only be realised through the delivery of the East West Main Line in full.

In this context delivery of the link between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes must continue to be viewed as an integral element of the East West Main Line. The link provides a key connection that will support future growth, improving connectivity in a way that reduces demand on the road network. In addition to linking the economic cluster centred on Milton Keynes with the planned growth centred on Aylesbury, the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes link forms part of the strategic opportunity to improve connectivity on the Northampton – Milton Keynes/Bletchley – Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common corridor. Realisation of this strategic opportunity is identified in the regional Transport Strategy as a regional priority.

Whilst the remit of the East West Railway Company is to restore the rail link between Oxford and Cambridge, the strategic opportunity championed by the East West Rail Consortium (and endorsed by the National Infrastructure Commission) is to connect services through Cambridge, and eastwards to Norwich and Ipswich.

The East West Rail Consortium is completing a pre-Strategic Outline Business Case for the 'Eastern Section' – i.e. in respect of services east of Cambridge. Realisation of this strategic opportunity is a priority of both EEH and Transport East Sub-national Transport Bodies. The design of the Bedford to Cambridge section must enable the running of services through Cambridge Station to/from the east without the need for the reversal of services in the station. The design of the section must also ensure that East West Rail services are able to call directly at Cambridge South in order to serve the internationally significant Cambridge Biomedical campus.

In developing detailed proposals the design of improvements in and around Bletchley Station should safeguard the option for a chord that enables direct services linking Cambridge and Milton Keynes, via Bletchley.

EEH and the East West Rail Consortium are working with partners in the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body with a view to ensuring that the potential of the East West Main Line to improve connectivity westwards of Oxford is realised.

**e) The section between Bletchley and Cambridge should be delivered as electrified infrastructure**

The imperative to decarbonise our transport system is front and centre of transport policy at national, regional and local level. Electrification of the East West Main Line offers the only realistic traction technology for high-speed, longer-distance passenger services and freight services that will operate on it.

The scale of construction works required for the Marston Vale Line, combined with the need for new construction between Bedford and Cambridge should be taken as the opportunity to deliver these sections as electrified infrastructure from day one.

With the West Anglian Main Line, East Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and West Coast Main Line all electrified, the case for electrification is heightened from an operational perspective.

Experience shows that the cost of retrofitting infrastructure for electrification once a rail link is operational will be significantly higher than if the investment is made at the same time as the initial construction works.

Committing to the delivery of the Bletchley/Bedford to Cambridge section as an electrified route will avoid unnecessary costs being incurred at a future date. The commitment to electrify the Bletchley/Bedford to Cambridge section should be viewed as part of the national programme of electrification that is required to support the Government's commitment to decarbonise our transport system.

In developing detailed proposals to deliver East West Rail as an electrified route the importance of high quality and environmentally sensitive design must be applied as a key principle underpinning all work.

**f) The section between Bletchley and Cambridge should be delivered as a digitally enabled infrastructure corridor**

EEH and the EWR Consortium have worked closely with the East West Railway Company and Government departments to enable the section between Bicester and Bletchley to be delivered as a digitally enabled infrastructure corridor. EWR Consortium members have been instrumental in enabling the digital capability being delivered to be over and above the minimum required to support rail operations: the additional capability being used to provide enhanced digital connectivity (including provision of 5G) for surrounding communities and 'back-haul' services in support of the continued expansion of the digital economy.

All parties involved with the Bicester to Bletchley works recognise the added value of delivering new infrastructure as digitally enabled. Experience with this work has demonstrated the need for future stages of the East West Main Line to be specified as needing to be digitally enabled infrastructure and for the cost of that provision to be included within the overall cost of the scheme.

Based on experience with the Bicester to Bletchley section, the cost of providing enhanced digital connectivity as a percentage of the overall scheme cost is marginal. However, unless it is included within the specification of the works from the outset it can be difficult to secure the provision. Experience with the Bicester to Bletchley section suggests that enhanced digital connectivity can be delivered at 10% of the cost of retrofitting once the railway infrastructure is operational.

The commitment to deliver the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet road improvement provides a further opportunity to ensure that new strategic infrastructure is delivered as digitally enabled. The East West Railway Company should work with Highways England to determine how best to provide a digitally enabled corridor where the two projects are in close proximity.

**g) The design of the Bletchley and Cambridge section must incorporate lessons learnt during the delivery of the Bicester to Bletchley section**

Members of the East West Rail Consortium involved with the delivery of the Bicester to Bletchley section of the rail link have first-hand experience of the impact of construction works on local communities and businesses.

Experience shows that in some instances the impact of the works has been exacerbated by decisions taken at the design stage which ultimately served to increase the impact on the adjacent local highway network during construction. In addition, experience during the construction period has served to highlight the need for a higher level of mitigation measures on the local highway network, and the need for a higher level of oversight and management of construction activity.

The Consortium has worked closely with the East West Rail Alliance delivering the Bicester to Bletchley section to identify lessons learnt. Those should be incorporated into the design and delivery of the section between Bletchley and Cambridge. Whilst integration of such requirements at the design stage may increase the headline cost of the works, experience from the Bicester to Bletchley section shows a failure to do so ultimately results in additional costs being incurred and additional impact on the local communities and businesses.

It is noted that works on the Bletchley to Bedford section of East West Rail are likely to overlap with construction works associated with the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme. This serves to emphasise the importance of working closely with local partners throughout the design of the Bletchley to Bedford section to ensure that the measures required to enable the construction works minimise the impact on local communities and businesses.

Experience throughout the development and delivery of previous sections of the East West Main Line have served to highlight the risk of underestimating the level of engagement necessary with local communities and businesses to minimise the impact of construction works. The implications for local authorities – both in terms of cost and resources – of managing the impact of construction works need to be taken into account in finalising the detail of the proposed works.

#### **h) The design of the Bletchley to Cambridge section should be capable of accommodating rail freight services**

The evidence base underpinning the regional Transport Strategy identifies the freight and logistics sector as one of the largest contributors to our carbon emissions. The Strategy encourages greater use of rail for freight and logistics as a means of providing additional resilience for the business community, while also acting on the need to achieve net zero.

Whilst not part of East West Rail, removing the bottlenecks on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton corridor remain an immediate strategic priority for EEH, Transport East and Midlands Connect. All three STBs support the need for proposals to address them being taken forward into delivery at the earliest opportunity.

However, it is also important that the East West Main Line is designed and delivered with the capability of supporting rail freight services without the need for additional works. In this regard due consideration must be given to ensuring that the impact on local communities of rail freight movements is minimised.

The design and operation of East West Rail should take into account and contribute to the delivery of the requirements of the national rail freight strategy. In due course Great British Railways will have a statutory duty to consider the needs of rail freight and to take those needs into account in planning the future of the rail network.

## **5. Detailed Requirements**

- 5.1. In addition to the overarching requirements set out above, the proposals put forward by the East West Railway Company give rise to a series of more detailed requirements. For convenience, and ease of reference, these are grouped geographically.

### **Oxfordshire**

- 5.2. The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study – funded in part by England’s Economic Heartland and the East West Rail Consortium – identifies the need for additional capacity at Oxford Station to accommodate the long-term increase in rail use (both passenger and freight), including that arising as a consequence of East West Rail.
- 5.3. EEH and the EWR Consortium support the principle of running East West Rail services through Oxford Station on the basis that this will improve wider connectivity and reduce the impact of terminating services in Oxford Station.
- 5.4. In addition to supporting the restoration of services to the Cowley branch line, the EWR Consortium are supportive of restoring direct services between Oxford, Swindon and Bath/Bristol and of additional services between Oxford and Southampton. The design of such services should support the need for improved rail connectivity to/from Didcot Parkway in support of the wider Science Vale initiative. The economic value of additional inter-regional services has been identified through the Passenger Rail Study work commissioned by EEH from Network Rail. Both service enhancements could be realised by extending East West Rail services through Oxford Station. In addition, the output

from the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study has highlighted the economic value of enhanced rail services within Oxfordshire in support of planned growth.

- 5.5. The need for additional capacity at Oxford Station from a railway operation perspective affords the opportunity to realise the potential of the station as a strategic economic opportunity linked to the regeneration of Oxford's East End. In particular, the high level of connectivity inherent at the station (including its role as an interchange for local bus services) should be used to explore the opportunity to integrate economic opportunities as part of any station enhancement to help take forward the ambitions of the Oxford Station masterplan.
- 5.6. Oxford Parkway has been a significant success in terms of providing residents with access to fast, direct rail services to London without the need to use the main station in the city centre.
- 5.7. The significance of Oxford Parkway as a gateway to rail services will grow further as a result of Local Plan allocations for housing and economic development. Improved local connectivity – in particular, by active travel modes and local bus services – should be delivered in anticipation of the planned development in order to encourage sustainable patterns of movement from the outset.
- 5.8. We have long-supported the need to deliver a solution that addresses the implications of increased barrier down-time at the London Road level crossing in Bicester arising from the extension of East West Rail services to Cambridge.
- 5.9. It is recognised within the proposals put forward by the East West Railway Company that the introduction of services to Cambridge will result in barrier down-time rising to 50 minutes per hour: effectively this means the level crossing will be closed for the majority of the day.
- 5.10. London Road is an important access route within the local highway network serving Bicester. And with significant housing growth being delivered to the south and west of Bicester this makes it essential that efforts to identify a viable and practical physical solution for all modes of transport for the level crossing are continued. If there is no such solution a comprehensive package of investment in local connectivity will be required to offset the impact of restrictions on London Road. In that exceptional circumstance, it is expected that the East West Railway Company will work with the local authorities to identify and agree the extent of such a package. It is also expected that the Government would provide the additional funding required to deliver the package in parallel with the delivery of the Bedford to Cambridge section of East West Rail

### **Bletchley**

- 5.11. We recognise and support the key role that Bletchley Station has as part of the transport offer that supports delivery of planned growth in the Bletchley area. This serves to emphasise the importance of having a new 'eastern entrance' to Bletchley Station – one that provides easy access to both East West Rail services and those operating on the West Coast Main Line.
- 5.12. We expect the East West Railway Company to continue to work with Milton Keynes Council and Network Rail to agree a package of improvements in local connectivity associated with the provision of a new eastern entrance. We would look to the Government to provide the additional funding that enables the agreed package to be delivered in parallel with the delivery of investment in the Bletchley to Bedford section of East West Rail.
- 5.13. In addition, the work of EEH has identified a potential requirement in the longer term for a new chord connecting East West Rail (from the east) with the West Coast Main Line. Enabling the provision of such a chord will enable direct rail services between Milton Keynes and the eastern half of East West Rail, both passenger and freight.
- 5.14. The design of improvements in and around Bletchley Station should safeguard the option for this chord to be delivered at a future date.

### **Bletchley to Bedford: the Marston Vale Line**

- 5.15. We recognise the need for change to operations on the Marston Vale Line. We accept that the proposals previously agreed as part of the Transport and Works Act for the 'western section' are not sufficient to enable this section of the route to fulfil its role as part of the overall East West Rail project.
- 5.16. The existing infrastructure means that journey times between Bletchley and Bedford are slow and the user experience is poor. We accept that retaining the existing stopping service would make it harder to realise the full potential of the East West Main Line.
- 5.17. Our support for the consolidation of stations and the acceleration of services is conditional upon the East West Railway Company working with the relevant local authorities to agree an appropriate package of complementary measures that ensure the stations are well connected to their communities. In this context it is essential that the measures meet both the requirements of existing and future communities. It is our expectation that East West Railway Company will receive the additional funding required to deliver the agreed package of measures.
- 5.18. Such a package of measures would need to both improve connectivity for existing residents and be available to residents of new developments from day one. The latter is particularly important in order to enable the adoption of sustainable travel patterns from the beginning of new developments.
- 5.19. The emerging outputs of the first mile last mile work commissioned jointly by EEH and the East West Railway Company should be used as the basis to develop the package of improvements in local connectivity required to complement the investment in East West Rail. The evidence base underpinning this work has been developed with the assistance of local authority partners. The detail of the package of improvements must be developed and agreed with the local authorities once a final decision has been made on the number and location of stations on this section of East West Rail.
- 5.20. Our support for this approach is also conditional upon the additional funding required to implement the agreed package being made available by Government.
- 5.21. Whilst we accept the need to close level crossings on the section between Bletchley and Bedford this can only be done when satisfactory alternative arrangements have been agreed with the relevant parties and those arrangements are delivered in parallel with the works associated with East West Rail. We note that detailed proposals already exist that would enable a number of level crossings to be closed.
- 5.22. We also note that there are specific concerns with regard to the East West Railway Company's proposals for a number of crossing points and stations on the Marston Vale line. This includes the proposals for Lidlington, Fenny Stratford, Bow Brickhill and Woburn Sands. There is deep concern regarding the impact of the proposals on the communities in each of these locations. We expect the East West Railway Company to work closely with the relevant local authorities to identify solutions that are appropriate and acceptable.
- 5.23. Our support in this regard is conditional upon the additional funding required to implement agreed arrangements being made available by Government.
- 5.24. In keeping with our shared recognition of the need to ensure that there is appropriate investment in local connectivity to/from EWR stations, we expect the East West Railway Company to bring forward proposals that will improve connectivity to/from EWR to the Wixams settlement. This should include measures to improve local connectivity from the community to the planned Wixams Station on the Midland Main Line.
- 5.25. We note the scale of the proposed works along the Marston Vale Line is significantly greater than that originally planned under the proposals agreed as part of the Transport and Works Act for the 'western section': what is now proposed effectively represents a complete reconstruction of the existing rail corridor.

- 5.26. Experience with the first phase of the East West Rail project – specifically the Oxford to Bicester section – demonstrated the added value realised from the complete closure of the railway for the duration of the works. Although such an approach has implications for existing passengers, experience shows that the rail industry is able to lay on alternative arrangements that ensure the travel needs of passengers continue to be met.
- 5.27. The alternative of seeking to reconstruct the Marston Vale and maintain the existing train service will lengthen considerably the time taken to deliver the proposed works and add significantly to the cost of delivering those works.
- 5.28. We therefore support a temporary closure of the Marston Vale line to enable its reconstruction. Our support is conditional upon the detail of alternative travel arrangements being agreed with the relevant local authorities and additional funding being provided to enable those arrangements to be delivered reliably throughout the temporary closure.
- 5.29. EEH strongly supports the introduction of Oxford to Bedford services at the earliest possible opportunity. We both consider it possible and important in terms of supporting delivery of planned growth that these services to be operational prior to the completion of the Bedford to Cambridge section.

### **Bedford**

- 5.30. East West Rail services calling at Bedford Midland will support the ambition to realise the economic potential of the town and is strongly supported by EEH.
- 5.31. The new railway will serve as a catalyst for the development of Bedford Midland Station as a regionally and nationally significant interchange, offering opportunities for interchange between East West Rail services and those on the Midland Main Line.
- 5.32. With respect to Bedford St Johns, we support relocating the station to the west of its current location to improve the alignment of the rail infrastructure, remove the existing speed restriction and support growth in the area.
- 5.33. To develop a more detailed understanding of the implications of each of the options set out in the consultation, EEH is supporting Network Rail in the preparation of a piece of strategic advice that will inform the selection of the optimum interfaces between Bedford and East West Rail. This piece of work will report in autumn 2021 and inform EEH's response to East West Rail's statutory consultation.
- 5.34. We welcome the recognition of the opportunity for improvements at Bedford Midland Station to support wider proposals for the regeneration of the town. We support local aspirations that seek to connect a newly regenerated station with economic redevelopment opportunities nearby and the construction of an 'up fast' platform that would enable interchange with express services on the Midland Main Line. The East West Railway Company should continue to work with partners in Bedford to ensure the proposals for Bedford Midland Station support the ambitions of Bedford Master Plan.
- 5.35. However we also note that there are deep concerns regarding the impact of the East West Railway Company's proposals on the community immediately north of Bedford Station with regard to the proposed demolition of a large number of homes and the need to rebuild Bromham Road Bridge. We expect the Company to work closely with the local authority to identify a solution that is both appropriate and acceptable.

### **Bedford to Cambridge**

- 5.36. It is noted that each of the five different route alignments proposed between the A1 corridor and west of Cambridge benefit from a shared movement corridor with the A428. We support this approach on the basis that aligning both rail/road infrastructure in this way will ensure new housing and communities are brought forward with the certainty of multi-modal transport connections. We welcome the commitment of the East West Railway Company to continue to co-ordinate with Highways England as both organisations take their proposals forward.



- 5.37. It is noted that work is ongoing to consider the benefits of the new alignment serving either a station at Tempsford or St Neots South. Timetabling and station design must facilitate frictionless interchange between East West Rail services and East Coast Main Line services. This will enable better rail access to the other significant regional destinations (e.g. Peterborough) that are not located along the railway's core.
- 5.38. Given the scale of growth that could potentially be delivered as a result of a new interchange station, it is also considered essential that commitment is made from Government to align the provision of new rail infrastructure with the need to plan for and deliver improvements to the A1 corridor. The capacity of the A1 is a known constraint to development in both the St Neots and Tempsford areas and a solution will be required before any growth can be considered along this corridor. These two infrastructure solutions combined would substantially improve connectivity, as well as creating the optimum location for future growth.
- 5.39. It is noted that East West Railway services will be in addition to existing services operating on the Shepreth corridor west of its junction with the West Anglian Main Line. Experience suggests that it will be necessary to examine in more detail the interaction between those existing services and East West Rail. We look to the Company to bring forward detailed proposals that will enable both East West Rail Services and existing services on the Shepreth corridor to operate using a timetable that is robust and delivers on performance measures.
- 5.40. It is important that proposals for four-tracking between Shepreth Junction into the city are integrated with the new Cambridge South Station. Delivery of the latter is a regional priority given the national, if not international significance of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. We support the delivery of the new station by 2025, and it is essential that East West Rail services also serve the station from the opening of the Bedford to Cambridge section.
- 5.41. We urge the East West Railway Company to work closely with the promoters of Cambridge South and the South East Transport project to ensure opportunities are aligned. We also urge the Company to work closely with the Greater Cambridge Partnership as they develop their proposals for the Cambourne to Cambridge project. Integration between services will enhance user choice and increase the attractiveness of both services.
- 5.42. Cambridge Station will continue to grow in importance as a hub station on the national network. The need for investment in passenger facilities, including the need for additional circulation space, should be kept under regular review. As should the potential need for a new passenger access on the eastern side of the station.

### **East of Cambridge**

- 5.43. In looking at the future requirements for Cambridge Station these should enable East West Rail services to travel through the station to/from the east.
- 5.44. The Passenger Rail Study taken forward jointly by England's Economic Heartland and Network Rail has identified that improving connectivity through Cambridge to/from East Anglia (i.e. Ipswich and Norwich) will unlock regionally significant economic benefits.
- 5.45. The EWR Consortium commissioned work to develop a pre-SOBC for the 'Eastern Section' is testing the benefits and implications of several new service options that provide enhanced connectivity to Ipswich and Norwich from Cambridge and further west. The emerging findings of the pre-SOBC have confirmed that the Eastern Section has a strong strategic and economic case and that extending East West services through Cambridge provides value for money. Such considerations are in addition to, and complement the work associated with delivering the programme of improvements required on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton corridor.
- 5.46. The true transformational benefit of the East West Main Line will not be felt until the country has coast-to-coast, through connectivity from East Anglia to the South West.

Through the work of the East West Rail Consortium and the Sub-National Transport Bodies (Western Gateway, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East) we will work together to continue to make the case for this investment.

## **6. The Customer Experience**

- 6.1. A key focus for the Heartland Transport Strategy is the need to ensure that investment decisions reflect the user need.
- 6.2. Our Strategy recognises that a user's experience is shaped by their end-to-end journey; not only how they feel whilst on-board the train. The aspiration for consistent, clock-face timetabling is supported and a reminder of the need for service improvements to public transport to take into account social factors.
- 6.3. We encourage the East West Railway Company, in its role as Shadow Operator, to use the framework provided by the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail to embrace and/or pioneer an approach to ticketing that better reflect changes in working patterns and other exogenous factors that have arisen in recent years.
- 6.4. Enhancing the user experience of the stations located on the East West Main Line should be afforded a high priority. The design of stations on the Marston Vale Line and on the Bedford to Cambridge section should be consistent with this ambition. It is expected that where necessary existing stations between Oxford and Bletchley will be retrofitted to the same standard.
- 6.5. We expect that, as a minimum, each station will provide a rich blend of future proofed facilities, enabled by new digital services that make the user experience simpler and more comfortable. In addition, we encourage the East West Railway Company to explore opportunities to re-establish the station as a focus for the local community.
- 6.6. This may include provision of additional facilities – such as meeting/workspace, or commercial activities – that give rise to added value. Experience suggests that in these circumstances the overall level of passenger safety is increased.
- 6.7. We invite the East West Railway Company to ensure that the design of its stations, and the surrounding public realm, prioritises access by active travel and local bus services. This extends beyond the provision of accessible routes to/from the station by considering the ways in which the need for passenger drop-off/pick-up and parking are managed to avoid the creation of streetscapes that are dominated by motorised transport.
- 6.8. The need to plan for a safe and inclusive transport system is a principle that underpins the region's Transport Strategy. The provision of on-board staff (in addition to the driver) does a lot to instil confidence when it comes to safety, as well as making a positive contribution to the overall customer experience. It is anticipated that services will therefore operate with an on-board member of staff.
- 6.9. We expect the East West Railway Company to ensure that station design, including from street to platform and from platform to train, is completely accessible for all.
- 6.10. Empirical research undertaken by the EEH Business Unit has demonstrated that users with impaired mobility are less likely to use stations that do not have level-boarding between platform and train when compared with stations that provide both ramp provision and level boarding. It is essential that a 21<sup>st</sup> century railway meets the needs of modern travellers and accessibility should ideally be accommodated by improved platform and rolling stock rather than manual ramp provision.

**June 2021**