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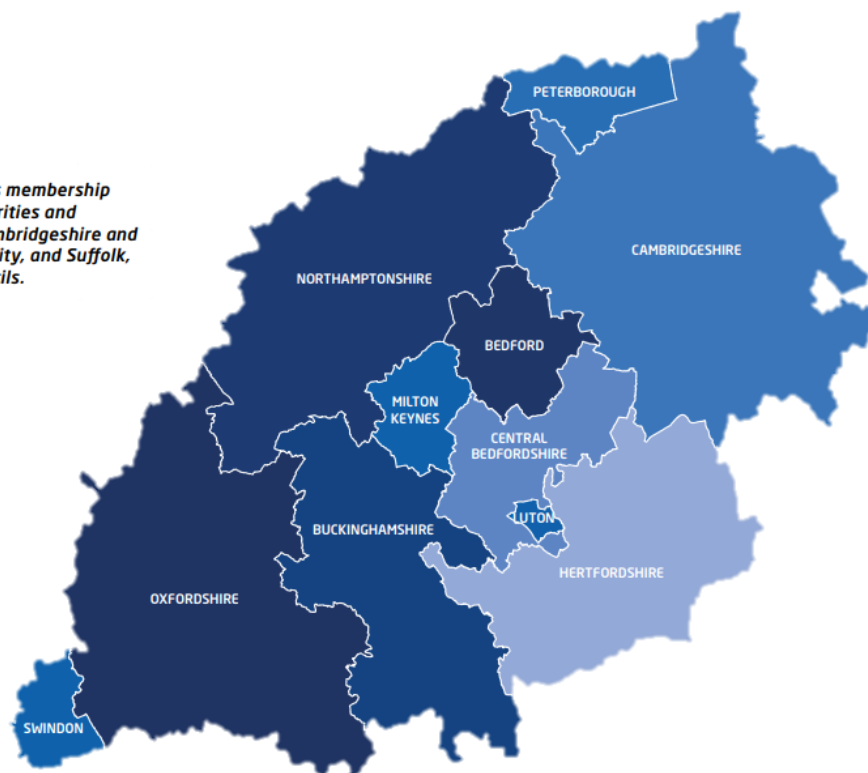
<b>Title:</b>	<b>England’s Economic Heartland – Transport Strategy</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To introduce Board Members to the EEH Outline Transport Strategy and proposed framework for stakeholder engagement.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Board members note the content of this report, and presentation by Martin Tugwell, Programme Director for England’s Economic Heartland.

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## 1 Summary

- England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) is the Subnational Transport Body for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and surrounding areas. Originally founded in 2014 under the ‘tri-counties’ partnership between Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, EEH now covers a wider geography and membership which has been formally established under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.

*England’s Economic Heartland’s membership covers 11 local transport authorities and involves close working with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex county councils.*



- This represented a devolution of power from Central Government enabling regions to come together to provide a single voice on planning, prioritisation and delivery of transport infrastructure. STBs operate at scale, identifying opportunities to grow the economy, increase productivity and unlock growth through planning and delivery at a strategic level

- EEH provides a shared commitment to realise the economic potential of the region through better connectivity.
- In July 2019, England's Economic Heartland published its Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement **Appendix 1**, which sets out the broad evidence base, high level themes and strategic objectives as the foundations for developing an integrated transport strategy for the region.
- EEH will publish its Transport Strategy 2020 – 2050 next summer. With a focus on economic growth, accessibility and inclusion and quality of life and the environment

## **2 Vision and Principles**

The main Vision for the Outline Transport Strategy is, 'Connecting People and Places with Opportunities and Services'. The ambition for the region's transport system to be zero-carbon by 2050 is stated (which is in line with national Government policy).

In developing the detail of the overarching Transport Strategy, EEH have focused on three key principles:

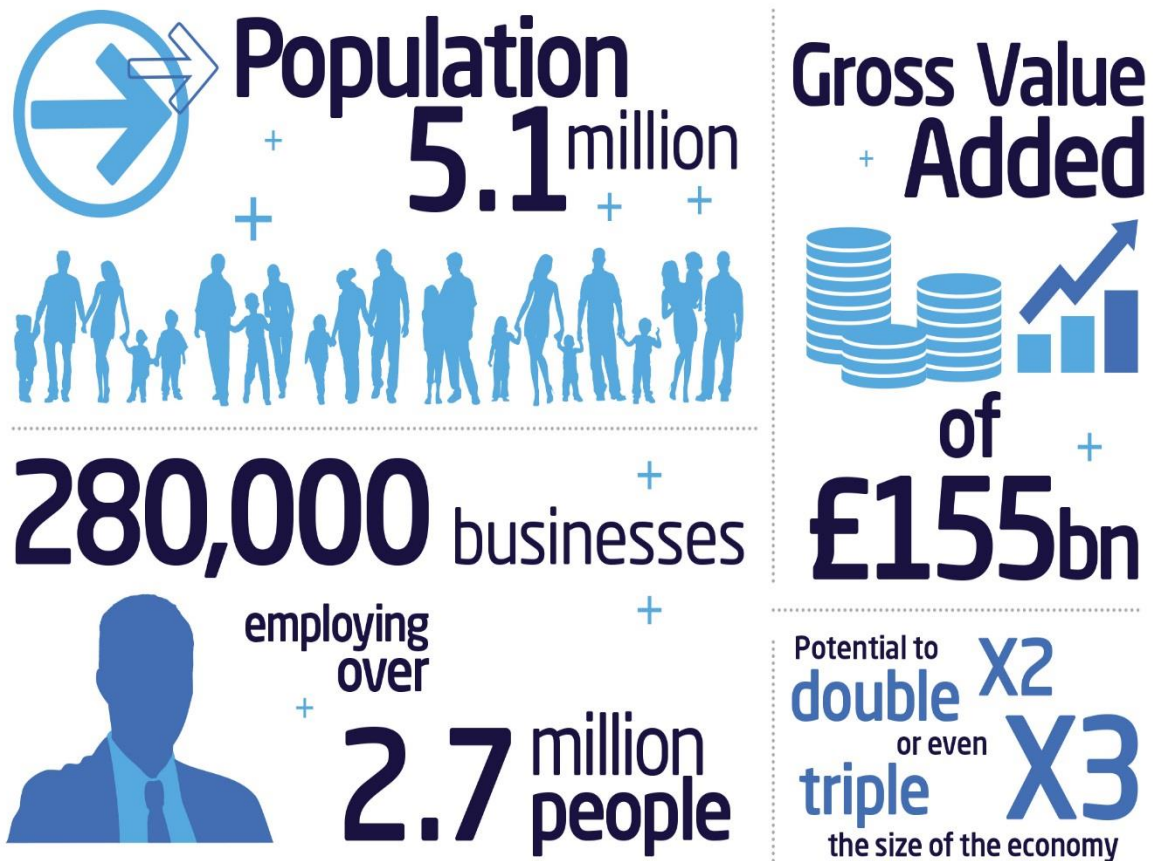
- Enabling economic growth
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Quality of Life and Environment

The outline transport strategy mixes themes, principles and aims in a way that does not necessarily clarify thinking or a strategic approach. Most of the statements made do not include references or evidence.

## **3 Strategic Context**

The report recognises the region as having national and international importance due to its businesses, including world leading innovation in industrial sectors at the cutting edge of global markets.

The National Infrastructure Commission believes there is the potential to double the size of the region's economy but this is highly dependent on delivering transformational growth supported by investment in high quality, accessible, reliable and sustainable transport connectivity



#### 4 Themes

##### 1 - Connecting People

Identifying where transport may be enhanced through regulatory changes, perhaps shifting from existing service delivery models; things such as bus competition rules cannot be changed by Local Transport Authorities but EEH might have more influence. The strategy mentions behaviour change but does not imply a level of expertise that, for example, BCC had in the early 2000s, and which could form a model for a regional specialist group.

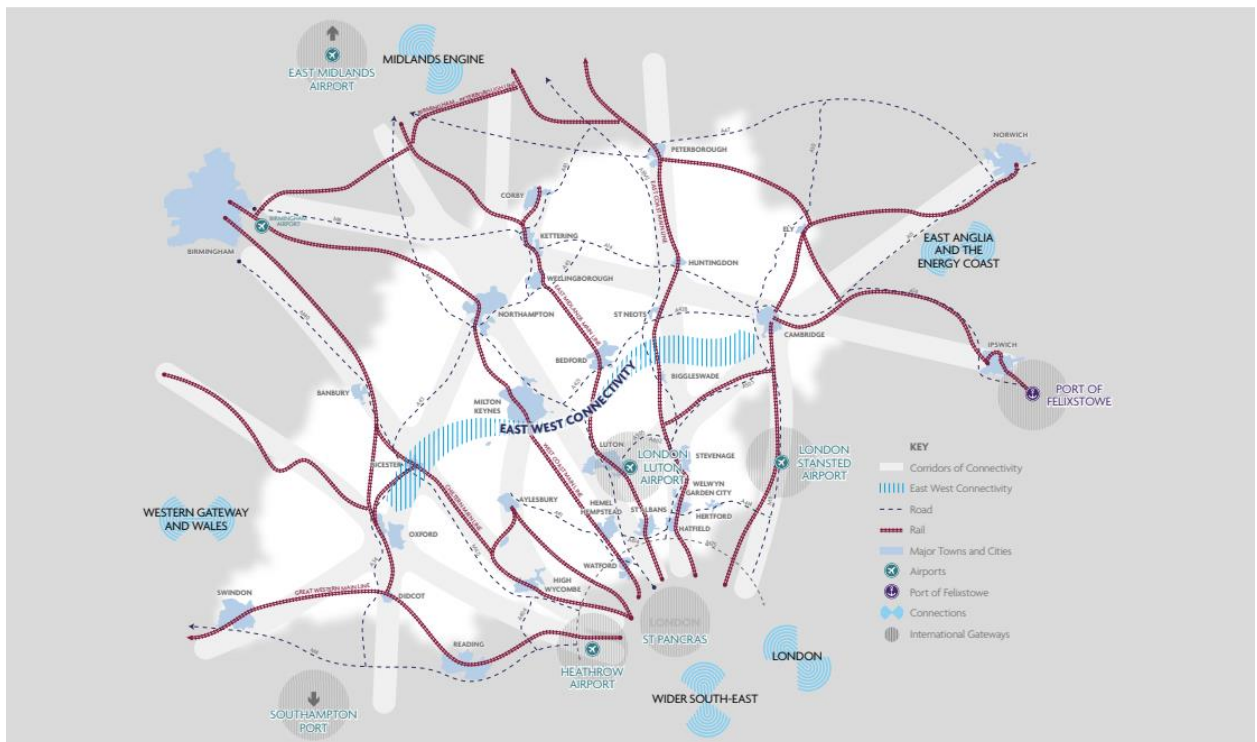
Within the text, rather than as a key point is *“an immediate priority for action – is to deliver an approach that targets bus and coach travel which are responsible for around two-thirds of the region’s journeys by public transport”*. The text also mentions transport hubs, sustainable mass transit, shared modes and solutions that avoid the need for traditional car ownership models

##### 2 - Connecting Places

This section begins with the statement *“Delivering investment in strategic transport corridors will transform travel patterns, improve connectivity and help ensure that the sum of the parts is bigger than individual components”*

It contains perhaps the two most important statements of relevance to Buckinghamshire:

- “Delivery of East West Rail and investment in the strategic road network are key elements of the new multimodal east-west spine across the Heartland region”. The report states that it is “important” (though not “critical”) that the EW Road options are designed to complement the EW Rail option.
- Mention is made of the “Connectivity Study” which Highways England say will guide the choice of the EW Expressway, but which is only at the “identify the need” stage.
- Also of interest to Buckinghamshire:
- Investment in north-south strategic corridors is as vital to our long term economic success
- the Northampton – MK – Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common is “Viewed as being integral to the Transport Strategy”



### 3 - Connecting Opportunities

This section is mostly covered by generic statements but highlights the need for greater connectivity between skills and employment hubs across the region. Silverstone is referenced as a case study in the Strategic Vision on page 12.

- The particular needs of employers specific to places like Bucks is not mentioned
- A supporting map does not include the Aylesbury Enterprise Zone at Westcott Venture Park and huge potential for growth in the space sector and associated industries.
- “Ageing” is mentioned as a key theme to be explored using a Regional Policy Scenario Model.

### 4 - Connecting Services

The report highlights need to continue investment to improve digital connectivity and with emphasis on greater integration with transport infrastructure, future mobility, freight and logistics. The stakeholder commentary in the opening introduction also highlights need to

providing communities with better access to goods and services, open space, leisure, recreation, healthcare and education, reflecting on increasing demands and the need to create more sustainable communities.

#### **4 Conclusions**

The published document provides a good starting point as an outline framework.

In the full Transport Strategy we might wish to see:

- More reference to the areas of greater economic potential and key industry sectors.
- A balanced approach to the idea of a growth Arc that incorporates local views of existing businesses and potential investors.

We might also like to see:

- An overall clearer link between vision, aims, objectives and tasks
- Clarification of what is special about the EEH region and why this requires a separate approach
- Clarification of what local planning and highway authorities are not doing at the moment which would be improved by a regional approach

#### **Board members are asked to:-**

- i. **Note the content of this report, the published Outline Transport Strategy and presentation from EEH.**

#### **References:**

Link to EEH Outline Transport Strategy

<http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Outline%20Transport%20Strategy%20Framework%20for%20Engagement.pdf>