

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board

Title of Report: England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement

Date: 24 September 2019

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Status: Public

Executive Summary and Purpose:

This report summarises progress on development of a Transport Strategy for England’s Economic Heartland, and asks Growth Board to comment on this strategy, and consider the principle of a joint Oxfordshire Authority response to the current engagement exercise on the Outline Transport Strategy.

Recommendations:

1. That Oxfordshire Growth Board notes development of the EEH Transport Strategy, and its content;
2. That Oxfordshire Growth Board provide any comments on the information provided by EEH on the Transport Strategy; and,
3. That Oxfordshire Growth Board supports the principle of a joint Oxfordshire Authority response to the Outline Transport Strategy.

Appendices:

- 1) Update from EEH Business Unit on the Outline Transport Strategy

Introduction:

1. England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) are progressing development of a Transport Strategy. The strategy covers strategic transport matters across the Heartland area (see Appendix A) for the period to 2050, and it is intended that it is agreed as the transport ‘vision’ by the EEH partners. Essentially, this strategy

would be a main component of the 'Connectivity' element of the wider Oxford to Cambridge Arc work programme.

2. An Outline Transport Strategy document has been produced, and this was launched at the annual EEH conference on 16th July 2019. The publication of the Outline Transport Strategy marks the start of the engagement process for the Strategy, with it being intended that the strategy is further developed following this engagement, with more 'formal' consultation planned on the Transport Strategy in 2020.
3. It is important to note that the major regional transport schemes, East West Rail and Expressway are being progressed separately (the latter two as specific schemes by Network Rail and Highways England respectively). Whilst the strategy will give the opportunity to outline how other transport networks and connections can respond and relate to these schemes, this is only part of the outline strategy, which aims to set out a vision and framework for transport and connectivity in the EEH area as a whole.

Draft Outline Transport Strategy:

4. A draft Outline Transport Strategy has been produced in hard copy and published on the EEH website. Key points and content are summarised on the attached update report from the EEH business unit.
5. In summary, the structure includes the following chapters:
 - **Strategic Vision-** focuses on delivery of a zero-carbon transport network by 2050, whilst also achieving the principles of *enabling economic growth*, being *accessible and inclusive*, and ensuring a high *quality of life and environment*.
 - **Connecting people** – this section focuses around enabling 'frictionless travel' for all users of the transport system, including development of improved travel hubs.
 - **Connecting places** -this section focuses on investing in key strategic transport corridors, including the Major Road Network, Strategic Road Network, and Rail, as well as digital infrastructure.
 - **Connecting opportunities-** this section focuses on supporting economic and jobs growth in the EEH area, including reference to addressing the Government Industrial Strategy Four Grand Challenges.
 - **Connecting services-** this section focuses on improving the freight and logistics network, building on the work and recommendations in the EEH freight study.
 - **Investment and Delivery-** these sections focus on the role of partnerships in enabling strategy delivery, developing a 'pipeline' programme of investment, and the potential for strategy performance indicators.

Engagement on strategy and possible joint Oxfordshire Authority response

6. As a core EEH partner, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) are intending on replying directly to the Outline Transport Strategy engagement exercise. This response will include taking into consideration comments received from the Strategic Transport Forum group. A proposed response will be considered by County Council Cabinet on 15th October.
7. There is also the potential to be a joint Oxfordshire Authority response. The joint response can be developed, taking into account officer and member comments received from each authority, and perhaps highlighting areas of focus that are considered should be reviewed and developed further to inform production of the full Transport Strategy. OCC can assist with co-ordinating the response and ensuring that it is submitted to the EEH business unit by the end of October.

Financial Implications

8. The immediate financial implications are focused around officer time for input to the joint response.

Legal Implications

9. There are no known immediate legal implications associated with the Outline Transport Strategy, apart from the need for the appropriate sign-off processes to be undertaken by respective authorities should it be agreed that a joint response to the engagement exercise is produced. However, there may well be legal implications to consider associated with delivery of aspects of the full strategy. These can be reviewed further as the full strategy is developed.

Other Implications

10. Development of any specific transport schemes in the EEH area will have implications that will need careful consideration through their development and/or delivery, including through any relevant statutory processes.
11. There is also the opportunity for development of the full strategy to take into account any other workstreams/ policy development associated with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc more generally, including those on productivity, place-shaping and the environment.

Conclusion

12. This report and attached update from the EEH Business Unit gives an overview on the progress of development and content of a Transport Strategy for the EEH area, and specifically the current engagement process for the Outline Transport Strategy. It is recommended;
 - a) That Oxfordshire Growth Board notes development of the EEH Transport Strategy, and its content;

- b) That Oxfordshire Growth Board provide any comments on the information provided by EEH on the Transport Strategy; and,
- c) That Growth Board considers the principle of a joint Oxfordshire Authority response to the Outline Transport Strategy.

Background Papers

13. Attached to this report is the EEH Business Unit update on the EEH Transport Strategy.

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Appendix A: Englands Economic Heartland Area

