



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

JAMES PALMER
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR

Agenda Item No: 2.9

England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy

To: Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Date: 10 March 2021

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor James Palmer

From: Paul Raynes
Director of Delivery and Strategy

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Recommendations: The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to:

a) Provide advice to the Mayor on the Combined Authority's position in relation to the revised Transport Strategy prepared by England's Economic Heartland (EEH), for him to take into account in attending EEH governance meetings.

Voting arrangements: Simple majority of all Members present and voiting.

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite Members to provide feedback and advise the Mayor (as chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee and representative within the EEH governance) and Board on the Combined Authority’s position in relation to the EEH and its associated Transport Strategy.

2. Background

England’s Economic Heartland: Background

2.1 The EEH is a partnership of Local Transport Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships that covers an area from Swindon and Oxfordshire in the west to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the east. The Combined Authority is not a member of EEH but has Associate Member status.

2.2 Following consultation in autumn 2020, the EEH has produced a revised, final Transport Strategy.

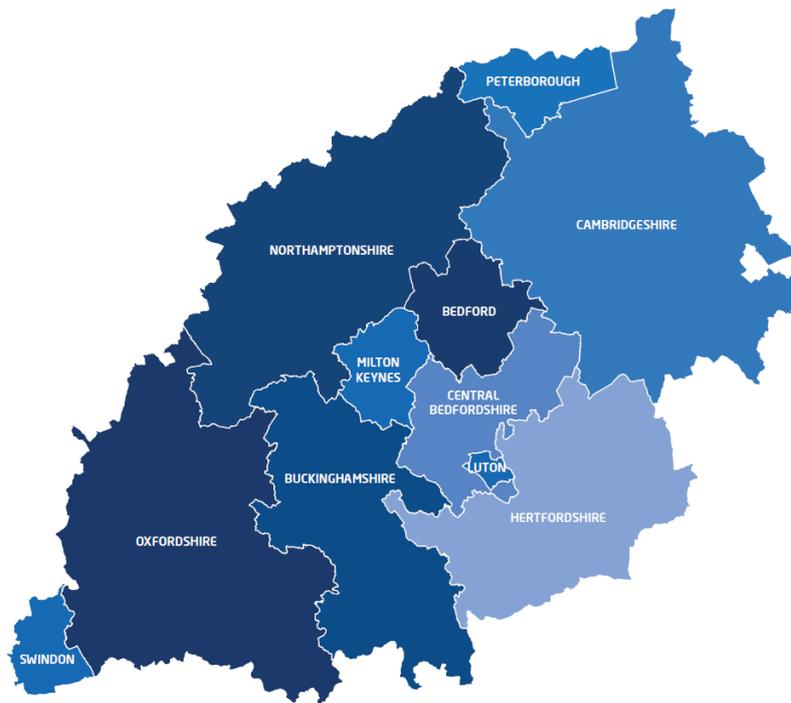


Figure 1: Map showing EEH region

2.3 The EEH’s public consultation ran until 6th October 2020 and covered the draft Transport Strategy, Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Proposal to Establish a Statutory Sub-national Transport Body. The September 2020 Transport and Infrastructure Committee and CA Board agreed the Combined Authority’s response to EEH’s consultation that was submitted in line with the EEH requirements.

EEH Transport Strategy

- 2.4 The final version of the Transport Strategy has now been submitted to the Secretary of State, who has three months in which to decide whether to approve it. If the Secretary of State approves the strategy, it would become a consideration that DfT officials would need to take into account in decision-making - for example, in deciding which schemes to fund. When the EEH's Transport Forum was invited to take a decision to submit the document to DfT, Mayor Palmer said the Combined Authority had not agreed the revised draft and said he would put it to the Combined Authority for a view.
- 2.5 EEH's Transport Strategy broadly aligns with the Combined Authority's priorities set out in the Growth Ambition Statement, Local Transport Plan, and Business Plan, and in several respects has taken on the Combined Authority's view expressed in comments on the consultation draft. The document recognises the importance of strategic transport schemes such as East-West Rail and the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro, and the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail corridor, as well as endorsing the Combined Authority's preferred delivery date for Cambridge South station.
- 2.6 In two areas, however, the post-consultation draft of the strategy does not fully align with the Combined Authority's previous comments.
- 2.7 Firstly, the Authority responded to the EEH's proposals to give EEH formal statutory status by suggesting that would be premature and requesting instead that EEH consider whether it was configured to the right geography. The Combined Authority suggested that EEH ought to be aligned either with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, for which the government aims to develop a formal transport strategy by 2022, or with the geography of the whole transport corridor leading to the East Coast ports. In response, EEH has dropped proposals for statutory status. However, it has not undertaken to consider its geography; and, as an alternative to statutory status, proposed an "operating framework" in which EEH would act as a filter between its members and DfT for major funding bids. This proposal for an "operating framework" has since been withdrawn pending a review.
- 2.8 Secondly, the Combined Authority welcomed the alignment between the draft EEH strategy and our 2050 target for net zero carbon emissions. In its revised form, the strategy sets out an aspiration to meet this target a decade earlier. There is no costed analysis in the strategy of what the implications of accelerating the target might be. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Climate Commission's recommendations will provide the Combined Authority with an evidence base for what is involved in delivering net zero by 2050. Members will want to consider whether it would be appropriate to endorse a new net zero aspiration unsupported by analysis of what that might involve.
- 2.9 In addition, there remains no mention within EEH's Transport Strategy of the doubling nature target as recommended in the CA consultation response.
- 2.10 It is also, of course, highly likely that the evidence base for this Transport Strategy will need to be revisited in the light of the COVID pandemic as the challenges, opportunities, potential solutions, and strategic direction may ultimately require changing to reflect changed travel behaviours which affect demand on the system and network.

- 2.11 A summary of how the revised EEH document reflects the Combined Authority's consultation response is attached at Appendix A.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications; the Combined Authority currently pays a c.£1,000 subscription for Associate Membership of EEH.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations accord with CPCA's powers under Parts 3 and 4 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017 (S1 2017/251).

5. Other Significant Implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – EEH comparison with CPCA's response to consultation

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None