

## **NNGO Beginners' Guide to England's Economic Heartland and its Outline Transport Strategy consultation**

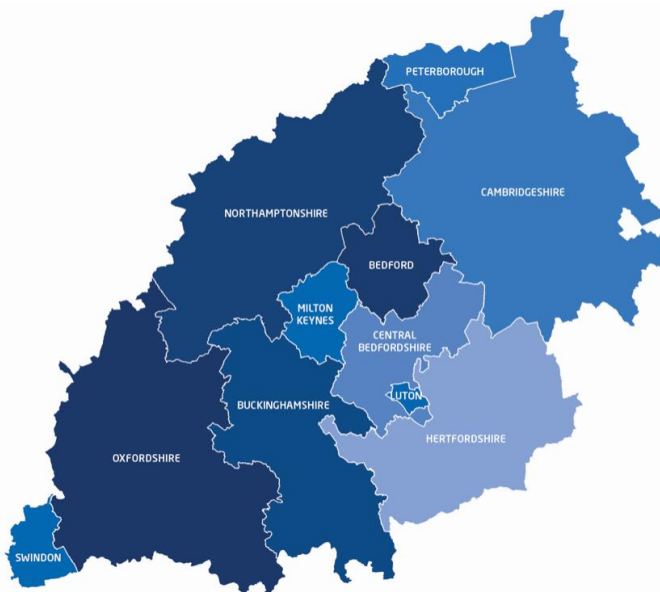
### **What is 'England's Economic Heartland'?**

It is a 'Sub-national Transport Body' (SNTB), with:

- A population of more than 5.1 million;
- 280,000 businesses with 2.7 million employees;
- Gross Value Added of £155 billion; and
- The National Infrastructure Commission says there is the potential to double or triple the size of this economy.

### **Where is the Heartland?**

Broadly, EEH now covers a group of 11 transport authorities (Counties and Unitary authorities, not Districts/Cities). The area includes the 'Arc' from Oxford to Cambridge - plus Swindon and Hertfordshire<sup>1</sup>:



Source: EEH website - <http://www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com/Pages/home.aspx>

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<sup>1</sup> EEH included the 9 Arc Councils initially - Oxfordshire County, Northamptonshire County, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire County, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough, Luton Borough, Cambridgeshire County, Peterborough City. Then Swindon Borough and Hertfordshire County joined later. Also, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is an associate member.

There is also ‘close working with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority<sup>2</sup>, and Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex county councils.’ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are included in the above map, but Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex are not.

## **What is the role of the Heartland?**

They say that:

*‘We provide the region’s voice on strategic infrastructure and services. Our leadership is focused on addressing barriers to realising our potential.*

*• We are the Sub-national Transport Body for the region. Our overarching Transport Strategy will be a 30-year strategic vision for our transport system that puts the needs of businesses and individuals at the forefront of investment decisions*

*• Our work on wider strategic infrastructure is focused on making sure investment in transport, digital and utilities infrastructure is ‘joined up’*

*• Our work with our delivery partners is focused on identifying investment priorities, getting the funding secured and then delivering improvements to budget and on-time.*

## **Who is represented on the governing body?**

The EEH SNTB is responsible for preparing the Regional Transport Strategy. There are similar SNTB’s for the whole of England. EEH’s governing body consists of:

- Elected politicians from EEH's member authorities;
- Representatives from 3 (of 5 possible) local enterprise partnerships<sup>3</sup>;
- 6 Sundry others<sup>4</sup>; and
- A bus operators association with ten members<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is a result of a devolution of powers agreement, granted by central government, to those two authorities specifically. They have an elected mayor. See: <http://cambspboroca.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Oxfordshire LEP, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP and South East Midlands LEP. The Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and Hertfordshire LEPs have been invited to join.

<sup>4</sup> Sundry others include the Oxfordshire Growth Board, the Central Growth Board, the Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail, the Transport Systems Catapult and EEH’s Bus Operators Association.

<sup>5</sup> Arriva, Carousel buses, Centrebus, City Sightseeing (Oxford), Go South Coast, Grant Palmer, Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach, Thames Travel and UNO Bus.

## Private sector partners?

EEH also has a number of private-sector 'delivery partners'. Initially these were Kier, WSP, Jacobs, Ringway Jacobs, Skanska and Volker Fitzpatrick, but they have now been joined by Atkins. These provide a very wide range of services including Construction, Development, Engineering, Professional, Property and Transport. They all provide services and works for one or more of the Councils.

## What about their meetings?

The Forum meets regularly, in public, with its agenda, minutes and reports available online. Members of the public are able to address the Forum.

The EEH has so far held 18 meetings, starting in February 2016 (4 in 2016, 5 in 2017, 5 in 2018 and 4 in 2019). Two more meetings are planned in 2019, on 27 September and 22 November. Recent and planned meetings are held at Bedford Borough Council.

Items considered in July 2019 included Public questions, Agreeing the major road network 5-year programme, Freight topic paper, East-West rail, Response to proposal for Transport for the SE to be a an SNTB, Outline Transport Strategy and finally a Business Unit update.

## Summary and Consultation...

So, the structure and composition of the EEH SNTB is somewhat complicated and it has evolved over time.

However, at a conference on 16 July 2019, EEH released for consultation a document called '*Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement*'. The deadline for comment is **6pm on 31 October 2019** (AKA 'do or die' Brexit day, or Halloween). Respond to: [engagement@englandseconomicheartland.com](mailto:engagement@englandseconomicheartland.com)

The Strategy has:

- 21 questions in 7 sections, each one under the headings 'What do you think'.
- Four single-page 'future visions' pictures for comment. The future visions are '*Striking visual images designed to encourage debate on how the future might look*'. The Four visions cover - High Street; New Housing Development; Business Park; and Rural Setting.
- Two of the maps also ask for comment.

Our understanding is that a further consultation on a more detailed strategy will follow in Spring/Summer 2020.