ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement

A special supplement marking the launch of England's Economic Heartland's Outline Transport Strategy

ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

The Heartland is one of the most exciting economic opportunities in Europe: an internationally renowned hub for science, technology and research – a region that has innovation at its heart.

Stretching from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire down to Hertfordshire, the Heartland has a population of more than five million, with its 280,000 businesses employing 2.5 million people. It is a net contributor to the Treasury, with an economy currently valued at more than £150bn per annum.

Across the Heartland economic growth has brought with it increased pressure on transport infrastructure and services: incidents quickly result in disruption, demonstrating how unreliability and a lack of resilience impact on the productivity of businesses.

At the same time the last 10 years have seen significant changes to the transport system, with the growth in user focused services driven by the rise of smart phone apps enabling greater choice for some. However, there are others who have seen a reduction in their travel options, particularly in more rural areas.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

England's Economic Heartland is a strategic collaborative partnership. It was established in autumn 2014 by the political leadership who had a shared ambition to realise the region's economic potential.

The partnership is recognition that:

- Strategic infrastructure (and solutions) extend beyond any one single area
- Issues that are common to one or more areas can benefit from a co-ordinated response
- There was and continues to be a need for stronger integration of investment by Government, its agencies, local authorities, as well as infrastructure and service providers.

England's Economic Heartland's Strategic Transport Forum was established in February 2016 as the region's Sub-national Transport Body. The Forum brings together the region's Local Transport Authorities, together with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and partners, to provide leadership on issues of genuinely strategic importance and to speak with one voice to the Government and its agencies.

As the Sub-national Transport Body, the Forum is responsible for preparing the overarching Transport Strategy for the region. This will provide the long-term framework for investment in strategic infrastructure and services for the period to 2050. This investment – by both the public and private sectors – will be central to ensuring improved connectivity helps individuals, communities and businesses realise their potential.

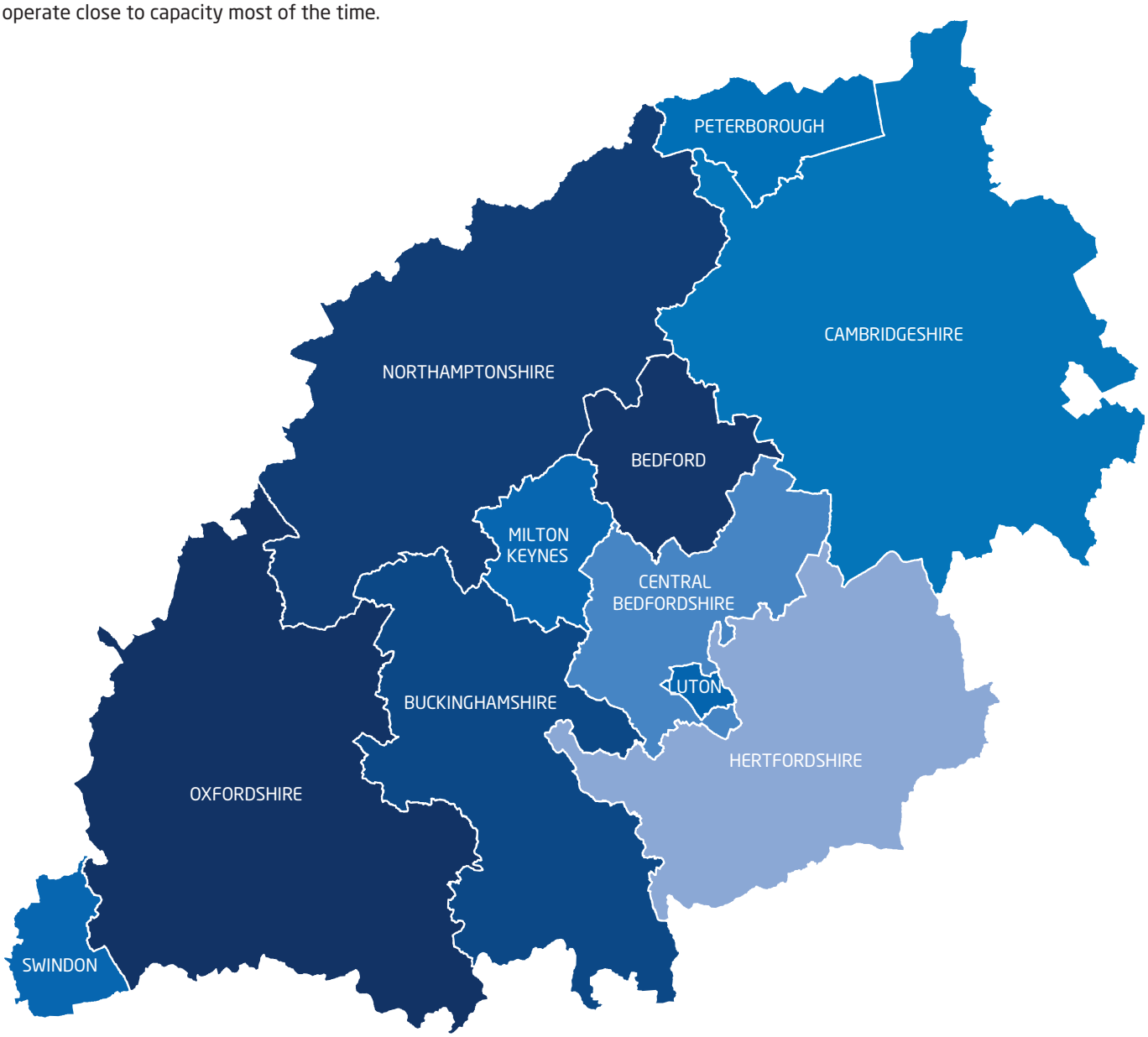
A REGION OF OPPORTUNITY

The economic importance of the region, recognised by the National Infrastructure Commission, and its position at the heart of the UK's knowledge economy, is a reflection of the concentration of world leading research facilities, internationally significant business clusters, its track record in innovation and entrepreneurship, and the skills of its workforce.

As a result, the region's economic performance has been consistently performing above national standards for some time. The success has been without the levels of investment in infrastructure and services needed to ensure growth is sustainable in the long term. As a consequence, pressures on the region's transport, digital and wider infrastructure networks have continued to grow to the point where they operate close to capacity most of the time.

The Heartland's success to date provides the foundation on which to grow the region's economy further, to the benefit of residents, communities and the UK economy as a whole. It is an ambition that is shared by the partners locally and Government, which has identified the region as a national economic priority.

Realising growth on a scale that is truly transformational requires a new approach: one that is inclusive and enables existing residents and communities to realise their potential, in ways that respects the quality of the region's environment – natural and built, urban and rural.



A USER-CENTRED TRANSPORT SYSTEM

To realise the ambitions for the region, the transport system must have the needs of people and businesses at its core – offering high quality, tailored and sustainable journeys which integrate seamlessly with longer distance modes: in short a model of frictionless travel.

We need to increase travel choice for the user, capturing the existing and untapped journey opportunities that exist across the region, which until now have only been able to be made by car. We need to capture the values and quality of life ambitions of our residents. And we need to use these values as a catalyst for the change required that will ensure the region delivers on its environmental ambitions.

And in seeking to achieve a genuinely inclusive transport system, we need to give priority to identifying and then removing physical, cultural and digital barriers. In doing so we need to recognise that individuals have a range of visible and invisible needs, and that through our Transport Strategy we must empower everyone to access opportunities that enable them to realise their potential.

A VISION FOR CHANGE

The National Infrastructure Commission warned that the region's continued economic success must not be taken for granted. It went on to stress the importance of investing in improved connectivity as a means of enabling individuals, communities and businesses to realise their potential.

Realising the economic opportunities that exist across the region in a way that delivers net environmental gain will require a new approach – 'business as usual' will not deliver our ambition.

And so our vision for the region is:

'Connecting people and places with opportunities and services'

And we believe that as a minimum, the region should set itself the ambition for its transport system to be zero-carbon by 2050.

THE OUTLINE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

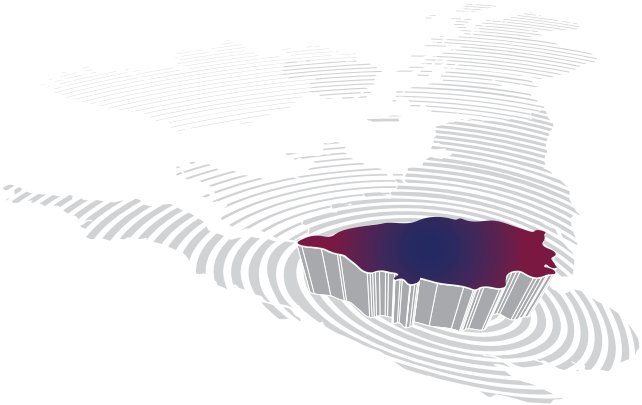
This vision and its associated ambition are at the heart of England's Economic Heartland's Outline Transport Strategy, published on July 16. It marks the start of a conversation with the Heartland's people and businesses that will help shape the development of detailed policies and proposals.

It sets out three key principles that flow from the vision and related ambition:

- Enabling economic growth – ensuring that the delivery of planned economic and housing growth is realised through co-ordinated investment in infrastructure and services, doing so in a way that encourages innovation and smarter use of existing assets
- Accessibility and Inclusion – ensuring that we actively encourage the development of a transport system that provides residents and businesses with attractive, affordable and reliable travel choices
- Quality of life and environment – ensuring that our approach to investment improves the general well-being of our people and communities, unlocking in the process opportunities for them to lead healthier, more fulfilling and prosperous lives. Future growth must be used as an opportunity to deliver environmental net gain, as embodied by the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan.

And in terms of drivers of change the Outline Transport Strategy draws on the Government's Industrial Strategy which identifies four Grand Challenges:

- Artificial Intelligence and Data
- An Ageing Society
- Clean Growth
- The Future of Mobility



PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE

The Outline Transport Strategy invites people and businesses to consider how these trends will impact on both the scale and nature of future travel demand. They also represent opportunities to harness the benefit of economic growth to develop new business models that have the potential to make a significant contribution towards delivering on our ambition for a zero-carbon transport system by 2050.

As a document seeking to engage our people and businesses in a debate on the future of transport, the Outline Transport Strategy includes a series of specially commissioned perspectives on how scenes that are familiar across the region might be transformed in the future. Included to promote debate and discussion, these perspectives seek to stimulate thoughts that will help develop a series of plausible future scenarios.

The default, and sometimes only way of commuting to business parks is often by car, leading to vast areas of space given up for parking. What if we can reduce reliance on commuting by car? And how should we best utilise the space that's been reclaimed from the car parks?

The challenges facing our High Streets are well documented. What role can the transport system play in rejuvenating town centres by offering safer, greener and more attractive places for people to enjoy, ensuring High Streets remain a central hub for urban communities?

REGIONAL EVIDENCE BASE

Our approach to investment needs to be more flexible. Traditional approaches to the planning, development and delivery of investment are increasingly too slow when it comes to delivering solutions that meet user expectations, which are themselves continuing to evolve.

And so whilst our work needs to be grounded in an understanding of where we start from, we have at the same time been developing a suite of tools that enable us to assess the relative implications of those plausible future scenarios. For underpinning the Outline Transport Strategy is the need to adopt a new paradigm – 'decide and provide'.

Our work to put in place the Regional Database gives – for the first time – a single overview of what is currently planned for the region. The development of our Regional Policy Scenario Model builds on this database and give us the capability – again for the first time – to explore the relative impact of different scenarios.

At the same time, our work on the 'first mile/last mile' of journeys is developing a set of personas that will allow us to exploit the potential of the Policy Scenario Model to consider the implications of policy choices targeted at achieving modal shift.

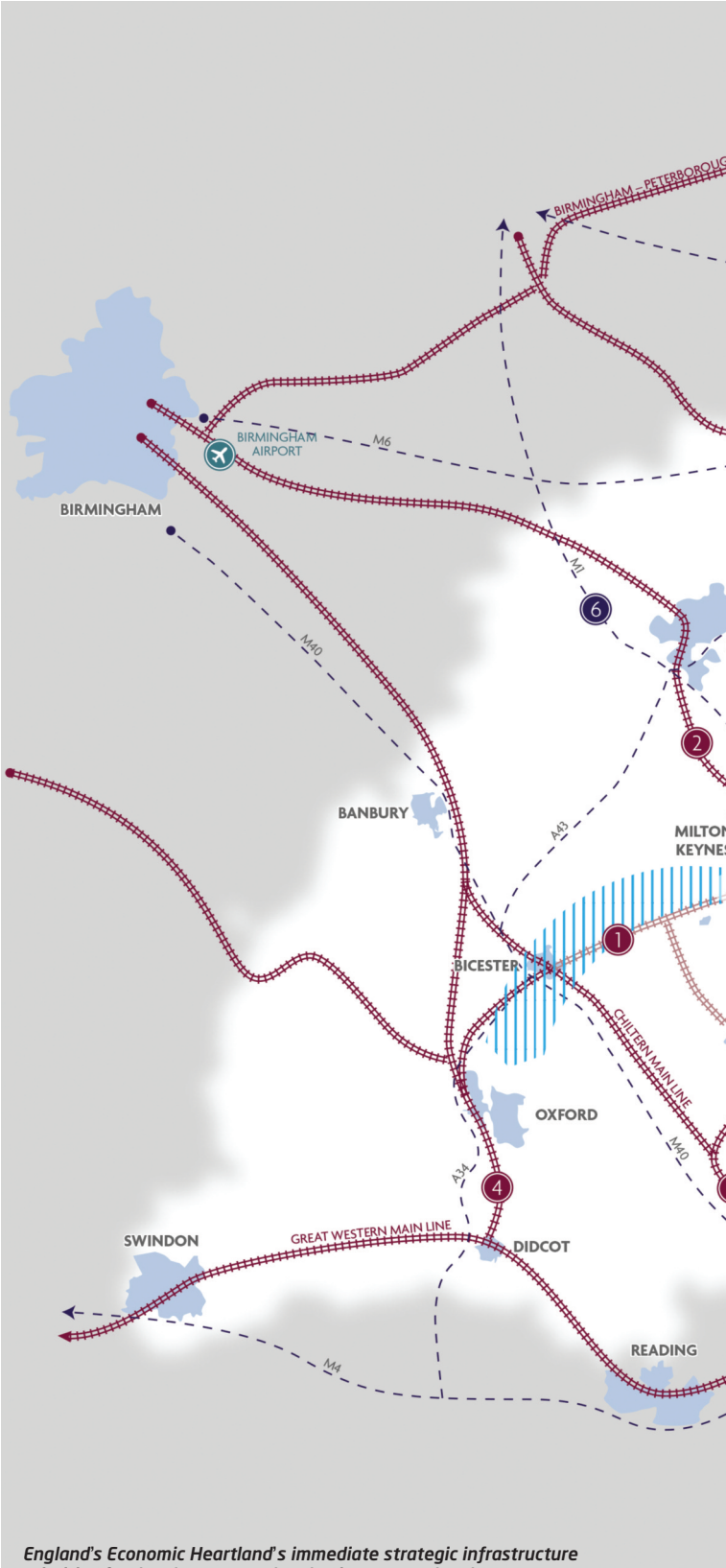
The fact that the tools developed at the regional level are automatically available to all of the local partners helps ensure a consistent understanding of the baseline scenario, whilst allowing local partners to explore the detail of the solutions required to effect change.

THE NEED FOR INVESTMENT

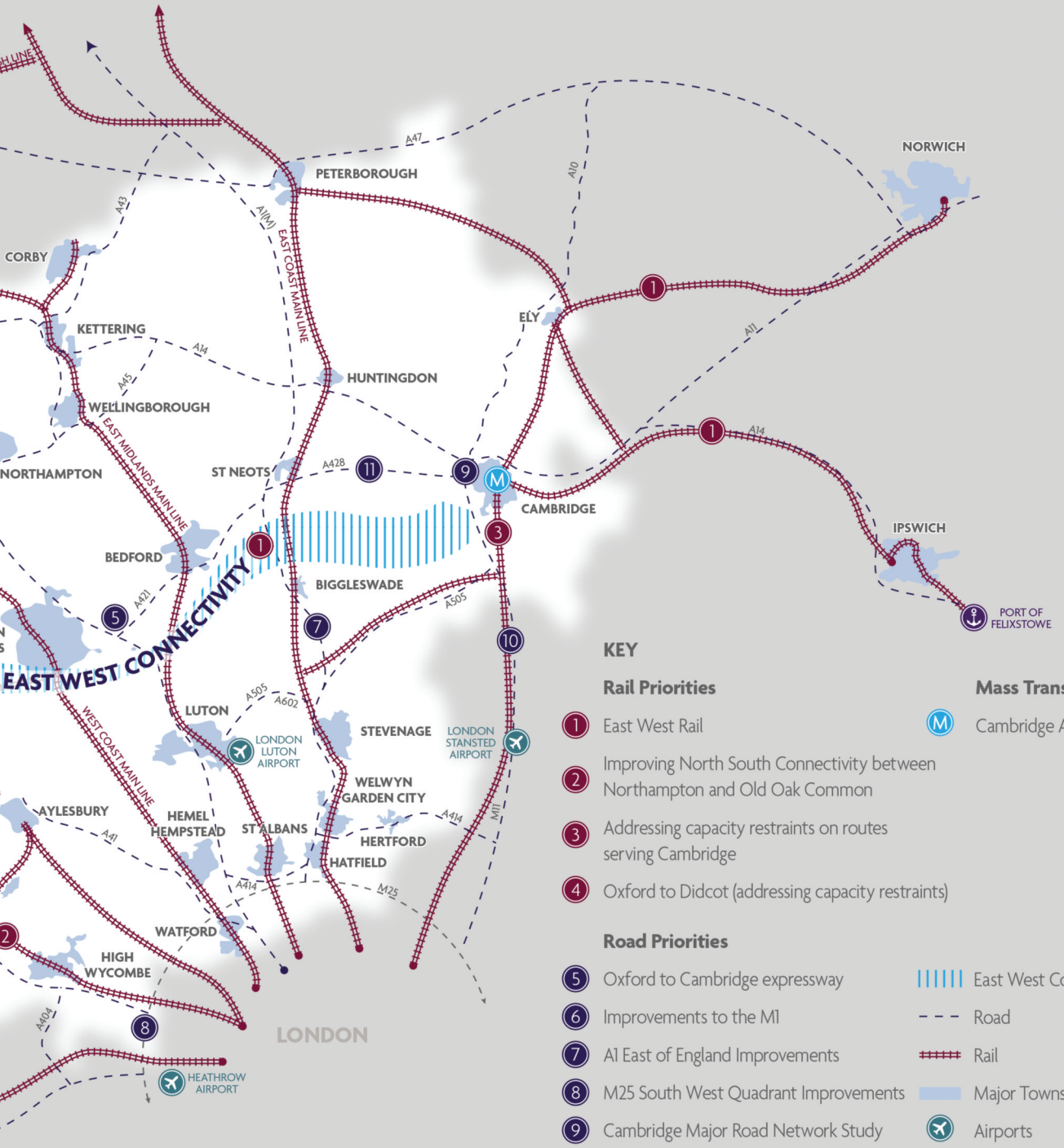
It is important to recognise that the scale of the economic opportunity across the Heartland is such that there will continue to be a need for continued investment in additional strategic infrastructure and services.

Investment in improved east-west connectivity – in particular East West Rail – together with investment in north-south connectivity – harnessing the opportunities created by the completion of HS2 – will help transform our socio-economic geography. What is currently a series of discrete housing and functional economic areas will increasingly become one. Investment proposals like the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) will help transform the transport offer to the benefit of both existing and future users.

Investing in improved connectivity will play a key role in widening labour markets and supporting new opportunities for economic growth. In this way we will realise increased economic capacity within our employment hubs, increased levels of interaction and integration across the region, and improved affordability of business and residential space.



England's Economic Heartland's immediate strategic infrastructure priorities for development and/ or business case development



KEY

Rail Priorities

1. East West Rail
2. Improving North South Connectivity between Northampton and Old Oak Common
3. Addressing capacity restraints on routes serving Cambridge
4. Oxford to Didcot (addressing capacity restraints)

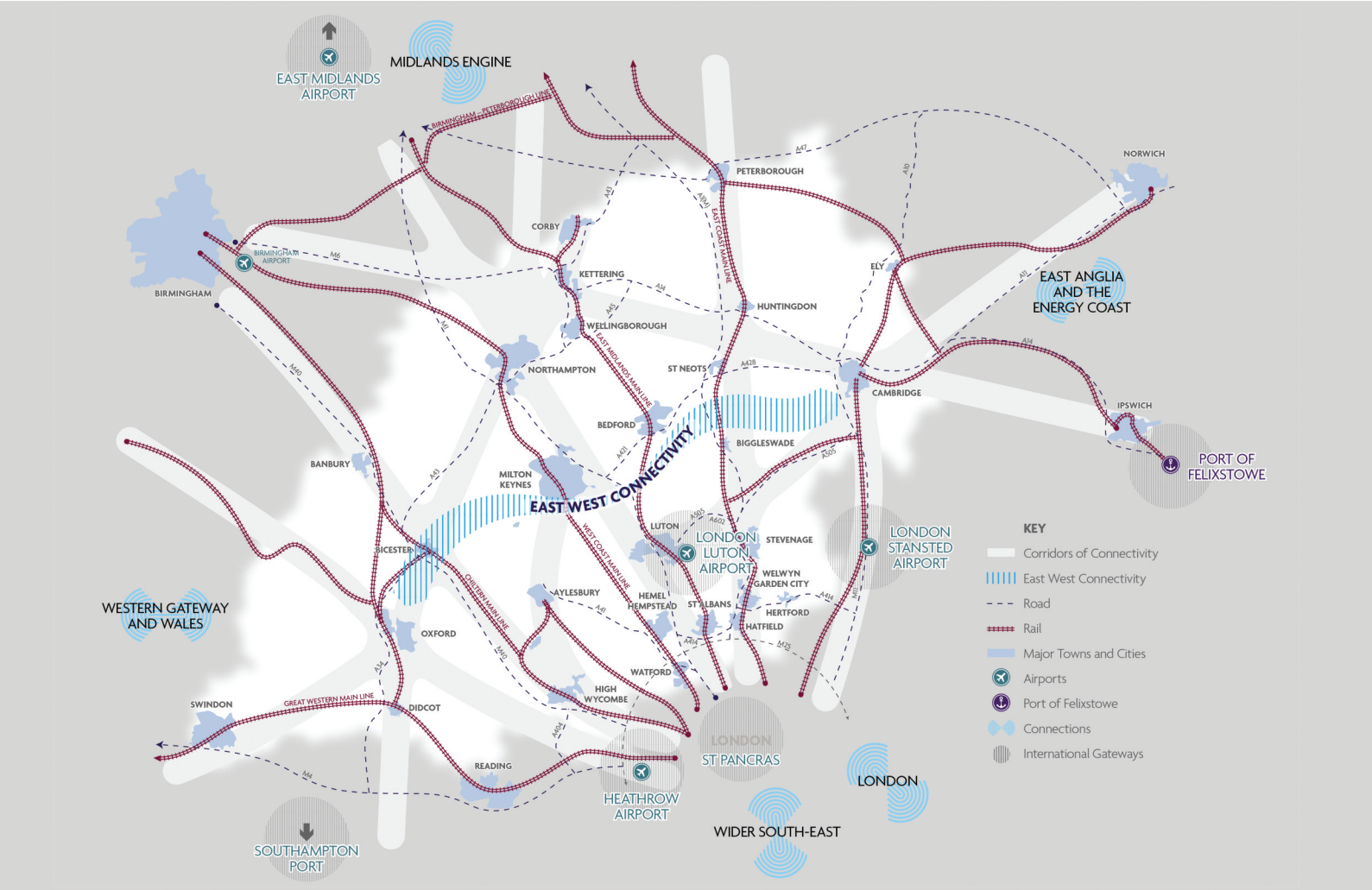
Mass Transit

- Cambridge Autonomous Metro

Road Priorities

5. Oxford to Cambridge expressway
6. Improvements to the M1
7. A1 East of England Improvements
8. M25 South West Quadrant Improvements
9. Cambridge Major Road Network Study
10. Improvements to the M11
11. Improving Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

- East West Connectivity
- Road
- Rail
- Major Towns and Cities
- Airports
- Port of Felixstowe



WIDER LINKAGES

The Outline Transport Strategy also acknowledges that the Heartland does not sit in isolation with other high performing regions of England: it is central to them. As part of the wider South East the region has strong connections with London, whilst Swindon is the gateway to opportunities further along the Great Western corridor. Connectivity to the east links the region to one of the UK's premier ports, Felixstowe, and the innovation of the Energy Coast, whilst Northamptonshire is a gateway to the Midlands Engine and beyond that the Northern Powerhouse.

Improved access to international gateways – including Heathrow and the Port of Southampton – will therefore be key priorities moving forward.

Published alongside the Outline Transport Strategy, our review of future freight and logistics opportunities forms a key part of the evidence base on which we'll draw as we develop the detailed policies and proposals.

OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Investment in strategic transport infrastructure and services is an enabling investment – it is necessary in order to enable a successful economy, one that provides individuals and businesses with the opportunity to realise their potential. Ultimately that means ensuring that our investment delivers a transport system that:

- Supports economic success – both in terms of improving productivity of existing businesses and growth in the overall size of the economy
- Enables the delivery of growth – to meet the needs of current communities and future growth

And we will need to ensure that it does so in a way that contributes to:

- Delivering net environmental gain to the region as a whole
- Improving the life chances and opportunities of our residents, no matter what their circumstances.

A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY

The Outline Transport Strategy seeks the views of our people and businesses as to what they want from their transport system in the future.

The way forward cannot be 'business as usual'. But for a region renowned for its cutting edge science and technology-led innovation we have the potential to develop new business models that improve connectivity, support economic growth and deliver net environmental gain.

The choices we face are not going to be easy: which is why the views of our people and businesses - and the wider transport sector - are so important at this stage in the process.

The full Outline Transport Strategy is available via the EEH website: **www.englandseconomicheartland.com** and the engagement period runs through to the **31st October**.

Responses can be emailed to:
engagement@englandseconomicheartland.com

VISION 2050 COMPETITION

Vision 2050, a 'competition' for students, post graduates and professionals in the earlier stages of their careers, is encouraging a fresh perspective on the region's transport system.

Students and people who have more recently embarked on their careers are being invited to submit up to 500 words on how the transport system should fulfil EEH's vision of 'connecting people and places with opportunities and services' up to 2050.

Entries should relate back to the three priority principles which underpin the strategy: economic growth; accessibility and inclusion; and quality of life and environment. Submissions may wish to give a broad overview of the future transport system, or focus on a single element, mode or priority principle.

For more information see:
http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/vision-2050-competition.aspx

HAVE YOUR SAY

Within the Outline Transport Strategy we've listed a number of questions at the end of every chapter. These are things we're particularly interested in hearing people's thoughts on – so please tell us what you think by emailing:
engagement@englandseconomicheartland.com

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