

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 7 March 2023

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Transport for the South East's final Strategic Investment Plan

**Purpose:** To seek Cabinet's approval of the final Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan prior to its adoption in March 2023

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cabinet is recommended to agree:

- 1) to support Transport for the South East's (TfSE) final draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP); and
  - 2) as a constituent authority, to TfSE's Partnership Board signing off the final SIP in March 2023 and submitting to Government in Spring 2023
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## 1 Background

1.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for the South East of England. Established in 2017, TfSE is made up of 16 local transport authorities (including Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Portsmouth, Southampton, Surrey, and West Sussex and the six unitary authorities of Berkshire) five local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) plus representatives of district & borough authorities, protected landscapes, and national delivery agencies such as Network Rail and National Highways (formerly Highways England).

1.2 Its purpose is to determine the transport infrastructure needs required to boost the region's economy and to communicate these priorities and the case for investment in the South East with 'one voice' to Government.

### TfSE Transport Strategy

1.3 The work of TfSE was launched with an initial focus on the development of an ambitious Transport Strategy. The County Council alongside other local authorities and key partners were critical in providing input into the development of this and it was published in summer 2020 - [TfSE-transport-strategy-Summary-Document.pdf \(transportforthesoutheast.org.uk\)](https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TfSE-transport-strategy-Summary-Documents.pdf).

1.4 The Strategy sets out a shared vision for a 'better connected, more prosperous and a more sustainable South East by 2050'. The vision is underpinned by three strategic goals:

- Environment – protect and enhance the South East's unique natural and historic environment including reducing carbon emission to net zero by 2050 at the latest,
- Social – improve health, safety, wellbeing, quality of life and access to opportunities for everyone; and
- Economic – improve productivity and attract investment to grow our economy and better compete in the global marketplace.

### Development of draft Strategic Investment Plan

1.5 Following the adoption of their Transport Strategy, TfSE undertook a series of geographic based studies focussed on the most important economic corridors in the region alongside several thematic studies relating to Decarbonisation, Levelling Up, Rail, Bus Mass Transit & Shared Mobility, Strategic Active Travel & Micromobility and Highways.

1.6 The outcome of the area studies and thematic studies supported the identification of the transport interventions in specific areas of the TfSE geography and global policy initiatives formed the basis for the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP provides a framework for delivering the TfSE Transport Strategy by outlining the structure for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services and regulatory interventions to 2050. Once adopted the SIP, underpinned by a robust evidence base, will provide advice to the Secretary of State for Transport on the investment priorities across the TfSE geography.

1.7 The draft SIP is supported by eight investment priorities. These comprise four high level 'policy-based investment priorities – 'Decarbonisation & Environment; Adapting to a new normal; Levelling up left behind communities, and Regeneration & Growth' - alongside four 'transport related investment priorities - World class urban transport systems; Transforming east- west connectivity; Resilient radial corridors and Global gateways and freight'.

1.8 The draft SIP outlines two types of investment packages. Firstly, the global policy interventions package which consist of national regulatory and policy activity which will be delivered across the South East and secondly place-based packages of multi modal (highways, rail, mass transit/bus, active travel) interventions. A summary of the SIP in relation to East Sussex is at Appendix 1.

#### SIP's Strategic Fit with Council Priorities

1.9 The SIP will be at the forefront of taking positive action to support several current and long-term challenges and opportunities including climate change, economic recovery and growth alongside supporting improvements to quality of life, health and wellbeing. This will provide opportunities and benefits to businesses and residents in East Sussex and the south-east, both immediately and in medium / long term future.

1.10 It will align with the County Councils' four core priorities alongside the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP4), the Environment Plan, the East Sussex Climate Emergency Plan, the East Sussex Whole System Healthy Weight Plan, the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the East Sussex Economic Strategy, as well as the District & Borough Local Plans.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 TfSE undertook a 12-week public consultation on their draft SIP between 20 June and 12 September 2022. As a constituent authority, the County Council's formal response to the consultation was approved by Cabinet on 27 September 2022. A copy of the September 2022 Cabinet report, including our response to the formal consultation on the draft SIP, is at Appendix 2.

#### TfSE's revised Strategic Investment Plan

2.2 Following the consultation, TfSE have updated and amended the draft SIP which was approved by their Partnership Board on 14 November 2022. The changes to the draft SIP, a number of which reflect our consultation response, include:

- providing more context on the purpose of the SIP and importantly, what the SIP won't do;
- providing clarity that the financial ask of the SIP is above and beyond the funding that Local Transport Authorities already receive;
- asserting the need to ensure that public transport provision returns to the quality of provision prior to the covid pandemic;
- updating the investment priorities section to reflect feedback on the priorities;
- strengthening the focus on decarbonisation and the environment throughout the document, including making it clearer that addressing climate change is a main aim of the SIP;
- providing greater recognition of the importance of strategic active travel and mass transit;
- clarifying that highways are multi-modal assets, supporting active travel and mass transit interventions as well as freight movements;
- amending the narrative regarding coastal areas to reflect the challenges that transport can help address and the opportunities that it can unlock;
- strengthening the narrative around key priorities that support health and wellbeing;
- recognising the current financial situation, the funding and finance section has been updated to reflect that the SIP is a live document and costs will need to be updated as individual schemes are taken forward;
- clarifying that transition of freight to rail will not be of detriment to passenger services;
- changing and clarifying information on proposed interventions to reflect comments received; and
- updating the delivery stages and next steps of the SIP to set out how the SIP will be implemented, delivered and monitored.

2.3 In addition, some comments received by TfSE in response to the consultation related to the evidence base documentation. These documents will be updated to reflect key comments and included on the TfSE website alongside the publication of the final SIP in March 2023.

## Support for TfSE's draft final Strategic Investment Plan

2.4 At its meeting on 14 November 2022, TfSE's Partnership Board resolved that constituent authorities be asked to agree the final SIP prior to its final consideration by the Partnership Board in March 2023 and submission to Government in spring 2023.

2.5 Overall we continue to be supportive of TfSE's SIP which has been developed utilising a robust technical evidence base. As one of TfSE's constituent authorities, we have had a key role in supporting its development from the outset providing input into the development of their Transport Strategy and more recently the various area and modal studies that have informed the SIP's development. In doing so, we have made the case for the inclusion of multi-modal interventions which will provide significant economic and regeneration benefits to our communities and places, and our East Sussex residents, businesses, and visitors.

2.6 Therefore, we agree that the draft final SIP makes the best case possible for investing in multi-modal transport infrastructure in the respective area packages covering East Sussex and the wider South East. The SIP's evidence base will be used to help shape the current review of our Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the draft final SIP's interventions will need to be reflected in the LTP4 Strategy and Implementation Plan.

2.7 We continue to agree that the eight SIP's investment priorities are all important either combined or individually. In addition, we agree that the four policy-based investment priorities will be critical for both the region and East Sussex in supporting the delivery of sustainable economic growth, and the greater urgency and emphasis of the 'Decarbonisation & Environment and Levelling Up' priorities from the outset.

2.8 We are fully supportive of the three place-based packages of multi-modal interventions for the Solent and Sussex Coast, London to Sussex and Kent, Medway & East Sussex areas, which reflect the individual long term transport infrastructure requirements of each area. We agree that the proposed interventions in the county, which remain unchanged following the consultation, will deliver the priorities of the SIP. We also welcome the benefits that each package will provide to the given area, and East Sussex as a whole, in terms of:

- unlocking opportunities for active travel to support greater social inclusion, health, and wellbeing
- enabling multi-modal improvements across our bus and rail networks;
- strengthening local connections within and between our communities and strategic connectivity to the wider region taking account of the different journey types undertaken (e.g. rural – urban; rural – rural; intra-urban, inter-urban, local)
- supporting wider strategies to level up and address the multiple deprivation issues especially in our coastal communities; and
- the resilience of the strategic and local highway network.

2.9 We also continue to agree with the global interventions identified in the SIP. These possess a level of importance which cuts across the eight investment priorities, and that these will be critical in enabling change in order to potentially support a faster pace of delivery in achieving the strategy's vision and the SIP's potential outcomes.

## **3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

3.1 The transport and global policy interventions identified in the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan will deliver significant change in the County and support our key priorities specifically the levelling up of our communities who are most at need and importantly accelerate the delivery of the decarbonisation of transport. This will support greater strategic connectivity and resilience of our networks across the county and unlock opportunities for localised transport measures for public transport and active travel to support greater social inclusion, health, and wellbeing. The TfSE Strategy and SIP will also support policy development and the identification of strategic transport interventions as part of the current review of our Local Transport Plan, which is currently underway.

3.2 Following consultation in summer 2022, TfSE have revised their draft SIP and are seeking the constituent authorities consent to sign off the SIP in March 2023. Overall, the County Council is supportive of TfSE's draft final SIP which has been amended to reflect some of the comments we made in our consultation response and makes the best case possible for long term investment in multi-modal transport infrastructure in East Sussex to support our local and TfSE's priorities. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Council agree to support TfSE's draft final SIP and, as

a constituent authority, agree to TfSE's Partnership Board signing off the final SIP at its March 2023 meeting prior to submission to Government in Spring 2023.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

**Director Communities Economy and Transport**

Contact Officer: Jon Wheeler

Tel. No: 01273 482212 / 07919 298435

Email: jon.wheeler@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS