

## **Report to Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**September 2022**

### **Response to the Consultation by Transport for the South East on a Draft Strategic Investment Plan**

#### **Report by Matt Davey, Assistant Director of Highways, Transport and Planning**

**Electoral division(s): All**

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#### **Summary**

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the sub-national transport body, currently operating in shadow form, that covers Berkshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, and West Sussex. TfSE has prepared a Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), the key purpose of which is to provide a framework to deliver its Transport Strategy for the South East, which was adopted in 2020.

The Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) (Executive Summary included as Appendix B) has been published for consultation with constituent authorities, including the County Council and wider stakeholders, between July and 12 September 2022. It includes 24 packages of interventions across the South East that have been developed through area studies involving a range of stakeholders, including the County Council. Once finalised, the SIP will inform future decision-making by the County Council and other key stakeholders.

Overall, it is recommended that the County Council should welcome the Draft SIP because it will help to ensure there is a more coordinated and strategic approach to regional investment in the transport network and because it aligns well with the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-36. However, the following key points have been identified in the consultation response (attached as Appendix A):

- dependencies between packages and projects are not adequately highlighted in the SIP. The desired outcomes of various projects can only be achieved by the delivery of multi-modal infrastructure and services, and so these should be more clearly articulated.
- although the road user charging global intervention is seen as a possible approach to anticipated changes to future fuel sources, it may be premature to present it as a deliverable intervention. Engagement on road user charging should take account of the needs of different users, including those in rural communities who could be disproportionately affected by a road user charging scheme due to having a greater reliance on private road-based transport.

- the active travel packages are inconsistent as some are specifically named routes, while others are grouped together. The Sussex Coast Active Travel package should be disaggregated into a set of local cycleways and inter-urban connectors in line with other areas.
- the ratio of annual maintenance and renewal costs to capital cost for the active travel package is extremely high and is likely to be unaffordable based on current financial arrangements. If future maintenance is likely to be unaffordable, then there will be a need to prioritise.
- there are concerns about the deliverability of elements of the packages, including schemes such as a large-scale improvement to the A27 at Worthing and Lancing given a long history of failure to deliver such improvements.
- a stronger focus needs to be placed on the needs and delivery in rural areas, with greater attention placed on the needs of rural users with a clearer understanding of the appropriate interventions to deal with their specific needs.
- the A24 should be highlighted as a route to improve north-south movement corridor resilience.
- references to rural bus services as 'mass transit' creates the wrong impression and expectations and should be replaced by a more accurate description of the intervention envisaged or identified.

## **Recommendation**

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approves the County Council's Consultation Response (Appendix A) for submission to Transport for the South East.

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## **Proposal**

### **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the sub-national transport body, currently operating in shadow form, that covers Berkshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, and West Sussex. It has the twin purposes of facilitating the delivery of a regional transport strategy and promoting economic growth in the South East.
- 1.2 In 2020, TfSE approved a Transport Strategy for the South East, which aims to shape the South East as a region economically, technologically and environmentally over the next 30 years, and change the way that investment is made in transport. TfSE has subsequently prepared two thematic strategies (on Future Mobility and Freight, Logistics and Gateways) and five area studies covering all parts of the region. The area studies have identified and appraised potential strategic transport interventions (i.e. rail, highways, mass transit and active travel) that have been included in packages of interventions. As the area studies are strategic, they do not cover every local issue as there are other programmes for this, including the County Council's own investment programmes.

- 1.3 This technical work has informed the development of a Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) (Appendix B is the Executive Summary) setting out a series of investment opportunities for Government, Local Transport Authorities and transport providers to consider investing in. Once finalised, the SIP will inform future decision-making by the County Council and other key stakeholders.
- 1.4 The Draft SIP is being published for consultation with constituent authorities, including the County Council and wider stakeholders, between July and 12 September 2022.

## **2 Draft Strategic Investment Plan for the South East**

- 2.1 The purpose of the SIP is to provide a framework for delivering the Transport Strategy for the South East. The Draft SIP aims to achieve the following investment priorities that are aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the Transport Strategy and the wider regional and national policy context:
  - a) Decarbonisation and the environment (i.e. enabling the UK to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050);
  - b) Adapting to a new normal (i.e. adapting sustainably to changing travel patterns);
  - c) Levelling up left-behind communities (i.e. providing a transport network that is more accessible and inclusive and supports access to employment, leisure and services);
  - d) Regeneration and growth (i.e. grow the economy and unlock regeneration and growth opportunities);
  - e) World class urban transport systems (i.e. deliver world class urban transport systems for the largest conurbations);
  - f) Transforming east-west connectivity (i.e. enhance east-west corridor to the same level as radial links to and from London);
  - g) Resilient radial corridors (i.e. deliver an increasingly reliable transport network); and
  - h) Global gateways and freight (i.e. enhance the capacity and contribution of the freight and logistics sector to the economy).
- 2.2 The Draft SIP explains that if the South East continues on a 'business as usual' trajectory to 2050, then many of the investment priorities listed in paragraph 2.1 will not be achieved.
- 2.3 The Draft SIP includes 24 packages of interventions across the South East that have been developed through area studies involving a range of stakeholders including County Council officers.

### **Global Packages**

- 2.4 The following packages of interventions are expected to apply region-wide or because they include schemes that will be implemented partially or fully in West Sussex.
  - Decarbonisation (i.e. a faster trajectory towards net zero carbon emissions than current trends);

- Public transport fares (i.e. reversing the real terms increase in the cost of public transport compared to motoring);
- New mobility (i.e. utilising new mobility solutions such as e-bikes to enable more active lifestyles);
- Road user charging (i.e. encouraging the Government to develop a national road user charging scheme to provide an alternative to fuel duty and manage demand);
- Virtual access (i.e. enabling virtual working to help reduce demand for transport services); and
- Integration (i.e. improving integration between modes of transport).

### **Area Packages**

- 2.5 The following packages of interventions include schemes that will be implemented partially or fully in West Sussex.
- 2.6 TfSE has developed nine packages of interventions for the Solent and Sussex Coast area, which covers South Hampshire and the 'Sussex Coast Conurbation' (i.e. coastal areas of West and East Sussex and Brighton & Hove). The packages and schemes in West Sussex are:
- Sussex Coast Rail (includes enhancements to West Coastway and removal of level crossings in Worthing);
  - Sussex Coast Active Travel (active travel schemes including those identified in Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans);
  - Sussex Coast Mass Transit (Shoreham strategic mobility hub, Sussex Coast Mass Rapid Transit); and
  - Solent and Sussex Coast Highways (A27 improvements at Arundel, Worthing and Lancing, Chichester, Tangmere and Fontwell, A259 enhancements between Chichester, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton and A29 Realignment).
- 2.7 TfSE has developed four packages of interventions for the London to Sussex Coast area, which covers the key corridors between London and the Sussex coast. The packages and schemes in West Sussex are:
- London to Sussex Coast Rail (Brighton Main Line speed increase and reintroduction of Cross Country services, Arun Valley Line faster services, new station North East of Horsham)
  - London to Sussex Coast Mass Transit (Fastway extensions from Crawley to Horsham, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill, rural bus service enhancements on A22, A23, A24, A272, A264, A283 and A281 corridors and Three Bridges strategic mobility hub)
  - London to Sussex Coast Active Travel (local cycleways in Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Crawley/Gatwick and Horsham, West Sussex inter-urban cycleways and new National Cycle Network corridors between London – Brighton and Crawley and Chichester)
  - London to Sussex Coast Highways (M23 junction 9 enhancement and improvements to A22, A23 from Gatwick to Crawley plus Hickstead & Bolney junctions, A24 between Horsham and Capel, A264 between

Horsham, Pease Pottage and East Grinstead, Crawley Western Link Road)

- 2.8 The packages of interventions are opportunities for investment that Government and other strategic bodies, including the County Council, as local highway authority, should consider investing in. The total capital cost in the areas covering West Sussex is estimated to be £14.8bn with annual capital maintenance and renewal costs of £880m. The total capital cost across the TfSE area is estimated to be £45 billion.
- 2.9 TfSE have used their South East Economy and Land Use Model (SEELUM) to assess the potential impacts of the packages on transport and economic performance and compared to a 'business-as-usual' scenario in 2050, the packages could deliver:
- 21,000 additional new jobs;
  - Additional £4billion in GVA each year by 2050;
  - 1.4 mega tonnes less CO<sub>2</sub>;
  - 500,000 more rail trips;
  - 1.5 million more trips by bus, mass transit and ferry; and
  - 4 million fewer car trips.

### **3 Proposed Consultation Response**

#### **General comments**

- 3.1 Overall, the County Council welcomes the Draft SIP because it will help to ensure there is a more coordinated and strategic approach to regional investment in the transport network. The SIP is underpinned by rigorous evaluations undertaken through the five area studies and the two thematic strategies that will help to deliver the adopted TfSE Transport Strategy. In general, the Draft SIP aligns well with the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-36 because it includes many of the County Council's priority schemes and, once the SIP is finalised, will support their delivery.
- 3.2 County Council officers have worked with TfSE and other local authorities on the area studies which reflect a combination of technical work and engagement with key stakeholders. The County Council welcomes the opportunity to continue working with TfSE to plan for delivery of the SIP.

#### **Road user charging**

- 3.3 The County Council welcomes that TfSE has identified road user charging as an alternative to the current arrangements for taxation. Although this does not form part of the West Sussex Transport Plan, the SIP is a longer-term plan and there is a need for engagement with the public about what should replace the current taxation arrangements in view of the expected shift away from fossil fuel propulsion which will reduce tax income. The County Council considers that engagement on road user charging should take account of the needs of different users, including those in rural communities who could (for example, if different charges apply at different times of day) be disproportionately affected by a road user charging scheme due to having a greater reliance on private road-based transport.

### **Active travel**

- 3.4 The active travel packages are inconsistent as some are specifically named routes, while others are grouped together. These different types of active schemes are likely to perform different functions and may require different delivery arrangements. Therefore, the County Council would like TfSE to disaggregate the Sussex Coast Active Travel package into a set of local cycleways (aligned to LCWIP areas) and inter-urban connectors in line with other areas (London to Sussex Coast, Kent, Thames Valley).
- 3.5 The ratio of annual maintenance and renewal costs to capital cost for active travel routes is extremely high and is likely to be unaffordable based on current financial arrangements. This seems erroneous and should be reconsidered by TfSE. If future maintenance is likely to be unaffordable, then there will be a need to prioritise.

### **Deliverability**

- 3.6 The County Council has some concerns about the deliverability of elements of the packages, including schemes such as a large-scale improvement to the A27 at Worthing and Lancing, as there is a long history of failure to deliver such improvements.

### **Dependencies**

- 3.7 The Draft SIP proposes a rail package to support faster inter-urban and long-distance journeys between the South East's two largest conurbations i.e. Brighton and Southampton. The West Coastway Strategic Rail Study (F1) is a critical project within this rail package. It should be clear though that in order for rail to form the backbone of public transport movement along the coast, parts of the road-based mass transit package are likely to be required as part of a multi-modal delivery approach. The County Council considers that where such dependencies exist, these should be clearly identified in the SIP. This could help to form the basis for a place-based approach to investment.

### **Rural areas**

- 3.8 A stronger focus needs to be placed on the needs and delivery in rural areas. The predominant interventions in rural areas are indicated as highways, long distance National Cycle Routes and some references to mass transit routes. Greater attention should be placed on the needs of rural users with a clearer understanding of the appropriate interventions to deal with their specific needs.

### **A24 corridor**

- 3.9 A24 should be highlighted as a route to improve north-south movement corridor resilience. Assessments are currently being undertaken for this route. The work on the A24 south of Horsham is public transport focussed and north of Horsham towards Surrey is highway capacity focussed. The (L7) Mass Transit scheme along this route alignment can be supported by the A24 highway interventions.

## **Mass transit**

- 3.10 The reference to rural bus services as 'mass transit' perhaps creates the wrong impression and expectations. This should be replaced by a more accurate description of the intervention envisaged or identified as part of the SIP.
- 3.11 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure will be recommended to approve the County Council's response to the consultation on the Draft SIP (Appendix A).

## **4 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

- 4.1. The other option considered was to not provide a response to the consultation. However, improving sustainable transport infrastructure in the South East will help to meet the ambitions of the West Sussex Plan and the West Sussex Transport Plan. Therefore, it is important that the Authority continues to engage positively in the process and that it responds to the consultation.

## **5 Consultation, engagement and advice**

- 5.1. The draft consultation response was discussed and considered by the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2022 and they provided the following comments:
- Include CHESC comments.
- 5.2. In response to the Committee's comments, the following changes were made to the report:
- Include summary of changes in response to CHESC comments.

## **6 Finance**

- 6.1. There are no financial implications of responding to the consultation as it does not obligate the County Council to fund any interventions. However, the Draft SIP includes capital and revenue cost estimates prepared to a level of detail commensurate with the maturity of the design of the packages of interventions. The cost estimates are meant to support long term planning, investment and delivery planning.
- 6.3. Funding of the packages is expected to come from multiple and diverse sources including from Government, local authorities, developers and end users etc, noting that the particular funding mix will be dependent on the particulars of the intervention. Further work is required to establish funding and financing solutions which include developing business cases, assessing procurement routes and assessing funding sources. If full funding of the SIP is not available, then there will be a need to prioritise. If there are financial implications for the County Council associated with delivery of interventions, then this will be set out in future budget decisions.

## **7 Risk implications and mitigations**

- 7.1 There are no risks associated with responding to the consultation.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
None	n/a

## **8 Policy alignment and compliance**

- 8.1 Our Council Plan – The Draft SIP will support the delivery of the following priorities: to deliver a sustainable and prosperous economy; to help people and communities to fulfil their potential; and to make best use of resources.
- 8.2 West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-36 – The West Sussex Transport Plan was developed in parallel with the TfSE thematic and area studies. The Draft SIP will support the vision, objectives and priorities in the West Sussex Transport Plan by helping to secure funding to deliver its priorities.
- 8.3 Climate Change – Work undertaken by the TfSE on climate change includes a decarbonisation pathways workstream, which has informed the Draft SIP. The workstream assesses the possible routes to decarbonisation, including policy and strategic interventions and the ability of these to meet targets in the medium term and by 2050. Although the County Council has not yet set transport decarbonisation targets by way of policy, it can be informed by the assessment that TfSE have undertaken. Further, interventions proposed in the Draft SIP for the West Sussex area are largely in keeping with the vision and objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan.
- 8.4 Public Health – public health and transport is a central theme of supporting work undertaken by TfSE in the area studies and thematic strategies. Active travel has been identified through various studies as potentially delivering significant health benefits to communities through the associated benefits of increased activity levels. For this and other reasons, increasing active travel is an objective of the West Sussex Transport Plan and other plans, strategies and investment programmes. Further, work done in assessing decarbonisation pathways and their ability to reduce carbon emissions and footprints is expected to assist in improving air quality.
- 8.5 Legal, Equalities, Social Value, Crime and Disorder – there are no identifiable implications in making this response to a consultation by an external organisation.

### **Matt Davey**

Assistant Director of Highways, Transport and Planning

**Contact Officer:** Anand Pillay, Principal Transport Planner, 0330 222 5031  
Anand.Pillay@westsussex.gov.uk

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Consultation Response

Appendix B – Draft SIP Executive Summary

### **Background Papers:**

None