

Agenda Item IMD7

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2023/07

TITLE	Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways - Paul Fishwick
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	8 March 2023 LGF6 at 4.15pm
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

The purpose of the report is for the Executive Member to agree the Strategic Investment plan (SIP) for the South East. This will ensure that the SIP can be submitted to the Department for Transport and subsequent funding decisions by the DfT will be based on the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways agrees the final draft SIP for the South East, as set out in Appendix A to this report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is a constituent authority of Transport for The South East (TfSE) and as such has been involved in the development of TfSE's SIP. The SIP has been developed as follows:

1. TfSE published its Transport Strategy in July 2020 in collaboration with Wokingham Borough Council and the other constituent authorities. The strategy sets an ambitious vision for the region to 2050 and identifies a preferred scenario to help achieve that vision. A series of Area Studies and thematic studies have since been completed and they identify packages of multi-modal interventions that are needed to deliver the 2050 vision.
2. On 13 June 2022 the Transport for the South East (TfSE) Partnership Board approved the draft SIP for public consultation. The SIP will form the final part of the transport strategy, bringing together the outputs from the area studies and thematic studies, to become the blueprint for investment in the South East for the next 30 years.
3. The formal consultation period on the draft SIP ran from 20 June 2022 to 12 September 2022, with over 600 responses received from a range of stakeholders. TfSE has listened, reviewed the feedback and amended the plan.

4. TfSE has now completed the formal consultation, analysis and revisions on the draft SIP. It is now seeking the agreement of its constituent authorities prior to submitting the final SIP to Government in spring 2023.

TfSE's work provides an opportunity to support and deliver growth across the South East through the development of a long-term strategic programme of multi-modal transport interventions to facilitate economic growth, improve quality of life and enhance the environment.

The Transport Strategy published in July 2020 supports and complements the work of the local authorities and LEPs. The SIP will further this and will offer a key route to influence the investment decisions by the Government and by the major national delivery agencies such as National Highways and Network Rail in a way that has not been possible in the past.

The SIP places equal emphasis on economic growth, environmental protection and enhancement and social inclusion. It sets out global policy measures and interventions that will help to achieve net-zero by 2050 at the latest.

Background

Transport for the South East is the sub-national transport body for the South East of England. Its purpose is to determine what investment is needed to transform the region's transport system and drive economic growth.

TfSE was established in 2017 and is a partnership of 16 local authorities¹, five local enterprise partnerships plus representatives of district & borough authorities, protected landscapes and national delivery agencies. By speaking with one voice on our region's transport priorities, TfSE is able to make a strong case to government for investment in the South East.

TfSE has established a governance that ensures all authorities have representation on the Partnership board and voting which reflects the populations of each of the constituent authorities. Wokingham BC is represented on the board by Cllr Tony Page as part of the Berkshire group of authorities, whilst Cllr Page liaises closely with all the Berkshire authorities through the Berkshire Local Transport Body. TfSE published a 30 year Transport Strategy in June 2020. The strategy sets out an ambitious vision to 2050, setting out a framework that will support the development of a modern, integrated and sustainable transport network.

TfSE has subsequently worked with its constituent authorities, LEPs, protected landscapes and other stakeholders to develop a series of area studies. These geographic studies have been based around the most important economic corridors in the region and have investigated the issues, challenges and opportunities identified in the transport strategy in more detail. This resulted in a number of multi-modal packages of interventions to make life better for people, for businesses and for the environment. Wokingham Borough Council and the rest of the Berkshire Authorities are part of what is known as the Wessex Thames study area. In addition to the area studies, further work has been undertaken on a Future Mobility Strategy and a Freight, Logistics and International Gateways Strategy. The evidence from all these studies has been used to inform the SIP.

Strategic Investment Plan

The SIP forms the final part of the Transport Strategy and is a blueprint for £45bn of investment in strategic transport infrastructure over the next 30 year. It makes a strong case for investment to the Treasury and the Department for Transport and has been designed in a way to be accessible to residents and communities across the region.

The draft SIP is the culmination of five years of technical work, stakeholder engagement and institutional development. It is underpinned by a credible, evidence based technical programme. The aim of the SIP is to identify the packages of interventions that will be needed to deliver the 2050 vision set out in the transport strategy. It is important that the SIP:

- supports the aim of the transport strategy in delivering sustainable economic growth;
- sets out a clear sequence and timescales for the packages of interventions identified as part of the area studies;
- presents a compelling case (strategic, economic, social, environmental) to government and other funders for the delivery of the packages of interventions identified in the SIP; and

- identifies the potential cost of the proposed programme of investment.

The SIP is aligned with and supports wider policy and government priorities at multiple levels and across multiple transport modes, including the Local Transport Plans, Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Bus Back Better and the Williams-Shapps Review.

The draft SIP sets out an ask for capital costs investment of £45 billion over the next thirty years. The transport interventions included in the SIP have the potential to generate 25,000 new jobs and to contribute an additional £4.5 billion growth in GVA per year against the business as usual scenario. The plan also has the potential to reduce the amount of CO2 emissions by 1.4 mega tonnes each year from the interventions alone and support a pathway to reach net zero. It will have an impact on daily journeys, supporting 500,000 more rail trips and 1.5 million more journeys by bus and ferry.

The draft SIP comprises six sections which guide the reader through the development of the ambitious programme. A summary of the content of each of the sections is set out below.

The opening section of the draft document sets out the context for the development of the draft SIP. It provides an overview of the role of Transport for the South East, the vision and strategic goals from the Transport Strategy, the approach to the development of the draft document and its position in relation to national and local policy.

The draft SIP then sets out the eight investment priorities aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the Transport Strategy and the wider regional, national, and international policy context with which both are aligned. This includes broader issues where action is needed across sectors, including transport, such as decarbonisation and the environment and adapting to a new normal, and key factors with a direct relevance to transport in the South East, such as east-west connectivity and world class urban transit systems.

The next sections of the draft document set out the benefits of investing in the South East and that there will be economic, social, and environmental returns for residents, businesses, and visitors, supporting the UK economy and enabling Government to achieve its priorities.

The third section of the draft SIP details 30 coherent packages of complementary, multi-modal Interventions that aim to deliver on the vision and objectives for the South East as set out in the Transport Strategy. These packages have been developed through the area studies, including workshops, discussions, and careful analysis of results of the assessment of the long list of interventions. In essence, this reflects both a 'top down' vision led approach and a 'bottom up' individual intervention assessment approach.

The packages are broadly split into two groups:

1. 6 Global Interventions consisting of national regulatory and policy activity.
2. 24 Place-Based Interventions: presented at a sub-regional level, with many being multi-modal or mode-agnostic.

It is intended that this combination of strategic investments will allow TfSE to achieve its objectives and, in doing so, support wider local, regional, and national policy and priorities.

For the Wessex Thames area, the interventions can be found on page 31 of the draft SIP in Appendix A. A list of the interventions most pertinent to Wokingham is provided below. It is explained in the SIP that in order to obtain funding for these projects and take them further there will need to be a full business case; this must include consideration of Carbon emissions as well as financial, strategic and delivery considerations. It will also be up to the authority responsible for delivery to consult on the proposals as they become more detailed.

Rail Package

Western Rail Link to Heathrow
Reading to Basingstoke Enhancement
North Downs Line - Electrification
North Downs Line - Level Crossing Removals
North Downs Line - Service Level and Capacity Enhancements
Cross Country Service Enhancements
Theale Strategic Rail Freight Terminal
Reading to Waterloo Service Enhancements

Active Travel

Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey Urban and Inter-urban Active Travel Infrastructure

Mass Transit

Bracknell/Wokingham Bus Enhancements
Slough/Windsor/Maidenhead Area Bus Enhancements
Reading Mass Rapid Transit
A4 Reading - Maidenhead - Slough - London Heathrow Airport Mass Rapid Transit
A329/B3408 Reading - Bracknell/ Wokingham Mass Rapid Transit
Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey Inter-urban Bus Enhancements

Highways

M4 Junction 10 Safety Enhancements
A322 and A329(M) Smart Corridor
M4 Junction 3 to Junction 12 Smart Motorway
New Thames Crossing East of Reading

The SIP is an ambitious and capital-intensive programme, seeking capital cost investment of £45bn over the next 30 years. The credibility of the plan therefore needs to be underpinned by a pragmatic consideration of how it will be paid for. The main financial challenge will relate to funding (i.e. how the projects are paid for over time). This will involve making best use of funds that can be directed from government and identifying new and innovative approaches. The funding and financing section of the draft SIP sets out more detail on this, including a number of case studies for schemes included in the plan.

The final chapter of the draft SIP focuses on delivery and governance. It is clear that the document will require shared ownership. The draft sets out the proposed role that TfSE will play in the implementation of the SIP, as well as the role and responsibility of key delivery partners. It sets out proposed key performance indicators that will be taken forward for further development by the TfSE team and a summary of the delivery plan from the Area Studies, including phasing and timing of the proposed packages and interventions.

Public Consultation

The public consultation on the draft SIP commenced on 20 June 2022 and concluded on 12 September 2022. The main mechanism for obtaining feedback was via an online survey, accessed via a dedicated online engagement platform. Some email and postal responses were also received as well as a number of templated

email responses via a campaign response platform developed by Transport Action Network (TAN).

The survey recorded responses about demographics, type of stakeholder, geographical area, comments on the SIP chapters and the ISA. It mirrored the structure of the SIP and included a combination of single selection answers (or 'tick all that apply'), response options as well as free-text responses.

During the twelve-week consultation period, TfSE engaged with multiple stakeholders through a variety of channels. The draft SIP was officially launched at TfSE's 'Connecting the South East' event at G-Live in Guildford on 5 July 2022. Two virtual webinars were held in July 2022, with nearly 300 attendees across all events. A parliamentary reception was also held at Portcullis House on 22 June 2022 for MPs and their researchers.

The consultation was widely promoted via the TfSE newsletter, press releases, social media (paid and unpaid) and through partner communications. All the region's MPs, LEPs and local authorities were sent a dedicated email containing a link to the consultation material.

There were 640 responses to the consultation. A total of 422 respondents completed the questionnaire, with a further 87 submitting individual letters or emails. In addition, 131 individual petition responses were received as a result of a campaign organised by Transport Action Network (TAN).

Consultation Results

All consultation responses have been considered and the following provides a short summary of the overall key findings from the consultation:

Support shown to investment proposals to improve public transport in the South East, for example, 34% of those that participated via email/letter explicitly stated they welcomed the investment into public transport.

Respondents welcomed the focus on Active Travel schemes, with between 51% and 79% of respondents who participated in the survey supporting the proposed Active Travel schemes across the four geographies.

Respondents welcomed the recognition of importance of the need to tackle climate change, with analysis showing that 76% of respondents to the survey stated 'Decarbonisation & Environment' is the most important investment priority for the SIP to deliver.

Of those respondents that participated via the survey, 49% of respondents were in agreement that the SIP makes the best case possible for investing in transport infrastructure in the South East, with 'Somewhat agree' at 31% and 'Definitely agree' at 18%.

Although 'decarbonisation and the environment' was selected as the most important overall investment priority for the SIP to deliver by respondents to the survey, qualitative responses to the same question showed that support for other investment priorities was also considered important. This highlighted that TfSE should prioritise improvements to public transport, in turn reducing car use and tackling climate change. The support for public transport fares was further evidenced when respondents to the online survey chose this above decarbonisation, as the most

important global policy intervention (78% / 72%) and the most frequently received comment in email and postal responses was around support for investment in public transport (34%).

When asked to what extent they agreed that the packages of interventions for the Wessex Thames Area delivered on the priorities of the SIP, the online survey submissions showed that 68% somewhat or definitely agreed for Wessex Thames, with less than 1% definitely disagreeing.

Feedback from the more detailed, geographic scheme specific questions demonstrated that rail, mass transit and active travel were the most popular interventions in the Wessex Thames area, with highway interventions being the least supported. The most frequent comments were surrounding a desire for greater investment in public transport and a greater focus on active travel.

The following provides a summary of the changes to the draft SIP following the public consultation:

- Provided more context on the purpose of the SIP and importantly, what the SIP won't do;
- Provided clarity that the financial ask of the SIP is above and beyond the funding that Local Transport Authorities already receive;
- Asserted the need to ensure that public transport provision returns to the quality of provision prior to the covid pandemic;
- Updates to investment priorities section to reflect feedback on the priorities;
- Strengthened 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;
- Greater recognition of the importance of strategic active travel and mass transit;
- Clarification that highways are multi-modal assets, supporting active travel and mass transit interventions as well as freight movements;
- Made amends to the narrative for 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;
- In recognition of 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;
- Clarification that transition of freight to rail will not be of detriment to passenger services;
- Changes and clarification to information on proposed interventions to reflect comments received; and
- Updates to the delivery stages and next steps of the SIP to set out how the SIP will be implemented, delivered and monitored.

Some comments received in response to the consultation related to the evidence base documentation, i.e. thematic plans or Strategic Programme Outline Cases (SPOC). 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.

At its meeting on 14 November 2022, the TfSE Partnership Board agreed the final draft SIP, which is attached as appendix A.

Next steps

The Partnership Board will consider the final SIP in March 2023 and will agree the process for submitting to Government. This requires that all constituent authorities agree to the SIP before submission to Central Government.

TfSE will continue to work with constituent authorities and other delivery partners to shape a delivery plan which will set out how the schemes and interventions in the SIP will be implemented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	9,667	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	9,667	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	9,667	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

TfSE has established an annual subscription of £58,000 per county and £30,000 per unitary, for WBC we pay one sixth of £58k together with the other Berkshire authorities; this is an ongoing cost already budgeted for and not affected by the SIP. DfT has awarded grant funding to TfSE of over £3m the last two financial years, which has been used to support the development of the technical programme and, more recently, for staffing costs. DfT has provided an indicative funding allocation for the next two financial years, which will support the implementation of the SIP.

The SIP is intended to be used as a bidding and lobbying document and as such will assist Wokingham in delivering some of its priorities for transport in future, though the value and scale of these is yet to be determined.

Cross-Council Implications

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

TfSE has been given consideration to the potential for any adverse equalities' impacts arising from the SIP. In addition, WBC officers have completed the borough's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment. This has not identified any impact for those with protected characteristics.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comments
Monitoring Officer	Comments received and incorporated into report.
Leader of the Council	No comments

For Highways use only
Town and Parish Councils
No responses were received from Town or Parish Councils
Local Ward Members
One Response was received from Cllr Gary Cowan who commented that the plan will be important for future if supported by central government. Cllr Cowan’s main concern is around funding and whether part of it would need to be funded by additional development. Cllr Cowan also commented that the Local Plan Update should take this into account potentially as an appendix to the LPU.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Appendix A is the final draft SIP agreed by the Partnership Board at its meeting on 14 November 2022.
Sources/background papers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Strategy, July 2020 • Area Study reports, published as part of the SIP evidence base in June 2022 • Freight, logistics and international gateways strategy, published in May 2022 • Future Mobility Strategy, published in October 2021 • Agendas and papers from TfSE Partnership Board

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