

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	19 January 2023
Title:	TfSE Strategic Investment Plan Approval
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050 and Assistant Chief Executive

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Strategic Investment Plan prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE).

Recommendation

2. That the Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the revisions made by Transport for the South East in response to consultation comments and approves the revised draft document (as set out in Appendix B) as a key delivery component of the Regional Transport Strategy.

Executive Summary

3. The Strategic Investment Plan is a key element of the Regional Transport Strategy and was the subject of recent consultation. A final draft version has been prepared and this paper seeks approval of that draft. It also sets out how the County Council's consultation comments have been addressed.

Contextual information

4. A report was considered at the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment Decision Day on 3 October 2022 that set out a proposed response to consultation on the draft regional Strategic Investment Plan published by Transport for the South East (TfSE) in the Summer. It was intended at this time that the final document should be signed off through the cabinet and full council process on the basis that the SIP formed part of the Strategy. Subsequent clarification has established that the SIP is in fact a stand alone document and is therefore being recommended for final sign off by the Executive Lead Member for Hampshire 2050. The response to consultation was approved, subject to the inclusion of two additional

references, as recommended by the Transport and Environment Select Committee. The two proposed references, and TfSE's accommodation of them, are detailed in Appendix A.

5. TfSE is the Sub-National Transport Body (SNTB) for South East England. It encompasses a partnership of sixteen local transport authorities, including Hampshire County Council. County Council Officers have been actively engaged in the work of TfSE including the preparation of the evidence base in support of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The County Council is also represented on the TfSE Partnership Board.
6. The main role of TfSE is to advise the Government and 'to speak as one voice' on behalf of the region on transport investment priorities. Following final approval by TfSE, once all constituent authorities have considered the proposed draft, the finalised SIP will be submitted to Government as the region's co-ordinated proposition for funding, powers and resources.
7. TfSE published a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in 2020. The SIP is a key document for the region and it demonstrates how TfSE intends to deliver the RTS objectives. The SIP will set out how TfSE and partners will deliver the aims of the RTS, bringing together the outputs from the area studies and thematic studies, to become the blueprint for investment in the South East for the next thirty years.
8. TfSE is a sub national transport body in shadow form and so has no statutory status. The constituent authorities have been requested to agree the SIP prior to final ratification at the TfSE Partnership Board on 13 March 2023.
9. Consultation on the draft took place from 20 June – 12 September this year. An overview of the consultation process is presented below. Appendix A sets out a schedule summarising the County Council's consultation responses and also indicates how each comment has been addressed by TfSE. As can be seen, most of the specific comments have been addressed and the text of the SIP has been amended accordingly. Only two consultation points from Hampshire County Council have not been fully adopted. They are covered in the following paragraphs.
10. The first relates to congestion charging. Hampshire County Council responded to the consultation stating that TfSE should not be promoting road user charging at this time and that doing so was not the current policy of the County Council or national Government. The SIP states "*We encourage the UK government to develop a national road user charging system to provide an alternative source of funding to fuel duty and to help manage demand in parallel to integrated local measures.*"
11. Whilst it is not current policy and a very emotive topic, it is inevitable that Government will need to consider the tax impact of the circa £30billion lost fuel duty as the national vehicle fleet converts to electric or other clean fuel technology over time. The Government has recently indicated it will add Vehicle Excise Duty to electric vehicle sales giving an indication of a direction of travel. It is worth noting that tax raised from fuel duty is linked to the national roads fund which pays for the National Highways, Large Local Majors

and Major Road Network funding. Without it or a replacement source of funding such programmes may be reduced.

12. It is noted that the introduction of a national road pricing scheme would require a significant change in Government policy, further consultation, and almost certainly new primary legislation. On this basis, this consultation point would not prevent the County Council from supporting the overall proposals of the SIP.
13. The second relates to TfSE taking a lighter approach to the request to upgrade the A34 to motorway standard, which is the current Hampshire County Council position. Instead, TfSE uses text which supports more modest improvements. In reality the TfSE wording is more pragmatic and closer to what might be funded in the medium term and the County Council ask is more aspirational and longer term. This does not put the County Council in a contradictory position with TfSE, as both see a need for improvement, but it does mean that the County Council has a different perspective as to what scale of investment is required.
14. A revised draft of the SIP was presented to the Partnership Board meeting and the final version is attached as Appendix B. In the light of the generally positive response to the County Council's consultation response, and the revisions made to the draft, it is recommended that the Strategic Investment Plan is approved. As noted above, all constituent authorities within TfSE have been asked to approve the plan.
15. An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has been prepared to support the SIP. This includes full environmental and equality assessments of the proposals. The preparation of an ISA is a standard process in plan making that helps ensure that decisions are made fairly and contribute to achieving sustainable development.

Finance

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed response to the SIP consultation. However, the proposals within the SIP could, if supported by Government, bring substantial future investment in transport measures to Hampshire and the South-East region generally. Moving forward, the County Council may choose to develop business cases for some of the schemes in the SIP in the future role of a promoting authority.

Consultation and Equalities

17. As noted elsewhere in the report, consultation on the draft SIP was undertaken by TfSE. TfSE undertook an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) to support the SIP. This includes full environmental and equality assessments of the proposals.
18. TfSE's overview of the consultation is as follows.
19. 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).

20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. 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). It is worth noting that the respondents include a disproportionate number of responses from some campaign/topic groups, that they include a relatively small sample of people or organisations responding from the Hampshire area and to the consultation overall. This is not unusual for a strategy of such a strategic nature, but it does mean that decision makers give appropriate weight to the results of the consultation. It is also worth noting the responses rate was lower than that received to the County Council's consultation on LTP4. The themes of response to that were largely supportive of plans to develop rail, mass transit, active travel and targeted highways schemes. They are not dissimilar to the TfSE responses, set out below and so, to some extent, corroborate the results of the TfSE consultation.
24. 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 Strategic Investment Plan to deliver; and
 - of those respondents that participated via the survey, 49% of respondents were in agreement that the Strategic Investment Plan makes a good case

for investing in transport infrastructure in the south east, with 'Somewhat agreed' at 31% and 'Definitely agreed' at 18%.

25. 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%).
26. When asked to what extent they agreed that the packages of interventions for a geography delivered on the priorities of the SIP, the online survey submissions showed that:
 - 42% somewhat or definitely agreed for Kent, Medway and East Sussex and 26% definitely disagreeing;
 - 68% somewhat or definitely agreed for Wessex Thames, with less than 1% definitely disagreeing;
 - 60% somewhat or definitely agreed for London – Sussex Coast, with 16% definitely disagreeing; and
 - 58% somewhat or definitely agreed for Solent and Sussex Coast, with 15% definitely disagreeing.
27. This would indicate that the most contentious geography in terms of proposed interventions is the Kent, Medway and East Sussex area, largely because of the inclusion of some contentious road schemes.
28. In terms of the study areas impacting Hampshire feedback for the Wessex Thames areas area, impacting north Hampshire, demonstrated strong support for rail, mass transit and active travel. The most frequent comments were surrounding a desire for greater investment in public transport and a greater focus on active travel. Rail schemes were most supported interventions for the Solent and Sussex Coast area, followed by mass transit and active travel. The most frequent comment for this geography was a desire to see more sustainable modes of transport prioritised.
29. At its meeting on 14 November 2022, the TfSE Partnership Board agreed the final draft SIP, which is attached as Appendix B.
30. As noted in the report, an Integrated Sustainability Assessment has been carried out for the SIP. This concluded that "The assessment of packages has identified generally positive effects on health and equalities". As an initial assessment, this seems fair and reasonable. There will be fuller assessments undertaken, specifically for Hampshire residents, as local schemes come forward and more detail is known.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

31. The ISA identifies that the proposals will have both positive and negative effects on climate change. It notes that “The assessment has identified a range of effects depending on the typology of interventions within packages. There may be positive effects from transport schemes such as active travel, smart motorways, support of public transport and ultra-low emission zones, demand management (roadspace reallocation), electrification of railways and specific rail options including Grain Branch Services, New HS1 Services, BRT which will all contribute to improving greenhouse gas emissions.

“Conversely, the construction of road schemes... could increase uptake of vehicular traffic which could lead to negative cumulative effects. These options are likely to have high levels of embodied carbon associated with both construction and operation.” The vulnerability of the transport options will depend on whether the location and the resilience of the design and materials used to withstand chronic and acute effects of climate change (e.g., future precipitation and temperatures changes). Interventions within areas of flood risk include Western and Southern Rail Links to Heathrow, Reading - South Reading - Basingstoke (A33/B3031), Wokingham - Blackwater Valley MRT (A321 or B327/B3016), Merooak (South Reading) Strategic Mobility Hub, Farnborough Strategic Mobility Hub, East Sussex Regional Cycleways, Surrey Regional Cycleways, West Sussex regional cycleways, A23 Gatwick – Crawley, A23/A27 Patcham Junction and major rail upgrades of SWML (Southwest Main Line upgrades Woking and London, South of Woking and Portsmouth line upgrades).”

Climate Change Adaptation

32. The ISA identifies that “The vulnerability of the transport options will depend on whether the location and the resilience of the design and materials used to withstand chronic and acute effects of climate change (e.g., future precipitation and temperatures changes). Interventions within areas of flood risk include Western and Southern Rail Links to Heathrow, Reading - South Reading - Basingstoke (A33/B3031), Wokingham - Blackwater Valley MRT (A321 or B327/B3016), Merooak (South Reading) Strategic Mobility Hub, Farnborough Strategic Mobility Hub, East Sussex Regional Cycleways, Surrey Regional Cycleways, West Sussex regional cycleways, A23 Gatwick – Crawley, A23/A27 Patcham Junction and major rail upgrades of SWML (Southwest Main Line upgrades Woking and London, South of Woking and Portsmouth line upgrades).

33. It goes on to say “Climate change generally negatively affects the operation of the rail and road network, for example, flooding, snowfall, high temperatures and wind. Climate change adaptation measures are likely to be specific to each development, but there may be benefits if implemented across multiple interventions.”

Conclusion

34. TfSE has, overall, responded positively to Hampshire County Council's previous consultation response on the draft plan. Although there are a couple of issues that have not resulted in changes, as discussed in the report, this is not felt to be sufficient reason to withhold support for the SIP overall. It is therefore recommended that the revised Strategic Investment Plan be approved.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> TfSE Strategic Investment Plan Consultation	<u>Date</u> 3 October 2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

As referenced in the report, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has been carried out on the SIP, which included an Equalities Impact Assessment. Based on this, it is concluded that the SIP overall has neutral impact on people with protected characteristics.

Appendix A

Schedule of Hampshire County Council consultation responses and TfSE responses

General	It would be interesting to compare how investment in the South East ranks with other regions.	These figures can be found within the Transport Strategy which can be found on the TfSE website.
General	The promotion of road user charging is not supported at this time, and the strategy should instead refer to the need for additional Government investment funds for transport and infrastructure.	TfSE have not made changes to the SIP which states about road user charging that "We encourage the UK government to develop a national road user charging system to provide an alternative source of funding to fuel duty and to help manage demand in parallel to integrated local measures."
General	As the SIP progresses, TfSE will need to keep potential Government funding streams and development of national policy under review, and potentially undertake sensitivity analysis should it not happen, as this is likely to require the strategy and area packages to be reviewed.	Noted
General	The income from taxation is expected to cover the costs of making public transport cheaper. This is a desirable use of such income. However, the County Council again has concerns this may not happen in practice and that the real terms cost of using public transport, particularly buses, will continue to rise faster than other modes of travel.	Noted
Corridor Packages	The County Council has been well engaged and involved in the development of the corridor packages. Hampshire County Council considers the packages to be extensive and comprehensive. In particular, it welcomes the inclusion of the measures in the two corridor studies most relevant to Hampshire. The County Council considers them as a state in time view of what is needed. However, it is expected that this will change over time and that all the packages will need to be periodically reviewed and reassessed. New schemes may be added when needed or ones which have been delivered	The SIP has been updated to include a 'next steps' section which highlights the plan as a document that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

	removed, and the remaining projects re-assessed against prevailing funding conditions.	
Corridor Packages	Across the corridor packages there is some inconsistency as to what certain measures mean. For example, the term 'Mass Transit' seems to mean different things in different parts of the region.	This has been checked and mass transit has been defined in the executive summary to clarify what it includes.
General	The SIP has identified a large potential programme of scheme development work. TfSE is not a scheme promoter in its own right and so the investment in business cases and scheme development sits with the promoting highway authority/TfSE member. In securing future funding, the County Council requests that TfSE make a case to Government to support scheme development funding to enable the programme to be developed further.	Agreed, this has been clarified within the 'next steps' section of the document.
p.42	Hampshire County Council strongly supports the focus on mass transit and public transport. These sustainable modes will need to do the "heavy lifting" in terms of decarbonisation and particularly in enabling the integration of land use and transport planning. In light of this, the County Council would welcome a small change to the text on page 42 of the SIP to reflect that the mass transit proposals for the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton both include the County Council as a major delivery partner and span way beyond the city boundaries	Agreed, the SIP has been updated to reflect this.
General	The National Highways work looking at the South West Quadrant identified that the stretch of the M25 between the M3 and M4 links and junctions was the busiest section of road network in the UK. Whilst recognising there are no easy solutions to the capacity issue, it remains an unresolved critical network capacity and resilience issue. It is not adequately addressed in the SIP at this time and should be given further consideration as the SIP evolves.	Throughout the development of the SIP we have worked closely with local stakeholders including the Berkshire authorities. Throughout this engagement support for a new link was lacking, but there was support for multi-modal solutions on the existing network which have been included in the SIP.
Proposal R12 - A34	Hampshire County Council welcomes the proposals for Junction and Safety Enhancements to the A34. The County Council understands this	This intervention is not as comprehensive as an upgrade to motorway standard. It constitutes introduction of 'crawler' lanes and safety

	<p>includes proposals to deal with the sub-standard gradient issues which cause Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to block the two running lanes whilst overtaking slowly, which then causes delay and frustration for drivers with potential resultant safety implications. The County Council also welcomes recognition of the need to improve junctions. The County Council would therefore welcome a more comprehensive project description to "A34 upgrade to motorway standard".</p>	<p>enhancements at junctions and so no change is proposed.</p>
p.59	<p>The County Council welcomes the rail package in the Wessex Corridor Study. It has all the core elements of the rail package that the County Council sees as important. However, there is a lack of clarity in the scheme descriptions relevant to a New Rail station at Chineham. Hampshire County Council would welcome reference to the long-standing consideration of the potential for a new rail station at Chineham (north of Basingstoke) possibly as a named element of O3 or O11. It is noted that the diagram on page 59 of the SIP includes a notation 'O19' within the Basingstoke area – there is not a corresponding entry in the list of interventions on the previous page.</p>	<p>We have changed the intervention description from Basingstoke to Reading 'rail electrification' to 'rail enhancements' and reference electrification and new stations to support developments within the delivery plan and SIP.</p>
General	<p>The SIP is concerned with new investments in infrastructure and as such strategic asset management issues are largely out of scope of the SIP as written. It is accepted that a line must be drawn somewhere but adding additional infrastructure when Government funding for maintaining existing transport assets is woefully inadequate is not seen as a sensible or sustainable position. The County Council would like to see TfSE develop a stream of work that looks at the asset management challenge we all face in a strategic way and supports the need for adequate funding for proper long-term management and maintenance of the railway and highway network, intelligent transport systems and other key transport assets.</p>	<p>Agreed, TfSE has noted this as a potential workstream to explore outside with the Senior Officer Group for 2023/24.</p>
Freight	<p>The strong emphasis on accommodating freight movements in a more sustainable way is welcomed and, in particular, the inclusion of</p>	<p>A reference to freeports has been added alongside 'global gateways' and</p>

	<p>proposals for investment to facilitate greater use of rail freight. However, the County Council notes that there are no references to the proposed Freeports in the region, including the Solent Freeport. TfSE is requested to reference the various Freeport sites and the need for investment in the facilitating infrastructure required to deliver them.</p>	<p>we will ask for freeport locations to be added to the relevant map(s).</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>The County Council strongly supports the investment package approach for key settlements. The Council would, however, suggest additional wording to reinforce the fact that these packages will need to reflect the needs of the communities beyond the immediate settlement boundary, whether that be in suburban areas or the rural fringes. This would include complimentary investment, to ensure that the 'core investment' would benefit the widest number of people possible.</p>	<p>We feel that this is already covered under the packages of interventions introduction on Page 11, however we have strengthened the wording on this section.</p>