

From: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Simon Jones, Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 19 January 2023

Subject: Transport for the South East – Adoption of Strategic Investment Plan

Key decision 22/00114

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Leader decision

Electoral Division: All divisions

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) was a founding member of Transport for the South East (TfSE), participating and funding TfSE since 2017 (decision ref 16/00120). The Council took a decision (ref: 20/00010) in July 2020 to adopt the TfSE Transport Strategy and support a TfSE proposal to Government for Statutory Powers, and following that bid being unsuccessful, took a further decision in March 2022 (ref: 22/00023) to continue participating in TfSE. These decisions were taken by the Leader as they concern the decision to participate in a partnership.

Since KCC's decision in March 2022, KCC has supported TfSE with the completion of the draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). TfSE ran a consultation on the draft SIP from 20th June to 12th September 2022. On 8th September 2022, the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee gave their views on KCC's draft consultation response to TfSE's draft SIP. KCC submitted its completed consultation response to TfSE on 12th September 2022.

Following discussion with TfSE Officers and its Chair, an updated draft final SIP has been prepared by TfSE that reflects KCC's consultation feedback. The TfSE Partnership Board agreed the changes and proposed that TfSE constituent member authorities seek to endorse the draft final TfSE SIP following their respective constitutions. The intention is that once all constituent members of TfSE have endorsed the SIP, the TfSE Partnership Board will finalise the SIP in March 2023 and then submit it to Government at an appropriate time.

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Leader in respect of the proposed decision to:

1. Endorse the Strategic Investment Plan prepared by Transport for the South East and support TfSE with its implementation.

2. Delegate to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport to take, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, the actions necessary to implement the decision.

1. Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is the largest single constituent Member of Transport for the South East (TfSE) and provides an annual contribution of £58,000 towards its operating costs. Match funding is provided by other participating County Councils and Unitary Authorities, whilst the Department for Transport (DfT) provides the main portion of funding, set in 2022/23 Financial Year (FY) to £1.725m. TfSE anticipate further DfT funding of £1.175 in 2023/24 and £1.235m in 2024/25.
- 1.2 The first Key Decision was taken by the Leader on 8 December 2018 (16/00120) which agreed to KCC's participation in the TfSE Sub-national Transport Body (STB) as an informal non-statutory body, and to further work to establish TfSE as a formal statutory body.
- 1.3 In July 2020 KCC took a further Key Decision (20/00010) to endorse the TfSE Transport Strategy and to support TfSE's bid for statutory powers and status. TfSE was unsuccessful in securing these powers and hence KCC took a further decision in March 2022 to continue to participate in TfSE noting it would remain as a non-statutory partnership – see decision 22/00023.

2. Transport for the South East

- 2.1 TfSE is comprised of 16 Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and 5 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). There are also other bodies co-opted onto the board – the Chair of the South Downs National Park to represent protected landscapes and two district council representatives for all the Local Planning Authorities in the region. Network Rail, National Highways and Transport for London (TfL) are non-voting members of the Board. The constituent authorities are:

- East Sussex County Council (lead authority and Accountable Body)
- West Sussex County Council
- Kent Council Council
- Medway Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Surrey County Council
- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Southampton City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- The Berkshire unitary authorities through the Berkshire Local Transport Body (LTB) which includes West Berkshire, Wokingham, Windsor & Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest, Reading and Slough.

- Five LEPs within the TfSE area are also included: South East LEP (SELEP), Enterprise M3, Coast to Capital, Solent and Thames Valley Berkshire.

3. TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan

- 3.1 TfSE has prepared, for submission to Government in spring 2023, a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The purpose of the SIP is to set out a thirty-year vision for the region and align with and support government priorities to rapidly decarbonise the transport system, improve public health outcomes, reduce congestion, and improve road safety, level-up left-behind communities and facilitate sustainable economic growth in the South East.
- 3.2 The TfSE SIP promotes ambitious levels of investment, setting out the potential economic gain and improvement in connectivity through Kent and the wider region. The full range of proposals relating to Kent are set out in the draft SIP – see section 11 for its download link. The SIP reinforces key messages KCC has focused on through its own work, such as prioritising improvements to both the A20/M20 corridor and the A2/M2 corridor, in line with KCC's promoted bifurcation strategy for port traffic; improving freight parking and management of flows across the wider region to lessen the burden on Kent itself; and promoting KCC's focus on its Major Road Network schemes such as the A229 Bluebell Hill improvements.
- 3.3 The importance of the rail network in Kent is made clear through the SIP, with proposals over the long term for investment to improve the High Speed network in east Kent. This is coupled with upgrading the domestic rail network by reducing journey times from central and west Kent towards London and cross-boundary towards Surrey and East Sussex.
- 3.4 The SIP echoes the arguments KCC and other TfSE members have made through their respective Bus Service Improvement Plans for investing in local bus networks. The substantial further investment that will be needed in Kent and the rest of the region is also made clear, with the SIP covering the step change in walking and cycling necessary to deliver Government's policies to improve health and reducing carbon emissions from future travel.
- 3.5 The broad case TfSE makes in the SIP will strengthen the case that KCC makes when seeking further funding to improve transport. The SIP will also ease the opportunity to improve cross-boundary connections between Kent and wider TfSE members. Lastly, the SIP provides a clear set of priorities for TfSE to focus its future activity on, helping to maximise the contribution it can make towards its member's own work.
- 3.6 Along with submission of the SIP to Government, TfSE will ask the Secretary of State to have regard to the SIP as priorities are set, policies are developed, and investment decisions are made. TfSE will use its further funding from constituent members and Government to begin to develop the proposals within the SIP. This may include tasks such as developing individual scheme business cases to attract funding through competitive bidding processes or as part of any devolved funding settlements for / within the region.

- 3.7 In response to KCC's consultation response, TfSE amended the list of schemes proposed for the Kent area and strengthened the narrative of the SIP. Specifically, TfSE have strengthened statements to make clear that the investment sought for the SIP is additional to the much-needed investment in existing networks and highways infrastructure.
- 3.8 At the TfSE Partnership Board on 14th November, amendments to a new draft final copy of the SIP were agreed, to reflect the consultation responses. KCC is represented on the Partnership Board by Dan Watkins, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. Constituent member authorities including Kent were tasked with endorsing the draft final TfSE SIP following their respective constitutions. The intention is that once all constituent members of TfSE have endorsed the SIP, the TfSE Partnership Board will finalise the SIP in March 2023 and then submit it to Government at an appropriate time.

4. Implications for KCC

- 4.1 There are no specific actions KCC needs to take arising from the completion of the SIP and its submission to Government. Implementation of the SIP will be dependent on the response from Government, future funding for TfSE, and agreement of actions between TfSE with its constituent member authorities through decisions made at the TfSE Partnership Board.
- 4.2 KCC may decide to invest time and resources into progressing elements of the SIP beyond the financial support it provides to TfSE. Should it do so, it will likely be on those proposals which are also selected as priorities within KCC's own new Local Transport Plan (LTP). As TfSE's SIP makes clear, the content of the SIP is not designed to dictate the content of constituent member LTPs. KCC's LTP will be subject to its own development, consultation, and adoption process in line with government guidance and KCC's constitution. As this takes place, the new KCC LTP will have regard of the TfSE SIP during its development.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 As TfSE will remain a non-statutory informal and voluntary group that KCC participates in, there are no legal implications of the planned decision.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 KCC contributes £58,000 per year to fund the development of TfSE – a sum included in the base budget for Highways and Transport. If KCC endorses the SIP then KCC will remain a participant in TfSE for the foreseeable future in order to support TfSE with the implementation of the SIP. Hence it is forecast that KCC will continue to pay an annual member contribution of £58,000 per annum for the life of the TfSE current forecast budget period to 2024/25. Doing so commits KCC to a further £116,000 in payments to TfSE and will take KCC's total contribution to TfSE since it was established to £388,000 by end of 2024/25.
- 6.2 KCC's contribution is matched by other constituent members as shown in the table below.

| Type of authority | Contribution per annum | Total |
|---|--|----------|
| County Councils (Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire) | £58,000 | £290,000 |
| Unitary authorities (Medway, Brighton and Hove, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton) | £30,000 | £150,000 |
| Other member authorities (Berkshire Local Transport body) | £58,000 (shared between the authorities) | £58,000 |

6.3 The £58,000 annual contribution from KCC is a direct payment to TfSE and does not include the cost of KCC officer time in attending TfSE meetings, workshops, reviewing documents and other time associated with participating in the partnership.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 The TfSE SIP has had an Integrated Impact Assessment conducted which considered the impact of the SIP proposals on equalities. It concluded that the effect would be positive given improved connectivity and ease of making journeys within the region. The SIP indicates that assessment of equalities impacts should be undertaken should any of the proposals within the TfSE SIP be progressed. Should any of those proposals in the SIP be progressed by KCC, they will be subject to their own Equalities Impact Assessment and included as part of any future decision making.

8. Data Protection implications

8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required as this decision does not require the processing of personal data.

9. Conclusion

9.1 KCC's consultation response has been considered by TfSE and amendments made to the SIP. As such it is proposed KCC endorse the SIP, by way of a Leader decision, so it can be made final and submitted by TfSE to Government.

10. Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Leader in respect of the proposed decision to:

1. Endorse the Strategic Investment Plan prepared by Transport for the South East and support TfSE with its implementation.

2. Delegate to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport to take, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, the actions necessary to implement the decision."

The Proposed Record of Decision is attached at Appendix A.

11. Background Documents

Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision

Transport for the South East (TfSE) Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) (word version) available to view on TfSE website here:

<https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/12/TfSE-Strategic-Investment-Plan-November-2022-Final-clean-word-version.pdf>

Previous Committee reports:

- ROD 16/00120 concerning Shadow Sub-National Transport Body for the South East: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s88382/1600120%20-%20signed%20ROD%20scanned.pdf>
- ROD 20/00100 concerning Transport for the South East – Proposal to Government: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s97556/20-00010%20-%20ROD.pdf>
- ROD 22/00023 concerning Transport for the South East – KCC Participation: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s110394/Record%20of%20Decision.pdf>
- Kent County Council's response to Transport for the South East's draft Strategic Investment Plan: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s113381/Appendix%203.pdf>

12. Contact Details

Report Author:

Joseph Ratcliffe, Transport Strategy
Manager
03000 413445
joseph.ratcliffe@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Haroona Chughtai, Director of
Highways and Transport
03000 413479
haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk