

Report to: **Partnership Board – Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting: **13 March 2023**
By: **Lead Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report: **Technical Programme Progress Update**
Purpose of report: **To provide a progress update on the ongoing work to deliver the technical work programme set out in the 2022/23 business plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress with the ongoing work to assist local transport authorities with the implementation of their bus service improvement plans (BSIP);**
 - (2) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE’s future mobility strategy;**
 - (3) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE’s freight logistics and gateways strategy;**
 - (4) Note the progress with the joint work on decarbonisation;**
 - (5) Note the progress with the work to develop local capability;**
 - (6) Note the progress with the work to develop a regional active travel strategy;**
 - (7) Agree to delegate authority to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair, for the procurement of a regional active travel strategy; and**
 - (8) Note that work is to commence on a refresh of the transport strategy.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on delivery of the TfSE technical work programme.

2. Bus Back Better

2.1 As reported to the Board in January 2023, TfSE is leading a joint project with Transport East and England’s Economic Heartland, to identify and deliver the support needed to assist local transport authorities (LTAs) with the delivery of their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs). The support is being provide to all LTAs in these three areas regardless of whether or not they received funding for their BSIPs. The value of the bid was £100,000 per STB area, with a total project value of £300,000.

2.2 The first stage of the work involved questionnaire surveys and a workshop, involving LTA officers and bus operators (grouped by STB area), to identify and prioritise the additional capability support it was felt LTAs needed to deliver their BSIPs. Eleven support packages were identified and delivered, covering topics including the role of demand responsive transport, alternative/low-emission fuels, low cost and quick wins, fares and ticketing, and making a strong case for bus priority improvements.

2.3 Delivery of the support packages commenced in December 2022 and is due to be completed by the end of April 2023. Thereafter, the webinar recordings and guidance documents produced as part of this project will remain available. During the course of this project, webinars and technical advice notes have been delivered on fares and ticketing, low cost quick wins, building a strong case for bus improvements, demand responsive transport, and bus infrastructure guidance. Monitoring and evaluation are taking place throughout the delivery of the packages which will be used to identify whether there are further areas of support that LTAs would like to see delivered once the current programme has been completed.

2.4 Bus forums have been established in each of the three STB geographies as part of this work. The forum for the TfSE area had their first meeting in January 2023 and will continue as a mechanism for LTAs, operators and other interested parties to meet, share guidance and best practice, continuing to support the delivery of better bus services for passengers. The second forum meetings are scheduled to take place in April and will then be held quarterly.

3. Future Mobility Strategy

3.1 The implementation of the future mobility strategy is being supported by WSP consultants. They are providing the following support to TfSE to continue to progress the implementation of the future mobility strategy until the end of May 2023:

- Organising and supporting the meetings of the future mobility forum (next meeting in May);
- Setting up and supporting working groups (as and when they are needed);
- Providing advice and support in key technical areas including the development of an approach to monitoring and evaluation and the development of pilot projects.

3.2 The last Forum meeting was held on 15 February 2023. At this meeting Conrad Haigh from Solent Transport was confirmed as Chair. There were two presentations given: *Mobile Network Data – Understanding Future Transport Demand* (Andrew Gilham, Virgin Media O2) and *Inclusive MaaS* (Djamila Ouelhadj, University of Portsmouth). The meeting also featured a workshop session on the grand challenges of piloting future mobility projects. A summary presentation of the working group on rural accessibility held on 26 January 2023 was also given.

3.3 WSP will also be preparing specifications for the following future mobility-related technical work and studies identified as priority work areas in the future mobility strategy:

- Shared knowledge hub;
- Mode propensity tool;
- Future propulsion strategy.

3.4 The initial scoping of the mode propensity tool was presented to the attendees of the Transport Strategy Working Group (held on 08 February 2023). The specifications for the other workstreams (shared knowledge hub and future propulsion strategy) are still in development.

3.5 At the January 2023 meeting, the Board agreed to delegate authority to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair, for the procurement of this further study work. A further update on progress with the future mobility work will be provided at the July 2023 meeting of the Partnership Board.

4. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

4.1 Work started in October 2022 on a small study to quantify the scale of the lorry parking issue across the South East and how this could be addressed. This work was awarded to AECOM and will extend the work that AECOM have recently completed for the Department for Transport (DfT) and National Highways identifying the scale of the lorry parking problem on the Strategic Road Network. Phase 2 of the project has commenced and will look at future demand forecasts as well as creating facilities and capacity improvements plans.

4.2 The TfSE freight forum that was originally established to oversee the development of the freight strategy will be reinvigorated in the first quarter of 2023/24. Following consultation with procurement specialists from the accountable body, arrangements have been put in place to request quotations from suitably qualified consultants to manage a future programme of freight forum meetings and support the work of the forum and associated sub-groups between those meetings. As part of this work, specifications are also to be drawn up for further technical studies that will take forward the implementation of the freight strategy including:

- A property market review to provide greater insight into the impact of current trends on logistics land and property provision and to provide some forecasting of likely future demand in the TfSE area;
- A study on the future role of coastal shipping and inland waterways for freight transport;
- Develop of an initiative to address public sector “freight blindness” and ensure a greater level of awareness of the needs of the freight sector amongst public sector bodies; and
- Production of a freight consolidation guide to provide clear, evidence-based guidance on the benefits of consolidation, including lessons learned from previous experience.

4.3 TfSE is looking at the potential for partnering with England's Economic Heartland and Transport East on elements of this study work. In January 2023 the Partnership Board agreed to delegate authority for the procurement of these studies to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair.

4.4 TfSE is currently participating, along with England's Economic Heartland and Transport East, in a study investigating where there will be a need across the highway network for alternative fuelling stations providing both EV charging and hydrogen for the road freight vehicles. This work has been procured by Midlands Connect, The first phase of the work is complete and provides base data and a spreadsheet model to be used to identify possible locations to offer these alternative fuels. The consultants Atkins and Cenex have issued the draft of their Phase 1 report.

4.5 Phase 2 of the work will consider how to begin to identify more specific locations suitable for new facilities. This will be undertaken with a range of stakeholders, including local transport and planning authorities. A further update on progress with this work will be provided to the next meeting of the Partnership Board in July 2023.

5 Decarbonisation

5.1 As was reported to the Board in January 2023 the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021, places a requirement on local transport authorities to identify how their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will deliver ambitious, quantifiable carbon reductions in transport to achieve net zero emissions.

5.2 TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) are working collaboratively to develop a decarbonisation assessment tool. A consortium consisting of WSP, City Science, and Steer have been appointed to undertake the work. Work is underway to identify baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero emissions in each of the LTAs in the three STB areas. Work is also progressing on the development of a carbon assessment tool which LTAs will then be able to use to assess the carbon reduction potential of the proposals to be included in their local transport plans.

5.3 The draft guidance on the development of Local Transport Plans, which will incorporate guidance on how LTAs should assess the carbon reduction impacts of their proposals, is due to be published before the end of March 2023. STBs have been approached to help the DfT deliver regional seminars to launch the guidance. A verbal update on this will be given at the Board meeting on 13 March 2023. The aim is to have the carbon assessment tool ready for use by LTAs once the final version of the guidance is published in the first quarter of 2023.

6 Local capability

6.1 As reported to the Board in January 2023, TfSE was awarded funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2022 with the aim of identifying the support that LTAs need to accelerate the delivery of their Local Transport Plans and related programmes.

6.2 Following extensive engagement with local transport authorities to identify gaps and solutions, Board members considered the proposals at the September 2022 Board meeting, agreeing that five proposals would be supported.

6.3 Wokingham Borough Council were funded to the value of £30,000 to improve their communications skillset in relation to engaging with residents on transport infrastructure schemes and are currently underway with their procurement processes to appoint a consultant to provide the training to achieve this.

6.4 Brighton and Hove were awarded £40,000 for a project designed to improve their strategic optioneering and communications skillsets. Three workshops have been held and they have also appointed Jacobs to support their communications training. Further officer workshops were held in late February / early March.

6.5 A joint proposal was submitted by the Solent authorities (Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, and Hampshire County Council) which aims to support the delivery of their existing Solent Regional Transport Model (SRTM). This was awarded £102,000 of funding and procurement of this is progressing with TfSE joining the evaluation panel for the tenders.

6.6 A proposal from Kent County Council for training on the production of quantifiable carbon assessments has also been allocated £18,000 of funding. There are currently 64 officers from across the TfSE area booked onto a full day course with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) on Carbon Management in Infrastructure. Places are also to be made available on a British Standards Institute carbon reduction course.

6.7 Hampshire County Council has been awarded £60,000 to develop guidance and advice documents to support the delivery of local transport plans. TfSE have been involved with scoping this work and will form part of the evaluation panel to ensure a regional perspective is offered. Delivery of this work will be resourced by Hampshire County Council and will be made available to all authorities in the region through the Regional Centre of Excellence.

6.8 Funding for each project of the capability projects must be committed by March 2023. All funding agreements have been collated and funds transferred to the relevant authorities. All the projects are being monitored by Transport for the South East and University of Western England (UWE) with progress being reported to the DfT.

7 Regional Active Travel Strategy

7.1 The aim of a regional active travel strategy will be to make walking, wheeling, and cycling an attractive, accessible, and realistic choice for more journeys undertaken across the TfSE area. It will seek to meet a number of the strategic priorities set out in the transport strategy by reducing carbon emissions through modal shift, delivering liveable communities, achieve better health and safer travel for all, and reduce inequalities through improved access to jobs, health, and leisure activities for those using active travel modes. The strategy will complement the work

being undertaken by the local transport authorities through the delivery of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. It would also respond to the SIP consultation responses received, a number of which highlighted the need for a greater focus on active travel across the region.

7.2 TfSE has met with England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Western Gateway to discuss the lessons learned from their recent regional active travel work. TfSE has used this insight to formulate a draft brief for the work, which outlines the need for a robust baseline understanding of active travel across the region, identification of a strategic network of active travel corridors and hubs, and recommendations for delivery. The strategy will add value, identify clear roles and responsibilities, provide a single voice for the south east region, make most efficient use of resources, and complement the work being undertaken by the constituent local transport authorities and the Department of Transport (DfT). A key part of this work will be engagement with local authorities within the region to understand the opportunities and challenges they face when planning and delivering active travel schemes.

7.3 Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree to delegate authority to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair, for the procurement of a regional active travel strategy.

8 Refresh of the Transport Strategy

8.1 The transport strategy was agreed by the Partnership Board in July 2020 with the intention that it would be updated every five years. Since then, there have been a number of important developments which prompt the need for it to be refreshed including the following:

- The economic impact of Covid-19 and the ongoing changes in travel behaviour following the pandemic;
- The ongoing impact of the country's departure from the European Union on economic activity in the TfSE area;
- The increased impetus on the need for rapid to decarbonisation of the transport system;
- The Government's levelling up agenda and the role of improved connectivity in delivering this.

8.2 There have also been a number of national policy announcements, including the national bus strategy and the ongoing reorganisation of the rail sector with the emergence of Great British Railways. The Government has also published guidance on the role of scenario forecasting in managing future uncertainty and common analytical scenarios for use in vision based transport planning.

8.3 All of these developments prompt the need for a refresh of the evidence base that underpinned the transport strategy and the scenario forecasting process that was used to develop it as a vision led plan. It will be important to ensure that any refresh is pragmatic and proportionate. Initial work is to be undertaken to scope what a refresh will need to encompass, the timeline for completing it and the level of

resource that would be needed. A part of this will be to review the approach adopted by both Transport for the North and Midlands Connect in reviewing and updating their transport strategies. A report on the outcome of this scoping exercise will be presented to the Board at their meeting in July 2023.

9 Financial considerations

9.1 The Bus Back Better, EV Charging Infrastructure strategy, decarbonisation, and local capability work are being funded from the additional in year funding awarded to TfSE in January 2022. The future mobility and freight strategy implementation work, active travel strategy development and initial work on the transport strategy refresh are being funded from the DfT grant funding for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

10 Conclusions and recommendations

10.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the progress that has been made with the various elements of the TfSE technical programme set out in this report. They are also recommended to agree to delegate authority to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair, for the procurement of a regional active travel strategy. A further progress update report will be presented to the Board at their meeting in July 2023.

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