

Bus, Shared Mobility and Mass Transit Policy Position Statement

V7.0 October 23 2023



Context

Bus, shared mobility, and mass transit form a vital component of the south east's transport network.

Mass transit encompasses all modes of transport capable of carrying high levels of passengers. This includes metro/underground systems and urban rail, light rail/tram systems, waterborne transport (such as ferries and hovercrafts), and bus networks with high levels of priority and frequency (such as bus rapid transit).

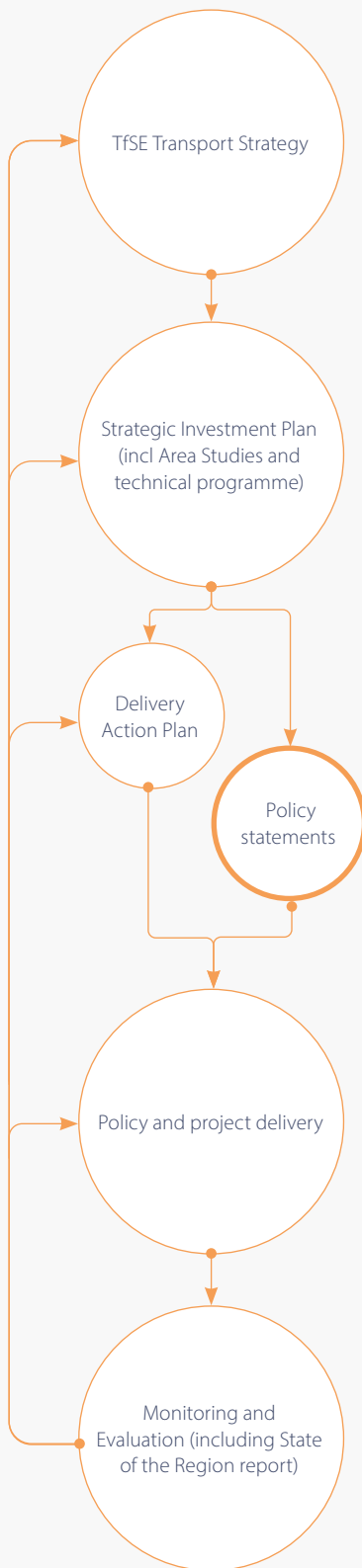
Shared mobility refers to shared modes such as taxis and private hire cars or minibuses; car clubs; and bike, e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes which are commonly accessed through an app.

The demand for bus services has declined across the south east due to a combination of reasons such as changing patterns of car ownership and usage, changing patterns of employment and the labour market; unattractive travel times and journey reliability; and poor accessibility, information provision and expensive/complicated fare structures. The Covid pandemic has further exacerbated these impacts.

However, there have been successes seen in the region's largest and most densely populated urban areas. Here, there is evidence of strong partnerships between local transport authorities and operators (or local authority led operations), innovation in service provision, and investment in bus priority infrastructure and other supporting changes. These conditions have resulted in more accessible, reliable, frequent, and faster services.



Transport for the South East



Our **Transport Strategy**, published in 2020, sets out how we will tackle these challenges and achieve our goals. In the Transport Strategy, we set out the following vision for 2050:

By 2050, the south east of England will be a leading global region for net zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step change in connectivity and environmental quality.

A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life.

Our Transport Strategy demonstrates the importance of a more integrated and sustainable transport network and emphasises how bus, shared mobility and mass transit could achieve this shared vision for the south east. Buses, shared mobility and mass transit all have an important role to play, though without effective intervention and prioritisation, it is unlikely we will see a major modal shift.

To support our vision, Transport for the South East submitted a **Strategic Investment Plan** to government in 2023. We have engaged widely with stakeholders to ensure what we put forward in the plan aligns with both their needs and their expectations in a sustainable and financially responsible manner. It is a plan developed by the south east, for the south east.

The Strategic Investment Plan is supported by thematic plans, including one about **Bus, Shared Mobility and Mass Transit**. This document builds on the thematic plan and presents Transport for the South East's position on the continuing role of bus, shared mobility and mass transit in realising our vision. It also sets out the actions Transport for the South East will lead on and deliver with our partners.

What we're going to do to deliver our 2050 vision



We will continue to work with mass transit operators and local transport authorities as well as planning authorities, statutory bodies, and communities to deliver the interventions and infrastructure improvements across the mass transit network identified in the Strategic Investment Plan.

Our role will focus on advocacy and promotion, guidance, and policy development, and supporting scheme development.

Developing Bus, Shared Mobility and Mass Transit networks

To maximise the benefits bus, shared mobility and mass transit networks can bring, integrated public transport networks need to be developed across the region. These networks should make effective use of the highway network and connect people to their homes, workplaces, schools, shops, and other transport hubs. Overall, they should offer an amenable and affordable alternative to driving.

The forms of infrastructure enabling these modes can vary considerably in terms of cost, effectiveness, and implementation time. At a more basic level schemes could include bus priority measures (such as traffic management, traffic signal controls, segregation from vehicular traffic and bus stop improvements). The development of Bus Rapid Transit and light rail schemes generally requires features such as dedicated lanes, busways, and junctions, alongside facilities for off-board fare collection.



Action 1 – Facilitate the delivery of the largest and most complex cross-boundary mass transit schemes

Develop strategic studies for the largest and most complex cross-boundary mass transit schemes that do not have a scheme promoter, providing the foundations to be built upon once funding opportunities or scheme delivery partners have been identified.



Action 2 – Develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Work with partners to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks and scheme specific plans to measure delivery and performance and gather insights and lessons learnt.

Developing new strategic mobility hubs

There is an opportunity to develop high-quality strategic mobility hubs between private, mass transit, and active modes, and with rail in some instances, in larger settlements across the south east. These hubs should serve to provide amenable interchange facilities and high-quality service information.

**Action 3 – Review mobility hub guidance**

Review existing guidance on the planning, design, and delivery of mobility hubs, including examples of best practice to provide to local authorities. This should incorporate guidance delivered through the Regional Centre of Excellence.



Developing Bus Service Improvement Plans

Bus Service Improvement Plans were underpinned through the government's National Bus Strategy – 'Bus Back Better'. The strategy says buses should be more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper. Local authorities have an important role to play in improving bus services in their local area by outlining ambitions for the development of enhanced partnerships with operators or in pursuing bus franchising.

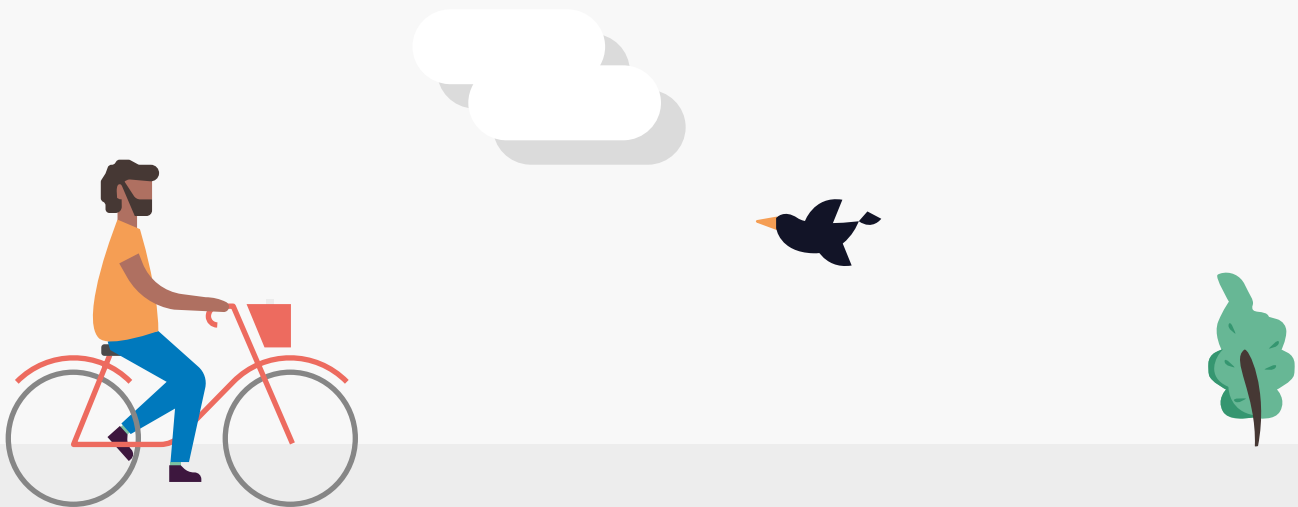


Action 4 – Facilitate early-stage scheme and business case development

Secure and allocate resource funding for early-stage scheme and business case development for bus, shared mobility and mass transit schemes, including support from both our analytical framework programme and our Regional Centre of Excellence.

Supporting demand responsive transport trials

Demand responsive transport trials have been undertaken in several locations across the UK. The trials saw some success in facilitating modal shift from car and taxi, alongside reducing levels of social isolation in those areas.





Action 5 – Monitor demand responsive transport trials

Work with local transport authority partners to identify and support trials across the TfSE area for (digital) demand responsive transport, sharing lessons from the monitoring and evaluation of regional and wider national trials.

Supporting shared mobility schemes

There is a range of shared mobility schemes in operation across many urban, semi-urban and rural contexts across the UK, which are commonly accessed through an app. These can include a variety of vehicle types such as on-demand private hire cars or minibuses; car clubs; and bike, e-bike, and e-scooters. Evidence suggests these types of schemes are successful in reducing car dependency whilst promoting modal shift.



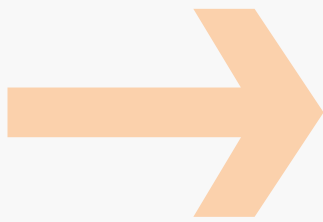
Action 6 – Monitor shared mobility schemes

Work with local transport authority partners to identify and support shared mobility schemes across the TfSE area, sharing lessons learnt from the monitoring and evaluation of schemes around the regional, nationally and internationally.



Facilitating behavioural change

Bus, shared mobility, and mass transit services provide an ideal alternative to private transport, whilst helping alleviate issues surrounding social isolation. As a result, it is important that local transport authorities work collaboratively with bus operators to deliver effective marketing and behavioural change campaigns showcasing the effectiveness of these modes whilst presenting new products and offers (such as the governments' temporary £2.00 cap on single tickets).



Action 7 – Engage central government

Engage central government and its agencies to provide funding and guidance for schemes and programmes that enable greater travel choices through promotional campaigns for bus, shared mobility, and mass transit modes.



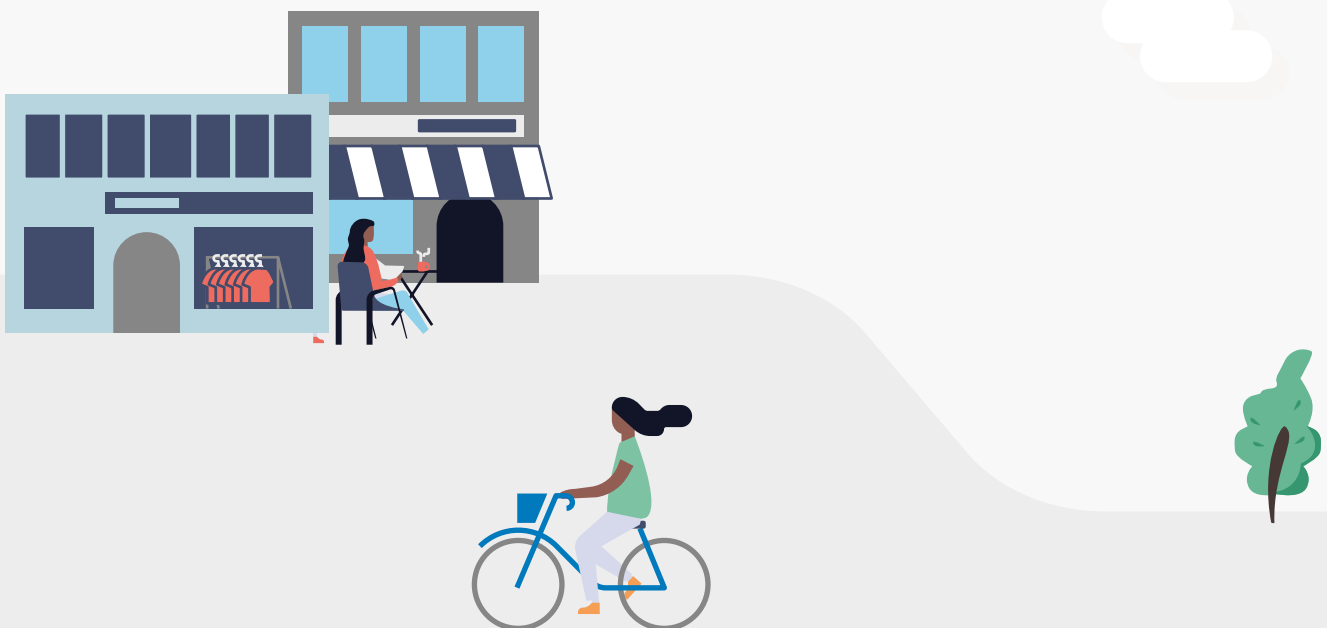
Next steps

Reflecting our status as the Sub-national Transport Body for the south east we will work with our delivery partners and other stakeholders to implement the actions included in this policy position statement. We will tailor our approach to the mode, scale, and level of development of each prioritised intervention.

We will use our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to report our progress against these actions on an annual basis.

Contact us

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