

Peninsula Transport Strategy Consultation Draft Response from Transport for the South East

1. Introduction

1.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Peninsula Transport Strategy – Strategic Transport Priorities to 2050. This is an officer level response which will be presented to our Partnership Board in April 2024. A further iteration of it may therefore follow.

1.2 TfSE is a sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England, bringing together leaders from across the local government, business and transport sectors to speak with one voice on our region's strategic transport needs. Since its inception in 2017, TfSE has quickly emerged as a powerful and effective partnership for our region. We have a [30-year transport strategy](#) in place which carries real weight and influence and will shape government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. The Secretary of State has confirmed that they will have regard to our strategy in developing new policy. We work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) DfT to provide advice to the Secretary of State and our ambition is to become a statutory body with devolved powers over key strategic transport issues.

1.3 Our principal decision-making body, the [Partnership Board](#), brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, five Local Enterprise Partnerships, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, Highways England, Network Rail and Transport for London.

1.4 Our [Strategic Investment Plan \(SIP\) for South East England](#) provides a framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services, and regulatory interventions in the coming three decades. The plan presents a compelling case for action for investors, including government departments – notably the Treasury and Department for Transport (DfT) – as well as private sector investors. It is written for and on behalf of the South East's residents, communities, businesses, and political representatives. The plan provides a framework for delivering our Transport Strategy, which:

- is a blueprint for investment in the South East;
- shows how we will achieve our ambitions for the South East;
- is owned and delivered in partnership;
- is a regional plan with evidenced support, to which partners can link their own local strategies and plans – a golden thread that connects policy at all levels;
- provides a sequenced plan of multi-modal investment packages that are place based and outcome focused; and
- examines carbon emissions impacts as well as funding and financing options.

1.5 TfSE welcome this opportunity to respond to the Peninsula Transport Strategy – Strategic Transport Priorities to 2050. We trust that our response will provide value to the work of Peninsula Transport in this area, but also form the basis for further engagement, especially as TfSE is undertaking a refresh of its own transport strategy throughout 2024/5. Specifically, we are keen to establish policy consistency on cross-boundary matters with other STBs. While we do not have a direct boundary with the Peninsula, transport heading to and from the peninsula does influence our networks.

2. Unique Challenges

2.1 TfSE notes that many of the strategic transport challenges faced on the peninsula closely align with those of our own challenges. Of note are the challenges around Achieving Net Zero and Rural Accessibility. For the former, our area is also characterised by high levels of car ownership and the dominance of the private car. For the latter, while our rural population is, on average, of higher income, issues around a less accessible rural public transport network – specifically for buses that have been subject to significant reductions – are common to our area as much as they are with the Peninsula.

2.2 With regards to cross-boundary movements, the evidence base to your Transport Strategy makes mention of a key international gateway for freight transport being the port at Portsmouth. Much of the traffic using this port uses either the A35 – A31 – M27 corridor, or the A303 – A36 – M27 corridor. These are corridors that we have identified as having poor connectivity, poor reliability, and frequent congestion along often single carriageway routes. This also reflects a wider issue within the TfSE area of poor east-west connectivity.

2.3 Tackling such connectivity issues, we would argue, should be a joint priority for TfSE, Peninsula Transport, and Western Gateway STBs. On this, we would like to see support being given in the transport strategy for initiatives to improve connectivity across this whole corridor, such the West of England Service Enhancements and M27 / M271 Smart Motorway as set out in our own [Strategic Investment Plan](#). This would bring benefits to all users across the corridor, including those from the South West.

2.4 More immediately, we would recommend providing additional text on the page setting out the Unique Challenges in your transport strategy. This would simply be the addition of “including on strategic transport links to nearby regions” in the Network Resilience and Freight Transport boxes.

3. A strategy for the user

3.1 TfSE supports the approach of basing a transport policy around the needs of the user and tackling user pain points. We particularly commend the clear vision that is set in the strategy for a cleaner, greener, and safer network from 2035 onwards, with articulated and deliverable goals under easier journeys, going electric, a connected peninsula, and completing the transport network.

3.2 All aspects of this future vision broadly align with our own strategic priorities. However, there is an area that we feel would add significant weight to the strategy is specifically in the “A Connected Peninsula” section Under Resilient, Safe, and Reliable Road and Rail links, we would like to see a change to the second part of the final sentence from “including to ports and airports” to “including to ports, airports, and key economic centres in nearby regions.” This would stress the importance of cross-border travel to many elements of the South West economy, and the need for good, reliable access to significant nearby markets, including those in the Solent. This would be a minor amendment to the document that would add significant value in making the case for funding for strategic transport connectivity improvements.

4. Our Immediate Priorities

4.1 TfSE is supportive of the immediate priorities for Peninsula Transport as set out in the transport strategy. These appear to be well-evidenced and supported in policy terms at a local authority level

within the peninsula. They consist of what will be most easy to deliver, or interventions that support regional action.

4.2 Under “A connected peninsula” we would recommend an additional action on improving connectivity between regions. Specifically we would recommend the following text: “Develop the case for enhancement of strategic transport connections to nearby regions.” This would place an emphasis on what the region can gain from such improvements, notably enhanced connections to other regional economic markets, and model shift for strategic transport (especially in the case of rail connections).