

**Report to:** Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

**Date of meeting:** 27 January 2025

**By:** Chair of Audit and Governance Committee

**Title of report:** Audit and Governance Committee Update

**Purpose of report:** To provide an update on the Audit and Governance Committee

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***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- 1) Note the discussions and actions arising at the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee; and
  - 2) Members are also asked to agree the Strategic Risk Register.
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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Audit and Governance Committee met on Wednesday 15 January 2025. This report provides a summary of the discussions and actions to take forward.

## **2. Audit and Governance Committee**

2.1 The Committee reviewed the draft Business Plan 2025/26. The Committee commended the Business Plan, noting the work had gone into it. The Committee also reviewed the spend of the forecast uncommitted underspend of £317,435 on delivering additional technical work, agreeing the recommendations put forward.

2.2 The Committee reviewed the finance position spend to December 2024, noting the reduced underspend. From 2025/26 the Committee have requested confidence ratings for the end of year forecasts to be reviewed at their meetings.

2.3 The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by the Committee. The Committee noted the new risks that had been identified following the publication of the Devolution White Paper. Whilst the Committee agreed with the new risks, they asked for the probability to be increased to a 5, as devolution is a certain, even if each combined authority's timescales, powers and geographies are not certain. The Committee asked for Devolution to be a standing item on their agenda.

2.4 The Committee reviewed their forward programme of work for 2025/26 noting that whilst we are going through Devolution and begin to gather more of an

understanding, there will be a requirement for Committee to work on the Inter Authority Agreements and Constitution. The Committee are going to consider which areas of TfSE's technical work programme they wish to conduct a deep dive on ahead of their next meeting.

### **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

3.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the discussions and actions arising at the recent meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee and approve the Strategic Risk Register.

**Councillor Joy Dennis**  
**Chair**  
**Audit and Governance Committee**  
**Transport for the South East**

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# Risk Register

## Programme Overview

January 2025



#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI = Risk score	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability			Impact	Probability	Risk score			
2	<b>Government Policy - STBs</b> Government policy around STBs is uncertain, particularly in light of other changes to government policy.	4	4	16	Continue to monitor developments. Work with other STBs to produce a strategy for potential changes to government policy.	1	2	2	All	Ongoing	SOG
3	<b>MP Engagement</b> Local MPs do not support TfSE and its strategy.	3	3	9	Following the general election, TfSE received 50 new MPs. Attend Liberal Democrat conference, 0 Lib Dem MPs pre election, now have 18. Scheduling meetings with all new MPs	2	2	4	Head of Programme and Policy	Ongoing	PB
4	<b>TfSE - Statutory Status</b> Maintaining the TfSE partnership without statutory status.	2	3	6	Ongoing engagement with Leaders. Secure indicative funding for future years to demonstrate DfT commitment to TfSE.	2	1	2	Chief Officer	Ongoing	PB
6	<b>TfSE - Value</b> Wider stakeholders do not recognise value of TfSE.	2	2	4	Use appropriate stakeholder forums as a route to engage stakeholders. Communication and Engagement Plan 2024/25 to be implemented.	1	2	2	Head of Programme and Policy	Ongoing	SOG
8	<b>Reduced Funding for 24/25</b> Reduced funding in 2024/25 may impact on work programme as set out in Business Plan.	4	3	12	£200k reduction from the ask set out within the Business Plan for 2024/25. Agreed amended work plan delivering against this.	2	2	4	All	Ongoing	PB
9	<b>Regional Inequality</b> Focus on regional inequality directs investment away from the South East. Grouping of London & SE not an accurate representation.	4	4	16	Continue to make the case for investment in the South East. We will continue to monitor distribution of project funding across STB regions as part of our value for money work within our Annual Report.	4	3	12	SOG/ Secretariat	Ongoing	PB
11	<b>TfSE Staff - Retention</b> Retaining staff in TfSE and plans to replace staff if the need arises.	2	2	4	Ensure succession planning is in place. Regular supervisions with staff, opportunities for further development and training. Advertising roles in key publications. Making roles region-wide and flexible approach to working. Using recruitment consultants as and when appropriate.	2	1	2	TfSE Management Team	Ongoing	PB

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12	<b>Procurement</b> Procurement unable to respond to adhoc needs from TfSE	1	2	2	Develop forward plan with procurement for future work. Majority of work will go through the technical call off contract.	1	1	1	Secretariat	Ongoing	PB
13	<b>SIP Delivery Plan</b> Constituent authorities do not support the SIP delivery plan.	2	2	4	Continued engagement with SIP delivery partners.	1	2	2	Analytical Team	Ongoing	SOG
15	<b>Infrastructure Investment proposals - challenges</b> Challenge to infrastructure investment proposals from stakeholders.	3	4	12	Robust evidence and processes to demonstrate approach. Exploring how to unlock private investment through our Funding & Finance Working group	2	4	8	Head of Programme and Policy	Ongoing	SOG
18	<b>24/25 Budget</b> Managing the 24/25 Budget to ensure the DfT grant and carry forward from 23/24 is fully spent	3	3	9	Effective budget monitoring on a monthly basis and demonstrate TfSE's performance to DfT through regular review meetings and annual report.	2	2	4	Head of Programme and Policy	Ongoing	SOG / PB
19	<b>Transport Forum - engagement</b> Transport Forum members engagement with the new structure	2	3	6	Members have had two sessions of digital engagement, two face to face events and a third planned in for January 2025. The Advisory Panel have met before the two recent board meetings, a forward programme is to be created for them to remain focussed. Engagement Manager is reviewing the membership of the group and preparing a refresh.	2	2	4	JL & JMS	Ongoing	PB
20	<b>Scheme Promoters</b> TfSE members are not prepared to be scheme promoters to larger schemes with large risks. This could lead to failing to deliver the TfSE transport strategy.	4	4	16	Report on the impact of inflation on schemes, we will use the report to continue discussions with DfT and advocate for a resolution. Working with DfT to better understand cost overrun risk. Officers will explore private sector funding for schemes through the funding and finance meetings. Centre of Excellence work will support early scheme development. Continue development of the common analytical framework with other STBs.	4	3	12	Chief Officer	Ongoing	PB
21	<b>LEPs Dissolution</b> The dissolution of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in March 2023 leaves a gap in business representation within the Transport for the South East governance structure.	3	4	12	The Business Advisory Group (BAG) have now met twice, a terms of reference has been agreed and an agreed format of an agenda to ensure the business voice is heard at each meeting to feed back into the Partnership Board. Partnership Board can assess the efficacy of the new BAG in capturing the business voice and whether any changes are needed.	1	1	2	Chief Officer	Jul-24	PB

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22	<p><b>Transport Policies</b></p> <p>Shifts in transport policies and funding allocations, meaning investment in the South East is paused or cancelled.</p>	5	4	20	<p>Maintain open and regular communication with DfT to ensure we are informed about any potential policy changes.</p> <p>TfSE have been approached by the Integrated National Transport Strategy team to support them with their early engagement work.</p>	4	3	12	Chief Officer	Ongoing	PB
23	<p><b>Delays in government policy direction.</b></p> <p>There could be delays in decision-making processes that could impact the timely implementation of our work programme.</p>	4	4	16	<p>Ensure we maintain open communication with local authorities, stakeholders and the public to manage any expectations and address any concerns promptly.</p> <p>Ensure we are building in flexible timelines within our work in the programme.</p>	4	3	12	Chief Officer	Ongoing	PB
24	<p><b>Transport Strategy Refresh - Constituent Authorities Support</b></p> <p>Constituent Authorities do not support the Transport Strategy Refresh and does not agree to support the 'missions'.</p>	4	4	16	<p>Changes to local government control mean that the Transport Strategy Refresh will need the sign-off of different stakeholders than the original Transport Strategy.</p> <p>The Transport Strategy Task and Finish Group have now met four times. The Partnership Board have signed off the Strategy at their meeting in December, and it was formally launched on 10th December and is out for consultation for 12 weeks. A number of face to face support surgeries are being scheduled in around the TfSE area.</p>	4	2	8	TfSE Management Team	Dec-25	PB
25	<p><b>Transport Strategy Refresh - Central Government Support</b></p> <p>Central government does not support the Transport Strategy Refresh and does not sign off the 'missions'.</p> <p>The new government means that the Transport Strategy Refresh needs the sign-off of a different Government than the original Transport Strategy.</p>	4	3	12	<p>The Transport Strategy will align with the emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Ensure we continue to engage with DfT officials, and engage with new Ministers following the election.</p> <p>Session took place in October with DfT policy leads on the Transport Strategy Refresh.</p>	4	2	8	TfSE Management Team	Dec-25	PB
26	<p><b>Local Contributions</b></p> <p>Constituent authorities are not able to pay Local Contributions from 2025 onwards.</p>	5	4	20	<p>Early agreement at Partnership Board. SOG members advised to work into operational budgets. October Board meeting, the Board agreed that the level of contribution would remain as it was in previous years recognising the pressures local authorities are facing.</p> <p>Officers produced work on demonstrating how TfSE delivers value for partners.</p>	4	2	8	KW / Secretariat	Ongoing	SOG / PB

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27	<p><b>South East Devolution</b></p> <p>The lack of devolution in the South East means that the South East does not receive the same level of policy focus as the North and Devolved Administrations.</p> <p>The South East has no representation in groups such as the Council of Regions and Nations.</p>	4	4	16	<p>Transport for the South East will engage with DfT Ministers and Officials to ensure the South East and Local Authorities in the South East remain high on the Government's agenda.</p> <p>We will reflect any implications within the devolution white paper.</p>	3	2	6	KW / Secretariat	Ongoing	SOG / PB
28	<p><b>Rail Reform</b></p> <p>The impacts of the Government's plans for rail reform are uncertain.</p> <p>TfSE's role may need to develop to provide strategic advice and democratic accountability to a new Great British Railways body.</p>	4	2	8	<p>TfSE will continue to monitor Government plans and continue to engage with DfT, Network Rail and Great British Railways as plans develop.</p> <p>TfSE will explore options for playing a bigger role in rail, as part of next year's Business Plan.</p>	4	1	4	KW / Secretariat	Ongoing	SOG / PB
29	<p><b>Storage of Data</b></p> <p>Consistency of data across TfSE geography. Plans if there was a loss of our key operational data and reliance on the ESCC data architecture</p>	4	4	16	<p>The analytical team are developing a data management plan. Clear documentation on any work produced by TfSE and what our data sources are.</p> <p>Backup of databases, with considerations to be made if we moved away from a particular software.</p> <p>Data architecture is being developed.</p>	2	2	4	Analytical Team	Ongoing	SOG / PB
30	<p><b>Use of Data</b></p> <p>Potential breach of GDPR or breach of data licences, which could result in prosecution/fines</p>	4	4	16	<p>Ensure proper governance in using our data. GDPR register to be completed and reviewed quarterly by the TfSE GDPR officer.</p> <p>Data catalogue to contain the licencing details for each item. TfSE officers (and consultants) to be made aware of and adhere to the constraints set out.</p>	2	1	2	Analytical Team	Ongoing	SOG / PB
32	<p><b>National Planning Policy Reform</b></p> <p>Uncertainty on the impacts of National Planning Policy Reform and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The NPPF reforms could add extra requirements for housebuilding onto Local Authorities, without adequate transport funding, or a mechanism for raising revenues from housebuilding.</p>	4	4	16	<p>TfSE will continue to monitor Government plans and continue to engage with MHCLG and DfT.</p> <p>TfSE recently responded to the open consultation on the NPPF.</p>	4	3	12	Chief Officer	Ongoing	SOG / PB

