Transport for the South East
Partnership Board Meeting

Agenda

Monday 2 February 2025, 14:00-17:00

Virtual – **Join MS Teams Meeting here**

Partnership Board Members		
Cllr Keith Glazier (Chair) Leader East Sussex County Council	Cllr Simon Curry (Deputy Chair) Cabinet Member, Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration Medway Council	Cllr Trevor Muten Cabinet member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr John Ennis Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport Reading Council *(representing BLTB)*	Cllr Paul Fuller Member of Economy, Regeneration, Transport and Infrastructure Isle of Wight Council	Cllr Peter Osborne Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Kent County Council
Cllr Lulu Bowerman Executive Member for Highways and Waste Hampshire County Council	Cllr Peter Candlish Cabinet Member for Transportation Portsmouth City Council	Cllr Alexander Winning Leader Southampton City Council
Cllr Matt Furniss Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure Surrey County Council	Cllr Joy Dennis Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport West Sussex County Council	Geoff French CBE Chair of the TfSE Transport Forum
Vince Lucas Business Representative *(co-chair Business Advisory group)*	Shamal Ratnayaka Aviation Strategy Lead Transport for London	Cllr Matt Boughton Leader Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council *(jointly representing District and Borough Councils)*
Mark Potter South Downs National Park Authority *(Representative from Protected Landscapes)*	Richard Leonard Network Planning Director National Highways	Cllr Sophie Cox Leader Worthing Borough Council *(jointly representing District and Borough Councils)*
Daniel Ruiz Business Representative *(co-chair Business Advisory group)*		

Guests: Sarah Rae (Steer), John Collins (Arup)

	Item	Who
1	**Welcome and Apologies**	Cllr Keith Glazier
2	**Minutes from last meeting (p4-p16)**	Cllr Keith Glazier
3	**Declarations of interest**	Cllr Keith Glazier
4	**Statements from the public**	Cllr Keith Glazier
	For Decision	
5	**Rail Strategy (p17-p120)**	Kate Over
6	**Report of the Audit and Governance Committee (p120-135)**	Cllr Joy Dennis
7	**Finance Update (p136-p138)**	Keir Wilkins
8	**Responses to consultations (p139-p189)**	Rupert Clubb
	For Information	
9	**SIP Refresh Update (p190-p191)**	Sarah Valentine
10	**Business Advisory Group (p192-p193)**	Daniel Ruiz / Vince Lucas
11	**Analytical Framework Update (p194-p196)**	Sarah Valentine
12	**Delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan (p197-p200)**	Sarah Valentine
13	**Technical Programme Update (p201-p205)**	Mark Valleley
14	**Centre of Excellence update (p206-p212)**	Emily Bailey
15	**Advisory Panel and Transport Forum (p213-p214)**	Geoff French
16	**Communications & Stakeholder engagement (p215-p216)**	James Boyes
17	**AOB**	Cllr Keith Glazier
18	**Date of Next Meeting** Thursday 26 March 2026, 14:00-17:00, London	Cllr Keith Glazier

Officers in Attendance

Rupert Clubb	Transport for the South East
Sarah Valentine	Transport for the South East
Keir Wilkins	Transport for the South East
Mark Valleley	Transport for the South East
Eleanor Jewell	Transport for the South East
Emily Bailey	Transport for the South East
James Boyes	Transport for the South East
Amelia Williamson	Transport for London
Carolyn McKenzie	Surrey County Council
Lyndon Mendes	Surrey County Council
Owen Jenkins	Surrey County Council
Chris Maddocks	Reading Borough Council
Hayley Chivers	Portsmouth City Council
Natalie Wigman	Hampshire County Council
Pete Boustred	Southampton City Council
Peter Duggan	DfT
Denise Tate	Tonbridge & Malling Council
Stuart Kistruck	Network Rail
Darryl Hemmings	West Sussex County Council
Alex Pringle	SDNPA
Thomas Cornwell	National Highways
Laura Wells	Brighton and Hove City Council
Joseph Ratcliffe	Kent County Council
Mark Breakthwick	Medway Council

TfSE Partnership Board
27 October 2025 – 14:00-17:00
Minutes - *draft*
ICE, Council Room

Partnership Board Members

Cllr Keith Glazier (Chair) Leader East Sussex County Council	Cllr Simon Curry (Vice Chair) Cabinet Member, Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration Medway Council	Cllr Trevor Muten Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr John Ennis Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport Reading Borough Council *(representing BLTB)*	Cllr Paul Fuller Justice of the Peace Isle of Wight Council	Cllr Kirsty North Representing Hampshire County Council
Cllr Matt Furniss Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure Surrey County Council	Cllr Joy Dennis Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport West Sussex County Council	Geoff French CBE Chair Transport Forum
Mark Potter Deputy Chair SDNPA Representing protected landscapes	James Craig Lead Strategic Planner Network Rail	Cllr Christie Lambert Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport Southampton City Council
Shamal Ratnayaka Aviation Strategy Lead Transport for London		

Apologies:

- Cllr Peter Osborne, Kent County Council
- Cllr Peter Candlish, Portsmouth City Council
- Cllr Lulu Bowerman, Hampshire County Council
- Cllr Matt Boughton, District and Borough representative
- Cllr Sophie Cox, District and Borough representative
- Dave Hooper, Network Rail
- Richard Leonard, National Highways
- Daniel Ruiz, Business Representative
- Vince Lucas, Business Representative
- Dan Taylor, DfT

Officers attended:

- Rupert Clubb, Transport for the South East

- Sarah Valentine, Transport for the South East
- Mark Valleley, Transport for the South East
- Keir Wilkins, Transport for the South East
- Emily Bailey, Transport for the South East
- Joshua Jiao, Transport for the South East
- James Boyes, Transport for the South East
- Jaimie McSorley, Transport for the South East
- Eleanor Jewell, Transport for the South East

Item	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies	
1.1 Councillor Keith Glazier (KG) welcomed Members to the meeting and noted apologies. 1.2 Apologies were received from Cllr Osborne, Cllr Candlish, Cllr Lulu Bowerman, Cllr Matt Boughton, Cllr Sophie Cox, Dave Hooper, Richard Leonard, Daniel Ruiz, Vince Lucas. 1.3 KG welcomed Cllr Kirsty North attending as a substitute for Cllr Lulu Bowerman, representing Hampshire. 1.4 KG welcomed Shamal Ratnayaka joining the Partnership Board representing Transport for London. 1.5 KG welcomed James Craig, attending as a substitute for Dave Hooper, representing Network Rail. 1.6 KG reminded Members that the Government had set out its position on future funding for TfSE in a letter, which was sent to Members on 8 September. 1.7 KG introduced Rupert Clubb (RC), who provided context for the restricted item at the end of the meeting, noting that this is confidential. 1.8 KG updated the Board on a recent meeting with DfT Director General, Conrad Bailey, alongside other Board Members, where Members shared their views on the DfT decision. 1.9 KG introduced Peter Duggan (PD), who provided an update on behalf of DfT. PD emphasised that the recent announcement does not reflect on the work of TfSE. The key decision is that local authorities will now receive all revenue funding. DfT confirmed it will continue to engage with TfSE, provide a funding allocation for 2026/27, and give due regard to TfSE's work.	
2. Minutes from last meeting	
2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	

3. Declarations of Interest	
3.1 Cllr Glazier asked Board Members to declare any interests they may have in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.	
4. Statements from the public	
4.1 Cllr Glazier confirmed that no statements from the public have been made.	
5. Transport Strategy Refresh	
5.1 KG noted that the constitution sets out that a decision on the Transport Strategy requires a super majority decision. RC confirmed that a super majority was present at the meeting. 5.2 Mark Valleley (MV) introduced the item. The objective today is to ask the Board to agree the final version of the transport strategy. 5.3 At the Partnership Board in July, the Board agreed the draft final version of the strategy, which had feedback from the consultation period incorporated. Following the meeting, four authorities (The Isle of Wight Council, Kent County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council) wished to seek approval for the draft final version. 5.4 Since this meeting, The Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council have approved the draft final version. 5.5 On 9 September the draft final Transport Strategy was taken to Kent's Environment, Transport Cabinet Committee, where they agreed to make a recommendation to the Leader to endorse the Strategy. This decision is still to be taken and once a decision is taken it will be subject to the call in period for scrutiny. 5.6 Following the July Partnership meeting, a final proofread of the strategy document was undertaken and small amendments were made, which do not affect its substance, intent, or conclusions. The Integrated Sustainability Agreement (ISA) that sits alongside the Transport Strategy was agreed at the July meeting. 5.7 If the strategy is agreed today, a communications and engagement plan has been prepared. A summary document has been produced, which can be used to promote the strategy. 5.8 Cllr Simon Curry (SC) noted the importance of using accurate maps, and for this to be reflected developing the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) refresh as there was one scheme in Medway shown on one of the maps that is no longer being pursued.	

5.9 Cllr Paul Fuller (PF) noted that the Transport Strategy was endorsed at the Isle of Wight council meeting, and while they agreed to support it, Isle of Wight Members felt TfSE could be bolder and go further. 5.10 Cllr Trevor Muten (TM) emphasised the importance of ensuring the Transport Strategy and SIP are closely aligned with local authorities' Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and any future plans developed by Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs). KG noted that while MCAs will take time to develop their own regional transport plans, having an overarching TfSE Transport Strategy in place is both supportive and beneficial in the interim. 5.11 The recommendations were **agreed** by a super majority of the Partnership Board, meaning the Transport Strategy is adopted as TfSE's strategic advice to Government. ***RECOMMENDATIONS:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to: (1) Note the outcomes of the approval processes pursued by the Isle of Wight Council, Kent County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire County Council to agree the transport strategy, and; (2) Agree the final version of the transport strategy.	
6. Regional Travel Survey	
6.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) introduced the item, providing context to the Regional Travel Survey (RTS), outlining how it is already being used to inform TfSE workstreams. 6.2 SV noted that TfSE is working with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to provide detailed data analysis to support their local transport plans and welcomed the opportunity to extend this service to other local transport authorities. 6.3 SV introduced Joshua Jiao (JJ), who presented the RTS approach and highlighted key findings for the region. JJ confirmed that the data and accompanying dashboards will be shared with officers via the TfSE Centre of Excellence, alongside a launch webinar on 7 November. 6.4 JJ noted that TFSE will explore collaboration opportunities with the Department for Transport (DfT) and universities, including the potential use of DfT's synthetic population tool. 6.5 To ensure data reliability, TfSE will monitor behavioural changes over time, with the intention (subject to Board approval) for the survey to be conducted biennially. 6.6 Councillor Trevor Muten (TM) queried whether the RTS sufficiently captured responses from younger demographics. JJ acknowledged that initial responses were limited in this group but confirmed that targeted engagement was undertaken to address and rectify this.	

6.7 TM asked whether walking within urban areas is adequately reflected in the assessment. JJ confirmed that it is, explaining that the survey captures details of all trips made by respondent, including mode of travel, thereby ensuring walking is represented alongside other modes. 6.8 TM queried whether mobile network data being procured could be integrated with the RTS to strengthen data collection JJ confirmed that this data will be combined. 6.9 TM asked how the RTS data could be used to encourage modal shift. JJ noted that the findings will be used to highlight opportunities for behavioural change. 6.10 The recommendation was **agreed** by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the Regional Travel Survey and endorse the proposed next steps.	
7. State of the Region	
7.1 SV introduced this item, noting that this is the second State of the Region report, following the inaugural publication in 2023. 7.2 The 2025 report was presented, with SV highlighting key findings including the continued uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) across the region and the ongoing challenges around public transport accessibility in rural areas. 7.3 Cllr Simon Curry (SC) welcomed the report and the valuable data it provides. 7.4 Cllr Paul Fuller (PF) queried the inclusion of Heathrow as an international airport, given its location outside of the TfSE, noting that other nearby international airports such as Bournemouth is used frequently by residents, but not referenced. They should be considered in future iterations of the report. 7.5 Cllr John Ennis (JE) drew attention to the drop in bus and rail patronage and highlighted the challenges of fare prices in being able to improve those numbers. 7.6 Councillor Joy Dennis (JD) suggested reviewing the impacts of the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) on Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in rural areas, to understand if demand matches assumptions. 7.7 The recommendation was **agreed** by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree the 2025 State of the Region Report and agree to its publication on the TfSE website.	

8. Intermodal Rail Freight Interchange Study	
8.1 Mark Valleley (MV) provided an outline of the Intermodal Rail Freight Interchange Study to the Partnership Board. 8.2 The study identified opportunities for both expansion and new infrastructure essential to supporting the shift of freight from road to rail and meeting the Government's target of achieving 75% growth in rail freight by 2050. This work builds on the priorities established through TfSE's Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy. 8.3 The report outlined several challenges, including limited land availability for infrastructure, the complexity of planning processes, and a lack of local authority awareness regarding the need for freight interchange facilities. 8.4 Key recommendations included ensuring the importance of rail freight interchanges is reflected in local authority plans and accelerating planning processes. TfSE is to consider hosting a stakeholder roundtable to develop an action plan for progressing these recommendations. Additionally, there is a need for TfSE to work with government to raise the profile of these facilities and secure their recognition as critical national infrastructure. 8.5 Mark Potter (MP) welcomed the potential benefits around decarbonisation, accessibility, and local investment but expressed concern that the previous study did not sufficiently consider protected landscapes. He noted that many areas identified as lacking infrastructure are within such landscapes and cautioned against the use of permitted development rights, which could bypass planning safeguards. MP requested further engagement on how potential impacts could be mitigated. 8.6 Cllr Trevor Muten (TM) welcomed the report but raised concerns about rail capacity constraints in Sussex and questioned how the strategy accounts for freight movement from ports given these limitations. MV explained that this study focused specifically on interchanges, and wider capacity issues would be addressed through the forthcoming Rail Strategy. 8.7 Cllr Kirsty North (KN) welcomed Andover's ranking as sixth in terms of potential interchange development and suggested further engagement with local officers to support this opportunity. 8.8 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) highlighted the need for Croydon Junction area pinch point to be addressed, echoing Cllr Muten's comments on capacity and emphasising the importance of addressing this during future development work. 8.9 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATIONS:*** The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to: (1) Note the findings and conclusions of the Intermodal Rail Freight Interchange Study; and, (2) Agree the study report, recommendations and next steps.	

9. Audit and Governance Committee	
9.1 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) provided Members with an update on the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 25 September and thanked those who attended. 9.2 JD reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) letter had been discussed at the meeting and noted that it would be addressed further under the restricted item on today's agenda. 9.3 JD highlighted early considerations regarding potential changes to the TfSE Constitution and Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA), noting that a review may be required in light of devolution and local government reorganisation. JD emphasised the importance of maintaining flexibility given that no formal decisions have yet been made. Any proposed amendments will be brought to a future Partnership Board meeting for consideration. 9.4 JD outlined the outcome of the recent audit of TfSE, which received a rating of reasonable assurance. The two recommendations arising from the audit have already been implemented. 9.5 JD also provided an overview of the updated risk register, noting several amendments made following the DfT announcement. The revised version will be presented at the January Partnership Board meeting. 9.6 The Committee also reviewed TfSE's financial position, assigning confidence ratings to each budget line; this will be detailed further under the finance item. 9.7 KG thanked the Committee for their work. 9.8 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the discussions and actions arising at the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.	
10. Finance Update	
10.1 Keir Wilkins (KW) provided an update on TfSE's financial position to the end of quarter two for 2025/26. 10.2 KW reported that expenditure stood at just under £1 million to the end of September, which is in line with expectations. Funding is forecast to increase over the remainder of the year as payments are made upon completion of work. These figures have been reviewed and scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee. 10.3 KW also provided TfSE's forecast expenditure to the end of the financial year, noting that these forecasts have been amended following the	

completion of final scoping work. Cost savings against the budget are being provided, particularly through work that will be delivered by the Centre of Excellence. 10.4 The recommendation was agreed by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to consider and approve the methodology and plan for the periodic update of the SIP.	
11. Responses to Consultations	
11.1 Rupert Clubb (RC) provided an overview of the three consultation responses submitted by TfSE. 11.2 Cllr Matt Furniss (MF) raised a concern regarding the response to the House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry – Joined-up journeys: achieving and measuring transport integration, particularly its references to Greater Manchester, which uses a franchising model. MF noted that this should not be cited as an example of best practice, as Enhanced Partnerships currently work well and franchising should not be imposed on local authorities as a result of the inquiry. RC acknowledged that franchising is not a suitable model for all areas and recognised both the benefits of Enhanced Partnerships and the potential opportunities franchising could bring to some urban settings. RC agreed to amend the consultation response to reflect this discussion. 11.3 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) asked about behaviour change referenced in the same inquiry, including how it would be achieved and within what timescales. RC noted that it would be for the Transport Committee to draw conclusions based on the evidence submitted. 11.4 JD also queried the response to the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan Consultation, particularly around rural bus services. JD suggested distinguishing between leisure trips through the park and journeys made by residents. RC acknowledged that transport corridors through national parks present unique challenges and welcomed discussion on how to reflect this in the response, referencing the opportunities provided by the Regional Travel Survey and mobile network data. Mark Potter (MP) noted the difficulties in disaggregating such data. 11.5 Cllr John Ennis (JE) highlighted recent discussions in Reading, which showed that increased leisure travel has contributed to higher private vehicle use. RC agreed, noting that travel patterns are changing and that the Regional Travel Survey and mobile network data will be valuable in informing future discussions. 11.6 Cllr Paul Fuller (PF) observed that much of the recent growth in bus patronage has been among passengers over 60. Rupert Clubb (RC) provided an overview of the three consultation responses we have responded to. 11.7 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board.	Amendment to the HoC inquiry consultation response – remove reference to Greater Manchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to: (1) Agree the draft response to consultation on the Draft South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2026–31; (2) Agree the draft response to the Isle of Wight Council's Consultation on the Draft Island Transport Plan 4; and (3) Agree the draft response to House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry - "Joined-up journeys: achieving and measuring transport integration"	
12. Analytical Framework	
12.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) provided an update on the progress of the analytical tools and officer support being developed across the TfSE region.SV emphasised the value this workstream is delivering to local authority officers, particularly when the data, tools and models are considered collectively. 12.2 SV reported that procurement is underway for mobile network data and freight data, both identified by local authority officers as priority areas. 12.3 These datasets will provide substantial benefits to TfSE workstreams and support both existing and new local authorities. 12.4 SV noted that housing and employment data is also being collated across the region, creating a single, reliable evidence base 12.5 Progress continues on the suite of analytical tools. The South East Highways Assignment Model (SEHAM) was identified as a previous modelling gap, and TfSE will work closely with National Highways as they update their regional transport models, sharing data and lessons learned. SV also highlighted the procurement of Podaris, a modelling and scenario planning tool that TfSE will be able to offer to local authorities at a discounted rate. 12.6 A review of the Major Road Network (MRN) undertaken by the Department for Transport (DfT) required input from local officers; TfSE provided support using these analytical tools to inform responses. 12.7 SV also noted the technical expertise provided to Wokingham Borough Council, helping the authority strengthen its role as an intelligent client in the work it commissions. 12.8 Cllr John Ennis (JE) welcomed the update and highlighted the benefits already being realised in Berkshire through the analytical framework. 12.9 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:***	

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress with the development of an analytical framework.	
13. Business Advisory Group	
13.1 Keir Wilkins (KW) conveyed apologies on behalf of Vince Lucas and Daniel Ruiz, Co-Chairs of the Business Advisory Group, who were unable to attend the meeting. 13.2 KW provided an update on the most recent Business Advisory Group meeting, which was held virtually on 1 October. He reported a strong appetite for organising a second Business Summit, building on the success and positive feedback from the inaugural event held earlier this year. 13.3 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) suggested undertaking a review of the Group's membership. The SIP Refresh Task and Finish Group wanted the SIP to engage with a range of businesses including freight operators and energy infrastructure providers and enquired whether these types of companies were included. KG agreed that officers would pass this feedback on to Daniel Ruiz and Vince Lucas in their capacity as Co-Chairs. 13.4 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the progress of the Business Advisory Group.	
14. Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) refresh	
14.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) provided an update on the refresh of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). 14.2 SV highlighted the establishment of a task and finish group comprising officers and Members, tasked with providing high-level strategic direction and advice on engagement with government. The focus of today's meeting was on the process of sifting and assessing schemes and exploring financing options. SV thanked attendees for their input, noting that the outcomes will be reported back to officers. 14.3 The Member Task and Finish Group had recommended that the draft SIP could be considered at an informalBoard meeting in December. 14.4 The final SIP is scheduled to be presented to the Partnership Board in March 2026, ahead of the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs). 14.4 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress of the Strategic Investment Plan Refresh.	

15. Delivering the SIP	
15.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) provided an update on the delivery of business case development support across the TfSE region that supports the delivery of the SIP. 15.2 SV noted that over the past three financial years, more than £800,000 has been provided to local authorities to develop business cases and build a pipeline of schemes, highlighting the value this has delivered for regional transport planning. 15.3 SV highlighted TfSE's role as project manager for the Kent to Gatwick scheme, supporting authorities that lack the capacity to manage such projects. Additional funding from Gatwick Airport was also leveraged to enhance delivery. 15.4 SV emphasised the benefits of convening scheme promoters across the region, which has allowed for common challenges to be identified and addressed collectively, rather than on an individual scheme basis. Key challenges identified include long timescales for DfT review of business cases, which TfSE continues to advocate on behalf of the region. 15.5 SV also provided an update on the Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) published by National Highways on 26 August, noting that no funding is currently planned for scheme development in the next RIS period. SV highlighted the importance of addressing issues from previously cancelled schemes, ensuring problems are resolved even if the named scheme is no longer progressing. 15.6 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress of a range of workstreams that support the delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan.	
16. Technical Programme Update	
16.1 Mark Valleley (MV) provided an update on the technical programme workstreams. 16.2 MV emphasised ongoing work on the Rail Strategy, which is scheduled to be presented to the Partnership Board in January. 16.3 Cllr Simon Curry (SC) queried the EV Charging Strategy, noting increasing demand from businesses in Medway and the resulting pressures faced by local authorities. JD supported this point, highlighting that these pressures are a key constraint. 16.4 Cllr Trevor Muten (TM) emphasised that capacity is fundamental and that the rollout of EV charging should drive this forward. He noted that grid	

capacity is critical and needs to be communicated to the relevant department. 16.5 JD further noted that on-street charging is not a major issue, but challenges exist in commercial environments. 16.6 The recommendations were noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to: (1) Comment on progress with the work to implement the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy; (2) Comment on the progress with the delivery of the Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy; (3) Comment on the progress with the work on rail; (4) Comment on the progress with the work on decarbonisation.	
17. Centre of Excellence Update	
17.1 Emily Bailey (EB) provided an update on the progress of the TfSE Centre of Excellence since the last Partnership Board meeting. 17.2 EB highlighted recent activities and outlined forthcoming initiatives. EB also presented the monitoring and evaluation results for the period from June to September. Key takeaways include the increase in usage particularly in September where we saw over 300 visits to the site, with the Carbon Assessment Playbook continuing to be the most visited page. 17.3 Chat Forum uptake is also on the increase, and the interactions from local authorities highlight their interest and commitment to knowledge sharing. 17.4 Uptake of webinars since July has been high, suggesting content relevance, especially given its timing during the summer months. Forthcoming activity was highlighted for Members. 17.5 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) praised the increased usage of the Centre of Excellence and noted that she expects the Centre of Excellence to become a key part of TfSE activity in the future, especially following the creation of Mayoral Combined Authorities. The recommendation was agreed by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress being made with the delivery of the Centre of Excellence.	
18. Advisory Panel and Transport Forum Update	
18.1 Geoff French (GF) provided an update on the Advisory Panel and Transport Forum. 18.2 GF outlined the current composition of the Advisory Panel and noted the need for the panel to evolve to meet future requirements.	

18.3 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the recent work of the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel.	
19. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Update	
19.1 James Boyes (JB) provided an update on communications and engagement activity since the last Partnership Board meeting. 19.2 JB noted that, following the Board's decision to adopt the Transport Strategy, planned communications will commence to raise awareness of the strategy, missions, and TfSE's role in helping to deliver them. 19.3 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) requested that future updates include statistics on social media metrics, which JB agreed to provide. 19.4 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. ***RECOMMENDATION:*** The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the communications and engagement activity that has been undertaken since the last Board meeting.	
20. AOB	
20.1 No matters were raised.	
21. Date of Next Meeting	
21.1 KG noted that the next meeting will take place Thursday 29 January, 14:00-17:00 in person at ICE. There will be an extraordinary Board meeting held on 15 December, pending discussions at the private item.	

Agenda Item 05

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

Date of meeting: **02 February 2026**

By: **Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Transport for the South East draft Rail Strategy**

Purpose of report: **To agree TfSE's draft Rail Strategy**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree the Rail Strategy.

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1. Introduction

1.1 With the forthcoming creation of Great British Railways (GBR), it is important for Transport for the South East (TfSE) to present a clear and collective voice on future rail priorities across the region. The TfSE Rail Strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities associated with improving passenger and freight rail services in the TfSE area and the wider South East. It is a daughter strategy to the TfSE Transport Strategy, agreed by the Partnership Board in October 2025. It builds directly on the Transport Strategy Missions to establish a shared vision for the future of rail in the South East.

1.2 The Strategy provides a strategic framework to guide investment decisions on TfSE's radial and orbital rail corridors over the coming decades. It defines the outcomes we wish to achieve, identifies the conditions under which they can be delivered, and charts potential pathways to get there. It is not a list of schemes or a short-term investment plan. This will be set out in TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan, which is currently being refreshed. Both have been developed concurrently to ensure alignment. It also acknowledges that TfSE is not a delivery body and that it will be for the rail industry to propose specific solutions and schemes which can deliver these outputs most efficiently.

1.3 More detailed information on the vision, objectives, key challenges, conditional outputs set out in the strategy, along with the key investment priorities for each of the corridors in the TfSE area, is set out in Appendix 1. The appendix also contains details on the engagement with key stakeholders undertaken during the development of the strategy. A copy of the draft Strategy is included in Appendix 2.

2. Background

2.1 The Rail Strategy reflects the missions set out in the Transport Strategy. It contains a detailed evidence base that will enable TfSE to advise the Secretary of State about the current and future priorities for rail investment in the TfSE area and inform the Long Term Rail Strategy. The rail strategy will also be used to advise other public bodies responsible for the delivery of rail projects, including Network Rail, Great British Railways (GBR), and the Office for Road and Rail (ORR). It will support their decision-making about rail investment across the TfSE area over the next 25 years. It will also be used to inform the forthcoming Mayoral Combined Authorities, unitary

and local authorities on the specific rail-related challenges and opportunities in their areas and ensure that they are aware of the broader implications of their aspirations for the wider rail network in the TfSE area.

3. Financial considerations

3.1. The cost of the draft TfSE Rail Strategy was £76,463 and was funded from the DfT grant allocation for 2025/26.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Rail Strategy sets out the key challenges and opportunities associated with the development of the rail network in the TfSE area. It sets out a comprehensive Vision supported by a number of key priorities to help guide future investment. Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree the TfSE Rail Strategy.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Kate Over
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Item 05 - TfSE draft Rail Strategy Summary report - Appendix 1

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this appendix is to provide an overview of the key elements of the draft Rail Strategy, including:

- the vision and strategic objectives;
- an analysis of the TfSE rail network;
- the challenges facing different parts of the network across the TfSE area;
- the conditional outputs identified for each rail corridor;
- the key investment priorities;
- the proposed approach to delivery of the strategy; and
- the stakeholder engagement undertaken during the development of the strategy.

A full copy of the strategy is set out in Appendix 2.

2. Vision and Strategic Objectives of the draft TfSE Rail Strategy

2.1. The strategy sets the TfSE vision for rail, which is aligned to the 2050 Vision set out in the Transport Strategy. The vision for rail in the TfSE area is:

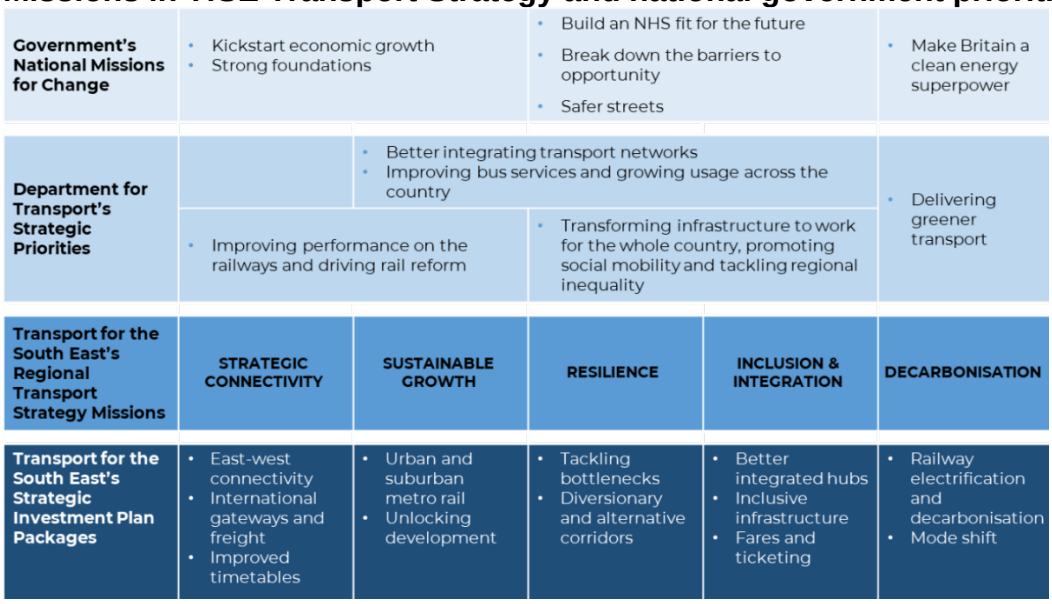
> "*A resilient and fully decarbonised rail network across the TfSE area providing a viable and attractive choice for medium to longer distance journeys, supports sustainable housing and employment growth and strengthens links between international gateways and the wider UK for both freight and passengers*."

2.2. The strategy sets out how it supports the delivery of the Secretary of State's Long Term Rail Strategy objectives and the national government priorities and missions identified in the TfSE Transport Strategy. These are summarised in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1: TfSE Rail Strategy objectives alignment with the Secretary of State's Long Term Rail Strategy objectives

Long term rail strategy objectives	Rail Strategy Objectives
Meeting customers' needs	• Improve integration with other modes. • Improving the accessibility of railway stations and speeding up the rollout of step-free access
Financial sustainability	• Maintain performance and customer satisfaction on key routes to maintain/increase industry revenue
Long-term economic growth	• Increasing connectivity to support sustainable growth across the TfSE area by improving radial and orbital rail corridors. • Improve the reliability of the network by addressing single points of failure.
Reducing regional and national inequality	• Improve rail connectivity to areas with low transport accessibility • Align rail investment to the development of housing, employment and the area's major ports and airports. • More integrated fares and ticketing to make rail more affordable & accessible
Environmental sustainability	• Accelerate electrification and modal shift to rail • Make orbital routes rail journeys a more attractive option than the car.

Figure 2. The relationship between the conditional outputs in the rail strategy, the Missions in TfSE Transport Strategy and national government priorities



2.3. The strategy includes five objectives that are aligned to the Transport Strategy Missions as follows:

- **Strategic Connectivity**: Enhancing both radial (to London) and orbital (between regional hubs) rail corridors to support economic growth across the region, with rail journeys a more attractive option for orbital routes.
- **Resilience**: Addressing single points of failure, ageing assets, and climate vulnerabilities to ensure the reliability of the rail network.
- **Inclusion and Integration**: More integrated fares and ticketing to make rail more affordable, accessible, and better integrated with other modes. Improving the accessibility of railway stations and speeding up the rollout of step-free access to make rail a viable option for disabled people across the region.
- **Decarbonisation**: Accelerated electrification and modal shift to rail, for both passengers and freight, to support the achievement of decarbonisation goals.
- **Sustainable Growth**: Alignment of rail investment with housing and employment growth to help ensure that development is sustainable and support the delivery of major developments at the region's ports and airports, including Southampton, Heathrow and Gatwick.

3. Analysis of the current TfSE rail network

3.1. The key issues affecting the current TfSE rail network can be grouped into five broad categories: infrastructure, services, governance, freight, and funding.

- The TfSE area is home to some of the most intensively used rail infrastructure in the UK. It is also where long-standing bottlenecks have network-wide effects, impacting services across the region.
- Many train services perform multiple roles and serve multiple markets. Therefore, network planning needs to balance frequency vs. more station stops, capacity vs. speed, speed vs local connectivity, and passenger vs freight trains.
- Although the strategy focuses on the rail network, effective coordination across different modes will be essential to deliver the outcomes that are being sought. For example, traffic management measures to address road congestion can drive modal

shift of freight traffic from road to rail, and integrated fares and ticketing, as well as improvements to first- and last-mile journeys and railway station accessibility, can all make public transport more attractive.

- Major construction projects, such as Heathrow and Gatwick expansion, are potential markets for passenger and rail freight growth, for example, through the need to supply aggregates and other construction materials.
- Significant reform is currently underway in the country's rail sector. The creation of GBR offers new opportunities for integration, potentially delivering simpler fares, unified passenger information, and improved customer service across modes and regions. At the same time, regional and local government is changing with the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities and local government reorganisation across the TfSE area, creating opportunities for better-funded, more local rail and public transport planning and management.
- Public finance will remain the primary source of funding for the railway. However, future investment in the TfSE area's railways does not have to rely solely on Treasury funds. A range of co-investment and alternative funding sources could be unlocked, including the Mayoral Combined Authority funding, revenue growth**,** developer contributions, airport expansion projects, and train operating companies.

4. Challenges and Strategic Priorities

4.1. The rail corridors in the TfSE area are part of a dense and highly interconnected rail network. This means that across large areas of the region, there is flexibility in how services are delivered, with multiple rail routes available and a range of options to improve speeds or frequency and reduce carbon emissions. Therefore, rather than attempting to cover every part of the network or corridor in detail, the strategy focusses on selected routes of strategic importance.

4.2. The key radial routes are:

- Kent (which includes parts of East Sussex)
- Sussex (including East Surrey)
- Wessex (West Surrey, Hampshire, and parts of Berkshire)
- Western (Berkshire)

4.3. The key orbital routes are:

- Inner Orbital (Medway – Maidstone – Tonbridge – Gatwick – Guildford – Reading).
- Outer Orbital and Coastal (Southampton – Brighton and Hove – Hastings – Ashford).
- South Coast to Midlands (Southampton – Basingstoke via Salisbury and also via Winchester – Reading – Didcot).

4.4. For each of these routes, the strategy sets out:

- Current challenges, and
- Conditional outputs – which define the level of service and outputs that are needed to achieve TfSE's strategic objectives for rail and realise the opportunities in each corridor. However, it will be for the rail industry to propose solutions and schemes which can deliver these outputs most efficiently. Therefore, we expect that these outputs would be reviewed and consulted on in detail by delivery bodies such as Network Rail or GBR as schemes are developed to deliver the conditional outputs.

4.5. The key rail challenges identified in the rail strategy for the TfSE area include:

- Without improvements to passenger and freight rail services, rapid population growth and plans for over 250,000 new homes by the early 2030s, there is a risk of worsening road congestion and carbon emissions from road transport.
- Many of the stations in the TfSE area lack step-free access, and others are poorly served by local buses, making it harder for people to use rail.
- Some routes continue to be held back by low line speeds, non-electrified sections, bottlenecks or ageing rolling stock, but funding constraints limit further development of these schemes, e.g. East Croydon, Oxted and Marsh Link lines.
- TfSE's ports generate significant freight traffic that could be better served by rail, but pinch points, lack of electrification, and limited terminal capacity restrict this potential.
- Growth plans at Gatwick, Heathrow, Southampton and Dover ports require step changes in public transport provision for sustainable access and failure to upgrade these rail links will constrain wider economic growth in the TfSE area and the UK.
- There is a persistent perception that rail is too expensive, so addressing value for money, ticketing integration, and first/last mile connectivity will be key to encourage passenger mode shift from road to rail.

4.6 Maps showing the main challenges and conditional outputs of each of the radial and orbital routes listed above can be found in the full Rail Strategy document contained in Appendix 2.

5. Conditional outputs

5.1. The conditional outputs identified in the strategy are summarised in Table 1 below. They have been divided into indicative delivery time periods as follows:

- **Short term (2025–2030)**
  Most of the key outputs for the rail industry have already been determined as part of Network Rail's Control Period 7 business planning period and 2025 Spending Review financial settlements. Therefore, the conditional outputs shown in Table 1 focus on "maintain" and "optimise", targeting rolling stock renewal, service improvements through timetabling, and power supply improvements that build on operators' existing plans.

  During this period, all of the region's operators will be brought into public ownership, and GBR will be formally established, although not until the end of 2027 at the earliest. This should not prevent the development of new ways of working through partnerships between Network Rail, DfT, TfSE, our partner local authorities, and STBs. It will be essential to align priorities and ensure that new structures and approaches meet the needs of the TfSE area and the wider South East.

- **Medium term (2030–2040)**

  More infrastructure schemes could be delivered in this window, particularly smaller interventions to unlock new services and freight routes, e.g. through further electrification and service enhancements to East-West links. Some privately financed "new" infrastructure, such as rail access to Heathrow, could also be delivered alongside reforms to governance, fares, and a fleet strategy as GBR establishes itself.

- **Long term (2040–)**

  In the longer term, there is a greater focus on "new" infrastructure, including large-scale transformational interventions (e.g., unlocking greater capacity at key bottlenecks into London, such as Croydon and Woking). These types of interventions

need to be delivered by 2050 to help achieve net zero, more housing, improved access to jobs and services, and, for rail to be in a position to compete much better with road and air alternatives.

Table 1: Summary of the conditional outputs and their delivery timescales

Short Term (2025-2035)	Medium Term (2035-2045)	Long Term (2045-)
High reliability, with punctuality equal to the best operators in the sector (above 90% of trains arriving within three minutes of schedule).	**Faster services** to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks, including Maidstone, Hastings and Thanet	**Capacity relief at Woking** to address congestion and passenger crowding.
High customer satisfaction, maintaining and improving scores in the industry Rail Customer Experience Survey, with overall journey satisfaction above 80%.	**Improved connections** within and between stations, including at Strood and Canterbury	A **long-term solution at Southampton**, including the resolution of capacity constraints at Southampton Tunnel and Central Station.
Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey (at least during peak hours)	**Capacity uplifts** to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford, including additional rolling stock and potential timetable enhancements.	Delivery of continuous **overhead line electrification** to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the Western Orbital corridor
Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel.	**Replacement of the ageing Networker fleet**, which is approaching the end of its operational life.	**Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon**.
Achieve the **public transport mode share targets** set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans, and deliver new services from Kent to Gatwick.	**Faster journey times** to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell to improve competitiveness relative to neighbouring centres.	**Decarbonisation of the Hurst Green** – Uckfield line, and reinstatement of the Uckfield-Lewes line
Improved frequencies on orbital services across Surrey	**Improve journey times** on the Arun Valley Route	**Further decarbonisation of the Western corridor**, including diesel branch lines
Maximising the benefits of future Heathrow rail links	**Improved connectivity** in the Blackwater Valley	Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor
Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton and Hove–Reading/Oxford services.	**Direct orbital services** in Kent between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph.	**Faster journey times** between major economic hubs (e.g. Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton and Hove, Hastings), targeting average speeds of at least 40mph and reduced interchange penalties.
1 train per hour semi-fast service linking **Gatwick Airport to Reading and Oxford.**	**Enhancements in the Reading area** to support future passenger and freight services	**Targeted infrastructure enhancements** to improve pathing and speed on the Outer Orbital corridor.
Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport	**Support for Old Oak Common** as a major national hub	**Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains** on HS1

Draft Rail Strategy for the South East – Appendix 1

Short Term (2025-2035)	Medium Term (2035-2045)	Long Term (2045-)
Maintain capability for current and anticipated freight traffic	**Ensure a diversionary** route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading	
	Direct services between Heathrow and key TfSE area hubs, including Woking and Staines	
	Realisation of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow	
	Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet, potentially using rail or Bus Rapid Transit	
	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.	
	A regular pattern of **four trains per hour** suburban services across the day in the South Hampshire and Sussex Coast conurbations	
	Decarbonisation of the Hastings–Ashford line and Portsmouth-Bristol-Cardiff service	

5.2. There are several delivery partners with a crucial role in delivering rail improvements for the region, all of whom must be engaged throughout the planning and development of schemes: Network Rail and Great British Railways - the owners and operators of the railway with responsibility for planning and delivery of services and infrastructure.
- Mayoral Combined Authorities and local transport authorities - will lead on service planning, station delivery, and modal integration for their areas,
- Department for Transport
- HM Treasury - key to major funding decisions and
- Private sector bodies - including freight, ports, airports and rolling stock owners.

5.3. While TfSE is not a delivery body, it will continue to play a critical role as a strategic convenor, champion, and technical resource. In delivering the Rail Strategy, TfSE will:
- Provide strategic evidence, data and analysis to inform local, regional and national decisions.
- Support early-stage scheme development.
- Align regional and local voices – especially where emerging Mayoral Combined Authorities and local authorities lack cross-boundary coordination.
- Champion the area – ensuring the TfSE area's needs are reflected in national programmes and GBR priorities.
- As devolution progresses, careful coordination will be required to ensure that transport authority boundaries do not limit rail's regional network benefits. TfSE and the Wider South East Rail Partnership (WSERP) have important roles to play in cross-boundary integration. The strategy will feed into the WSERP Rail Plan, which covers a broader geography.

6. Key investment priorities

6.1. The key investment priorities as set out in the strategy can be summarised as follows:
- More trains with improved frequency, faster services and reduced journey times for most East-West services, and corridors connecting major economic hubs throughout the TfSE area, e.g. the Arun Valley line and Medway to Ashford.
- More direct London services, from destinations including the south coast, Portsmouth, north Kent and Medway.
- Increased resilience and capacity by addressing capacity constraints, including those at East Croydon, Woking and Southampton.
- Improved access to airports, including earlier/later services to Gatwick, western and southern access to Heathrow and improved links to Old Oak Common to enable interchange with HS2.
- The introduction of bi-modal rolling stock as a short-term solution for those lines that are still not electrified, e.g. Hurst Green to Uckfield.
- Improved freight capacity and journey times through improved infrastructure such as diversionary routes, more intermodal rail interchanges and gauging upgrades.
- Improved integration of rail with local public transport networks and active travel routes, including integrated ticketing.
- Maintaining high standards of customer service and improving reliability and punctuality.

7. Delivery of the strategy

7.1. Public finance will remain essential to funding enhancements to the rail network, especially for schemes that do not offer direct commercial returns. Expecting rail to cover its costs with farebox revenue is unrealistic and risks curtailing beneficial schemes. However, funding streams could be diversified. Options for this include:

- Third-party and co-investment from airports, ports, developers and private operators.
- Beneficiary-pays models, where benefits accrue to a defined geography or business base, are challenging to implement without substantial evidence and predictable returns.
- Investors (public or private) need predictable, staged pipelines, and TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan provides this, but requires alignment with funding cycles (e.g. Network Rail's current Control Period 7 and the new Funding Periods in the future).
- Mayoral Authorities funding when it becomes accessible.

7.2. The last five years have shown that transport planning cannot rely on static forecasts. Pandemics, economic shocks, infrastructure re-scoping (e.g. HS2), and changing work and travel patterns have all shaken the old assumptions.

7.3. TfSE's approach to futureproofing includes:

- Scenario planning, which is baked into TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan and wider strategy development process.
- Incremental, modular delivery which favours scalable solutions that can flex with demand.
- Passive provision to ensure today's decisions do not limit tomorrow's choices (e.g. providing passive junctions for future station links or electrification).
- Integrated planning through aligning transport, energy and digital infrastructure.

7.4. Monitoring will need to track:

- Operational outputs, e.g. services per hour, journey times, electrification coverage, as well as performance metrics.
- Strategic outcomes, e.g. wider economic impacts, modal shift, access to opportunity.
- Delivery confidence, e.g. scheme readiness, alignment with funding.

7.5. TfSE's State of the Region Report will be a primary tool for tracking delivery and identifying where course corrections are needed, using existing key statistics on rail performance, including reliability and customer satisfaction, as well as monitoring carbon emissions, economic growth and rail fare inflation. This is vital to ensuring the rail strategy remains relevant, resilient, and responsive to changing conditions.

8. Stakeholder Engagement

8.1. A broad group of stakeholders from the following organisations were consulted during the preparation of the strategy, including:

- Transport officers from all TfSE's local authority partners
- Department of Transport – Rail Freight

- Network Rail
- National Highways
- Transport for London
- Rail Delivery Group
- Rail freight operators
- Passenger train operators – Great Western Railway, Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Rail.
- Rail Freight Group
- STBs – Western Gateway, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East
- Gatwick and Heathrow Airports
- Southampton and Portsmouth ports.

8.2. Regular meetings were held with the local transport authorities throughout the strategy's development, which were combined with the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan engagement meetings to ensure transparency and consistency between the two pieces of work.

8.3. A draft copy of the report was circulated for comment to all the stakeholders above, and their comments have been incorporated into the final draft contained in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2

January 2026

Draft Rail Strategy for the TfSE Area

Transport for the South East

January 2026

Draft Rail Strategy for the TfSE Area

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Executive Summary

Overview

This document is a daughter strategy to the Transport Strategy, which specifically focusses on the issues and opportunities associated with improving rail service delivery in the Transport for the South East (TfSE) area and wider South East.

The Rail Strategy reflects the missions set out in the Transport Strategy. It contains a detailed evidence base to enable TfSE to advise the Secretary of State about the current and future priorities for rail investment in the TfSE area. The Rail Strategy will also be used to advise others responsible for the delivery of rail projects, including Network Rail, Great British Railways (GBR) and the rail regulator, the Office for Road and Rail (ORR).

It aims to enable TfSE to advise mayoral strategic, unitary and local authorities in our area on the issues and opportunities for rail and support them in developing their own strategies. It will also articulate regional priorities to national stakeholders, including Network Rail and GBR.

It sets out a long-term, place-based vision for the region's rail network, aiming to support sustainable, inclusive, and productive growth through to 2050. It is not a list of short-term projects, but a strategic framework to guide investment, policy, and partnership decisions over the coming decades. Specific rail-related projects are set out in TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Both have been developed concurrently to ensure alignment. The strategy also aligns with TfSE's broader transport vision: to deliver the highest quality of life for all and achieve sustainable, net zero carbon growth through a resilient, reliable, and inclusive transport network.

Therefore, the vision for rail in the TfSE area is:

> "A resilient and fully decarbonised rail network across the TfSE area providing a viable and attractive choice for medium to longer distance journeys, supports sustainable housing and employment growth and strengthens links between international gateways and the wider UK for both freight and passengers."

The South East's rail network is at a pivotal moment. The region faces structural challenges - low productivity growth, housing unaffordability, climate change, and spatial inequalities - while adapting to shifting travel patterns, new technologies, and constrained public finances. The rail system, shaped by nearly two centuries of development, is heavily focused on radial routes into London, but orbital and cross-country links are underserved, despite highly congested road networks. Ageing infrastructure and capacity constraints limit rail's ability to help address the challenges the region faces.

Strategic Objectives and Missions

The strategy sets out how rail supports the delivery of TfSE's core missions, as well as national government priorities and the Secretary of State's Long Term Rail Strategy objectives. Successful delivery of the strategy will deliver improved outcomes across all five missions from our Transport Strategy:

- **Strategic Connectivity:** Enhancing both radial (to London) and orbital (between regional hubs) corridors will support economic growth across the region, with rail journeys a more attractive option for orbital routes.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Alignment of rail investment with housing and employment growth will help to ensure that development is sustainable. Rail can support the delivery of major developments at the region's ports and airports, including Southampton, Heathrow and Gatwick.
- **Resilience:** Addressing single points of failure, ageing assets, and climate vulnerabilities will ensure reliability of the network.
- **Inclusion and Integration:** Integrated fares and ticketing will make rail more affordable, accessible, and better integrated with other modes. Improving the accessibility of railway stations and speeding up the rollout of step-free access will make rail a viable option for disabled people across the region.
- **Decarbonisation:** Accelerated electrification and modal shift to rail, for both passengers and freight, will support the achievement of climate goals.

Key Challenges

The TfSE area's rail network faces mounting pressures from:

- Rapid population growth and ambitious housing plans, which, without high-capacity public transport, risk leading to greater road congestion and emissions. New housing developments are not always well aligned with existing rail infrastructure, making it harder to support sustainable travel and economic growth.
- Many stations lack step-free access or good local bus connections, limiting accessibility and demand. While some routes have seen recent upgrades, others continue to struggle with outdated infrastructure and rolling stock, and funding constraints slow further improvements.
- Freight demand is evolving, with significant traffic that could be better served by rail, including intermodal and construction traffic, but bottlenecks and limited terminal capacity restrict this potential.
- Decarbonisation is a pressing need, as gaps in electrification and reliance on diesel trains undermine climate goals.
- The cost of rail - both for passengers and public authorities - remains a barrier, especially in less affluent areas.

If these challenges are not addressed, there is a real risk of declining connectivity, worsening congestion, and missed opportunities for clean and sustainable growth.

Opportunities

The High Speed 1 route, the UK's first domestic High Speed line, presents a number of opportunities for the region. There is available capacity for additional rail freight, if some of the remaining technical and commercial barriers can be addressed, and this could have a significant benefit in relieving road congestion around Kent and supporting the government's rail freight growth targets.

Investment in the region's ports and airports will require major improvements to the rail and public transport networks – but aside from the local growth that they can generate, this infrastructure can have a broader impact on regional connectivity.

With targeted investment and reform, the rail system in the TfSE area can unlock sustainable housing and economic development, improve social inclusion, and strengthen its role as a national and international gateway.

Strategic Priorities

The strategy takes a corridor-based approach, defining conditional outputs for each of the seven rail corridors in the TfSE area. A conditional output, in this context, is an aspirational specification for the service the network should be able to provide. These outputs are conditional because, until detailed design work has been carried out, there may be trade-offs between them or more cost-effective options to deliver something similar.

This approach has been taken to recognise the complex nature of the region's rail network: in many areas, there are a number of potential options for delivering each output. TfSE is not a delivery body and has therefore focused on setting out the priorities for the area and potential options.

The key investment priorities as set out in the strategy can be summarised as follows:

- More trains with improved frequency, faster services and reduced journey times for most east-west services, and corridors connecting major economic hubs throughout the TfSE area, e.g. the Arun Valley line and Medway to Ashford.
- More direct London services, from destinations including the South Coast, Portsmouth, North Kent and Medway.
- Increased resilience and capacity by addressing capacity constraints, including those at East Croydon, Woking and Southampton.
- Improved access to airports, including earlier/later services to Gatwick, western and southern access to Heathrow and improved links to Old Oak Common to enable interchange with HS2.
- The introduction of bi-mode rolling stock as a short-term solution for those lines that are still not electrified, e.g. the North Downs and Marshlink lines.
- Improved freight capacity and journey times through improved infrastructure such as diversionary routes, more intermodal rail interchanges and gauging upgrades.
- Improved integration of rail with local public transport networks and active travel routes, including integrated ticketing.
- Maintaining high standards of customer service and improving reliability and punctuality.

Appendix A summarises the conditional outputs in the strategy as they align to Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and county geography, and to our Transport Strategy missions.

Pathways to Delivery

There are several crucial delivery partners in delivering rail improvements for the TfSE area, including Network Rail and GBR, Local Transport Authorities and the Department for Transport (DfT).

While TfSE is not a delivery body, it plays a critical role as a strategic convenor, champion, and technical resource. In delivering the Rail Strategy, TfSE will:

- **Provide evidence, data and analysis to inform decisions** – through the TfSE Analytical Framework, State of the Region Report, and more.
- **Support early-stage scheme development** – via funding and technical expertise.
- **Align regional and local voices** – especially where emerging MCAs and local authorities lack cross-boundary coordination.
- **Champion the region** – ensuring the South East's needs are reflected in national programmes and GBR priorities.
- **Embed wider priorities** – e.g. decarbonisation, social inclusion, freight growth – in scheme appraisal and pipeline development.

As rail reform and devolution progress, TfSE will work closely with DfT, Network Rail, GBR, Mayors and the existing local and new unitary authorities to ensure that regional priorities are captured in local, regional and national strategies. The strategy will also feed into the Wider South East Rail Partnership Rail Plan, which captures priorities across the broader geography of the wider South East.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

1.1.1. The TfSE Rail Strategy is a daughter strategy to the Transport Strategy, which specifically focusses on the challenges and opportunities associated with improving rail service delivery in the TfSE area and wider South East.

1.1.2. It reflects the Transport Strategy's missions but articulates these in ways that will enable TfSE to provide a stronger and more detailed evidence base and support advice to the Secretary of State about the priorities for rail in the TfSE area. The Rail Strategy will also be used to advise others responsible for the delivery of rail projects, including Network Rail, Great British Railways (GBR) and the rail regulator, the Office for Road and Rail (ORR). It will ensure that they have the evidence and rationale to support decision-making about rail investment in the TfSE area over the next 25 years.

1.1.3. It will also enable TfSE to advise the mayoral strategic, unitary and local authorities in our area on the specific challenges and opportunities across their own areas and the wider South East. It will support them in developing their statutory role in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network and ensure they are aware of the wider implications of their aspirations for the development of the rail network in their area.

1.2. Background

1.2.1. Rail has shaped the South East of England for just under two centuries. It has powered the growth of our towns and cities, connected people to jobs and services, and formed the backbone of national and international trade. It made possible the commuter belts of the 20th Century, with towns developing around the rail network and increasing the number of people able to access high-value employment. It will be increasingly central to enabling a more sustainable, inclusive, and productive South East in the 21st Century.

1.2.2. Today, the region is at a critical juncture. The long-term structural challenges facing the TfSE area – namely, low productivity growth, deepening housing unaffordability, climate change, and growing spatial inequalities – require a bold response. We must also adapt to rapid changes in travel patterns, evolving technologies, and constrained public finances. Rail cannot be all things to all people, but it can and must do more.

1.2.3. Building on the missions set out in our Transport Strategy, this strategy sets out a vision for the future of rail in the TfSE area. It is not a list of schemes or a short-term investment plan. Specific rail-related projects are set out in TfSE's SIP. Both have been developed concurrently to ensure alignment. Instead, the strategy provides a strategic framework to guide decisions over the coming decades. It defines the outcomes we want to see, identifies the conditions under which they can be delivered, and charts

potential pathways to get there. It highlights the core problems holding back rail today, the opportunities to use the network more effectively in the future, and the case for investment to support the region's growth and success.

1.2.4. Our approach is rooted in 'Place'. **Figure 1** below shows the complexity and density of the rail network in the TfSE area, and the diversity of the areas it serves. Each rail corridor reflects the character and economic function of the places it connects, shaping how people and goods move within and beyond the region. Different corridors across the TfSE area face different challenges. That's why our strategy focusses on two broad groups of rail corridors:

- **Radial routes**, which link the region's communities to London and accommodate some of the highest levels of passenger demand in the country; and
- **Orbital routes**, which connect places outside the capital, including key UK ports, airports, growth areas, and urban centres - corridors that have often been overlooked but are essential to the South East's future prosperity.

1.2.5. We also set out a high-level delivery framework. We know that delivery will be complex, long-term, and subject to change. But we believe that by setting clear priorities, aligning partners around shared outcomes, and advocating for the right investment and policy levers, we and our delivery partners can make meaningful progress, starting now.

1.2.6. TfSE has a critical role to play, convening partners across boundaries, championing the needs of the region, and building the evidence base and tools needed to move from vision to delivery. We are also clear that no single organisation can do this alone. We must work in partnership with GBR, the DfT, Network Rail, new Mayoral Strategic Authorities, local authorities, freight and passenger operators, investors, and communities to make this strategy a reality.

Figure 1: The rail network in the TfSE area

2. Vision and objectives

2.1. A strategic vision for rail in the TfSE area

2.1.1. Transport for the South East's vision for its rail network aligns fully with its overall 2050 Vision set out in the Transport Strategy:

"Our vision is for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in achieving sustainable, net zero carbon growth. To achieve this, we will develop a resilient, reliable, and inclusive transport network that enables seamless journeys and empowers residents, businesses, and visitors to make sustainable choices."

2.1.2. This Rail Strategy sets out how the region's rail system can contribute to this vision through offering fast, reliable, and comfortable rail services. It aims to deliver a railway that is inclusive, fully integrated with the wider transport system, and capable of supporting the region's economy, population, and environment over the long term.

2.1.3. Therefore, the vision for rail in the TfSE area is:

"A resilient and fully decarbonised rail network across the TfSE area providing a viable and attractive choice for medium to longer distance journeys, supports sustainable housing and employment growth and strengthens links between international gateways and the wider UK for both freight and passengers."

2.1.4. We believe rail can play a central role in enabling sustainable housing and employment growth, including for local passenger journeys within our urban areas. We also want to see rail freight flourish, including its role in transporting construction materials for development, supported by investment in capacity and electrification.

2.1.5. This ambition is shaped by important national changes. The structure and governance of rail are undergoing reform, with GBR expected to take on a more unified role with responsibility for both operation and maintenance of rail infrastructure and publicly owned passenger services. Reform is also underway at a regional and local level, with the gradual introduction of Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSA) and the consolidation of local government into integrated, single-tier unitary authorities. The MSAs will offer greater opportunities for integrated planning and delivery, as well as stronger local leadership in the future development of the railways in the TfSE area.

2.1.6. Rail sits within a broader, highly integrated network, and this strategy reflects collaboration with our neighbouring Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs), including through the Wider South East Rail Partnership (WSERP). The partnership brings together three STBs – England's Economic Heartland, Transport East, and TfSE in collaboration with the DfT, Network Rail, and Transport for London (TfL).

2.1.7. Its collective mission is to champion a transformative vision for the region's rail network that meets the needs of passengers, freight, and businesses while supporting government priorities for economic growth, net zero, and equitable prosperity.

2.1.8. This strategy acknowledges upfront that funding constraints are intensifying – particularly from central government sources. Passenger demand has shifted post-pandemic, with traditional commuting declining and leisure and discretionary travel rising. These changes must inform a realistic but ambitious long-term strategy.

2.2. Alignment with Government priorities

2.2.1. National government has identified six core missions as national priorities. Rail can most strongly be linked to the Economic Growth mission: particularly as in the TfSE area, rail services are a key part of the regional economy. Rail will be crucial to supporting growth at our major international airports, as well as fast-growing cities like Reading and Southampton.

2.2.2. This strategy, and TfSE's broader vision and missions, also align well with the DfT's strategic priorities:

- improving performance on the railways and driving forward rail reform
- improving bus services and growing usage across the country
- transforming infrastructure to work for the whole country, promoting social mobility and tackling regional inequality
- delivering greener transport
- better integrating transport networks

2.2.3. As set out in the Railways Bill 2025, in future, a Long Term Rail Strategy will set out strategic objectives for the railway across Great Britain and set the context for GBR. In the bill, government has set out five objectives for this strategy:

- meeting customers' needs
- financial sustainability
- long-term economic growth
- reducing regional and national inequality
- environmental sustainability

2.2.4. **Figure 2** below shows how these objectives are reflected in the TfSE Rail Strategy.

Figure 2: TfSE Rail Strategy objectives alignment with the Secretary of State's Long Term Rail Strategy objectives

Long term rail strategy objectives	Rail Strategy Objectives
Meeting customers' needs	• Improve integration with other modes. • Improving the accessibility of railway stations and speeding up the rollout of step-free access
Financial sustainability	• Maintain performance and customer satisfaction on key routes to maintain/increase industry revenue
Long-term economic growth	• Increasing connectivity to support sustainable growth across the TfSE area by improving radial and orbital rail corridors. • Improve the reliability of the network by addressing single points of failure.
Reducing regional and national inequality	• Improve rail connectivity to areas with low transport accessibility • Align rail investment to the development of housing, employment and the area's major ports and airports. • More integrated fares and ticketing to make rail more affordable & accessible
Environmental sustainability	• Accelerate electrification and modal shift to rail • Make orbital routes rail journeys a more attractive option than the car.

GBR must also have regard to the transport plans and strategies of MCAs when it makes decisions on the network. This strategy, setting out priorities across the region, will form a valuable part of those MCA plans. **Figure 3**, below, shows how the Rail Strategy conditional outputs align to core government missions.

Figure 3: Golden policy thread from government Missions to rail outputs

Government's National Missions for Change	• Kickstart economic growth • Strong foundations		• Build an NHS fit for the future • Break down the barriers to opportunity • Safer streets		• Make Britain a clean energy superpower
Department for Transport's Strategic Priorities		• Better integrating transport networks • Improving bus services and growing usage across the country			• Delivering greener transport
	• Improving performance on the railways and driving rail reform		• Transforming infrastructure to work for the whole country, promoting social mobility and tackling regional inequality		
Transport for the South East's Regional Transport Strategy Missions	**STRATEGIC CONNECTIVITY**	**SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**	**RESILIENCE**	**INCLUSION & INTEGRATION**	**DECARBONISATION**
Transport for the South East's Strategic Investment Plan Packages	• East-west connectivity • International gateways and freight • Improved timetables	• Urban and suburban metro rail • Unlocking development	• Tackling bottlenecks • Diversionary and alternative corridors	• Better integrated hubs • Inclusive infrastructure • Fares and ticketing	• Railway electrification and decarbonisation • Mode shift

2.3. TfSE's strategic objectives

2.3.1. TfSE's 2025 Transport Strategy outlines five missions that articulate the challenges, opportunities, and actions that are most pertinent to the TfSE area.

Strategic Connectivity

2.3.2. The TfSE area boasts some of the UK's best radial links to London, but orbital, cross-country, and coastal routes remain underserved. The latter corridors are characterised by having lower frequencies, slower journey times, and much lower passenger rail mode share. Areas that suffer from poor London connectivity compared to their neighbours, such as Thanet and Hastings, are also priorities for the region.

2.3.3. There is a major opportunity in aligning rail investment with expected growth in housing, employment, and with major developments at our ports and airports. Every major airport in the TfSE area is expanding, as illustrated by Heathrow's Third Runway, Gatwick's Northern Runway and Southampton's runway extension projects. At both Gatwick and Heathrow, expansion is expected to include proposals for significant improvements in public transport connectivity. There are new plans to expand the port of Southampton substantially. Within the region, areas such as Southampton and Medway are fast-growing, both in terms of population and employment. These new and growing corridors must be supported by high-quality rail connectivity.

Sustainable growth

2.3.4. Rail enables denser, more sustainable development, as suggested in the Secretary of State's long-term rail strategy objectives. Rail-led development – often called Transit-Oriented Development – helps protect the countryside while providing access to jobs, housing, and services. Rail investments should be closely coordinated with housing and spatial planning decisions, helping the region to grow sustainably. There can be a virtuous circle here, as contributions from major developments can be channelled towards rail improvements such as new stations or additional services. This represents an opening to change a challenge into an opportunity in a region with high demand for housing, with limited national government funding available for rail investment.

Resilience

2.3.5. Resilience describes the ability of a system to respond to and recover from shocks and disruption. By these terms, the railway in the TfSE area faces major resilience risks, especially on busy radial corridors serving London, where key pinch points at Croydon (for the Sussex Coast) and Woking (for the South West) act as single points of failure on their respective routes. Ageing infrastructure, climate vulnerabilities, and capacity constraints make the system fragile. Tackling these issues will require targeted investment and improved operational strategies.

Inclusion and Integration

2.3.6. For too many people in the TfSE area, there are barriers to benefiting from the region's railways. This is why passenger services must become more affordable, more accessible, and better connected to local and regional services. A more integrated approach to fares, ticketing, interchanges, and services, with improved connections both within the rail network and to local buses, is essential to ensuring no one is left behind.

2.3.7. TfSE's 2025 Transport Strategy has identified several areas in the TfSE area that are at risk of Transport Related Social Exclusion – areas that also have relatively poor rail connectivity to the rest of the region and country[1]. Boosting connectivity in these areas is a powerful way of delivering more equitable socioeconomic outcomes.

Decarbonisation

2.3.8. Rail can make a significant contribution to achieving the UK's wider climate goals. Transport carbon emissions make up a significant portion of the region's carbon footprint, and the rate of decarbonisation is slower than it needs to be. Even with increased uptake of electric vehicles, local particulate emissions will remain a problem. Rail helps reduce these emissions quickly by encouraging travellers and freight customers to switch from higher carbon-emitting options to one of the lowest: each freight train can remove up to 76 HGVs from the road. Removing fossil fuel traction from the rail network further reduces emissions, which will be needed in the longer term.

2.3.9. While much of the rail network in the South East is electrified, key gaps remain, requiring small diesel fleets that are expensive, inefficient and polluting. Third rail electrification presents safety, supply and cost challenges but may still be required, with battery-hybrid offering part of the solution in other areas. Full electrification remains the most efficient and scalable approach for corridors with significant freight and/or long-distance high-speed intercity flows.

2.4. The role of rail in supporting the TfSE Missions

2.4.1. Rail plays a unique and powerful role within the transport system in the TfSE area – particularly in urban and interurban contexts:

- **High capacity and speed:** Rail can carry large numbers of passengers at high speeds, with line speeds up to 186mph on High Speed 1
- **Low carbon traction:** Most rail services in the South East are already electric and can be fully decarbonised with the right complementary policies
- **Space efficiency and safety:** Railways offer more capacity than motorways in a smaller footprint and are the safest form of land transport
- **Accessibility:** Rail provides access to jobs, education, and services for those without a car, especially in urban and semi-urban areas
- **Productivity:** Unlike driving, rail allows passengers to work, read, or rest while travelling

2.4.2. However, it is also important to acknowledge that rail is not without limitations:

- **Cost and complexity:** Rail infrastructure is expensive to build, maintain, and upgrade. For many local authorities and delivery bodies in the TfSE area, the perceived cost of rail often makes it seem unaffordable – particularly for addressing more localised or short-term transport needs. What seem like small infrastructure schemes, such as chords to enable direct services, often balloon in costs as the expense of providing those services are taken into account, making them economically unviable.

[1] TfSE Transport Strategy, p57

- **Limited flexibility:** Rail is inherently less adaptable than modes such as bus or demand-responsive transport. Fixed routes and bespoke assets make it difficult and costly to adapt rail to changing demand patterns – for example, on some routes, weekend demand has grown sharply post-COVID, but increasing services is challenging given requirements for maintenance access. Rail is most effective on corridors with high, concentrated demand. In low-density areas or for short, point-to-point journeys, rail often requires strong integration with first and last mile modes. That said, the fixed nature of rail can also be a strength: investment in new lines or stations signal long-term commitment, giving residents, businesses, and developers the confidence to invest in those locations.
- **Freight constraints:** While rail is highly effective for bulk and long-distance freight, it is less suited to short-haul or dispersed deliveries, where HGVs offer greater route flexibility. As the UK economy has shifted away from traditional commodities like coal, the rail freight sector has had to adapt – pivoting towards growing sectors such as intermodal logistics, which is currently the fastest growing area of rail freight. This has required a rethink of terminal and interchange locations, access arrangements, and network capacity.

2.4.3. In the TfSE area, rail is particularly strong on radial corridors and in serving the London commuter and leisure market. Rail has a high mode share for commuting in the region, reflecting fast and frequent services to London. Even outside of peak times, key radial corridors have a dense and highly utilised service.

2.4.4. Ultimately, rail supports the socio-economic ambitions of the region: unlocking growth, linking labour markets, enabling clean transport to urban centres, and enhancing long-distance freight. With the right interventions, it can do even more to connect people, places, and markets across the region.

2.5. A whole-system view of the rail network

2.5.1. This strategy takes a whole-system view of the rail network in the TfSE area. We recognise that rail is not just about tracks and trains. It is a complex system where infrastructure, services, rolling stock, timetabling, governance, funding, and freight must work together to deliver a coherent and resilient offer to passengers and freight customers.

2.5.2. For example, resilience is not just about infrastructure. It is about greater standardisation in the train fleet, minimising the number of incompatible traction types and allowing stock to be deployed flexibly, and designing timetables that reduce the risk of cascading delays. A disconnected network with 59-minute connection times and four different train types operating on adjacent routes is not efficient or passenger-friendly, particularly when it also means complex and expensive ticket options. This is why we must plan for an integrated system where each part is optimised and works effectively with the others.

2.5.3. The key challenges we have considered as part of our approach to whole-system thinking are outlined below and include infrastructure, services, governance, freight, and funding.

Infrastructure

2.5.4. The TfSE area is home to some of the most intensively used rail infrastructure in the UK. It is also where long-standing bottlenecks have network-wide effects, impacting services across the region. Key priorities include:

- **Bottleneck removal**: Targeting congestion points (e.g. Croydon and Woking) to unlock wider timetable reliability, connectivity, and capacity.
- **Decarbonisation:** Strategic electrification, which supports decarbonisation and has the potential to generate cost savings (e.g. avoiding the need to maintain diesel fleets at depots focussed on electrified fleets).
- **Capacity constraints:** Additional tracks, junction upgrades, and line-speed improvements will be needed in some places if the railway is to support higher service frequencies, faster journeys (enabling services to overtake each other), and more rail freight.

Services

2.5.5. Many train services perform multiple roles and serve multiple markets. For example, a Southern service from Littlehampton to London supports London commuters, airport passengers, and interurban trips along the South Coast in one journey. Network planning must balance:

- **Frequency vs. complexity**: Simplified, "metro-ised" services can carry more people but may require more interchanges due to fewer direct trains.
- **Capacity vs. speed**: Well-designed infrastructure can enable overtaking and express running, improving journey times for longer trips while maintaining local connectivity.
- **Speed vs local connectivity:** New stations can generate new demand, but lengthen the journey time for existing passengers
- **Passenger vs freight:** Freight trains can be much longer than passenger services, as well as slower. This makes scheduling passenger and freight services on the same infrastructure more challenging, and it will sometimes require additional infrastructure, such as passing loops.

Integration

2.5.6. This strategy is focused on the rail network, but effective coordination across modes is essential in order to deliver the strategy outcomes.

- **Constraints on the road network** are a substantial driver of growth in rail demand, particularly for freight
- **Integrated fares and ticketing,** and more joined-up bus services, improve the accessibility of railway stations and make public transport as a whole more attractive.
- **Major projects outside of rail,** such as Heathrow expansion, are a substantial market for rail freight and the supply of aggregates and other construction materials.

Governance

2.5.7. Significant reform is underway in the country's rail sector. The creation of GBR and "nationalisation" of previously fragmented private franchises offer new opportunities for integration – potentially bringing simpler fares, unified passenger information, and improved customer service across modes and regions. At the same time, regional and local government is changing:

- **Devolution:** MSAs across the area are gaining powers that in other parts of England have enabled rail devolution. London and Liverpool already oversee the management and delivery of rail services, while Greater Manchester is seeking to take on greater responsibility for its stations. These powers, as well as additional funding opportunities, will only be available to established MSAs.
- **Local Government Reorganisation:** the establishment of Mayoral and unitary authorities means that spatial planning and transport powers and functions are becoming more joined-up, enabling better long-term integration between rail infrastructure and land-use planning.

2.5.8. TfSE will work collaboratively with GBR, DfT, local government, operators, and other STBs, including through the WSERP, to represent and advocate for local needs. Areas across the region are at different stages of the devolution process, and this should not limit their opportunities to feed into national plans.

Freight

2.5.9. Rail freight is both a driver and a beneficiary of investment. The development of rail freight interchanges provides investment and employment opportunities, as set out in TfSE's *Intermodal Rail Freight Interchange Study*[2]. Though it competes with passenger services for capacity, it can help strengthen the business case for infrastructure. Intermodal, aggregates, automotive, and other freight types each have a distinct geography, timings, and capacity requirements. However, key priorities include:

- **Electrification of strategic corridors** to improve freight decarbonisation and performance
- **Terminal development** including new rail freight interchanges to support growing intermodal traffic and options for new routes. Planning processes should treat freight facilities as critical infrastructure and support faster development
- **Supporting** the delivery of the Government's 75% Rail Freight Growth Target through modal shift and growing existing routes

[2] https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2025/11/TfSE-Intermodal-Rail-Freight-Interchange-Study-October-2025.pdf

Funding

2.5.10. Public funding for rail is heavily centralised, with the DfT providing over £18 billion annually to Network Rail and a further £8 billion for HS2 in 2023/24[3] – vastly greater than local transport budgets. This public subsidy is crucial to both capital investment in the railway and covering ongoing operational costs.

2.5.11. However, future investment in the railways in the TfSE area does not have to rely solely on Treasury funds. A range of co-investment and alternative funding sources could be unlocked, including:

- **Future MCAs** and local government, which could offer match funding or raise capital through devolved transport powers
- **Revenue growth** of existing services through GBR should reduce net subsidy and support additional investment in services
- **Developer contributions**, especially where new housing or employment is unlocked by rail investment
- **Airport expansion projects**, such as at Heathrow and Gatwick, where sustainable surface access is a condition for growth
- **Open Access Train Operating Companies (TOCs)**, for example, Virgin Rail, who plan to introduce additional international passenger services between London, Kent, and Europe
- **Freight Operating Companies**, particularly for access routes to ports and interchanges, and for infrastructure improvements supporting intermodal growth

[3] DfT Annual Accounts 2023/24

3. The case for change

3.1. Context and background

The evolution of the railway in the TfSE area

3.1.1. Our rail network is one of the most intensively used in the country and has been shaped by over 190 years[4] of development. Much of the existing network was established in the 19th century by competing private companies focused on providing radial links between London and coastal towns. As a result, many of the region's key corridors remain geared towards commuting into London, with relatively limited provision for orbital, coastal, and cross-country movements.

3.1.2. While major modernisation programmes have taken place in recent years – including the delivery of Crossrail/Elizabeth Line, expansion of Thameslink, development of High Speed 1, and introduction of new rolling stock across multiple franchises – the fundamental geography and design of the network continue to constrain capacity, connectivity, and resilience. In particular, historic junction layouts, outdated signalling, and capacity bottlenecks act as barriers to growth and modal shift.

3.1.3. The legacy of this history is especially visible at places like Southampton, where freight volumes have grown steadily in recent decades. As a strategically important deep-water port with a rapidly growing container and automotive trade, its continued growth is constrained by both mainline capacity and first-mile-last-mile access to the port, underlining the need for targeted investment and coordination across passenger and freight networks.

Today's railway

3.1.4. The TfSE area benefits from one of the most extensive and well-used rail networks in the UK. It features:

- **More than 350 stations** across a densely settled geography, with some counties like Kent and Surrey among the best connected in the UK in terms of station accessibility per capita.
- **Extensive electrification**, predominantly via third-rail DC, covering over 80% of the network. However, gaps remain – particularly on key cross-country, rural, and freight corridors.
- **Intensive passenger service patterns**, particularly on radial routes to London, with some corridors seeing over 20 trains per hour per direction in peak periods.
- **Strong rail mode share for travel into London**, but much weaker inter-urban and orbital links elsewhere in the region, where services are slower and less frequent.

[4] The Crab and Winkle Line – the South East's first railway – opened in 1830

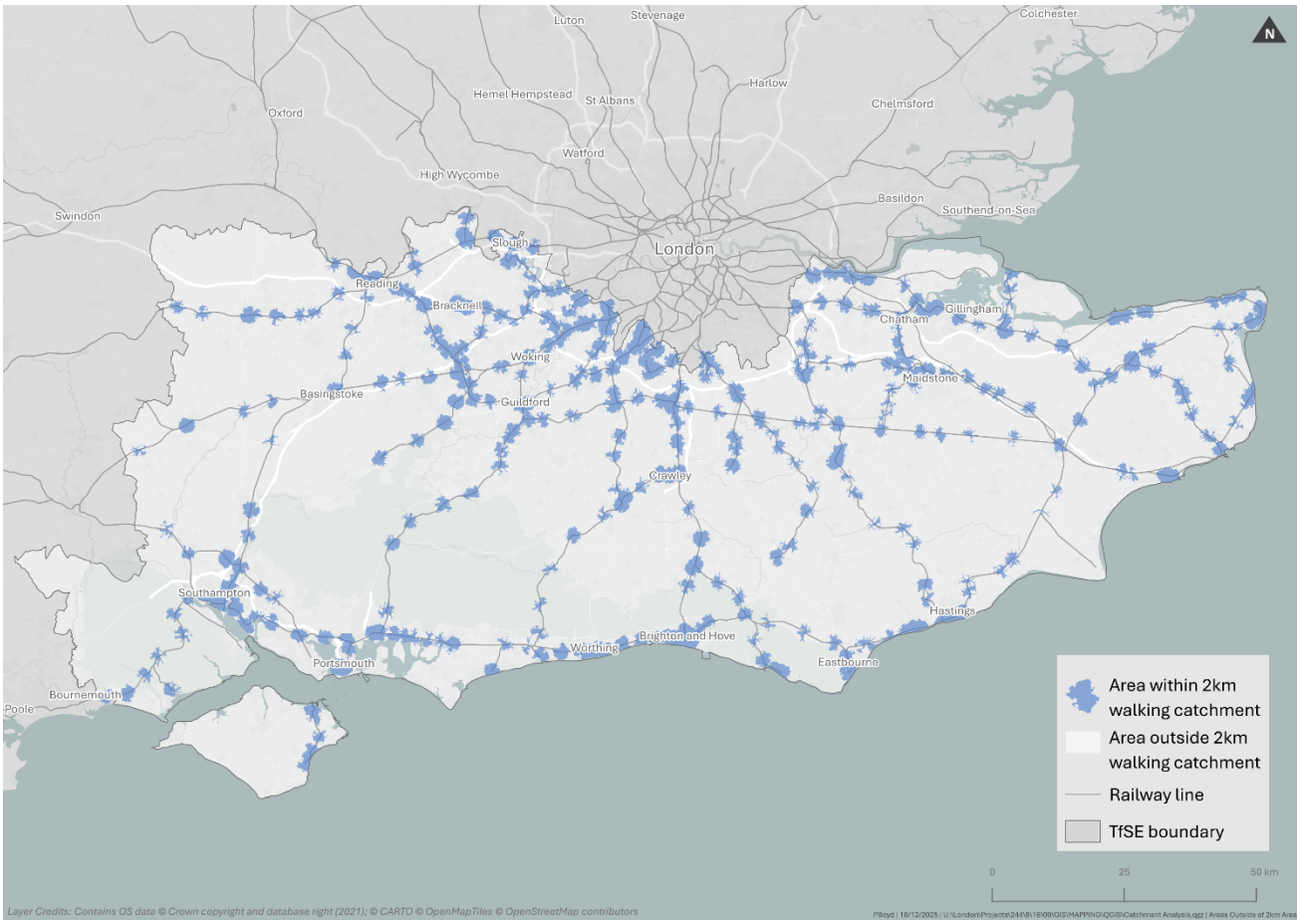
- **Rolling stock that is increasingly ageing**, with some fleets over 35 years old and lacking features aligned with accessibility, sustainability, or passenger comfort expectations.

3.1.5. More detail on the evidence and data behind the strategy is provided in **Appendix B.**

3.2. Infrastructure

3.2.1. There are 351 stations in the TfSE area, and the density of that railway network is evidenced by the proportion of the population living within walking and cycling distance of stations. Around 5.5 million people live within a two-kilometre distance of a station, or 70.6% of the TfSE population. The density of the network, as shown in the map in Figure 2, **Figure 4** below reflects the focus on London-centric commuting, with significant station catchments in centres closer to London.

Figure 4: Areas within a 2km walking catchment of a railway station

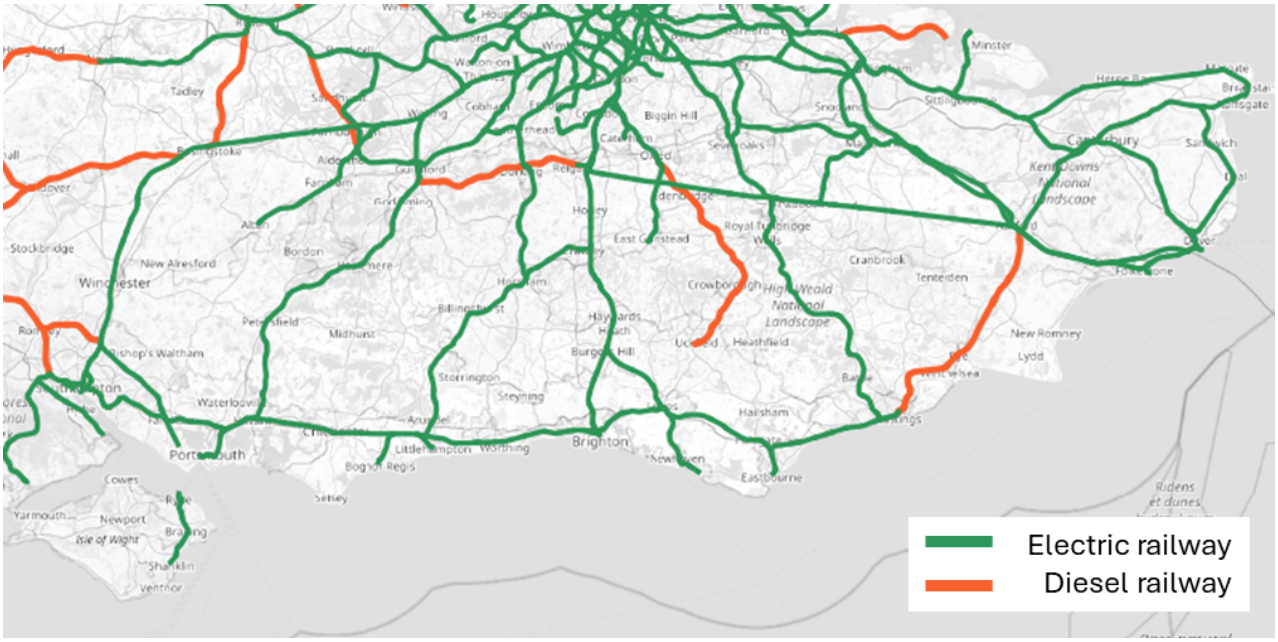


3.2.2. Over 80% of the region's rail network is electrified, the majority with third-rail DC systems. However, as shown in **Figure 5Error! Reference source not found.** below, there are a number of gaps. Some of these are used primarily for freight, particularly to the west of the region and the Isle of Grain, but this also includes the Marsh Link from Hastings to Ashford, the North Downs line and the Wealden line from Hurst Green to Uckfield. These diesel 'islands' within an electrified railway limit the services which can be offered with existing rolling stock and need a route to decarbonisation. The government has an ambition to remove all diesel-only rolling stock from the network by 2040; to achieve this, it will require either multi-mode (potentially battery electric)

rolling stock or electrification. Plans have been developed by Network Rail, but these require funding to progress.

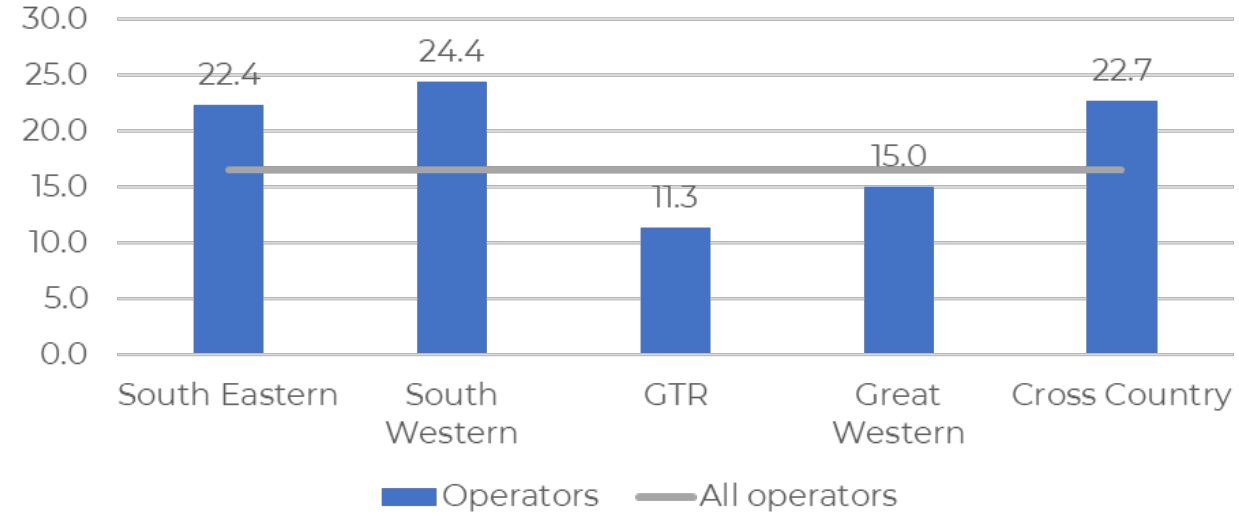
3.2.3. Onward routes to the west, towards Bristol and Salisbury, and north of the region towards Oxford are also unelectrified: this particularly limits the opportunities to decarbonise freight.

Figure 5: Electrified rail routes in the TfSE area



3.2.4. Rolling stock in the TfSE area is generally modern, but some fleets need urgent replacement. The average age of rolling stock for all operators in the country is 16.6 years old, as shown in **Figure 6**, with only GTR (Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern) having significantly newer (on average) rolling stock than this, but this hides substantial variation. Many of the region's fleets are significantly older.

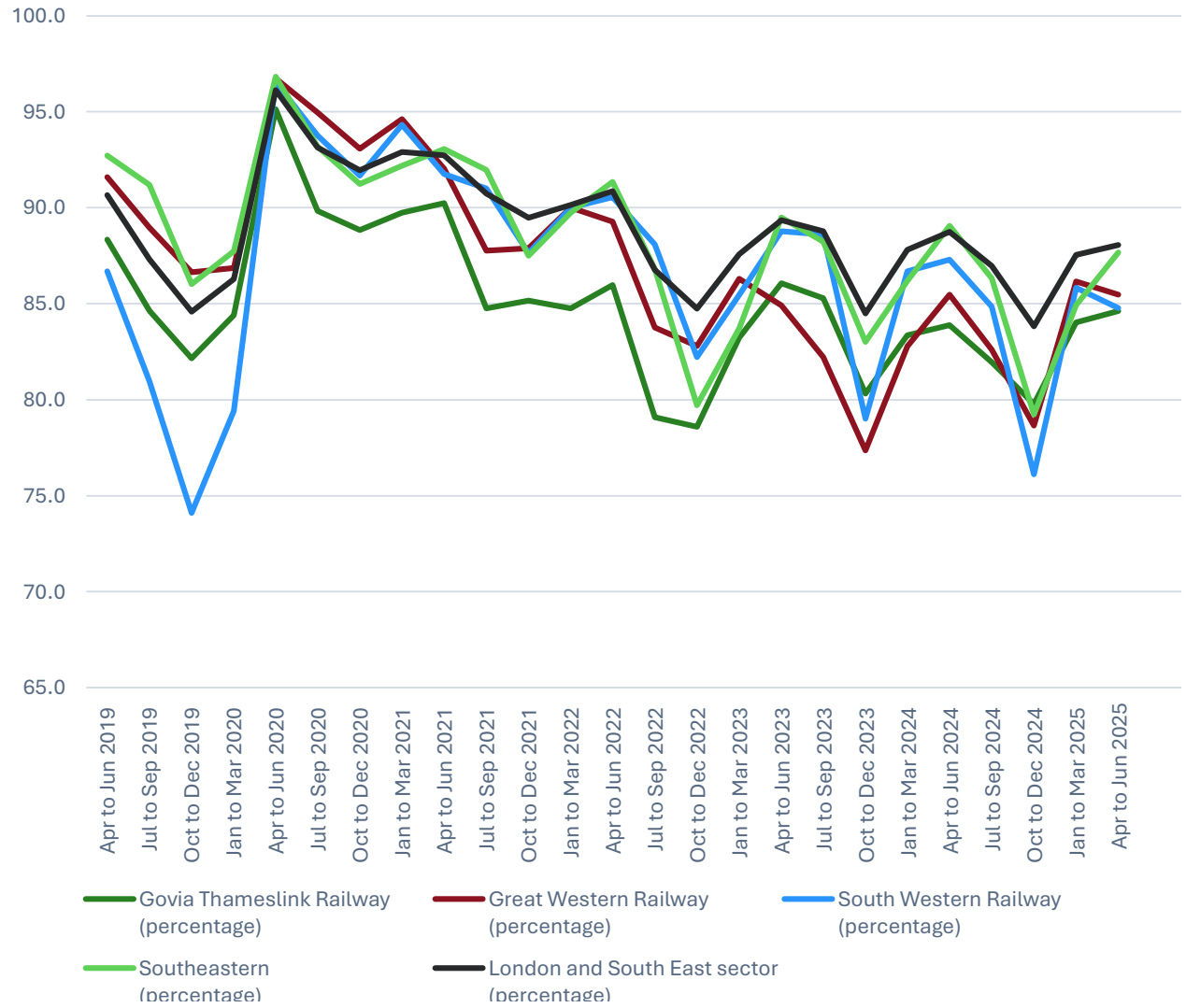
Figure 6: Average age of rolling stock by operator



3.3. Performance

3.3.1. Performance on the network declined post-Covid. **Figure 7** shows quarterly data for the public performance measure – the percentage of trains arriving at their final destination within 5 minutes of schedule. Performance in 2020-2021 was high because fewer trains were run and fewer people were on them; nevertheless, the continuing downward trend is concerning. The intensively used network in the TfSE area worsens the impact of delays and means huge numbers of passengers can be affected.

Figure 7: Public Performance Measure by operator (quarterly data)



Source: ORR Rail performance data, table 3113

3.4. Services and demand

3.4.1. Rail infrastructure in the region is intensively used, with an estimated total of 255 million rail trips between April 2023 and March 2024 across the South East statistical region.

3.4.2. 165 million of these trips were to or from London, 73 million were within the South East, and the remaining 17 million were journeys to or from other regions. This shows the extent of rail's role supporting access to London, but also the importance of many other corridors across the region. Our busiest stations serve major routes for commuting and leisure, supporting millions of journeys a year.

Table 1: 10 busiest stations within the region

Station	Annual entries/exits (2023-2024)
Gatwick Airport	19,489,656
Brighton	14,547,650
Reading	13,490,220
Woking	6,013,940
Guildford	5,883,734
Southampton Central	5,795,080
Slough	5,383,958
Dartford	4,497,840
Maidenhead	4,391,702
Basingstoke	4,239,778

Source: ORR Estimates of station usage, 2023-24

3.4.3. Demand into London remains high and capacity issues are highlighted by the stations over capacity at peak time in ***Table 2***. The number of passengers in excess of capacity (PiXC) at Waterloo is notable, with increasing passenger demand at peak times, resulting in significant increases in PiXC levels from 2022.

Table 2: Passengers in excess of capacity at selected London terminals

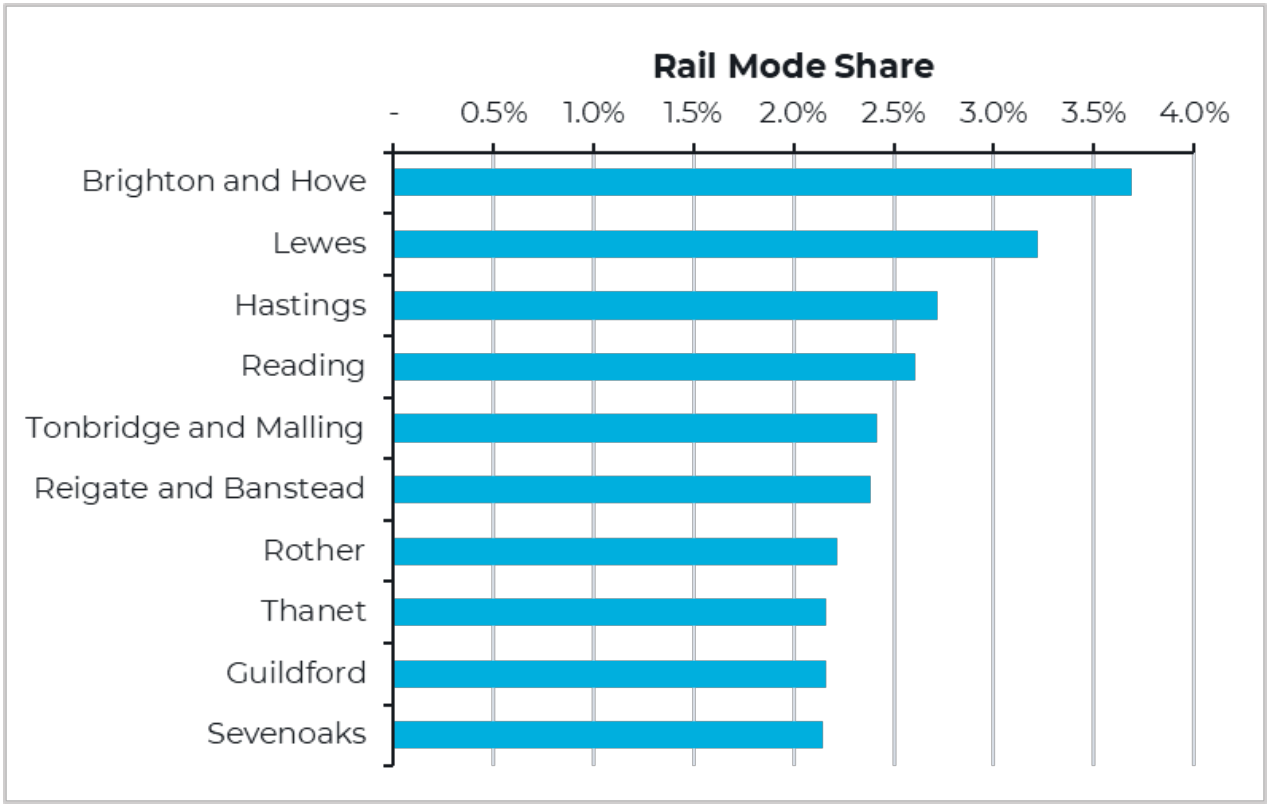
Station	Total Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PiXC) 2023	Percent PiXC	Change from 2022 (pp)
London Bridge	1,236	0.60%	-0.2 pp
Vauxhall (for Waterloo)	5,172	3.40%	+2.1 pp
Victoria	311	0.30%	+0.3 pp

Source: DfT Rail passenger numbers and crowding, 2023

3.4.4. Rail has a low overall market share on orbital routes and coastal routes, and for leisure journeys. Even in some of the area's larger conurbations (e.g. Reading), rail struggles to achieve a total mode share above 2-3%, as seen below in **Figure 8** below. Freight flows remain significant on some corridors and show promise, but growth needs to be supported through dedicated interchange and rail path capacity and modernisation.

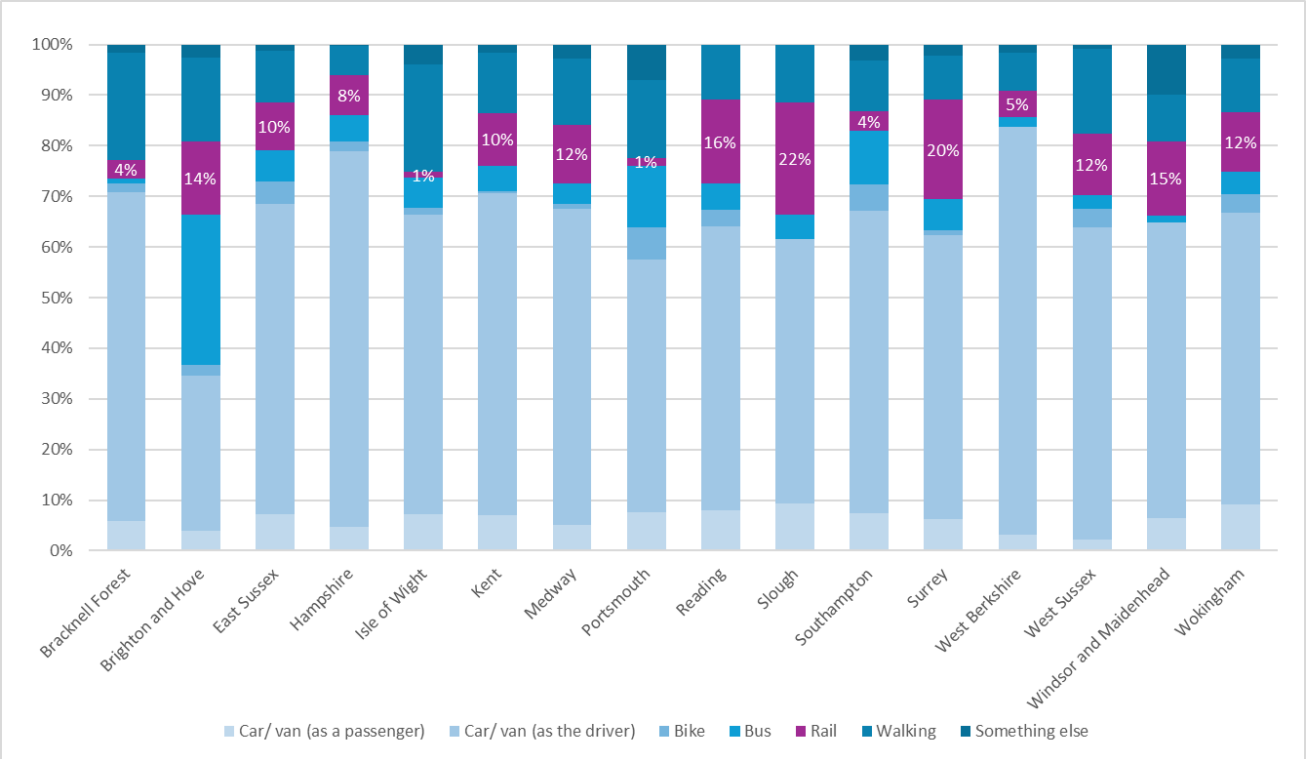
3.4.5. However, as **Figure 9** shows on the following page, the region has a very high rail mode share for commuting, particularly into London, highlighting the current strengths of the network. This**Error! Reference source not found.** shows that many authorities within TfSE have greater than 10% rail mode share for commuting.

Figure 8: Rail mode share in the region's best-performing local authority areas



Source: Network Rail Mobile Network Data, May 2025

Figure 9: Mode Share for Commuting



Source: TfSE Regional Travel Survey

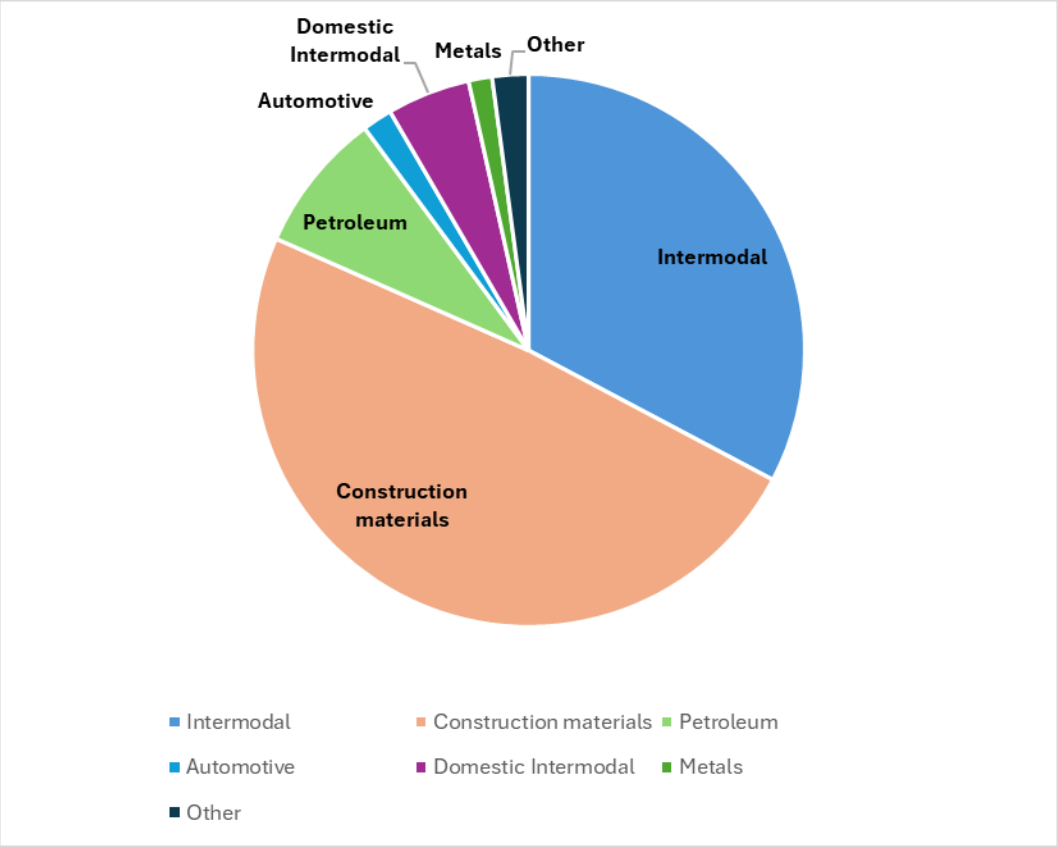
3.5. Freight

3.5.1. The region's core rail freight markets are intermodal container traffic, largely from the Port of Southampton, and construction materials from a number of different terminals. **Figure 10** shows the breakdown of total volumes for 2023/24.

3.5.2. Particularly in the case of smaller routes, some freight services may not be frequently operated but still serve a valuable role. Some railheads and infrastructure may not be currently used but should be protected for future needs, as once infrastructure or land has been redeveloped, it is much more challenging to reinstate freight services.

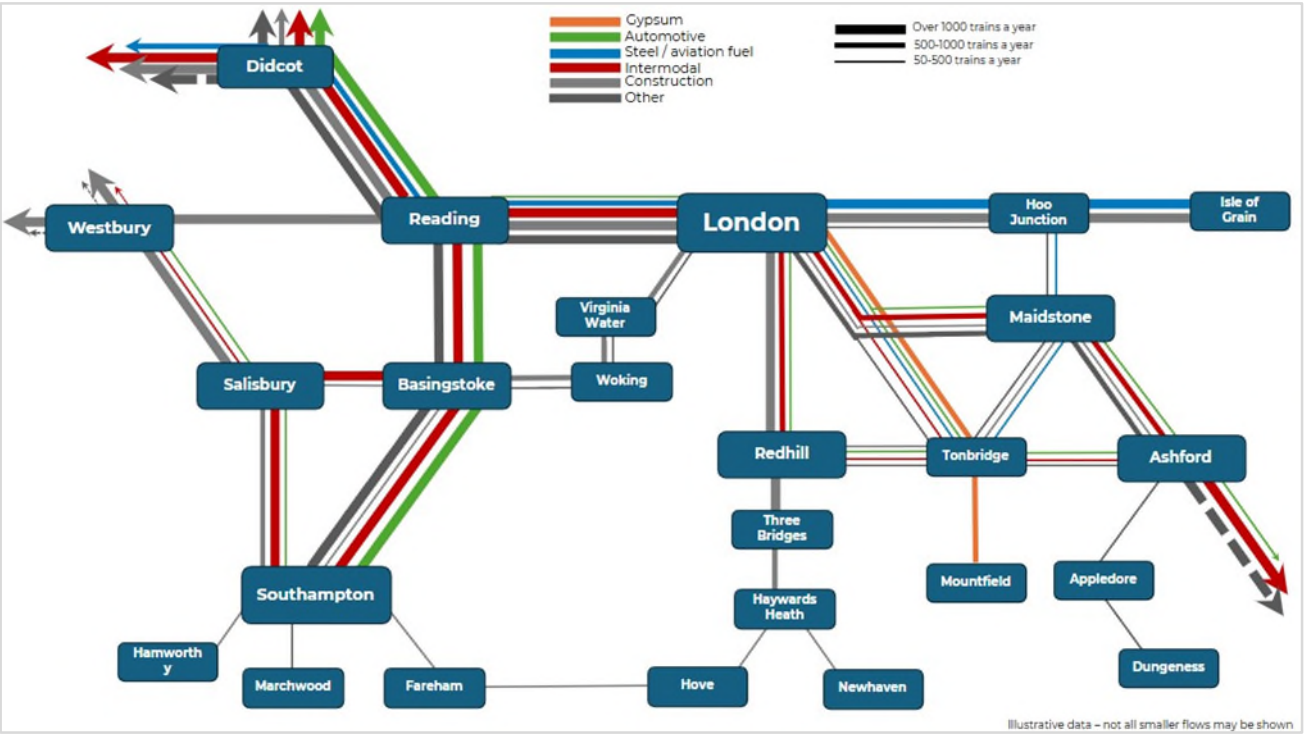
3.5.3. As shown in **Figure 11**Error! Reference source not found.**,** construction traffic including aggregates makes up a substantial part of the region's freight network – this includes both traffic from the Mendip quarries to the West and sea-dredged aggregates. The latter are increasingly crucial in construction as domestic quarries are depleted, and Newhaven and the Isle of Grain are important terminals for the sector. Rail transport of these construction materials is particularly important for major developments in and around London, where bringing in heavy materials by road is challenging and disruptive.

Figure 10: Freight tonne kilometres by commodity, 2023/24



Source: ORR rail freight usage – table 1311

Figure 11: Rail freight routes



Source: Network Rail summary of current freight traffic, January 2026

3.6. Financial

3.6.1. One of the key challenges facing today's railway is its financial sustainability. Post-pandemic, overall ridership has not fully returned to pre-Covid levels, but leisure and interurban travel has grown significantly. On some corridors, such as east-west inter-regional links, leisure demand is now substantially higher than before Covid, showing the evolving nature of the travel market.

3.6.2. However, there is an increasing gap between demand growth and revenue, with passengers increasingly using discounted and off-peak fares, particularly for business and leisure travel.

3.6.3. **Figure 12** below shows the net subsidy for each rail operator in the TfSE area, normalised by total passenger kilometres. Before the pandemic, many of the region's operators returned a premium to the government, providing a cross-subsidy to less profitable services across the country. However, this has been reducing gradually over time as operating costs have increased and hybrid working has become more common.

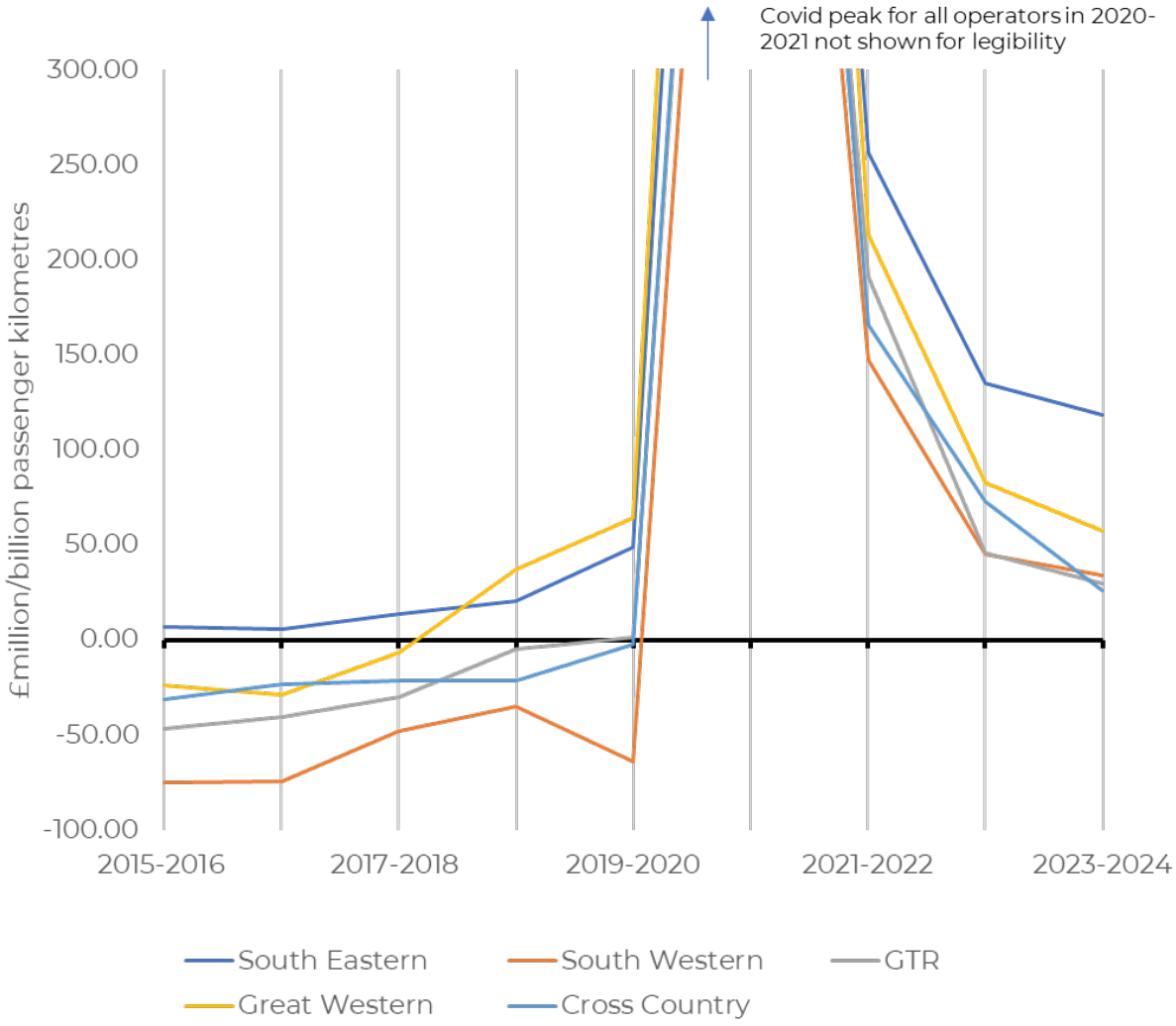
3.6.4. Post Covid-19, all operators require a subsidy, although commuter demand is still growing quickly across much of the region, and this could quickly change.

3.6.5. The rail industry is currently highly focused on improving its financial sustainability and growing revenue: new services or infrastructure need to demonstrate their impact on subsidy levels in order to be attractive to funders. Services in the TfSE area still deliver a huge proportion of the industry's total revenue: the potential benefits of growth are higher than they are elsewhere in the country.

3.6.6. The region is also home to major gateways such as Heathrow, Gatwick, and Southampton airports, as well as ports at Southampton, Portsmouth, Shoreham, Newhaven, Dover, and Medway. The TfSE area is also home to the Channel Tunnel, which relies on motorway and high-speed rail links in Kent to access the rest of the country. These assets make the area vital not only to regional prosperity but also to national connectivity and global competitiveness.

3.6.7. Fares can be a barrier to the use of rail, particularly in more economically deprived parts of the region. In recent years, the gap between rail fares and car costs has grown, as rail fares have increased above inflation. Within the region, fares can vary substantially between routes and for similar stations. This will often still reflect historic decisions before privatisation – rather than the best option for each route today.

Figure 12: Net subsidy by operator (£million/billion passenger kilometres)



Source: ORR franchised passenger train operator finances – table 7226

3.7. The need for action

Key problems, challenges, and opportunities

3.7.1. Several converging pressures demand urgent action to modernise and reposition the rail network in the TfSE area:

- **Population growth**: The TfSE area continues to experience rapid population growth, with over 250,000 new homes planned by the early 2030s. Without high-capacity public transport, this growth risks worsening road congestion and carbon emissions from all forms of road transport.
- **Misalignment between housing and transport locations**: New housing is not always well-aligned with existing rail infrastructure. Transit-Oriented Development offers a way to align housing, employment, and sustainable travel. The government has recently recognised this and announced a presumption in favour of development around well-connected stations.
- **Station accessibility**: Many of the region's stations lack comprehensive step-free access: only 22% of stations in the region are fully step-free, and 8% have no step-free access at all. Others are poorly served by local buses: both make it harder for people to use rail, and limit demand growth.
- **Ageing infrastructure and fleets**: While some routes have benefitted from recent upgrades, others – such as the North Downs Line – continue to be held back by low line speeds, non-electrified sections, or ageing rolling stock. In many places, the solution is clear, but funding constraints impact the further development of these schemes.
- **Resilience**: Climate change and increased extreme weather events make it more challenging to maintain the network. Coastal routes are at risk of flooding, and embankments and cuttings are increasingly affected by storms and hot weather.
- **Freight growth**: Rail freight has pivoted from bulk goods (e.g. coal) to intermodal (container) and construction-related traffic. The South East's ports generate significant freight traffic that could be better served by rail. However, pinch points, lack of electrification, and limited terminal capacity restrict this potential.
- **Airport and port expansion**: Growth plans at Gatwick, Heathrow, and ports like Southampton and Dover require step changes in public transport provision. With ambitious mode share targets for sustainable access, failure to upgrade rail links will constrain wider economic growth in the TfSE area and the UK.
- **Decarbonisation**: While the region's electrification levels are high, there are critical gaps on corridors such as the Oxted and Marsh Link lines. Delivering modal shift to rail is essential to achieving the decarbonisation of the transport system in the TfSE area.
- **Cost and affordability**: There is a persistent perception that rail is too expensive, both for passengers and for public authorities looking to deliver enhancements. Addressing value for money, ticketing integration, and first- and last-mile connectivity will be key to overcoming these barriers.

Policy context and strategic alignment

3.7.2. The need to reform and invest is reinforced by a strong policy framework, including:

- **TfSE's Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan**: These set out a vision and investment priorities for a better-connected, more resilient, inclusive, decarbonised, and growth-enabling transport system.
- **National policies**: These include changes in investment priorities, decarbonisation and rail freight targets, and rail reform, including the bringing of passenger rail franchises into public ownership and the creation of GBR.
- **Local plans and devolution deals**: Spatial development strategies emerging from combined authorities and unitary authorities provide new levers for spatial planning, land value capture, and integrated transport delivery. The creation of combined authorities and unitary authorities, and the roll-out of local government reorganisation, present further opportunities to strengthen transport planning and delivery – although this may take time as the region transitions to new local government and funding arrangements.

What happens if we do not act?

- **The rail system in the TfSE area is at a pivotal moment**. Without concerted investment and reform, the region risks a gradual erosion of connectivity, competitiveness, and environmental performance. Inaction would not simply maintain the status quo – it would lead to a decline in our region's economy, with large parts of the region dependent on rail connectivity for employment.
- **A barrier to housing and economic growth**: Rail has the potential to unlock development by making high-density, low-carbon housing viable and by connecting people to jobs and services. Without a modern, reliable rail system, local authorities and developers will find it increasingly difficult to deliver sustainable growth. This could result in more dispersed, car-dependent housing development; increased congestion and air pollution in towns and cities; and lost inward investment. The TfSE area's role as a global gateway would be weakened, with airports struggling to meet passenger mode-share targets they need for expansion, and ports losing competitiveness against European hubs for freight. Stretched capacity limits the potential for rail to supply aggregates and other construction materials for development, and to service new housing and employment hubs subsequently.
- **A network that fails to meet future demand**: Population and housing growth are outpacing infrastructure investment. Without new capacity and service improvements, existing corridors will become increasingly congested, particularly on routes into London, across the South Coast, and through key bottlenecks. This risks constraining labour mobility and suppressing productivity in some of the UK's most economically dynamic areas. For freight, the lack of available train paths risks creating greater reliance on HGVs, generating additional congestion and worsening air quality and resilience on the Strategic Road Network, Major Road Network, and local roads.

Growing profitable services: While operators require subsidy at present, the area's high volume and intensively used core routes drive a huge proportion of UK rail revenue and, in the pre-Covid era, cross-subsidised the network. Ensuring that these routes grow and deliver their full potential once again will have a hugely positive impact on rail revenue at a national level.

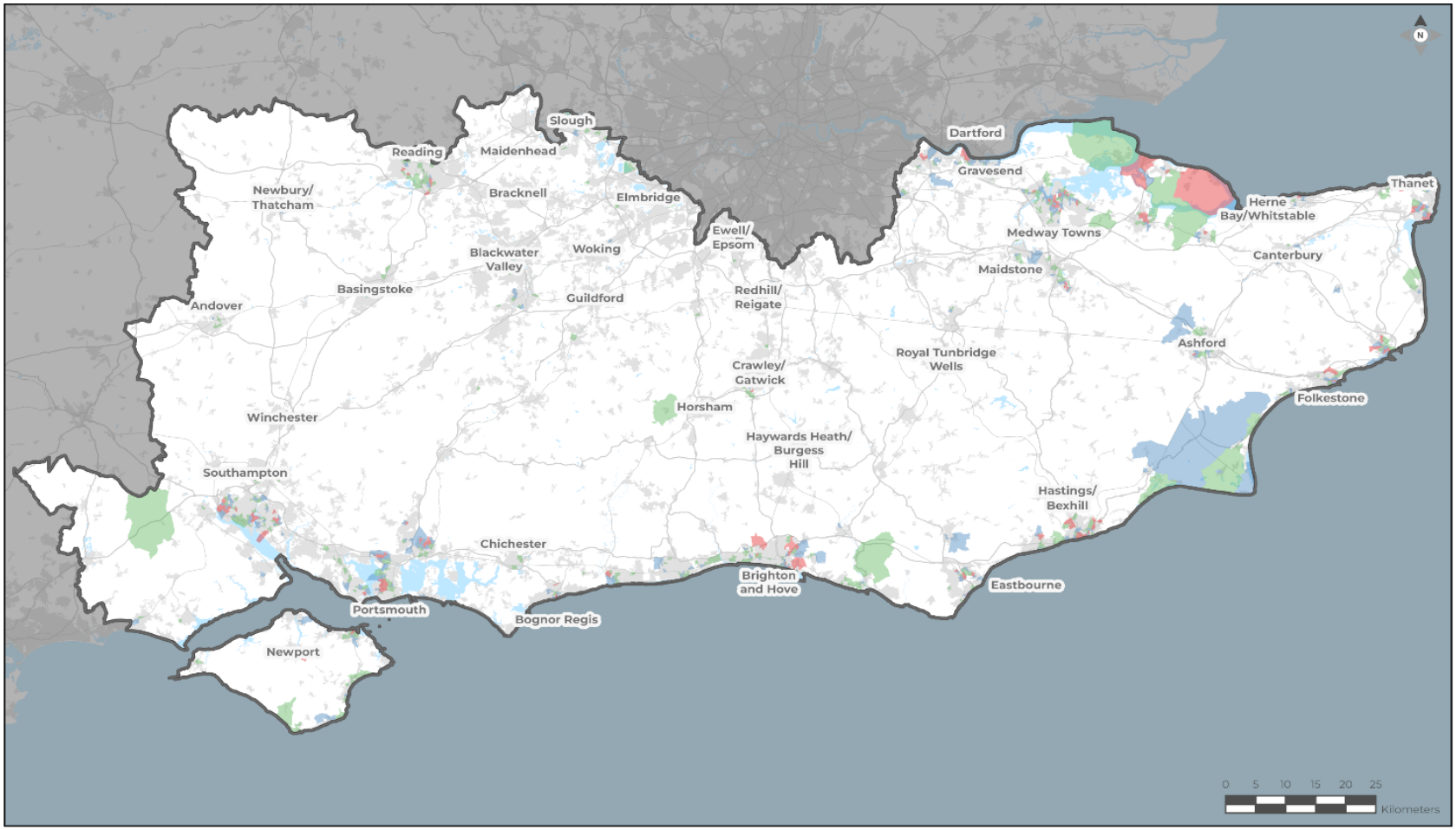
- **A missed opportunity to "catch up" on the UK's decarbonisation goals**: Transport is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK[5]. Rail, by contrast, is already the lowest-carbon form of powered transport. If rail fails to grow its mode share, the TfSE area will fall short of its decarbonisation ambitions. Without electrification and infrastructure renewal, diesel operation will persist, locking in higher costs and emissions. Similarly, without greater modal shift to rail freight, HGV mileage will continue to rise, undermining progress on air quality and climate commitments.
- **Widening inequality and isolation[6]**: Many coastal and rural communities in Kent, East Sussex, and Hampshire already experience poor connectivity, high car dependency, and lower incomes. Without action, these disparities will deepen. A rail system focused primarily on London commuting risks excluding communities that depend on regional and cross-country links for access to work, healthcare, and education. The social and economic cost of transport-related exclusion would rise, contradicting TfSE's Inclusion and Integration mission. **Figure 13** below shows the most and least deprived areas in the region, which are concentrated on the coast and the areas furthest from London.
- **Increasing vulnerability and declining resilience**: The TfSE rail network is ageing and highly interdependent. Single points of failure at major junctions mean that disruption in one area can cascade across the region. Without sustained investment in renewal, resilience, and modernisation, reliability will worsen, leading to higher maintenance costs, longer journey times, and reduced public confidence in rail. Extreme weather events, flooding, and coastal erosion will continue to expose vulnerable assets, particularly along the South Coast.
- **Lost strategic advantage for the UK**: Finally, failure to act would undermine not just regional goals but national ones. The TfSE area is the UK's primary gateway for trade, tourism, and talent, and a huge driver of national economic activity. It serves a significant proportion of the UK's port traffic through Southampton and Dover, provides access to some of the country's busiest airports, and hosts direct links to Europe via HS1 and the Channel Tunnel. Without improved rail freight and passenger capacity to and from these gateways, national supply chains will become less efficient, less competitive, and more carbon-intensive – undermining the UK's position in global markets.

3.7.3. The choice is clear: without intervention, the TfSE area faces declining reliability, mounting congestion, widening inequalities, and missed opportunities for clean growth. Acting now – through delivering a coherent programme of investment and

[5] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures, 6 February 2025, **https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67a30e4f7da1f1ac64e5feb1/2023-final-greenhousegas-emissions-statistical-release.pdf**

reform – will ensure the TfSE area secures its role as the nation's economic engine, global gateway, and low-carbon exemplar.

Figure 13: Index of Multiple Deprivation



Regional Transport Strategy for the South East

TfSE Area **Index of Multiple Deprivation,2019 - Decile (DCLG)**

Most Deprived

Least Deprived

TRANSPORT FOR THE South East

steer

Source: MHCLG Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025

4. Strategic priorities

4.1. Overview

4.1.1. This section sets out the key challenges and opportunities for rail across the TfSE area and how they shape our strategic priorities. To do so, we adopt a corridor-based framework that reflects the way rail services function and how passengers and freight move across the region. These corridors cross administrative boundaries – a list of conditional outputs within each MSA area and county is provided in **Appendix A**.

4.1.2. In this section, we divide the network into two broad categories:

- **Radial corridors**, which connect the TfSE area to London and play a vital role in national and international connectivity.
- **Orbital corridors**, which connect towns, cities, ports, and airports across the South East and beyond without necessarily passing through London.

4.1.3. These corridor types face common challenges – including capacity constraints, ageing infrastructure, resilience challenges, and changing patterns of demand – but also offer distinct opportunities to unlock sustainable growth, reduce car dependency, and improve regional productivity.

4.1.4. Within each category, we focus on key corridors that underpin the region's transport and economic systems. We highlight selected routes and lines of strategic importance, without attempting to cover every part of the network in detail.

4.1.5. The region has a dense and highly linked rail network. This means that across large areas of the region, there are a number of different rail routes which could be used to deliver services, and different approaches which could be taken to deliver improvements to speeds or frequency, or reductions in carbon emissions.

4.1.6. 'Conditional outputs', as used in this strategy, define the level of service and outputs which are needed to achieve TfSE's objectives and meet the opportunities in each corridor. It is then for the rail industry to propose solutions and schemes which can deliver these outputs most efficiently.

4.1.7. The intensive utilisation of the network in the TfSE area means that there are few options to substantially improve services without making trade-offs between different potential markets, without major infrastructure investment. We expect that these considerations would be reviewed and consulted on in detail as schemes are developed to deliver the conditional outputs. For each corridor, we apply a consistent structure to outline:

- The **role and function** of the corridor.
- **Current challenges** affecting performance and reliability.
- **Opportunities** to enhance services, unlock growth, and support strategic objectives.

- **Conditional outputs** – the outcomes we want to achieve, subject to appropriate investment and partnerships.
- **Dependencies and risks**, recognising that delivery relies on coordination across delivery agencies, funding sources, and policy frameworks.

4.1.8. Together, these corridors represent the backbone of the rail network in the wider South East – one that needs to be resilient, integrated, decarbonised, and better aligned to the region's evolving needs. In the following pages, we set out our priorities for each corridor, beginning with the radial routes to and from London.

4.2. TfSE-wide Priorities

4.2.1. Across the network, there are a number of areas where performance and customer experience are currently inconsistent and could be improved. Alongside the specific conditional outputs in each corridor section, there are a number of broader themes where TfSE is keen to see action.

Rail integration

4.2.2. Access to rail stations via bus is often harder than it needs to be: connection times are poor, or services are not available directly outside the station. Walking and cycling can also be a challenge, particularly where stations were historically built some distance from town and village centres. This leaves people reliant on driving to stations, causing congestion, carbon emissions and creating car parking challenges.

4.2.3. In best practice examples, stations serve as multimodal hubs in their local area: joined-up information on bus times and potential active travel routes, and high-quality facilities, support access to stations via a range of modes and reduce dependence on cars.

Passenger experience

4.2.4. The quality of service passengers receive can be inconsistent, with some rolling stock fleets very old or inappropriate for the routes they serve, such as high density commuter trains serving longer distance routes. Wi-fi provision is variable, and the quality of mobile phone reception is poor on some routes, particularly those with frequent tunnels and cuttings. Consistent data availability, particularly on longer distance routes, is increasingly important to passengers and particularly so for business and leisure travel.

4.2.5. Many of the stations in the TfSE area lack comprehensive step-free access: only 22% of stations in the region are fully step-free, and 8% have no step-free access at all. Rail should be accessible to everyone, and with an ageing population, this is only going to become more important. Existing funding through Access for All[7] supports the rollout of step-free access, but this should be accelerated.

Performance

4.2.6. The intensively used network in the TfSE area worsens the potential impacts of delays, and the number of people affected by major incidents can be huge. Across the network, as Network Rail and train operators work more closely together in the lead-up

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/access-for-all-programme

to GBR, action is needed to improve and maintain network performance, including through timetabling improvements and future plans for rolling stock and train crew.

Fares and ticketing

4.2.7. In the current financial climate for the rail industry, with intense pressure to reduce subsidy levels, general reductions in fares are unlikely. However, affordability is a key barrier to the use of rail by many, and options should be considered to introduce targeted discounts where possible, particularly where this may drive revenue growth. In many parts of the region, the focus has been on London fares, and there may be room to optimise fares on orbital and regional flows, with positive impacts on both revenue growth and local economies.

4.2.8. Integrated ticketing between bus and local rail can also support improved multimodal integration, better linking rail into local transport networks. Trials of Pay-as-you-go (PAYG) ticketing currently being carried out in Yorkshire and the East Midlands provide new and more flexible options for passengers. The South East shouldn't be left out of this.

Conditional outputs

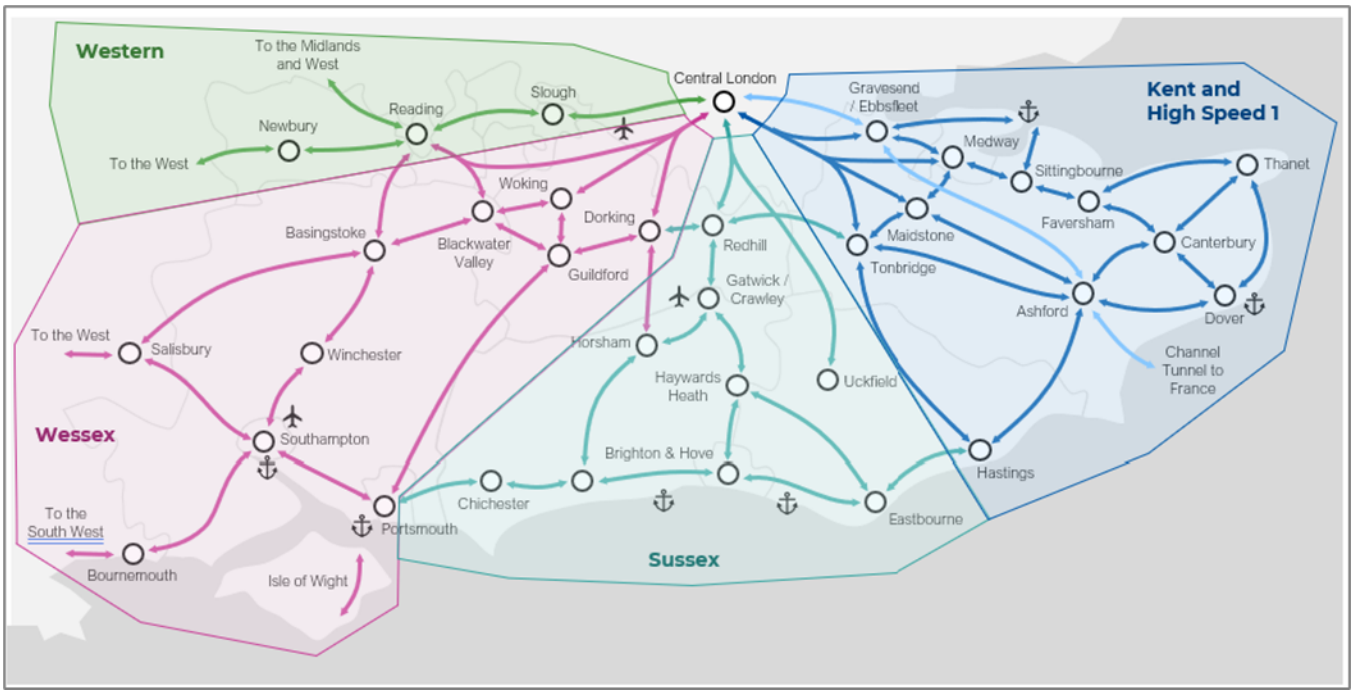
Conditional outputs to address these challenges

- **Improved integration of rail with local public transport networks** and active travel routes, including integrated ticketing.
- Provision of **high-quality rolling stock for each route**, including Wi-Fi provision.
- **Targeted fares** to support local markets and economies.
- **High reliability**, with punctuality equal to the best operators in the sector (above 90% of trains arriving within three minutes of schedule).
- **High customer satisfaction**, maintaining and improving scores in the industry Rail Customer Experience Survey, with overall journey satisfaction above 80%.

4.3. Radial corridors

4.3.1. Radial corridors provide frequent and often fast rail services connecting towns and cities across the TfSE Area with central London. These routes enjoy high market share, particularly for commuting and business travel to and from Central London destinations and have historically been the engine of the area's rail network.

Figure 14: Radial rail corridors in the Transport for the South East area



4.3.2. However, this success brings challenges. Many radial routes are now operating at or beyond capacity, resulting in overcrowding, congestion, and reduced performance and reliability. In several cases, the very popularity of these services has made them a victim of their own success.

4.3.3. While the radial network is extensive and well-used, some notable connectivity gaps remain. For example, many east–west movements rely on radial lines that are often circuitous or require multiple interchanges. Some towns are less well connected than their neighbours, a disadvantage that can hinder growth, investment, and economic opportunity. A direct train from London to Hastings, for example, takes 95 minutes: as long as getting from London to Doncaster (which is more than twice the distance). Many stations, particularly in rural areas, are poorly integrated into local transport networks, with passengers dependent on car access. This limits the scope for driving new demand, particularly in the off-peak.

4.3.4. London remains the dominant economic hub for the region. Towns and cities across the TfSE area continue to rely heavily on London for both employment and connections to the wider UK and international destinations. As a result, high-quality, reliable, and inclusive rail access to the capital is not simply desirable – it is fundamental to the region's future success and to the city's economy. Where places fall behind their neighbours in terms of rail provision, they must work disproportionately harder to attract investment, support housing delivery, and grow their local economies.

4.3.5. Additionally, while the radial routes enjoy significant modal share for journeys to and from Central London, there are opportunities to significantly grow rail's contribution

to serving destinations to and from outer London.

4.3.6. We have structured our analysis of radial routes in line with the established Network Rail routes for the region:

- **Kent** (which includes parts of East Sussex)
- **Sussex** (including East Surrey)
- **Wessex** (West Surrey, Hampshire, and parts of Berkshire)
- **Western** (Berkshire)

4.3.7. Each of the following sub-sections sets out the corridor's role, challenges, opportunities, desired outputs, and delivery considerations.

4.3.8. While the sections below focus on corridor-specific outputs, as a general rule, TfSE and its stakeholders would like to see each Major Economic Hub (defined as a major town, city, port, airport, and/or growth hotspot, and shown in **Figure 15** below) well-connected to London (and to each other, as described in the orbital section).

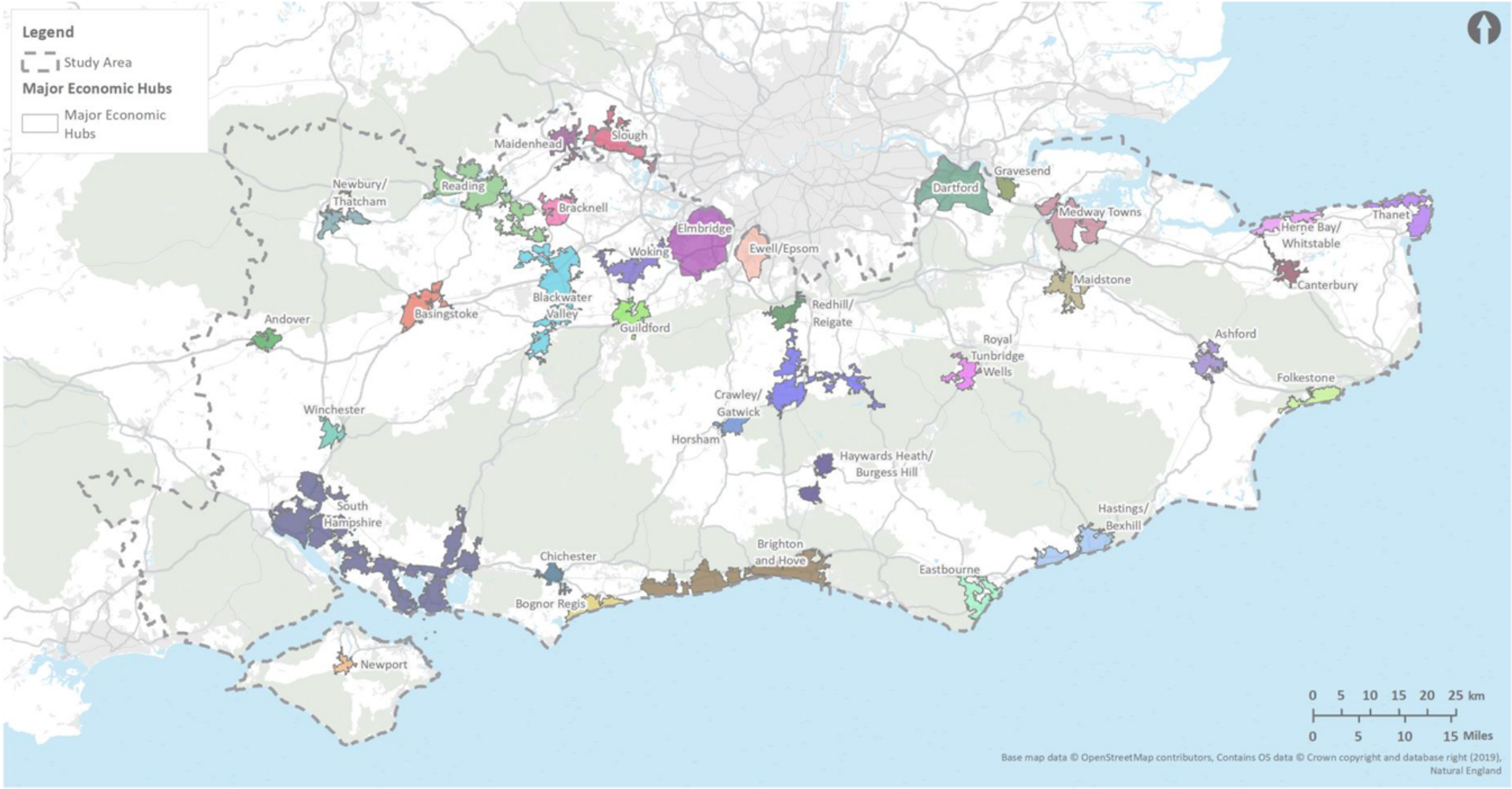
We define "well-connected" for these hubs to mean:

- **At least four direct services per hour to/from London during peak hours** for stations within one hour of the capital.
- **At least two direct services per hour to/from London off-peak** for all hubs, including peak hours for hubs that are more than one hour from London.
- **50mph average speed** between London and each hub.

4.3.9. These outputs are achieved in most – but not all – places in the TfSE area. In the sections below, we outline corridor-specific outputs we want to see realised.

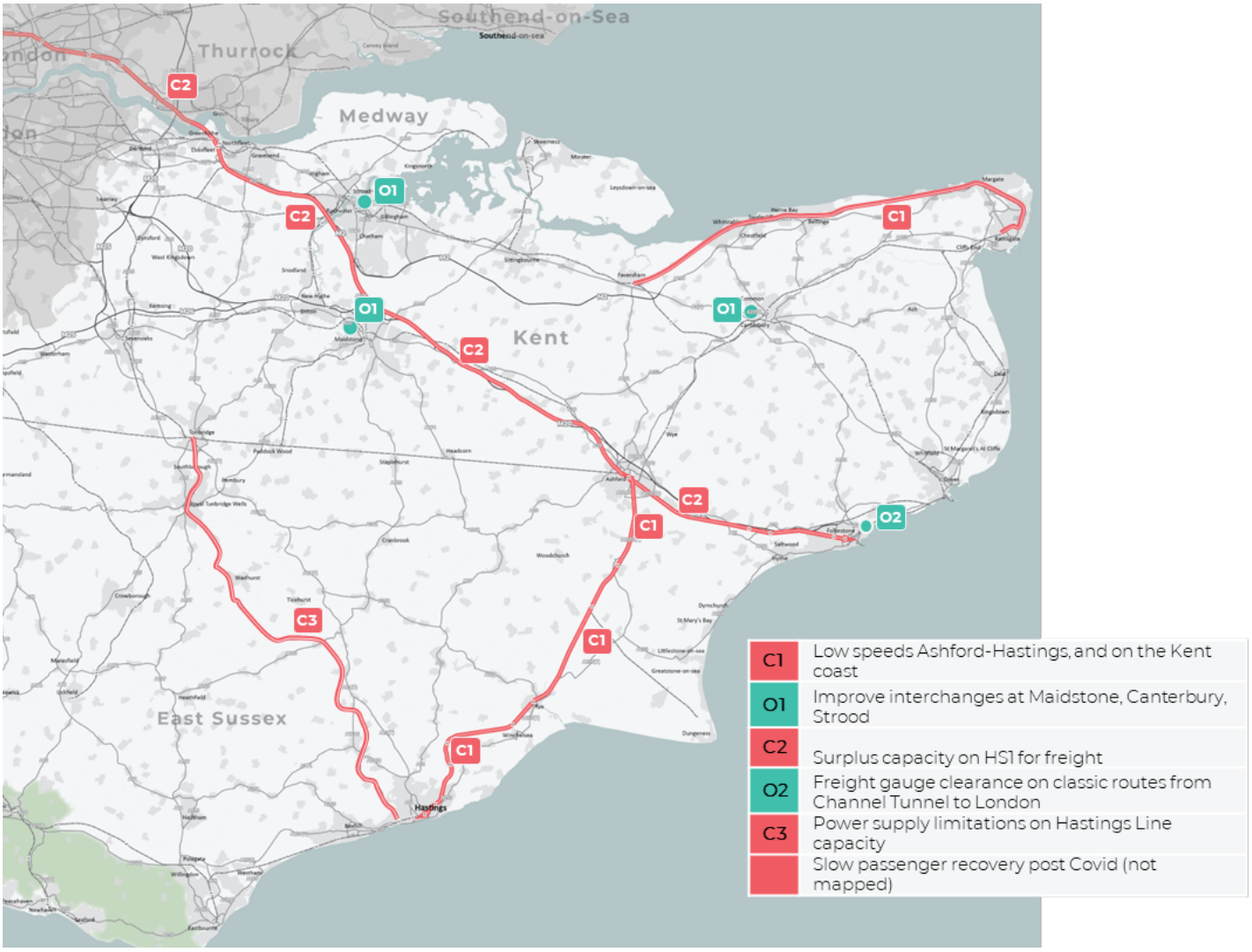
4.3.10. Across both hubs and smaller stations, rail should be well integrated into local transport networks. Step-free access is crucial for many people to access the network, and the rollout of accessibility upgrades across the network should be accelerated.

Figure 15: TfSE Major Economic Hubs



Kent Route and High Speed 1

Figure 16: Challenges and Opportunities for Kent



Corridor profile

4.3.11. In contrast to many other radial corridors, Kent is served by a diverse and extensive network of lines connecting to the capital. Six London termini serve routes into Kent, supported by four principal main lines – High Speed 1, the South Eastern Main Line, the North Kent Line, and the Chatham Main Line. These each expand into branches that intersect and diverge across the county to create a complex, interwoven network. In several locations, such as Maidstone, Canterbury, and Strood, lines cross without convenient interchanges, limiting connectivity across the network.

4.3.12. This complexity reflects Kent's historical importance in the development of the railway. The county hosted one of the first railways to be built in Britain, and it is home to the UK's only high-speed railway, High Speed 1 (HS1), which provides access to the Channel Tunnel. Despite this international infrastructure, rail freight has a relatively modest presence in the area. Most freight services in Kent are a combination of Channel Tunnel traffic and aggregate trains (sand and stone) for the construction industry. Key features of construction traffic in the Kent Area are sea-dredged aggregates from the North Kent area into London distribution terminals and a series of terminals in Kent receiving aggregates traffic from suppliers across the UK. Sea-dredged aggregates will

become increasingly important as domestic aggregate quarries are exhausted.

Current challenges

4.3.13. The rail network in Kent has faced significant headwinds in recent years. The pandemic accelerated a downturn in commuting, and recovery in both passenger demand and revenue has been slower than in other parts of the TfSE area. The region's lower average incomes – particularly in East Kent – may be contributing to affordability challenges and reduced rail use. While HS1 has dramatically improved journey times and delivered associated benefits to some areas (for example, Ashford has seen substantial growth in population and employment[8]), many locations in the north and east of the county still suffer from slow journey times and indirect services.

4.3.14. Power supply limitations on the Hastings Line constrain performance and capacity, limiting the number of 12-car services that can operate each day.

4.3.15. For freight, the gauge clearance of key routes used to reach the Channel Tunnel to allow larger containers would allow rail to become more attractive to end users. The Maidstone East Line is the key route used by freight trains to access the Channel Tunnel and is currently cleared only to W9 gauge. W12 is the aspirational standard.

Opportunities

4.3.16. One of the most exciting opportunities for Kent lies in the revival of international connectivity. Recent decisions by the ORR – including enforcement of open access to HS1 depot facilities and reductions in access charges – mark a turning point. These changes open the door to new international high-speed services and create the potential for greater competition on cross-Channel routes. Virgin Trains has had its application for services as an open access operator approved, while the incumbent operator – Eurostar – has also announced expansion plans. Reopening Ashford and Ebbsfleet to international services is a clear strategic priority for Kent County Council, Medway Council, and TfSE, and in principle, one supported by Virgin. Delivering this would bring significant economic and social benefits to the region, restoring Kent's global gateway status and reconnecting communities with European markets.

4.3.17. There is also substantial potential to increase the volume of freight transported on High Speed 1: while technical barriers remain, capacity is available and reduced access charges make this more viable. Proposals to reopen the international freight terminal in Barking would support this growth.

Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

While service frequencies have largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels, **speed and direct connectivity remain key challenges for Kent**. TfSE supports a range of conditional outputs to address this, including:

- **Faster services to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks**, including Maidstone, Hastings (on the edge of this corridor), and Thanet – targeting journey times of towns that are comparable distances from London.
- **Improved connections within and between stations**, including at Strood and Canterbury, as well as Maidstone West and Maidstone Barracks.

[8] DfT HS1 evaluation

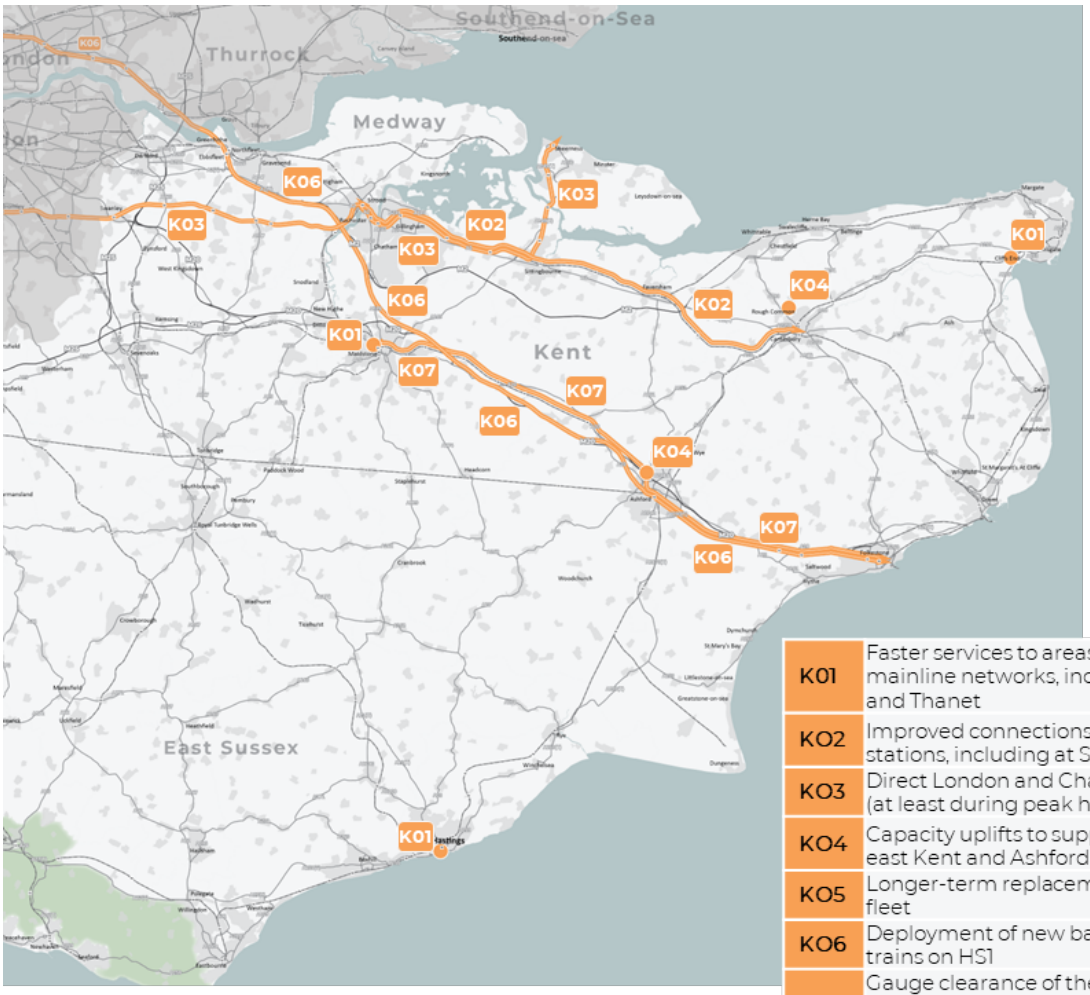
- **Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey** (at least during peak hours), which is currently disconnected from the capital.
- **Medium-term capacity uplifts** to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford, including additional rolling stock and potential timetable enhancements.
- **Longer-term replacement of the ageing Networker fleet**, which is approaching the end of its operational life.
- **Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains on HS1**, which could potentially unlock direct services to new destinations without reliance on diesel traction.
- **Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines** to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel, and broader work to support growth in rail freight on HS1.
- **A new rail freight interchange** at Northfleet.

Dependencies and risks

4.3.18. Many of the improvements sought in Kent are dependent on future rolling stock investment, and decisions that may be taken at a national or system level following the establishment of GBR. There is also a degree of uncertainty around the Mayor of London's proposals to take on responsibility for inner suburban rail services. While this could deliver benefits within London, any transfer must be carefully managed to ensure it does not negatively impact operations further into Kent and Medway. With capacity highly constrained, additional services and stops within Greater London could affect connectivity for longer-distance passengers, increasing journey times or reducing service frequencies.

4.3.19. TfSE supports TfL's ambition to extend the Bakerloo Line, which could release capacity on the national rail network in inner south-east London, a change that could, in turn, support faster services from Kent into the capital.

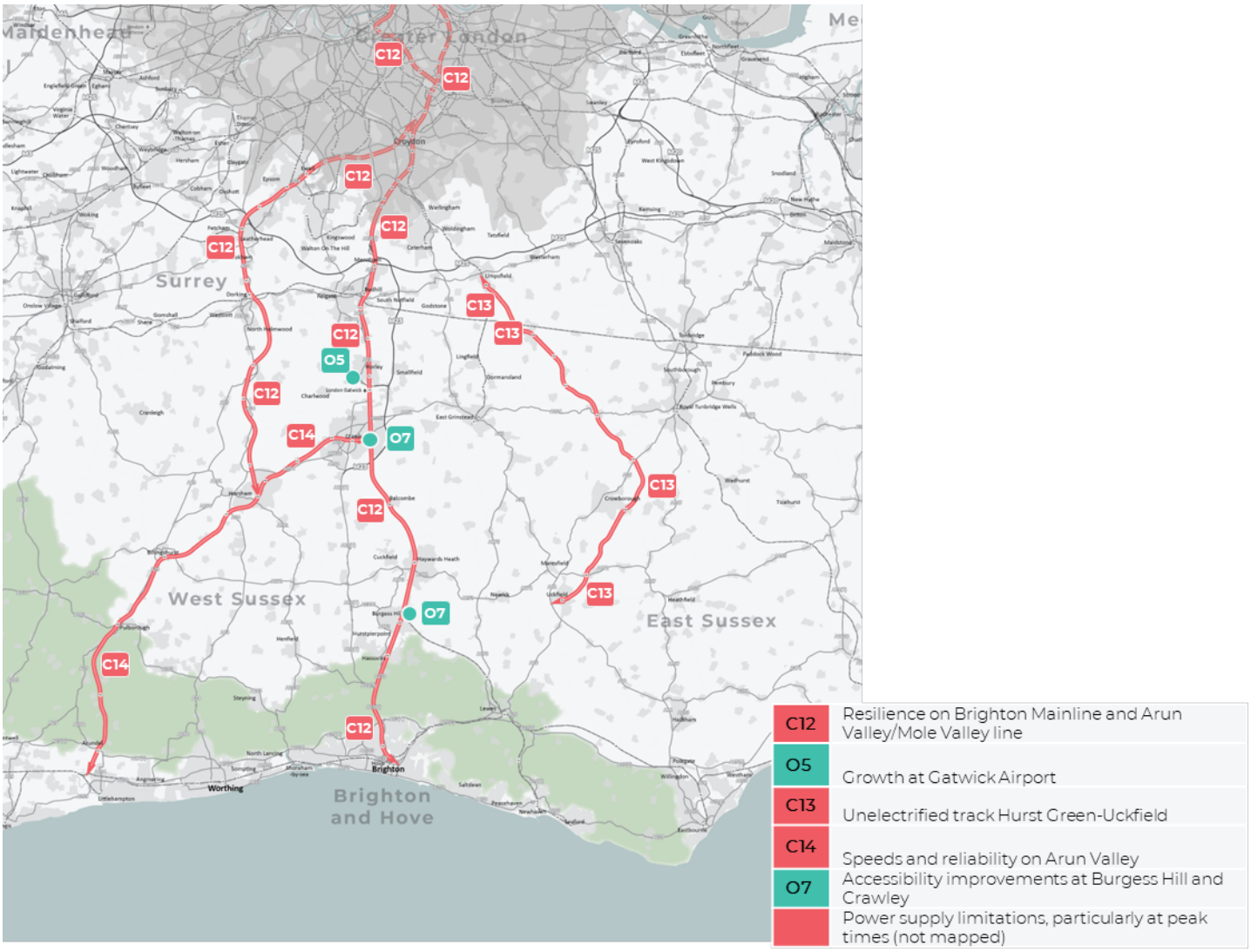
Figure 17: Conditional Outputs for Kent route



K01	Faster services to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks, including Maidstone, Hastings and Thanet
KO2	Improved connections within and between stations, including at Strood and Canterbury
KO3	Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey (at least during peak hours)
KO4	Capacity uplifts to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford
KO5	Longer-term replacement of the ageing Networker fleet
KO6	Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains on HS1
KO7	Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel.

Sussex Route

Figure 18: Challenges and Opportunities for the Sussex route



Corridor profile

4.3.20. The Brighton Main Line corridor operates as a major trunk route into London for much of East Surrey and Sussex, with multiple branches at both ends. Services are primarily split between two London termini – Victoria and London Bridge – while south of Gatwick, the line fans out into the Coastway East and West routes and the Arun Valley Line. This corridor is home to Gatwick Airport, Britain's second busiest, which has recently secured development consent to expand its operations – a change that is expected to generate significant additional demand for rail. At the southern end of the corridor lies Brighton and Hove, a vibrant and growing city that faces acute housing affordability challenges. These growth pressures are increasingly spilling over into neighbouring towns, intensifying demand for reliable rail connections across the wider Sussex coast and into the capital.

4.3.21. This corridor is also served by Thameslink – delivering metro-level frequencies across the heart of London and enabling direct connections between Sussex and

destinations as far afield as Cambridge and Peterborough, as well as connecting Gatwick and Luton airports.

4.3.22. Thameslink's core high-capacity route through central London also interchanges with the Elizabeth Line at Farringdon, and therefore, for many, it forms an increasingly attractive way of accessing many destinations, including Heathrow. In many respects, this corridor is well served – but that should not obscure the pressing issues it faces, particularly around resilience and capacity.

4.3.23. Freight is confined primarily to the East Coast Line, Brighton Main Line and the Tonbridge-Redhill Line. The Brighton Main Line carries aggregates traffic between Newhaven, Ardingly, Crawley, and Purley, and the Mendips. The Tonbridge-Redhill Line is one of the alternative routes used by traffic to access the Channel Tunnel. Pathing of freight on the Brighton Main Line is challenging, even in the off-peak.

Current challenges

4.3.24. The trunk-like structure of this corridor creates a major vulnerability: disruption at a single point can have widespread knock-on effects. The most critical of these is at Croydon, where two four-track main lines (Brighton Main Line and Quarry Lines) converge into just six platform faces, before funnelling into five tracks south of East Croydon. The Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme, which was intended to address these long-standing bottlenecks, was deferred due to affordability constraints post-pandemic. Although the pandemic delayed the need for additional capacity and bought time before the enhancement is required, the underlying issue remains, and solutions are unfunded.

4.3.25. Power supply limitations also constrain performance, particularly during peak periods. Despite reasonable journey times (e.g. around one hour from London to Brighton and Hove), services remain relatively slow compared to equivalent cities such as Milton Keynes or Cambridge. TfSE is also concerned about the pace and reliability of services via the Arun Valley Line.

4.3.26. A further operational challenge is the short unelectrified section of railway between Hurst Green and Uckfield. This limits flexibility, increases operating costs, and undermines ambitions for a fully decarbonised railway.

4.3.27. There is also some fragmentation in the customer offer – particularly for airport passengers – with multiple operators, brands, and fare structures serving Gatwick.

Opportunities

4.3.28. Gatwick's planned expansion will generate a step-change in demand for high-quality public transport, particularly rail. Alongside broader growth in the corridor, this presents an opportunity to re-energise investment cases for longstanding infrastructure needs, including Croydon. With the right interventions, there is potential to deliver meaningful performance, capacity, and sustainability benefits across the entire corridor.

4.3.29. The corridor also offers scope to revisit long-term aspirations such as reinstating the Uckfield – Lewes line to create a secondary Brighton – London route. While Croydon would remain a constraint, this would improve resilience, support growth in Mid Sussex and East Sussex, and potentially relieve pressure on the Brighton Main Line.

4.3.30. Crawley and Burgess Hill have been identified as particular targets for station accessibility and broader improvements, which could support local sustainable development and the attractiveness of rail.

Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

TfSE supports the following conditional outputs for the Sussex corridor:

- Achieving the **public transport mode share** targets set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans. New services from Kent to Gatwick should contribute to this.
- Improving journey times on the **Arun Valley** route.
- Delivering a **more resilient and reliable railway** through the following options:
  - Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon.
  - Longer-term decarbonisation of the Hurst Green – Uckfield line to support fleet standardisation and reduce emissions.
  - Longer-term reinstatement of the Uckfield – Lewes line to provide a second north–south spine between Brighton and Hove and London.
- Exploring **enhanced inter-regional connectivity**, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton – Reading/Oxford services. (Though it is noted that Thameslink and the Elizabeth Line together already provide comprehensive connections.).
- Maintaining capability for current and anticipated **future freight requirements**, including potential rail freight interchanges at Salfords, Crawley Goods Yard and South Godstone.
- Ensuring the **rolling stock fleet is sufficient** to meet future demands on capacity and services and provides a high-quality passenger experience.

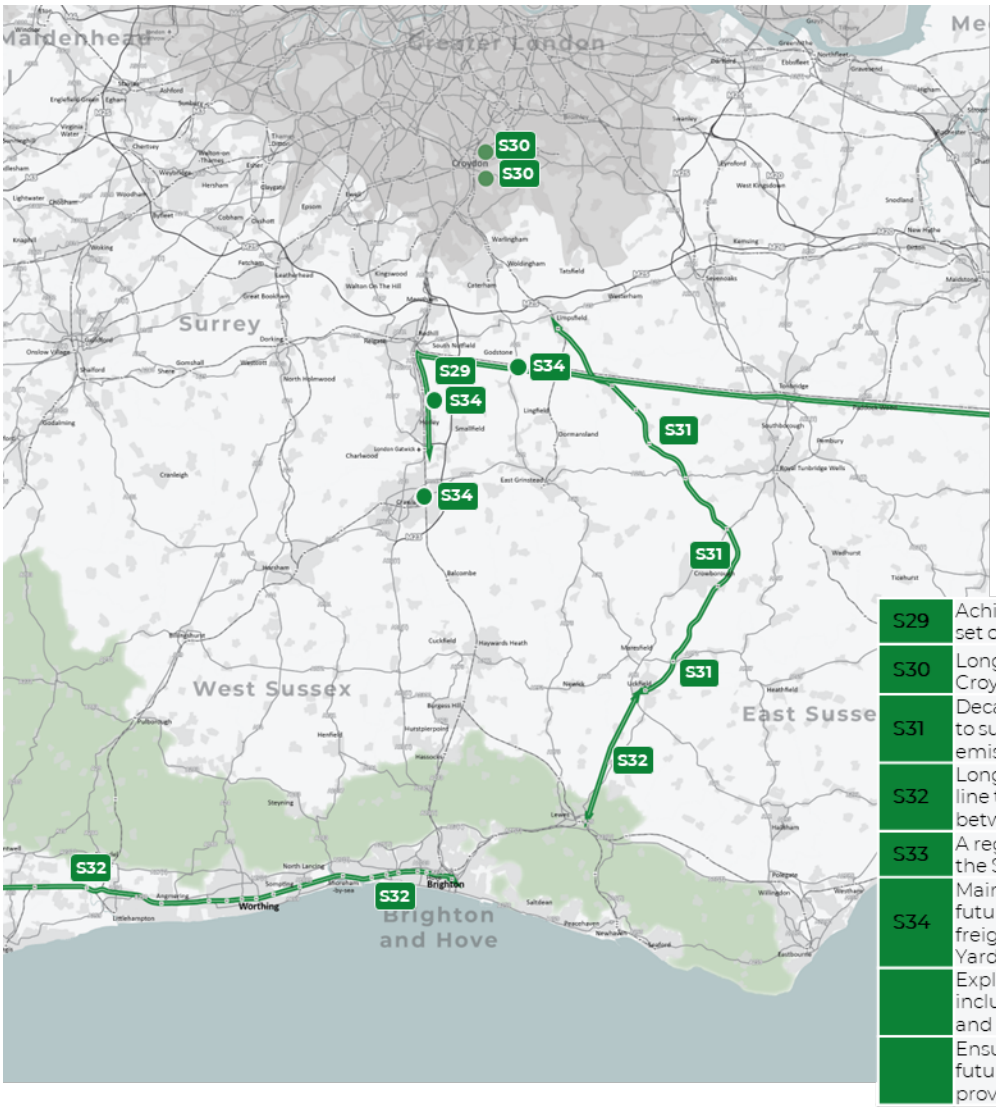
Dependencies and risks

4.3.31. Thameslink's operational structure presents challenges as well as benefits. While it offers excellent north-south connectivity, the integration of services from north of the Thames introduces performance risk to the Sussex corridor. Any disruption upstream can cascade through the network.

4.3.32. Demand pressures at both ends of the route are likely to intensify with the opening of the Universal Studios theme park in Bedford, as well as growth at Gatwick and Luton Airports. Meeting this demand with the existing infrastructure will be challenging, as there is very limited scope to increase service frequencies and none to lengthen trains. Some Thameslink trains run as 8-car sets which could be converted to the full 12-car sets to accommodate growth associated with airport expansion, but this would require additional rolling stock.

4.3.33. Investment in the Croydon area remains critical for this corridor, but securing funding for such a complex and expensive scheme will be difficult. A clear link to national resilience objectives and to the level of growth on the corridor may help to build the case.

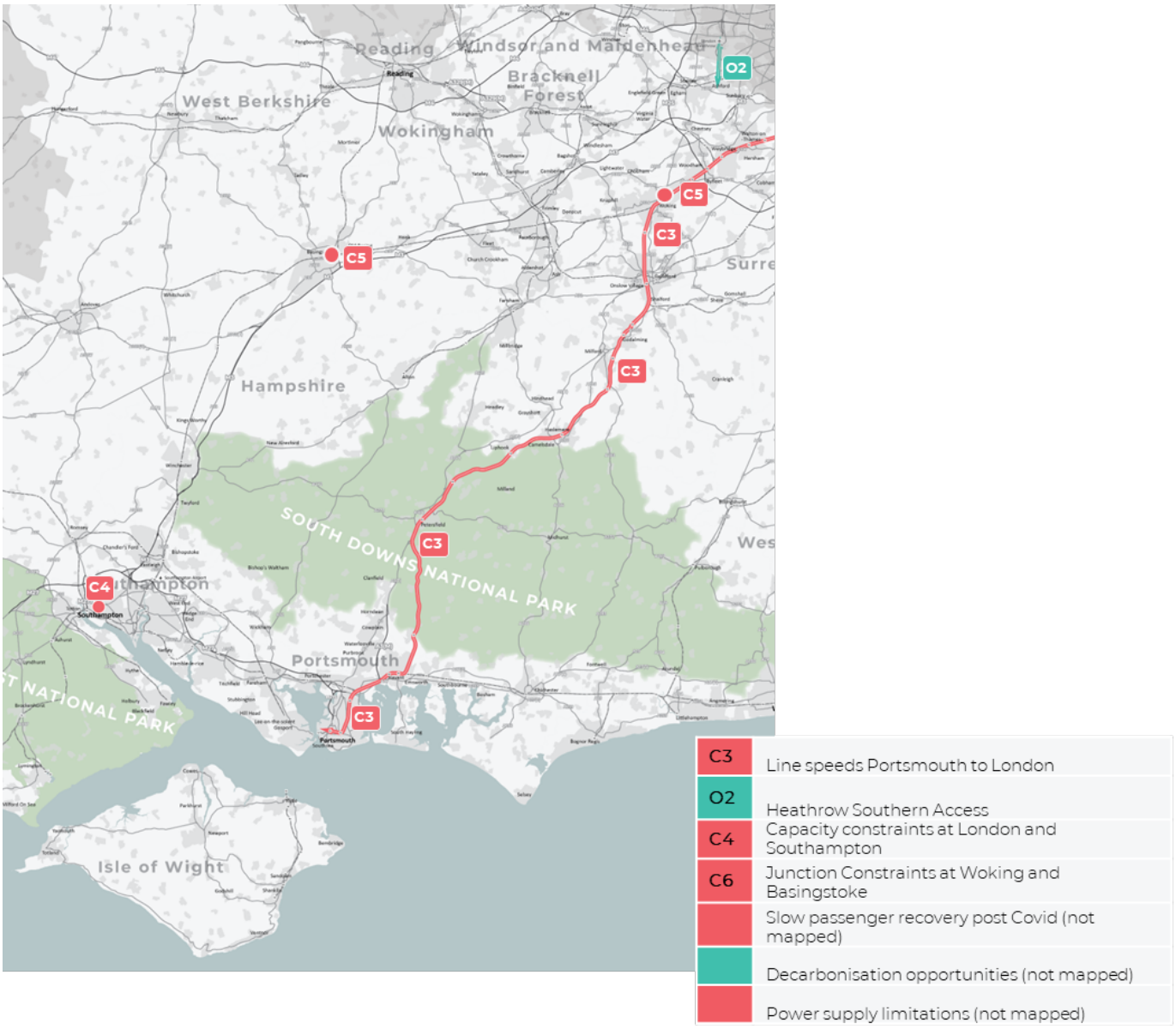
Figure 19: Conditional outputs for Sussex route



S29	Achieving the public transport mode share targets set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans
S30	Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon.
S31	Decarbonisation of the Hurst Green – Uckfield line to support fleet standardisation and reduce emissions.
S32	Longer-term reinstatement of the Uckfield – Lewes line to provide a second north–south spine between Brighton and Hove and London.
S33	A regular 4 tph suburban services across the day in the Sussex Coast conurbation
S34	Maintain capability for current and anticipated future freight requirements., including potential rail freight interchanges at Salfords, Crawley Goods Yard and South Godstone
	Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton and Hove–Reading/Oxford services
	Ensure the rolling stock fleet is sufficient to meet future demands on capacity and services and provides a high-quality passenger experience.

Wessex Route

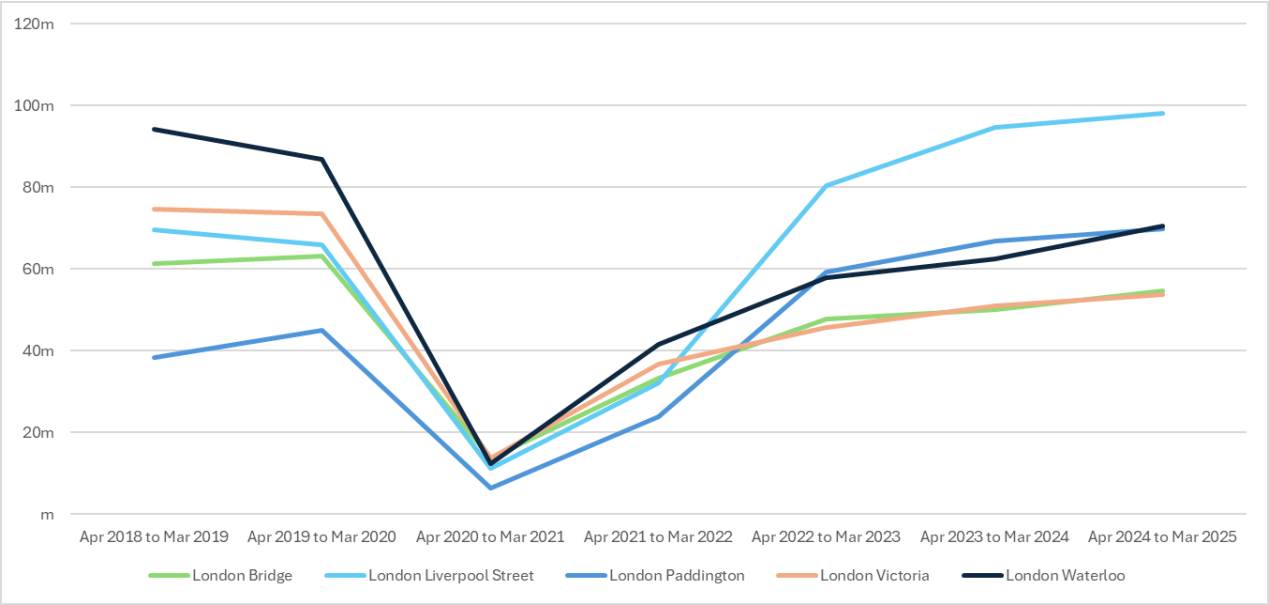
Figure 20: Challenges and Opportunities for the Wessex route



Corridor profile

4.3.34. The Wessex corridor is structured in the opposite way to Kent, with all services funnelling into a single London terminus: Waterloo. Once Britain's busiest station, handling over 100 million passengers per year pre-pandemic, usage has fallen sharply; by 2025, Waterloo had dropped to 70 million entries and exits, overtaken by Liverpool Street, as shown in **Figure 21**. While growth at other stations is linked to the Elizabeth Line, this decline highlights the transformation in commuting patterns on this corridor. Demand has not recovered, likely due to a demographic skew toward higher-income, home-based workers.

Figure 21: London terminal demand from 2019-2025



Source: ORR estimates of station usage, 2025

4.3.35. Nevertheless, the corridor remains one of the most important in the TfSE area. It delivers a very high frequency service into London and connects three of the five largest conurbations – South Hampshire, the Blackwater Valley, and Reading – to the capital and, to a degree, to each other. While the top end of the corridor is heavily commuter-oriented, the southern end becomes more mixed, with freight, regional, and cross-country services joining the flow. Connections to the North Downs line provide access to Gatwick Airport, as well as Reading and Guildford.

4.3.36. The corridor forms part of the principal rail corridor to the Port of Southampton and serves Portsmouth International Port. This forms the most significant freight flow in the TfSE geography, principally domestic intermodal traffic between Southampton and terminals in the Midlands, North West and Yorkshire. A smaller flow of construction traffic follows the South West Main Line from Basingstoke towards London, operating outside of the peak passenger period.

4.3.37. In future, this corridor may have an interface with Heathrow, depending on the outcome of airport surface access work. To the west, this corridor also provides a vital link for communities in South Wiltshire, North Dorset, East Devon, and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole.

Current challenges

4.3.38. The corridor's sharp decline in ridership poses a challenge for new investment as it is difficult to argue for major funding when usage remains below two-thirds of pre-pandemic levels. But many pre-Covid constraints remain. At the London end, crowding is still a problem, and DfT data identifies one of the UK's most overcrowded services operating on this corridor. The railway infrastructure approaching London is well designed, with grade-separated junctions in many places. But pinch points emerge at Woking and, to a lesser extent, Basingstoke, where flat junctions introduce conflict. Power supply constraints limit the scope for service enhancements.

4.3.39. South of Basingstoke, the railway reduces to two tracks in several places, creating capacity bottlenecks. The most critical is at Southampton Central, where all traffic –

including significant freight volumes – is funnelled through a restrictive tunnel approach (Southampton Tunnel). Despite freight having two routes into the city (via Winchester and via Salisbury), many freight trains converge on this bottleneck due to the layout of the port approaches. Limited capacity arising from the interaction with passenger services is a key constraint for freight on this corridor, along with the lack of a diversionary route cleared for longer trains when sections of the Southampton-Basingstoke-Reading route are closed. The lack of Direct Current (DC) freight locomotives is also a challenge.

4.3.40. Although some mainline sections operate at 100mph, journey times are inconsistent in places. The Portsmouth Direct Line (joining at Woking) is noticeably slower than equivalent routes to Southampton or Andover, placing Portsmouth (and by extension, the Isle of Wight) at a relative disadvantage. The Windsor Lines are also slow, largely due to frequent stopping patterns and limited overtaking opportunities.

4.3.41. Some long-distance services on the Portsmouth route are operated by high-capacity suburban rolling stock, offering a poor passenger experience which combined with slow journey times, further reduces the attractiveness of Portsmouth rail services.

Opportunities

4.3.42. The most transformative opportunity for this corridor lies in surface access to Heathrow. While the primary driver is improved airport connectivity, there is the potential for a new 'Southern Access' link from Surrey or Hampshire to Heathrow, potentially continuing through to the Great Western Main Line at Old Oak Common. This could unlock transformational regional benefits, offering new direct services to the airport from Basingstoke, Guildford, Winchester, and even Southampton. There may also be scope to improve east–west connectivity in towns along the Windsor Line, such as Bracknell and Wokingham.

4.3.43. Decarbonisation presents another opportunity. The West of England Line and Test Valley Line are still unelectrified, and the diesel fleet that serves them is approaching the end of its operational life. This provides a natural decision point for decarbonisation. Meanwhile, although most of the main Wessex corridor is already electrified, the use of third-rail DC limits freight performance, particularly on steep gradients.

Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

TfSE supports the following conditional outputs for the Wessex corridor, shown in Figure 21 below:

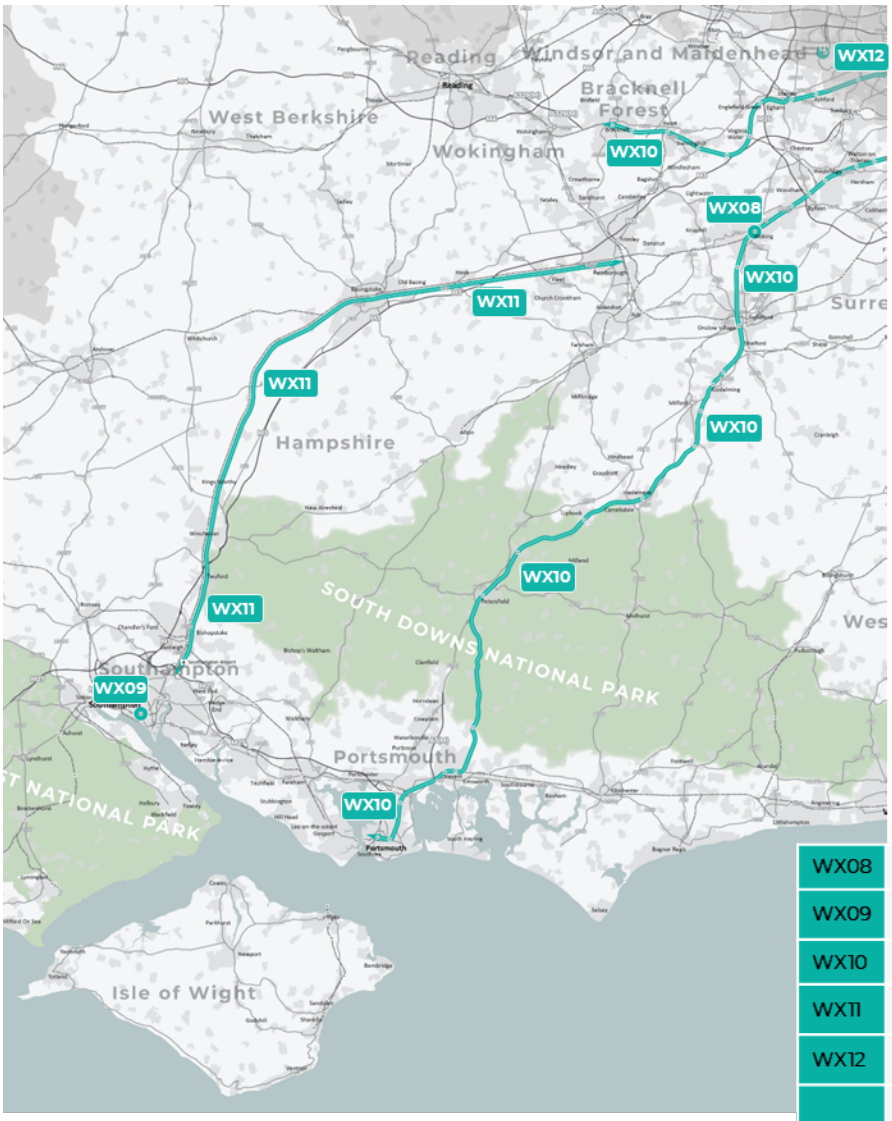
- **Capacity relief at Woking** to address congestion and passenger crowding. We support longstanding proposals for grade separation (e.g. flyovers) but leave the design solution to the industry.
- **A long-term solution at Southampton**, including the resolution of capacity constraints at Southampton Tunnel and Central Station. While there are differing views within the industry and local authorities, the need to address this bottleneck is clear and urgent.
- **Faster journey times to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell** to improve competitiveness relative to neighbouring centres.
- **Improved connectivity in the Blackwater Valley**. There may be scope to better integrate east–west and north–south rail services through investing in a new hub

station in the Farnborough area, and to improve integration with local bus services.
- **Maximising the benefits of future Heathrow rail links**, particularly the Southern Access scheme, ensuring Wessex corridor services benefit from new connections as and when airport infrastructure is progressed.
- Ensure a suitable **diversionary route is available for freight** between Basingstoke and Reading – this could be via Kew or Salisbury.

Dependencies and risks

4.3.44. Many of the outputs listed above are intertwined with TfSE's orbital priorities, particularly around freight, electrification, and access to Heathrow. Resolving these constraints has the ability to improve connectivity not just within the corridor, but much more broadly across the region. It will be important to ensure strategic alignment between these programmes to maximise return on investment and avoid fragmented planning.

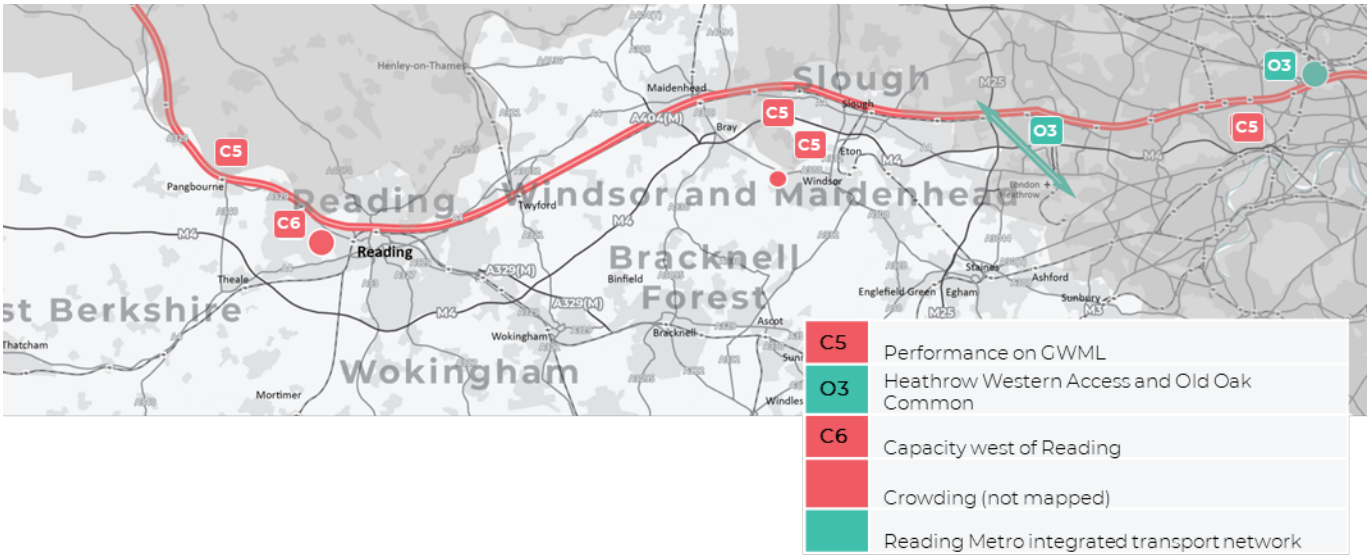
Figure 22: Conditional Outputs for Wessex route



WX08	Capacity relief at Woking to address congestion and passenger crowding.
WX09	A long term solution at Southampton
WX10	Faster journey times to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell
WX11	Improved connectivity in the Blackwater Valley
WX12	Maximising the benefits of future Heathrow rail links including Southern Access
	Ensure a suitable diversionary route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading(not mapped)

Western Route

Figure 23: Challenges and Opportunities for the Western route



Corridor profile

4.3.45. The Great Western Main Line (GWML) is quite distinct in character from its Southern Region counterparts. Though only around 30 miles of the core route fall within the TfSE geography, the strategic importance of this corridor extends far beyond our region. It links London to key centres in the Thames Valley, the South Midlands, the West of England, South Wales, and the South West and does so with impressive journey times (at least on core London routes).

4.3.46. This route has recently seen significant investment through electrification, the rollout of Intercity Express Programme trains, and the introduction of the Elizabeth Line. It is also home to major economic hubs including Slough, Reading and Maidenhead.

4.3.47. The route carries a significant volume of freight, particularly between Reading and London, Didcot and Basingstoke. The Didcot – Reading – Basingstoke section forms a key part of the Solent to West Midlands intermodal corridor, and the GWML from Reading into London mainly carries construction traffic between the Mendip quarries and terminals in the London area. The route is gauge cleared to W12 between London and Reading, and to W10 between Reading and Basingstoke.

Current challenges

4.3.48. While the Western corridor generally performs well and offers good connectivity across a range of geographies and travel needs, even good infrastructure has its limits. This is a busy railway and one that is running close to capacity. With intercity, airport, freight, local and metro services all competing for capacity, it is increasingly difficult to find new train paths without compromising reliability. Overcrowding can be an issue at times, particularly where long-distance travellers compete for seats with airport passengers boarding in central London. Oxford Road and Southcote Junctions to the west of Reading are constraints on the mix of passenger and freight services that operate across them.

4.3.49. It is important to acknowledge that some of the most pressing capacity and

performance issues on this corridor lie just beyond TfSE's northern boundary. Oxford is a major bottleneck and will likely become busier when the East West Rail project starts operations towards Milton Keynes and Cambridge. The line west of Newbury remains unelectrified, which is a missed opportunity for freight services accessing the quarrying industry in Somerset. STBs outside the TfSE area, including England's Economic Heartland, have a variety of aspirations for new services, including direct Oxford – Bristol services, enhanced Cotswolds – London connectivity, and improved freight and cross-country flows between Reading and Didcot. Performance is always a challenge on busy corridors and is often raised as a concern here, in part due to the added complexity of introducing cross-London Elizabeth Line services on the slow lines in recent years.

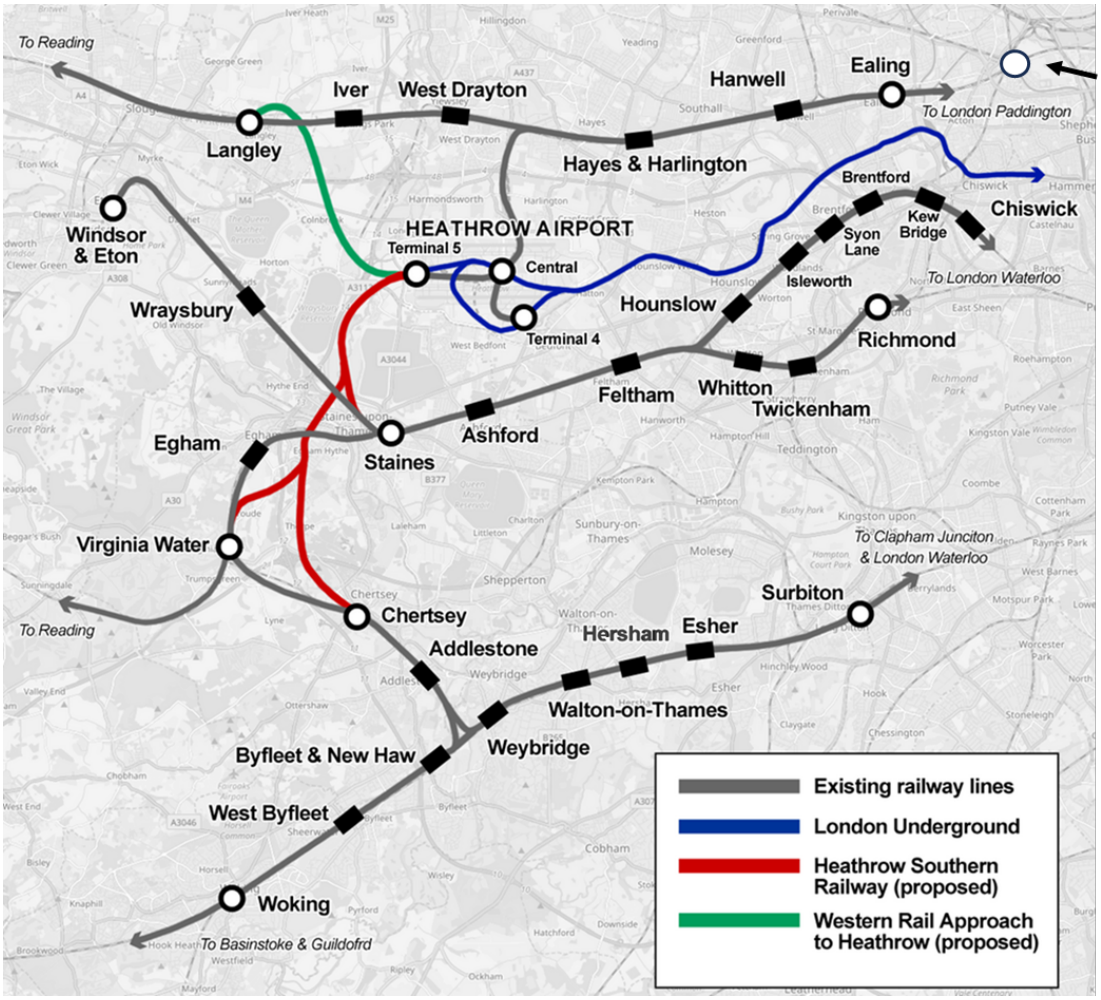
Opportunities

4.3.50. The biggest single opportunity for the Western corridor is the emergence of Old Oak Common as a major national interchange. Once complete, it will connect HS2, the GWML, the Elizabeth Line, Heathrow Express and potentially other services - placing the Thames Valley within minutes of the UK's newest superhub. For commuters, business travellers and interchanging passengers alike, this represents a step-change in accessibility.

4.3.51. Coupled with this is the long-awaited Western Rail Link to Heathrow, which would provide a direct connection between the GWML and the airport. This opens up opportunities for through-running services from Reading, Maidenhead and Slough directly into Heathrow, delivering major time savings and mode shift potential. In conjunction with the Southern Access scheme this has the potential to transform rail connectivity substantially. Taken together, Old Oak Common and Western Rail Access to Heathrow could transform the national rail map and unlock benefits across the TfSE area and beyond, as shown in **Figure 24**.

4.3.52. There are strong aspirations to deliver a 'Reading Metro' integrated transport network, with better alignment of service timings at key locations and integrated ticketing options, as well as branding and promotion. This could support the broader use of rail in the corridor.

Figure 24: Heathrow/Old Oak Common scheme map



Illustrative map of previous proposals – may not reflect current route options

Conditional outputs

4.3.53. TfSE recognises the GWML's role as nationally strategic infrastructure, even if only a short stretch of track lies within our geography. TfSE remains committed to working closely with neighbouring STBs, Network Rail's Western Route and Region, and national government to ensure this corridor continues to deliver for the country as a whole.

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

While the Western corridor already delivers high levels of connectivity, TfSE supports the following conditional outputs:

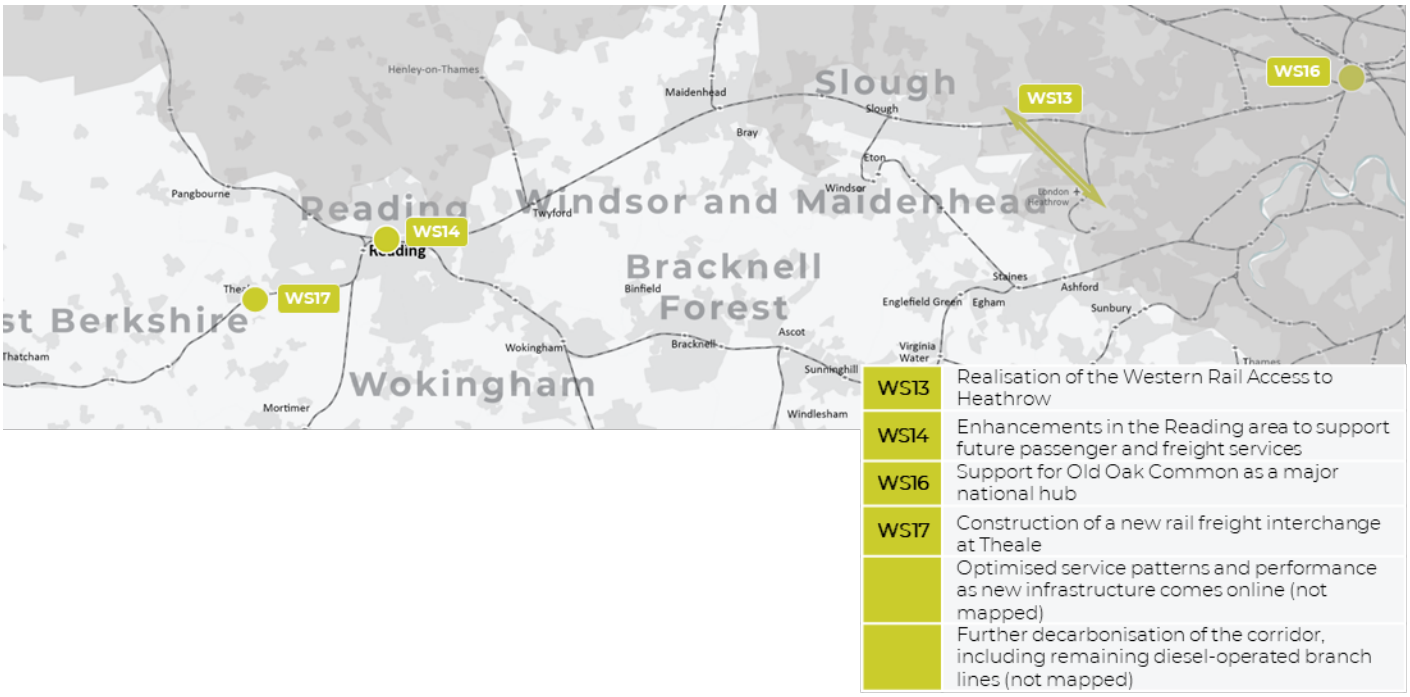
- **Realisation of the Southern and Western Rail Access to Heathrow**, maximising regional benefits across Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey.
- **Enhancements in the Reading area** to support future passenger and freight services, potentially including additional tracks and junction improvements.
- **Optimised service patterns and performance as new infrastructure comes online** - ensuring that growing demands for freight, airport access and long-distance travel do not erode reliability.

- **Support for Old Oak Common as a major national hub**, maintaining good access from key stations in the TfSE area and introducing new services from the South and West.
- **Further decarbonisation of the corridor**, including remaining diesel-operated branch lines - where emerging battery-electric technologies may provide a cost-effective solution. This could also facilitate better-performing freight services.
- **Construction of a new rail freight interchange at Theale**

Dependencies and risks

4.3.54. The Western corridor sits at the intersection of several nationally significant rail-related delivery projects, and the risks are accordingly high. Construction at Old Oak Common will be complex and disruptive. The Heathrow rail schemes will need to be delivered with care to avoid knock-on effects on the wider network. The corridor is also sensitive to performance pressures and operational changes on other parts of the national network.

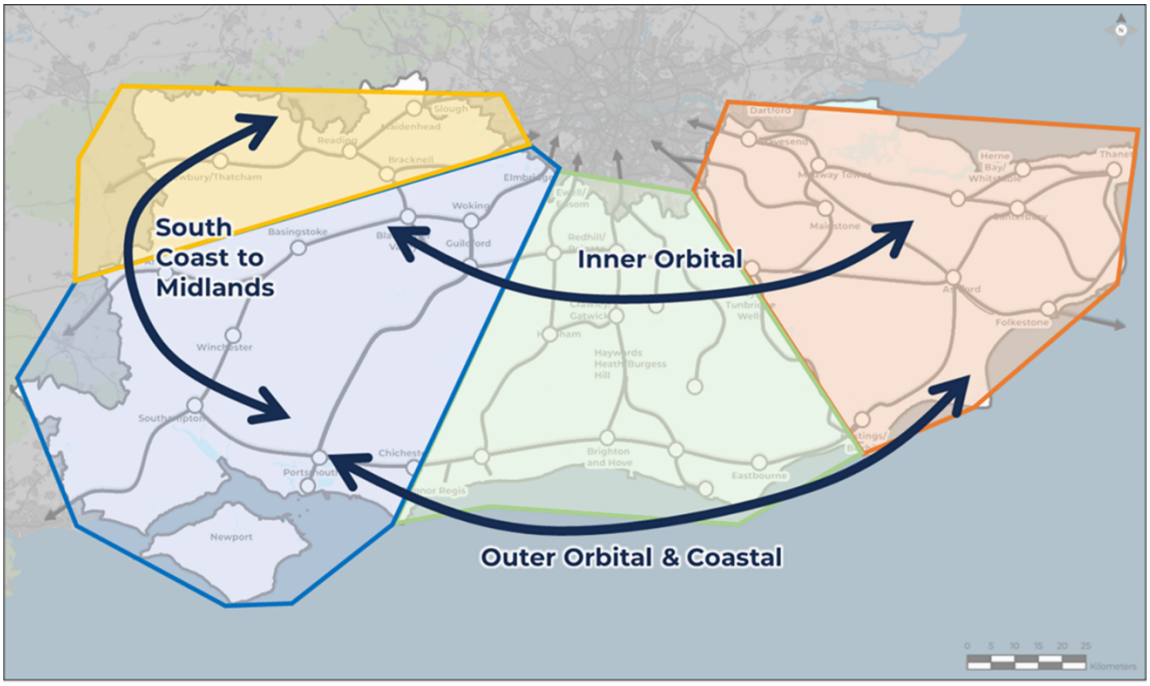
Figure 25: Conditional Outputs for Western route



4.4. Orbital routes

4.4.1. Orbital corridors describe the key regional rail routes that connect TfSE's major economic hubs without passing through London. They also link the TfSE area and the wider South East to the West of England, the Thames Valley, and regions beyond.

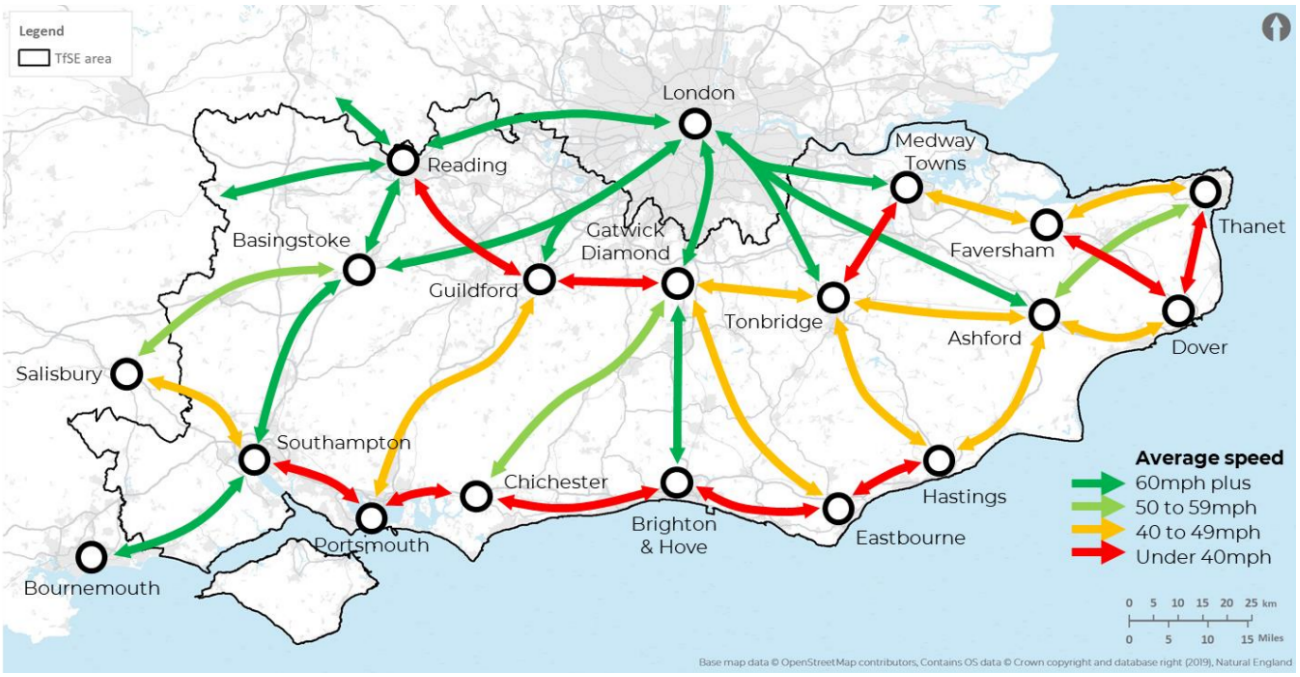
Figure 26: Orbital rail corridors in the TfSE area



4.4.2. Many stakeholders believe these corridors have been neglected for many years. Yet they play a vital role. They serve diverse markets – local (e.g. urban trips along the South Coast), regional (e.g. Southampton to Bristol), international gateways (e.g. access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports), seaports and multiple major economic hubs (e.g. Reading, Guildford, Medway). Many of these corridors carry significant freight volumes, and some also serve as relief routes for radial corridors.

4.4.3. In general, these corridors deliver slower, less frequent, and less electrified passenger rail services compared to radial lines, as seen in **Figure 27** below. This map potentially underplays the difference, as it only looks at in-vehicle rail journey times. Poor interchanges and connection times will further decrease connectivity. These issues will be discussed in more detail for each corridor below.

Figure 27: Average rail speeds across the region



Source: Steer analysis carried out for TfSE Rail Thematic Plan, 2022

4.4.4. We have structured our analysis of orbital routes in line with the strategic corridors originally defined in TfSE's 2017 Economic Connectivity Review:

- **Inner Orbital** (Medway – Maidstone – Tonbridge – Gatwick – Guildford – Reading).
- **Outer Orbital and Coastal** (Southampton – Brighton and Hove – Hastings – Ashford).
- **South Coast to Midlands** (Southampton – Basingstoke via Salisbury and also via Winchester – Reading – Didcot).

4.4.5. As with the radial corridors, each sub-section explores the corridor's role, current challenges, opportunities, conditional outputs, and delivery considerations.

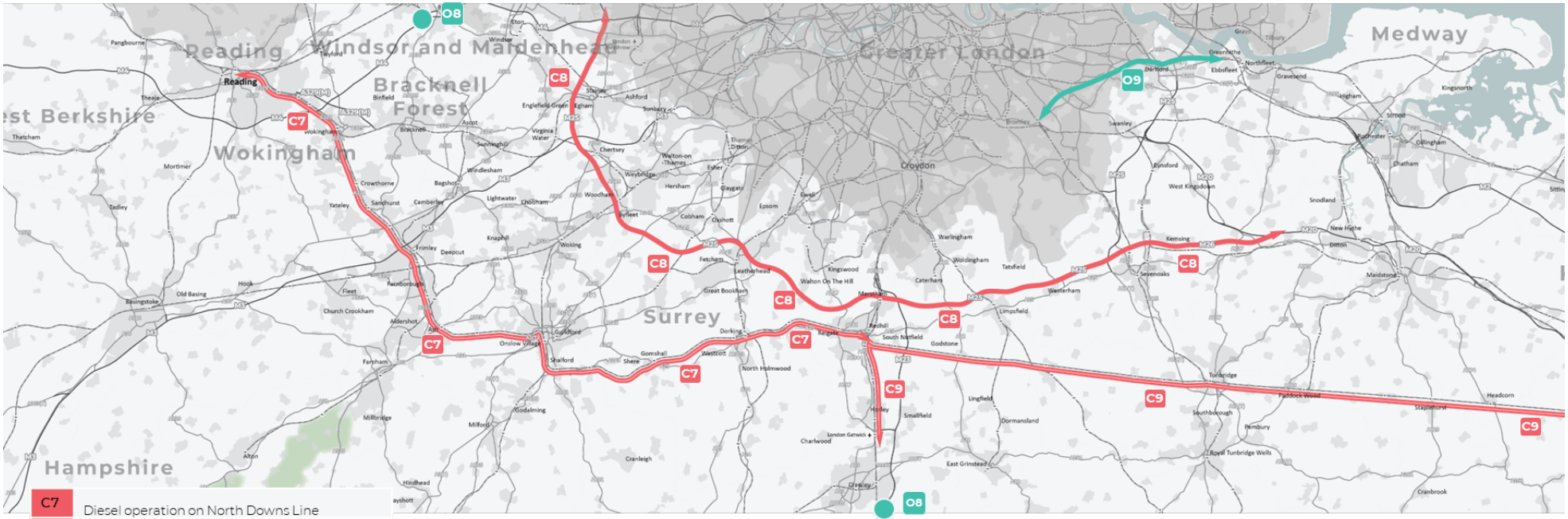
Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

In terms of potential solutions and conditional outputs, our overarching objective for these corridors is to bring them up to a similar level of service quality closer to the radial routes. This does not necessarily mean matching the same frequencies, but, at a minimum, two trains per hour in each direction operate on key sections. Critically, journey times and comfort must become competitive with car travel.

Additionally, TfSE would like to see the following output between Major Economic Hubs on non-radial routes: an **average speed between each hub of greater than 40 mph.**

Figure 28: Challenges and Opportunities for Inner Orbital route



Inner Orbital

Corridor profile

4.4.6. The Inner Orbital corridor is not a single railway line, but rather a network of interconnected routes that broadly mirror the route of the M25 and other key radial motorways. It includes the Medway Valley Line, South Eastern Mainline, Redhill – Tonbridge Line, North Downs Line, and Reading – Waterloo Line. These corridors intersect and complement the radial network, providing a vital (if perhaps currently underperforming) rail alternative to some of the UK's busiest road links.

4.4.7. Historically, the area has experienced strong growth. This is driven in part by the staged opening of the M25 during the 1970s and 80s. Since then, the area has become home to a dense cluster of towns, employment centres, and infrastructure assets, including Britain's two busiest airports: Heathrow and Gatwick. This growth is forecast to continue, particularly around key hubs like Ebbsfleet, Guildford, and the Thames Valley.

4.4.8. There are high numbers of local commuters on the Western end of the route, for both work and education. The North Downs Line is an important mode of access to universities in Reading and Guildford, as well as colleges in other towns along the route.

4.4.9. The geography is also rich in natural beauty, with several national landscapes such as the Kent Downs and Surrey Hills. Yet this scenic and prosperous corridor faces acute transport challenges – not least because of its overreliance on the private car.

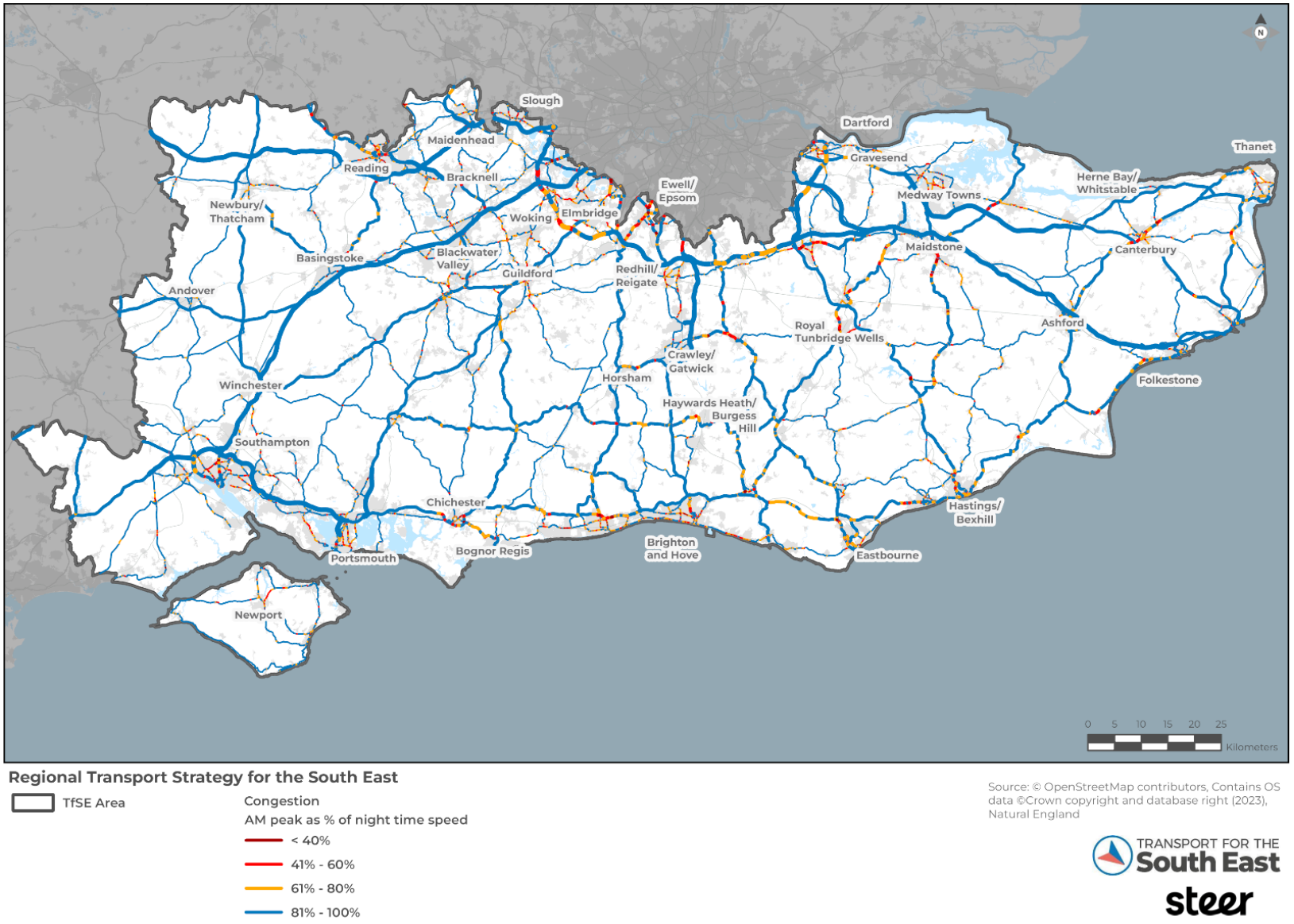
4.4.10. Different sections of the Inner Orbital corridor carry varying volumes and flows of freight. The Medway Valley Line carries aggregates traffic from the Mendips primarily. Between Tonbridge and Paddock Wood, these are joined by traffic using the Channel Tunnel diversionary route, some of which continues beyond Tonbridge to the Redhill route before travelling north. The rest of the route to Reading does not carry significant freight.

Current challenges

4.4.11. This corridor faces mounting challenges, with car use remaining dominant due to high levels of car ownership, dispersed development, and good access to strategic roads.

4.4.12. The M25 is Britain's busiest motorway, but it is no longer capable of absorbing additional demand. As shown in **Figure 29** below, travel speeds on much of the M25 at peak times are substantially affected by congestion, particularly between the M3 and A24. Junction improvements may bring some relief, but there is no realistic prospect of significant widening. The road network, particularly away from the motorway, is characterised by narrow rural lanes, limited capacity, and growing congestion.

Figure 29: Congestion on the strategic and major road networks in the TfSE area



Source: Steer analysis carried out for TfSE Rail Thematic Plan, 2022

4.4.13. Meanwhile, the rail network struggles to present an attractive alternative. Orbital rail links on this corridor are:

- **Slow**, with many services averaging less than 30mph
- **Infrequent**, especially off-peak or for cross-network trips
- **Diesel-operated**, limiting decarbonisation and modernisation potential
- **Disjointed**, with long interchange times between key services (e.g. Redhill–Tonbridge)
- **Misaligned with travel needs**, particularly where existing rail links serve weaker flows (e.g. Maidstone – Paddock Wood rather than strategic destinations like Gatwick.

4.4.14. In short, the orbital rail offer is currently uncompetitive, and the result is increasing road traffic, high congestion, and deteriorating air quality.

Table 3: Journey times on key orbital corridors, and the impact of congestion[9]

Journey	Time by Rail	Time by Road (range)	Difference (range)
Maidstone to Gatwick	90 mins	40-65 mins	25-50 mins
Chatham to Gatwick	80 mins	50-80 mins	0-30 minutes
Woking to Reading	61 mins	45-80 mins	15 minutes slower to 20 minutes faster
Sevenoaks-Guildford	80 mins	55-120 mins	40 minutes slower to 25 minutes faster

Opportunities

4.4.15. Despite these challenges, the Inner Orbital corridor holds enormous potential. The high levels of existing and future demand – particularly to and from airports, employment hubs, and growth locations like Ebbsfleet – create a strong case for investment.

4.4.16. Several connectivity schemes are already under active discussion:

- **Heathrow**: As outlined above for radial corridors, multiple new Heathrow access options are under consideration including access from the South West (via Woking), South East (via Staines), and the West (via Slough).
- **Gatwick**: There are opportunities to strengthen links from Kent, Surrey, Medway, and the Thames Valley — including further restoration of links that have been eroded over time.
- **South East London – Ebbsfleet**: There is potential to create new links from Bromley and Bexley to Ebbsfleet International and the North Kent Line, enabling stronger integration with South East London and the wider orbital network.

[9] Table shows weekday morning peak journey times sourced from Google Maps API in November 2025.

4.4.17. Recent work led by Great Western Railway to improve service levels and rolling stock on the North Downs Line is encouraging and driven by growing demand on the existing services. There is a clear opportunity to build on this and continue to enhance the service. Options have also been developed to replace the existing diesel rolling stock which operates the route, potentially enabling decarbonisation through the use of battery-electric trains.

Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

TfSE's objectives for this corridor are to ensure that major economic hubs located on this corridor have viable rail alternatives to M25 journeys. This means:

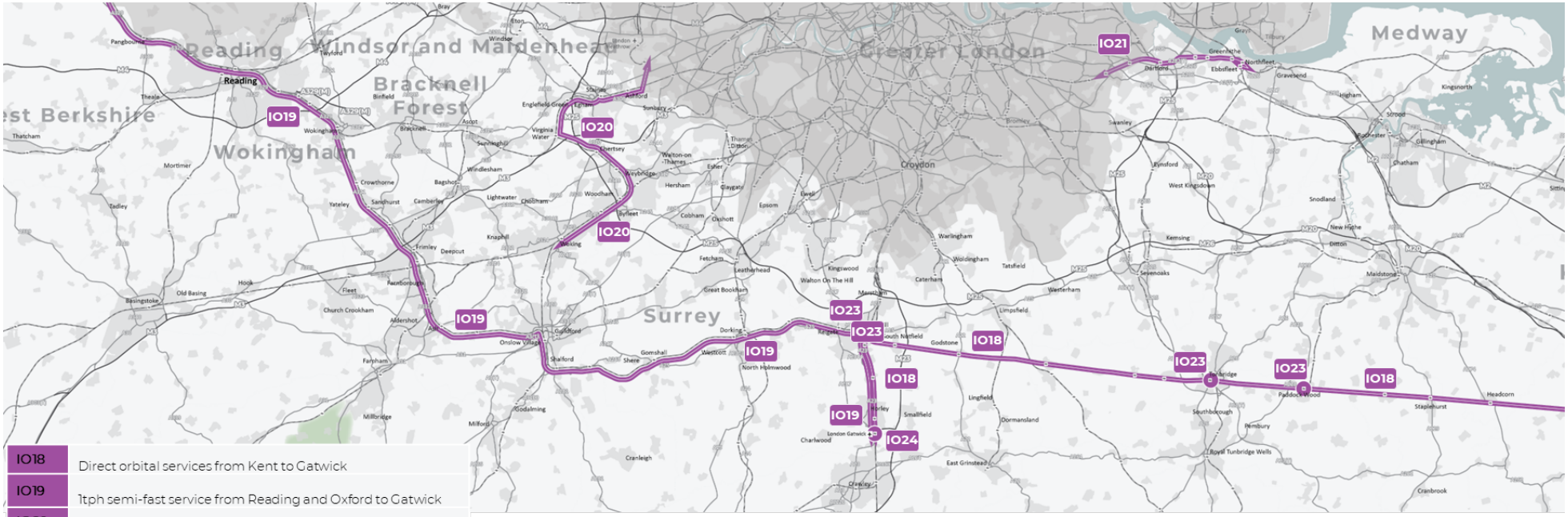
- **Direct orbital services in Kent** between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph. This should mirror the existing direct orbital services that link Reading, Bracknell, Blackwater Valley, Guildford, Redhill and Gatwick.
- **1 train per hour (tph) semi-fast service** linking Gatwick Airport to Reading and Oxford.
- **Direct services between Heathrow and key TfSE hubs**, including Woking and Staines, and potentially extended to Guildford, Bracknell, Basingstoke, and Southampton.
- **Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet**, potentially using rail or Bus Rapid Transit – to enable viable rail alternatives for M25 South East quadrant movements.
- **Improved frequencies on orbital services** across Surrey, supporting modal shift.
- **Full decarbonisation of the corridor**, through electrification or zero-emission rolling stock.
- **Targeted infrastructure enhancements** – for example, new chords or junction improvements at Redhill, Tonbridge, or Paddock Wood to improve pathing and speed. Use of underutilised assets such as the Longfield HS1 spur could also be explored as an option for improving access to Ebbsfleet.
- **Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport,** supporting public transport accessibility for both staff and passengers.
- **Maintain capability for current and anticipated freight traffic** – no specific interventions are required as capacity exists for the low volume of services which run outside of peak periods.

Dependencies and risks

4.4.18. This is a complex corridor. Four or five TOCs operate, multiple service groups and rolling stock types are involved, and the corridor overlaps with key radial lines at multiple points. Timetabling is notoriously difficult, especially at flat junctions where orbital lines must cross radial services.

4.4.19. Coordination will be critical between operators and across sub-national boundaries. Many of the service groups in this corridor span multiple regions and rail industry routes. The challenge of achieving coherent, attractive orbital connectivity should not be underestimated, but it is also one of the most transformational opportunities in the TfSE area.

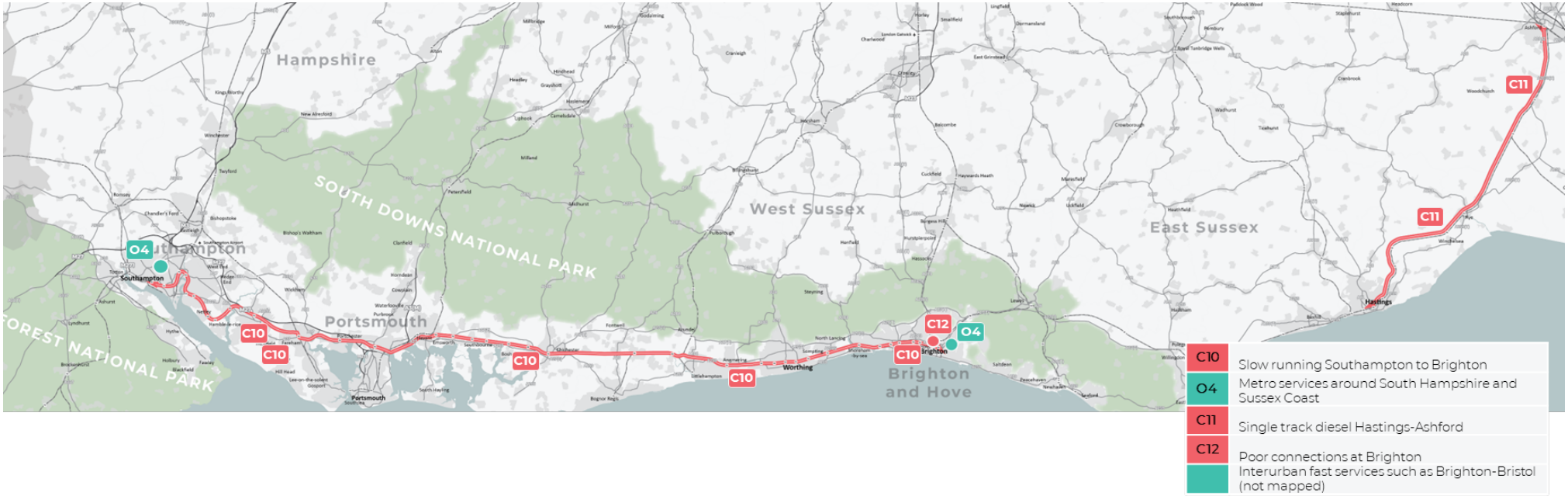
Figure 30: Conditional Outputs for Inner Orbital Route



1018	Direct orbital services from Kent to Gatwick
1019	1tph semi-fast service from Reading and Oxford to Gatwick
1020	Direct services between Heathrow and key TfSE hubs
1021	Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet
1022	Full decarbonisation of the North Downs Line and corridor
1023	Targeted infrastructure to improve pathing and speed
1024	Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport
	Maintain capability for current and anticipated freight traffic

Outer Orbital & Coastal

Figure 31: Challenges and Opportunities for Outer Orbital route



Outer Orbital & Coastal

Corridor profile

4.4.21. At first glance, this corridor feels far removed from the high-performing radial routes that carry hundreds of thousands of commuters into London at speed. It's a line that winds along the coast, often in areas of great natural beauty, and provides access to key destinations for leisure and tourism.

4.4.22. But this perception is misleading. This is the primary East–West corridor linking two of the South East's largest conurbations – South Hampshire (Southampton and Portsmouth) and the Sussex Coast (centred on Brighton and Hove but includes Eastbourne and Hastings / Bexhill). Both are growing rapidly or already play vital economic roles.

This corridor hosts three distinct rail markets:

- **London commuting**: Radial services that travel along the coast to capture demand for the capital
- **Local and urban trips**: Connecting town centres with universities, retail areas, health services, and job clusters
- **Longer-distance regional movements**: Especially between Brighton and Hove, Portsmouth and Southampton, which have been significantly reduced in recent years.

4.4.23. There are 35 stations between Southampton Central and Brighton across a distance of around 60 miles (one station every 2.75 km). While this density provides wide access, it also creates operational and capacity challenges, particularly given the two-track configuration and numerous flat junctions. There are very few opportunities for faster services to overtake slower ones, limiting opportunities to increase capacity and improve journey times.

4.4.24. TfSE and its partners recognise the importance of improving east–west connectivity to support sustainable growth and agglomeration across this region. Without a step change in rail performance, this growth will default to the road network - driving up congestion, emissions, and travel times. Improved rail services are essential to delivering housing growth sustainably, ensuring that the growing population does not just increase pressure on the road network.

4.4.25. The corridor is less significant for freight than the Inner Orbital, although the west section between Southampton and Hove does carry a small volume of primarily construction traffic to/from the Mendips. Further east, the Marshlink Line carries a small flow to/from Dungeness.

Current challenges

4.4.26. This corridor is shaped by persistent structural constraints which limit speeds and frequency:

- From **Southampton to Fareham**, the route is meandering, and average speeds fall below 30mph. This segment includes single-track sections, notably the Botley line, further reducing flexibility and resilience.
- Between **Fareham and Littlehampton,** there is a high number of flat junctions, including at Cosham, Farlington, Havant, Barnham, Ford (especially complex), Hove and Brighton.

- **There are dozens of level crossings on the corridor**, many of them on main roads, severely limiting opportunities to increase train frequencies and negatively impacting journey reliability.
- **Platform capacity at Southampton and Portsmouth** limits service expansion.
- **The Coastway East Line** (Brighton–Lewes–Eastbourne–Hastings) performs relatively well, though Lewes remains a bottleneck, and Eastbourne's configuration (a terminus for both directions) adds journey time.
- **Brighton is a key interchange,** but connections are often poor. Services are not well aligned, and interchange sometimes involves leaving the station and re-entering, extending journey times further in peak periods.
- **Between Hastings and Ashford (the Marshlink)**, the infrastructure is particularly weak: single-track, unelectrified, speed-restricted due to local ground and track conditions, and vulnerable to flooding and erosion. Despite serving two strategic growth locations, this line has some of the poorest connectivity in the region. This is also a key limitation on longer-distance connectivity along the coast towards High Speed 1 (HS1) and, potentially, international services if these are restored to Ashford.

Opportunities

4.4.27. Several strategic opportunities exist to reshape the role of rail on this corridor:

- **Extending HS1 services** to Hastings and Eastbourne has long been a local and regional aspiration. The use of bi-mode or battery-electric trains could enable faster journey times (targeting ~1hr15 from London to Hastings, down from ~1hr45) without the full cost of electrification. Increasing frequency to 2 tph on Marshlink could be considered.
- **Metro-style suburban services** in the Solent and Sussex areas could support mode shift, especially if integrated with bus and ferry networks and delivered on a clockface 4tph basis (and potentially higher during peak hours).
- **Interurban fast services** (e.g. Brighton–Southampton or Brighton–Bristol) could be revived to support longer-distance demand, especially if capacity enhancements enable express services to skip lower-demand stops.
- With significant growth pressures in Solent and Sussex, **improved rail capacity and service frequency** could help shift housing and employment development patterns.

Conditional outputs

Conditional outputs to address these challenges

To address the challenges and unlock this corridor's potential, TfSE is calling for:

- **Faster journey times** between major economic hubs (e.g. Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton and Hove, Hastings), targeting average speeds of at least 40mph and reduced interchange penalties.
- **A regular pattern of four trains per hour suburban services** across the day in the South Hampshire and Sussex Coast conurbations, integrated with local bus and ferry services and common fares.
- **Decarbonisation of remaining diesel operations** – particularly the Hastings–Ashford line and Portsmouth-Bristol-Cardiff service, where battery-electric solutions may be the most viable.
- **Targeted infrastructure enhancements**, potentially including passing loops or a third track on the Brighton – Worthing section to enable overtaking; junction

upgrades at key nodes (e.g. Fareham, Ford, Lewes); and/or timetable simplification to reduce service conflicts and splitting/joining movements.

Dependencies and risks

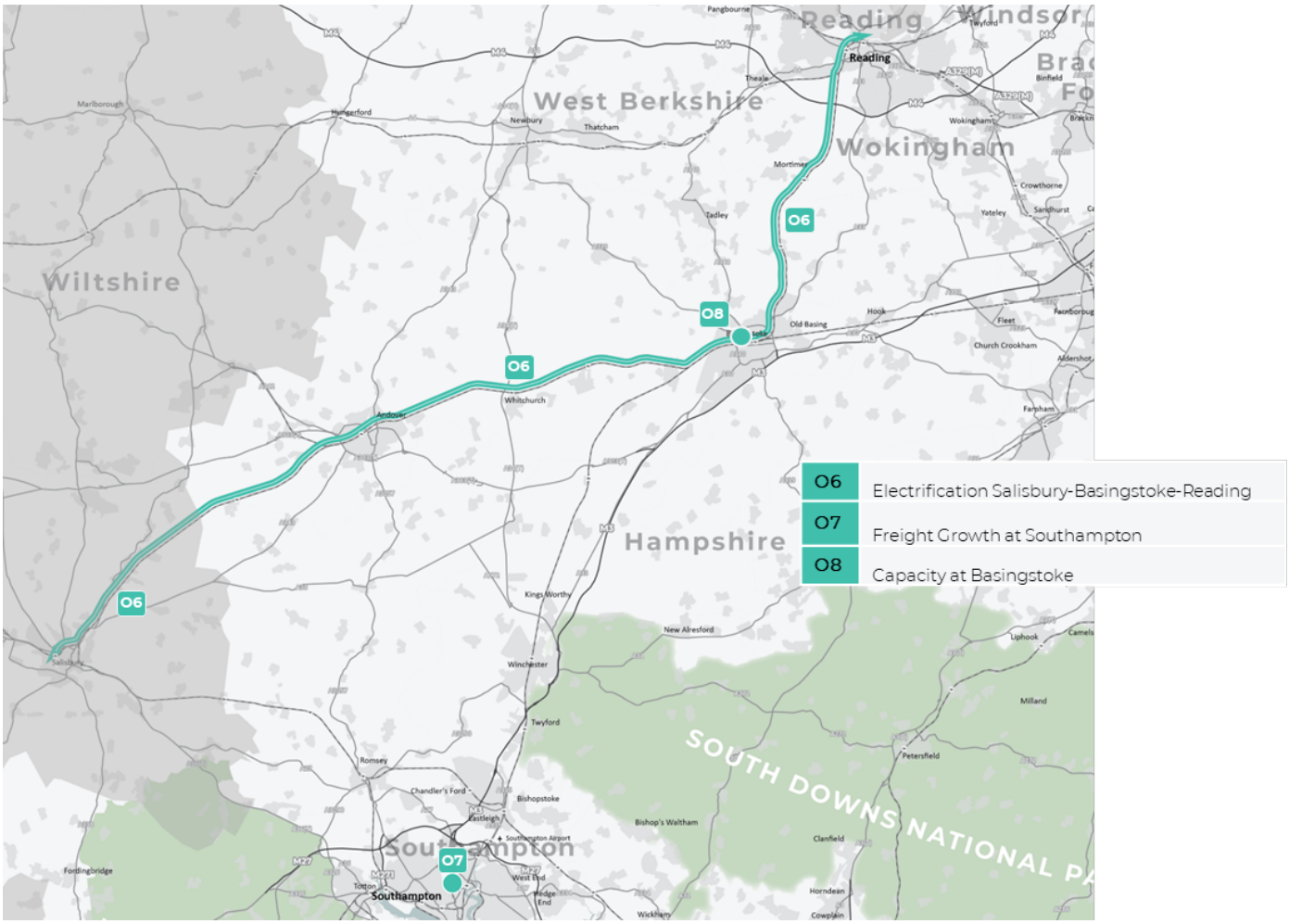
4.4.28. This corridor is also highly complex, with five train operating companies (TOCs), freight, overlapping service groups, and conflicting timetable priorities. Multiple flat junctions limit operational flexibility. The corridor also interfaces with the Kent, Sussex, and Wessex radial corridors, increasing the risk of cross-boundary coordination failure.

4.4.29. Many stakeholders hold different views about the best way forward, and some trade-offs will be required. Some interventions (e.g. extending HS1 services, additional track capacity, or full electrification) will require national commitment, but there is also scope for incremental, cost-effective upgrades. A GBR-led approach to timetable coordination, fleet deployment, and service planning could significantly improve outcomes here.

Figure 32: Conditional Outputs for Outer Orbital route

South Coast to Midlands

Figure 33: Challenges and Opportunities for the South Coast to Midlands route



Corridor profile

4.4.30. This corridor provides vital north–south connectivity, linking key economic hubs in the Midlands with the Port of Southampton and the South Coast. It supports both cross-country intercity services and nationally significant intermodal freight movements between the Solent, the Midlands and beyond. There is significant overlap with the Wessex radial corridor, particularly around Basingstoke, but the defining feature of this corridor is its strategic role in facilitating inter-regional flows that bypass London. These include the CrossCountry services connecting Southampton with Basingstoke, Reading, Oxford, and Birmingham.

Current challenges

4.4.31. Many stakeholders believe historic investment in this key economic corridor has not reflected its national importance. Inconsistent electrification is a key constraint, particularly for freight. While emerging battery-electric passenger fleets may offer some flexibility for long-distance passenger services, they are not a viable option for heavy freight, especially on sections of the route that have relatively steep inclines (e.g. around Winchester). Capacity bottlenecks, particularly at Basingstoke, also pose challenges, especially where freight and passenger flows must converge or cross paths. In addition, the routes between Romsey and Salisbury remain diesel-operated and constrained by

infrastructure limitations, including single-track sections at Chandler's Ford.

Opportunities

4.4.32. The Port of Southampton has seen encouraging modal shift to rail for freight, and there is clear potential to build on this success. DP World's 'Modal Shift Programme' trial has provided financial incentives to transport freight away from the port by rail through a levy on all containers. Building on this and supporting further growth requires a modernised freight-ready corridor that is electrified to a consistent standard. One promising option would be to pursue overhead line electrification via the Salisbury route, which avoids compatibility issues with the existing third-rail DC network south of Basingstoke and Winchester. This would require a fresh look at existing operational arrangements, including the Salisbury depot, but could unlock a more resilient and decarbonised freight corridor between the Midlands and the South Coast.

Conditional outcomes

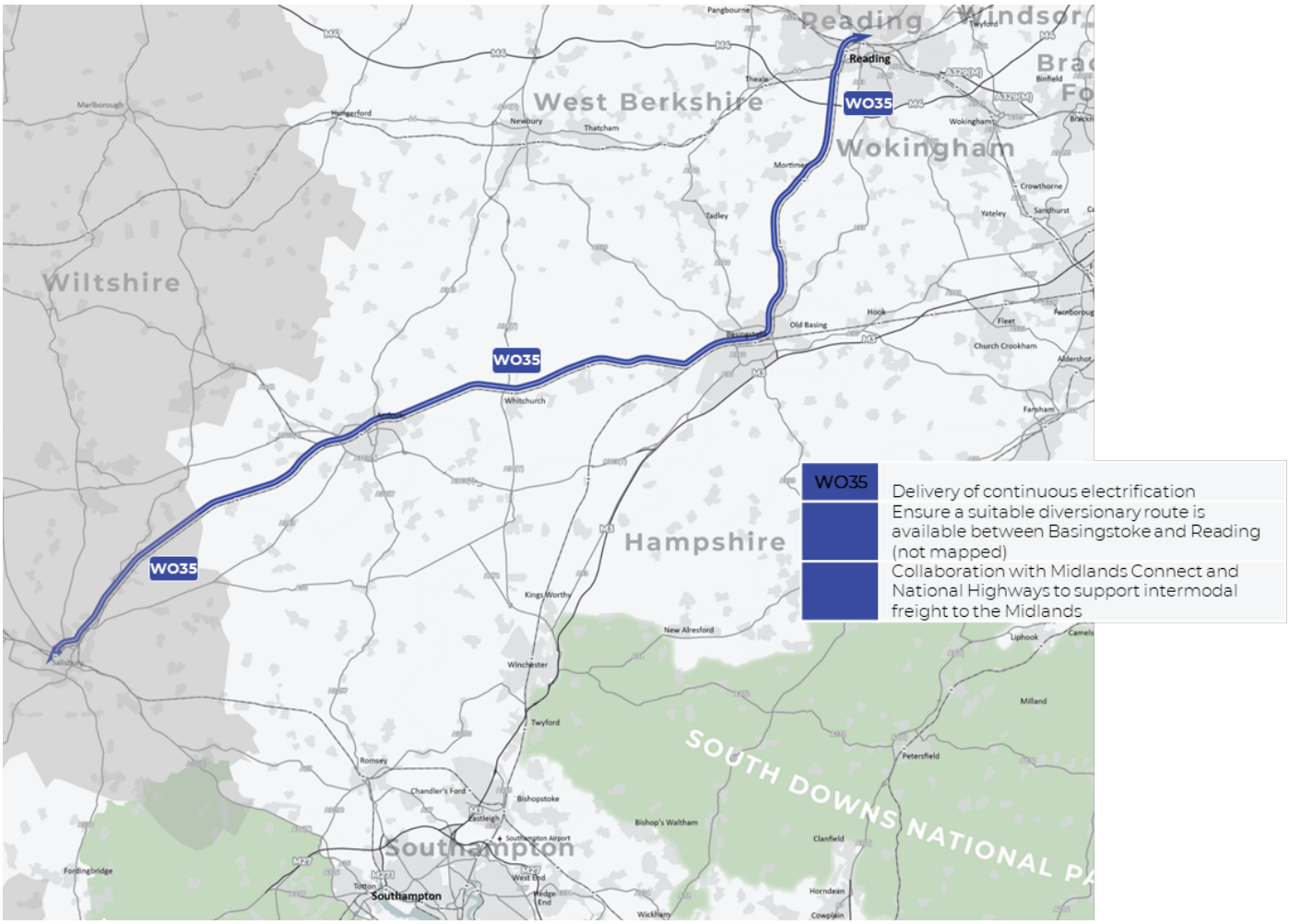
Conditional outputs to address these challenges

- **Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight** and long-distance passenger movements. This could be delivered via the Salisbury–Basingstoke–Reading route, creating a fully electrified link between Southampton and the Midlands while avoiding complex interface issues associated with third rail.
- **Ensure a suitable diversionary route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading –** this could be via Kew or Salisbury.
- **Broader collaboration with Midlands Connect and National Highways** on capacity and intermodal opportunities for freight in the Midlands, which could reduce road traffic.

Dependencies and risks

4.4.33. There is considerable overlap with other strategic flows, especially the Wessex radial corridor and the Western Main Line at Reading and Didcot. Any proposed enhancements will need to be closely coordinated to avoid conflicts and ensure capacity is used efficiently. If Salisbury were to become a more prominent junction on an electrified corridor, this may require a reconfiguration of existing rolling stock and depot arrangements. There may also be merit in rethinking the West of England Line's role in the broader Great Western network if electrification proceeds in this direction.

Figure 34: Conditional Outputs for the South Coast to Midlands route



5. Pathways to delivery

5.1. Enabling actions

5.1.1. Aside from infrastructure and service provision, a number of actions have been identified in the development of this strategy which would support the timely delivery of improved rail outputs for the TfSE area.

Freight

5.1.2. Demand for aggregates from the region is increasing, and major construction projects such as Heathrow expansion could increase this further. A better understanding of the potential demand for aggregates from these major projects could help to ensure capacity is available for more of this to be supplied by rail.

5.1.3. Utilisation of freight paths across the region varies considerably. While we support calls to expand freight capacity, ensuring efficient use is made of existing routes is essential to maximise rail freight's mode share and make the case for enhancements.

Governance

5.1.4. The Railways Bill sets out how GBR will relate to MSAs and details their role in future industry planning processes. With the first Mayoral elections in the South East delayed to 2028, and not all local authorities currently included in these plans, it is crucial that MSAs are not the only route for local and regional engagement with GBR as it sets its initial priorities and ways of working. This strategy is one of the ways in which TfSE will set out priorities for the area and seek to engage with the rail industry, alongside the Transport Strategy and the SIP.

5.2. Planning horizons

5.2.1. Delivering a better rail system in the South East will require bold decisions, long-term planning, and near-term action. To structure this, we consider three planning horizons:

Short term (2025–2030)

5.2.2. In the short term, key outputs for the rail industry have already been decided as part of the Control Period 7 business planning period, which runs from 2024-2029, and the 2025 Spending Review. Infrastructure planning takes time, and without existing schemes in the delivery pipeline, it's not realistic for plans to reach delivery in the next few years.

5.2.3. As a result, actions deliverable in the short term are largely focused on "maintain" and "optimise": targeting rolling stock renewal and enabling service uplift through timetabling and power supply improvements, building on existing plans from operators.

5.2.4. This time should also be used for scheme development, business case preparation, and ensuring that schemes can be taken forward into the investment pipeline as funding becomes available.

5.2.5. Over this period of time, all of the region's operators will come into public ownership, and GBR will be formally established by the end of 2027. While limited structural change is likely beforehand, this should not block the development of new ways of working, and close collaboration between Network Rail, DfT, TfSE, our partner local authorities and other STBs.

5.2.6. This will be essential to align priorities and ensure that new structures and approaches meet the needs of the TfSE area and the wider South East.

Medium term (2030–2040)

5.2.7. More infrastructure schemes could be delivered in this window, particularly smaller interventions to unlock new services and freight routes and some pieces of privately financed "new" infrastructure, such as rail access to Heathrow. This is where TfSE would like to see major decarbonisation gaps filled, high-value service enhancements delivered (e.g. East-West links), and reforms to fares, governance, and fleet strategy as GBR establishes itself.

5.2.8. Some interventions are likely to be multimodal and cross-boundary, with delivery roles shared between TfSE, MSAs, GBR, and others such as TfL or other STBs.

Long term (2040–)

5.2.9. In the longer term, there is more focus on "new" infrastructure, including encompassing large-scale transformational interventions.

5.2.10. By 2050, rail must have helped deliver net zero, more housing, improved access to jobs and services, and be in a position to compete much better with road and air alternatives. This means that larger-scale interventions, including schemes to unlock greater capacity on key bottlenecks into London, such as Croydon and Woking, will need to be delivered in order to achieve these goals.

5.2.11. The table below summarises the conditional outputs in the strategy, which we believe are deliverable within each of these windows.

Table 3: Conditional Outputs likely to be deliverable in the short, medium and long term

Short Term (2025-2035)	Medium Term (2035-2045)	Long Term (2045-)
High reliability, with punctuality equal to the best operators in the sector (above 90% of trains arriving within three minutes of schedule).	Faster services to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks, including Maidstone, Hastings and Thanet	Capacity relief at Woking to address congestion and passenger crowding.
High customer satisfaction, maintaining and improving scores in the industry Rail Customer Experience Survey, with overall journey satisfaction above 80%.	Improved connections within and between stations, including at Strood and Canterbury	A long-term solution at Southampton, including resolution of capacity constraints at Southampton Tunnel and Central station.
Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey (at least during peak hours)	Capacity uplifts to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford, including additional rolling stock and potential timetable enhancements.	Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the Western Orbital corridor
Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel.	Replacement of the ageing Networker fleet, which is approaching the end of its operational life.	Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon.
Achieve the public transport mode share targets set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans, and deliver new services from Kent to Gatwick.	Faster journey times to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell to improve competitiveness relative to neighbouring centres.	Decarbonisation of the Hurst Green-Uckfield line, and reinstatement of the Uckfield-Lewes line
Improved frequencies on orbital services across Surrey	Improve journey times on the Arun Valley Route	Further decarbonisation of the South Coast to Midlands corridor, including diesel branch lines
Maximising the benefits of future Heathrow rail links	Improved connectivity in the Blackwater Valley	Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor
Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton –Reading/Oxford services.	Direct orbital services in Kent between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph.	Faster journey times between major economic hubs (e.g. Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton and Hove, Hastings), targeting average speeds of at least 40mph and reduced interchange penalties.

Short Term (2025-2035)	Medium Term (2035-2045)	Long Term (2045-)
1 train per hour semi-fast service linking Gatwick Airport to Reading and Oxford.	Enhancements in the Reading area to support future passenger and freight services	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Outer Orbital corridor.
Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport	Support for Old Oak Common as a major national hub	Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains on HS1
Maintain capability for current and anticipated freight traffic	Ensure a diversionary route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading	
Improved integration of rail with local public transport networks and active travel routes, including integrated ticketing	Direct services between Heathrow and key TfSE hubs, including Woking and Staines	
Targeted fares to support local markets and economies	Realisation of the Western and Southern Rail Access to Heathrow	
Support development of new rail freight interchanges, including Northfleet, Theal, Salfords, Crawley Goods Yard and South Godstone.	Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet, potentially using rail or Bus Rapid Transit	
	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.	
	A regular pattern of four trains per hour suburban services across the day in the South Hampshire and Sussex Coast conurbations	
	Decarbonisation of the Hastings-Ashford line and Portsmouth-Bristol-Cardiff service	

5.3. Roles and responsibilities

5.3.1. There are several crucial delivery partners in delivering rail improvements for the region:

- **Network Rail and Great British Railways** will continue to own and operate rail infrastructure, but with new strategic planning responsibilities once GBR is established. This strategy aims to support them in their roles by clearly conveying regional priorities and informing their delivery plans.
- **Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Transport Authorities** will increasingly lead on service planning, station delivery, and integration. This strategy aims to support them in developing their own plans for rail, particularly the emerging MCAs, by providing a clear sense of priorities across the wider region and an understanding of the key constraints and challenges.
- **Department for Transport and HM Treasury** will remain key to major funding decisions. This strategy sets out the urgency of unlocking funding to deliver some of the key constraints in the region.
- **Private sector** including freight, ports, airports, rolling stock owners and developers must be engaged throughout the development of schemes.

5.3.2. While TfSE is not a delivery body, it plays a critical role as a strategic convenor, champion, and technical resource. In delivering the Rail Strategy, TfSE will:

- **Provide strategic evidence, data and analysis to inform local, regional and national decisions** through the TfSE Analytical Framework, State of the Region Report, technical studies and more.
- **Support early-stage scheme development** via funding and technical expertise.
- **Align regional and local voices** especially where emerging Mayoral Combined Authorities and local authorities lack cross-boundary coordination.
- **Champion the region** ensuring the TFSE area's needs are reflected in national programmes and GBR priorities.
- **Promote wider priorities** e.g. decarbonisation, social inclusion and freight growth in scheme appraisal and pipeline development, ensuring these are recognised by scheme promoters, including Network Rail and GBR.

5.3.3. As devolution progresses, careful coordination will be required to ensure that transport authority boundaries do not limit rail's regional network benefits. TfSE and the WSERP have important roles to play in cross-boundary integration. The strategy will feed into the WSERP Rail Plan, which covers a broader geography.

5.4. Funding and financing

5.4.1. Public funding will remain essential to funding enhancements to the rail network – especially schemes that enable modal shift and decarbonisation but do not offer direct commercial returns. Expecting rail to cover its costs with farebox revenue is unrealistic and risks curtailing beneficial schemes.

5.4.2. However, we must also diversify funding streams. This includes:

- **Third-party and co-investment**: Airports, ports, developers and private operators all benefit from rail and should contribute to enhancements - especially where profits are driven by improved access (e.g. Heathrow expansion).
- **Beneficiary-pays models**: Where benefits accrue to a defined geography or business base, mechanisms such as land value capture or levies may be appropriate, although they can be difficult to implement without strong evidence and predictable returns.
- **Pipeline certainty**: Investors (public or private) need predictable, staged pipelines. TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan provides this for specific schemes but requires refresh and alignment with funding cycles (e.g. Network Rail Control Periods and the new Funding Period, Transport for City Regions funding and when these become accessible to MSAs in the region).

5.5. Tools for delivery

5.5.1. TfSE is committed to enabling delivery through practical, targeted tools:

- **Analytical Framework**: A robust, data-driven decision support system underpinning scheme appraisal, prioritisation, and monitoring.
- **Centre of Excellence**: A growing resource hub to support officers across the region with training, technical assistance, best practice, and peer learning.
- **Scheme Development Fund**: To unlock business case development and reduce delivery risk.
- **Prioritisation Framework**: Providing a consistent basis for scheme ranking based on benefit, readiness, and cost.

5.5.2. These tools are not static and will evolve over time to reflect lessons learned.

Risk, uncertainty, and futureproofing

5.5.3. The last five years have shown that transport planning cannot rely on static forecasts. Pandemics, economic shocks, infrastructure re-scoping (e.g. HS2), and changing work and travel patterns have all shaken the old assumptions.

5.5.4. TfSE's approach to futureproofing includes:

- **Scenario planning** baked into TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan and wider strategy development process.
- **Incremental, modular delivery** favouring scalable solutions that can flex with demand.
- **Passive provision** ensuring today's decisions don't limit tomorrow's choices (e.g. providing passive junctions for future station links or electrification).
- **Integrated planning** aligning transport, energy and digital infrastructure.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.5.5. This strategy is defined by its outputs and outcomes, not just inputs. Monitoring will need to track:

- **Operational outputs** e.g. services per hour, journey times, electrification coverage, as well as performance metrics.
- **Strategic outcomes** e.g. wider economic impacts, modal shift, access to opportunity.
- **Delivery confidence** e.g. scheme readiness, alignment with funding.

5.5.6. TfSE's State of the Region report will be a primary tool for tracking delivery and identifying where course corrections are needed. This feedback loop is vital to ensuring the Rail Strategy remains relevant, resilient, and responsive to changing conditions.

5.5.7. The report monitors both operational and strategic outputs through key statistics on rail performance, including reliability and customer satisfaction, as well as tracking carbon emissions, economic growth and rail fare inflation.

5.5.8. Monitoring the progress of scheme development and progress can be carried out through Local Transport Plans and business cases, which will identify the next steps for key schemes which are progressing within the region.

Appendices

A. **Conditional output summary tables**
B. **Stakeholder Engagement**

Appendix A

The corridors used for this study broadly align to the new MSA geographies, but the orbital corridors cross between several. Table **B1** below presents, for reference, the conditional outputs included within each of the MSA areas, as well as for the upper-tier areas where future devolution proposals have not yet been proposed.

Conditional outputs across the network, such as fares and reliability, are not included in this table.

Table **B2** summarises the conditional outputs as they align to the Transport Strategy missions.

B 1: Conditional outputs by MSA and county

Kent	Sussex	Hampshire and Solent	Berkshire	Surrey
Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey (at least during peak hours).	A regular pattern of four trains per hour suburban services across the day in the Sussex Coast conurbation	Faster journey times to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell to improve competitiveness relative to neighbouring centres.	Support for Old Oak Common as a major national hub.	Improved frequencies on orbital services across Surrey.
Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel.	Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon.	Capacity relief at Woking to address congestion and passenger crowding.	Further decarbonisation of the Western corridor, including diesel branch lines.	Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport.
Deliver new services from Kent to Gatwick	Decarbonisation of the Hurst Green – Uckfield line, and reinstatement of the Uckfield-Lewes line.	A long-term solution at Southampton, including resolution of capacity constraints at Southampton Tunnel and Central station.	Realisation of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow.	Improved connectivity in the Blackwater Valley.
Faster services to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks, including Maidstone, Hastings and Thanet.	Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton–Reading/Oxford services.	Direct services between Heathrow and key South East hubs, including Woking and Staines.	Direct services between Heathrow and key South East hubs, including Woking and Staines.	Direct services between Heathrow and key South East hubs, including Woking and Staines.
Improved connections within and between stations, including at Strood and Canterbury.	Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport.	Decarbonisation of the Portsmouth-Bristol-Cardiff service.	Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the South Coast to Midlands corridor.	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.
Capacity uplifts to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford, including additional rolling stock and potential timetable enhancements.	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Outer Orbital corridor.	Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the South Coast to Midlands corridor.	1 train per hour semi-fast service linking Gatwick Airport to Reading and Oxford.	Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the South Coast to Midlands corridor.

Kent	Sussex	Hampshire and Solent	Berkshire	Surrey
Replacement of the ageing Networker fleet, which is approaching the end of its operational life.	Direct orbital services in Kent between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph.	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Outer Orbital corridor.	Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton-Reading/Oxford services.	Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor.
Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet, potentially using rail or Bus Rapid Transit	Achieve the public transport mode share targets set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans	A regular pattern of four trains per hour suburban services across the day in the South Hampshire conurbation	Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.	
Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains on HS1.			Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor.	
Direct orbital services in Kent between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph.			Ensure a diversionary route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading	
Decarbonisation of the Hastings–Ashford line				
Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.				
Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor.				

B 2: Conditional Outputs by Transport Strategy missions

Strategic Connectivity	Sustainable Growth	Resilience	Inclusion and Integration	Decarbonisation
Improved connections within and between stations, including at Strood and Canterbury	Direct London and Chatham services to Sheppey (at least during peak hours)	Capacity relief at Woking to address congestion and passenger crowding.	High customer satisfaction, with overall journey satisfaction above 80%.	Decarbonisation of the Hurst Green-Uckfield line, and reinstatement of the Uckfield-Lewes line
Faster services to areas on the high-speed and mainline networks, including Maidstone, Hastings and Thanet	Capacity uplifts to support growth areas in north-east Kent and Ashford, including additional rolling stock and potential timetable enhancements.	High reliability, with punctuality equal to the best operators in the sector (above 90% of trains arriving within three minutes of schedule).	Replacement of the ageing Networker fleet, which is approaching the end of its operational life.	Achieve the public transport mode share targets set out in Gatwick Airport's expansion plans, and deliver new services from Kent to Gatwick.
Faster journey times to London for Portsmouth and Bracknell to improve competitiveness relative to neighbouring centres.	Gauge clearance of the Folkestone and Maidstone East Lines to enable larger containers to access the Channel Tunnel.	A long-term solution at Southampton, including resolution of capacity constraints at Southampton Tunnel and Central station.	Improved integration of rail with local public transport networks and active travel routes, including integrated ticketing	
Improve journey times on the Arun Valley Route	Improved frequencies on orbital services across Surrey	Long-term resolution of capacity constraints at Croydon.	Ensure fares are targeted to support local markets and economies	Further decarbonisation of the South Coast to Midlands corridor, including diesel branch lines
Exploring enhanced inter-regional connectivity, including the potential reinstatement of Brighton–Reading/Oxford services.	Direct services between Heathrow and key TfSE hubs, including Woking and Staines	Enhancements in the Reading area to support future passenger and freight services	Maximising the benefits of future Heathrow rail links for the wider region	Full decarbonisation of the Inner Orbital corridor
Direct orbital services in Kent between Medway/Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Gatwick Airport, operating a half-hourly service that targets average speeds of at least 50mph.	Realisation of the Western and Southern Rail Access to Heathrow	Maintain capability for current and anticipated freight traffic		Delivery of continuous overhead line electrification to support freight and long-distance passenger movements along the Western Orbital corridor

Strategic Connectivity	Sustainable Growth	Resilience	Inclusion and Integration	Decarbonisation
1 train per hour semi-fast service linking Gatwick Airport to Reading and Oxford.	Faster journey times between major economic hubs (e.g. Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton and Hove, Hastings), targeting average speeds of at least 40mph and reduced interchange penalties.	Ensure a diversionary route is available for freight between Basingstoke and Reading.		Support development of new rail freight interchanges, including Northfleet, Theale, Salfords, Crawley Goods Yard and South Godstone.
Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Outer Orbital corridor.	Extended early morning and overnight services to Gatwick Airport			Decarbonisation of the Hastings–Ashford line and Portsmouth-Bristol-Cardiff service
Support for Old Oak Common as a major national hub	Improved connectivity in the Blackwater Valley			Deployment of new battery-electric or bi-mode trains on HS1
Targeted infrastructure enhancements to improve pathing and speed on the Inner Orbital corridor.	Improved connections between Bromley/Bexley and Ebbsfleet, potentially using rail or Bus Rapid Transit			
	A regular pattern of four trains per hour suburban services across the day in the South Hampshire and Sussex Coast conurbations			

Appendix B

A broad group of stakeholders from the following organisations were consulted during the preparation of the strategy, including:

- Transport officers from all TfSE's local authority partners
- Department of Transport – Rail Freight
- Network Rail
- National Highways
- Transport for London
- Rail Delivery Group
- Rail freight operators
- Passenger train operators – Great Western Railway, Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Rail.
- Rail Freight Group
- STBs – Western Gateway, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East
- Gatwick and Heathrow Airports
- Southampton and Portsmouth ports.

Regular meetings were held with the local transport authorities throughout the strategy's development, which were combined with the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan engagement meetings to ensure transparency and consistency between the two pieces of work.

A draft copy of the report was circulated for comment to all the stakeholders above, and their comments have been incorporated into the final draft.

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Distribution

Client:

Steer
:

Version control/issue number

Date

Agenda Item 6

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**2 February 2026**
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**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the discussions and actions arising at the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Audit and Governance Committee met on Friday 16 January 2026. This report provides a summary of the discussions and actions to take forward.

2. Business Plan 2026/27

2.1 The Committee were informed that the TfSE Business Plan submission to DfT on 8 December 2025 was still awaiting a response from government. Once received, TfSE will inform the Audit and Governance Committee.

3. Finance update

3.1 The Committee were provided with an update on the financial position to the end of December 2025, alongside the forecasted total spend for 2025/26, and confidence ratings.

3.2 The Committee signed off the finance figures and forecasts to be presented to the Board.

4. Strategic Risk Register

4.1 The Committee reviewed TfSE's risk register, which was amended and updated based on feedback from Members. Notably, three actions were marked as completed:

- Risk 21 – dissolution of LEPs – TfSE's Business Advisory group established and working well, capturing the business voice and feedback into the work of TfSE and Partnership Board.

- Risk 24 – Transport Strategy refresh & constituent authority support – The Strategy was approved and adopted by TfSE's Partnership Board in October 2025.

- Risk 36 – Multiyear funding settlement – TfSE now has certainty of our funding position in future years from government.

4.2 A number of risks were updated to reflect increased uncertainties around devolution and local government reorganisation, including stakeholders recognising the value of TfSE, regional inequalities in government funding, and TfSE's staff retention. Changes are highlighted in yellow in **Appendix 1**.

4.3 Following a discussion at the meeting, Risk 22 was updated to reflect the particular challenges for the delivery of MRN schemes, as Local Authorities cannot progress these, without knowing their future organisational and financial position.

4.4 The risk register will be submitted to the Department for Transport following the Partnership Board, as part of TfSE's regularly quarterly reporting.

5. Conclusions and recommendation

5.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the discussions and actions arising at the recent meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

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

Contact Officer: Keir Wilkins

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Risk Register

Programme Overview

January 2026

TRANSPORT FOR THE South East

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
2	**Government Policy - STBs** Government policy around STBs is uncertain, particularly in light of other changes to government policy.	4	5	20	The Government has now announced STB funding for the remainder of the Spending Review and has been clear that STBs should be locally funded in the future. There is still uncertainty about what funding will be available to TfSE in 2026/27 and what the Government wants TfSE to focus on delivering in this transition year. TfSE will continue to engage with the Government and other STBs to gain more clarity and guidance.	3	5	15	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	SOG
3	**MP Engagement** Local MPs do not support TfSE and its strategy.	3	3	9	Following the general election, TfSE received 50 new MPs. TfSE have reached out to all new MPs with information about TfSE, what our Strategic Investment Plan means in their constituency, and to schedule introductory meetings.	2	2	4	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	PB
4	**TfSE - Statutory Status** Maintaining the TfSE partnership without statutory status.	2	3	6	Ongoing engagement with local leaders, who will determine TfSE's funding, role and status in the future.	2	1	2	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB
6	**TfSE - Value** Wider stakeholders do not recognise value of TfSE. This risk is particularly heightened given the fact that devolution and local government reorganisation will potentially lead new administrations, with new stakeholders, who may have less awareness about the role TfSE play.	4	4	16	Continue to deliver TfSE's Communications and Engagement Plan for 2025/26. Make use of stakeholder forums and other forms of engagement with stakeholders, with a particular focus on reaching stakeholders from new Local Authorities, as they are established. Develop a prospectus for new and existing Local Authorities, setting out what TfSE's role is and how we can help them to deliver their objectives.	2	4	8	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	SOG

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
9	**Regional Inequality** Focus on regional inequality directs investment away from the South East. The grouping of 'London & South East' does not accurately represent the state of transport funding in the TfSE region. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation may excacerbate this risk, as stakeholders are distracted by delivering these changes, instead of making the case for infrastructure.	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	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	PB
11	**TfSE Staff - Retention** Retaining staff in TfSE and plans to replace staff if the need arise. This risk is heightened given the uncertainty about the future status and funding for TfSE.	4	4	16	Recruitment is currently paused, in light of the DfT funding announcement. Plans for future staffing structures will be considered at an appropriate time, following local leaders' steers on the future status of TfSE. Management will support staff through this transition, through regular updates and supervisions, to keep staff updated on the currennt state of play and maximise staff capability.	3	3	9	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB
12	**Procurement** 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. Technical Call off Contract will be in place until July 2026.	1	1	1	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	PB
13	**SIP Delivery Plan** Constituent authorities do not support the SIP delivery plan.	3	2	6	Continued engagement with SIP delivery partners. Extensive engagement with partners is currently taking place, as we are going through the process to refesh the SIP, and secure approval for this.	1	2	2	Sarah Valentine	Ongoing	SOG
15	**Infrastructure Investment proposals - challenges** 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	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	SOG

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
18	**TfSE Budget - 25/26 and 26-27** Managing the 25/26 Budget to ensure the DfT grant and carry forward from 24/25 is spent to deliver TfSE's Business Plan. Manage uncertainty around TfSE's Budget Position for 26/27, including on-going commitments and expenses, as we await certainty of funding from the DfT.	4	4	16	Effective budget monitoring on a monthly basis and demonstrate TfSE's performance to DfT through regular review meetings and annual report. Forecast end of year position for 25/26 and scenario plan impacts of different budgets for 26/27.	3	3	9	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	SOG / PB
19	**Transport Forum - engagement** Transport Forum members engagement with the new structure	2	3	6	Members had two sessions of digital three in person events in 2024/25. Further events will be planned for 2025/26, to help meet TfSE's Business Plan and engage a wide range of stakeholders across the region. 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	Jaimie McSorley	Ongoing	PB
20	**Scheme Promotors** TfSE members are not prepared to be scheme promotors 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. TfSE have also supported Local Authorities with DfT's recent MRN ask. TfSE convened meetings of all scheme and have undertaken analysis using data and modelling tools we have. This work has been well received by Local Authority partners, as we have helped to evidence shared challenges across schemes. TfSE's Centre of Excellence and Analytical Framework will support early scheme development, and we are supporting a number of Local Authority business cases through delivery of this year's Business Plan.	4	3	12	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
~~21~~	~~**LEPs Dissolution**~~ ~~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.~~ ~~The Business Advisory Group are hosting their inaugural Business Summit on 9 July, bringing together a wider group of business stakeholders from across the South East, to tackle three top transport-related challenges (access to international connectivity, rural mobility, energy availability)~~ ~~Partnership Board can assess the efficacy of the new BAG and Business Summit in capturing the business voice and whether any changes are needed.~~	~~1~~	~~1~~	~~2~~	~~Keir Wilkins~~	~~Mar-26~~	~~PB~~
22	**Government policies affect delivery of transport investment** Shifts in government policies and funding allocations, meaning investment in the South East is paused or cancelled. While three year Local Transport Grant settlements have given Local Authorities certainty, this has been offset by continued uncertainty around devolution and LGR, so overall this has not been as stabilising as expected. This uncertainty is having a particularly damaging effect on MRN schemes, as Local Authorities cannot progress these, without knowing their future organisational and financial position.	5	4	20	Maintain open and regular communication with DfT to ensure we are informed about any potential policy changes. The recent Spending Review focused investment in the North and Midlands, although it did announce funding for the Lower Thames Crossing. TfSE will continue to engage with Government to make the case for funding transport investment in the South East, particularly through private finance and funding. TfSE to liaise with Local Authorities to explore how it can further support them on MRN issues.	4	3	12	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB
23	**Delays in government policy direction** There could be delays in decision-making processes that could impact the timely implementation of our work programme.	4	4	16	Ensure we maintain open communication with local authorities, stakeholders and the public to manage any expectations and address any concerns promptly. Ensure we are building in flexible timelines within our work in the programme.	4	3	12	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
~~24~~	~~**Transport Strategy Refresh - Constituent Authorities Support**~~ ~~Constituent Authorities do not support the Transport Strategy Refresh and does not agree to support the 'missions'.~~	~~4~~	~~4~~	~~16~~	~~The Transport Strategy is going to the Partnership Board for final approval and adoption in October 2025.~~ ~~TfSE has had extensive engagement with Local Authority partners, to ensure the Transport Strategy is taken through all Local Authority governance processes as required.~~	~~4~~	~~2~~	~~8~~	~~Mark Valleley~~	~~Dec-25~~	~~PB~~
25	**Transport Strategy Refresh - Central Government Support** Central Government does not support the Transport Strategy Refresh, or the strategy's missions. The Government does not need to approve the Transport Strategy, as it represent's the region's advice to Government. However, it is important that the Government thinks it is credible advice, that aligns to and helps them deliver their missions.	4	3	12	Following the adoption of the Transport Strategy, TfSE's Chair, Cllr Glazier, sent it to the Transport Secretary. We are yet to hear back from the Transport Secretary, but the strategy was also shared with DfT officials, and feedback was positive, that TfSE's Transport Strategy is aligned to the Government's approach.	4	2	8	Mark Valleley	Mar-26	PB
26	**Local Contributions** Constituent authorities are not able to pay Local Contributions from 2025 onwards. This is especially uncertain, as new authorities form, who have not yet received funding, or been able to set budgets.	5	4	20	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. Officers produced work on demonstrating how TfSE delivers value for partners.	4	2	8	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	SOG / PB
27	**South East Devolution** 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. The South East has no representation in groups such as the Council of Regions and Nations.	4	4	16	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. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill has now been published and sets out the Government's policy. There is potential for two Mayoral Strategic Authorities to be established in the TfSE region in 2026/27, and TfSE can support these areas, and our other Local Authorities through our Centre of Excellence and Analytical Framework.	4	4	16	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	SOG / PB

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
28	**Rail Reform** The impacts of the Government's plans for rail reform are uncertain. TfSE's role may need to develop to provide strategic advice and democratic accountability to a new Great British Railways body. Rail reform could distract from the needs of the South East, with a number of rail interventions identified in TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan not currently moving forward.	4	2	8	TfSE will continue to monitor Government plans and continue to engage with DfT, Network Rail and Great British Railways as plans develop. TfSE will explore options for playing a bigger role in rail, as part of next year's Business Plan. The Railways bill consultation went live on 18 February which TfSE responded to.	4	1	4	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	SOG / PB
29	**Storage of Data** Consistency of data across TfSE geography. Plans if there was a loss of our key operational data and reliance on the ESCC data architecture	3	3	9	The analytical team are developing a data management plan. Clear documentation on any work produced by TfSE and what our data sources are. Backup of databases, with considerations to be made if we moved away from a particular software. Data architecture is being developed.	2	2	4	Sarah Valentine	Ongoing	SOG / PB
30	**Use of Data** Potential breach of GDPR or breach of data licences, which could result in prosecution/fines	3	3	9	Ensure proper governance in using our data. GDPR register to be completed and reviewed quarterly by the TfSE GDPR officer. Data catalogue to contain the licencsing details for each item. TfSE officers (and consultants) to be made aware of and adhere to the constraints set out.	2	1	2	Sarah Valentine	Ongoing	SOG / PB
32	**National Planning Policy Reform** 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 Auhthorities, without adequate transport funding, or a mechanism for raising revenues from housebuilding.	4	4	16	TfSE recently responded to the open consultation on the NPPF. Following the consultation, the NPPF was revised on 12 December 2024. It set out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. TfSE will continue to monitor government plans and continue to engage with MHCLG and DfT, as the government continues to develop their policy on planning.	4	3	12	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	SOG / PB

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
33	**Devolution Delays Delivery** The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill has been published. Many Local Authorities in the TfSE area have made proposals for devolution, but it will take some time for devolution to take effect and Local Authorities may take on powers in phases. Whilst these changes are worked through, there is a risk that the implementation of transport improvements delays delivery.	5	4	20	TfSE will continue to monitor any Government updates and plans. TfSE notes the devolution priority programme and the current consultations for proposed Combined authority geographies across the region. TfSE provides continuity during this period of change and transition.	4	4	16	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB
34	**Devolution affects legislative framework underpinning TfSE** STBs are underpinned in legislation by the Local Transport Act, as amended by Cities and Devolution act 2016. The English Devolution Bill could amend the section of this legislation that sets out the role of STBs. However, the text for the Bill has been published, and is in its final stages of approval, so this risk is reduced.	4	2	8	TfSE will continue to work with the 6 other STBs who together with TfSE make up the 7 STBs for England. TfSE will continue engagement with DfT officials and monitor any Government updates and plans. We will stay live to any changes and make sure that we engage with Local Authorities to fulfil the role that they want us to play. TfSE's Chair met with the Transport Secretary, to set out the role that TfSE play on behalf of our Members, and we will ask DfT Ministers to set this out in writing.	3	1	3	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB
35	**Governance** As Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution take effect, any changes to TfSE's constituent authorities would mean that our Constitution and Inter Authority Agreements would need to be amended.	3	5	15	TfSE Officers will work with Local Authorites ensuring engagement is timely in order to make the changes to the constitution and inter authority agremeent in a timely manner to ensure the governance of TfSE is correct. Changes should be easy to implement, once they are needed.	1	5	5	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing	PB / SOG
~~36~~	~~**Spending Review**~~ ~~Without TfSE having a multiyear funding settlement it means it is difficult to plan a forward programme of support to our Local Authorities and work is delayed, because of stop-start funding.~~	4	~~5~~	~~20~~	~~TfSE have now received a letter from DfT outlining their position for funding TfSE over this Spending Review period. TfSE funding will now be a matter for local leaders, following the transition year of 2026/27. TfSE will engage with local leaders to understand their position on TfSE's future status.~~	~~3~~	~~5~~	~~15~~	~~Rupert Clubb~~	~~Ongoing~~	~~PB / SOG~~

#	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)			Owner	Review date	Escalation route
		Impact	Probability	Risk score		Impact	Probability	Risk score			
37	**TfSE Governance / Meetings** In response to devolution developments and Local Government Reform TfSE will need to adapt to changes that arise. Both through the formal constitution and ensuring the correct level of engagement with the key local authority officers. TfSE currently have 18 meeting groups.	3	2	6	TfSE officers will conduct a review of the current attendance at meetings attended by our Local Authority officers. TfSE officers will also review the terms of reference for each meeting group to ensure they remain relevant and are up to date. The findings and recommendations for the meeting groups will be taken to the TfSE management team to consider in light of the current changes due to devolution.	2	1	2	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing	Audit and Governance Committee

Risk Register - COMPLETED

Programme Overview

January 2025

Risk Number	Risk Description	Score if no action taken (1-5)		LxI =	Mitigating action	Score post action (1-5)		LxI =	Owner	Review date
		Likelihood	Impact	Risk score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk score		
	Stakeholders are not fully engaged in SIP development	3	4	12	Stakeholder and Communication Plan developed at start of process. Consultation plan implemented	2	3	6	LDT	Mar-23
	Ability to scale up quickly in year one to deliver sizable technical programme	4	4	16	Revised recruitment process planned for autumn. Utilise temporary resource to deliver against key projects in technical and analytical teams	2	4	8	RF	Autumn 2022
	Funding for analytical framework and Centre of Excellence not released in financial year	2	4	8	Work with DfT to develop proposals and draw down part of the funding to continue background research	1	4	4	RF	Autumn 2022

	Technical team resource is insufficient to deliver additional work streams.	3	4	12	Review recruitment process and utilise temporary resource.	2	4	8	MV/ SV/ RF	Autumn 2023
	Programme Manager is vacant, post could remain vacant a significant length of time.	4	4	16	Interviews will be taking place October 2023	3	4	12	RC	Oct-23
	Managing 23/24 budget to ensure DfT Grant allocation and carry forward from 2022/23 is fully spent.	4	4	16	Effective budget monitoring on a monthly basis and demonstrate TfSE's performance to DfT through regular review meetings and annual report.	3	4	12	MV & SV	Ongoing
	Transport Forum members become disengaged.	2	4	8	Transport Forum review.	1	3	3	JL	Ongoing
	Local Contributions are not secured from constituent authorities for 2023 onwards.	2	4	8	Early agreement at Partnership Board. SOG members advised to work into operational budgets. Certainty from DfT re: ongoing grant.	2	3	6	SV / Secretariat	Jan-24
	Levelling Up & Regeneration bill received royal ascent in October 2023. Provisions of Act may have implications for TfSE's activities	3	3	9	Briefing to be prepared on potential impact impact TfSE activities and any actions required.	2	2	4	RC	Ongoing

	Frequent changes in government policies and priorities in the run up to a general election lead to uncertainty in long-term transport planning and infrastructure investment for the South East region. This results in suboptimal outcomes, wasted resources, and inability to meet strategic goals.	4	4	16	Maintain open and regular communication with DfT to get early insight into emerging policies and priorities. Develop scenario plans for policies and priorities. Discussions with senior officers through Senior Officers Group for appropriate actions	4	3	12	RC	Oct-24
	Local Contributions are not secured from constituent authorities for 2024 onwards.	4	3	12	Early agreement at Partnership Board. SOG members advised to work into operational budgets. Certainty from DfT grant allocation received May 2024, £200k reduction. Officers produced work on demonstrating how TfSE delivers value for partners.	3	2	6	KW / Secretariat	Ongoing

	Additional work is identified that has not been accounted for in the budget.	3	2	6	Prioritisation process to be put in place. Small contingency allocated in budget.	2	2	4	TfSE Management Team	Ongoing
32	**National Planning Policy Reform** Uncertainty on the National Planning Policy Reform white paper contents which could add extra requirements for housebuilding onto Local Auhthorities, without adequate transport funding, or a mechanism for raising revenues from housebuilding	4	4	16	TfSE will continue to monitor Government plans and continue to engage with DfT. TfSE recently responded to the open consultation on the NPPF.	4	3	12	Chief Officer	Ongoing
8	**Reduced Funding for future years** 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	Keir Wilkins	Ongoing

21	**LEPs Dissolution** 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. The Business Advisory Group are hosting their inaugural Business Summit on 9 July, bringing together a wider group of business stakeholders from across the South East, to tackle three top transport-related challenges (access to international connectivity, rural mobility, energy availability) Partnership Board can	1	1	2	Keir Wilkins	Mar-26

24	**Transport Strategy Refresh - Constituent Authorities Support** Constituent Authorities do not support the Transport Strategy Refresh and does not agree to support the 'missions'.	4	4	16	The Transport Strategy is going to the Partnership Board for final approval and adoption in October 2025. TfSE has had extensive engagement with Local Authority partners, to ensure the Transport Strategy is taken through all Local Authority governance processes as required.	4	2	8	Mark Valleley	Dec-25
36	**Spending Review** Without TfSE having a multiyear funding settlement it means it is difficult to plan a forward programme of support to our Local Authorities and work is delayed, because of stop-start funding.	4	5	20	TfSE have now received a letter from DfT outlining their position for funding TfSE over this Spending Review period. TfSE funding will now be a matter for local leaders, following the transition year of 2026/27. TfSE will engage with local leaders to understand their position on TfSE's future status.	3	5	15	Rupert Clubb	Ongoing

Agenda Item 7

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**2 February 2026**
By:	**Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report:	**Financial Update**
Purpose of report:	**To update on the budget position for Transport for the South East**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note TfSE's financial position to the end of Quarter 3 2025/26.

1. Overview

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Partnership Board on TfSE's financial position to the end of Quarter 3 2025/26.

2. Background

2.1 The Board agreed TfSE's final Business Plan for 2025/26 in July 2025. This Business Plan set out how funding is allocated to each of TfSE's technical work areas for the year ahead. This report sets out our progress in spending money against each budget line and forecasts our outturn to the end of the Financial Year.

3. Summary of our Financial Position budget for 2025/26

3.1 Our financial position to the end of Quarter 3 2025/26 is set out in **Appendix 1**. In the nine months from April to the end of December, TfSE spent £1,555,119.

3.2 This is in line with our expectations at the start of the year. We only pay for work on completion, so expenditure on the technical programme will increase as the financial year progresses.

3.3 At the end of Quarter 3, our updated forecast expenditure is now £3,209,032, against a budget of £3,807,322. This paper breaks down the forecast for each expenditure line in the budget. The confidence rating for many forecasts has increased, as we gain more certainty about the cost of work to the end of the financial year.

4. Staffing Costs

4.1 Staffing expenditure is in line with expectations. Our forecast expenditure to the end of the year is £1,236,862. The forecast confidence rating has increased from a 4 to a 5, as staff, who are employed by our accountable body East Sussex County Council, have now received the Council's pay award for the year ahead. We also have certainty on pension and taxation costs to the end of the financial year, following the October Budget. We could still underspend against the forecast if any members of staff leave their posts between now and the end of March.

5. Technical Programme Costs

5.1 The final forecast spend on the Transport Strategy is £99,405. This has decreased from £120,737, as we will no longer host a bespoke event to launch the Transport Strategy.

5.2 Forecast expenditure on SIP Implementation remains steady at £401,704. Any underspend will be committed carry forward, as work is already underway, and any work that is not finished in 2025/26 will be finished early in the 2026/27 Financial Year.

5.3 Forecast expenditure on the Analytical Framework has decreased from £513,833 to £465,327, our forward work plan for 2025/26 has been finalised. As with SIP Implementation, any underspend will be committed carry forward and will be spent early in 2026/27. The forecast confidence rating has increased from a 3 to a 4, as we have greater clarity on when expenditure will be made.

5.4 Forecast expenditure for Future Mobility and Active Travel is unchanged at £0.

5.5 Forecast expenditure for Decarbonisation, Freight, Rail, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, and Centre of Excellence have been updated as we now have costs for all planned work from suppliers. All changes are minor and are the forecasts are in-line with the forecasts that the Board received at the end of Quarter 2.

5.6 Forecast expenditure Private Financing remains at £50,000. However, the forecast confidence rating has decreased from a 3 to a 2, as TfSE's Funding and Finance Group gave feedback on how the work should be delivered to maximise its impact. A new scope for the work will be approved by TfSE's Funding and Finance Group in January, meaning work may be completed after the end of this Financial Year.

5.7 The end of year forecast for Other Costs and Technical Support has decreased to £99,118, leaving £50,882 for further additional work, should it be required.

6. Communications, Engagement and Other Costs

6.1 End of year forecasts for Communications, Engagement, and Other Costs are as forecast at the end of Quarter 3. Costs for the website and stakeholder database are billed for a whole year, in Quarter 4. Although Communication spend has been low so far this year, we expect expenditure to increase to the forecast, to support delivery of the SIP Refresh. There will also be expenditure on TfSE Governance on work that has been undertaken on the future status of TfSE.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 The Partnership Board are recommended to note the financial position to the end of Quarter 3 2025/26.

RUPERT CLUBB

Chief Officer

Transport for the South East

Contact officer: Keir Wilkins
Email: keir.wilkins@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Appendix 1 – TfSE Budget Position at end December 2025

	Budget	Actual YTD	Year End Forecast	Forecast Confidence (1-5)	
EXPENDITURE					
Salaries (including on-costs)	1,319,857	681,196	*1,231,862*	**5**	▲1
Training	20,000	759	*5,000*	**4**	
STAFFING	**1,339,857**	**681,955**	***1,236,862***	**4**	
Transport Strategy	120,737	97,975	99,405	**4**	
SIP Refresh	98,000	52,287	*98,045*	**4**	
SIP implementation	482,473	228,275	*401,704*	**4**	
Analytical framework	546,984	129,498	*465,327*	**4**	▲1
Future mobility	40,000	0	*0*	**5**	
Active travel	45,000	0	*0*	**5**	
Decarbonisation	40,000	3,116	*23,640*	**4**	
Freight	185,758	72,875	*156,935*	**4**	
Rail	75,000	66,957	*111,503*	**4**	
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	129,319	41,874	*125,842*	**4**	▲1
Centre of Excellence	251,759	56,065	*201,371*	**4**	
Private Financing	104,435	0	*50,000*	**2**	▼1
Other costs/technical support	150,000	78,477	*99,118*	**4**	▲1
TECHNICAL PROGRAMME	**2,269,465**	**827,399**	**1,832,890**	**4**	
Events	40,000	24,344	*40,000*	**4**	
Communication (and Media Subscriptions)	14,000	100	*24,280*	**4**	
Publications	5,000	0	*5,000*	**4**	
Website	21,000	305	*10,000*	**4**	
Stakeholder Database	18,000	4,537	*10,000*	**4**	
COMMUNICATIONS/ENGAGEMENT	**98,000**	**29,286**	***89,280***	**4**	
TfSE Governance	25,000	0	*25,000*	**4**	
Operational Expenses	75,000	16,479	*25,000*	**4**	
OTHER	**100,000**	**16,479**	***50,000***	**4**	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**3,807,322**	**1,555,119**	***3,209,032***	**4**	

MONEY HELD BACK FOR TFSE RESERVE	496,730
TOTAL BUDGET INCLUDING RESERVE	4,304,052

FUNDING FOR 2025/26	
Local Contributions	498,000
DfT Grant	2,161,666
Technical Programme Carry Forward from 2024/25	1,237,656
TOTAL FUNDING EXCLUDING RESERVE	**3,897,322**
Carry Forward for TfSE Reserve from 2024/25	406,730
TOTAL FUNDING INCLUDING RESERVE	**4,304,052**

Confidence Ratings

5	*VIRTUALLY CERTAIN*
4	*HIGLY LIKELY*
3	*MODERATELY LIKELY*
2	*UNCERTAIN*
1	*HIGHLY UNCERTAIN*

Agenda Item 8

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

Date of meeting: **2 February 2026**

By: **Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Responses to Consultations**

Purpose of report: **To agree the draft responses submitted in response to a consultation.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

1) **Agree the draft response to Brighton & Hove City Council's Consultation - Our City Transport Plan 2035**

2) **Agree the draft response to National Energy System Operator's Consultation on the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan (tRESP)**

3) **Agree the draft response to National Energy Systems Operator's Consultation on the methodology for the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP)**

4) **Agree the draft response to Department for Transport's Consultation on the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)**

5) **Agree the draft response to the consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex**

6) **Agree the draft response to the consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) has prepared responses to these recent consultations. This paper provides an overview of the responses to the following consultations:

- Brighton & Hove City Council's (BHCC) Consultation - Our City Transport Plan 2035
- National Energy System Operator's (NESO) Consultation on the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan (tRESP)
- NESO's Consultation on the methodology for the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP

- Department for Transport's (DfT) Consultation on the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)

2. Brighton & Hove City Council's Consultation - Our City Transport Plan 2035

2.1 In September 2025, TfSE responded to BHCC's consultation - Our City Transport Plan 2035. This response is contained in **Appendix 1**.

2.2 The response noted the draft 'Our City Transport Plan 2035' demonstrates a strong alignment with TfSE's Transport Strategy, notably through its recognition of the role of the Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan.

2.3 The response noted opportunity to incorporate explicit references to several regionally significant schemes beyond city boundaries, suggesting this would further anchor Brighton & Hove's proposals within the regional investment framework.

3. NESO's Consultation on the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan (tRESP)

3.1 NESO opened their consultation on tRESP in Autumn 2025 seeking TfSE's comment as key stakeholders. The tRESP is the first publication in the journey towards transforming and improving local energy infrastructure. TfSE submitted a response in November 2025 which is contained in **Appendix 2.**

3.2 The response was broadly supportive of the tRESP, alongside several key suggestions about how the transport activity and infrastructure in the South East could be better considered alongside energy infrastructure.

3.3 The response outlined that the South East's distinct patterns of transport activity generate an electricity demand that differ from other regions. Greater emphasis on these transport–energy linkages, and clearer spatial representation of cross-boundary movements to and from London, would make the context more accurate and actionable.

3.4 The response gave detailed answers on how the mapping in tRESP could be revised to improve its viability for direct use in transport or spatial planning.

4. National Energy Systems Operator – Consultation on the methodology for the Regional Energy Strategic plan

4.1 NESO's RESP Methodology sets out the proposed approach to implementing the RESP role. NESO opened consulting on the RESP Methodology in November 2025, closing January 2026.

4.2 The response was broadly support of the RESP methodology, noting provides a strong platform for developing place-based, whole-system RESPs. TfSE stands ready to support delivery by convening stakeholders, curating local area intelligence, validating drafts and supporting ongoing monitoring.

4.3 TfSE offered constructive suggestions on a number of improvements across the particulars of the consultation. Most significantly, TfSE would welcome deeper transport–energy integration (freight, ports, airports and cross-boundary corridors) and open, map-based data outputs at useful geographies to help operationalise RESP in ED3 and local energy planning contexts.

5. Department for Transport's (DfT) Consultation on the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)

5.1 The Department for Transport opened a Consultation on CWIS3.TfSE have submitted a response, which is contained in **Appendix 4**.

5.2 The response strongly supports the overall direction of CWIS3 and welcomes its alignment with our Transport Strategy, particularly the missions on Decarbonisation, Inclusion & Integration, Strategic Connectivity, and Sustainable Growth.

5.3 The response noted local performance indicators need to be practical and robust. It recommends moving away from monitoring percentage increases in trip stages at LTA level, and instead using alternative measures such as school travel mode shares and cordon counts on LCWIP corridors.

5.4 The response suggests ATE could provide a clear Monitoring Playbook with standard methods, open dashboards, and co-funding for counters to help LTAs deliver consistent, high-quality data without excessive burden.

5.5 The response highlights an extant general data gap in travel behaviour, which could be met through collecting local level travel survey data, on a more continuous basis is challenging. This could be delivered at a regional/STB level to balance the level of detail needed and achieve economies of scale.

5.6 Finally, the response proposes capital investment must be matched with revenue funding. Behaviour change programmes like Bikeability, adult cycle confidence, and school streets are essential to convert infrastructure into real uptake.

6. Consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex

6.1 East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, and West Sussex County Council collectively opened a consultation on their proposals for local government reorganisation. TfSE have submitted a response, which is contained in **Appendix 5.**

6.2 The response notes TfSE does not take a position on specific options for local government reorganisation – this is for government and our local authority partners to determine.

6.3 The response assures TfSE will remain a constructive partner to all our local authorities, whilst being adaptable to final governance arrangements.

6.4 The response concludes that TfSE remain committed to supporting authorities and government to ensure that transport planning and investment contribute positively to sustainable growth, improved connectivity, and better outcomes for communities across Sussex and Brighton and the rest of our region.

7. Consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

7.1 Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council, and Southampton City Council collectively opened a consultation on their proposals for local government reorganisation. TfSE have submitted a response, which is contained in **Appendix 6**.

7.2 The response notes TfSE does not take a position on specific options for local government reorganisation – this is for government and our local authority partners to determine.

7.3 The response assures TfSE will remain a constructive partner to all our local authorities, whilst being adaptable to final governance arrangements.

7.4 The response concludes that TfSE remain committed to supporting authorities and government to ensure that transport planning and investment contribute positively to sustainable growth, improved connectivity, and better outcomes for communities across Hampshire and the Solent, and the rest of our region.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree the draft responses to the consultations detailed in this report.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

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Appendix 1 – Brighton and Hove City Council Our City Transport Plan 2035

Draft ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’ - Brighton & Hove City Council Consultation response from Transport for the South East

1. Introduction

1.1. This document is the draft Transport for the South East (TfSE) response to the consultation on the Brighton & Hove City Council’s draft ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’. This is a draft officer response that will be presented to our Partnership Board in January 2025 for approval. A further iteration may therefore follow.

1.2. TfSE is the sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England. Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, business representatives, National Highways, Network Rail and Transport for London.

1.3. We have a vision-led Transport Strategy in place to influence government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. Our Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) provides the delivery framework for this strategy, setting out the infrastructure and policy interventions needed across the region over the next three decades. This is in the process of being refreshed.

1.4. TfSE welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’. We trust that our response will add value to the development of the City Council’s plan and form the basis for continued engagement as we strengthen the ‘golden thread’ between the local and regional strategies.

2. Approach

2.1. The draft ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’ is structured around six objectives and a set of guiding principles reflecting active and healthy travel, efficient road networks, the transition to zero-emission vehicles, inclusive access, and well-maintained streets. This approach is closely aligned with the principles underpinning TfSE’s Transport Strategy. Both emphasise evidence-based prioritisation, integration of transport with wider policy areas, and the need to balance economic, social and environmental outcomes in decision-making.

2.2. There are several common elements in the way the two documents have been developed. Each draws on the ‘avoid–shift–improve’ framework, promotes a ‘Movement and Place’ approach that balances the movement of people and goods with the role of streets as public spaces and incorporates aspects of ‘Triple Access Planning’ which integrates physical mobility, digital connectivity and spatial proximity in access planning. Both documents also support data-led monitoring to inform investment decisions.

3. Vision

3.1. The vision in the Brighton & Hove draft LTP5 is strongly aligned with the 2050 Vision in TfSE's Transport Strategy. Both commit to a low-carbon, inclusive and accessible transport system that enhances quality of life and supports sustainable economic growth. The shared emphasis on reducing emissions, improving connectivity, and creating healthier places provides a robust foundation for partnership working. Table 1 below sets out the alignment between the two vision statements.

Table 1: Alignment between the 'Our City Transport Plan 2025' and the 2050 vision in TfSE's Draft Transport Strategy

'Our City Transport Plan 2035' Vision	TfSE Transport Strategy 2050 Vision
A transport system that enables everyone to move around and access what they need easily, affordably and safely, while improving health and wellbeing, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing the city's environment and economy.	Our vision is for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in achieving sustainable, net zero carbon growth. We will develop a resilient, reliable and inclusive transport network that enables seamless journeys and empowers residents, businesses and visitors to make sustainable choices.

4. Alignment between Brighton & Hove Objectives and TfSE's Missions

4.1. Table 2 presents an assessment of alignment between the objectives of the 'Our City Transport Plan 2035' and the five missions of TfSE's Transport Strategy. The analysis shows strong overall alignment, particularly in relation to decarbonisation, inclusion, and sustainable growth.

Table 2: Alignment between objectives of 'Our Transport Plan 2025' and TfSE's five Missions

Brighton & Hove 'Our Transport Plan 2035' objectives	TfSE's Missions				
	Strategic Connectivity	Resilience	Decarbonisation	Inclusion & Integration	Sustainable Growth
1. Increase the use of public transport and active travel.	X		X	X	X
2. Support the transition to zero-emission vehicles.			X		
3. Ensure safe, inclusive and affordable transport options for all.			X	X	
4. Maintain streets and public spaces to high standards.		X			X
5. Integrate transport with new housing, jobs and regeneration.	X			X	X
6. Harness technology and data to improve travel and reduce emissions.	X		X		X

4.2 As shown in Table 2, the objectives of 'Our Transport Plan 2035' are broadly consistent with TfSE's missions. Notably, the emphasis on mode shift and zero-emission vehicles supports TfSE's Decarbonisation Mission, while the focus on inclusion and accessibility aligns with the Inclusion & Integration Mission. The Council's approach to technology, data and public realm improvements complements TfSE's Resilience and Sustainable Growth missions.

4.3 TfSE welcomes the clear recognition in ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’ of the regional role played by Transport for the South East and the inclusion of both the TfSE Transport Strategy and the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to demonstrate alignment with regional priorities. The Plan usefully reproduces the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan map, illustrating the alignment between Brighton & Hove’s local priorities and the wider regional network. It also identifies several shared priority schemes, including the Sussex Coast Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) concept, Brighton Main Line resilience and capacity improvements, A27 and A23 corridor enhancements, and the strategic mobility hubs proposed at Falmer, Shoreham, and the A23/A27 junction.

4.4 There is scope to strengthen the alignment between the two documents by referring to a small number of additional schemes from the Strategic Investment Plan that are directly relevant to the city’s wider connectivity. These include the A27 East of Lewes to Polegate improvements, which would enhance east–west resilience and improve access between Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and the wider coastal area; and the West Coastway Strategic Study, which aims to reduce rail journey times between Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings. Reference could also be made to the proposed additional platform at Brighton Station, which will increase capacity and improve the reliability of services to and from the station and the reinstatement of direct Cross Country services between Brighton, London and the Midlands to reduce journey times for long-distance travelers and support inbound tourism. Finally, reference to TfSE’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure and wider decarbonisation work areas, in which the City Council has already been involved, would further demonstrate consistency with regional initiatives to reduce emissions.

4.5 Recognising these additional linkages would give a more complete picture of how Brighton and Hove’s proposals fit within the wider regional investment framework and would help strengthen the case for future joint funding and delivery.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The draft ‘Our City Transport Plan 2035’ demonstrates a strong alignment with TfSE’s Transport Strategy, notably through its recognition of the role of the Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan. TfSE welcomes this clear acknowledgement of the regional context and the City Council’s commitment to collaboration on future investment. There is an opportunity to build on this by incorporating explicit references to several regionally significant schemes beyond the city boundary, which would further anchor Brighton & Hove’s proposals within the regional investment framework. Doing so would underline the City’s contribution to delivering a resilient, inclusive and net-zero transport system for the South East.

Transport for the South East response to the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan consultation

Explainer: The purpose of tRESP is to help make the transition from the way that electricity and gas distribution networks are currently planned, to the new Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP) approach, which will be in place from 2027. The tRESP is an interim step focused on supporting the process to set the ED3 price control for the electricity distribution network operators (DNOs).

About you / your group / your organisation

Question 5. Please give a brief overview of your organisation:

Response:

TfSE is the sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England. Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, business representatives, National Highways, Network Rail and Transport for London.

We have a vision-led Transport Strategy in place to influence government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. Our Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) provides the delivery framework for this strategy, setting out the infrastructure and policy interventions needed across the region over the next three decades. This is in the process of being refreshed.

TfSE brings evidence on future transport demand, fleet electrification and spatial development that can help ensure regional energy planning fully reflects where and how transport will drive future electricity needs.

Nations and Regions Contexts

Question 1. Are the Nations and Regions Contexts accessible, clear and easy to interpret? What improvements would you like to see?

- **Yes - please suggest any improvements:**

_____

- **No - please suggest any improvements:**

_____

Selection: Yes

Response:

The Nations and Regions Contexts are well structured and provide useful summaries of energy system characteristics. However, they remain largely energy-sector focused and would benefit from a clearer articulation of how regional transport demand and spatial development patterns interact with energy needs.

For the South East, the context should explicitly recognise:

- *The scale and diversity of transport demand linked to ports, airports and freight corridors.*
- *High inter-regional commuting flows to London and the wider South East, which influence daily energy demand.*

Accessibility could also be improved through the publication of supporting datasets in open, map-based formats, allowing regional partners to overlay their own evidence and test assumptions.

Question 2. How well do the Nations and Regions Contexts reflect your understanding of your nation or region?

- *Extremely well*
- *Very well*
- *Moderately well*
- *Slightly well*
- *Not well at all*

Selection: *Moderately well*

Justification:
The Nations and Regions Contexts capture many of the South East's broad energy

characteristics, but they only partially reflect the region's transport-related energy demand. The South East's distinct combination of ports, airports, major freight corridors and dispersed rural communities creates patterns of electricity demand that differ from other regions. Greater emphasis on these transport–energy linkages, and clearer spatial representation of cross-boundary movements to and from London, would make the context more accurate and actionable.

Question 3. Do you agree with the elements and topics included in the Nations and Regions Context and is there anything missing that you would have expected to see?

- Yes _____
- Maybe _____
- No _____

Selection: *Maybe*

Justification:
The elements and topics provide a useful foundation, but the current scope under-represents transport and spatial development drivers of energy demand. The context would benefit from explicit coverage of:

- *Transport electrification across all modes, including HGVs, LGVs, and buses.*
- *The energy needs of ports, airports and potential transport energy hubs.*
- *Use of Sub-national Transport Bodies' evidence base.*

Including these would ensure the Context provides a more complete view of how place-based transport patterns will shape regional electricity requirements in the South East.

Question 4. How do you envisage using the Nations and Regions Context(s)?

Transport for the South East would use the Nations and Regions Context as an evidence base to support integration between transport and energy planning. In particular, it would:

- *Inform dialogue with Distribution Network Operators and NESO on where transport-driven energy demand is likely to arise.*
- *Support local authorities in aligning future Local Area Energy Plans with strategic transport corridors and growth areas.*

- *Provide baseline data to inform TfSE's work on the identification of potential strategic freight energy hubs and to support investment prioritisation, ensuring that future transport schemes take account of grid capacity and reinforcement requirements.*

Used in this way, the Context would help ensure that transport decarbonisation and energy system planning evolve coherently across the South East.

Question 5**. Do you have any feedback on the data selected for the specific topics included for the Nations and Regions Contexts?**

Response:
The selected datasets provide a strong foundation for understanding regional energy demand, but the transport dimension could be strengthened. In particular, there is limited visibility of data on:

- *Energy demand associated with transport hubs such as ports, airports and rail terminals.*
- *The location and capacity of bus and freight depots transitioning to zero-emission fleets.*
- *Spatial distribution of public and private EV charging infrastructure, especially along strategic corridors.*
- *Future housing and employment growth areas that will influence transport energy demand.*

Improving access to these datasets, ideally through open and map-based formats, would enhance the accuracy and usability of the Nations and Regions Contexts for transport and spatial planning purposes.

Question 7. What additional data do you think we should be considering either for tRESP or full RESP?

Additional datasets that would improve both the transitional and full Regional Energy Strategic Plans include:

- *Transport decarbonisation datasets – including the location, capacity and growth trajectories of EV charging sites, bus depots, rail traction power and potential strategic freight energy hubs.*

- *Freight movement data – to identify energy demand around ports, distribution parks, construction material hubs and major freight corridors such as the M25, M3–M27–A27 and the M20/A20 and M2/A2.*
- *Land-use and growth forecasts – from local plans and Sub-national Transport Bodies, data sets, showing where new housing and employment growth will drive future energy demand.*
- *Grid capacity and constraint mapping – published at a usable spatial scale for integration with transport investment plans. We understand these data will be made available in future iterations of the RESP.*

Incorporating these datasets would strengthen the regional evidence base and ensure that tRESP and RESP fully reflect the interdependence between transport, energy and place-based growth.

Pathways and Consistent Planning Assumptions (CPAs)

8. The purpose of the tRESP Pathways is to drive consistency across DNO forecasting, as part of their business plans for 2028-2033 (ED3). Are the steps we are taking to drive consistency, via the baselining and alignment, clear and proportionate? Are the set of tRESP building blocks and the approach to creating Pathways fit for purpose?

- **Yes - please explain: _____**
- **Maybe - please explain: _____**
- **No - please explain: _____**

Selection: Maybe

The approach to baselining and alignment is logical and proportionate for this transitional stage, and the intention to improve consistency across DNO forecasts is strongly supported. However, the current set of building blocks and pathways does not yet fully capture transport-related demand drivers.

To be fully fit for purpose, the Pathways should:

- *Integrate transport electrification forecasts from the Department for Transport and Sub-national Transport Bodies, including data on bus, freight and rail depot transitions.*
- *Reflect the spatial and temporal variability of transport demand, particularly around ports, airports and logistics corridors.*
- *Provide transparency on how assumptions differ from local and national transport decarbonisation trajectories.*

Strengthening these elements would make the Pathways a more reliable foundation for both energy network planning and transport investment sequencing in the South East.

Question 9. Will your organisation use the Pathways? If yes, which of the building blocks and for what purpose?

- **Yes - please explain: _____**
- **Maybe - please explain: _____**
- **No - please explain: _____**

Selection: Yes

Transport for the South East would use the Pathways to inform the integration of transport decarbonisation and energy network planning across the region. In particular, we would draw on the transport demand and electrification trajectories to assess the scale and timing of grid reinforcement required for EV charging infrastructure and strategic freight energy hubs.

Question 10. Pathways will be published for each building block, down to Grid Supply Point feeding area, and for each RESP nation/region. What is your preferred format to receive the Pathways?

Transport for the South East would prefer the Pathways to be published in open, map-based and machine-readable formats, allowing integration with spatial transport and infrastructure datasets and models.

Question 11. The objective of the tRESP CPAs is to drive consistency across DNO demand forecasting as an input to DNOs' network impact assessment to create their business plans for the ED3 period (2028-2033). Will your organisation use the tRESP CPAs for other purposes? If so, for what purpose? Is the format of the CPA value workbook usable for this purpose?

- **Yes _____**

- **Maybe** _____
- **No** _____

Selection: *Yes*

Transport for the South East would use the Consistent Planning Assumptions (CPAs) to ensure alignment between regional transport planning and energy network forecasting. In particular, TfSE could apply the CPAs to:

- *Test the compatibility of transport decarbonisation pathways with regional electricity demand forecasts.*
- *Support local authority partners in aligning future Local Area Energy Plans with strategic transport corridors and recharging infrastructure programmes.*
- *Provide a common evidence base for engagement with Distribution Network Operators and NESO on future investment needs.*

Question 12. Are the definitions of the CPAs clear, as described in the tRESP methodology and detailed design document and the tRESP CPA value workbook?

- **Strongly agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Neither agree nor disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Strongly disagree - please explain:**

_____

Selection: *Somewhat agree*

The definitions of the Consistent Planning Assumptions (CPAs) are broadly clear and well structured, providing a transparent framework for aligning Distribution Network Operator forecasts. However the CPA value workbook does not currently include explicit assumptions for heavy goods vehicles or other freight modes. This represents a significant evidence gap for the South East, where port, airport and logistics activity are major drivers of electricity demand. However, we understand that further work will be undertaken to integrate freight

and non-road modes into future RESP iterations. This work should draw on Sub-national Transport Body evidence.

Question 13. Based on the methodology, do you agree with the values established as tRESP CPAs in the value workbook? If not, are there any additional or alternative data sources which are more appropriate? Answers should refer to specific CPA numbers e.g. EV01 and adhere to these criteria: • Be based on a reliable source • Be relevant • Be up-to-date • Be location-specific • Consider changes through time, and • Consider weather and climate impact.

Selection: Maybe
Transport for the South East supports the overall methodology used to derive the tRESP Consistent Planning Assumptions (CPAs) and recognises the need for national alignment across DNO forecasts. However, several CPA values could be strengthened to improve relevance to transport decarbonisation in the South East.

On electric vehicle uptake, the national averages provide a consistent baseline, but they do not capture regional variation in vehicle ownership or travel patterns. Forecasts from Transport for the North's EVCI Visualiser tool that has been deployed to all STBs, offer a more spatially granular and evidence-based view of likely charging demand across different geographies. Using this dataset would improve the realism and location-specific accuracy of future CPAs.

The absence of an explicit CPA for HGV and LGV decarbonisation remains a significant gap. Freight transition data from DfT's Zero Emission HGV trials, National Grid's Future Energy Scenarios, and Sub-national Transport Body freight studies should be incorporated to reflect depot and logistics energy demand more accurately.

Including these sources in the full RESP will make it more representative of real-world transport energy needs and better support regional planning in the South East.

Question 14. Do you agree with the scope and granularity of the assumptions in the CPA value workbook, considering the materiality and complexity of implementation of a more detailed or granular approach? If not, can you provide evidence to support the use of a more or less detailed or granular approach? See the value workbook for an overview and further detail of the scope and granularity of the tRESP CPAs.

- **Strongly agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Neither agree nor disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Strongly disagree - please explain:**

_____

Selection: *Somewhat agree*

The current level of granularity in the CPA value workbook is appropriate for a transitional stage and provides a manageable framework for DNO forecasting. However, the transport assumptions would benefit from greater spatial and modal resolution to capture regional variation in demand.

In particular:

- *EV uptake and charging assumptions should be represented at a finer spatial scale, ideally down to Local Authority or Grid Supply Point level to ensure they align with the distribution of transport activity and local energy constraints. Tools such as Transport for the North's EVCI Visualiser demonstrate that a more granular approach can be implemented effectively using existing datasets.*
- *Freight energy demand requires at least corridor-level granularity (e.g. M25, M3–M27–A27, Thames Estuary) to reflect depot clustering and port-related power needs.*

These refinements would add limited complexity but significantly improve the realism and planning value of the CPAs, particularly for regions where transport is a dominant energy driver.

Strategic Investment Need (SI Need)

Purpose (explainer)

The tRESP defines *Strategic Investment Need* as the **evidence-based identification of areas where coordinated investment in the electricity network is required** to support future demand, generation, and flexibility needs.
It is designed to show **where and when** reinforcement or flexibility solutions may be required to deliver least-regret outcomes across regions and DNO boundaries.

NESO describes SI Need as a **transitional concept** that will evolve into a more data-driven, spatially detailed product under the full RESP from 2027.

Framing and approach

In the tRESP, SI Need is framed around two key assessment dimensions:

- **Strategic Value** – the expected long-term importance of an area to meeting national or regional energy, decarbonisation, or growth objectives.
    - This includes the scale of demand or generation growth, links to major industrial clusters or growth corridors, and contribution to net zero.
- **Uncertainty** – the degree of confidence in those future outcomes, based on the maturity of supporting evidence, policy commitments, or local delivery programmes.
    - Areas with high Strategic Value but also high Uncertainty are flagged as priorities for further analysis and engagement rather than immediate investment.

Together, these criteria are used to **classify "emerging areas of Strategic Investment Need"** that will inform Distribution Network Operator (DNO) business plans for the **ED3 period (2028–2033)**.

Question 15. Do you feel that the definition and framing of Strategic Investment Need (SI Need) is clear?

- ***Strongly agree - please explain:***

_____

- ***Somewhat agree - please explain:***

_____

- ***Neither agree nor disagree - please explain:***

_____

- ***Somewhat disagree - please explain:***

_____

- ***Strongly disagree - please explain:***

_____

Selection: *Somewhat agree*

The definition and framing of Strategic Investment Need (SI Need) are broadly clear and provide a useful basis for identifying areas where coordinated reinforcement is required.

However, the framework would benefit from a stronger link between energy system need and place-based transport investment priorities.

Question 17. Does the combination of RESP area narratives, maps, and hotspot descriptions provide a clear and helpful picture of where emerging needs are arising? Is the level of detail suitable for your purposes?

- **Strongly agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat agree - please explain:**

_____

- **Neither agree nor disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Somewhat disagree - please explain:**

_____

- **Strongly disagree - please explain:**

_____

Selection: Somewhat agree
The combination of narratives, maps and hotspot descriptions gives a useful overview of where energy system pressures are beginning to emerge. The regional framing is clear and provides a good starting point for future coordination between NESO, DNOs and local partners.

However, the current level of detail is too high-level for direct use in transport or spatial planning. To be more actionable, the mapping should:

- *Include transport-related energy demand hotspots, such as ports, airports, rail terminals, bus and freight depots, strategic freight energy hubs and key motorway corridors.*
- *Be published at a consistent and open spatial scale (for example, Grid Supply Point or Local Authority level) so that partners can overlay their own data.*
- *Offer a short narrative summary of how each hotspot was identified, including data sources and assumptions.*

These refinements would make the emerging SI Need picture clearer and more usable for regional infrastructure coordination in the South East.

Question 18. What level of geographic detail would be most useful in future versions? For example:

Local authority boundaries

Project-level details

Place-based clusters or zones

GSP (Grid Supply Point) boundaries

Thematic areas (e.g. heat networks, industrial clusters)

Lower layer super output area / data zone

Anything else? (Please explain)

_____

Response:
Transport for the South East would find the following levels of geographic detail most useful in future versions of the RESP:

☑ **Place-based clusters or zones** – *to align with multi-sector growth areas and transport corridors.*
☑ **GSP (Grid Supply Point) boundaries** – *to enable integration with DNO datasets and Local Area Energy Plans.*
☑ **Local authority boundaries** – *for consistency with transport and spatial planning geographies used by constituent authorities.*
☑ **Thematic areas** – *such as transport electrification hubs, freight and logistics clusters, and port or airport energy zones.*

Additional suggestion:
Future iterations should provide an interactive map layer *allowing partners to view and overlay these geographic scales simultaneously. This would support coordination between transport, energy and land-use planning at both regional and local levels.*

Question 19. Do you see a role for these outputs in supporting local planning, infrastructure alignment, investment proposals?

- **Yes - please explain:**

_____

- **Maybe - please explain:**

_____

- **No - please explain:**

_____

Selection: *Yes*

The outputs from the RESP have clear potential to support local planning, infrastructure alignment and investment prioritisation. For Transport for the South East, they would help:

- *Align transport and energy investment programmes, particularly for EV charging, bus depots, strategic freight energy hubs, and port and airport connections.*
- *Provide a consistent regional evidence base for future Local Area Energy Plans, enabling authorities to plan within realistic grid capacity constraints.*
- *Strengthen the strategic justification for business cases and funding bids, by demonstrating alignment with nationally recognised areas of Strategic Investment Need.*
- *Improve coordination between DNOs, local authorities and Sub-national Transport Bodies, ensuring that planned transport interventions are matched with timely energy reinforcement.*

Used in this way, the RESP outputs would form an essential bridge between energy system planning and place-based infrastructure delivery in the South East.

Question 20. Are there any locations you would expect to see identified as SI Need that are not currently being assessed? Please highlight these and, where possible, provide supporting information.

- **Yes - please explain:**

_____

- **No - please explain:**

_____

Selection: *Yes*

Explanation:
A number of transport-related locations in the South East appear under-represented in the emerging SI Need assessment. These areas are already showing strong or imminent growth in electricity demand linked to the decarbonisation of surface transport and logistics:

- M3–M27–A27 corridor (Solent and Sussex coast): Concentration of port, airport and freight activity around Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton, with energy demands likely to intensify significantly as international ferries are electrified, and growing demand from bus and HGV depot electrification.
- Thames Estuary and North Kent corridor: Rapid logistics and construction-related demand associated with Thames Gateway ports (Tilbury, London Gateway) and Lower Thames Crossing preparation works.
- Gatwick–Crawley–Brighton axis: Airport operations and planned public transport electrification, combined with surrounding employment growth.
- M25 orbital and radial routes: High intensity of HGV and coach movements, motorway service areas, and logistics parks requiring rapid-charging infrastructure.

- Ashford and East Kent growth areas: Electrification of rail depots and local bus networks alongside planned housing and employment expansion.

Each of these locations aligns demonstrates a clear overlap between regional transport priorities and future grid reinforcement needs.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) draft response to NESO's RESP Methodology Consultation

About you / your organisation (mandatory questions)

Q1. What is your name?

[Insert: Benn White]

Q2. What is your email address?

[Insert: Benn.White@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk]

Q3. What is your role / job title?

Project Manager

Q4. What is your organisation name?

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

Q5. Please give a brief overview of your organisation

TfSE is the Sub-national Transport Body for the South East of England. Our Partnership Board brings together 16 local transport authorities, district/borough councils, protected landscapes, business representatives, National Highways, Network Rail and TfL. We have a vision-led Transport Strategy to 2050 and a Strategic Investment Plan (being refreshed). TfSE brings evidence on transport demand, fleet electrification and spatial development to support RESP in reflecting transport-driven electricity needs.

Q6. Which category best describes your organisation? (Select all that apply)

- Local authority or representative of local authorities
- Non-energy infrastructure provider — transport

Q7. Which Nation or Region are you / your organisation located in, or interested in? (Select all that apply)

- South East

Q8. Has your response been approved by your internal governance / approval process, where relevant?

Response will be taken to the TfSE Partnership Board on 2 February 2025 for review and approval.

Q9. Following your submission, are you happy to be contacted specifically in relation to this consultation, to further understand your views?

[Proposed: Yes]

Q10. How would you like us to treat your response?

[Proposed: My response can be published]

Terminology

Q1. Do you agree that in Scotland and Wales the strategic plans outlined in this methodology should be known as the Scotland RESP and Wales RESP respectively?

Selection: Strongly agree

Q2. If not, what alternative should be used?

Not applicable. We support the proposed terminology.

Engagement

Q1. Do you agree with our approach to engagement as we develop the RESPs?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q2. Please provide your reasoning?

We broadly agree with NESO's proposed approach to engagement and welcome the strong emphasis on place-based, transparent and collaborative engagement, alongside the intention to reflect local priorities through locally sourced data. In particular, we support NESO's commitment to engage with customers and stakeholders "for the first time ever" at this scale, and to draw on local inputs such as local growth plans, local transport and housing data, and Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) where these exist, so that regional priorities are meaningfully reflected in each RESP.

However, we consider that the effectiveness of the engagement approach will depend on how consistently it is implemented and how well it supports continuous, two-way engagement throughout RESP development. We therefore suggest that NESO may wish to strengthen the engagement approach in three practical ways:

1) Make engagement continuous, structured and "through-process"
NESO's proposals for engagement provide a good foundation, but local authority and cross-sector participation will be most valuable if engagement is structured as an ongoing cycle aligned to key development stages of the RESP. We suggest NESO may wish to publish a clear engagement calendar (including evidence "submission windows" and review points) so stakeholders can contribute at the moments when their input will have the greatest influence on outputs. This would help ensure the place-based intent of the process is realised in practice and reduce the risk of late-stage challenges to assumptions.

2) Formalise an STB-enabled route for transport and cross-boundary intelligence

In the South East, transport is a major driver of future electricity demand and spatial patterns of growth, including demand linked to ports, airports, freight corridors and depot electrification. We suggest NESO may wish to ensure engagement explicitly captures these transport-energy linkages and cross-boundary impacts, particularly where travel-to-work and logistics patterns cross regional boundaries. As the Sub-national Transport Body for the South East, TfSE can support NESO by convening local authorities to provide local area intelligence and evidence on transport electrification, corridor demand and strategic hubs. This would complement NESO's engagement programme and help avoid duplicated requests to the same local stakeholders.

3) Ensure engagement is supported by accessible data and usable draft outputs
We welcome NESO's direction of travel on providing additional support to enable local authorities to engage effectively. In practice, engagement will be significantly more efficient if stakeholders can respond to draft outputs in open, map-based formats based on familiar local geographies (e.g. local authority areas), supported by clear explanations of datasets, assumptions and metrics and "what changed" notes between versions. This would enable local actors to validate assumptions quickly and provide evidence-based feedback, rather than relying on narrative-only engagement.

Overall, TfSE supports the direction of travel and would be willing to support NESO's engagement approach as a key regional stakeholder by helping convene South East local transport authorities and by supplying relevant local area intelligence in line with NESO's agreed process and timetable.

Local Actor Support

Q1. Do you agree with the approach we have outlined on local actor support, and how we have phased the delivery?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q2. Please provide your reasoning?

We broadly agree with NESO's proposed approach and the rationale for phasing delivery, particularly the focus on enabling local authorities to engage effectively and the intent for support to evolve over time.

To maximise effectiveness and reduce engagement inequality, we suggest NESO may wish to:

(i) define a clear minimum support offer for all local authorities;
(ii) focus support at the points in the process where local authority insight genuinely shapes the outcome, particularly during the development of Contexts, Pathways and CPAs, and the subsequent spatial interpretation of system needs, rather than spreading effort thinly across all stages; and
(iii) prioritise practical engagement tools, including open, map based draft outputs and clearly explained data standards, so that local authorities can quickly understand what is being proposed, test it against local evidence, and respond efficiently without a disproportionate burden on resources.

TfSE would be happy to support NESO's programme by convening South East local authorities and helping package transport-related local area intelligence in consistent formats.

Governance

Q1. Do you agree that local authorities should be able to decide whether to send a political representative or officer to the strategic board?

Selection: Somewhat disagree

TfSE supports flexibility in how local authorities engage with the RESP process. However, we consider that this question conflates two distinct roles within established local government governance arrangements.

In practice, strategic oversight and decision making are undertaken by elected members, who provide democratic legitimacy and accountability for decisions that have material implications for place-based priorities. Officers play a critical and complementary role in advising members, developing evidence, testing assumptions and supporting implementation, but do not typically act as decision makers at strategic board level.

While RESP Strategic Boards are not decision-making bodies in the sense of approving investment or allocating funding, they do shape and endorse assumptions and interpretations that will inform future network planning and investment decisions. On this basis, TfSE considers it appropriate that local authority representation on Strategic Boards is from elected members. At the same time, effective RESP development depends on sustained officer involvement. TfSE therefore recommends that NESO makes explicit provision for officer led technical and working groups to support the Strategic Board, responsible for developing analysis, resolving detailed issues, and formulating recommendations. Officers should also be enabled to attend Strategic Board meetings in an advisory capacity, including presenting evidence and responding to technical questions.

Clarifying this two layer approach would align RESP governance with established local government practice, ensure democratic legitimacy, without adding unnecessary complexity. As the Sub-national Transport Body for the South East, TfSE would be happy to support NESO in refining the methodology to clearly articulate these roles.

Q3. Do you agree with our proposed voting structure for strategic boards?

Selection: Somewhat agree

We broadly agree with NESO's proposed voting structure, including the intent to apply a consistent model across nations and regions and the use of a two-thirds approval threshold to secure strong consensus for whole-system plans. We also recognise the need for clear decision-making arrangements given the strategic board's mix of local government, network and cross-sector representation.

To strengthen confidence and ensure decisions reflect genuine whole-system agreement, NESO may wish to consider:

(i) a simple safeguard that demonstrates meaningful support across core membership groups (e.g., local government and networks), alongside the overall two-thirds threshold;
(ii) clear rules on quorum, abstentions and conflicts of interest; and
(iii) transparent reporting of vote outcomes, including short rationales and how significant dissenting views were addressed.

We note the proposed escalation pathway where agreement cannot be reached, and we welcome clarity on how this will operate in practice. TfSE would be happy to support NESO's process by helping to convene and synthesise local authority perspectives.

Q5. Do you feel any changes should be made to the proposed terms of reference?

Selection: Yes

Q6. Please provide us the details?

Yes. We broadly support the intent of the proposed terms of reference for the Strategic Board , but suggest a few targeted additions that would strengthen effectiveness and consistency. In particular, the terms of reference could more explicitly require continuous, through-process engagement with local authorities reflecting NESO's emphasis on locally sourced data and stakeholder engagement.

We suggest clearer provisions on:

(i) cross-sector/cross-boundary coordination (including where transport and other infrastructure materially shape demand and growth);
(ii) transparency and traceability of decisions (including how feedback and dissent are handled); and
(iii) clarity on how the strategic boards will interface with working groups and the GB Steering Committee.

Q7. Do you agree with our proposals for appointing members of the strategic boards?

Selection: Somewhat agree

We broadly agree with the proposed approach but consider that the effectiveness of the strategic boards will depend heavily on ensuring the right mix of members, particularly those able to reflect how infrastructure decisions play out at a regional scale.

In addition to network and market expertise, NESO may wish to ensure the boards include representation from organisations with direct experience of planning and coordinating major transport infrastructure and its interaction with the energy system across wider geographies. This includes understanding how ports, airports, highways and rail networks shape electricity demand, connection requirements and spatial patterns of growth, and how these pressures vary between regions.

We also suggest that explicit provision is made for port and airport stakeholders to be represented where relevant, given their role as major energy users and enablers of national and regional economic activity. Without this perspective, there is a risk that strategic decisions do not fully reflect the operational realities and future investment needs of nationally significant transport assets.

As the sub national transport body for the South East, Transport for the South East works closely with local authorities, transport operators and infrastructure owners, including ports and airports. TfSE would be well placed to help facilitate appropriate regional and industry participation in strategic boards if invited, helping to ensure that board members are well connected to wider stakeholder networks and that the board will support integrated, place-based decision making rather than sector specific optimisation.

Q9. Do you agree with our proposed design for working groups?

Selection: Somewhat agree

We broadly agree with NESO's proposed design for working groups and welcome the use of thematic groups (including Local Government and Industrial Decarbonisation & Transport) alongside a technical working group to input to Common Planning Assumptions, with mechanisms to resolve cross-sector issues before escalation.

To strengthen effectiveness, NESO may wish to:

(i) ensure that transport considerations are made explicitly visible within the governance structure, in a way that reflects their relative importance at a regional scale, for example through a dedicated transport sub group or time-limited task and finish workstream where ports, airports, strategic freight corridors and depot electrification are significant system drivers;

(ii) structure the Local Government Working Group as the main route for broad local authority evidence and feedback throughout the RESP cycle; and

(iii) clarify working group outputs, interfaces and escalation routes so inputs clearly influence draft RESP components and board decisions.

TfSE would be happy to support NESO's approach by convening South East local authorities and transport stakeholders and providing providing a clear, shared picture of local plans, constraints and evidence in consistent formats to reduce duplication and support place-based decision making.

Nations & Regions Contexts — TfSE as a key stakeholder

Q1. Do you agree with the approach for the Nations and Regions Contexts?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q2. Please provide your reasoning?

We broadly agree with NESO's approach to Nations and Regions Contexts as a long-term view of local conditions and priorities informed by local engagement and data. We also welcome NESO's intention to draw on locally sourced evidence, such as local growth plans, local transport and

housing data and LAEPs where these exist, so that place-specific priorities are meaningfully reflected.

To maximise usefulness, NESO may wish to ensure the Contexts explicitly capture key cross-sector drivers of demand and growth. In the South East, this includes transport–energy interactions (ports, airports, strategic freight corridors, rail traction and depot electrification) and cross-boundary movement patterns. Supporting the Contexts with open, map-based data and with open, map based data and clear information on data sources and assumptions would make the outputs easier for local partners to use and validate.

TfSE would be happy to support NESO's work by convening stakeholders and providing a clear, shared picture of local plans, constraints and evidence in consistent formats to help strengthen the South East Context.

Q3. How do you envisage using the Nations and Regions Contexts and what would make the output work best for your needs?

TfSE would use the Nations and Regions Contexts as a place-based evidence to help better align transport decarbonisation, spatial development and regional energy planning in the South East. We welcome NESO's intention to draw on locally sourced data and engagement and see the Contexts as the key mechanism for consolidating these inputs into a coherent regional narrative and baseline that informs Pathways, CPAs, Spatial Context and SI Need.

To work best for TfSE and local partners, the Contexts should be supported by open, map based datasets that can be readily used by local teams, consistent geography (for example local authority areas), clear information on data sources, and a straightforward way for stakeholders to flag corrections or updates as the RESP develops. TfSE would be happy to support NESO's work by convening local authorities and transport stakeholders and providing curated transport-related local area intelligence aligned to NESO's data standards.

Pathways

Q1. Do you agree with the scope of 'Whole Energy' for RESP Outputs?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q2. How do you envisage using the RESP Pathways and how can we communicate pathways to support you to use them effectively?

We would expect to use the RESP Pathways as a practical reference point to help align regional and local transport, spatial and infrastructure plans and strategies, understand choices and trade offs, and test proposals against different future scenarios. In practice, the pathways would be used to:

(i) support alignment across strategies, plans and investment programmes;
(ii) identify actions that make sense across most futures, as well as those that depend on specific pathways being realised;
(iii) understand sequencing and dependencies between different interventions;
(iv) strengthen business cases by applying a consistent set of assumptions and stress testing

proposals; and
(v) agree indicators and decision points that support review and adjustment over time.

To be genuinely useful, pathways need to be communicated in a way that works for different audiences. This would include a clear high level summary, more detailed guidance for practitioners, and access to underlying technical material where needed. Plain English explanations of each pathway, how they differ, and what assumptions sit behind them will be important, alongside transparency about uncertainty.

Practical supporting materials, such as simple templates, charts and data, and where appropriate spatial or digital tools, would help partners apply the pathways consistently in their own work. A clear engagement approach and update cycle, including version control and clear explanations of what has changed between iterations, would further support confidence and ongoing use.

Q3. Do you agree with the approach for the RESP Pathways?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q4. If not, please provide your reasoning?

We are broadly supportive of the proposed approach and agree that a pathways based framework is an appropriate way to support planning under uncertainty. To strengthen the approach in practice, we suggest that NESO should:

(i) make clear how pathways are intended to be used in decision making, with specific examples of the types of decisions they are designed to inform;
(ii) set out assumptions clearly and provide guidance on how uncertainty should be interpreted, including the use of ranges or sensitivities where this is feasible;
(iii) describe dependencies and enabling conditions more explicitly, to support understanding of sequencing and delivery risks; and
(iv) put in place clear governance arrangements, including version control and a defined update cycle with change logs, to support consistent use over time.

Consistent Planning Assumptions (CPAs)

Q1. Do you agree with our prioritisation approach and criteria set out to evaluate the validity of the CPA values?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q2. Please provide your reasoning?

A clear prioritisation approach and robust validity criteria for CPAs are essential to ensure consistency across regions and to avoid divergent assumptions being applied. To strengthen the approach in practice, we suggest that NESO should:

(i) set out a clear evidence hierarchy, including how conflicting sources will be weighed and resolved;
(ii) define minimum data quality expectations, with clear information on sources, coverage, date and known limitations;

(iii) explain the rationale for selected values and how uncertainty has been treated, including the use of ranges or sensitivities where this is feasible;
(iv) provide guidance on when and how CPAs should be adapted to reflect regional circumstances, and where national consistency should be maintained; and
(v) establish clear governance arrangements, including stakeholder review, version control and defined triggers for refresh.

Q3. Do you agree with our approach for the CPAs?

Selection: Somewhat agree

Q4. Please provide your reasoning?

A CPA workbook and a common set of assumptions should improve consistency and coordination across network areas, and we support the proposed collaborative development approach. To strengthen the approach, we recommend that clearer rules are developed to resolve conflicting evidence and documenting decisions, explicit treatment of uncertainty, clearer guidance on when CPAs vary geographically and over time, and robust governance with version control, clear update cycles and a change log so stakeholders can apply CPAs consistently.

Spatial Context

Q1. Our preferred approach is to move the RESP delivery dates back to enable option 2 (page 75). Do you support this approach and are there any other wider factors we should consider?

Selection: Yes

Q2. Do you agree with our proposed approach for the Spatial Context?

Selection: Somewhat agree

The proposed Spatial Context should improve transparency and support collaboration, including identification of potential Strategic Investment Needs. To strengthen the approach, we recommend:

- Clear decision-led scoping (what it is/isn't for)
- Strong transparency on data provenance/assumptions/limitations
- Clear guidance on granularity constraints and the ability to switch between geographic, network and time views
- Interoperability and reusable outputs; an approach to confidentiality/commercial sensitivity
- Governance with clear update cycles, version control and change logs.

Q4. How do you envisage using the Spatial Context output and how can we communicate the output to support you to use it effectively?

We would expect to use the Spatial Context as a practical, place-based tool to show how Pathways play out spatially alongside existing and planned network capacity and wider whole system information. In practice, it would help us to:

- identify spatial hotspots, where transport, energy and land use pressures overlap, creating binding constraints or clear opportunities and potential locations for Strategic Investment Need;
- support option development, prioritisation and sequencing;
- bring stakeholders together and help align transport, energy and spatial planning activity;
- provide a consistent spatial evidence base to inform strategies and business cases;
- support monitoring and adaptive planning over time.

To support effective use, outputs should be communicated through a layered approach, including a clear high-level summary, practitioner focused use cases and access to technical material where needed. Transparency on data sources, assumptions and limitations will be important, alongside clear guidance on how outputs should be interpreted. The Spatial Context should also provide usable geographic outputs that can be downloaded and applied directly in local and regional work.

Strategic Investment Need (SI Need)

Q1. Do you agree with our description of the three types of complexity and the examples indicated?

Selection: Agree

Q3. What further considerations should we take as we develop the approach for specifying and categorising Strategic Investment Needs to ensure consistent regulatory treatment of network investments? Please provide your reasoning.

To ensure consistent regulatory treatment, SINs should be specified and categorised using standardised criteria, common evidence thresholds and a shared specification template across all regions.

TfSE can support NESO by convening and synthesising comparable place-based evidence across the South East. Potential South East SIN locations could include:

- The M3–M27–A27 corridor; Thames Estuary/North Kent
- Gatwick–Crawley–Brighton; the M25 orbital/radials
- Ashford/East Kent growth areas
- Ports electrification/shore-power programmes

Technical Coordination

Q1. What examples of whole system optimisation opportunities are you aware of and what considerations should we take to identify, prioritise and develop these collaboratively with you?

Examples of whole-system optimisation include:

- Coordinating EV charging hubs and depot electrification with flexibility/storage to reduce peak impacts;
- Aligning ports/airports electrification with local generation/storage and phased connections; and
- Aligning energy works with transport/other utilities to avoid disruption and "dig twice".

To identify, prioritise and develop these collaboratively, we recommend:

- Early hotspot identification using in-development pipelines and spatial mapping
- A transparent prioritisation framework based on whole-system value (cost, carbon, resilience, deliverability, optionality, distributional impacts)
- Aligned data and common assumptions with clear version control
- Practical cross-sector technical working arrangements (including corridor/cluster sessions)

TfSE can help convene transport stakeholders and provide evidence on transport decarbonisation programmes to support coordination in the South East.

Network Planning Assurance

Q1. Do you support the selection of option 2 (page 154) as delivering best value in assuring alignment?

Selection: Yes

Q3. What further considerations should we take as we develop the approach to Network Planning Assurance for gas distribution networks?

Selection: Somewhat agree

For gas distribution network planning assurance, we recommend:

(i) set out a clear scope that covers transition planning, including repurposing, downscaling and decommissioning, as well as network reinforcement;
(ii) deal explicitly with uncertainty and future choice, using pathway or scenario based evidence, clear decision triggers and staged investment to manage the risk of stranded assets;
(iii) recognise safety, security of supply and operational resilience as non negotiable constraints;
(iv) reflect cross sector impacts and whole system trade offs, for example the interaction between heat electrification and electricity peak demand, in line with the RESP's whole system approach;
(v) use standardised evidence and clear audit trails to support consistency and comparability across regions; and
(vi) include clear governance and escalation routes where evidence or assumptions are contested.

Societal Considerations

Q1. Do you agree with our approach to societal considerations? What additional considerations should we make on PSED as we develop the RESPs?

Selection: Somewhat agree

We support translating RESP outputs into indicative societal impacts to inform Strategic Board decisions and welcome the explicit commitment to comply with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To strengthen the approach, PSED "due regard" should be embedded into key decision points, supported by a proportionate EqIA-style process where impacts could be significant. The evidence base should be disaggregated where feasible (e.g., low-income, disabled, older people, rural/digitally excluded groups) and include affordability impacts (who pays vs who benefits, fuel poverty interactions). We also recommend clear monitoring and reporting of societal indicators over time, inclusive engagement and accessibility, and clear roles for recording PSED considerations across NESO and Strategic Boards.

Environmental Approach

Q1. Do you agree with our proposed environmental approach?

Selection: Somewhat agree

A proportionate approach is sensible and we note the position that HRA/SEA are not required at RESP level because RESPs are not prescriptive and will influence rather than constrain future decisions. To strengthen the approach, we recommend:

- set out clear environmental guardrails to inform decision making as pathways and spatial options are developed;
- apply a consistent set of environmental constraints and sensitivity layers within the Spatial Context to support early screening;
- record trade offs transparently, using a clear mitigation hierarchy to show how impacts have been avoided, reduced or addressed;
- give explicit consideration to climate adaptation and resilience alongside mitigation;
- provide a light touch way of identifying potential cumulative impacts across pathways and places; and
- offer clearer guidance on how RESP outputs are intended to support downstream HRA, SEA and consenting processes.

Digital & Data

Q1. Do you have any observations or suggestions on our proposed approach to managing RESP data?

We support the proposed direction, including use of a digital system to log and analyse inputs in compliance with data protection. To strengthen the approach we recommend:

- Clear data governance and ownership ("single source of truth")
- Consistent metadata/provenance and audit trails
- Robust version control and published change logs for citeable outputs

- Interoperability via open/reusable formats (especially for Spatial Context and CPAs)
- Tiered access/role-based permissions for sensitive or commercial data with aggregation/anonymisation options
- Repeatable data quality validation
- Transparency on AI use and safeguards (with human review)
- A coordinated data request catalogue to minimise duplication and burden on stakeholders.

Q2. How frequently do you believe data refreshes should occur to ensure the RESP remains accurate and useful? What criteria should trigger a data refresh?

We recommend a layered approach to ensure the RESP remains both stable for planning purposes and responsive to change.

Frequency

• Full RESP plans: every three years, with clear versioning to provide a stable reference for stakeholders and network business planning.
• Core datasets: refresh annually (e.g., CPAs, baseline demand/supply, network capacity/headroom layers and key indicators), with a published change log explaining what has changed and why.
• Fast-moving datasets: allow continuous updates (e.g., the in-development register and major pipeline indicators), complemented by quarterly "snapshot" releases to provide a consistent reference point for analysis and auditability.

In addition to the planned refresh cycles, we recommend out-of-cycle refreshes where changes would materially affect outputs. Trigger criteria could include:

• Material policy or regulatory changes
• Major updates to upstream national plans/scenarios
• Sustained divergence from key assumptions (e.g., uptake rates or peak demand patterns beyond defined thresholds)
• Major new developments, cancellations or significant delays;
• Material updates to network capacity/constraints data that alter spatial conclusions
• Data quality corrections or agreed methodological changes
• Significant resilience-related events.

To support transparency and consistent use, NESO should publish a refresh calendar, define materiality thresholds for triggers, and set out governance arrangements for approving and communicating out-of-cycle updates.

Overall

Q1. Overall, do you agree with the approaches proposed across the RESP methodology? Are there any elements of the methodology that you would like to see in more detail?

Selection: Somewhat agree

The methodology provides a strong platform for developing place-based, whole-system RESPs. TfSE stands ready to support delivery by convening stakeholders, curating local area intelligence, validating drafts and supporting ongoing monitoring. We would particularly welcome deeper transport–energy integration (freight, ports, airports and cross-boundary corridors) and open, map-based data outputs at useful geographies to help operationalise RESP in ED3 and local energy planning contexts.

Developing the third cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS3)

1. Introduction

Thank you for responding to this consultation which is asking for your views on what you think the third cycling and walking strategy should include.

Closing date is 15 December 2025.

Print or save a copy of your application

When you get to the end of this questionnaire, you will be offered the chance either to print or to save a copy of your application for your records. This option appears after you press 'Submit your response'. All questions are optional unless marked otherwise.

View all questions

This survey provides questions based on user choice, an overview of the questions is available [opens in a new window]. All survey questions are optional unless stated otherwise.

Save and continue option

You have an option to 'save and continue' your response at any time. If you do that you will be sent a link by email to allow you to continue your response where you left off.

It's very important that you enter your correct email address if you choose to save and continue. If you make a mistake in the email address you won't receive the link you need to complete your response.

Accessibility statement

Read our accessibility statement for SmartSurvey forms [opens in a new window].

Data protection regulations

The Department for Transport (DfT) is running this consultation which is asking for your views on what you think the third cycling and walking strategy should include.

Appendix 4 – Developing the Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)

View our DfT online form and survey privacy notice [opens in a new window] for more information on how your personal data is processed in relation to this survey.

Although we are not asking for sensitive personal data, any that is provided in response to this consultation will be processed under article 9.2.g, substantial public interest, with reference to the Data Protection Act Schedule 1 Part 2 Section 8 for the purpose of equality of opportunity or treatment.

Do not include personal information in your responses unless specifically requested.

2. Your information

1. What is your name?

Benn White

2. What is your email address?

benn.white@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

3. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

- [x] Yes
- [ ] No

3. Organisation details

4. What is your organisation's name?

Transport for the South East

5. What best describes your organisation?

- [x] Local authority
- [ ] Third sector organisation
- [ ] Private sector organisation
- [ ] Industry body
- [ ] Trade body

- [ ] Professional body
- [ ] Another type of organisation:

4. Local authority

We are proposing a performance monitoring methodology for CWIS3. This includes the following 4 local transport authority performance indicators OF:

- reducing the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured (KSI)
- a percentage increase in active travel stages taken by walking and cycling
- an increase in miles of compliant new and improved active travel network produced
- a maintained or improved active travel capability rating

6. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to performance monitoring of local transport authority outcomes frameworks using the performance indicator of:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
reducing the number of pedestrians and cyclists KSI	✓		
a percentage increase in active travel stages taken by walking and cycling		✓	
an increase in miles of compliant new and improved active travel network produced	✓		
a maintained or improved active travel capability rating	✓		

If disagreeing explain why?

TfSE does not support using “% increase in stages” derived from National Travel Survey data as a core local indicator as using the NTS data in this way introduces several technical and practical issues.

1. Sample sizes are too small to give stable local estimates.

The NTS is designed for national trend analysis, not LTA-level monitoring. Once the national sample is broken down by geography, the number of walking and cycling stages per LTA becomes very small. This produces high year-to-year volatility that does not reflect real behavioural change but statistical noise.

2. National Stage based data = does not map well to local interventions.

Most LTAs deliver targeted schemes on specific corridors, town centres or schools. National stage-based survey data cannot be linked to these interventions in any meaningful way. It does not show whether a new scheme is used, whether there has been a mode shift along a particular corridor, or whether a town centre has more footfall. Local data is needed to identify these impacts but this can be expensive to collect and many local transport authorities are unable to meet these additional costs from the available budget for the scheme. Consideration needs to be given to selective funding of a number of active travel schemes to demonstrate their impacts.

3. It risks unfair comparisons between authorities.

Because the statistical uncertainty varies widely between LTAs, a single national metric based on NTS stages would create perverse league tables. High-density urban areas would appear “better” simply because their sample is more robust, not because they delivered more effective interventions.

As an alternative, we suggest relying on the locally collected traffic count data, using a balanced basket of measures could include:

(1) a national centrally funded programme of indexed automatic counts of walking/cycling activity, coordinated by ATE or the Sub national Transport Bodies;
(2) school travel mode shares;
(3) town-centre/border cordon counts and counts along key LCWIP corridors;

This package of indicators provides a far more reliable, stable and actionable evidence base. It aligns with how LTAs plan, monitor and justify their investment decisions. This approach requires a national centrally

funded programme coordinated by ATE or by the Sub-national Transport Bodies to ensure consistent and comprehensive coverage of monitoring devices, we propose replacing this indicator with the following package of measures.

We have indicated that we do not disagree with the use of the increase in miles of compliant new and improved active travel network produced as a performance measure. However, it is not simply the total length of new or improved active travel network that matters. What also counts is where schemes are delivered, how they address areas with poor accessibility, and whether they are located in the places where people most rely on walking, wheeling and cycling. We suggest adding indicators such as an accessibility index to show how accessibility has improved as a result of the enhanced network.

5. Local authority

7. How can Active Travel England (ATE) support local authorities in making local targets?

ATE can add the greatest value by pairing multi-year funding certainty with practical technical support that is proportionate and usable across LTA contexts. TfSE recommends:

1) **Target Setting Playbook & Templates** – standardised baselining and trend methods, ready-to-use outcome framework templates and example baselines from official statistics.

2) **Shared Data Services** – authoritative baselines (Active Lives, NTS, Road Safety), open dashboards, guidance on small-area estimation, and co-funding for permanent/temporary foot/cycle counters with Quality Assurance.

3) **Quality & Design Reviews** – expand pre-application design review; keep assessment tools current with LTN 1/20 and inclusive design; offer corridor-level audits to ensure continuity and permeability.

4) **Capability Uplift & Peer Learning via STBs** – co-fund local Active Travel Leads; scale peer learning through TfSE's Centre of Excellence.

5) **Revenue for Activation & Maintenance** – ring-fence revenue for behaviour change initiatives (Bikeability, adult cycle confidence, school streets, travel planning) and for maintenance (surface quality, lighting,

winter service).

7) **Proportional Monitoring & Evaluation** – ATE develops and rolls out a lightweight M&E framework with templates and training so LTAs can evaluate effectively without excessive burden.

8) **Develop a Centralised Case Study Library** - Currently, Transport Analysis Guidance Unit A5.1 proposes several different methods (e.g. comparative study, sketch plan, and transport models), not to mention other methods that are not covered in TAG. It would be useful to establish a centralised case study library demonstrating successful examples under different scenarios and to provide greater consistency.

6. Proposal

We are consulting and asking for your views on what you think the third cycling and walking strategy should include.

This includes:

- what the national vision for active travel should be
- the objectives which support the long-term vision for active travel
- the performance monitoring methodology including what both the key and further performance indicators should be

Full information on our proposals is given within our consultation information.

The government has proposed the national vision for active travel as:

"By 2035, the government wants walking, wheeling and cycling to be a safe, easy and accessible option for everyone — allowing people to embed the economic, health and environmental benefits of active travel into their daily life if they choose."

8. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed national vision for active travel?

- [x] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Don't know

7. Disagree with national ambition

9. Why do you disagree with the proposed national vision for active travel and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

N/A

8. Ensuring people are safe to travel objective

We are proposing 2 new objectives for CWIS3 that will support the long-term vision for active travel. These are:

1. Ensure people are safe to travel actively.
2. Ensure people feel it is an easy choice.

These proposed objectives capture the main barriers preventing people from walking, wheeling and cycling particularly for women and children.

10. Do you agree or disagree with the objective: ‘Ensure people are safe to travel actively'?

- [x] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Don’t know

9. Disagree with ensure people are safe to travel actively

11. Why do you disagree with the objective: ‘Ensure people are safe to travel actively’ and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

N/A

10. Ensuring people feel it is an easy choice objective

12. Do you agree or disagree with the objective: ‘Ensure people feel it is an easy choice’?

- [x] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Don't know

11. Disagree with ensuring people feel it is an easy choice objective

13. Why do you disagree with the objective: ‘Ensure people are safe to travel actively’ and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

N/A

12. Performance monitoring

We are proposing a performance monitoring methodology for CWIS3. This includes key performance indicators that reflect the output of government investment into active travel through a range of official statistics.

The key performance indicators are to:

- increase the percentage of people that achieve 150 mins a week activity through active travel by 2030
- increase the percentage of walking and cycling stages per person by 2030
- increase the percentage of walking and cycling trips per person to and from school
- decrease the rate of cyclists and pedestrians killed on England’s roads, measured as the number of fatalities per billion miles walked and cycled

- decrease the rate of cyclists and pedestrians seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of serious injuries per billion miles walked and cycled
- decrease the percentage of people walking and cycling concerned about safety

14. Do you agree or disagree with the following proposed key performance indicators?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Increase the percentage of people that achieve 150 mins a week activity through active travel by 2030	✓			
Increase the percentage of walking and cycling stages per person by 2030	✓			
Increase the percentage of walking and cycling trips per person to and from school	✓			
Decrease the rate of cyclists and pedestrians killed on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities per billion miles walked and cycled	✓			
Decrease the rate of cyclists and pedestrians seriously injured	✓			

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
on England's roads, measured as the number of serious injuries per billion miles walked and cycled				
Decrease the percentage of people walking and cycling concerned about safety	✓			

If disagreeing explain why.

Do not disagree with the performance indicators but an additional one is needed focussed on short distance trips (e.g. less than 2 miles), where trips are more likely to shift to active travel modes.

13. ATE monitoring

We are proposing a performance monitoring methodology for CWIS3.This includes performance indicators directly relating to the outputs of the work of Active Travel England based on annual reporting metrics. The further performance indicators are:

- improved local authority active travel capability ratings
- percentage of average increase in scheme quality
- percentage of planning applications within our thresholds responded to within the statutory timescale (%)
- increased number of people actively engaged via activation programmes (including Bikeability)
- increased percentage of ATE capital projects completed on schedule (%)
- increasing the number of trained active travel professionals including local authority officers

15. Do you agree or disagree with the following indicators relating to the work of Active Travel England?

Appendix 4 – Developing the Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Improved local authority active travel capability ratings	✓			
Percentage of average increase in scheme quality	✓			
Percentage of planning applications within our thresholds responded to within the statutory timescale (%)	✓			
Increased number of people actively engaged via activation programmes (including Bikeability)	✓			
Increased percentage of ATE capital projects completed on schedule (%)	✓			
Increasing the number of trained active travel professionals including local authority officers	✓			

If disagreeing explain why.

N/A

14. Final comments

16. Any other comments?

TfSE strongly supports the overall direction of CWIS3 and welcomes its alignment with our Transport Strategy, particularly the missions on Decarbonisation, Inclusion & Integration, Strategic Connectivity, and Sustainable Growth. We believe the strategy can deliver significant benefits if implemented with flexibility and a strong focus on local context.

The TfSE area includes rural and coastal areas where longer trip distances, severance on major roads, and seasonal demand create unique challenges.

Local performance indicators need to be practical and robust. We believe that analysing percentage increases in trip stages at the LTA level using NTS data would be extremely challenging due to limited sample size at local level. Instead, we suggest relying on the locally collected traffic counts data, using a balanced basket of measures. This approach requires a national centrally funded programme coordinated by ATE or by the Sub-national Transport Bodies to ensure consistent and comprehensive coverage of monitoring devices.

Monitoring and evaluation should be proportionate. ATE could provide a clear Monitoring Playbook with standard methods, open dashboards, and co-funding for counters to help LTAs deliver consistent, high-quality data without excessive burden.

Finally, capital investment must be matched with revenue funding. Behaviour change programmes like Bikeability, adult cycle confidence, and school streets are essential to convert infrastructure into real uptake. There is also a persistent gap in local travel behaviour data. While the National Travel Survey is valuable for national trends, as noted earlier, it cannot provide the granularity needed for local scheme design or for tracking change over time. A coordinated approach led by ATE or the STBs could help authorities collect consistent, continuous-use travel data at a scale that balances cost, comparability and detail, strengthening both business cases and performance monitoring.

Appendix 5 – Draft response on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex, Brighton and Hove, and West Sussex

Transport for the South East response to the consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex

Transport for the South East (TfSE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

About TfSE

TfSE is the sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England. Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, business representatives, National Highways, Network Rail and Transport for London.

Neutral stance on governance structures
TfSE does not take a position on specific options for local government reorganisation – this is for Government and our local authority partners to determine.

TfSE will remain a constructive partner to all our local authorities, whilst being adaptable to final governance arrangements. TfSE will continue to provide strategic evidence, regional planning expertise, and a forum for collaboration on transport priorities that extend beyond individual local areas.

TfSE remain committed to supporting authorities and Government to ensure that transport planning and investment contribute positively to sustainable growth, improved connectivity, and better outcomes for communities across Sussex and Brighton and the rest of our region.

Appendix 6 – Draft response on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

Transport for the South East response to the consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

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TfSE will remain a constructive partner to all our local authorities, whilst being adaptable to final governance arrangements. TfSE will continue to provide strategic evidence, regional planning expertise, and a forum for collaboration on transport priorities that extend beyond individual local areas.

TfSE remain committed to supporting authorities and Government to ensure that transport planning and investment contribute positively to sustainable growth, improved connectivity, and better outcomes for communities across Hampshire and the Solent and the rest of our region.

Agenda Item 9

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**2 February 2026**
By:	**Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report:	**Strategic Investment Plan Refresh**
Purpose of report:	**To provide an update on the development of the Strategic Investment Plan Refresh.**

RECOMMENDATION:
The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress of the Strategic Investment Plan Refresh.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the development of the refreshed Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). This report is an update of the work that has taken place, and a forward look at the work that is planned over the next three months.

2. Progress with technical work

2.1 The ongoing technical work is on schedule to the original work programme for the refresh. The activities that have been/are being undertaken to date include the following:

- Inception and mobilisation
- Confirm strategic narrative and structure
- Long-list optioneering
- Analysis, prioritisation and modelling
- Integrated Sustainability Assessment
- SIP drafting
- Engagement

2.2 Updating the long list involved engagement with all delivery partners and a review of the schemes from the previous SIP to ascertain if they are funded, committed, supported or no longer supported. A request was also made to all delivery partners for any new interventions they would like to see considered for inclusion in the SIP. This has included specifically interventions that support the new Transport Strategy missions of inclusion & integration and resilience.

2.3 Having agreed the methodology through the officer working group and Member task and finish group, stratification work was completed to sift longlisted schemes into National Strategic, Regional Strategic, Local Strategic, and Local categories to provide focus for the new SIP and to help define the roles of TfSE and our delivery partners.

2.4 The schemes and interventions long list was reviewed, and a draft shared with the officer working group for discussion before assessment with the updated multi-criteria assessment framework (MCAF) was undertaken.

2.5 SEELUM modelling to forecast the outputs and outcomes the SIP would deliver was completed, the results are presented by mission across the region and in total. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) has also been updated to include the new schemes shortlisted for inclusion within the SIP.

3. Update on engagement activities

3.1 A programme of engagement with our Tier 1 stakeholders at officer and member level is continuing throughout the project, with monthly meetings of the officer working group and Member Task and Finish group having taken place. We also met with both National Highways, Network Rail and the DfT.

3.2 The draft refreshed SIP was presented to the board on the 15th December 2025 to explain the changes to the SIP from the previous iteration and the process followed to get to the final draft.

3.3 An engagement period followed immediately following the release of the draft SIP to Tier 1 Stakeholders on the 16 December. All LTAs were offered a “fireside chat” to discuss the draft SIP over the engagement period, which ran until 30th January 2026.

3.4 The responses will be analysed through February and post engagement amendments will be made and finalised in March before the final SIP is put forward for approval at the March Partnership Board meeting.

4. Financial implications

4.1 The technical work to refresh the SIP has been commissioned through TfSE’s Technical Call off Contract at a cost of £98,000. There will also be some proportionate costs in analysing the targeted engagement responses. These amounts are planned for within the TfSE 2025/26 Business Plan.

4.2 A further allocation will be required as part of the 2026/27 Business Planning process to include the graphic design and digital content elements of the proposal. As they draw on the same digital data sources, this would be integrated with work to update the delivery action plan and strategic prioritisation tool to monitor progress with delivery, focus scheme development support and facilitate prioritisation within the SIP schemes.

5. Conclusions and recommendation

5.1 In conclusion, work on the Strategic Investment Plan refresh is now well underway, with progress being made on a number of elements of technical work and engagement activities. Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the progress on the Strategic Investment Plan refresh.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Sarah Valentine
Email: sarah.valentine@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Agenda Item 10

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**2 February 2026**
By:	**Co-Chairs, Business Advisory Group**
Title of report:	**Business Advisory Group**
Purpose of report:	**To update the Partnership Board on the progress of TfSE's Business Advisory Group**

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the progress of the Business Advisory Group.

---

1. Introduction

1.1 The Business Advisory Group (BAG) was formed in October 2024. It is co-chaired by Vince Lucas and Daniel Ruiz. The group provides a business voice to support, advise and contribute to the Partnership Board.

2. Business Advisory Group – Feedback for Partnership Board

2.1 The BAG met on Thursday 15 January virtually.

2.2 The BAG received an update on the status of TfSE's Transport Strategy. A number of organisations in the Group had responded to the consultation. Members were pleased to hear that the Transport Strategy had been adopted by TfSE's Partnership Board and submitted to the Transport Secretary as the region's advice.

2.3 BAG Members were briefed on the work delivered through TfSE's Centre of Excellence and Analytical Framework and the upcoming Transport Forum meeting. Members expressed an interest in contributing the business perspective on the day.

3. Business Opportunities and Challenges

3.1 The BAG had a wide-ranging discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing business, and progress that has been made since the last meeting:

- Western Rail Access to Heathrow remains a top priority for multiple stakeholders.
- Businesses face challenges due to inconsistent franchising approaches.
- Hydrogen storage and availability remain key obstacles to delivery.

- Poor road conditions persist; calls for transparent maintenance plans and investment in secondary roads. EV adoption is being hindered by high upfront costs and lack of joined-up charging infrastructure.
- Rural areas are struggling with frequency and reliability of services and rail ticketing inconsistencies. The high costs of rail services is impacting talent recruitment.
- Need for better ticketing/timetabling integration, with commercial arrangements, not technology, limiting progress. TfSE could facilitate partnership forums.
- Gatwick reports increased international routes and further sustainability initiatives, including higher drop-off charges.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Members of the BAG are reviewing TfSE's refreshed Strategic Investment Plan, to give their views on how well its schemes and policy interventions align with business needs. This will inform the final version of the Strategic Investment Plan, which the Board will review in March.

4.2 Members of the BAG are contributing to a report, which summarises the Group's solutions to top challenges that they worked on in 2025/26 (access to international connectivity, rural isolation, and energy availability). This will be submitted to the Partnership Board in March, ahead of submission to Government.

4.3 Members of the BAG asked TfSE to organise another Business Summit this Summer. This will be scoped ahead of the next meeting of the BAG in early March.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the progress of the Business Advisory Group.

Daniel Ruiz and Vince Lucas
Co-Chairs – Business Advisory Group
Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Keir Wilkins
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Agenda item 11

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**02 February 2026**
By:	**Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report:	**Analytical Framework**
Purpose of report:	**To provide an update with the development on analytical framework.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress with the development of an analytical framework.

---

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on the development of an analytical framework to support business cases and the delivery of the schemes within the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

2. Background

2.1 The analytical framework route map was initially approved at the Partnership Board meeting on 23 January 2023, followed by an endorsement of the refreshed route-map on 13 July 2024 to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with local challenges, while also ensuring value for money.

3. Data

3.1 The building of our back office data architecture is underway. The data architecture will consist of a virtual machine hosting a database to store modelling data produced by various TfSE workstreams. Various software tools required to produce, interrogate and visualise the data will also be available on the virtual machine creating a back office solution that will enable efficient sharing amongst our partners. Currently we are in the process of setting up a support contract with an external consultant for technical support configuring the database.

3.2 The regional travel survey launch session took place in November. The report and factsheets covering the TfSE area and five sub-regional areas (Kent & Medway, Greater Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Solent, and Berkshire) have been published via the Centre of Excellence platform. The raw data and questionnaire will be available upon request.

3.3 We have now received the BT mobile network data. This dataset is a key source of information for understanding travel demand in the region and a critical input for

building transport models. The raw data is available to all LTAs upon request. We have also been working closely with consultants responsible for developing models for several LTAs in our area. This collaboration ensures that the data will be robust and fit for supporting their own modelling and strategic planning work.

3.4 We have procured freight origin destination matrices from MDS Transmodal, the developer of the Great Britain Freight Model. As with the mobile network data, the freight OD matrices are available to all LTAs in the region upon request.

3.5 We have contacted all the planning authorities in our geography to refresh our housing and employment site planning dataset. This dataset requires regular updates to ensure the data quality is as reliable as possible. We have currently received returns from 70% of our planning authorities. Once the dataset is complete for the whole region, we will be able to share the data with our local transport authorities to be used as an input for transport planning workstreams. This will avoid the requirement for each of our LTA stakeholders to collect the data, duplicating workload, often at cost from consultants time.

4. Analytical tools

4.1 We have completed the development of the Travel Market Synthesiser, an analytical tool designed to generate synthetic origin destination matrices for a specified year, tailored to TfSE's area. As the next step, the tool will integrate with mobile network data and enhance data granularity across transport modes, trip purposes, and socio-economic groups. The tool and the associated travel demand data are available to all LTAs in the region.

4.2 Scoping work has been carried out for the next phase of South East Highway Assignment Model (SEHAM) development, which includes rebasing the model to a 2024 base year and developing future forecast year models for 2031, 2041, and 2051. The 2024 and future-year models are planned for completion by the end of the 2026/27 financial year. Once completed, they will provide robust road network analysis and an evidence base for TfSE and its partners.

4.3 We have now set up Podaris, a strategic planning and modelling tool, to carry out analysis. Podaris focuses on public transport and accessibility analysis and can work alongside SEHAM to provide multimodal analysis. The proposal negotiated with Podaris offers LTA stakeholders a discounted rate for access to the tool by joining our multi-tenanted workspace.

5. Engagement

5.1 We are engaging with National Highways in the scoping for the next phase of SEHAM development to ensure our plan is aligned with their development of NH regional transport model. NH is keen to learn more about our experience in using the MND and Freight data, and requests access to our traffic data in the due course, which will help to keep the consistency across different models.

5.2. We are supporting the University of Leeds in its application for UKRI funding for the TRACE project, which aims to establish a national-scale active travel monitoring system through a citizen science sensor network. TfSE, together with Oxfordshire

County Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, West Midlands Combined Authority, and Transport Scotland, is a partner in this project. Our involvement ensures that the South East region contributes to and benefits from the development of innovative methodologies for monitoring and modelling active travel. The project will deploy a network of sensors, integrate diverse data sources, and develop advanced modelling tools to generate robust, standardised datasets. These outputs will support evidence-based decision making and improve the evaluation of active travel interventions.

6. Financial Considerations

6.1 The work set out in this report is being funded from the DfT grant allocation awarded to TfSE for 2025/26.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to comment on the progress with the development on analytical framework.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Joshua Jiao
Email: joshua.jiao@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Agenda item 12

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

Date of meeting: **2 February 2026**

By: **Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan**

Purpose of report: **To provide an update on work to support the delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress of a range of workstreams that support the delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan.

---

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on a range of workstreams that support the delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

2. Background

2.1 Delivering the SIP requires several partners, including Transport for the South East (TfSE), local transport authorities, National Highways, Network Rail and Department for Transport (DfT), to work closely together to develop and deliver the schemes and policy interventions it sets out. Several different approaches to bring forward schemes are also required, taking account of the different stages of development that schemes are at and the resources available to both TfSE and delivery partners to progress.

2.2 This report provides an update on work that supports delivery of the interventions in the SIP, ensuring our partners have the support they need as they develop and deliver schemes.

3. Scheme Development Work

3.1 This workstream supports delivery partners to progress schemes through the feasibility study or Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) stage where they are not able to fund or resource the work themselves.

3.2 The schemes that have been funded across the three financial years since inception are shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix 1. Through this programme TfSE has been able to support 14 schemes, providing over £800,000 in funding which supports the building of a pipeline of schemes ready for delivery in the coming years.

3.3 Work is continuing to review the support provided to date, and to refine and develop a more holistic offer for future financial years, including support that can be provided through the Centre of Excellence.

4. Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Majors (LLM)

4.1 TfSE continues to support delivery partners with the Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Majors (LLM) programmes for the region, through support to local transport authority promoters and liaison with DfT.

4.2 Following the Secretary of State's road and rail announcement on 8th July 2025, a review of the MRN/LLM programme was announced for 7 schemes in the programme from the TfSE area, to determine which should continue to be supported going forward, with the remainder being cancelled. TfSE met firstly with DfT to gain a greater understanding of the review and then subsequently with the authorities delivering schemes under review to offer advocacy and support whilst also providing an opportunity for officers to meet with counterparts across the region to discuss common issues and their approach. TfSE also provided a variety of bespoke analysis to LTA's to assist them with answering the questions posed by DfT.

4.3 Scheme promoters were required to submit their responses to DfT's review on 12 September 2025, and it was anticipated that Ministers would make their decision on which schemes will remain in the programme and which are cancelled by the end of 2025, however no announcement has yet been made. DfT Officials have warned that difficult choices will have to be made.

4.4 TfSE will continue to advocate for the schemes in the region, and provide support to our scheme promoters as the review and subsequent revised MRN/LLM programmes' progress. Our Analytical Framework is available to local authorities, and further training and guidance on business case development is available to officers through the Centre of Excellence.

5. Third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3)

5.1 The draft RIS3 was published on the 26th August, this is a key document in the RIS process. It publicly outlines the government goals, and the resources planned for the upcoming RIS period. It does not at this stage provide details of any specific schemes. Following an interim settlement in 2025, RIS3 will now cover the period from 2026 to 2031. TfSE officers attended a DfT external stakeholder engagement workshop in September 2025, where details of the draft RIS were presented and there was the opportunity to ask questions.

5.2 The draft RIS includes the Statement of Funds Available (SoFA), the public funds available to National Highways to deliver the objectives to be set out in RIS3 for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. The total funding available to the company, covering both capital and resource expenditure is £24,983 million. There is no annual spending profile, this will be confirmed in the final RIS.

5.4 DfT confirmed that National Highways are to focus on managing, maintaining and renewing their network, alongside delivery of any remaining committed RIS2 enhancement schemes. There will be a programmatic approach to delivering improvements around the environment, safety, tackling pinch points and targeted

investment to support Governments housing and growth plans. Designated Funds will continue to support activities beyond National Highways day to day role.

5.5 TfSE officers raised concerns about the absence of plans to develop a pipeline of schemes for delivery in a future RIS period, and also highlighted that several RIS2 schemes have now been cancelled, leaving problems on the SRN in our region unresolved.

5.6 The next stage of the RIS process is for National Highways to produce a draft Strategic Business Plan (draft SBP), indicating whether it believes the Government's objectives can be delivered within the resources available. The ORR must then undertake an efficiency review of National Highways' draft Strategic Business Plan, to confirm the proposals in the Plan are challenging and deliverable.

5.7 TfSE officers will continue to meet with both DfT and National Highways as the RIS process continues, to ensure the regions needs and priorities are taken into consideration as the final RIS is developed. The final RIS is expected to be published at the end of March 2026.

6. Financial Considerations

6.1 The work set out in this report is being funded from the DfT grant allocation awarded to TfSE for 2025/26.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to comment on the progress of a range of workstreams that support the delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

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Item 12 – SIP Delivery - Appendix 1

Table 1 - Development support schemes – 2023-24

Promoting Authority	SIP ref	SIP Scheme Name	Status	Support for:	Award
Kent County Council	V2, V3 & V17	Fastrack Optimisation and Extension	Complete	Feasibility Study	£51,297
Medway Council	S16	New Strood Interchange	Complete	Pre-Feasibility Study	£20,000
Portsmouth City Council	B5	Cosham Station Mobility Hub	Complete	SOBC	£30,000
Southampton City Council	I10	West Quay Road Realignment	Complete	SOBC	£100,000
				Total	**£201,297**

Table 2 - Development support scheme - 2024-25

Promoting Authority	SIP ref	SIP Scheme Name	Status	Support for:	Award
West Sussex County Council	I16	A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Enhancement	Complete	SOBC	£100,000
Surrey County Council	N1	London to Sussex Coast Highways (A22 N Corridor (Tandridge) South Godstone to East Grinstead)	Underway	Feasibility Study	£50,000
East Sussex County Council	N3b & N18	A22 North of Hailsham to Maresfield (MRN Pipeline) Corridor SOBC	Complete	SOBC	£50,000
Berkshire - Wokingham Borough Council	P7, P9, P12, P18, Q1	A4 Berkshire - Quality Bus Corridor and Active Travel Improvements	Complete	Feasibility Study	£75,000
Hampshire County Council	E2	South East Hampshire Area Active Travel	Underway	Feasibility Study	£50,000
Brighton & Hove City Council	A2 & A3	A27/A23 Patcham Interchange & Falmer Strategic Mobility Hub	Underway	Feasibility Study	£50,000
Solent Authorities - NR	G2 & G3	A2 Botley Line Double Tracking & A3 Netley Line Signalling and Rail Service Enhancements	Complete	SOBC	£50,000
Kent County Council	S22	Gatwick-Kent Service Enhancements	Finalising Contracts	SOBC	£30,267
				TOTAL	**£455,267**

Table 3 - Development support schemes – 2025-26

Leading Authority	SIP ref	SIP Scheme Name	Status	Support for:	Award
Southampton City Council	C1	Southampton Mass Transit	Underway	Feasibility Study	£100,000
Portsmouth City Council	C2	South East Hampshire Rapid Transit Future Phases	Underway	Feasibility Study	£50,000
				TOTAL	**£150,000**

Agenda Item 13

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

Date of meeting: **2 February 2026**

By: **Chief 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 2024/25 business plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

1) **Comment on progress with the work to implement the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy;**
2) **Comment on the progress with the delivery of the Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy;**
3) **Comment on the progress with the work on rail;**
4) **Comment on the progress with the work on decarbonisation.**

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the delivery of a number of elements of the Transport for the South East (TfSE) technical work programme.

2. Progress update

2.1 A progress update on each of the elements of the technical work programme is set out in **Appendix 1.**

3. Financial considerations

3.1 The work on the electric vehicle charging infrastructure, freight, rail, and decarbonisation set out in this report is being funded from the DfT grant funding for 2025/26.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress that has been made with the various elements of the TfSE technical

programme set out in this report. A further progress update report will be presented to the Partnership Board at their meeting in March 2026.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

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Appendix 1 - Technical Programme Progress Update

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this appendix is to provide a progress update on the delivery of several elements of the Transport for the South East (TfSE) technical work programme.

2. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

2.1 In November 2025, TfSE commenced a new study under aims to identify the ongoing challenges and emerging solutions related to the introduction on-street charging solutions across the south east. The budget for this project is £75,000 and will be delivered in two phases. Phase One will aim to establish a baseline for the TfSE area by mapping current and planned provision, surveying and interviewing LTAs, and analysing governance and delivery to identify key operational, social and spatial pressure points. Phase Two will examine emerging solutions and technologies that are coming to the market that could reduce demand for public on-street residential charging. Outputs for this project will provide local transport authorities with guidance, case studies and inputs to TfSE's regional Centre of Excellence. A final report will be brought to the Board in March 2026 for approval.

2.2 As reported to the Partnership Board in October 2025, TfSE delivered a pilot project that developed guidance for local transport authorities on planning charging infrastructure provision for commercial fleets within their areas. This initial pilot project focused on two case study areas in Brighton and Hove and Slough. As part of this project, we used specialist datasets, including Field Dynamics' Fleetmap data to create visual maps that highlight potential locations for charging hubs. Building on this project, we have recently commenced a new piece of work which looks to extend the creation these maps for all the local transport authorities within the TfSE area. With a budget of £10,700, the project will deliver two maps per LTA to identify potential urban charging hub locations for larger commercial vehicles and also update the Brighton & Hove and Slough maps. Completion of this project is expected in January 2026.

3. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

3.1 Work continues to modify the Alternative Freight Fuel Infrastructure (ALFFI) tool developed by Midlands Connect to enable it to include potential locations in the TfSE areas for smaller HGV recharging sites. In its current form, the tool is currently focussed on identifying locations for major sites on the SRN. In the future, many of the larger national hauliers will have charging facilities at their depots or use en-route facilities. However, smaller hauliers will not be able to support charging facilities at their depots due to either financial, spatial or power supply constraints. They will be more dependent on public charging sites. TfSE are identifying potential sites for these facilities in peri-urban areas. Once identified, these sites will be added to the tool, enabling local planning authorities to rank and evaluate them as part of their development planning process, should developers submit proposals. Where possible, TfSE will also endeavour to ensure that these sites can support other freight-related facilities such as consolidation and EV/zero-emission vehicle interchange hubs. Once the identification work has been completed, TfSE officers will share the potential locations with our local authority transport and planning officers and demonstrate how the tool works through the Centre of Excellence.

3.2 Work has begun on the development of the Freight Awareness Programme e-training course by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport (CIHT) and Steer. The training course will be delivered through the CIHT website via the TfSE Centre of Excellence. It is anticipated that the courses will be available from April 2026. There will be a steering/quality control group comprising representatives from TfSE, Transport East, Steer, Transport for Hertfordshire, and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. The course aims to provide planners and policymakers with a better understanding of freight, including delivery and servicing activities. The course will outline how the freight sector works and the freight issues to consider in transport and land-use planning policy and processes. It will comprise three to four modules covering 10 topic areas, each taking between 10 and 20 minutes to complete. The topics will include an introduction to the terms used in the freight sector, how freight operators operate the infrastructure needed for efficient freight operations, what customers need in relation to deliveries, and traffic regulations and enforcement. In addition, a guide for freight operators on navigating the public sector will be produced.

3.3 The last Wider South East Freight Forum meeting was held on 25 November 2025. The focus of the meeting was on decarbonisation, with presentations from Logistics UK on their Decarbonisation Roadmap Survey, the Net Zero Council on their Roadmap for Decarbonisation, Midlands Connect on their Freight and Superhub Research, and Solent Transport on Establishing Local Micro-consolidation Centres. There were also updates from the DfT on the New Plan for Freight and the DfT Task and Finish HGV Parking Group on their report about the importance of raising the security standards of lorry parking facilities. The next meeting will be held on 5 March 2026 and will focus on local authorities' experience of freight planning and management.

4. Rail

4.1 Work on the TfSE draft Rail Strategy is complete and is presented to the Partnership Board for agreement as part of this meeting.

4.2 TfSE continues to work with England's Economic Heartland, Transport East, Network Rail, DfT and TfL on the **Wider South East Rail Partnership** to develop a Wider South East Rail Plan. The Plan will bring together existing evidence from all partners to identify issues and opportunities, develop potential solutions and outcomes, and identify key challenges and dependencies for rail across the local and strategic authority areas in the Wider South East. The Partnership will engage with the wider south east's local and newly established mayoral combined county authorities, and national delivery bodies during its development. It will clearly demonstrate how the Plan will support and align with both the central government's missions and the area's strategic and local authorities' priorities. Once completed, the Plan could then be used to inform Network Rail's and the new Great British Railways' work programmes.

5. Decarbonisation

5.1 In September 2025, the Department for Transport published their Carbon Assessment Guidance setting out when and how carbon analysis should be integrated into strategy and scheme development.

5.2 As reported previously, the STBS have developed a Carbon Assessment Playbook tool that enables the baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero in each of the LTAs to be identified. Each LTA is then able to assess the carbon reduction potential of the proposed transport interventions included in their local transport plans. The tool therefore allows the LTAs to put key elements of the Carbon Assessment

Guidance into practice, in particular the early stage assessment of the potential impact on carbon emissions. No other tool currently exists for this purpose.

5.3 As reported previously to help LTAs become more proficient in using the CAP in advance of the long awaited guidance being published, a programme of 1-2-1 support is underway to enable representatives from the LTAs to better understand how to use the tool. Three workshops have been held with LTAs in the TfSE area and a further workshop is planned for early in the New Year.

Agenda Item 14

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

Date of meeting: **2 February 2026**

By: **Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Centre of Excellence Progress Update**

Purpose of report: To provide a progress update on the Centre of Excellence

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RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the progress being made with the delivery of the Centre of Excellence**.**

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the delivery of the TfSE Centre of Excellence.

2. Progress update

2.1 Since the previous Partnership Board in October, we have made significant progress in delivering the 2025/26 Centre of Excellence Work Plan. Progress has been made against the seven support areas, with 22 bespoke webinars or events held across the topics. Please see **Appendix 1** for more detail on the sessions.

3. Forthcoming Activity

3.1 Between this Partnership Board meeting and the meeting scheduled for March, seven webinars are already scheduled in Local Transport Authority calendars. These cover electric vehicle seminars, awareness of emerging technologies, and authority-led contributions, including How to Use the Carbon Assessment Playbook Tool in Local Transport Plan Development delivered by Brighton & Hove City Council.

3.2 A more comprehensive overview of commissioned activity is provided in **Appendix 1**. New commissions are underway across improving sustainability and achieving net zero, network review and design, and understanding national plans and policy, with experts appointed and inception meetings held. Further sessions will be scheduled and added to officers' diaries as delivery progresses.

4. Engagement activity

4.1 The Centre of Excellence continues to work with National Highways, Network Rail, and universities to share assets, showcase regional and national expertise, and

bring together innovation and academic insight to support Local Transport Authorities.

4.2 We are planning to engage with universities at TfSE's upcoming Transport Forum, to help them to develop their forward work plans around the region's transport priorities. Content from universities' work could be showcased on the Centre of Excellence in future years.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation evidence shows full engagement from all 16 Local Transport Authorities, high and repeat use of Centre of Excellence resources, strong satisfaction and usefulness scores, and early evidence of value for money through efficiency savings. Detailed performance data is provided in **Appendix 2.**

6. Finance Update

6.1 At the date of this Partnership Board, £78,688 will have been spent from the total £251,759 budget. Expenditure is forecast to reach £201,371 by March 2026, with the remaining funding allocated to subject matter expert support. A £50,388 carry forward into 2026/27 is forecast.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress being made with the delivery of the Centre of Excellence.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East
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Appendix 1 – Centre of Excellence update

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this appendix is to provide further information on several updates since October's Partnership Board meeting on the Transport for the South East (TfSE) Centre of Excellence.

2. Delivery against the Centre of Excellence Work Plan 2025/26 since October Partnership Board 2025

2.1 Between November 2025 – January 2026, the Centre of Excellence hosted 22 webinars and events that supported three of our eight support areas.

Impacts of Devolution on Buses

A webinar and supporting report were delivered to help LTA officers understand the implications of devolution and the changing policy landscape for the planning and delivery of local bus services.

AI in transport planning

A programme of activity was delivered to build understanding of the role of artificial intelligence in transport planning, ranging from introductory content to technical and academic perspectives. This has been an area of rapidly increasing interest among officers.

Modelling and Forecasting

Four technical webinars were delivered covering TAG guidance, active travel modelling, and spatial planning.

Awareness of Emerging Technologies

A new flagship webinar series was launched to improve awareness of emerging transport technologies, including electric vehicles, shared mobility, data and digital systems, Mobility as a Service, and autonomous vehicles. To date, we have delivered three out of five.

EV seminars

Additionally, from feedback received through the TfSE EV Forum, we have delivered two out of a four-part webinar series. The topics covered included:

- Costing and pricing of public EV charging – understanding and managing the disparity.
- Developing public infrastructure to support the electrification of light commercial vehicles.

Future Transport Zone

We were pleased to promote the webinar series from Solent Future Transport Zone on the recent projects they had undertaken. All webinars were promoted through the Centre of Excellence, and materials and recordings are now hosted on our site for posterity.

- Where do Mobility Credits have the biggest impact?
- Micro Consolidation: Lessons From Delivering Logistics Innovation
- The Right Fit: Selecting and supporting businesses in travel change initiatives
- Micromobility parking: Selecting sites and making them happen
- Successful procurement for innovation projects in emerging sectors
- Lessons Learned from the Breeze MaaS Trial

Other bespoke content

- West Sussex and Kent County Council Active Travel Capability Assessment Showcase
- Brighton and Hove and West Sussex presentation on becoming a Chartered Transport Planning Professional
- Using Vivacity as an AI tool – local authority case studies
- Using the STB Carbon Assessment Playbook in Local Transport Plan Development – Brighton and Hove presentation
- Active Travel England webinar on their Cycling Walking Infrastructure Strategy 3 consultation with TfSE's local transport authorities
- CityScience training session on Cadence tool, with free use via the TfSE CoE website

3. Monitoring and Evaluation – September–November 2025

3.1 The Monitoring and Evaluation framework demonstrates strong engagement with the Centre of Excellence and provides early evidence of value for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs).

3.2 Between September and November, the website recorded 1191 site sessions and 759 unique visitors (accumulatively across the three months), indicating repeat use. A total of 48 new user sign-ups were recorded during this period, bringing total sign-ups to 367.

3.3 User engagement was spread across key areas of the site, with consistent traffic to events, resources, webinars, key tools, and case studies, demonstrating broad interest rather than reliance on a single content type. Increased interaction was also observed within the online forum, particularly during October, suggesting growing confidence in peer-to-peer engagement.

3.4 By November, 395 resources had been uploaded, with 66 new items added between September and November. The most accessed content related to data

science training, carbon assessment tools, active travel forecasting, and bus policy, aligning closely with known capability gaps.

3.5 Feedback collected from webinars and case studies shows consistently high satisfaction and usefulness scores. Average scores were 4.34 for satisfaction and 4.37 for usefulness (out of 5), with several sessions achieving scores of 5.0. This provides assurance that the support delivered is meeting officer needs and contributing to changes in understanding and practice.

3.6 Based on time savings reported by users, estimated efficiency benefits for LTAs between September and November total approximately £303,920, providing early evidence of return on investment from the Centre of Excellence model.

3.7 The monitoring and evaluation data indicates that the Centre of Excellence is achieving strong engagement across all authorities, delivering relevant and high-quality support, and beginning to demonstrate measurable benefits in terms of efficiency and capability building.

4. Finance update

4.1 As at the date of this Partnership Board, the Centre of Excellence will have spent £78,688 of its total £251,759 budget. Expenditure to date includes delivery of the support packages (webinars, training courses, case studies), production of the *Impacts of Devolution on Buses* report, and costs associated with in-person events, including venue hire and catering.

4.2 Total expenditure is forecast to reach £201,371 by the end of March 2026, with remaining spend fully allocated to subject matter expert support to address Local Transport Authority capability gaps. This results in a projected £50,388 budget carry forward into 2026/27**.**

Centre of Excellence Monitoring & Evaluation

Centre of Excellence

TRANSPORT FOR THE South East

Date Selector

Please select month/s below

Multiple selections

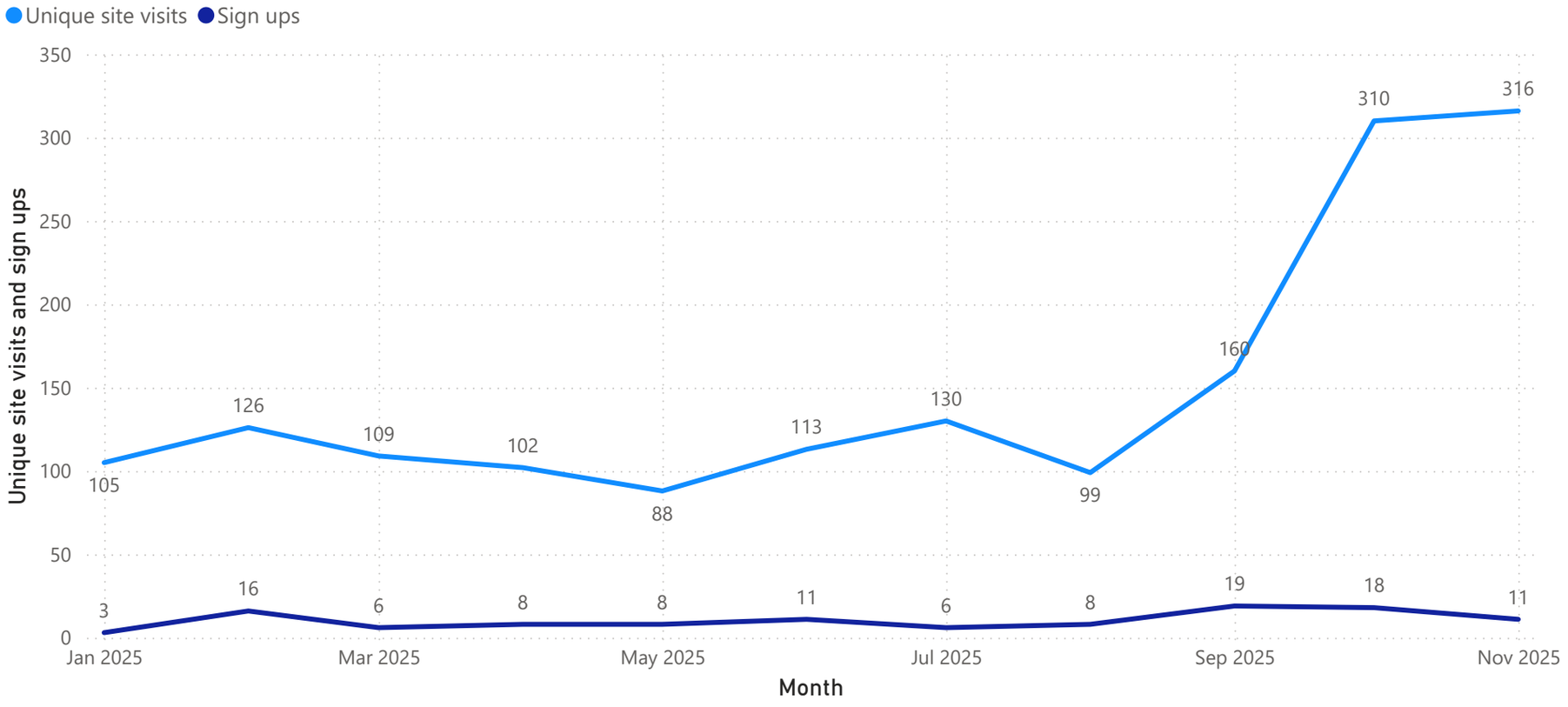
Site Sessions | Unique Visitors | Site Sessions per visitor

759
Total site sessions (Sep-Nov 25)

66
Content uploaded Sep - Nov 25

303920
LTA savings (£) (Sep - Nov 25)

Unique site visits and sign ups by month



48
Site Sign Ups (Sep - Nov 25)

367
Total Sign Ups

395
Total Content Uploaded

16 (100%)
Number of LAs signed up

Centre of Excellence Monitoring & Evaluation

Centre of Excellence

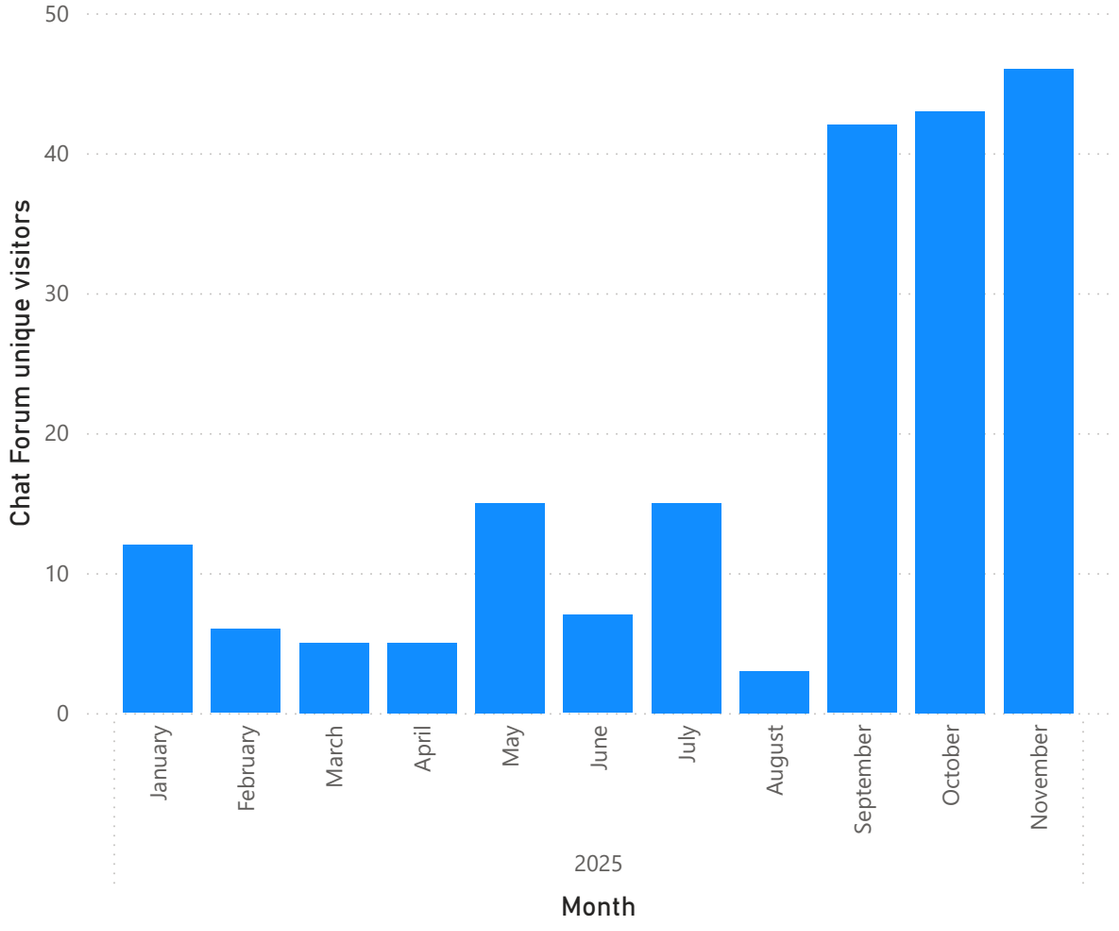
TRANSPORT FOR THE South East

Date Selector for chat forum interaction

Please select month/s below

Multiple selections

Chat Forum interaction



Number of unique visitors per component home page

Title	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Total
events	17	19	10	46
resources	11	15	18	44
webinars	19	10	13	42
case-study	7	7	16	30
key-tools	10	6	14	30
data	2	8	17	27
qualifications-and-courses	9	6	12	27
forum	5	15	6	26
new-to-the-sector	0	4	5	9
consultations	0	2	6	8
funding	2	0	6	8
contact	1	0	6	7
procurement	0	0	7	7

Number of unique visitors for specific pages

Title	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Total
forumlocal-transport-authoritiesregister-your-interest-data-science-for-transport-planners-full-day-training-course-offer	42	9	0	51
key-tools- carbon-assessment-playbook	16	16	11	43
blog-postsforecasting-the-impact-of-active-travel-interventions	18	12	0	30
chatforum	0	28	0	28
groupgeneraldiscussion4745552a-dfd7-4d0b-b4b0-f997577ee429	0	28	0	28
groupebf048a5-3af2-4e0b-8b5a-2afaf7e89709discussion	0	26	0	26
resources- transport-for-the-south-east-|-regional-travel-survey-report	0	26	0	26

Agenda Item 15

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

Date of meeting: **02 February 2026**

By: **Chair of Transport Forum**

Title of report: **Advisory Panel and Transport Forum Update**

Purpose of report: **To update the Partnership Board on the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the recent work of the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel

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1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on plans for the next meeting of TfSE's Transport Forum, as well as an update on the activity of TfSE's Advisory Panel, which brings together representatives of TfSE's thematic groups.

1.2 This paper provides an update on plans for the next meeting of TfSE's Transport Forum scheduled to take place on 12 March in London.

2. Transport Forum

2.1 The Transport Forum is TfSE's wider stakeholder group. It meets in person approximately twice a year, as and when there is a need to capture the views of stakeholders to support the delivery of a piece of TfSE's work.

2.2 The Transport Forum is scheduled to meet on 12 March at Broadway House and the agenda will focus on the three distinct work areas from Transport for the South East.

2.3 Following a request at the TfSE Universities Group to work more closely with Local Transport Authorities, the Transport Forum will host a session on mapping the future transport priorities to inform Universities research. This will bring together two groups of TfSE stakeholders and identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment in future work. This will also provide an opportunity for TfSE to bring an update on the Centre of Excellence, including a review of the first 18 months since launch and how the CoE can bring TfSE partner organisations together.

2.4 TfSE will also facilitate a session on devolution following feedback that this is a key area of unknown for many of our stakeholders. The session will focus on where responsibilities will lie and what this could mean for TfSE.

2.5 The final session will provide an opportunity for TfSE to share with Transport Forum members progress on the refreshed Strategic Investment Plan. This will focus on the engagement which has gone into developing the refreshed Strategic Investment Plan and how it aligns and helps to deliver the five missions in the TfSE Transport Strategy.

3. Advisory Panel

3.1 TfSE's Advisory Panel brings together representatives of TfSE's thematic groups, giving them the opportunity to update each other on their group's work, and feed into the business of the Partnership Board. TfSE is currently rationalising the scope and activities of its thematic groups, as its work programme evolves.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Partnership Board note the work of the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel.

GEOFF FRENCH
Chair of the Transport Forum
Transport for the South East

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Agenda Item 16

Report to:	**Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting:	**2 February 2026**
By:	**Chief Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report:	**Communications and Stakeholder Engagement update**
Purpose of report:	**To update the Partnership Board on communications and stakeholder engagement activity**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the communications and engagement activity that undertaken since the last meeting.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on communications and engagement activity undertaken since the last Partnership Board meeting, including support provided to technical projects, stakeholder meetings, and recent and upcoming events.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

2.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) continues to use communication and engagement activity to support the implementation of our technical work programme and the promotion of the organisation with our audiences.

2.2 We are delivering against the objectives set in the 2025/26 Communications and Engagement Plan, with activity supported by website updates, social media coverage, and our monthly *Connections* newsletter.

2.3 The team has continued to support colleagues on the development of the rail strategy and SIP refresh, coordinating engagement activity and arranging meetings with officer groups and partnership board representatives, and this will continue into the Spring.

3. Transport Strategy

3.1 We added a permanent, direct link from the TfSE home page to our recently adopted Transport Strategy and ran a social media campaign to promote the strategy's five missions, illustrating each mission with two examples per week, over five weeks.

3.2 Each of the region's MPs was emailed about the strategy with a link to the website and short introduction to the missions and the approval process. We also emailed all Local Authority leaders and chief executives, 323 transport forum members, 31 working group members and 1153 consultation and Your Voices respondents.

4. Events and speaker slots

Past Events

4.1 In October, TfSE Head of Strategy, Mark Valleley, delivered the keynote speech at the Transport Smart Class conference in London about devolution and the impact on

local bus services. In November, Head of Analysis and Appraisal Sarah Valentine spoke at a Systra UK webinar with other transport representatives on the impact on transport delivery of changes to government appraisal and investment frameworks.

4.2 The TfSE Chair and Chief Officer were invited to the Kent Leaders meeting in November to provide an update on TfSE activity including the Transport Strategy and consultation responses.

Future events/speaker slots

4.3 We're planning a Transport forum in early Spring that will cover the SIP refresh, Centre of Excellence and devolution.

5. MP engagement and public affairs

5.1 Following an invite from Caroline Dinenage, MP for Gosport, we met to discuss her proposals for a Solent water taxi seeking guidance on funding opportunities and followed up with further written advice.

5.2 Ben Spencer, MP for Runnymede and Weybridge, wrote to TfSE's Chair regarding the Transport (Duty to Cooperate) Bill, that he had introduced. The Chair replied that whilst local highway authorities have statutory duties to manage street works, maintenance and construction, TfSE's Transport Strategy highlights the importance of coordination, reliability and confidence in the transport system.

6. Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Plan

6.1 We continue to follow the priorities and objectives outlined and monitor outcomes and progress of our communications and engagement activities.

6.2 We are monitoring devolution and local government reorganisation, and the impacts that may have on our region over the months and years ahead. We are planning to produce a document that sets out TfSE's role, impact and how our work helps to support local authorities.

6.3 Since the last board meeting, we have gained 41 followers on LinkedIn, a 2.9% increase, bringing our total to 1,477 against our 2025/26 target of 1500. Engagement rate is also continuing to grow, increasing by 18.1% since the last meeting, which suggests that a greater number of our followers are actively engaging with TfSE on LinkedIn.

6.4 Our Connections newsletter subscriber base fell slightly this quarter, but we will increase promotional activity and post articles from Connections onto social media more regularly, with sign-up prompts. This has risen by 43 since October to 3790.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 The Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the communication and engagement activity undertaken since the last Partnership Board meeting.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

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