

TfSE Partnership Board
2 February 2026
Minutes - draft
Virtual, MS Teams

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 Paul Fuller Member of Economy, Regeneration, Transport and Infrastructure Isle of Wight Council	Shamal Ratnayaka Strategic Analysis Manager Transport for London	Cllr Lulu Bowerman Executive Member for Highways and Waste Hampshire County Council
Cllr Alexander Winning Leader Southampton County Council	Cllr Joy Dennis Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport West Sussex County Council	Geoff French CBE Chair Transport Forum
Cllr Peter Osborne Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Kent County Council	Cllr Matt Boughton Leader Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council <i>(jointly representing District and Borough Councils)</i>	Cllr Sophie Cox Leader Worthing Borough Council <i>(jointly representing District and Borough Councils)</i>
Tom Cornwell National Highways <i>On behalf of Richard Leonard</i>	Stuart Kistruck Network Rail <i>On behalf of Dave Hooper</i>	Dan Taylor Deputy Director Department for Transport
Daniel Ruiz Business Representative <i>(co-chair Business Advisory group)</i>	Vince Lucas Business Representative <i>(co-chair Business Advisory group)</i>	Mark Potter Vice Chair South Downs National Park Authority

Guests:

- Sarah Rae (Steer)
- John Collins (Arup)

Apologies:

- Cllr John Ennis, Reading Council
- Cllr Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council

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
- Kate Over, Transport for the South East
- James Boyes, Transport for the South East
- Emily Bailey, 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. Apologies were noted from Cllr Furniss and Cllr Ennis. 1.2 KG provide an update on the recent receipt of the funding letter dated 26 January from DfT. KG was pleased to inform Members that TfSE received a funding allocation of £1.5m for 2026/27, which matches the figure included in the business plan, presented to Board in December 2025. With this settlement confirmed, work is now underway to assess how to balance commitments with available resources. Consideration will be required on how TfSE structures its resources. 1.3 KG also noted a response from the Secretary of State acknowledging the region's specific challenges, including devolution and local government reorganisation, and confirming that TfSE remains a valued partner to DfT. The letter also confirmed no funding for TfSE beyond March 2027. A request for a meeting remains unanswered and will be followed up. 1.4 Rupert Clubb (RC) thanked the Board for their contributions to the Business Plan submitted to DfT. 1.5 Dan Taylor (DT) noted that Ministers face challenging funding decisions and highlighted that TfSE's realistic and targeted proposal was a key factor in securing the requested allocation. He also emphasised the value Ministers place on visible support from local authorities through commitments and local funding contributions, which signals confidence in TfSE's future. DT further recognised the ongoing transitions in the South East related to devolution and local government reorganisation. 1.6 KG thanked Members and DfT for their continued support.	
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. Rail Strategy	
5.1 KG introduced Kate Over (KO), who presented the TfSE draft Rail Strategy for the Board. 5.2 The strategy was developed to provide a clear, collective position on rail priorities ahead of the creation of Great British Railways (GBR). The strategy identifies key challenges and priority outcomes for passenger and freight services and provides a framework to guide future rail investment across TfSE's radial and orbital corridors. It does not list specific schemes, instead these are contained in the refreshed Strategic Investment Plan, which is being developed concurrently with the rail strategy. 5.3 The rail strategy objectives align to the TfSE Transport Strategy Missions, and the rail strategy's key challenges and strategic priorities were summarised. The strategy will guide investment decisions over the next 25 years, advise the Secretary of State about the TfSE area's rail investment priorities, inform the Long Term Rail Strategy, and inform the forthcoming Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and new unitary authorities about the rail priorities in their areas. KO noted that delivery in 2025-30 will focus on maintaining and optimising existing infrastructure, with limited scope for new schemes, while opportunities for smaller projects may emerge post-2030, and larger infrastructure most likely to be delivered from 2050 onwards. KO stressed the need to begin planning and advocating now. Stakeholders including the Rail Delivery Group, LTAs, Network Rail, ports, airports and DfT have been engaged throughout. 5.4 Cllr Trevor Muten (TM) noted gaps in the strategy, particularly the absence of routes connecting Brighton & Hove to North Kent, which he felt would strengthen network resilience. He also raised concerns about the reliance on east-west coastal public transport. TM welcomed the focus on unlocking constraints at Croydon, recognising its importance. On accessibility, he strongly supported the ambitions but referenced recent experiences with delivery partners, highlighting the barriers still preventing step free-free access at local stations. 5.5 Cllr Simon Curry (SC) expressed support for the work to date and noted that it aligns well with the wider strategy, particularly around achieving net zero. SC highlighted the importance of forthcoming Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP), which will set out future housing development. Given the delivery timetable, SC stressed the need for the rail strategy to link closely with these IDPs to ensure projects are aligned with development needs and delivered at pace, working closely with planning authorities across the region. 5.6 Cllr Joy Dennis (JD) noted that the strategy reflects many of the region's issues but expressed disappointment that, while it refers to	

unlocking capacity into London, it does not adequately address the constraints on services leaving London. Also highlighted confusion over references to achieving short-term mode shift at Gatwick when capacity between London and Gatwick cannot currently be improved. JD asked that the Gatwick to Reading corridor be noted as an ongoing concern.

5.7 MB welcomed two points in the strategy: the recognition of local diesel -operated lines with no clear electrification pathway, which he felt is essential for decarbonisation, resilience and encouraging patronage; and the recognition of poor rail connectivity between Kent and Gatwick, where train journeys are currently longer than by car. He emphasised support for prioritising these schemes to boost economic growth and reduce pressure on the M25.

5.8 KO responded to the points raised. KO noted that the strategy does not set out specific schemes as TfSE is not the delivery body; detailed interventions to address resilience issues between Lewes, Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells instead will be captured in the Strategic Investment Plan. On step-free access, KO emphasised that one of the strategy's purposes is to strengthen TfSE's ability to advocate for regional schemes, reflecting Network Rail's request for TfSE support.

5.9 Regarding capacity issues at East Croydon, London and Gatwick, KO explained that these will need to be progressed in smaller phases rather than through a single major scheme. A strategic study on the Kent-Gatwick route is underway, and the strategy will help advocate for this and other priorities. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) is being jointly prepared by TfSE, Network Rail, and Kent County Council for submission to the Department for Transport. This work is currently in progress, and the outcome will be known in due course. The ongoing development of the case should offer reassurance that the proposal is actively being advanced.

5.10 On electrification, KO acknowledged the challenges and invited John Collins (JC) for comment. JC advised that electrification options are considered in more detail within the SIP. He explained that bimodal trains are not a practical solution for the Uckfield line due to the large batteries required, which would reduce both on-train space and concerns regarding overall network capacity. Stuart Kistruck (SK) confirmed support for the strategy, noting it provides clear advocacy for Network Rail and aligns with the wider expectation for rail decarbonisation amid complex decisions on rolling stock, electrification and cost optimisation.

5.11 KO also noted that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), currently out for consultation, includes clear provisions encouraging the co-location of new housing developments and rail stations. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that future housing growth and railway development will be more closely aligned, recognising their mutual dependence. This represents a positive direction of travel for integrated planning.

5.12 Cllr Lulu Bowerman (LB) asked whether there is any further support that local authorities can provide to strengthen advocacy for rail, in order to

help elevate the case for investment on the Brighton to Portsmouth line which is part of the outer orbital and coastal rail corridor. 5.13 Vince Lucas (VL) emphasised the importance of identifying short-term priorities while balancing longer-term priorities while balancing longer-term priorities while balancing longer-term deliverability. 5.14 KO noted the strong working relationship with Network Rail, which will be leveraged throughout the process. 5.15 TM asked how Member comments will be captured. RC clarified that the Strategic Investment Plan will be presented to the Partnership Board in March, outlining all proposed schemes. 5.16 RC reiterated that current rail funding is focused on maintenance and renewals, not enhancements, and highlighted the need to increase capacity on the south coast line. 5.17 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board. RECOMMENDATION: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to agree the Rail Strategy.	
6. Audit and Governance Committee	
6.1 KG introduced Cllr Joy Dennis (JD), Chair of Audit and Governance Committee. 6.2 JD provided an overview of the meeting held on Friday 16 January. 6.3 JD noted at the time of the meeting, there was no update on the submission of the 2026/27 Business Plan to DfT or on future funding. The Committee will continue to monitor TfSE's financial planning as certainty improves. 6.4 The Committee reviewed Q3 finances and year-end forecasts. Freight spending forecasts increased due to higher supplier quotations, with scope unchanged. Decarbonisation forecasts decreased following a shift towards training local authority officers in use of the Carbon Assessment Playbook. Members suggested further development of the tool, including capturing infrastructure carbon. 6.5 The Committee reviewed updates to the strategic risk register, a key responsibility of the Committee. Risks marked as complete: • Risk 21 – LEP dissolution mitigated by the Business Advisory Group. • Risk 24 – Transport Strategy refresh adopted (Oct 2025). Risk 36 – Multi-year funding settlement for TfSE, closed as we now know the position on future year's funding from Government.	

6.6 JD noted that some risks were updated to reflect uncertainty around devolution and local government reorganisation: stronger stakeholder engagement was agreed as mitigation. 6.7 A proposed addition to Risk 22 reflects challenges for local authorities delivering MRN schemes without clarity on future organisational or financial positions. 6.8 The risk register will be submitted to DfT as part of quarterly reporting. 6.9 JD thanked Members of the Committee for their contribution. 6.10 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.	
7. Finance Update	
7.1 KG introduced Keir Wilkins. KW provided a finance update for the Board up until the end of December 2025. 7.2 KW highlighted the financial position to the end of quarter three. 7.3 The total annual budget for 2026/27 is £3.8m, primarily funded by the DfT. Expenditure to the end of December (Q3) stands at £1.55m, in line with expectations. As work is paid on completion, spending is expected to increase in Q4, with £3.2m forecast by year-end. This will result in a committed carry-forward of just under £600k into next year, consistent with the Business Plan approved by Members and the DfT. Any additional underspends from technical workstreams will be committed carry forward allocated specifically to finishing the remaining work in those workstreams. 7.4 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. RECOMMENDATION: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note TfSE's financial position to the end of Quarter 3 2025/26.	
8. Responses to consultations	
8.1 RC provided an outline of the six consultations TfSE have responded to since the previous Partnership Board. 8.9 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board. 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	
9. SIP Refresh Update	
9.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) took the papers as read and invited any questions from Members. 9.2 The recommendations were noted by the Partnership Board RECOMMENDATIONS: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress of the Strategic Investment Plan Refresh.	
10. Business Advisory Group	
10.1 KG took the papers as read and invited any questions from Members. 10.2 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.	
11. Analytical Framework Update	
11.1 SV provided an update on progress with the analytical framework to date and noted that a wide range of datasets are now available. Members were invited to make contact should they wish to access any of the data. 11.2 The recommendation was agreed by the Partnership Board. RECOMMENDATIONS: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress with the development of an analytical framework.	
12. Delivery of the Strategic Investment Plan	
12.1 SV referred back to the earlier discussion under Item 6 regarding the challenges for authorities in progressing major road schemes. It was noted that TfSE is still awaiting a response from the DfT on the review undertaken last autumn	

12.2 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.	
13. Technical programme update	
13.1 Mark Valleley (MV) took the papers as read and invited any questions from Members. 13.2 TM highlighted concerns regarding the limited EV charging infrastructure on the motorway network, particularly in comparison with provision in Europe. MV noted that National Highways has a comprehensive rollout programme underway, and TfSE will continue to work closely with them to support timely delivery. It was acknowledged that site availability and power supply constraints remain challenges, but these are recognised by National Highways. 13.3 The recommendations were agreed by the Partnership Board. 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.	
14. Centre of Excellence Update	
14.1 Emily Bailey (EB) provided an update on delivery against the 2025/26 work plan. During the reporting period, 22 webinars and events have been delivered across a range of topics. The platform recorded just under 1,200 site sessions, 48 new sign-ups, and 66 new pieces of content uploaded. 14.2 EB highlighted strong user satisfaction, with users giving content an average rating of 4.3 out of 5. Engagement with the Chat Forum continues to increase, and the Carbon Assessment Playbook (CAP) tool remains one of the most frequently visited resources. 14.3 The recommendations were noted by the Partnership Board. RECOMMENDATION: The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the progress being made with the delivery of the Centre of Excellence.	
15. Advisory Panel and Transport Forum Update	

15.1 Geoff French (GF) welcomed comments from Rupert Clubb on the upcoming Transport Forum. 15.2 RC noted that a Transport Forum will take place on 12 March, which will consider the implications of devolution, provide a progress update on the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), and include reflections from university and business representatives on current challenges within the transport sector. 15.3 The recommendation was noted by the Partnership Board. RECOMMENDATION: Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the communications and engagement activity that has been undertaken since the last Board meeting.	
16. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Update	
16.1 James Boyes (JB) took the papers as read and invited any questions from Members. 16.2 The recommendation was agreed 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.	
17. AOB	
21.1 No matters were raised.	
18. Date of Next Meeting	
19.1 At the time of the meeting, the next meeting was announced as 26 March. However, due to local councils entering their pre-election periods, the date has since been revised. The meeting has now been rescheduled to 19 March and will be held in person. An updated calendar appointment has been circulated, and we look forward to seeing you all there.	