

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 19 October 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 2026/27 business plan

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- 1) Comment on progress with the work to support local transport authorities with the introduction of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
 - 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 and;
 - 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. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

2.1 TfSE has commenced delivery of two new Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure projects for 2026/27, designed to support local authorities in moving from evidence and strategy towards practical delivery of EVCI. Both projects build on previous TfSE research and engagement activity and will support authorities across the South East.

2.2 The first commission, **On-Street Charging Solutions - Phase 2**, is supporting local transport authorities to apply the On-Street Charging Toolkit developed through the initial study, which was presented to the Partnership Board in July 2026. The project will provide facilitated readiness assessments, targeted support on common delivery challenges, and a series of worked examples demonstrating how different authorities can progress their on-street charging programmes.

2.3 The second commission, **Urban Public e-light commercial vehicle (eLCV) Charging Opportunities**, is supporting local transport authorities to identify credible short-term public charging opportunities for electric light commercial vehicle fleets. Building on TfSE's existing fleet electrification programme, the project will develop practical charging opportunity typologies, a streamlined screening framework for assessing potential locations, and worked examples illustrating how authorities can move from demand forecasts to an actionable pipeline of opportunities. The findings will be tested through the Fleet Electrification Working Group and shared across the region to support future delivery.

3. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

3.1 The **Freight Awareness Programme** e-training course for local authority transport, spatial planning and economic development officers was launched on 15 July 2026 via a Centre of Excellence webinar. It attracted over 50 attendees and received positive feedback. A recording of the webinar was sent to all attendees and those unable to attend. The course will remain available on the Centre of Excellence website and the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transport (CIHT) website.

3.2 The course provides transport and land use planners and policymakers with a better understanding of freight, including delivery and servicing requirements. It outlines the importance of the freight sector, how it works, the freight issues that need to be considered in transport and land-use planning policy and processes and provide solutions for managing freight movements efficiently and sustainably. A short guide for the freight sector on navigating the public sector has been prepared and shared with Logistics UK, the Road Haulage Association, and their members.

3.3 The **Wider South East Freight Forum** covers the geographic areas of TfSE, England's Economic Heartland, and Transport East, and aims to promote better understanding and good practice, and to foster greater partnership working between freight operators and the public sector.

3.4 The next meeting will be held on 22 October 2026. It will focus on the updated National Policy Planning Guidance (NPPG) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the planned update to the Department of Transport's (DfT's) Freight Plan, and an engagement session with the members of the Forum on TfSE's Freight Fuel Infrastructure Plan.

3.5 Work continues on the development of the innovative **TfSE Freight Fuel Infrastructure Strategy**. The freight and logistics sector is very important to the South East because:

- has 24,550 freight and logistics businesses, second only to London out of all UK regions (source: Nomis 2025);
- has over 300,000 freight and logistics employees, the highest number of logistics employees of all UK regions (source: Nomis 2024); and
- contributes £22,436,752,455 gross value added to the UK economy, second only to London (source ONS 2026).

3.6 The sector is undergoing a major shift in how it operates, with vehicle manufacturers and large freight fleet operators transitioning from diesel to alternatively fuelled vehicles. This is due to the government's net-zero targets for the industry set in both the UK and Europe. To support this transition, local authorities, energy suppliers and infrastructure developers will need to be prepared to facilitate it. Larger national operators are already making the necessary operational changes; however, smaller local operators lack access to the same level of information or infrastructure support to do this.

3.7 The study will provide much-needed regional evidence to enable realistic insight into what alternative-fuel infrastructure is required for different types of freight operators and vehicles, where it is needed, and the implications for energy supply, land use, and infrastructure planning in the region. It will strengthen the evidence base already gained from TfSE's EV charging infrastructure work. Drawing on relevant national evidence and existing studies about zero-emission freight infrastructure and energy supply resilience, the study will:

- help to inform infrastructure planning
- improve the practical support available to local authorities, operators and other stakeholders in the TfSE area
- assess how infrastructure needs will vary according to fleet composition, operator type and logistics patterns and
- identify the role of different infrastructure types and the implications for the energy system.

3.8 Work on freight related **guidance for local authorities** continues. This includes: the management of freight vehicles during local construction projects; how to improve local servicing and delivery functions by freight operators; and what the new DfT Local Transport Guidance for freight means for local transport authorities' programme delivery. The guidance will be delivered by March 2027. The outputs from this will be made available through TfSE's Centre of Excellence platform.

4. Rail

4.1 The TfSE Rail Strategy identified station accessibility and integration as one of the TfSE-wide priorities. To address this, TfSE has commissioned a **First Mile Last Mile Rail Integration Study**, and work began in August 2026. The study focuses on access to rail stations via sustainable modes of travel. Bus connections can be poorly timed, and rail services may not stop directly outside stations. Walking, wheeling, and cycling routes can be indirect, unattractive, or difficult to use, particularly where stations are located some distance from town and village centres.

4.2 The study will provide TfSE, local transport authorities, rail operators, bus operators and other partners with a clear evidence base and practical recommendations to improve sustainable access to rail stations across the TfSE area. Outcomes will include how access to stations could be improved; ways to reduce reliance on cars to access rail stations, which will also help address congestion, carbon emissions, and parking pressures; and improvements to the passenger experience through more inclusive access to rail for people without a car.

4.3 TfSE continues to work with England's Economic Heartland, Transport East, Network Rail, DfT and TfL as part of the **Wider South East Rail Partnership** to develop

a Wider South East rail and transport connectivity 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. It is due for delivery in March 2027.

4.4 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 A new version of the **Carbon Assessment Playbook** (CAP) has been developed by the DfT and the website that hosts it has been updated. The DfT is not expecting local authorities to update their Local Transport Delivery Plans as a result. The tool enables LTAs to identify baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero in their area, and to assess the carbon-reduction potential of transport interventions included in their Local Transport Plans.

5.2 The DfT's latest guidance on Local Transport Delivery Plans strengthened the role of carbon monitoring and reporting, moving it from a voluntary activity to a mandatory requirement. This update will ensure that the tool remains aligned with current national policy, guidance and evidence.

5.3 TfSE will continue to support authorities in applying the updated version of the CAP through the Centre of Excellence in the coming months.

6. Financial considerations

6.1 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 2026/27.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 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 its meeting in January 2027.

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