

TfSE Transport Forum
20 December 2022
Minutes
2-4pm

Item
1. Welcome and Apologies
<p>1.1 Geoff French (GF) (chair) welcomed the Transport Forum. This meeting was held virtually and Geoff explained how it would be managed.</p> <p>1.2 Geoff welcomed two new members, representing town and parish councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sarah Barker – Chair of Kent County Council Town and Parish councillors - Bob Franklin – Chairman of Burwash Parish Council <p>1.3 GF thanked the new members for their attendance, noting that it is important for us to ensure that we have effective and efficient representation with that very important group of stakeholders going forwards.</p> <p>1.4 GF informed the Board of the recent correspondence between members of the Forum with officers and Members of the Board, and noted that the process for the Transport Forum still remains that views raised within the meeting would be brought to subsequent Partnership Board meetings.</p> <p>1.5 GF further noted that the Transport Forum's terms of reference will be reviewed after the establishment of the audit and governance committee that will take place early in the next financial year. This will offer the opportunity to refresh the Forum and to recognise the move from strategy to implementation.</p> <p>1.6 GF provided more clarity on questions raised regarding the approach to the minutes and papers for both the Forum and Partnership Board, noting that the voices of the entire Forum are to be represented, but that moving forward we will ensure that comments are informed to the Board more appropriately.</p>
2. Minutes from Previous Meeting
<p>2.1 The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed, with a commitment to capture those comments raised by individuals at future meetings, and to ensure that this is included accordingly to Board papers.</p>
3. SIP Delivery Action Plan
<p>3.1 Sarah Valentine (SV) introduced this item and provided the membership with insight into the delivery plan for the strategic investment plan.</p> <p><u>Delivery Action Plan</u></p> <p>3.2 SV noted that the SIP contained some 280 multi-modal scheme and policy interventions that are required to be delivered in the South East over the next 28 years to realise the vision set out in the Transport Strategy.</p>

3.3 Delivery of these interventions will require input from a number of different partners working in collaboration, and the exact arrangements will vary from scheme to scheme.

3.4 A series of workshops with key delivery partners have been undertaken, which examined individual schemes in detail. The results of these discussions are being collated into a Delivery Action Plan for the SIP, setting out when, how and by whom the schemes will be progressed.

3.5 This document will be regularly reviewed and updated and will form the baseline from which future monitoring and evaluation of the SIP can be measured.

3.6 The development of this has been progressed to identify which schemes need to progress in the next three years and what support is needed to enable partners to deliver. While all schemes are priorities, we will begin to look at a prioritisation list of the SIP.

3.7 Due to external events and changing fiscal circumstances, we need to be able to respond to government priorities rapidly. All STBs are preparing to provide prioritised, evidenced advice across all modes of transport, should investment demands change in the future. Consequently, we are developing processes whereby we can identify 'Top 10' schemes either from the SIP in its entirety, or specifically for a particular mode or funding stream.

3.8 It was noted that the SIP delivery action plan will be delivered simultaneously in March with the strategic investment plan itself, which have involved extensive engagement with partners who are responsible for each scheme. There will be consultation with the Forum when individual schemes come forward.

3.9 The process of the delivery will follow the format of the Transport Strategy, as this was established as the baseline.

3.10 There was a suggestion for the prioritisation list of schemes to be cross modal, which was supported, but it was noted that presently Government fund schemes by single mode. It was further noted that schemes should demonstrate benefits nationally to accentuate the value added. SV clarified that through the area studies work that TfSE undertook, every scheme followed a multi criteria assessment to align with the transport strategy objectives: environment, economy and social, which would demonstrate these local and regional benefits.

3.11 SV iterated the importance of the alignment of schemes with new government priorities such as levelling up, but also with authorities' local transport plans (LTPs) and their particular targets and ambitions.

Common Analytical Framework

3.12 SV set out the intention for development of a common analytical framework (CAF) for the Forum. Regardless of the delivery route or partner, it is likely that many of the schemes within the SIP will require a business case to secure their funding.

3.13 Developing the business cases will require a suite of analytical tools that are collectively capable of assessing the impacts, benefits, and costs of the schemes to provide the necessary assurance to DfT and other funding/delivery partners that the schemes are worthy of delivery.

3.14 TfSE will gain an understanding as to what is needed to develop the SIP schemes, alongside a review of what is available.

3.15 There is the possibility of a collaborative piece of work across the seven STBs and DfT to develop the common approaches to data and analytical tools that will also benefit our constituent authorities.

3.16 The outputs of this project will include:

- An interim summary note of available tools and suitable tools for future strategy, implementation planning development and business case development; and
- A route map for the analytical framework development with a focus on the next three years.

3.17 The remainder of the DfT funding will be drawn down to fund this particular project.

Monitoring and Evaluation

3.18 A clear robust approach to monitoring and evaluation is needed to ensure the successful delivery of the interventions included in the SIP. It will be important to ensure this mechanism provides a clear line of sight from the transport strategy's vision, through to the Strategic Investment Plan's delivery. It will also be important to discern the outcomes and impacts of interventions at a regional level to understand how much they contribute to the SIP's (and wider TfSE) objectives.

3.19 The Transport Strategy sets out the strategic priorities and the key performance indicators (KPIs) that are intended to show how the strategy is progressing. The Area Studies built upon this and used the 'theory of change' links between the investment or policy input at one end of a logic map through to the expected outputs and impacts/outcomes at the other end.

3.20 To progress the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework a workshop was held recently with our constituent authorities to help inform the approach that we should take. The workshop considered development of a "State of the Region" annual report which would monitor the 'health' of the region against a number of key metrics which are linked to the outcomes and impacts the Strategy and SIP are seeking.

3.21 The main outcomes from the workshop were for further consideration to be given to the role(s) of TfSE in delivering the SIP, and whether targets per scheme should be set. There was support for schemes to undertake a post opening project evaluation (POPE), and there was an interest in exploring how this could be included as part of the development of a Centre of Excellence.

4. Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

4.1 Mark Valleley (MV) provided the Forum with a progress update on the electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy.

4.2 The objectives of this project align closely with those set out in the DfT's national EV infrastructure strategy. The intention of this strategy for TfSE, is to bring together stakeholders that are heavily involved in working on the roll out of EV infrastructure, to help us deliver an EV Strategy for the South East that will be as beneficial as possible.

4.3 A key component in the development of the strategy focuses on engagement. A Steering Group has been set up in order to review and validate the deliverables of this strategy. Additionally, there has been a Forum established which brings together and facilitates dialogue between LTAs, Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), Charge Point Operators (CPOs) and fleet operators to assist the roll out of public charge points. At the first meeting of the forum, attendees were invited to share feedback on the current challenges and barriers that they are facing with EV infrastructure roll out.

4.4 In addition, the seven STBs have recently set up a Focus Group which allows each STB to share information on the EV work we are individually undertaking, and also allows us to discuss the activities and engagements regarding EV roll outs. As a result, it was suggested that STBs need to highlight the need for a comprehensive energy policy. The nation is already being softened up to the idea of power cuts this winter and demand for the 'electrification of everything' will place further pressure on limited capacity.

4.5 MV noted that as part of the commission, DfT tasked TfSE to also undertake the electrification of fleet vehicles. MV notes that this is particularly complex, as it must consider those vehicle owners that charge their fleet vehicles in their residential homes.

4.6 It was noted that there is a particular focus on local transport authorities, but a query was raised to understand what engagement has been done with local planning authorities to create policy. MV notes that this will be more relevant for the delivery phase of this workstream, but in current strategy writing, its intention is to address gaps in supply.

5. Bus Back Better

5.1 Mark Valleley (MV) introduced the Forum to this DfT priority workstream and provided them with an update on progress.

5.2 This workstream has been developed in alignment with the national bus strategy (2021), to ensure that all local authorities, irrespective of funding allocated as part of their bus service improvement plan (BSIP) bids, would have support in the implementation of these plans.

5.3 A key component of this project sets out to improve collaboration and engagement with bus operators, which is key to developing enhanced partnerships.

5.4 This commission was awarded to Mott MacDonald and Arup, and progress has been made in identifying support packages to help LTAs implementation of BSIPs. These will be delivered via webinars, technical notes, one to ones and small group activities in the new year, concluding in April.

5.5 Monitoring and evaluation of these support packages will identify if there is a requirement for an extension of this workstream.

5.6 It was confirmed that this technical slide deck will be circulated with the membership.

6. Freight and Logistics Strategy

6.1 Alan Jones (AJ) reminded the Forum of the strategy that was launched in May 2022, which was the culmination of several years of scoping, planning and researching for the vision of the strategy.

6.2 The South East hosts a number of major international freight gateways of national importance and these gateways enable freight movements to and from the continent, and the rest of the UK.

6.3 As the UK transitions to a low-carbon economy, clean freight transportation will be key to achieving this.

6.4 The vision sets out the ambitions for 2040, which will push the South East into being a leading global region for net-zero carbon.

6.5 We are now developing our action plan, which brings together tangible actions to execute the strategy. It was noted that there is no single measure which will deliver all of the required changes. As this strategy spans to 2040, many of the measures will exist in various forms in the coming years. Packages of measures will need to be implemented in the short, medium and longer term.

6.6 An additional project under the freight strategy implementation commission is a wider reaching project which will address the measures of the action plan. TfSE have recently gone out to tender for this commission. This tender will look to manage the Freight Forum, produce technical studies and take forward the implementation of the freight strategy.

6.7 Further, TfSE are participating in a collaborative study with Transport East and England's Economic Heartland, to investigate where there will be a need across the highway network for alternative fuelling stations, providing both EV and hydrogen to freight vehicles. Phase two of this work will consider how to identify more specific locations for new facilities, which will be undertaken with a range of stakeholders, including planning authorities.

6.8 TfSE welcomed the inclusion of John Lewis onto the project, as per a suggestion by a member of the Forum, as they are in their early stages of trialling lighter goods vehicles as an alternative to heavy goods vehicles.

7. Future Mobility

7.1 Katie Lamb (KL) introduced herself to the Forum as the new Lead Transport Planner at TfSE.

7.2 KL reminded the Forum of the future mobility strategy and action plan that was developed and adopted last year. Implementation commenced in April through to September 2022, which involved reinvigorating the future mobility forum and engaging with local authorities via workshops.

7.3 There has also been future work scoped on technical studies, which will look at prioritisation of the action plan, to ensure it matches pace with the developments in future mobility.

7.4 We are now in phase 2 of the implementation, which will run until the end of May 2023. This phase is made up of three areas:

Engagement

In addition to the forum, there will be working groups that will offer focus on particular topics. Engagement will also be undertaken with research bodies, such as universities.

Technical

Due to the fast-paced nature of future mobility, we will be undertaking a short review of the action plan tasks to make sure we are still focusing on the most important tasks and plan ahead for future phases. The monitoring and evaluation to be done during the phase is looking at the signals, trends, and trajectories of various future mobility aspects in order to stay up to date on the latest information.

Briefs

Another aspect of Phase 2 is to develop briefs for future technical work. At this time, this includes a shared learning hub and mode propensity tool. The shared learning hub will offer a centralised database of knowledge and experiences on all things future mobility. The mode propensity tool will help identify which interventions will work best in various areas.

Technical/Briefs

Depending on the development of activities in the action plan, there will be either technical work or brief development for future technical work on piloting projects and future propulsions.

8. Decarbonisation

8.1 Mark Valleley (MV) took the Forum through the three workstreams that have developed under decarbonisation.

8.2 The first is the decarbonisation pathways report, which has previously been presented to the Forum. This report shows several trajectories to net zero, and which policies can be adopted to achieve this.

8.3 Next, we have worked on a carbon assessment tool, which is a collaborative project with England's Economic Heartland and Transport East, to help local transport authorities (LTAs) quantify their carbon reduction as part of their local transport plans. This commission will produce a tool which will enable them to respond to the upcoming transport guidance from DfT. It is the intention for the deliverable of this project to be finalised by the end of quarter two of 2023/24.

8.4 The data that will support this playbook and tool is being undertaken in a separate workstream, led by Midlands Connect.

8.5 MV noted that the work that TfSE has undertaken on QCR in relation to the SIP recognises that more stringent demand measures are required to get us to where we need to be in terms of carbon reduction. These trajectories are still to be confirmed and will be realised when the monitoring and evaluation of the SIP itself and additional workstreams are implemented.

8.6 In response to a query raised regarding inclusion of emission on the Strategic Road Network managed by National Highways and how they will affect the carbon trajectories, MV clarified that it would be important to be able to distinguish between carbon emissions from trips originating within each local transport authority area, as against those from through traffic over which the local transport authority had no control. An outcome we are keen to gain from this tool is for this information to be available to partners so that they understand the overall scale of emissions for their area, and what they have control over.

8.7 Thirdly, TfSE have established a regional decarbonisation forum which meets bi-monthly with key stakeholders. This forum shares best practice and develops understanding in line with the emerging government guidance.

8.8 It was noted that some of the data used in the national decarbonisation strategy is currently subject to a Freedom of Information Request, and a query was raised to understand if this outcome will affect this tool. MV noted that as far as possible the development, and release of the tool would be coordinated to be delivered at the same time as the final version of the QCR guidance is released.

8.9 The FOI relating to the data that was used to generate the trajectories within transport decarbonisation plans does not affect the understanding of likely carbon effects from local transport measures as this is being conducted via desktop research.

8.10 The membership supported the idea that the tool will add benefit and should be offered to local authorities for use so that they can apply it to their local transport plans.

9. Future Technical Work Programme

9.1 Active Travel: Katie Lamb (KL) offered the Forum an interactive session on the development of a regional active travel. This offered the membership the opportunity to rank the biggest barriers to using active travel. The options were:

- Infrastructure non-existent, inconsistent, or substandard

- Lack of amenities (cycle parking, benches, bathroom facilities, storage)
- Safety concerns (traffic, crossings, speeds, lighting)
- Distance and disability (daily/frequent travel isn't feasible to do via active travel)
- Route/journey planning and wayfinding/signage

9.2 The results demonstrated that members of the Forum ranked infrastructure issues the highest, followed by safety, and then distance and disability.

9.3 KL thanked the Forum for their feedback and noted that their responses help us starting to think about the active travel strategy and what is needed for the region. For those who were unable to respond during the meeting, a link to the questions can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/e/pQ8yabtxsf>. Feel free to submit a response to this form, even if you were able to answer during the Forum.

9.4 KL informed the Forum that engagement has taken place with England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Western Gateway, who are both progressing on their own regional active travel strategies and will use their lessons learned to inform the development of our own strategy.

9.5 The Forum welcomed the idea of safety from a security perspective (ie women and girls for active travel) particularly in regards to walking/cycling to and from transport hubs, which supports work being undertaken at present by partners. KL confirmed that hub connections will be one of the focuses of the active travel strategy.

9.6 Transport Strategy refresh: MV informed the Forum that TfSE are commencing the refresh of our Transport Strategy, which is required to be completed by 2025 as part of our commitment to a 5 year refresh, and noted that there are several challenges that TfSE face in doing this, such as new DfT guidance and priorities (Levelling Up, Bus Back Better, Decarbonisation agenda), the change in the economy and Brexit.

9.7 A key component of this will be engaging with stakeholders to shape the scope of the work programme.

9.8 MV noted that we are looking for a modal shift in the transport strategy but recognises that the sustainable forms of transport are facing some challenges from a funding perspective.

9.9 It was suggested that some of the challenges that TfSE face should be categorised as macro issues that could affect the resilience of the plan, and its ability to react to change, particularly if behaviour is different to assumptions in 2019/20.

9.10 Interest was shown for the refresh of the Transport Strategy from the town and parish councils, and it was confirmed that engagement will be undertaken to include those stakeholders in the consultation and delivery of the strategy.

10. Summary of forum comments for the Partnership Board

10.1 Geoff French (GF) acknowledged the earlier concerns regarding processing feedback back to the Board via minutes and agreed that comments today will be captured and reported on 23 January Board Meeting.

10.2 Noted that any suggestions on February Transport Forum agenda items are welcome via the TfSE secretariat.

11.AOB

11.1 No other business was raised.

11.2 Geoff thanked the membership for their contribution over the past year and look forward to seeing members at the next meeting in February.

DRAFT