

**TfSE Transport Forum
8 November 2022
Minutes
2-3:30pm**

| Item |
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| <p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Geoff French (GF) (chair) welcomed the Transport Forum. This meeting was held virtually and Geoff explained how it would be managed.</p> <p>GF welcomed one new member to the Transport Forum which demonstrates the continued interest in engaging with the work of TfSE. The new members are detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kelly Sharp, who joins us from Wealden District Council <p>GF also welcomed Steven Bishop of Steer as the guest speaker for the Forum.</p> |
| <p>2. Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>2.1 The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.</p> <p>2.2 Geoff French (GF) noted that the actions raised from the previous meeting were brought to the attention of the Board on 26 September, and that consideration is being given to the membership of the Transport Forum, to ensure it has disabled representation.</p> |
| <p>3. SIP Consultation and Progress Update</p> <p>3.1 Rupert Clubb (RC) introduced the strategic investment plan for the Forum, noting that it has been the culmination of five years of hard work which has come together to form this ambitious plan. RC thanked the membership for their input throughout this period.</p> <p>3.2 Rupert Clubb introduced Rachel Ford, (RF) who informed the Forum of the process that was in regard to the recent consultation. It was noted that all responses have been analysed as equal and used to inform the final SIP. Rachel introduced the Forum to Lucy Dixon-Thompson (LDT), who provided the Forum with results of the recent 12-week public consultation that closed on 12 September 2022.</p> <p>3.3 Lucy Dixon-Thompson (LDT) took the Forum through the high-level statistics of the consultation, noting that it ran for 12 weeks, noting that of the 641 consultation responses, 422 were completed via the survey platform, 88 were written responses via email or letter, and a further 131 were received via the Transport Action Network (TAN) campaign. It was noted that TfSE were pleased with the response rate and geographical spread of the consultation responses.</p> <p>3.4 LDT provided the Forum with quantitative response headlines, presenting the wide geographical reach and demographic splits. LDT remarked that for the question within the consultation that asked, 'which investment priorities do you feel are important for the SIP to deliver', while 'decarbonisation and environment' was selected as the most important overall investment priority for the SIP, free text responses to the same question showed that people felt</p> |

strongly that TfSE should prioritise improvements to public transport, in turn reducing car use and tackling climate change.

3.5 For the qualitative response headlines, LDT introduced Steven Bishop (SB) of Steer, who took the Forum through the key themes that emerged as a result of the consultation. These included decarbonisation, public transport, and active travel to name a few. In addition to the thematic comments, all stakeholder comments have been coded and analysed as well as over 550 key stakeholder comments that have been addressed on a line-by-line basis. This combined analysis has informed the proposed changes to the SIP.

3.6 SB provided an in-depth presentation on the responses taken to each key theme, to ensure that the narrative accurately reflects the analysis taken from the consultation.

Decarbonisation

For decarbonisation, notable updates include a reiteration of commitment to net zero carbon from travel in the region by 2050 at the latest, and we have ensured content has been updated to reflect the urgency given to addressing the climate emergency. Further emphasis has been given to behaviour change, integrated planning and digital technologies.

Public Transport

For public transport, we have reiterated the importance of accessible, affordable, integrated, reliable and attractive public transport in all its forms and offered a clarification on what is meant by 'mass transit'.

Active Travel

Recognising the importance of active travel, which must be in both local and regional connectivity, with the SIP identifying several enhancements to the National Cycle Network (NCN) while also supporting and helping better connect local infrastructure improvement schemes such as those contained within Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Highways

Highways interventions have been clarified within the SIP, to ensure importance of integrated planning and digital technology reduce the need to travel by motorised methods. It has also been made clearer that the number of interventions within the plan focus on multi-modal, safety improvements, and delivery of freight. It was noted that these will also de-conflict strategic and local traffic around built-up areas, freeing up road space for active travel and public transport.

Connectivity

In response to the connectivity theme, it has been made much clearer that greater transport choices are imperative, with an emphasis on improved connectivity needing to be achieved through improved public transport infrastructure and services and active travel infrastructure before private cars, even where these are electric.

Costs and Benefits

Notable updates for the costs and benefits have been rectified to include commentary around the public health and personal wellbeing benefits of SIP interventions have been added. The potential for public transport to deliver benefits related to alleviation of cost-of-living crisis, supporting development and delivering affordable housing, and improving accessibility and reducing deprivation has been more clearly explained.

Rural Transport

Greater clarity has been offered on potential for transport to improve accessibility and help reduce deprivation in rural communities. There has been a commitment to develop a policy statement on rural mobility, which TfSE are engaging with other sub-national transport bodies (STBs) and local partners to understand the evidence underpinning the challenges and opportunities for rural transport and service provision.

Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA)

It was noted that while 1% of all comments related to the ISA, it was felt that these should be addressed. The context of the ISA has been updated to reflect the Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995. It was also noted that while some comments state that the document is too scientifically complex, it is a technical document that follows legislative guidance.

General Comments

We have developed a technical document which should provide readers with additional information about the interventions and evidence base used in development of the SIP and individual proposed projects. Assessment of the deliverability of the plan has been made throughout the development of the SIP and supporting Area Studies programmes. Consideration has been given proportionately to affordability, engineering, feasibility, stakeholder acceptance and associated risks.

More can be found within the presentation on our website: [Transport Forum - Transport for the South East](#).

3.7 RF informed the membership of the next steps for the SIP. It will be presented for approval at the subsequent meeting on 14 November, which will then allow our local authorities to take it through their democratic processes if required. Next, we will be presenting the final SIP for sign off in March 2023 to our Board and, pending approval, will be taking a physical copy to government.

3.8 There was an opportunity for questions from the membership. The first that was raised firstly welcomed the strengthened emphasis on Active Travel within the SIP, but wondered whether it went far enough to address changes required to reach net carbon by 2050. SB noted that the trajectories to aid decarbonisation via reduction in tailpipe emissions delivered by SIP interventions would lead to a further 15% reduction in emissions on top of government plans, which would be a very good result. It was noted that there will be requirement as each intervention is developed to assess the carbon impacts.

3.9 In response to a query raised on the inclusion of consultation responses that came in via email and letters, LDT confirmed that all responses have been analysed on a line-by-line basis and used to inform the latest iteration of the SIP. LDT did note that the only element that they were not included in the statistics was on the percentage results of the SIP priority interventions for delivery, as this was a direct question within the consultation survey.

3.10 One view was that a further 25% is required on car use reduction, regardless of electrification, quoting Antonio Guterres' 'Highway to Climate Hell' to highlight the growing carbon emissions. The suggestion was for further consideration to be given to active travel, which was supported by TfSE but noted that in relation to local active travel schemes, those working within a local authority are best placed to put forward these schemes as they are familiar with their patch and political context. RC went on to inform the Forum that through development of a centre of excellence, capacity and capability will be assessed throughout the region, to be able to uplift skills areas, which will likely include developing business cases for active travel schemes.

3.11 A query was raised regarding what support TfSE would be offering local authorities that are presently developing their active travel schemes or considering how they can involve them in future plans. It was confirmed that TfSE are working at length to communicate with Active Travel England to assist their support to local authorities, and how best we engage with them in future.

3.12 Support was offered for highway schemes by several forum members, stating that they benefit not only active travel and public transport, but also freight. The movement of goods is imperative to the SIP, whether delivered via road or rail and are further supported by additional workstreams that are underway at TfSE. RC offered comment, stating that both the strategic road network (SRN) and major road network (MRN) allow for effective movement of freight, and our interventions should align with these plans and policy, further stating that the SIP will not be static but flexible to adapt with any future changes.

3.13 Sustrans offered their support of the SIP and welcomed the greater emphasis and recognition of first/last mile journeys being taken by active travel and what steps are being taken to address this. They further noted that there has been conflation surrounding highways interventions and recognise that they include multiple modes such as public transport and active travel, such as foot and cycle paths. A suggestion was offered to outline further within packages, exactly what modes are included per highway intervention.

3.14 RC concluded that the consultation has been a great opportunity to involve a wide range of stakeholders, especially those on the Forum. This involvement has been appreciated, not just for the consultation, but since TfSE's establishment.

4. SIP Delivery

4.1 Sarah Valentine provided the Forum with the intended approach to the delivery of the SIP, which will take the work programme from strategy to implementation and require many different partners working together.

4.2 SV presented the delivery action plan development, which has commenced by stakeholder engagement with the different delivery partners, and results of these discussions will be collated into the Delivery Action Plan.

4.3 In addition to the Delivery Action Plan, the development of an analytical framework is in progress. This is being developed to aid business cases, which will require a suite of analytical tools that will be collectively capable of assessing the impacts, benefits and costs of the schemes to provide the necessary assurance to the DfT and other funding/delivery partners that the schemes are worthy of delivery.

4.4 A final development on the SIP next steps will be the monitoring and evaluation plan. This will relate to the key priorities of the SIP, ensuring our aims and objectives are being delivered.

4.5 A robust approach is needed to ensure the successful delivery of interventions included in the SIP. A 'State of the Region' annual monitoring could add considerable value to TfSE and our partners by providing an annual report which collates and presents several big-picture metrics such as economy, environment and social inclusion. This will also offer more specific transport-led outputs which are directly linked to the stated objectives of the Transport Strategy and the SIP. This report will set out trajectories for those metrics and demonstrate each year whether those are being met.

5. Summary of comments for the Board

5.1 GF informed the Forum of the next steps, which will be working with TfSE to provide a paper for the Board meeting on Monday 14 November, at which a verbal update will be offered on the feedback collected from the membership.

5.2 RC concluded by recognising that there will be difference in opinion when approaching a plan of this size, but it was recognised having one voice to present to government will strengthen the case for investment in the south east.

6. AOB

6.1 Geoff French (GF) offered the Board the opportunity to consider a shortened meeting on 20 December, which was agreed subject to further correspondence with the membership.

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