

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Report of Executive Director Neighbourhoods &
Environment

To

Cabinet

On

29 September 2022

Report prepared by: Karen Gearing Principal Engineer –
Strategy

Agenda
Item No.

Endorsement of Transport East Transport Strategy

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Place Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Councillor Steven Wakefield - Cabinet Member for Highways,
Transport and Parking
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Transport East is a Sub-National Transport Body comprising Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock and was set up to provide a single voice for the future of transport in the Eastern Region. Department for Transport (DfT) requested Transport East to prepare a Transport Strategy to set the direction for transport in the region to 2050 and identify the transport investment needed.
- 1.2 The Transport Strategy underwent an 8 week consultation period and was provided approval from the 11 July 2022 Transport East Forum to seek endorsement of the Transport Strategy from the Local Transport Authority members.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to endorse the Transport East Transport Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Cabinet take note of the Transport Strategy and agree that Southend-on-Sea City Council, in its capacity as Local Transport Authority endorse the Transport East Transport Strategy appended to this report.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Transport East is the non-statutory Sub-National Transport Body for the east region and is one of seven sub-national transport bodies that cover all of England outside of London. Transport East was formed in 2018 and comprises Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend and Thurrock. It is an informal body and has

been tasked by the Department for Transport to produce a non-statutory regional Transport Strategy.

- 3.2 Government have made it clear that, whilst not a statutory document, Transport East's Transport Strategy (the Strategy) is vital to act as a framework for future strategic transport investment in the East, and the Transport East partnership, using the strategy as a guide, will be responsible for providing advice on future priorities to the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 3.3 The Strategy for the region aims to fully support its members shared ambitions for economic growth, quality of life and prosperity. The Strategy is appended to this report (Appendix 1).
- 3.4 Transport East is governed by the Transport East Forum and is led by Councillors from Local Transport Authorities (including Southend), District Planning Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Chamber of Commerce and delivery partners National Highways, Department for Transport and Network Rail. Only political representatives on the Forum are able to vote and Cllr Wakefield is Southend-on-Sea City Council's representative at the Forum.
- 3.5 Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) is closely involved in the operations of Transport East through the Senior Officers Group (TESOG) and have assisted with the development of the Strategy over the last 2 years with the Transport East team and their consultants. TESOG provide technical and professional advice drawn from the Local Transport Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, district authorities, infrastructure agencies and transport service providers.
- 3.6 The Strategy's Vision is '*A thriving Eastern region with safe, efficient and net-zero transport networks advancing a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.*' The Strategy identifies four key priorities for the east that strongly reflect the views captured from across the region including Southend:
 1. Decarbonising transport to Net Zero
 2. Connecting growing towns and cities
 3. Energising coastal and rural communities
 4. Unlocking global gateways
- 3.7 Decarbonising transport is identified as a key priority and its theme runs through each of the key priorities. Each key priority has a number of goals to identify the pathway to achieve the Strategy's vision.
- 3.8 The Strategy's priorities fully align with National Policy, the current Local Transport Plan 3 and emerging Local Transport Plan 4 (which is in its early stages) as shown in the table below. The Strategy will inform the developing Local Plan which is currently being updated. The Strategy also supports Southend's 2050 Ambitions, Southend's Green City Action Plan, Southend's Bus Service Improvement Plan, our Net Zero Ambitions and Levelling Up Agenda through improved access to jobs, skills, training and services.

Table 3.8.1 Showing Alignment of Themes and Priorities

LTP 3 Themes	TE – Transport Strategy Priorities	LTP 4 Emerging Themes
1. A thriving and sustainable local economy in the City.	2. Connecting growing towns and cities. 3. Energising coastal and rural communities.	1. A City of opportunity and prosperity for everyone.
2. Minimise environmental impact, promote sustainability for a greener City.	1. Decarbonising transport to Net Zero.	2. A smart transport system that meets the needs of all users while supporting decarbonisation and a sustainable, green City.
3. A safer City.		3. A City where our residents are safe, well and active.
4. Reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing and for a more accessible City.	3. Energising coastal and rural communities. 4. Unlocking global gateways.	1. A City of opportunity and prosperity for everyone.

3.9 The Strategy also identifies six core strategic transport corridors that connect the East of England and provide onward connectivity to key UK destinations. These corridors are key to our national economy, the economy of the east and to the economy of Southend:

- Midlands – Kings Lynn – Norwich – Great Yarmouth
- London – Chelmsford – Colchester – Ipswich – Norwich and Suffolk Coast
- Norfolk and Suffolk – Cambridge – Midlands and Southwest
- Kings Lynn – Cambridge – Harlow – London
- Stansted – Braintree – Colchester – Harwich – Clacton
- South Essex: London – Thurrock – Basildon – Southend

3.10 Southend is located within the South Essex – London - Thurrock – Basildon – Southend corridor. The Southend corridor not only extends to London but also connects to neighbouring areas south across the Thames to Kent and north towards Chelmsford and greater Essex. The corridors reflect the Strategy’s place-based approach and linking key destinations such as Southend within, and beyond the Transport East region. The corridors include roads, rail, ports and airports and the strategy recognises the strategic importance of Southend within the region for its destination and tourism. The corridors will remain critical throughout the life of the Strategy which recognises further investment is needed on the corridors if Southend and the rest of the east region is to reach its potential as a thriving, connected, multi-centred economy, whilst reducing carbon emissions.

- 3.11 The Strategy supports the work of Opportunity South Essex and the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) (comprising of Southend, Thurrock, Rochford, Castle Point, Brentwood and Basildon) to drive forward progress in this corridor and for UK prosperity. The Strategy also supports ASELA's vision to deliver a decarbonised, integrated public transport system, rebalance modal priorities in favour of active and sustainable modes. With walking, cycling and greener public transport to become the more appealing and practical choice which will be supported by quality placemaking initiatives improving public realm regeneration and community initiatives. Also reducing carbon emissions with the aim for South Essex to become carbon neutral ahead of national targets

4. Other Options

- 4.1 Transport East has no formal status and the Strategy is not a formal statutory document however, it's purpose is to advise DfT of the priorities in the east region and the collective voice of Transport East. Transport East propose to submit the Strategy to the Secretary of State for Transport later this year. If Southend does not endorse the Strategy it could undermine the strategy (and the one voice of the region) and may make it even more difficult for Southend, and possibly the whole of the region, to attract DfT funding. This option is therefore not recommended.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 Cabinet is being asked to endorse the Strategy, not adopt it. The Strategy fully aligns and supports our current Local Transport Plan 3, will inform and support the emerging Local Plan and Local Transport Plan 4. The Strategy supports Southend's 2050 ambitions, Southend's Green City Action Plan, our Net Zero ambitions and levelling up agenda through improved access to jobs, skills, training and services.
- 5.2 The Strategy supports the work of Opportunity South Essex and the Association of South Essex Local Authorities vision to deliver a decarbonised, integrated public transport system. Rebalance modal priorities in favour of active and sustainable modes and reducing carbon emissions with the aim for South Essex to become carbon neutral ahead of national targets.
- 5.3 Department for Transport tasked Transport East to develop a Transport Strategy to set a single voice for the future strategic transport investment in the East Region. Endorsing the Strategy will strengthen Southend's and the Region's strategic case to government in future bids for funding.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map
- 6.2 The Strategy has been developed independently by Transport East and reflects views of partners from across the East of England; however, SCC has had many opportunities to input into the strategy during its development and the Transport East Transport Strategy is closely aligned with the outcomes

identified Southend's 2050 ambitions. In particular, the Strategy is closely aligned with the delivery of the Connected and Smart outcomes.

6.3 Transport East has also identified a number of wider outcomes the Transport Strategy will help:

- Reducing transport carbon emissions to net zero by 2040;
- Promoting active, healthy and safe lives for all;
- Promoting and supporting a productive, sustainable and diverse economy;
- Supporting access to education, training and employment opportunities for all;
- Helping our growing areas to develop sustainably to create high quality, inclusive, distinctive and resilient places to live, work and visit;
- Facilitating the sustainable energy sector;
- Protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.

The Strategy does not conflict with the current Local Transport Plan and is aligned with the developing Local Transport Plan 4.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from endorsing the Strategy. Transport East is primarily funded by The Department for Transport (DfT) with contributions from local transport authorities and SCC's annual contribution is currently £24.2k. Being a member of Transport East provides a vehicle to:

- Share technical expertise and resources across the partners to assist with the development of a coherent and integrated transport network which is better able to respond to the demands of growth and changing technology;
- Provide a strong, loud and collective regional voice in the national planning, prioritisation and delivery of strategic transport improvements, helping to ensure investment decisions are locally supported, evidence-led, joined-up and take a strategic long-term approach;
- Enable a 'single voice' engagement with the Department for Transport, infrastructure agencies (such as Highways England and Network Rail) and service providers (such as bus and train operating companies), and the East of England's major ports and airports;
- Provide leadership and strategic oversight on strategic transport priorities which cross local authority or regional boundaries.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 The amended Local Transport Act 2008 provides for the creation of statutory sub-national transport bodies who exercise transport functions, including the production and adoption of a Transport Strategy. Only Transport for the North has created a statutory body. The remaining six sub-national bodies, including Transport East, are informal groups and have no statutory powers.

6.3.2 Although Transport East does not have statutory powers, it is influential in terms of attracting and directing investment in the area and in co-ordinating the activities with local authorities.

6.3.3 The 4 key themes of LTP3 are: a thriving and sustainable local economy in the City; minimise environmental impact; promote sustainability for a greener City; a safer City; reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing and for a more accessible City which are aligned with the 4 key priorities of the Strategy which are: decarbonising transport to net zero; connecting growing towns and cities; energising coastal and rural communities; unlocking global gateways.

6.4 People Implications

6.4.1 There are no people implications associated with this report.

6.5 Property Implications

6.5.1 There are no property implications associated with this report.

6.6 Consultation

6.6.1 The final strategy takes account of the outcome of the region-wide public Consultation and the Transport East Consultation Report is attached at Appendix 2. 514 completed questionnaires and a further 76 emails were received in response to the Consultation. Southend residents were advised of the Consultation via 'Your say Southend', Southend Echo, social media and was also promoted in the monthly newsletter. Whilst the Strategy was broadly supported, some respondents expressed the view that there was a conflict between decarbonisation and road building. As a result of the Consultation, several changes were made to the Consultation draft of the Strategy including:

- A revised Vision that now references decarbonisation. *"A thriving Eastern region with safe, efficient and net-zero transport networks advancing a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come."*
- The order of the decarbonisation goals has been altered to better reflect the need to decarbonise all transport. Consultation responses commented that the strategy was focussing on decarbonising transport related to growth. The order of the four goals has changed to; reduce the need to travel, shift mode, change fuel, support zero carbon growth. The Strategy also includes a commitment to improve carbon emission evidence and to develop a transport carbon budget for the region.
- The previous Ports and Airports sections have been combined into a single "gateways" section resulting in reduced duplication and a clearer set of goals and activities.
- Strengthened references to linkages between rural and urban areas. Rural and urban issues were seen as unconnected in the draft strategy.
- More emphasis on Levelling Up, in line with national government policy objectives, and how transport can support social inclusion agendas.
- Strengthened reference to cross boundary relationships: London, England's Economic Heartland region and Transport for the Southeast.

- Minor corrections and clarifications to address specific issues raised during Consultation.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7.1 Transport East commissioned an independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) of the Transport Strategy to assess social, economic and environmental impacts and inform and improve the Transport Strategy. The ISA is currently being updated following public consultation responses and includes an Equality Impact Assessment.

6.7.2 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in the Strategy will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

6.8 Risk Assessment

6.8.1 Government have made it clear that the Strategy is vital to act as a framework for future strategic transport investment in the East, and the Transport East partnership, using the Strategy, will be responsible for providing advice on future priorities to the Secretary of State for Transport.

6.9 Value for Money

6.9.1 Endorsing the Strategy does not directly commit SCC to spend or allocate any funds.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

6.10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications associated with this report.

6.11 Environmental Impact

6.11.1 The Strategy supports decarbonising transport which is fully aligned to SCC's Green Action Plan and 2050 Ambition. An independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) of the Strategy was undertaken to assess social, economic and environmental impacts and inform and improve the Transport Strategy. The ISA is being updated following the public consultation responses and includes:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Community Safety Assessment (CSA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Natural Capital Assessment (NCA)

7. Background Papers

7.1 Local Transport Plan 3.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 Transport East Transport Strategy.
- 8.2 Appendix 2 Transport Strategy Consultation Report.