

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee

Date: 4 February 2020

Reporting officer: Assistant Director (Planning)

Subject: Transport for South East Draft Plan Consultation

Purpose and summary of report:

Provide a brief summary of the Transport for South East Draft Plan, the Borough Councils response and the long term issues to be addressed. A presentation will be made.

Recommendations:

1. Members views are invited on the Draft Transport Strategy for the South East and the role of Planning Authorities in taking this forward and the forthcoming area studies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Local Transport Act 2007 (as amended in 2017) it is now possible to create a sub-national transport body combining existing Transport Authorities, and for them to prepare a Transport Strategy. Transport for the South East (TfSE) has recently consulted on a draft transport strategy
- 1.2 TfSE is a shadow made up of Kent CC, East Sussex CC, West Sussex CC, Surrey CC and the unitary authorities of Medway, Brighton & Hove, Portsmouth, Southampton, Isle of White and those making up Berkshire. It does not directly involve District Councils in their role as Planning Authorities as the legislation is only concerned with Transport Authorities (though Unitary Councils are also Planning Authorities).
- 1.3 In May 2019 TfSE carried out a consultation on whether they should be move from being a shadow body to a statutory one. At the time of that consultation the then SoS for Transport stated that it was not intended to create anymore such bodies. Transport for the North is the only current body with statutory status. With a new Government this position may change and TfSE has held discussions with Government on progressing
- 1.4 It is important to emphasise that the sub-national transport bodies are not like Transport for London as they do not exercise any direct control over the provision of transport services. Highways England (for the strategic network) and local transport authorities remain responsible for the roads etc. and their detailed

transport plans. Network Rail and franchisees for the rail system (and therefore the Department for Transport as their sponsor).

2. TfSE Draft Strategy

- 2.1 A response has been sent to the consultation, authorised by the Strategic Environment Portfolio holder, however this is an opportunity for Members to consider the draft strategy and how they would like to see it evolve in the future. TfSE are going to carry out further area studies, which will include North Kent (due to start in March). The TfSE summary document is attached as Appendix 2 and the Borough Council response as Appendix 3.
- 2.2 The South East, as defined here, tends to be seen as part of London whereas it has a number of specific characteristics including strong radial routes, poor orbital connections, very large areas of landscape and nature conservation constraints, and areas of affluence counterbalanced by pockets of deprivation, especially coastal communities. It also contains a number of international gateways including Dover & Southampton ports, Channel Tunnel, Gatwick Airport with Heathrow Airport just on the boundary which cause particular transport challenges.
- 2.3 The overall aim is to move from a 'predict and provide' methodology to 'decide and provide' approach in a context of encouraging economic development in a sustainable way, improving health and wellbeing and protecting the environment. A shift from planning for vehicles to people and places. This is clearly a long term process moving towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- 2.4 A number of challenges are highlighted, along with possible approaches based on known projects or studies. Examples relevant to Gravesham including M25 congestion, Dartford Crossing congestion, Lower Thames Crossing, rail capacity constraints and Crossrail extension. In the longer term there are the major uncertainties about how technology is going to impact on how travel is going to occur (e.g. autonomous vehicles) and future demand for trips (e.g. changing work patterns).
- 2.5 The Borough Council's main comments were:
 - The current lack of a clear mechanism to integrate Local Plans and the draft Transport Strategy
 - The strength and urgency needed to tackle the issues of air quality and decarbonisation
 - Lack of clarity on how the draft Strategy can effectively be used to prioritise projects including reviewing those that are not being currently implemented
 - The degree of influence over other bodies such as the LEP's, Highways England, Network Rail and Central Government to ensure implementation
 - The Thames is not treated as a transport corridor in its own right
 - The draft strategy supports the Lower Thames Crossing, which this Council opposes, but it does not address it as a strategic corridor in explicitly include it in the Strategic Environmental Assessment

3. Presentation

- 3.1 There will be a brief presentation to stimulate debate.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 The Draft Transport Strategy for the South East and supporting documents can be found at <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/transport-strategy/>
- 4.2 The summary document can be found at <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TfSE-Draft-Transport-Strategy-Executive-Summary.pdf>

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	None
Finance and Value for Money	None
Risk Assessment	If adopted the Transport for Southeast Transport Strategy would be a material consideration in the preparation of the Local Plan
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i>
	<p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner’s Office website via the above links.</p>
	<p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p>
	<p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p>
	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. Neutral</p>
	<i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i>
Corporate Plan	#1 People, #2 Place & #3 Progress
Crime and Disorder	No relevant
Digital and website implications	None
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	None