

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	6 March 2025
Title:	Draft Regional Transport Strategy - Consultation Response
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the County County's response to consultation on the regional transport strategy refresh.

Recommendation

2. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the proposed changes to the Transport for the South East (TfSE) Regional Transport Strategy and approves the submission of Hampshire County Council's response to the consultation on the strategy refresh.

Executive Summary

3. This paper seeks to summarise Hampshire County Council's response to the TfSE Regional Transport Strategy refresh consultation. The strategy refresh presents a future-focused vision built around people and the places they live, work and do business; a vision that aligns with Hampshire's 2050 vision and the adopted Local Transport Plan 4.

Contextual information

4. Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the Sub-National Transport Body (SNTB) for South East England. It encompasses a partnership of sixteen constituent Local Transport Authorities, including Hampshire County Council. County Council Officers have been actively engaged in the work of TfSE. The County Council is also represented on the TfSE Partnership Board.
5. TfSE is a sub national transport body in shadow form and so has no statutory status. The main role of TfSE is to advise the Government and 'to speak as one voice' on behalf of the region on transport investment priorities.
6. TfSE published a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in 2020 which is supported by a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) published in 2023. These together provide

a framework for investment in strategic transport interventions to 2050. TfSE is currently consulting on a refresh of the RTS.

7. TfSE has highlighted that with a post covid change in travel behaviours, a changing national policy and funding framework and now a new Government that the current RTS was becoming out of date and launched a refresh process earlier this year. The County Council has been fully engaged in the development process at both officer and member level. As such, the draft refresh is already broadly aligned with County Council objectives.
8. The draft proposals for the RTS are considered evolutionary and they do not fundamentally change the regional approach of priorities. There is a greater emphasis on social inclusion and significant work has been undertaken by TfSE to engage with representative groups of people with protected characteristics and excluded communities. The proposals remain compatible with and complementary to the Hampshire LTP and, on that basis, can be welcomed.
9. Public consultation is underway on the draft refresh, which is open until 7 March 2025. A draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix A to the report. As would be expected, given the involvement of the County Council in the development of the refresh document, the proposed response is broadly supportive of the proposed approach. It should be noted that as a member of TfSE the RTS should be viewed as Hampshire Policy and so it is important that we are in agreement with it.
10. During the process of developing the draft strategy the Government has announced that it will be developing a new national transport strategy. TfSE has considered this issue and included the following text in its report *“The Government has now started work on the development of an Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS) which is due to be published in Summer 2025. Although the INTS is at a very early stage of development, a number of the themes which are likely to guide its development have recently been announced. ... Even at this early stage, there is good alignment between these emerging themes and the five Missions that TfSE will seek to achieve to deliver our 2050 Vision. This has been confirmed through engagement with the Department for Transport as part of the development of the Draft Strategy, where we received comments indicating good broad alignment between the Draft Strategy and the DfT’s Missions. We will continue to closely monitor the development of the INTS and seek to engage in its development as appropriate. The Partnership Board will be advised of any modifications that are deemed necessary to ensure close alignment between the INTS and the Draft Transport Strategy.”*
11. It is not clear what the future arrangements between TfSE and future Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) in the region will be - and whether TfSE (or some successor body) will be needed once any future MCA is in place for Hampshire and other County areas.

Draft Response

12. The draft proposed response is contained in Appendix A. The proposed response is generally very supportive of the proposed revision, which could be expected as HCC has been involved in its development.

13. The proposed response does highlight some potential enhancements to the RTS, most significantly asking TfSE to give greater emphasis to public health. That response does also highlight some potential omissions from the RTS including a number of issues and schemes and reference to supporting some deprived/excluded areas within Hampshire. Specifically, these are –
- the need to include Gosport and Leigh Park in the list of excluded coastal communities with need for enhanced connectivity
 - A326 and bringing A34 to motorway standard
 - ensuring that public transport schemes in north Hampshire are properly represented and labelled
 - the need to secure sustainable long term funding streams for maintenance.

Finance

14. There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed response to the TfSE consultation. The staff time taken to review the proposals and engage with TfSE is included within core revenue budgets as business as usual activity. Indirectly it is important that the strategy reflects Hampshire's needs and that key Hampshire schemes have a good foundation within the strategy as this increases the County Council's chance of being successful in securing national funding for schemes benefiting the residents, businesses and visitors of Hampshire.
15. The Regional Transport Strategy will have an impact on the allocation of transport investment in the future, so it is important for the RTS to align with County Council objectives, and this is reflected in the response.

Consultation and Equalities

16. This report outlines Hampshire County Council's response to the consultation undertaken by TfSE. To inform the draft strategy and supplement the associated consultation, engagement, consultation and co-creation exercises have been undertaken with groups who have been traditionally excluded from transport services and infrastructure. This activity resulted in the following key findings:
- the population of the South East is generally older than the national average, with greater proportions of people aged 65 and over, and aged 80 and over. Berkshire and north Kent have higher proportions of younger people (under 19), while the rural and coastal parts of the region to the south have a higher proportion of older people (over 80)
 - the largest proportions of the population identifying as having no religion are found in towns and cities such as Brighton, Southampton and Hastings. The largest proportions of the population identifying as Christian can be found in the region's rural hinterlands. People identifying as Hindu and Sikh are clustered in the North of the TfSE area
 - the region's LGBTQ+ population are largely clustered around major towns and cities, such as Brighton, Southampton, Reading and Canterbury

- areas most at risk of Transport Related Social Exclusion are found in North Kent, the Kent Coast, East Sussex, parts of the South Coast, and the Isle of Wight
 - there were substantial north - south and east - west divides for certain characteristics, suggesting the potential for certain interventions to be focused in specific parts of the region
 - the north of the region has a much larger proportion of BAME people than the south of the region. Places in the north of the region with the highest proportions of BAME people included Slough and Reading
 - the south (and also stretching across the coastal east) generally had much higher proportions of individuals classified as having “bad or very bad health”. Disability, which is likely intrinsically connected to health, exhibited a similar pattern; high density in the south, low in the north and stretching east along the coast. The main areas where this observation can be seen include Brighton, Hastings, Eastbourne, Portsmouth and Dover
 - evidence gaps were identified around neurodivergence and mental health, with there being insufficient evidence to identify the distribution of these characteristics across the TfSE area
 - digital exclusion was also found to be underexplored in terms of its interaction with other protected characteristics.
17. Any future schemes that come forward in Hampshire will be subject to equality impact assessment. The Council’s view will also be informed by the policies and priorities of the LTP, which itself has been the subject of a full assessment.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

18. The draft TfSE strategy and associated consultation activity was subject to an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal. This included an assessment of a number of areas relating to sustainability, including decarbonisation. A carbon assessment has been undertaken by TfSE and forms a part of the evidence base. Hampshire analysis in our adopted Local Transport Plan 4 also included a detailed carbon assessment. The conclusion reached in Hampshire’s evidence bases are broadly similar and indicate that a reduction of vehicle traffic levels of 10% is required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. This is required to be in addition to the electrification of private vehicles as forecast by Government.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> TfSE Strategic Investment Plan Approval	<u>Date</u> 19/01/23
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> None	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

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- The population of the South East is generally older than the national average, with greater proportions of people aged 65 and over, and aged 80 and over. Berkshire and north Kent have higher proportions of younger people (under 19), while the rural and coastal parts of the region to the south have a higher proportion of older people (over 80).
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- The region's LGBTQ+ population are largely clustered around major towns and cities, such as Brighton, Southampton, Reading and Canterbury.
- Areas most at risk of Transport Related Social Exclusion are found in North Kent, the Kent Coast, East Sussex, parts of the South Coast, and the Isle of Wight.
- There were substantial north - south and east - west divides for certain characteristics, suggesting the potential for certain interventions to be focused in specific parts of the region.
- The north of the region has a much larger proportion of BAME people than the south of the region. Places in the north of the region with the highest proportions of BAME people included Slough and Reading.
- The south (and also stretching across the coastal east) generally had much higher proportions of individuals classified as having "bad or very bad health". Disability, which is likely intrinsically connected to health, exhibited a similar pattern; high density in the south, low in the north and stretching east along the coast. The main areas where this observation can be seen include Brighton, Hastings, Eastbourne, Portsmouth and Dover.
- Evidence gaps were identified around neurodivergence and mental health, with there being insufficient evidence to identify the distribution of these characteristics across the TfSE area.
- Digital exclusion was also found to be underexplored in terms of its interaction with other protected characteristics.

Any future schemes that come forward in Hampshire will be subject to equality impact. The Council's view will also be informed by the policies and priorities of the LTP, which itself has been the subject of a full assessment.