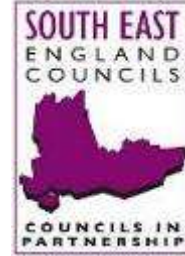


**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE MEETING**



Date: 4 April 2014

Subject: Strategic Transport: Priorities to align with London's Infrastructure 2050 work

Report by: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- i) Note London's plan to scope the capital's infrastructure needs to 2050
- ii) Consider whether SEEC should put forward any key, mutually beneficial, strategic transport projects for inclusion in London's plan and related influencing activity
- iii) Discuss criteria to identify any projects to be put forward to London.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Continuing investment in strategic transport infrastructure is an important factor in maintaining economic competitiveness. In the South East members have expressed concern about lack of investment in strategic transport and work is nearing completion on *Mind the Gap* – a list of South East priorities to be submitted to Ministers in spring 2014. This work is being carried out jointly by SEEC, SESL and SEDEEPT.
- 1.2 London shares similar concerns and is preparing to consult on *Infrastructure 2050*, a document setting out the capital's transport and wider infrastructure needs.
- 1.3 The economies of London and the South East are inter-dependent, relying on a two-way flow of commuters and the need for quick, reliable transport access to supply chains and international gateways in the shape of South East ports and airports. Together London and the South East drive the economic success of UK PLC.
- 1.4 Discussions with GLA and TFL have identified the opportunity for the South East and London to join forces in calling for investment in strategic transport projects with mutual benefits. This offers potential to reinforce South East needs on a wider stage.
- 1.5 London is very keen to prioritise its projects to present a phased investment programme and has therefore asked the South East to highlight its top transport priorities for possible inclusion in Infrastructure 2050 and influencing work.
- 1.6 While prioritisation is a sensitive issue, members are asked to consider the potential value in joining forces with London to make a stronger case for investment in mutually beneficial projects. Highlighting a number of joint London-South East schemes will not preclude the South East presenting its own wider investment programme to Ministers.

2. Potential approach to identifying shared interests

- 2.1 A possible approach to selecting projects to put forward to London is set out below, categorising projects under 4 headings where a, b and c offer most mutual benefits:
 - a) Rail schemes that will relieve congestion on key routes and open up new, alternative routes that avoid central London – targeting funding from Network Rail
 - b) Road projects that will relieve congestion on orbital routes, allowing traffic to bypass London
 - c) Road or rail projects that improve access to gateway ports/ airports/areas of economic potential for London/ South East-based business and tourism
 - d) Remaining priorities that offer primarily South East benefits, improving local, national and international links between areas of economic potential.

2.2 Member discussion is invited on alternative criteria and whether projects could also be classified as short, medium or long term. All *Mind the Gap* projects are included below but presented in a different order to reflect their potential to benefit London as well as the South East. Some projects have been consolidated to help emphasise high level benefits to London. SEEC work will continue to press for all projects in sections a-d.

a) Rail schemes that will relieve congestion on key routes and open up new, alternative routes that avoid central London:

- Improving the Ashford/ Redhill/ Reading rail corridor, including a Redhill flyover and electrification of the North Downs Line to link South East economic centres and give access to HS1/ Europe without the need to travel via central London.
- Package of improvements to South East rail network from Waterloo
 - Crossrail 2 regional route to include removing the rail bottleneck at Woking that affects suburban and Portsmouth services plus a new link to speed up commuter services from the Ascot/ Camberley areas
 - Signalling improvements to allow more services to run on existing lines
 - Developing Clapham Junction as a major 'hub' station with more connections to a greater range of destinations.
- Expedite western rail access to Heathrow Airport to reduce journeys made via central London
- Extend East-West rail from Bedford to Cambridge, Norwich and Ipswich.

b) Road projects that will relieve congestion on orbital routes, allowing traffic to bypass London

- Expedite a new Lower Thames Crossing
- M25 – improve junctions and explore local management of motorways.

c) Road or rail projects that improve access to gateway ports/ airports/ areas of economic potential for London & South East-based business and tourism

- Improve access to Dover, Channel Tunnel and the new Thames crossing through improvements to the M2/A2 and M20/A20 corridors
- Long term solution to Operation Stack – a new approach to handling freight delays in accessing the Channel Tunnel
- Improve road and rail links to Southampton port/ airport and neighbouring economic areas in Hampshire and Surrey by electrification of rail lines to Southampton and improving strategic junctions along the M3/A34 and the A3, particularly at M3 junction 9 and A3 at Guildford
- Improve rail and road links to Gatwick by removing bottlenecks on the Brighton mainline and improving the M23 south of the M25
- Improve public transport to Heathrow Airport from the south and west, in addition to Western rail access
- Improve London-Kent/ East Sussex links to open up areas of economic potential through quicker rail links to Hastings, rail links from Hastings to HS1 and improvements to the A21 road corridor.
- Improve rail access to Manston Airport. *NB: members may wish to review inclusion of this project, given current consultation on closure of Manston.*

d) Remaining priorities that offer primarily South East benefits, improving local, national and international links between areas of economic potential.

- Improve south coast links to drive economic growth and improve access along the corridor from Dover to Southampton through investment in better coastal rail routes and major road upgrades to the A27/M27
- Extend the Dunstable bypass to Aylesbury to provide a link to the M1
- Improve economic links to South West England by upgrading the A303 road corridor and rail electrification from Newbury to Taunton.