

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE MEETING



Date: 30 September 2016

Subject: **Sub national transport bodies: update on South East discussions**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director, and Trevor Pugh, Surrey CC and Chairman South East Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- i) Note the update on a sub national transport body (SNTB) for the South East
- ii) Discuss potential for SEEC involvement in a working group and future SNTB

1. Background

- 1.1 At a ministerial meeting with the Department for Transport this summer, SEEC representatives were asked to consider whether a Sub National Transport Body (SNTB) could benefit the South East.
- 1.2 Robert Goodwill MP suggested a SNTB could help direct existing investment better by co-ordinating priorities across local authorities and national agencies such as Highways England and Network Rail. (At the time Robert Goodwill was Minister of State at the DfT; he has now moved to the Home Office as Immigration Minister).
- 1.3 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 paved the way for areas to consider SNTBs as new, cross-boundary statutory bodies bringing together transport authorities and their partners. At SEEC's AGM in June members showed interest in learning more about SNTB potential and asked for an update for today's Executive.

2. A South East Sub National Transport Body

- 2.1 Early discussions on a SNTB to cover part of the SEEC area are taking place in a group called the SE7. This is an established group of seven authorities (all transport authorities), who have worked together for a number of years on shared procurement and promoting good practice in a number of service areas. The group comprises Kent CC, Medway, East Sussex CC, West Sussex CC, Brighton & Hove Council, Surrey CC and Hampshire CC. There is also an initiative called England's Economic Heartland, considering SNTB options for an area covering Oxfordshire CC, Buckinghamshire CC and Northamptonshire CC.
- 2.2 Reports on options will be presented to SE7 Chief Executives this month and to SE7 Leaders in October. They will consider whether to establish a shadow SNTB as a way to explore options on:
 - Functions for a possible SNTB – for example the role of a cross-boundary transport strategy to further economic growth
 - Geography and whether a potential SNTB should extend beyond SE7 members to include, for example, unitary councils along the south coast and in the Thames Valley.
 - Governance – roles for transport authorities, district councils and partners such as LEPs
 - Any staff resources required.
 Following the SE7 discussions, a decision will be made on whether to establish an officer working group to develop shadow SNTB proposals further.
- 2.3 SEEC has offered to participate in the SE7 officer working group to help ensure linkages between an emerging SNTB and SEEC's existing work. For example, it will be important to ensure effective links to SEEC-led liaison with London on transport through the Wider South East political steering group and to projects such as the South East *Missing Links* strategic infrastructure report. SEEC could also play a role in helping to nominate district councillors to a potential SNTB to ensure all tiers are involved in helping to prioritise transport investment needs.