



GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
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Date: **7 July 2017**

Request for meeting: Developing transport infrastructure for economic growth in the Wider South East

Dear Secretary of State for Transport,

We, the Wider South East (WSE) Political Steering Group, are an all-tier executive partnership with geographical and cross party political representation from across the WSE. Our aim is to work collectively to tackle the priority issues in common between our three regions, and we would like to meet you to discuss key transport investments needed.

As we approach Brexit, it is vital that transport investment helps maintain and grow the global competitiveness of the UK's economic heartlands in London, South East and East of England. None of us can risk a decline in productivity, profitability or employment in these areas that provide the UK's only net contributions to Treasury. At all costs, we must avoid damaging these economies – that underpin Government's public spending – by failing to invest in essential transport infrastructure.

We are therefore writing to ask for your commitment to invest in a number of strategic infrastructure priorities we have collaboratively identified. We would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss how we can work together to ensure that these schemes of pan-regional significance are delivered in the interests of our regions and the UK as a whole.

We are keen on exploring ways of collaborating with Government to ensure smooth progress on developing our road and public transport infrastructure further. The East, London and the South East are vibrant economic centres, together delivering 54% of England's economic output – some £773bn (GVA 2015). Together, our 159 councils are home to over 24 million people, 44% of England's population. However, we see further opportunities for economic and housing growth which are currently hampered by our overstretched transportation network.

Through the WSE Political Steering Group, and alongside local partners, our aim is to be a collective and constructive partner in helping Government to develop and deliver infrastructure policy that can secure sustainable and balanced economic growth for our regions and the country as a whole. Over the past two years we have been working across London, South East and East of

England to bring together our collective economic strength to make progress on the most pressing issues hindering growth within our regions.

First and foremost, we have identified that our transport infrastructure requires urgent attention locally and nationally if we are to continue growing as the strongest contributors to UK Plc. By working together we are able to bring together an intimate knowledge of our local areas with the relationships we have with business and wider partners to assist central government to deliver the key transport infrastructure needs of the three regions as a whole, thereby assisting better infrastructure planning and supporting future economic growth.

Our priorities include the development of 13 key infrastructure corridors/schemes which are of strategic importance for the economic growth of the three biggest economies in England. They also offer national benefits: directly, by improving access to markets here and abroad, but also indirectly as a successful Wider South East economy provides economic returns to the Treasury which it then reinvests across the country. Developing these 13 crucial transportation links will not only encourage regional growth but also help deliver government priorities (for example as set out in the industrial strategy and the new Transport Investment Strategy), most notably by increasing collaboration across regional boundaries and making transport between our strong regional economies faster and more convenient. The 13 initial priorities we have identified are (see also the map attached to this letter):

- East West Rail and new Expressway road link (Oxford – Cambridge)
- North Down Rail Link (Gatwick – Reading) incl. extension to Oxford
- A27/M27/A259 and rail corridor (Dover – Southampton)
- West Anglia Mainline and Crossrail 2 North (London – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough)
- Great Eastern Mainline (London – Ipswich – Norwich)
- Thames Gateway Essex: C2C and Crossrail 2 Eastern Branch (London – South Essex/London Gateway Port)
- Thames Gateway Kent: Crossrail 1 Extension and HS1 (London – North Kent – Channel Tunnel)
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Brighton Mainline (London – Gatwick – Brighton)
- South West Mainline and Crossrail 2 South West (London – Surrey/southern access to Heathrow)
- Great Western Mainline (London – Reading/western access to Heathrow)
- Midlands and West Coast Mainline (London – Luton – Bedford/Milton Keynes)
- Felixstowe – Nuneaton/Midlands

Both road and public transport infrastructure across the Wider South East have increasingly been under strain with greater numbers of people commuting longer distances for work and the regional population as well as the regional economy expanding. A range of local, strategic and national partners are involved in promoting or progressing these schemes. The 13 schemes within the three regions have been highlighted in recognition of the positive impact they will have in terms of meeting local growth needs as well as easing pressure from London which is facing unprecedented demands on its transport infrastructure.

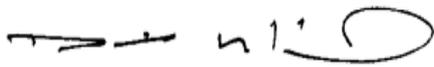
The schemes include Crossrail 2, which is widely recognised as a regional scheme with national importance. We ask for Government progress on this scheme, which would simultaneously increase transport capacity, national connectivity and accessibility, while reducing crowding and cutting journey times across a 160-mile corridor from Portsmouth and Cambridge. It will provide a £150bn boost to the UK's economy, unlock 200,000 new homes and create 200,000 new jobs, with 60,000 additional supply-chain jobs across the UK. It also underpins the Government's industrial strategy and will support skills and apprenticeships. Early four-tracking of the currently

bottle-necked section of the West Anglia Mainline Railway ahead of Crossrail 2 delivery would benefit the affected areas and allow them to prepare for the early delivery of growth.

The Wider South East collaboration effort harnesses the collective strength of our area which is already economically vibrant and which can become even more so, with the help of the Government. Within our regions partners are already talking to key infrastructure delivery partners, such as Network Rail, Highways England and utility providers in order to make sure that our regions are ripe for investment and can deliver on the economic advantages promised. Investment in key infrastructure will no doubt unlock housing sites across our three regions, and we welcome the prospectus for the Housing Infrastructure Fund, which we hope will direct funding to support the opportunities we see across the Wider South East. Authorities in the WSE, based on delivery and the value that development brings to the country, will be presenting a strong case for investment.

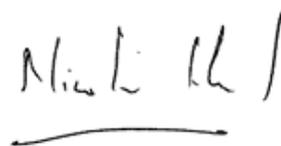
We would welcome your support to boost the efforts of our councils and private sector partners who are working hard to take practical steps to progress and deliver these schemes and associated economic and housing growth, enabled by infrastructure expansion. In order to achieve this, we would welcome a meeting with you to discuss how we can work together with you and our wider partners more effectively to ensure that these schemes are able to progress.

Yours sincerely



Cllr David Finch

Chairman of the East of England Infrastructure & Growth Group
Malling
and Leader of Essex County Council



Cllr Nicolas Heslop

Chairman of South East England Councils
and Leader of Tonbridge &
Borough Council



Jules Pipe

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration
City
& Skills, Greater London Authority

Dagenham



Cllr Daren Rodwell

London Councils Portfolio Holder for
Development and Leader of London
Borough of Barking &

CC: The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Greater London Authority the Mayor of London provides citywide leadership and creates policies to improve London for all.

London Councils represents London's 32 borough councils and the City of London.

South East England Councils (SEEC) is a cross-party partnership representing county, unitary and district councils in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, East & West Sussex and Kent.

The East of England LGA is a membership organisation of the district and county councils in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and the unitary councils of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.