



## South East Councils (SEC) response

### **Transport for the South East (TfSE) Consultation: On the Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)**

*“I am delighted to submit this response on behalf of South East Councils (SEC) – we have most of the local authorities in the South East region within our membership.*

*There is a commonly held perception of the South East as a region of rolling green pastures where investment and opportunities continually flow down from London into the surrounding home counties.*

*However, this simply does not reflect the reality on the ground. It misses the crucial fact that the region faces numerous challenges relating to decarbonisation and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.*

*The responses from SEC Member councils that make up this submission, clearly demonstrate a focus on meeting climate change commitments and net-zero targets. Central to that is the recognition that the South East requires a significantly improved transport system with a focus on stronger connectivity between places outside of London to lift barriers and obstacles to both economic growth and decarbonisation.*

*There are significant gaps in transport infrastructure and accessibility, pushing many rural residents to purchase road vehicles by default. A modal shift towards active travel would both reduce congestion, improve health, and cut emissions.*

*Enabling more efficient east-west journeys, swifter links to/from regional ports of entry, and more innovative use of freight could further tackle traffic congestion and create opportunities. The A27 is a prime example of the need for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to local packages of interventions to prevent bottlenecks to subregional economic growth. There are potential innovative solutions to addressing the A27’s impacts if the will exists within central government.*

*SEC welcomes and supports Transport for the South East’s (TfSE) mission.*

*Looking to the bigger picture as Prime Minister Liz Truss enters office, SEC remains of the view that to deliver most effectively for the people our councils represent, more powers and competencies should be transferred closer to the communities that local authorities serve.*

*As part of that view, ultimately SEC believes that TfSE should be designated as a statutory body with strategic responsibilities.”*

***Cllr Nicolas Heslop, Chair, South East Councils***



## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This response is from [South East Councils \(SEC\)](#). SEC is a cross-party, voluntary membership association that works to ensure that the South East is a great place to live, work and do business. SEC brings together district, unitary and county councils to promote the views and interests of all tiers of local government across the South East and is recognised as an associate member of the Local Government Association (LGA). With the majority of the 70 local authorities across the region as members, we seek to provide a unified democratic voice on South East interests.
- 1.2 SEC's [“Towards a Greater South East” \(TAGSE\) agenda](#) works towards five priorities: **(1) efficient Transport to keep our region moving;** **(2) Affordable, decent Housing to grow sustainably;** **(3); Collaboration for a Smarter and Greener future;** **(4) Adequate Skills provision to compete successfully;** and **(5) Practical Devolution to empower our region.**
- 1.3 SEC serves as the Secretariat for the [All-Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) for the South East](#), which is chaired by Sally-Ann Hart MP. Over the last year, the work of the APPG has focused on what levelling up should look like in the South East. On 27 July, the South East APPG published a report following its inquiry: [Financing the future – what does levelling up mean for South East England?](#)
- 1.4 SEC publishes biannual polling of business decision-makers, members of the public and councillors in the South East, which will support this submission with well-evidenced insights. Published twice a year, the [South East 1,000](#) regional monitor, sees SEC partner with polling agency Savanta ComRes to produce a unique monitor of public, business and civic cohorts from the UK's most populous region. It is the largest and most authoritative regular survey of councillor, business, and public opinion in the entire region. Our [latest edition](#) was published on 21 June 2022.
- 1.5 On 22 March 2022, we published [“Resetting the South East – Levelling up after Brexit, Climate Change and COVID”](#), a SEC-commissioned report by think-tank Localis. The report investigated the role of the South East region in Levelling Up, and what is necessary for its constituent local authorities to deliver – individually and collectively – on this multi-layered and ambitious set of environmental, economic, and social transformations.
- 1.6 The [Wider South East Dialogue](#) enables leaders of South East local authorities to connect with the Greater London Authority (GLA) Mayoral team, London Councils, and the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) to discuss strategic policy matters of interest and concern, including transport – with the shared aim of seeking to underpin economic prosperity across the Wider South East. On 8 July 2022, we co-hosted the [London and Wider South East Conference](#) at One Great George Street, Westminster. Key themes included working together in response to climate change, spatial challenges, and levelling up.
- 1.7 SEC welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on TfSE's draft SIP. We acknowledge that the SIP aims to boost the economy and make life better for people, for business and for the environment and if approved, it will be the blueprint for future investment in strategic transport infrastructure in the South East for the next thirty years.



## **2.0 Investment Priorities**

### **2.1 Which of the above investment priorities do you feel are important for the SIP to deliver? (Tick all that apply)**

- ✓ Decarbonisation & Environment
- ✓ Adapting to a New Normal
- ✓ Levelling Up Left Behind Communities
- ✓ Regeneration and Growth
- ✓ World Class Urban Transit System
- ✓ East — West Connectivity
- ✓ Resilient Radial Corridors
- ✓ Global Gateways and Freight

### **2.2 Do you have any further comments on the SIP's investment priorities?**

#### **2.2.1 Member Insights**

2.2.2 Insights from SEC members tells us that there is clear focus on decarbonisation and the environment, Chichester District Council told us that all of the SIP's investment priorities are important, but “decarbonisation and the environment is particularly important.”

2.2.3 Guildford Borough Council agreed that although all SIP investment priorities are important, the ‘decarbonisation & environment’ investment priority must be the key priority saying that “by giving absolute precedence to the transport decarbonisation objective over and above the other proposed investment priorities will assist decision - makers in appraising and formulating the transport strategies for places and corridors.” Guildford also questioned whether the target for the South East to be net-zero by 2050 was ambitious enough.

2.2.4 A key focus for Woking Borough Council, where car ownership is higher than the regional and national average, is “the interplay between transport and business, retail, leisure and culture.” They told us that “key to encouraging more use of sustainable transport relies on changing the mindset of those who already own a car. Increasing the reliability and accessibility of the bus service, and ensuring that active travel is promoted and made safe, is key to encouraging the shift away from car usage.



**2.2.5 South East APPG Insights**

**2.2.6 East-West Connectivity and Global Gateways and Freight** arose as focal points of discussion at the APPG’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 22 June, 2022.<sup>1</sup>

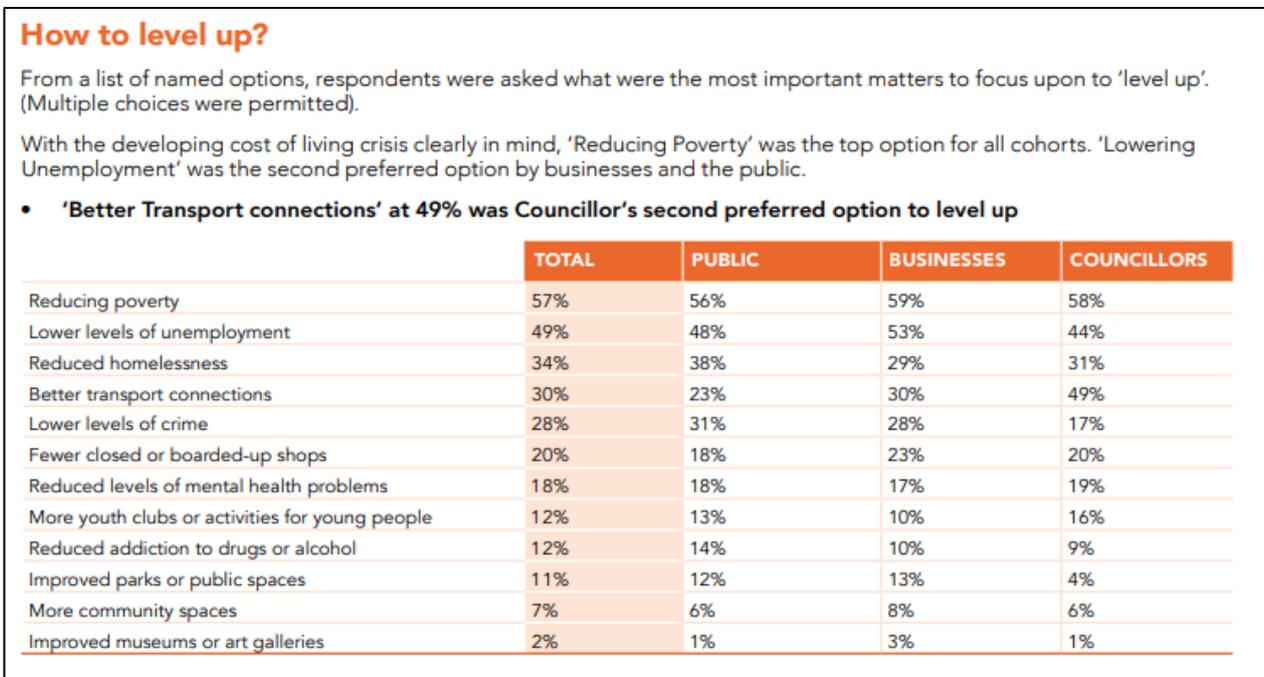
**2.2.7 East-West Connectivity:** Paul Holmes MP emphasised that parts of Southampton have been “left behind” including underinvestment in transport infrastructure – with more progress needed on freeports, South West Trains, and the inclusion of smaller towns in Hampshire on rail services to London Waterloo.

**2.2.8 Global Gateways and Freight:** Huw Merriman MP emphasised the importance of the Port of Southampton, Port of Dover, and Gatwick and Heathrow airports for development – with Chair Sally-Ann Hart MP raising the importance of knock-on effects global gateways have had on transport at large in the region. Paul Holmes MP noted worthwhile attempts to increase shipping freight to free up traffic congestion on roads.

**2.2.9 Insights from the SE1,000 Spring 2022 edition<sup>2</sup>**

*2.2.10 Levelling-up and transport*

**2.2.11 TfSE should be aware that there is significant political support from local government across the South East to invest in transport as part of the “levelling up” agenda (see Figure 1).**



**Figure 1**

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2022/06/2022-06-24\\_Minutes-South-East-APPG-AGM.pdf](https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2022/06/2022-06-24_Minutes-South-East-APPG-AGM.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2022/06/South-East-1000-SPRING-2022.pdf>



2.2.12 Councillors in the South East consider “Better transport connections” as the second most important matter (49%) out of twelve options to “level up” the region.

2.2.13 This only followed “Reducing Poverty” (57%) which took first place. (Multiple choices were permitted).

2.2.14 *Transport links with London*

2.2.15 **Our polling demonstrates that respondents in the South East feel improving transport links and reducing the impacts of climate change are of critical importance when working with London (see Figure 2).**

2.2.16 As with the Spring and Autumn 2021 South East 1,000 monitors, respondents have been asked what named topic areas they thought councils in the South East region should work more closely on with the GLA.

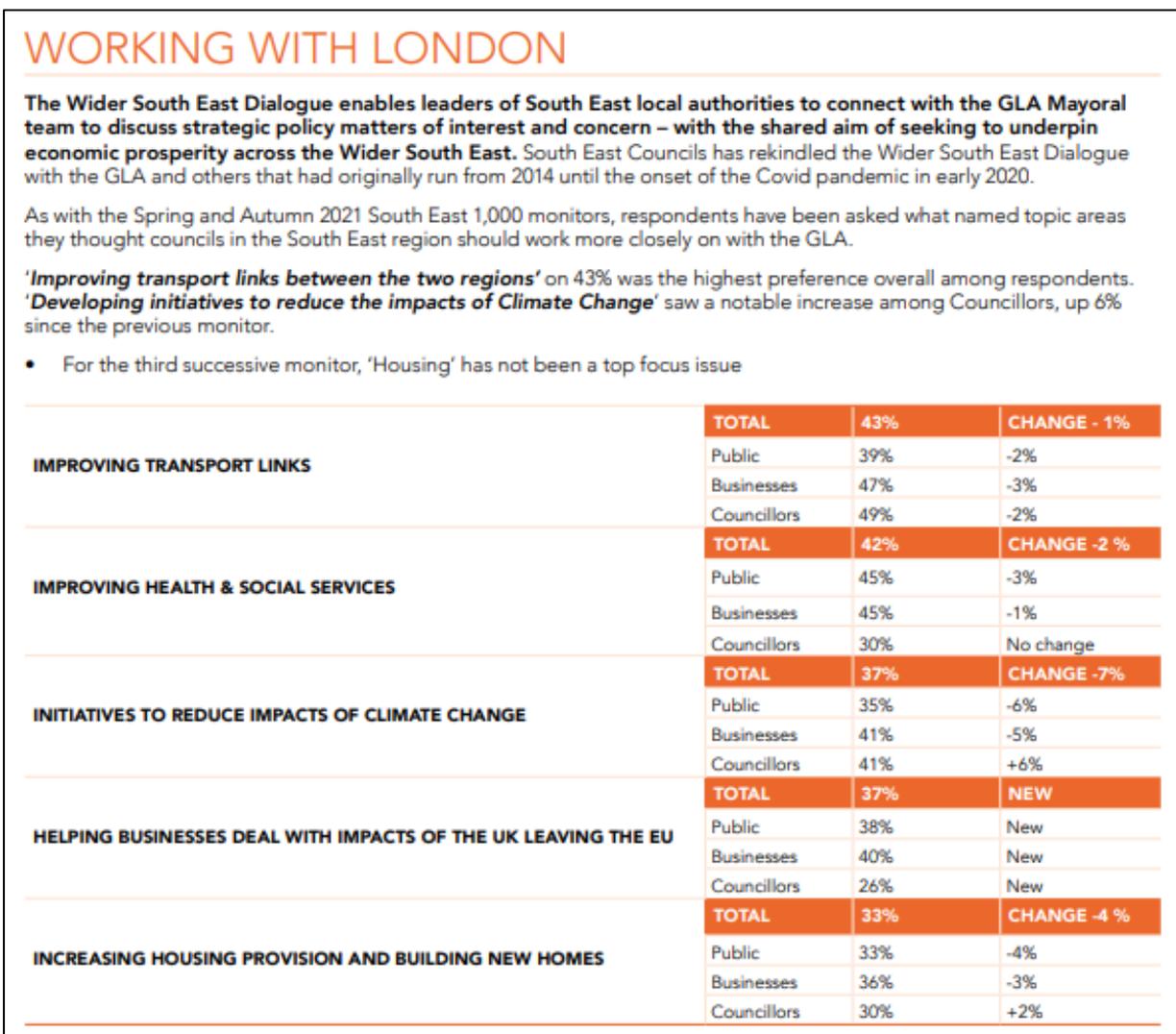


Figure 2



2.2.17 When asked what named topic areas, they thought councils in the South East region should work more closely on with GLA respondents said:

- **‘Improving transport links between the two regions’** on 43% was the highest preference overall among respondents.
- **‘Developing initiatives to reduce the impacts of Climate Change’** saw a notable increase among Councillors, up 6% since the previous monitor.

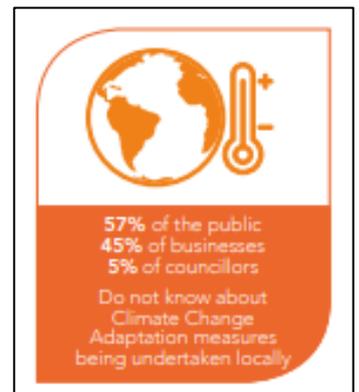
2.2.18 For the third successive monitor, ‘Housing’ has not been a top focus issue.

2.2.19 *Climate change and adaptation*

2.2.20 **The SE,1000 has found that there is broad support for transport to play a major role in responding to climate change.**

2.2.21 Nevertheless, sizeable numbers of respondents said they do not know about climate change adaptation measures being undertaken in their local areas (see Figure 3):

- **Over half the public polling cohort at 57%**
- **Just under half of the business cohort at 45%**



**Figure 3**

2.2.22 Addressing climate change and adapting to its impacts will be a major and continual undertaking. The ‘do not know’ figures above suggest there may be a case for local authority, TfSE, and other relevant organisations communications teams to review how to convey their council’s approach to tackling climate change.

2.2.23 *Climate change and responsibility*

2.2.24 **Our polling found a small proportion of individuals are planning to buy or drive an electric vehicle (EV). TfSE should consider how its strategy should respond (see Figure 4).**

2.2.25 On the one hand, it may be wise not to rely in a major sense on EV take-up by the public, at least in the short term before the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be introduced in the UK.

2.2.26 On the other hand, TfSE, with partners, could target resources to understand why intentions to buy or drive EV’s are so low and aim to encourage a shift in perceptions to increase EV take-up.

2.2.27 Broadly equal numbers of all respondents thought government and councils should be responsible for taking measures to tackle climate change. Respondents were probed on what they are doing, or may be planning to do, on a personal level, to help tackle climate change impacts based on several named options. (Multiple choices permitted).



- Over two thirds (67%) said they were using energy-efficient appliances and lighting at home
- Nearly one third (28%) planned to make their homes more energy efficient.
- **Only 10% said they actively planned to buy or drive an electric vehicle.**

		Recycling more (paper, plastics, aluminium, food waste, clothes)	Using energy-efficient appliances and lighting at home	Insulating my home (e.g. double glazing, loft, floor or wall insulation)	Buying sustainable goods or services that have a low carbon footprint	Eating less meat / having a vegetarian / vegan diet	Making my home heating more energy-efficient (e.g. switching from gas to electric)	Buying and/or driving electric vehicles
I have already done this or I am doing it	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Public	83%	62%	51%	30%	29%	27%	5%
	Businesses	86%	68%	54%	44%	38%	32%	13%
	Councillors	93%	80%	71%	55%	42%	25%	18%
I will never do this	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Public	1%	1%	5%	3%	31%	8%	18%
	Businesses	4%	2%	4%	4%	26%	8%	8%
	Councillors	0%	0%	3%	3%	33%	7%	14%

**Figure 4**

2.2.28 *Further action on climate change?*

2.2.29 **Our polling found that there is significant popular demand to improve connectivity, public transit options, active travel, and the number of available EV charging points to help local areas address the impacts of climate change.**

2.2.30 Respondents were presented with several named options with multiple choices permitted.

- 47% overall, wanted financial assistance for insulating homes.
- **41% of all respondents cited increased public transport options**
- **41% of all respondents cited better cycling and walking routes**
- 50% of councillors want financial assistance to insulate homes
- **31% of all respondents cited more electric vehicle charging points**

2.2.31 These clearly line up with TfSE’s investment priorities:

- **Decarbonisation & Environment**
- **World class urban transit systems**
- **East-West connectivity**



### **3.0 Packages of Interventions**

3.1 For the purposes of data gathering and analysis, the TfSE region has been split into four geographies. Which of the following geographic areas are you most interested in? Please be aware that some local authority areas appear in more than one of the geographies and you may need to select more than one of the geographies if this is the case for your specific area of interest. Choose all that apply.

- ✓ Solent and Sussex Coast (Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, Littlehampton, Worthing, Brighton, Isle of Wight)
- ✓ London — Sussex Coast (Chichester to Eastbourne, Surrey, West Sussex and East Sussex excluding the Hasting Area)
- ✓ Wessex Thames (Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey)
- ✓ Kent, Medway and East Sussex (Kent, Medway, Hasting and Rother areas of East Sussex)

3.2 *Only if you answered Solent and Sussex Coast:*

**3.3 To what extent do you agree that the packages of interventions for the Solent and Sussex Coast area will deliver on the priorities of the SIP?**

- ✓ Definitely agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Definitely disagree
  - I'm not sure

**3.4 Please select all of the packages for the Solent & Sussex Coast area that you feel are important in achieving the priorities of the SIP. Tick all that apply.**

- **South Hampshire Rail (Core)**
- **South Hampshire Rail (Enhanced)**
- **South Hampshire Mass Transit**
- **Isle of Wight (two Packages)**
- ✓ **Sussex Coast Rail**
- ✓ **Sussex Coast Mass Transit**
- ✓ **Sussex Coast Active Travel**
- ✓ **Solent and Sussex Coast Highways**

3.5 *Only if you answered London — Sussex Coast:*

**3.6 To what extent do you agree that the packages of interventions for the London — Sussex Coast area will deliver on the priorities of the SIP?**

- ✓ **Definitely agree**
- **Somewhat agree**



- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Definitely disagree**
- **I'm not sure**

**3.7 Please select all the packages for the London - Sussex Coast area that you feel are important in achieving the priorities of the SIP. Tick all that apply**

- ✓ **London - Sussex Coast Rail (2 Packages)**
- ✓ **London - Sussex Coast Mass Transit**
- ✓ **London - Sussex Coast Active Travel**
- ✓ **London - Sussex Coast Highways**

**3.8 Do you have any further comments on the Packages of Interventions for the London Sussex Coast area?**

**3.8.1 Member Insights**

3.8.2 We have been told by multiple Members including Chichester District Council and a Hampshire/Wessex Thames Member that the A27 must be considered in its entirety. It plays a major role in opportunity for development with traffic congestion impeding economic performance across the subregion.

3.8.3 Chichester District Council told us:

- *“The A27 needs to be looked at holistically as the main East to West route - there is no comprehensive package of mitigation for the A27 at Chichester, whereas there is for Arundel (RIS 2 scheme) and Worthing (potential tunnel solution) – Chichester is in the RIS 3 pipeline scheme which means it is not guaranteed for delivery, and there is no scheme identified relating to the scale of interventions which would be needed to achieve its strategic aims.*

*This is regrettable as Chichester suffers from severe traffic congestion which is affecting its economic performance. There is also no consideration of a package of improvements particularly modal shift to connect the Manhood Peninsula to the city of Chichester and that is also an important omission given the scale that tourism plays in contributing to the local economy.”*

3.8.4 The West Sussex Member also emphasised the importance of improving cycling infrastructure, accessibility, and safety to achieve a significant modal shift, telling us:

- *“TfSE is aiming to achieve significant modal shift, therefore the Chichester to Emsworth Cycle route (CHEM route) needs to be of the highest standard otherwise there will be no incentive for modal switch.*

*Addressing high public transport fares is important, but this alone will not help unless public transport reliability and interconnectivity between bikes and trains, and bikes on trains is also addressed.”*

3.9 *Only if you answered Wessex Thames:*

3.10 **To what extent do you agree that the packages of interventions for the Wessex Thames area will deliver on the priorities of the SIP?**

- **Definitely agree**
- **Somewhat agree**
- ✓ **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Definitely disagree**
- **I'm not sure**

3.11 **Please select all of the packages for the Wessex Thames area that you feel are important in achieving the priorities of the SIP. Tick all that apply.**

- ✓ **Wessex Thames Rail**
- ✓ **Wessex Thames Mass Transit & Active Travel**
- ✓ **Wessex Thames Highways**

3.12 **Do you have any further comments on the Packages of Interventions for the Wessex Thames area?**

3.12.1 Havant Borough Council emphasised the critical role of the A27 in impeding or promoting economic development not just in their area, but along the entire stretch of the road.

3.12.2 The Member representative told us that the SIP must ensure *“a focus on the whole of the A27, not just the section within our boundaries.”*

3.12.3 SEC emphasises on behalf of the multiple members coming forward on this issue that the impact of the A27 must not be considered in isolation.

3.12.4 TfSE should work with all of the councils with an interest in the road in collaboration to address the core issues holding back economic development such as traffic congestion.

3.12.5 We would like to add that there is major demand to address traffic congestion across the region. Our SE,1000 Spring 2021 edition showed that:

- Overall, more than half (56%) of all respondents want local car traffic levels to decrease.<sup>3</sup>

3.12.6 Guildford Borough Council pointed out that this area only has one intervention saying that *“this does not appear equitable or balanced given the emerging development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) across local authorities.”*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2021/05/South-East-1000-Monitor-Spring-21-circulation.pdf> (p. 4)



3.13 Only if you answered Kent, Medway and East Sussex:

3.14 To what extent do you agree that the packages of interventions for the Kent, Medway and East Sussex area will deliver on the priorities of the SIP?

- Definitely agree
- Somewhat agree
- ✓ Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Definitely disagree
- I'm not sure

3.15 Please select all of the packages for the Kent, Medway and East Sussex area that you feel are important in achieving the priorities of the SIP. Tick all that apply.

- Kent, Medway, and East Sussex Classic Rail
- Kent, Medway, and East Sussex High Speed Rail (two Packages)
- ✓ Kent, Medway, and East Sussex Mass Transit
- ✓ Kent, Medway, and East Sussex Active Travel
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Kent, Medway, and East Sussex Highways

3.16 Do you have any further comments on the Packages of Interventions for the Kent, Medway and East Sussex area?

3.16.1 One of our Members, an elected Councillor and Chair of a Planning Committee in this part of East Sussex told us: “Modal shifts to **active travel** should be at the heart of what we are doing, linked in with **Low emission zones** and **Park and ride for all towns.**”

3.17 Global Policy Package of Interventions

3.18 Which of the above Global Policy Interventions do you feel are important for the SIP to support? (Tick all that apply)

- ✓ Decarbonisation
- ✓ Public Transport Fares
- ✓ New Mobility
- ✓ Road User Charging
- ✓ Virtual Access
- ✓ Integration



### **3.19 Do you have any further comments on the SIP's Global Policy Interventions?**

#### **3.19.1 Member responses**

3.19.2 An elected Member from East Sussex told us that Decarbonisation, Public Transport Fares, and Road User Charging were the most important Global Policy Interventions for them.

3.19.3 Woking Borough Council told us that “there is greater scope to encourage more flexible road usage in response” and that “integrating transport networks and modes, and prioritising sustainable travel are key to Woking Council’s objectives, as part of a wider priority to tackle climate change.”

3.19.4 Guildford Borough Council reiterated their earlier point that decarbonisation “must be given the ultimate priority” and again questioned the level of ambition sought on this topic. This was reiterated by a West Sussex member who emphasised that “we need to shift to carbon neutrality much faster by being more ambitious moving forward.”

#### **3.19.5 SEC research**

3.19.6 A SEC-commissioned report by think-tank Localis found several problems with the current state of transport in the South East and made recommendations relevant to this consultation.<sup>4</sup>

3.19.7 The South East needs better public transport to lift barriers to both economic growth and decarbonization.

3.19.8 Outside of major towns and urban centres, there are significant gaps in transport infrastructure and accessibility. The South East has the highest take-up of electric vehicles in the country, which places the region at the forefront of the transition away from internal-combustion engines in private vehicles. However, the region also has among the lowest ratio of chargers to vehicles in all of the UK (second only to the joint lowest ratio of the North West and East of England). Charging infrastructure and associated energy grid updates are therefore important in a region with high uptake of electric vehicles like the South East.

3.19.9 The findings of the report reaffirmed that the roads, particularly those around London, are extremely congested, rail expensive, and a “patchy” bus station serving much of the region.

3.19.10 The report unpacked considerable institutional overlap observable with many central government programmes, cross-council initiatives and the individual or collaborative work of various LEPs, reducing the efficacy and speed of the transition to net zero, with a need for overarching strategic responsibilities to be clearer delineated emerging.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2022/03/046\\_Resetting-the-South-East\\_PRF2.pdf](https://www.secouncils.gov.uk/media/2022/03/046_Resetting-the-South-East_PRF2.pdf)



3.19.11 With multiple moving parts and broad areas of overlap, a fundamental reset of how transport is managed and funded across the South East will be required to bring the various initiatives and agendas into alignment and ensure as smooth a transition to net zero as possible.

3.19.12 **In order to maximize the effectiveness of TfSE delivering on its global priorities, our report recommended that:**

- As the regional body for transport, TfSE should be made a statutory body with strategic responsibilities. The existence of such a body should be a pivotal part of the plans for reforming the rail franchise system.
- This should involve an expansion of TfSE's ability to raise finances to invest in the network.
- As part of its formalisation, the transport body should also be given a statutory role in reducing emissions.



## 4.0 Benefits and Costs

**4.1 Do you think that the SIP captures the benefits and costs of the proposed packages of interventions adequately? Choose any one option.**

- Yes
- No
- ✓ I'm not sure

**4.2 Please explain your answer to the above question here.**

4.2.1 One Member told us they did not believe the SIP captures the benefits and costs of the proposed packages of interventions adequately. They believe that the role councils have in global decarbonisation is so important that it appears, as it stands, that we will “always be spending money on improvements and playing catch up.” They indicated the SIP should place a greater emphasis on the benefits and worthwhile costs of proposed packages of interventions on decarbonisation.

4.2.2 Another Member told us that “TfSE’s working assumptions exclude locally important schemes” which should be acknowledged. Another Member based in West Sussex told us that they do believe the SIP captures the benefits and costs of the proposed packages of interventions adequately, stating that “the SIP represents value for money as the cost of the interventions is cheaper than the GVA created.”

4.2.3 They followed in support of the SIP’s emphasis on improving the cycle network across the South East, saying “In comparison to road improvements the creation of a network of high-quality cycle schemes would be relatively cheap to achieve.”

4.2.4 One Member who believes the SIP does capture the benefits and costs said that the duration of the SIP means uncertainty is unavoidable, but this encourages more attention to detail when allocations are made.

**4.3 Do you have any further comments on the funding and finance approach of the SIP?**

4.3.1 Guildford Borough Council told us they have concerns that “there are a number of other local projects which are also earmarked to be delivered via the same funding and the scope to rely on developer cost contributions to (part) fund SIPs may thus be limited.”



## **5.0 Delivery of the SIP**

**5.1 To what extent do you agree that, as a whole, the packages of interventions will deliver on the priorities of the SIP?**

- Definitely agree
- ✓ Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Definitely disagree
- I'm not sure



## **6.0 Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Do you have any comments on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal?**

6.2 A West Sussex Member told us that the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Conclusion “appears to be comprehensive.”

6.3 One member told us that improvements to road infrastructure in their area “prioritise road usage, rather than increase flexibility of transport modes.” Another member spoke about road infrastructure and highlighted findings from a report which said that “emissions arising from construction of highways improvements are unlikely to be ‘paid back’ by operational improvements whilst in the case of public transport infrastructure, many schemes will be able to ‘pay off’ the emissions they generate through the lowering of car use.”

6.4 Overall, to what extent do you agree that the SIP makes the best case possible for investing in transport infrastructure in the South East?

- Definitely agree
- ✓ Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Definitely disagree
- I'm not sure

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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