WinACC
Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis

Notes on the Transport for the South East Transport Strategy 2025

Transport Strategy - Transport for the South East

Introduction

The Transport Strategy 2025 from Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a comprehensive statement of the strategic priorities for developing transport within the TfSE area. It contains a greater emphasis on sustainable low-carbon transport policies than its predecessor.

The establishment of mayoral combined strategic authorities, including one for Hampshire and the Solent is likely to reduce the significance of TfSE; The government appears to be moving away from regional transport funding streams, towards multi-year, block settlements for mayoral authorities.

A tool for Mayoral Candidates

In these notes we refer only to

- proposals of significance to Hampshire and the Solent, and
- proposals that will contribute to the reduction in transport emissions

We focus on the positive elements in the 2025 TfSE Strategy relevant to transport emissions. We suggest that the mayoral candidates might use these positive elements as they develop their own strategies, avoiding the laborious process of reinventing parts of the new strategy from scratch. This could accelerate the development of a programme that will reduce transport emissions in Hampshire and the Solent.

The list of TfSE transport *interventions* for implementing this policy (the Strategic Investment Plan - SIP) will not be published until March 2026. We refer only briefly to interventions that will cause major increases in transport emissions (new major road schemes, and schemes focussed on supporting airport development). We hope they will be deleted from the 2026 SIP since they will not make a positive contribution to the intentions of the new strategy.

We hope that money allocated to interventions will **reflect proportionately** the importance given to each type of intervention in the strategy, and that there will be **widespread consultation** on the balance of the SIP.

Appendix A of 2025 TfSE Strategy lists interventions proposed in the 2023 SIP, but we hope there will be changes in the 2026 SIP to reflect the differences in emphasis between the 2025 strategy and its predecessor.

Good schemes in the interventions in the 2023 SIP include many that we hope will be carried forward into the 2026 SIP, and subsequent mayoral transport priorities:

- The SIP is particularly strong on rail and ferry schemes.
- A number of bus schemes that have been thought through. More detailed design would benefit some of the other bus schemes. Bus franchising would provide a better framework for designing and implementing bus service improvements. In particular the strategy's commitment to integrated public transport needs detailed attention in all parts of the area.
- Walking and cycling schemes rely heavily on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).These vary in quality. Mayoral candidates should examine how effective each LCWIP is likely to be in delivering the 'missions' of the strategy.

Filling in the Gaps

It will be essential to set timetabled modal share targets for each of the modes of public and active transport, and to apportion expenditure to ensure these targets are met. Without these targets and financial allocations, the good intentions of earlier regional and local strategies have so far delivered very little change.

Strategic Direction

The vision promises a lot, especially through these principles:

- **User Hierarchy:** "By prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport over cars, this principle promotes safer, more sustainable urban environments by designing infrastructure to reflect these priorities," and
- **Environmental Net Gain:** "New transport developments should leave the environment better off than before by enhancing biodiversity, using sustainable design, and integrating green solutions into infrastructure projects."

The other four principles are: Vision and Validate, Triple Access Planning, Avoid-Shift-Improve, and Movement and Place (P 31). We hope the relative

funding of interventions in the 2026 SIP costings will reflect the balance of interventions suggested by all six principles.

Missions

The missions also suggest that interventions will be designed to achieve a more accessible and effective transport system at the same time as reducing emissions. For example:

- **Strategic Connectivity** will be successful "if key towns, cities, and international gateways are as accessible by public transport as they are by car, with rail freight becoming as competitive as long-distance road freight; its core goal will be to make meaningful progress toward decarbonising transport, in line with national policy and public expectations and key outcomes will include increased use of sustainable modes like walking, cycling, bus, and rail, especially for short and medium-length trips; decarbonisation of freight, including mode shift to rail and adoption of clean fuels and logistics; reduced reliance on fossil fuels, with transport emissions aligning with the region's carbon budget." (p 10)

This and other missions set out in the 2025 strategy will require a change in the balance of the funding allocated to schemes in the 2023 programme. The other missions are:

- Resilience
- Inclusion and Integration
- Decarbonisation
- Sustainable Growth

Priorities

We list below, by transport mode, the interventions identified as 'priorities.' These interventions could form the basis of a mayoral programme; we think they could be of benefit to Hampshire and the Solent. There are overlaps between the 'categories,' but the overall list of interventions is useful, irrespective of how they have been categorised.

Public Transport

Rail and Ferry

Rail features prominently,

- in the **long-term strategic connectivity** 'priorities': (p 10)

    - "Upgrading the south coast's rail corridors between Brighton and Southampton to strengthen economic ties between the region's two largest built-up areas."
    - "Strengthening freight corridors from Southampton and Channel Ports to the Midlands and North"
    - "Reviewing regional rail connectivity when Old Oak Common and HS2 open, potentially making it faster and more convenient to connect the Midlands and North to the South East via Old Oak Common or Heathrow Airport. This may offer opportunities to rethink the regional passenger rail map. (p 40)"
- In the **short-term strategic connectivity** 'priorities' (p 10)
    - "Enhancing incentives for long-distance public transport by optimising fares, ticketing, and on-board amenities."
    - "Refining timetables to support fast-growing markets like leisure travel and rescheduling maintenance to reduce disruption."
    - "Safeguarding critical areas and aligning planning policies to enable future improvements."
- in the **long-term decarbonisation** 'priorities' (p 64):
    - "Decarbonising the railways through battery trains and rail electrification, ensuring that all rail services are powered by zero-emission energy sources."
    - "Developing new rail interventions to support mode shift for passengers and freight, ensuring that rail becomes the preferred choice for long-distance travel and freight movement."
- In the '**sustainable growth transport intervention priorities**' (p 72)
    - "public transport concessionary fares"
    - "Delivering a high-quality, high-frequency suburban passenger rail service in the Solent area and along the Sussex coast"
- In the **Key Transport Intervention** priorities (p 74):
    - "South West Mainline Capacity and Resilience"
    - "Solent Rail Metroisation"
    - "Isle of Wight Mass Rail"

As an **example of good practice** the strategy offers:

- "Densifying brownfield sites near transport hubs is set to enable doubled rail service frequencies for local services between Southampton and Portsmouth (p 75)"

Pending finalisation of the 2026 SIP, in Appendix A the strategy includes references to relevant rail schemes in the 2023 SIP affecting Hampshire and the Solent:

Rail and Ferry Interventions in Hants and the Solent in the 2023 SIP

(with SIP refs) listed by types of intervention proposed in the 2025 Strategy

Fares/Ticketing Priorities

- Global Policy Statement (Public Transport Fares)
- Global Policy Statement (Integration)

Regionwide Service Priorities

- Global Policy Statement (Public Transport Fares)
- Global Policy Statement (Integration)

South Coast Ports – Midlands and North Freight Connectivity

- Additional Rail Freight Paths to Southampton (A11)
- Havant Rail Freight Hub (B7)
- Fratton Rail Freight Hub (B8)
- B9 Southampton Container Port Rail Freight Access and Loading Upgrades (B9)
- Southampton Automotive Port Rail Freight Access and Loading Upgrades (B10)

South Coast Rail Connectivity

- Southampton Central Station – Woolston Crossing (B1)
- South-West Main Line – Mount Pleasant Level Crossing Removal (B4)
- Fareham Loop/Platform (A4)
- Eastleigh to Romsey Line Electrification (B6)
- Reading to Basingstoke Enhancements (O3)
- Electrification from Basingstoke to Salisbury (O19)
- Cross Country Service Enhancements (O14)

Isle of Wight Ferry Connectivity

- Isle of Wight Ferry Service Enhancements (D2)

South West Mainline Capacity and Resilience

- South West Main Line / Portsmouth Direct Line – Woking Area Capacity Enhancement (O12)
- South West Main Line – Digital Signalling (O17)

Haying Island Access

- Improved Portsmouth – Hayling Island Ferries (C11)

Solent Ferry Connectivity

- Improved Gosport – Portsmouth and Portsmouth – Hayling Island Ferries (C11)

- Ferry operating Hours and Frequency Enhancements (D2a)
- New Summer Route – Ryde to Southampton (D2b)

Solent Mass Transit

- South East Hampshire Rapid Transit Future Phases (C2)
- New Southampton to Fawley Waterside Ferry Service (C3)
- Southampton Cruise Terminal Access for Mass Transit (C4)

Solent Rail Metroisation

- Botley Line Double Tracking (A2)
- Netley Line Signalling and Rail Service Enhancements (A3)
- Fareham Loop / Platform (A4)
- Portsmouth Station Platforms (A5)
- South West Main Line – Totton Level Crossing Removal (A6)
- Southampton Central Station Upgrade and Timetabling (A7)
- Eastleigh Station Platform Flexibility (A8)

Region-wide Ferry Decarbonisation Priorities

- New

Isle of Wight Mass Transit / Rail

- Isle of Wight Mass Transit and Connections (D1 & D2)
- Isle of Wight Railway Extensions or Mass Transit alternative Shanklin to Ventnor (D1e)
- Isle of Wight Railway Extensions or Mass Transit alternative - Shanklin to Newport (D1f)

Rail Electrification and Decarbonisation

- Eastleigh/Southampton to Salisbury – Electrification (B6)
- Reading to Basingstoke Enhancements (O3)
- West of England Main Line – Electrification from Basingstoke to Salisbury (O19)

Buses

A comprehensive background document comparing the 2024/25 levels of funding, frequency of services, and levels of bus use across the whole TfSE area can be found at Devolution and Bus Governance Transport for the South East. References to buses in this strategy include:

In the **short-term decarbonisation** 'priorities:' (p 63)

- "Improving bus services by working with local authorities and bus operators to make bus services more affordable, reliable, and customer-focused to encourage a shift from car use to public transport."

- "Supporting local bus, freight, and ferry operators to transition to zero-emission vehicle fleets by providing financial and technical assistance to help replace diesel-powered buses with electric or hydrogen alternatives."

In the '**sustainable growth transport intervention** priorities' (p 72)

- "Expanding public transport concessionary fares schemes to make sustainable travel options more accessible and affordable. •Initiatives like the £3 bus fare cap will encourage greater use of public transport, particularly for shorter journeys, helping reduce congestion."
- "Developing mass transit systems in major population centres, such as Solent, Sussex coast, North Kent, Gatwick Diamond, Blackwater Valley, and Thames Valley – alongside delivering BSIP across the region."

  TfSE has undertaken benchmarking studies that show many places in the South East have the scale and density to support sustainable, high-quality, mass transit systems. In the shorter term, these will likely take the form of Bus Rapid Transit systems providing a frequency of four to six services per hour – although in the longer term higher capacity options such as trams could be viable. These systems will improve access to jobs and services, reduce congestion, and support sustainable travel in high-density areas.

In the **transport intervention** priorities (P 72):

- Solent Mass Transit
- Isle of Wight Mass Transit
- Thames Valley Mass Transit
- Basingstoke Mass Transit

As an example of **good practice** the strategy offers:

- "improved Bus Rapid Transit services [that] support regeneration around Gosport and Portsmouth, enhancing connectivity across the Solent.(p 75)"
- "Providing new residents [in Andover] with free bus tickets to enable them to explore the local public transport system and avoid relying too much on the car (p 75)."

Bus Interventions in Hants and the Solent in the 2023 SIP (with SIP refs) listed by types of intervention proposed in the 2025 Strategy (see Appendix A)

Fares/Ticketing Priorities

- Global Policy Statement (Public Transport Fares)
- Global Policy Statement (Integration)

Regionwide Service Priorities

- Global Policy Statement (Public Transport Fares)
- Global Policy Statement (Integration)

Solent Mass Transit

- South East Hampshire Rapid Transit Future Phases (C2)
- Southampton Mass Transit (C1)
- South East Hampshire Rapid Transit Future Phases (C2)
- New Southampton to Fawley Waterside Ferry Service (C3)
- Southampton Cruise Terminal Access for Mass Transit (C4)

Isle of Wight Mass Transit

- Isle of Wight Mass Transit Connections (D2)
- Bus Mass Transit –Newport to Yarmouth (D1a)
- Bus Mass Transit - Newport to Ryde (D1b)
- Bus Mass Transit - Newport to Cowes (D1c)

NE Hampshire Mass Rapid Transit

- Basingstoke Mass Rapid Transit (P1)
- Blackwater Valley Mass Rapid Transit (P2)

SIP proposals not referred to in Strategy Appendix

- Winchester Bus Enhancements (P14)
- Andover Bus Enhancements (P15)

Active Travel (cycling, wheeling, walking)

They feature less prominently:

In the **short-term decarbonisation** 'priorities:' (p 63)

- "Developing local and regional active travel infrastructure by expanding walking, wheeling and cycling routes, making it safer and easier for people to choose active travel modes for short trips. This includes supporting schemes identified in the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans."
- "Supporting sustainable neighbourhood planning with liveable neighbourhood principles to ensure that residents can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk or cycle from home. This will reduce the need for longer car journeys and making communities more self-sufficient."

In the '**sustainable growth transport intervention priorities**' (p 72)

- Embedding high-quality, well connected active travel infrastructure into the design of new communities to support healthier lifestyles and reduce

car use, especially for short trips. This includes delivering Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) as well as TfSE's Regional Active Travel Strategy and Plan (RATSAP) across the region.

Unresolved issues on active travel and LCWIPs

We welcome the support in the strategy for the development of LCWIPs. However, some LCWIPs do not follow the effective guidance issued by Active Travel England . This means that the mere existence of an LCWIP does not mean that all the relevant issues have been addressed, or that there are sufficient plans for necessary action.

There is major variation in the quality of the LCWIPs that have been drafted. At worst they are incoherent and unambitious.

Some additional definition of what would qualify as sufficient in Hampshire and the Solent is needed, to match what has been provided for all other transport modes. We hope mayoral teams will develop the TfSE offer:

All Active Travel Packages in the SIP (listed in Appendix A)

- Southampton Area Active Travel (including LCWIPs) (E1)
- South East Hampshire Area Active Travel (including LCWIPs) (E2)
- Portsmouth Eastern Road Active Travel Bridge Extension (E3)
- Portsmouth Eastern Road EastWest Bridge (E4)
- Southampton City Centre Placemaking (E5)
- Isle of Wight Active Travel Enhancements (E6)
- Active Travel Enhancements - Newport to Yarmouth (E6a)
- Active Travel Enhancements Newport to Ryde (E6b)
- Active Travel Enhancements Newport to Cowes (E6c)
- Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey Urban and Inter-urban Active Travel Infrastructure (Q1)

Planning

Links are made with local plans:

For sustainable growth outcomes:

- **high quality public transport and active travel infrastructure in major new developments** (p 70) with planning for healthy streets, liveable neighbourhoods, and a target for a percentage of new dwellings within ten minutes of metro level public transport,

For integrated land use priorities

- the development of appropriately located mixed-use communities that are **relatively dense and aligned with public transport corridors** (p 71), and

- **Integrating land use and transport planning** to locate new developments where high-quality sustainable transport is viable (p 71)

Road Schemes

The 2023 SIP included a large number of road schemes, with many of them allocated high budgets. Some additional large road schemes have been introduced in this strategy, although not in Hampshire and the Solent.

To achieve three of the strategy's missions, Inclusion and Integration, Decarbonisation, and Sustainable Growth, the majority of the budget cannot be allocated to road schemes . It would be more consistent with the strategy if all the road schemes were to be removed from the 2026 SIP

Outputs, Impacts and Outcomes

On page 88 there is a list that contains many good ideas for indicators, but it seems that this is still work in progress.

It is disappointing that the strategy does not distinguish between indicators that show the immediate **output** of an intervention (e.g. the number of people using a new piece of infrastructure), the less immediate **impact** of an intervention (e.g. reduction in average time spent travelling to work) or the final **outcome** of the programme (e.g. reduction in transport emissions).

It is the outcomes that really matter, and these are the most difficult to measure. Sometimes even if immediate results may be good, ultimate outcomes may be poor. The results, whether immediate or longer term, need to be looked at together.

Mayoral teams need to consider which indicators they want to use to demonstrate the success of their strategies, and to link these to targets. Indicators we particularly hope they will adopt for Hampshire and the Solent include:

- Greenhouse gas emissions per person from transport
- Public transport journeys per person per year by public transport mode
- Transport mode share for all transport modes
- PM2.5 emissions at specific points on the Hants and Solent motorway system.

For the programme as a whole it will be good to concentrate on the most relevant and revealing indicators. Some of the indicators mentioned in the strategy may be best kept for internal use.

Phil Gagg

Chair, WinACC Transport and Planning Action Group, 18 December 2025