

Cllr Keith Glazier
Transport for the South East
County Hall
St. Anne's Crescent
Lewes
BN7 1UE

Transport for the South East

28th June 2019

Dear Keith

I am writing on behalf of members of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Strategic Board in relation to the Transport for the South East (TfSE) proposal to Government for statutory status.

SELEP fully supports TfSE's ambition to grow the South East's economy by facilitating the development of a high quality, integrated transport system that makes the region more productive and competitive, improves access to opportunities for all and protects the environment. TfSE's ambition to seek statutory status will help to make the case for much needed investment in transport infrastructure across the area.

Since the partnership was brought together, it has been encouraging to see the pace at which TfSE has built momentum and has progressed work such as the Economic Connectivity Review and steps towards the development of a transport strategy for the area. SELEP will seek opportunities to maximise the benefits of this evidence base, particularly in the context of developing our Local Industrial Strategy.

SELEP is in a unique position with two Sub National Transport Bodies (STBs) having been established across our geography. This, to date, has not presented an issue and SELEP has been fully involved across TfSE and Transport East. SELEP is supportive of TfSE's proposal to seek statutory status on the basis that it does not impact on SELEP's ability to engage across the two STBs.

There are also transport priorities for SELEP which cross between the geography of Transport East and TfSE; specifically the Lower Thames Crossing. Whilst the Lower Thames Crossing sits at the periphery of TfSE's boundary, the delivery of the new Lower Thames Crossing will have a profound impact on economic connectivity across the South East and nationally. We therefore hope that TfSE will continue to support investment on a regional basis, with consideration for connectivity beyond the TfSE boundary.

SELEP welcomes the continued opportunity to work in partnership with TfSE, through LEP representation on the Shadow Partnership Board and Transport Forum. Under TfSE's statutory status, LEPs will continue to play an important role in bringing a business perspective to the discussion and decision making. As such, and once the Partnership Board has been formed under statutory status, SELEP supports the proposal for two LEP representatives to remain co-opted onto the Partnership Board. Given the importance of business leadership, it is also felt that this should be reflected in the award of voting rights to the co-opted LEP members, for matters which relate to the LEP board members.

To date there has been strong engagement between TfSE and LEPs. The representation of LEPs on the Partnership Board and the ongoing engagement between SELEP and TfSE at an officer level will help to ensure that a co-ordinated approach between TfSE and SELEP remains in relation to the management of future funding from central government for transport infrastructure. In SELEP's view, TfSE has a much more strategic role in influencing the future of our transport network and making the case for investment on the Strategic and Major Road Network, particularly where investment stretches beyond LEP boundaries.

As all constituent member authorities within the SELEP area will be providing individual responses through their own governance processes, it is not SELEP's intention to provide detailed comments on the powers which are sought through the proposal to Government, other than to echo the need to operate cooperatively and with consent of the constituent authorities. It is, however, encouraged that TfSE seeks powers which will genuinely add value in supporting a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the development and management of a sustainable transport network which is fit to support our growing economy.

Finally, I'd like to thank you for the continued engagement with SELEP through the development of the proposal and hope that we can provide valued input through continued joint working between TfSE and SELEP.

Yours sincerely

Christian Brodie
Chair
South East Local Enterprise Partnership