

Record of Decisions

"Transport for the South West Peninsula" Sub-National Transport Body

Decision Taker

Elected Mayor on 3 September 2018

Decision

- (i) that Torbay Council joins an informal partnership with Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, Devon County Council and Somerset County Council; which will be known as a shadow sub-national transport body for the South West Peninsula (or similar), subject to Government agreeing with that proposal, and subject to formal agreement of a final terms of reference once the partnership has formally convened;
- (ii) that the draft terms of reference attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report provide an appropriate basis in principle upon which to create a partnership;
- (iii) that the Executive Head of Assets and Business Services, in consultation with the Elected Mayor and the Executive Lead for Community Services, be given delegated authority to agree the final terms of reference for the shadow sub-national transport body subject to the terms being generally in accordance with the draft terms attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report.;
- (iv) that the Executive Head of Assets and Business Services, in consultation with the Elected Mayor and Executive Lead for Community Services, be given delegated authority to develop and agree a constitution for the South West Peninsula sub-national transport body with the partner authorities, and an inter-authority agreement to enable the informal partnership to operate;
- (v) that the Executive Lead for Community Services be appointed to represent the Council on the sub-national transport bodies;
- (vi) that the Executive Head of Assets and Business Services, in consultation with the Elected Mayor and Executive Lead for Community Services, be given delegated authority to agree a prospectus (and any other material as appropriate) for the proposed body for communication purposes;
- (vii) that an initial partnership funding contribution of up to £20,300 be approved from the Planning Reserve, to facilitate the development and operation of the partnership, and lever in match-funding from the Government; with the actual value of the contribution to be agreed between the parties following further development of technical workstreams.

Reason for the Decision

To enable the formation of a shadow sub-national transport body (STB) by entering an informal partnership with other authorities in the South West and key agencies responsible for infrastructure investment. The STB will be the principal mechanism for dialogue with Government regarding strategic transport investment in area.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 18 September 2018 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

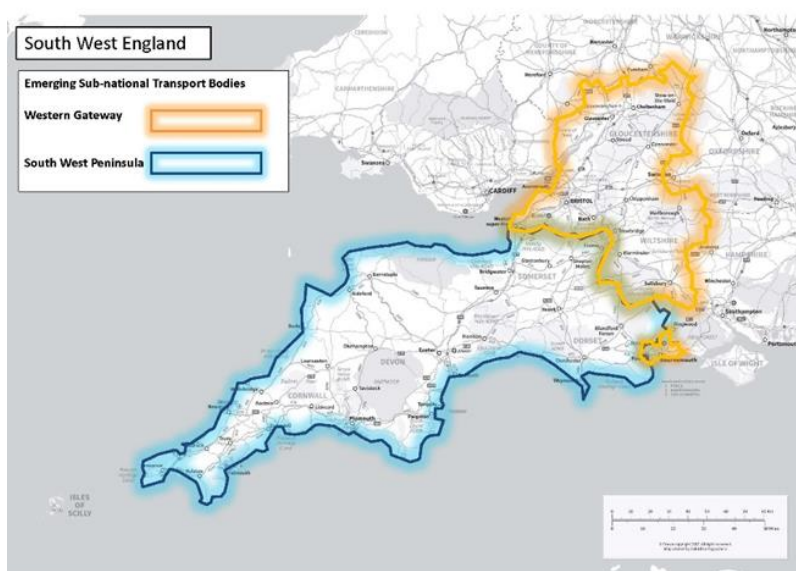
Information

Local Authorities across England are responding to Government's request for more strategic thinking about transport investment with the aim of improving regional productivity and sustainable economic growth by joining up to become Sub-national Transport Bodies (STB) using legislation, within the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.

Nationally three STBs have been formed and are working towards becoming statutory authorities. They include: Transport for the North, Midlands Connect and England's Economic Heartland. In addition, a shadow STB has been created for South East England and work has begun on creating a STB for East Anglia. The South West remains the only part of England not covered.

A recent consultation document on defining a new tier in the major road network for England (MRN), has highlighted Government's intention to work with STBs to agree investment priorities. Authorities in the South West have identified that a failure to put STBs in place would present a considerable risk in missing investment opportunities, and that such bodies will provide a unique opportunity for unprecedented access to Government and a key role in advising on use of the new national roads fund and other infrastructure investment processes.

The Authorities are well progressed in setting up two STBs, Western Gateway South West Peninsula, to cover South West Region; are on-track to establish shadow bodies as informal partnerships by September 2018 whilst longer-term discussions about statutory body status place. The SW authorities wrote to in June 2018 setting out the intention to set up two bodies and explaining the benefits and opportunities that this would create.



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A draft terms of reference for the shadow South West Peninsula STB has been drafted and is attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

Work is now underway to establish the detailed resourcing requirements and activity required to develop the evidence base and transport strategy which will be the key

initial output from the Body to inform imminent discussions with Government about strategic transport investment needs.

Corridor alliances such as those formed around the A303 corridor and the Bristol South West Economic Link are a strong feature of joint working in the area and will remain a key mechanism for joint working between the sub-national bodies.

The draft terms of reference for both bodies refer to the opportunity for local authorities to become 'associate members' of bodies where they are not part of the core STB area but have important strategic connectivity issues and investment needs related to a neighbouring STB. (For example, it would be beneficial for Somerset County Council to become an associate member of the Western Gateway STB given the investment needs and connectivity issues on the road and rail corridors that would be shared priorities with the Western Gateway area (e.g. M5, A38, A303, rail links to Bristol etc).)

Similarly the West of England Combined Authority has recently been created to facilitate strategic planning for the West of England area and there may be opportunities and benefits with forming a more formal association with that body.

The sub-national transport body model being followed is similar to the recently established 'Transport for the South East' which has an informal partnership in place utilising a £0.5m budget formed of contributions from its constituent authorities. The budget has been used to set up governance arrangements, a programme management office and technical workstreams which include preparing an initial evidence base and 'connectivity review' which has now been published. The body has recently been awarded £1m by the DfT to develop its transport strategy and activity needed to become a statutory body by 2020.

The Elected Mayor considered the recommendations of the Policy Development and Decision Group (Joint Operations Team) at the meeting on 3 September 2018 and his decision is set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Seek to establish a statutory body from the outset. This was not recommended due to the need to swiftly put in place a body for Government to deal with; statutory body status will take several years to progress.

Seek to establish one body for the whole South West Region. This was not recommended for the reasons set out in Appendix 4 to the submitted report.

Not to form a partnership with other authorities and seek to negotiate future strategic transport investment with Government as an individual authority. This was not recommended as Government has expressed a strong preference for such bodies. An authority seeking an individual relationship with the Department for Transport (DfT) on these matters would be unlikely to attract any significant new investment.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

10 September 2018

Signed: _____
The Elected Mayor of Torbay

Date: 10 September 2018