



Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
House of Commons
London SW1A 1AA

24 September 2020

Dear Chancellor

Transport East: Comprehensive Spending Review

I write on behalf of the Transport East partnership to present **three offers** to government for the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 (CSR20).

As the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for **Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend and Thurrock**, we bring together local transport and planning authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and business leaders, alongside Network Rail, Highways England, in addition to our strong collaboration with the other six STBs across England to tackle cross-boundary transport challenges together at a sub-national level.

We work closely with key strategic partnerships that transcend across our sub-national area, including the UK Innovation Corridor and Thames Estuary Growth Board. Our offers in this letter are therefore aligned with the UK Innovation Corridor's CSR20 submission to ensure Transport East supports enhanced connections and integration with the economies of London and Cambridge, and we are aligned with the Thames Estuary Growth Board (TEGB) to ensure that our plans are able to help join up effective transport across the Estuary as is outlined in the TEGB action plan, The Green Blue.

As such, we are helping to reinforce **one voice for transport**. Our vision is a thriving economy – the Eastern Dynamo - with modern, fast, reliable, resilient and low-carbon transport networks, transforming how people travel and goods are transported to drive forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come, supporting the wider UK economy and levelling up our diverse coastal communities. We are helping our sub-national area lead a green, clean, inclusive, and resilient economic recovery, and are focused on:

- ✓ **Energising coastal communities** - we are creating a reinvented, sustainable coast for the 21st century which delivers on our ambition to become the UK's foremost all-energy coast, supporting a year-round, competitive visitor offer, and 'levelling up' our coastal communities
- ✓ **Maximising our UK gateway role**, connecting the UK to world markets: Post-Brexit, connections to the rest of the world will be more important than ever. Better connected ports and airports help UK businesses thrive and boost the nation's economy through greater access to international markets and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment.
- ✓ **Enhanced connectivity** between our fastest growing places and businesses to enable the area to function as a coherent economy and boosting productivity.

To achieve these goals, Transport East has **created a dedicated team**, developed our first **Investment and Delivery Plan**, and initiated an **evidence base** to understand transport's contribution to our economic, environmental and social goals – including our recently published **Transport Decarbonisation Recommendations**.

We are pleased this progress was recognised last month by government's award of £425k for 2020/21 to complete our evidence base and deliver our inaugural **long-term transport strategy** over the next six months.

For the first time in the East, this will establish a single vision, a framework for transport investment, and set of transport priorities. Our three offers for CSR20 directly build on this:

Offer 1: We will accelerate delivery from our existing strategic investment programme, with government support

In advance of our strategy completing in 2021, our Transport Forum has developed and reviewed a draft **Investment and Delivery Plan** that sets our partners' existing strategic priorities into a single sub-national delivery programme of 30 strategic projects on six strategic corridors that will help deliver the CSR20 goals. This existing programme aligns with separate submissions made to you for example by the UK Innovation Corridor and Thames Estuary Growth Board, thereby assuring you of both support for the projects concerned and further evidence of need and deliverability.

Many of these are 'oven-ready' and deliver the government's stated CSR20 goals. At this early stage of CSR20, we ask that HM Treasury and Prime Minister prioritise the core departmental budgets which can help get these existing programmes over the line, including:

- **Roads:** Protect and enhance the **Road Investment Strategy** funding to ensure full delivery of committed and new projects in our sub-national area, from those delayed from RIS1 (2015-2020) to new projects in RIS2 (2020-2025) and RIS3 (2025-2030).
- **Rail:** Protect and enhance the current and future **Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline** for Control Period 6 (2019-2024) and Control Period 7 onwards, to drive forward our rail improvements to enable mode shift of passengers and freights to rail.
- **Ports and airports:** Invest in surface access to ports and airports to support our international gateway and economic recovery role post-Brexit, including the expansion of the **Freeport programme**.
- **Active Travel:** Protect, enhance and broaden the funding available to local authorities to deliver a shift to sustainable modes, through the **Walking and Cycling grant programme**.
- **Passenger Transport:** Focus on the recovery of the passenger transport sector – to enable our residents to get to school, work and vital services, through funding of local capacity enhancements on rail, bus and other passenger transport.
- **Decarbonisation:** Increase the resources available to local authorities and sub-national bodies to prepare for, scale up and deliver our decarbonisation ambitions, including **support for alternative fuels, transport innovation and future-proofing the transport network, in addition to investment in digital infrastructure** to both enhance connectivity and maximise benefits to the transport network.

Offer 2: We will identify, prioritise and accelerate a new generation of projects through an Eastern pipeline, in partnership with government

The Transport East Strategy will identify and prioritise a **long-term programme of transport investment to 2050**. From April 2021, as our focus moves from strategy to implementation, we want to accelerate the best of these to ensure rapid progression of projects that support the long-term UK recovery, and the government's CSR20 goals.

To achieve this, **STBs need funding certainty**. In line with the parallel requests from the other STBs across England, we ask that government commit to a **three-year Transport East settlement for financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24** to provide the framework for our partnership to accelerate delivery. This proposal is aligned to the submissions made by other STBs across England, and supported by our local partners, including the UK's Innovation Corridor and the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Offer 3: Transport East can help government fix our broken models of rural connectivity, public transport and active travel

Outside of the UK's metropolitan cities, the traditional approach to transport planning and funding does not achieve the CSR20 outcomes we need for our economy, businesses and communities. Many rural communities are becoming transport deserts, the public transport funding model is broken, and our active travel potential is not realised. The COVID-19 situation has exposed the deficiencies within the existing model.

We want to work with government and businesses to turn this around, using COVID-19 as once-in-a-generation catalyst for change. Through our DfT-funded strategy work to March 2021, we will work with partners to identify better models for delivering connectivity in the Transport East region and we ask Government to commit to working with us through the three-year CSR20 period, to develop and implement a better national approach to transport planning and funding to truly achieve the potential of the Eastern Dynamo.

I hope this provides sense of our ambition, supporting the recovery of UK plc via a close working relationship with government. I look forward to our future shared success.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Kevin Bentley
Chair of Transport East**