



Transport for South Hampshire response to the Urban Challenge Fund

Introduction

The South Hampshire sub-region is the largest urbanised area in the South East outside London and currently faces all the transport challenges identified in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU) report. Significant levels of sustainable economic growth are proposed for the sub-region in the South East Plan over the period to 2026. This includes the construction of 80,000 new homes and 2 million square metres of new employment land.

Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) recognises that the provision of high quality and carefully considered transport interventions will be essential to successfully deliver this growth and address existing and future transport challenges. The Urban Challenge Fund would provide a significant opportunity to help deliver these interventions and TfSH welcomes the opportunity provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) for comments on the proposed Fund. Within the sub-region, there is already good experience of delivering projects that are consistent with the approach outlined in the Urban Challenge Fund and some specific examples are quoted in this response.

Fund Objectives

The PMSU report has sensibly taken a balanced approach to identify both the positive and negative impacts transport has in urban areas and TfSH welcomes how the Fund also aims to address this wide range of economic, environmental and health issues in a comprehensive way, rather than the narrow congestion only focus of the Transport Innovation Fund. TfSH particularly welcomes the fact that the Urban Challenge Fund does not have a mandatory requirement for either road user charging or workplace parking levy and potential bidders can consider a wider range of alternative demand management measures as part of a package of interventions. TfSH support how the Fund has drawn on the successful outcomes of the Sustainable Travel and Cycling Demonstration Towns.

TfSH support the principle for strong governance to deliver an Urban Challenge Fund and believe the TfSH Joint Committee is a good example of multi-authority decision making and would like to seek clarity that this would be an appropriate governance model to successfully deliver an Urban Challenge Fund.

What measures will the Fund support?

TfSH has established the Reduce – Manage – Invest strategy to addressing sub-regional transport issues. The measures proposed in the Urban Challenge Fund, broadly sit within the Reduce and Manage elements of the strategy and are recommended as a high priority for investment within the

recently submitted “Urban South Hampshire 2014 to 2019 Delivery Strategy” report. Each of the key areas proposed for delivery by the Fund are now considered in more detail.

Sustainable Travel

This includes the wide range of measures that can be classed as “Smarter Choices”, including promoting walking and cycling, travel planning and travel awareness campaigns. The Discussion Paper does not outline the type of funding that would be made available to successful bidders, but these Smarter Choices measures would predominantly require revenue funding and it is important that the Fund makes an appropriate provision for both revenue and capital funding. This would contrast with the current dominance of capital funding, but is a change that will be necessary to deliver many of these Sustainable Travel interventions. Within South Hampshire, there is already good practice in these areas, including a more than doubling in cycling over the 2004 to 2009 five year period in Southampton.

This section includes improved street design as a potential intervention. The work in the PMSU report has not explicitly identified the costs of poor street design and public space and conversely the benefits that good design can bring. TfSH recommends that an attempt is made to quantify this in greater detail, as the evidence that was provided in the PMSU report suggests that the benefits could be significant. These are often poorly understood by many transport professionals. Apart from the obvious road safety benefits, there can be significant economic benefits from an improved environment, where people stay for longer and spend more money. Streets that are designed to positively encourage walking and cycling can contribute towards modal shift, carbon reduction and congestion reduction, as well as the significant health benefits that come from an increasingly active population.

There is good experience of such improvements in Urban South Hampshire and a recently implemented streetscene enhancement scheme in London Road, Southampton will be featured in the forthcoming Manual for Streets 2 document. In Portsmouth, the area wide application of a 20mph limit in most residential areas, which was introduced in 2008, aims to reduce speeds, improve safety and make these areas more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

Encouraging modal shift

TfSH fully supports the measures outlined to improve public transport, which will have a significant role in delivering modal shift for medium to longer distance journeys that are unsuitable for walking and cycling. The recently completed A3 ZIP Bus Priority Corridor between Clanfield, Waterlooville and Portsmouth is a good example in South Hampshire of how a public transport corridor can be comprehensively enhanced.

Demand Management

As noted above, TfSH welcomes the consideration of a wide range of demand management measures, without the narrow and mandatory focus on road user charging or workplace parking levy.

Traffic Management

TfSH supports a comprehensive approach to traffic management and would want to ensure that all relevant bodies, such as the Highways Agency, are involved in the development and implementation of any comprehensive traffic management strategy. TfSH has already established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Highways Agency, which can provide the basis to take forward joint working arrangements.

How might the new Fund work?

TfSH looks forward to detailed guidance on how the Fund will operate and the levels of funding that will be available. TfSH supports the suggested criteria outlined in this section.