

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Board Meeting

Paper A

Date **27th November 2024**

Title of report: **Strategic Investment Plan update**

Purpose of report: **To provide an update on progress on the Strategic Investment Plan process, outputs and draft document and seek approval to progress to public consultation**

Recommendations:

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. Note progress on the SIP.
- II. Approve application of the agreed assessment process (of which the output is the list of 38 prioritised proposals)
- III. Note the overall costs of the prioritised programme
- IV. Approve the draft Strategic Investment Plan for consultation
- V. Approve proposed consultation process
- VI. Approve the list of key stakeholders as set out in Appendix A
- VII. Note options for document design and provide recommendations if desired
- VIII. Delegate approval of final documents for consultation to SIP Board

1. Background

- 1.1 The long term (2024-2050) Strategic Transport Plan (STP) was approved by the Board in March 2024 and the development of the associated Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) began in May 2024, with a target completion date of April/May 2025.
- 1.2 A SIP Project Board has guided day to day progress, with Cllr Hannah Young as Project Executive. An assessment advisory panel comprised of officers from partner Local Authorities further informed the assessment process. Information has been shared with SOG at regular intervals.

2. Progress to date (November 24)

- 2.1 The full approach to the SIP is outlined below, with items completed highlighted in blue, those in progress in green and those still to be completed in black.

Item	(Expected) completion date
WGSTB developed an assessment methodology for proposals (based on the STP objectives), supporting information and a proforma for submission. Circulated to Local Authority partners.	Completed 1 st August
Local Authority Partners submit proposals for assessment, along with supporting information.	Completed 2 nd Sept
WGSTB assess proposals submitted against the objectives identified. Top scoring proposals identified and compiled into a draft SIP	Completed 6 th Nov
Draft SIP document for consultation produced	19 th Nov
Artworked version of the SIP document for consultation produced. Online consultation set up	13 th Dec
Consultants (WSP) conduct Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment of prioritised schemes.	18 th Dec
Public consultation on draft SIP, along with impact assessments	18 th Dec – 2 nd Feb
Highways impacts of prioritised schemes modelled	Feb
Consultation responses, impact assessments and other feedback compiled and the SIP re-drafted in response	Feb
Final draft SIP submitted to the Board	13 th March

- 2.2 The final SIP will then be completed, artworked and published in May 2025, after local elections in some authorities.

3. Proposals received

- 3.1 Proposals were submitted by all nine partner Authorities (West of England Combined Authority submitted an overall proforma covering all their UAs), National Highways and Network Rail. 101 proposals were received in total.
- 3.2 Following a validation and sift exercise, 62 proposals were progressed for assessment in the current SIP round

4. Assessment methodology

4.1 The twelve metrics (and methodology) for the multi-criteria assessment framework were agreed and confirmed at previous Board meeting, following several workshops and discussions with transport and senior officers. These are summarised in the table below:

Sustainable Growth and economy	1.Support the economy to thrive and level up across the whole region, particularly where prosperity is constrained by poor connectivity
	2.Facilitate sustainable visitor access to our key tourism areas
	3.Maintain and improve sustainable access for goods and people to national and international gateways,
Decarbonisation and Air Quality	4.Reduce annual regional transport carbon emissions from 6,250kt CO ₂ e (2019) to net zero by 2050
	5.Minimise embodied carbon
	6.Deliver the infrastructure/conditions/services necessary to prioritise a shift to low carbon modes
Access to services and opportunities	7.Improve access to essential goods, services and opportunities in target areas
	8. Maintain and improve access to important regional and national destinations through our strategic transport networks
Facilitates strategic N-S movements	9.Improve north-south rail and road links between the Midlands and South Coast on identified corridors/routes delivering social and economic benefits & levelling up southern parts of the region
	10.Improve journey time reliability on strategic routes (identified in STP)
Movement of Goods	11.Increase ability for goods moved by road to shift to rail or coastal shipping
	12.Improve HGV facilities on strategic freight routes to increase attractiveness, discouraging running on unsuitable alternatives.

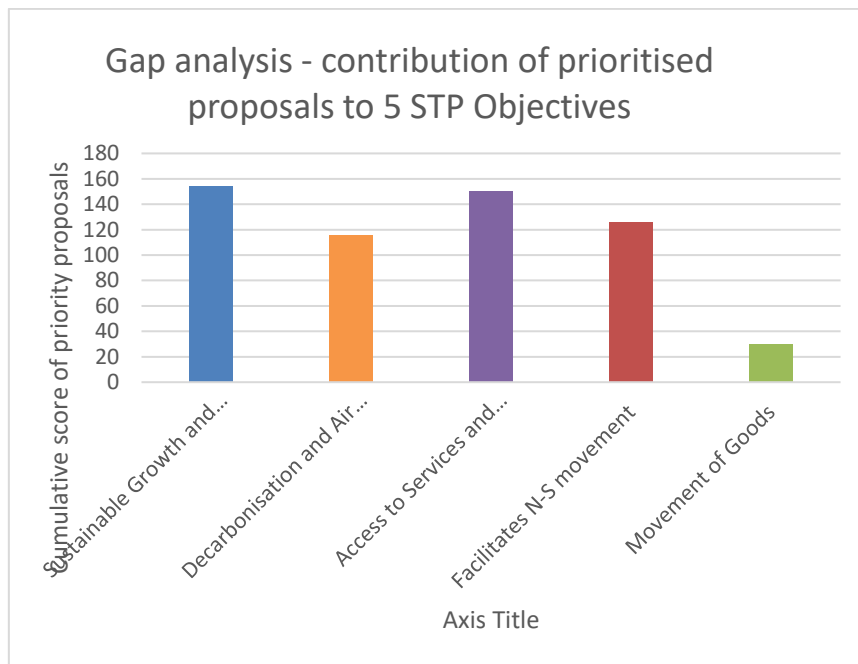
4. Outputs of assessment process – prioritised proposals

4.1 Following application of the assessment process, 38 proposals that are best able to deliver against the 5 Key Aims of the SIP at the most affordable cost have been identified. These form the basis of the Strategic Investment Plan.

4.2 A draft SIP document is being circulated with this Paper. The full list of prioritised proposals and their performance against the 5 Key Aims can be seen in Section 6 of this document.

4.3 The overall prioritised programme is effective at delivering consistently against the first four Key Aims of the STP, leaving no significant gaps. There is a smaller cumulative contribution against the 5th Aim – Movements of Goods – but as the objectives underpinning this aim relate particularly to a limited subset of proposals supporting a shift of road-based goods movement to more sustainable alternatives (rail, coastal shipping and zero-emission vehicles) this is not an unexpected result. Traditional goods movement (particularly by diesel powered vehicles) benefits primarily from the facilitation of strategic north-south routes and the Access to National/International Gateways objective under Sustainable Growth and Economy.

Overall, the ability of selected proposals to deliver the Key Aims of the STP is good.



4.4 This list of prioritised proposals was circulated to officers in partner authorities on 14th November. We have offered (and undertaken) meetings with individual authorities to explore and resolve questions regarding the scoring methodology and outputs.

4.5 Alternative approaches to compiling the prioritised programme were also explored during the development process, but the costs and performance of these alternatives were less favourable.

4.6 The full costs of the 38 prioritised proposals is around £4 billion over 10-15 years (proposals commencing by 2025), broken down into 5-year windows as follows:

	Capital, £M	Revenue, £M
2025-30	1,118	109
2030-35	1,345	149

2035+	1,104	142
Total	3,567	400

This is broadly in line with other STBs we have researched.

5. Draft SIP document

- 5.1 A draft SIP document (text document) has been circulated with this paper. If the Board approves this draft (potentially with minor amendments deferred for approval to the SIP Board) then it will be finished and artworked for consultation.
- 5.2 The style of the SIP will mirror that of the STP to accentuate continuity, but design variation options will also be presented at the Board meeting on 27th November for Member feedback.

6. Impact assessments and modelling

- 6.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment is progressing in tandem with the SIP assessments and documentation.
- 6.2 The Impact assessments are integrated, multi-stage processes, with the final report due by 13th December 2024. This report must accompany the public consultation. We expect any major findings or concerns to be flagged before this time.
- 6.3 Traffic modelling of the highest priority proposals identified in the SIP will be undertaken in February by Dorset Council and WSP. The exact specification for this is being finalised, with the cost expected to be approx. £40k.

7. Consultation, communication and engagement

- 7.1 The development of the SIP has been informed by regular workshops and meetings with partners including Local Authority senior officers, transport officers and data officers, National Highways, Network Rail, other STBs and our Transport and Business Forum.
- 7.2 Public consultation on the draft SIP (including impact assessment reports) will take place between 20th December 2024 and 2nd February 2025. This will comprise:
1. An online consultation with a dedicated survey designed to collate the information required and facilitate central coordination.
 2. Webinar series: Two webinars are being coordinated to be held via Teams during afternoon and evening to maximise attendance and accessibility. The online webinar will be public, free and will offer a virtual presentation about the SIP, followed by Q&A session.

3. The first webinar will be held on 19 December 2024 between 12:00-13:30 and 18:00-19:30, the second on 16 January between 12:00-13:30 and 18:00-19:30.
4. Email campaign: Emails to be issued to all stakeholders regarding 'Western Gateway STB seeking your views: consultation on regional Strategic Investment Plan'. The emails will contain the webinar dates and will also be designed to encourage onwards sharing to maximise our stakeholders' channels, further email reminders to be issued throughout the consultation period.
5. Other meetings: There will be an opportunity to present the SIP in other meetings when invited.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment and a Health Impact Assessment is in progress to identify any potential disadvantages to protected groups or impacts on community health and safety.

9. Legal Considerations

- 9.1 The Western Gateway STB remains an informal non-statutory partnership and the STP and SIP are not statutory plans. They are therefore not subject to specific directives regarding sustainability appraisal. We have received advice from DfT that no specific appraisal methodology is expected, but a proportionate approach to be established in consultation with Local Authority partners.

10. Financial considerations

- 10.1 The approved budget for the SIP is £145,000.
- 10.2 The SEA has come in under the indicative budget amount (£34,780 against a budget of £60,000) although there may be some additional work to do post-consultation.
- 10.3 The modelling estimate is higher than the budgeted amount (£40k estimate compared to £30k budget), but is still well within the overall budget.
- 10.4 Most of the assessment work is being done in-house or by partner Authorities and with existing or free software, so there is a likely to be a saving against the £15k indicatively allocated for consultancy work.
- 10.5 Overall, the SIP project is likely to come in below the budgeted amount.

11. Risks

- 11.1 As raised in the previous Board meeting, the timescales for delivery of a final draft SIP by the end of the financial year are extremely tight, with no flex in the programme to accommodate delays or changes.
- 11.2 A delay to the programme, combined with pre-election period restrictions in March – May would mean a delay to delivery of 4-6 months.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The Board is asked to note progress on the SIP and approve the decisions recommended in the introduction of this paper that would allow the draft SIP to progress to public consultation in December.

Contact Officer

Hannah Fountain, Senior Transport Officer, Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body.

Appendix A: Audience and stakeholder groups for SIP engagement

Stakeholder Groups		
External Group	Internal Group	Interest Group
Partners (DfT, Network Rail, National Highways)	Board members	Voluntary organisations
Business communities (big and small)	Senior Officer Group	Urban and rural residents
Sub-national Transport Bodies	Transport Officer Group	Community groups
Statutory bodies	Transport and Business Forum	Student and young people groups
Neighbouring and district councils and LTAs	Freight Forum	Campaign groups
MPs		Equalities groups and seldom heard communities (including black and ethnic communities, disability and LGBTQ forums)
Housing and Economic development bodies		
Ports and airports		

Academic institutions and industry		
Freight operators		
Environmental groups, bodies and organisations		
Local, regional and national media		
Engagement Tools		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular update meetings and correspondence • Webinars • Articles in existing email newsletters • Website and online engagement hub • Promotional video/animation • Briefings • Social media • Online survey • Consultation • Information and resource packs • Documentation of meetings and outcomes • Social media content shared via partners / community channels. • Ongoing relationships 		

