

Transforming Cities Fund *Call for Proposals*



Department
for Transport

Application Form

Applicant Information

Bidding City Region: Integrated Transport Solutions in South Essex (ITSSE) – A joint application between Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council

Bid Manager Name and position: James Hopkins, Business Development Manager

Contact telephone number: 03330 131115

Email address: james.hopkins@essex.gov.uk

Postal address: Highways and Transport, Essex County Council, County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1QH

Maps

Appendix A – City region boundary and two key corridors identified for investment

Appendix B – Major employment, essential services and train stations on the two corridors

Appendix C – Committed and future housing developments along the two corridors

Supporting evidence

Appendix D – Peak time congestion

Appendix E – Air Quality issues overview

Appendix F – Commuter journeys in Basildon and Castle Point

Appendix G – Developing employment sites and industry strengths

Letters of support

Appendix H to O – First Essex, Rochford District Council, Arriva Herts & Essex, Essex Air Quality Consortium, Opportunity South Essex, Greater Anglia, Basildon District Council, Southend Borough Council

SECTION A – Definition and challenges

A1. Constituent Local Authorities:

Led by Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council.

The bid covers Southend Borough Council, Rochford, Basildon and Castle Point district councils.

A2. Geographical area:

Vibrant, attractive and huge potential; our South Essex city region covers a densely populated, fast-growing urban area with a twist – no city!

With 90,000 new homes and 70,000 new jobs planned by 2036, within a short geographical span; the region provides all the characteristics and needs of a growing city. The area is a major part of the Thames Gateway with strong links to London.

Encompassing strategically important establishments, including London Southend Airport, Basildon Enterprise Corridor, two major hospitals and many emerging business and industrial parks; the region is hampered by high congestion levels and several Air Quality Management Areas.

A3. Population

Residential population (2016) = 539,400

Basildon – 183,300
Southend – 180,600
Rochford – 85,700
Castle Point – 89,800

Overall workday population (2011 census) = 336,327

Basildon – 125,591
Southend – 115,742
Rochford – 46,423
Castle Point – 48,571

Figures taken from www.nomisweb.co.uk

A4. Discussion of key transport challenges:

The city region identified has significant growth plans, with 90,000 new homes and 70,000 new jobs planned by 2036, within an already densely populated area. Indeed, this growth has already begun, with significant developments being built now or confirmed.

Limited, disjointed sustainable travel options in the region are a barrier to unlocking economic opportunities this growth presents. The current travel picture is unattractive – an overloaded road network, wasted employee time spent sitting in traffic and a distinct lack of connected multi-modal options with clear need for customer orientated information and integrated ticketing options.

Failure to act and invest in sustainable travel infrastructure will result in parts of the road network coming to a daily grinding halt at peak times. Key pinch points of the network are nearly at 100% of existing capacity without this extra growth (see Appendix D) and building our way out of the problem is not a viable option or the right solution. As it stands, any incident in these areas has a significant effect on the network. Delays in bus journeys are believed to be 8 minutes per route.

Notwithstanding the damaging impact congestion has on the local economy and employers, it has led to several AQMA's in the city region (www.essexair.org.uk). For example, Rayleigh Town Centre NO₂ concentrations have been measured at 40.73µg/m³ and in Southend 'The Bell' NO₂ concentrations have been measured at 49.2µg/m³. Three locations on the A127 have been identified in the National Air Quality Plan published July 2017. The Pollution Climate Mapping indicates further locations in Basildon and Rochford will be in exceedance by 2021 (Appendix E). The well-known effects of such levels may cause or worsen respiratory diseases or aggravate existing heart conditions.

These fundamental issues are driven by exceptionally high car use. 76.9% of all commuter journeys in Basildon and Castle Point are undertaken by car, compared to a very low 4.9% via bus/coach and 3.7% by train (Appendix F). The region is largely urban, has high population density and many key attractors, all essential ingredients for robust and quality bus services; however significant congestion and journey unpredictability prevent this occurring.

Understanding the reasons behind this mismatch is vital. Convenience of the car, congestion and unreliable bus journeys surely play a factor, but perhaps the location of employment opportunities is the bigger issue. Government statistics show that Castle Point and Rochford are number 3 and 4 respectively in the UK for losses from residential to workday populations (2011 census; 25% and 23% loss respectively, www.ons.gov.uk). It is considered that a significant majority of these workday journeys will be to Basildon and Southend, as the major employment hubs in the region or into London via train.

We believe the transport challenge this presents requires a two-pronged approach – capital investment in bus priority infrastructure, through this bid, to provide a platform for an improved network of services (facilitated by use of new powers in the Bus Services Act); and a subsequent behavioural change programme to enable real, permanent modal shift.

SECTION B: Who & Where

There are two key corridors that we wish to invest in:

- Southend to Basildon (via Southend Airport, Rayleigh, Wickford, Basildon Enterprise Corridor with an option to include Billericay)
- Basildon to Southend (via Pitsea, SEEVIC and Hadleigh along the A13)

They represent ideal locations for bus priority measures; improving access to high-tech industry jobs, opportunities for skills development and an enhanced pathway into London via local train stations that have significant and established investment plans. The region has a significant number of employment sites under consideration for development and existing strengths to build upon in industries such as construction (See Appendix G).

Aside from the clear benefits to business in the area, totalling some 187,000 jobs (www.essexsb.co.uk), the connectivity provided by the two corridors through key urban areas should encourage more reliable, frequent services between schools, colleges and the two major hospitals in the area. Examples of beneficiaries would be South Essex College (SEC) that has 11,466 (2016/17) students on role, attending a number of campuses along the two corridors, with students currently moving between them on poorly connected services or via car.

Another key beneficiary would be Basildon and Southend hospitals, currently under the governments success regime, which seeks to centralise specialist services at one site, leading to the need for increased travel between sites and longer journeys for patients to appointments.

Congestion and air quality issues are vocal concerns of local residents living in these corridors, which are set to become worse given a considerable majority of housing and job growth (referred to in Section A) is focussed along the two corridors. The issues are heightened when an incident occurs on the nearby A127, M25, A13 or A12, highlighting the importance to invest now.

Our proposals for a raft of interchange and junction upgrades, bus gates, removal of 'dog-legs' and priority bus lanes will lead to improved bus journey times on the two corridors. As an example, around an 8 minute journey time improvement is achievable from Wickford to Basildon, representing in the region of a 25% quicker trip. This would be complemented with better connected walking and cycling routes and the addition of further cycling hubs to provide a number of high-class multi-modal hubs at key points along the corridors, such as Basildon and Southend Victoria train station. This would build on existing investment in this area to the tune of £15.9 million planned under the South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) project.

Investing in these proposals gives bus operators in the region a platform upon which to deliver a vastly better bus experience – shorter journey times, a high quality experience and incentive to invest in a minimum of Euro V vehicles. Our intention is to explore and implement powers available under the Bus Services Act 2017 to cover the city region identified; raising standards, improving bus rail interchange, seeking an improved integrated ticketing approach across bus and rail and thereby offer residents a service that is attractive, efficient and more likely to achieve behavioural change.

SECTION C: Ambition for change

South Essex is going to change over the next 25 years. Recognising this, and wishing to make the most of the opportunities offered by change, the local authorities across South Essex have come together to form The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) to develop a joint vision for the future, the South Essex 2050 Ambition to create:

- A dynamic modern place, full of opportunities;
- A place where communities and businesses thrive and,
- A place where potential is fulfilled.

To achieve this ambition, investment in our transport network will be aimed at ensuring the efficient and effective movement of people and goods to boost economic growth, create great places to live, work and visit, enable people to live independently, and enable people to make the most of opportunities as they arise,

All of our main urban areas are growing and the provision of effective linkages between them, are key to the economic success of South Essex, enabling South Essex to grow and deliver more than the sum of its parts. Our aim is to ensure that these areas continue to develop into places where people want to live, work, shop, and spend time.

With this growth, there will be an increase in demand for travel on our already busy urban road networks. However, space is not available in our major urban areas to increase capacity on the existing roads, or to build new roads where space for roads is competing with other uses.

A new approach is required:

- Transport investment in our key urban areas will focus on the most sustainable transport options that enable the efficient movement of large numbers of people and goods within the limited space available, freeing up space for development and an improved public realm.
- Providing high quality and viable sustainable alternative travel to encourage trips to be made using fast and reliable public transport and safe, high quality cycling and pedestrian networks
- Ensuring that the different forms of transport are as integrated as possible, people have access to up to date and reliable transport information and ticketing and payment mechanisms make use of new technology.

Our proposals in this application clearly support the future ambition of South Essex 2050 and have the backing of a wide range of council's, businesses and operators; demonstrated in Appendices H - O

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the Department, as part of the Government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within two working days of submitting the final bid to the Department. The Department reserves the right to deem the business case as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

Please specify the weblink where this bid will be published:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/bids-and-funding/transforming-cities-fund.aspx>

Submission of proposals:

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday, 8 June 2018**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to:

TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk