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GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

The Rt Hon. the Lord Adonis
National Infrastructure Commission
5th Floor, 11 Philpot Lane
London, EC3M 8UD
enquiries@nic.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Lord Adonis

The Wider South East Political Steering Group is an all-tier executive partnership of councils and the Mayor of London, with geographical and cross-party political representation from across London, the South East and East of England. Our aim is to work collectively with key national decision makers including the National Infrastructure Commission, Government and wider partners to tackle the most important issues facing our economies, locally and across our three regions. We welcome the work of the NIC in identifying the key role of transport investment and wider supporting infrastructure.

We believe that transport is particularly crucial in securing Wider South East (WSE) economic prosperity and would like to meet with you to discuss the progress of key strategic transport priorities that we have identified.

With the Brexit negotiations underway, it is vital that transport investment helps maintain and grow the global competitiveness of the UK's economic heartland in London, the South East and the East of England. The WSE provides the UK's only net contributions to Treasury – which supports Government spending across the whole of the UK – and we cannot risk a decline in productivity, profitability or employment. The East, London and the South East are vibrant economic centres, which together deliver 54% of England's economic output – some £773bn (GVA 2015). Collectively, our 159 councils are home to over 24 million people, 44% of England's population. However, we see further opportunities for local economic and housing growth, which are currently hampered by our over-stretched transportation network.

By working collectively across the WSE, we are able to bring together an intimate knowledge of our local areas with the relationships we have with business and wider partners to support the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure across the three regions as a whole, thereby assisting better infrastructure planning and supporting future economic growth. The initial 13 priorities supported by the WSE partnership include the development of several infrastructure corridors/schemes which are of strategic importance for economic growth (see also the map attached to this letter):

- East West Rail and new Expressway road link (Oxford – Cambridge)
- North Downs Rail Link (Gatwick – Reading) incl. extension to Oxford
- A27/M27/A259 and rail corridor (Dover – Southampton)
- West Anglia Mainline, Crossrail 2 North (London – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough) and M11
- Great Eastern Mainline (London – Ipswich – Norwich) and A12
- South Essex: Essex Thames-side, Crossrail 2 Eastern Branch (London – South Essex/London Gateway Port) and A127 and A13
- Thames Gateway Kent: Crossrail 1 Extension and HS1 (London – North Kent – Channel Tunnel)
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Brighton Mainline (London – Gatwick – Brighton)
- South West Mainline and Crossrail 2 South West (London – Surrey/southern access to Heathrow)

- Great Western Mainline (London – Reading/western access to Heathrow)
- Midlands and West Coast Mainline (London – Luton – Bedford/Milton Keynes)
- Felixstowe – Nuneaton/Midlands and A14

Both road and public transport infrastructure across the Wider South East have been under increasing strain with greater numbers of people commuting longer distances for work, and the regional population as well as the regional economy expanding. These 13 transport corridors within the three regions have been highlighted in recognition of the positive impact they will have in terms of meeting local growth needs and providing alternatives to travelling via central London to help ease pressure on London, which is facing unprecedented demands on its transport.

There is significant support for investment in these 13 transport corridors and a range of local, strategic and national partners are involved in promoting or progressing specific schemes along each corridor. The schemes offer significant national benefits: directly, by improving access to markets here and abroad, and indirectly, as a successful WSE economy provides economic returns to the Treasury which can be reinvested across the country. Developing these crucial transportation links will not only encourage regional growth but also help deliver government priorities, most notably by increasing collaboration across regional boundaries and making transport between our strong regional economies faster and more convenient.

The Wider South East collaboration effort harnesses the collective strength of our area which is already economically vibrant and which can become even more so with NIC support for investment. Within our regions, partners are already talking to key infrastructure delivery partners, such as Network Rail, Highways England and utility providers in order to make sure that our regions are ready for investment and can deliver the expected economic advantages. Investment in key infrastructure can unlock housing sites across our three regions to meet local needs. WSE representatives are also engaging central government in this effort and representatives are due to meet with the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport on 11 October 2017 for an initial discussion on future collaboration.

We welcome the focus of the NIC on a number of the significant schemes for our regions, particularly Crossrail 2, the East-West Rail link to Cambridge, a new Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, the future of Heathrow Airport and the Eastern crossings of the River Thames. All of these are essential for securing balanced growth across the Wider South East and we would like to meet with Commissioners at the NIC to explore what more we can do collectively with local partners and the NIC to make sure we can deliver on national and local ambitions, as well as secure the delivery of new homes.

We hope to meet with you in the autumn to discuss how we can secure the delivery of strategic transport across our three regions and support the work of the NIC collaboratively as the Wider South East.

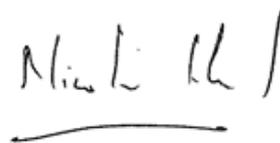
Yours sincerely



ClIr David Finch
Chairman of the East of England Infrastructure
& Growth Group
and Leader of Essex County Council



Jules Pipe
Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration
& Skills, Greater London Authority



ClIr Nicolas Heslop
Chairman of South East England Councils
and Leader of Tonbridge & Malling
Borough Council



ClIr Daren Rodwell
London Councils Portfolio Holder for City
Development and Leader of London
Borough of Barking & Dagenham

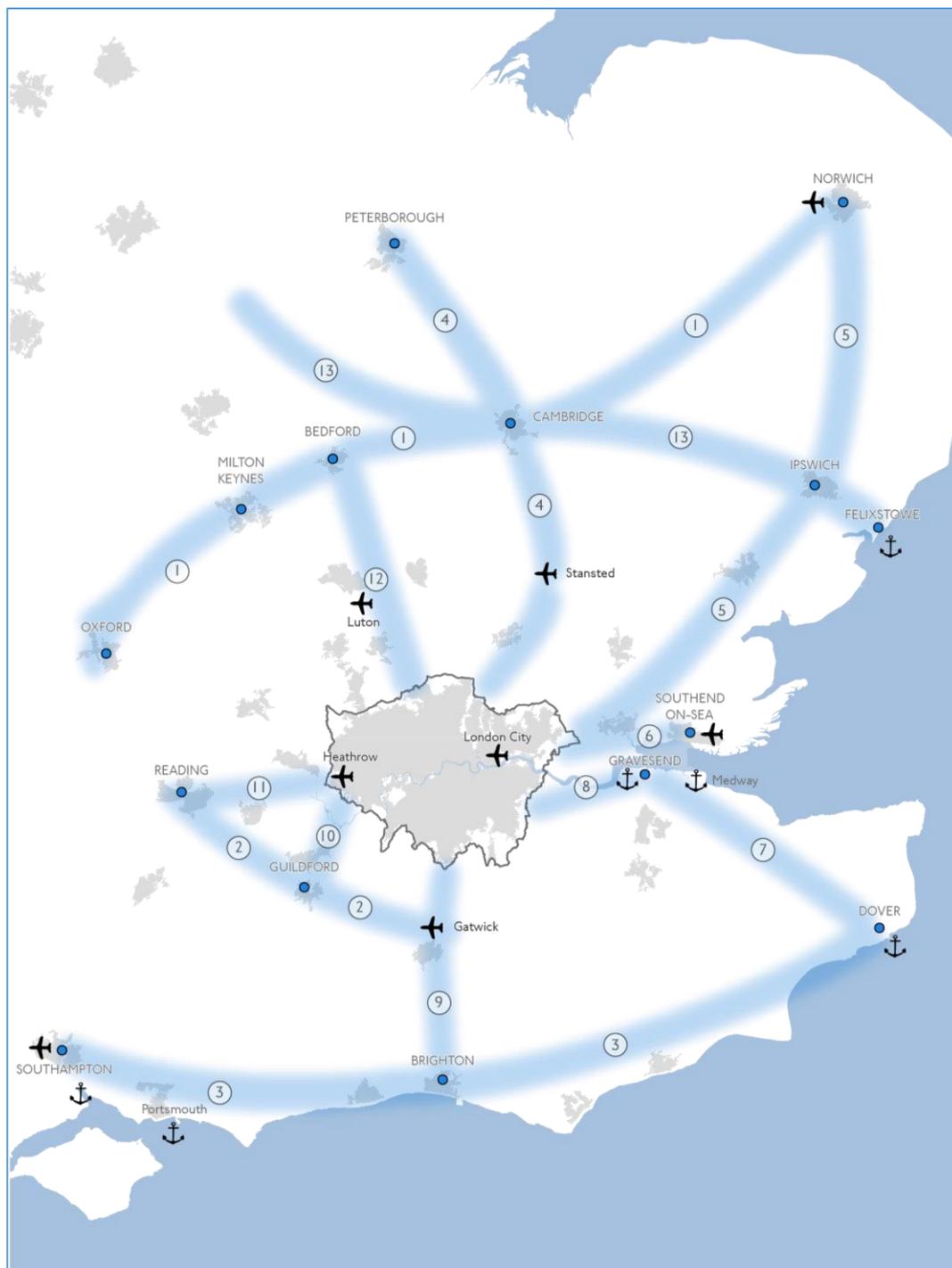
Greater London Authority the Mayor of London provides citywide leadership and creates policies to improve London for all.

London Councils represents London's 32 borough councils and the City of London.

South East England Councils (SEEC) is a cross-party partnership representing county, unitary and district councils in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, East & West Sussex and Kent.

The East of England LGA is a membership organisation of the district and county councils in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and the unitary councils

Wider South East – 13 Initial Strategic Infrastructure Priorities



1. East West Rail and new Expressway road link (Oxford – Cambridge)
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