Purpose of report:

- To inform the Regional Transport Forum of the developments within the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) programme and to seek approval for the attached consultation response (Appendix A) to the European Commission.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that members approve the draft consultation response paper.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) aims to promote the development of trans-European networks as a key element for the creation of the internal market and for reinforcing economic and social cohesion. This includes the interconnection and interoperability of national networks as well as access to such networks. The programme consists of 30 ‘priority transport projects’ (of which four fall within the East of England) as well as a wider ‘comprehensive network’ of road, rail, airport and sea connections.

1.2 To meet the European Commission’s ambitions of achieving this trans-European network, the TEN-T programme dedicates financial support in the form of Multi-Annual and Annual calls for proposals.

1.3 The Annual Call finances both works and studies – with many studies laying the groundwork for a more substantial bid towards either Multi-Annual or Annual funds. The Commission’s financing rate for a project is usually around 10-15% for works and up to 50% for studies.

1.4 The European Commission has a budget of approximately €8.013 billion for the TEN-T programme for the period 2007-2013. Almost 80% of this funding has already been allocated to projects. Thus, for the period 2010-2013 there remains approximately €1 billion (or €250 million per year) in the Commission budget.

1.5 Following the publication of the 2010 Call in May several project ideas emerged. As of 1st September 2010 the following bids from the East of England are expected to either be submitted to the UK Department for Transport (DfT) for their approval or directly submitted to the European Commission:

- Hutchison Ports – project to build a new rail terminal at the Port of Felixstowe, that will include nine tracks of 700m in length, six rail mounted gantry cranes, ancillary equipment and associated storage areas. Project was submitted to the Commission via the DIT in late August and has already received
expressions of support from Haven Gateway Partnership, Suffolk County Council and Richard Howitt MEP.

- Luton Airport Parkway – creation of a new northern entrance to the Parkway station off Kimpton Road with the aim to increase patronage of both the shuttle bus between the station and the airport and the train services that call at the station.

1.6 Southend Airport (Stobart Group) was seeking to make an application, however, the DfT informed them that they were ineligible because they did not meet the necessary passenger numbers required, they therefore withdrew their application. Stobart is now working with regional partners on accessing other European funds.

2 TEN-T Consultation Background

2.1 In 2009, the European Commission held a consultation on its TEN-T Green Paper. At that point, the East of England submitted a very full and detailed response addressing the issues raised.

2.2 In our Green Paper response, we argued that the existing 30 defined priority projects should be completed before changing the network, as you risk losing the benefits of the investment so far. However, the region did agree with an additional focus on key nodes (e.g. ports, stations, airports etc), where added value can be found.

2.3 In May 2010, the Commission launched a new consultation on the future TEN-T guidelines seeking comments and views on the key aspects of the programme such as future funding, nodes and links, intelligent transport systems and the future of the comprehensive network.

2.4 Given that the East of England’s position has not substantially changed, the new response from us is being based largely on the Green Paper submission, with updated comments on transport nodes and the future comprehensive network.

3 Our Response to the Consultation

3.1 The response is constructed around four policy sections: core network and nodes; comprehensive network; innovation infrastructure measures (ITS); and funding.

3.2 The key messages from the East of England are:

- An increase in the TEN-T budget to more adequately reflect what the programme is seeking to achieve.
- The maintaining of both the current priority projects and comprehensive network within the East of England. We believe it would be damaging and short sighted to remove the potential for future TEN-T investment post-2013 in the currently uncompleted priority network, as this would not allow existing investments and works to be fully realised and reach their full potential.
- A stronger focus on European objectives, based on the EU2020 strategy and the EUs 20/20/20 climate change goals, supported by consistency with national and regional objectives.
• Continued support for and completion of the currently defined priority projects, given the recognised European, national and regional benefits these will bring and the disadvantages inherent in not completing these projects.
• Continued support for both annual and multi-annual calls for proposals to ensure both large scale and smaller projects can be covered by the TEN-T programme
• Future-proofing of the programme to ensure projects can be supported which relate to future needs not just what is already required

4 Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that members:

4.2 Approve the draft consultation response paper.

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The East of England

The East of England is the second largest geographical area in England in the United Kingdom covering 19,120 square kilometres with a population of 5,541,600 (ONS mid year population estimate) for 2005. There are around a dozen medium-sized towns and cities, although there is no major city acting as a regional focus. The five counties of Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and six Unitary Authorities of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock make up the East of England. There are 41 district or Borough councils.

The area is diverse, stretching from the edge of London in the south to remote coastal and rural areas in the north and east. It is an area facing challenges from the risk of flooding from sea level rise, an ageing demographic profile and yet significant population increases accompanied by high housing growth targets and thus considerable current and future pressure on its infrastructure.

As a result of its proximity to both London and Continental Europe and as the location of the UK’s key deep-sea ports, the East of England region serves as a vital conduit between the rest of the UK and other parts of Europe leading to the region accommodating significant passenger and freight flows. Indeed, over 400,000 containers were transported from/to the Port of Felixstowe by rail in 2008, making it the UK’s largest intermodal rail hub.

Multiple studies and reports have underlined the need for better quality transport infrastructure and services to support future development and growth in the area and also to make best use of the existing networks. The UK Highways Agency estimates an increase in road traffic on the strategic highway network in the East of England of 44% between 2001 and 2021.

Connectivity in the East of England poses a major challenge. Public transport use is relatively low and the East of England has by far the highest personal car usage levels for the whole of the UK (19% higher than the UK average). There is significant congestion on the strategic highway network at present and this is expected to worsen in the future. There is widespread rail overcrowding on nearly all rail routes into London, which constrains opportunities for further passenger growth in the absence of capacity improvements and this is coupled with underinvestment in east-west rail links in many areas.

A recent survey on barriers to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK found that the East of England suffered more from traffic congestion as a whole and 54% of respondents were ‘very dissatisfied’ with local roads and 43% with motorways and trunk roads. The congestion and limited transport networks inhibit economic growth and challenge the region’s low carbon ambitions.

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1 For an explanation of the local government structure in England please see [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk). Essentially, unitary authorities provide all local government services in their area while in a two-tier structure (counties and districts/boroughs) responsibility for services is divided.
As a result of these challenges, the East of England has set itself ambitious low carbon economic growth targets, and has given its Regional Competitiveness (European Regional Development Fund) Programme a low carbon economic growth theme.

The policy review of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) is therefore of great importance to the East of England and provides an opportunity for us to share our expertise on the issues raised and, at the same time, to provide a means of tackling some of its most pressing concerns.

The following routes within the East of England are currently incorporated in the TEN-T network:

**Priority Project 13: United Kingdom/Ireland/ Benelux Road Axis**
Covering the A14 and parts of the A12, A120 and M11

**Priority Project 14: West Coast Mainline**
A small part of the WCML passes through Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire (Watford Junction being the relevant station).

**Priority Project 26: Railway/Road Axis Ireland/United Kingdom/Continental Europe**
Covering the Felixstowe to Nuneaton Rail Line.

**Priority Project 21: Motorways of the Sea**
Covering: Harwich, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Great Yarmouth and Tilbury.

In addition, a number of routes run through the East of England which are not ‘priority’ routes but still part of the ‘comprehensive’ TEN-T network. These are:

**Road:**
the A47, parts of the A1, A1(M), A12, A14, A120, M1, M11 and the M25

**Rail:**
Great Yarmouth–Peterborough, Kings Lynn–London (Via Cambridge), Felixstowe

**Ports:**
Felixstowe, Harwich, Ipswich and Great Yarmouth

**Airports:**
Norwich, Luton, Stansted and Southend

**Introduction**

The East of England welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the European Commission’s Future Trans-European Transport Network policy consultation in light of the significant issues in terms of transport facing many of Europe’s regions and cities, not least the East of England.

The East of England European Partnership takes its responsibilities in terms of contributing to the debate on the development of European policy very seriously and has in recent times contributed to major EU debates on territorial cohesion, EU2020,
maritime policy, urban transport and climate change. It addition, it is vital that any revision of the TEN-T guidelines is complementary to the forthcoming European Transport White Paper.

The East of England calls for:

- An increase in the TEN-T budget to more adequately reflect what the programme is seeking to achieve
- The maintaining of both the current priority projects and comprehensive network within the East of England. We believe it would be damaging and short sighted to remove the potential for future TEN-T investment post-2013 in the currently uncompleted priority network, as this would not allow existing investments and works to be fully realised and reach their full potential
- Consistency with other European policies for example the developing Transport Policy, the emerging concept of Territorial Cohesion and consideration within the developing EU budget
- A longer timeframe for project funding, beyond the current 7 year period, to reflect the scale of the projects under consideration – possibly 14 or 21 years
- A stronger focus on European objectives, based on the EU2020 strategy and the EUs 20/20/20 climate change goals, supported by consistency with national and regional objectives
- A consistent approach to project assessment in terms of maturity, quality and cost-benefit analysis
- Continued support for and completion of the currently defined priority projects, given the recognised European, national and regional benefits these will bring and the disadvantages inherent in not completing these projects
- Expansion of the list of priority projects to incorporate key elements of the European transport network, including major international gateways such as ports and airports because of the enormous economic benefits these bring, and their hinterland connections, particularly where these use sustainable transport modes
- A clearly defined conceptual pillar, where this supports projects of common interest, e.g. in relation to congestion, capacity management, safety and security issues, both in response to market needs and to exploit new technological approaches
- Future-proofing of the programme to ensure projects can be supported which relate to future needs not just what is already required
- Increased co-ordination of funding streams, particularly where this leads to more innovative solutions to identified problems
- A broader definition of “cross border projects” under the TEN-T programme more in keeping with that used under the Territorial Co-operation programme, which includes maritime borders
- Continued support for both annual and multi-annual calls for proposals to ensure both large scale and smaller projects can be covered by the TEN-T programme

1. Core Network and Nodes

The idea of a core network composed of nodes and links is a positive development, but only if it is able to escape the financial difficulties associated with the current priority route network where the available funds are far from being sufficient to
support the identified network. It is encouraging to see that the Commission does not propose to initiate an entirely new infrastructure programme and will give suitable attention to key bottlenecks. We believe that whilst an enhanced core network (better covering new and old Member States) is welcome it is important to continue to provide resources to the many uncompleted priority routes. It would be an inefficient use of limited resources to reduce in stature many of the current priority routes to that of a wider comprehensive network.

In addition, we would argue that the concept of nodes is a good one as it would allow other key elements of a European transport network including international gateways such as airports and ports (both existing facilities and those in the latter stages of development) to be included in future programmes. In terms of the East of England this would include the Haven Ports of Felixstowe and Harwich, London Gateway, London Southend Airport and London Stansted Airport. Furthermore, the development of hinterland connections which enable the EU to maximise the benefit of these nodes and in some cases to combat congestion problems, need to be included and prioritised in future programmes, particularly where there are environmental gains to be made e.g. by supporting the development of rail projects.

As is the case with the TEN-T routes crossing the East of England, it is important to ensure there is a consistent European, national and local framework which can be used to determine whether projects are eligible for funding.

In terms of Article 23 of the Community Guidelines, which outlines a definition of “Priority projects”, the East of England believes this is largely an appropriate definition and provides a strong basis upon which to build a Core Network. However, the East of England believes that Members States should be expected to have already undertaken studies and (consistent) evaluation procedures to ensure that projects have sufficient maturity and a clear cost-benefit analysis in support of them prior to submission for funding rather than only to “demonstrate commitment” to undertaking this work.

2. Comprehensive Network

There is a strong sense that the existing Comprehensive Network has emerged as a means of benefiting each individual Member State rather than as a strategic attempt to provide a transport network which can benefit the EU as a whole. This clearly has implications in terms of the financial effectiveness of the programme and ultimately its credibility. The East of England would argue that the European Commission should refocus TEN-T on common European objectives, based on EU2020 and the fight against climate change, which can be supported by the funding available. This will give the network coherence and strategic importance. By virtue of it being achievable, the credibility of the programme will also be enhanced.

As such, the East of England believes that TEN-T should continue to support the completion of the “priority projects” as having substantial recognised benefits at a European, national and regional level; this is particularly true of the priority projects which cross the East of England region. At the same time it is important to realise that there are significant disadvantages inherent in not completing these projects.

3. Innovative Infrastructure Measures

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) have a crucial role to play in enhancing the functioning of the transport system and in helping to meet the EU2020 targets on technological innovation and knowledge, and contributing towards the EU’s
Innovation Agenda. ITS can be used to provide data to governments in terms of infrastructure usage and current and future requirements, to provide information and advice to infrastructure users in terms of congestion and alternative routes, to provide information to emergency services for the more efficient and effective delivery of their services. Data on freight movements can be used to make more informed decisions on the most effective modes of transport in particular situations and places, facilitating increased modal shift. Logistics companies and customers can be better informed of the whereabouts of items of freight.

In terms of using the TEN-T network for the deployment of innovative approaches, for example in transport pricing, it is important not to disadvantage the TEN-T network in relation to other possible networks, thus possibly displacing traffic to the detriment of other networks, with all the attendant consequences for European competitiveness, as well as the social and environmental impacts on these alternative routes. A consistent approach must be taken across the entire European network if a fair system is to be available to all infrastructure users.

A key consideration, however, is to ensure that there is sufficient harmonisation of information, data collection and systems across the EU to ensure fair access to the benefits ITS can bring. It is also essential that where ITS is deployed, it is future-oriented and adaptable to the changing needs and pressures on the transport network. It should be emphasised that TEN-T is an infrastructure programme and ITS should be complimentary to this, and not compete for TEN-T investment.

4. Funding

The East of England fully supports the TEN-T programme and would argue that its budget should be substantially increased to enable it to more closely reflect the needs it is trying to address.

The East of England believes that the current focus on a seven year funding framework is inappropriate to the scale of many projects necessary to provide a trans-European transport network. Aligning TEN-T funding to two or even three framework periods (i.e. 14 or 21 years) would be more relevant and would fit more effectively with the planning timeframe.

We believe it is important that the TEN-T programme applies more rigorous tests in terms of evidence of European value, cost-benefit analysis and project maturity to the projects put forward. This would give a more accurate picture of the cost of projects, would facilitate more effective monitoring and would ensure the relevance of projects to the needs of the EU.

It is important that a range of sources are used to fund TEN-T projects and we fully support the EU2020 strategy “to mobilise EU financial instruments (e.g. rural development, structural funds, R&D framework programme, TENs, EIB) as part of a consistent funding strategy, that pulls together EU and national public and private funding”. Community funding is crucial to ensure projects of genuine European benefit take place but the scale of projects in question could not be funded solely by European sources. Indeed, a project partner contributing an element to a funding package for a project ensures a level of commitment to the timely delivery of projects to acceptable quality standards. It is unnecessary, however, to restrict or define the component sources of the funding package. Individual projects and situations will require and have available to them different funding sources and it is important that they are able to use any opportunities presented to them. The Commission’s
intention should be to facilitate the development of funding packages, not to provide a strait-jacket which limits the range of funding which can be used.

The East of England would agree with the current situation whereby increased funding is available to cross border projects but would argue that the definition of cross border is too restricted and that it should be extended to include maritime borders, e.g. in the case of the route from Nuneaton-Felixstowe and beyond. This would be consistent with the 2007-13 Territorial Cooperation programmes where new maritime cross border programmes are being supported.

We would also argue that support for multi-modal nodes and sustainable modes of transport, e.g. rail, should be prioritised over modes such as road or air.

The East of England would urge the European Commission to ensure above all else that there is a consistent and fair approach across Europe to the support given to projects which are deemed to be in the European interest and of sufficient maturity to proceed. This applies to ensuring that only those projects which meet a defined set of criteria are funded and also to the introduction of fair charging schemes for commercial and private infrastructure users.

Furthermore, it is important that equal priority should be given to those projects funded by the private sector as is accorded to public sector projects. There is concern currently that public sector projects are being prioritised over those supported by the private sector.

5. Conclusion

The East of England supports the concept of nodes and links with an additional focus on key interchanges such as ports and airports, along with their hinterland connections. In addition, we support a stronger focus on projects where sustainable transport modes are used and where there is a clearly recognised European as well as national and regional value to the project. It is also important to have a consistent approach to the assessment of projects and a satisfactory cost-benefit analysis.

The East of England would also support the notion of the comprehensive network being the “basic TEN-T layer” upon which crucial nodes and links are added. However, it is important that such a “layer” does not distract and divert much needed resources away from the critically important transport interchanges and routes of strategic and economic importance.