

# South West Infrastructure Partnership (SWIP)

## Terms of Reference

### BACKGROUND

Investment into areas like the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine, have been driven by collaboration, pressing the business case for industry and economic growth across important local sectors. The South West of England, whilst the most successful tourist destination after London, is characterised by a wide range of industries, with no one sector predominant. Although this has helped to preserve our unique status and attractive environment, the business case for investment into infrastructure is more challenging. Cornwall has one of the lowest GDPs in the UK and although the figure improves incrementally through the region moving towards the South East and Midlands, the South West is characterised by a low wage economy. The significant contrast is between the rural hinterland and urban centres such as Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth, which drive broader economic growth.

Consequently, whilst the North and Midlands have been able to attract substantial investment, the South West has a legacy of underfunding. The relative lack of critical infrastructure and subsequent dependency on limited arterial routes throughout the peninsula makes our region especially vulnerable to disruption. The highly dispersed nature of our population is further spread across rural and coastal communities linked by few urban centres, and often limited access to transport. Being in the forefront of prevailing weather fronts, the South West also experiences frequent extreme weather-related incidents, including storm damage, flooding and coastal erosion. Combined with intense seasonal fluctuations of visitor numbers, these unique characteristics of the South West present many challenges to the region's infrastructure and require careful consideration, particularly as the region strives to deliver net zero as soon as practicably possible. In light of these regional issues, this partnership has been set up by the Institution of Civil Engineers South West Region (ICE SW) to consider these factors and provide an informed response to the challenges that the South West faces.

### PURPOSE

- To provide an independent platform for debate with key stakeholders and decision makers across the South West and nationally
- To provide informed, strategic and objective advice on behalf of the South West region in respect of critical infrastructure: transport, waste, water, flood alleviation, broadband, energy and other aspects of civil engineering that underpins communities and services
- To advocate resilience and improvements to critical infrastructure, not only within the South West but also with neighbouring regions, helping to provide and support business cases for investment
- To respond collectively to issues regarding critical infrastructure with objective and strategic observations
- To learn from best practice in other UK regions, and internationally, adopting where possible.

### OBJECTIVES

- Consider the likely range of infrastructure demands across the South West over the next thirty years and how to meet them
- Address the various challenges of decarbonisation
- Protect and enhance the natural environment
- Serve the needs of our population and business
- Ensure equitable infrastructure investment for the South West from national policy and funding.

## SCOPE

The Steering Group assisted by ICE South West will:

- Open channels of communication with South West MPs and LEPs providing opportunities for input or feedback
- Engage with professionals from across the fields of civil engineering, economics, environment, community, education, politics and media
- Provide comments in response to key newsworthy issues, events or topics
- Create reports on the basis of information amassed through a variety of sources that will include specialist industry, agency, department or academic information, research, intelligence and insight.

## MEMBERSHIP

SWIP is led by a Steering Group of 16 members, deemed to represent a cross selection of specialist fields from the region, and representatives from across industry, business and local government. Each sector is represented by a specific individual or company recognised by the ICE for their expertise in that sector.

The current membership represents the following sectors:

- Academia – represented by Bristol University
- Aviation – represented by Exeter Airport
- Business – represented by Business West
- Communications - represented by Coast Communications
- Digital – represented by Cosmic
- Energy – represented by a sector expert
- Environment - represented by the Environment Agency
- Highways – represented by Highways England
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) - represented by ICE South West Director
- Local Government – represented by the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT)
- Maritime – represented by The Bristol Port Company
- Professional Services – represented by Burges Salmon
- Rail - represented by Network Rail
- Structures – represented by a sector expert
- Waste – represented by a sector expert
- Water and Wastewater – represented by a sector expert

Individuals or organisations with an interest in South West infrastructure are invited to join as contributors. They will be kept informed on SWIP activity and be able to participate in workshops and contribute to policy responses.

## GOVERNANCE

- The chair will be nominated by ICE South West
- The Partnership will be overseen by a Steering Group and additionally comprise contributors who have applied to join the Partnership
- For those appointed to the Steering Group, the period of membership is 3 years and may be extended by a period of 2 years at the request of the chair or the Steering Group
- Further representatives may be co-opted to the Steering Group at the discretion of the Steering Group
- Any formal statement from the Steering Group will be agreed by a collective process to achieve an informed consensus before publication

- Whilst each statement may not require unanimous approval, all members of the Steering Group should have the opportunity within a given timeframe to contribute or propose amendments to the position
- Unless expressly agreed by the membership, the chair is the only person empowered to speak on behalf of the Steering Group
- In the event of an emergency, a comment may be required from the Steering Group. In this instance, approvals may not be possible by all Steering Group members
- The Steering Group will aim to meet quarterly, using video conferencing or in person meetings as appropriate
- Papers will remain confidential to the group, but a brief synopsis of minutes will be available on request
- The Steering Group will review its terms of reference periodically and will propose any changes and publish the new terms of reference within one month.

#### ICE ROLE

ICE is an independent voice that uses the expert knowledge of its members to influence government policy and help the industry progress.

- The South West division of ICE (ICE SW) will facilitate the Partnership and its work
- The Partnership will support and uphold the strategic aims and objectives of ICE
- The Partnership will work with ICE SW to influence the future direction of infrastructure in the South West.