

Developing a transport strategy for the South East

Transport Forum stakeholder workshops, April/May 2019

To help inform the development of our transport strategy we have formed three Transport Forum working groups, bringing together:

- Local authority officers;
- Business community and transport operators; and
- User and special interest groups.

A first round of workshops with these groups took place in January 2019, providing a wealth of valuable insight which was instrumental in shaping the development of the strategy.

A second round of workshops took place in April/May 2019 at Hilton London Gatwick Airport. Below is a reminder of the format and key topics of discussion, along with a summary of the key outputs.

A third and final round of workshops will take place in July prior to the publication of the draft transport strategy for consultation in the autumn.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The half-day workshops all followed a broadly similar format, with introductory presentations followed by a series of roundtable activities. The agenda for the third workshop session (user and special interest groups) was slightly amended in order to accommodate an extended Q&A period early in the workshop.

Session one: Updates from the transport strategy team

- Transport strategy update including a review of outcomes from the January workshops
- Future scenario planning and development
- The future of mobility and how developments such as increasing automation may affect travel behaviour

Session two: Round table activities

- Activity 1: Key transport issues and opportunities across the region
- Activity 2: Short-term delivery priorities (2020-25)
- Activity 3: Longer-term policy areas/themes that could inform the direction of transport investment in future

ACTIVITY 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For the first activity, attendees were asked to consider transport issues and opportunities along the [key strategic corridors](#) in the TfSE region.

Issues

- Congestion and capacity constraints act as a barrier to growth and planned population increases will exacerbate existing issues
- Limited cross-boundary connectivity, particularly on orbital routes
- Differing priorities among policy makers and often a lack of political will to encourage more sustainable travel choices
- Poor integration between land use and transport planning
- Limited availability of funding and challenges associated with securing funding for local priorities
- Concerns over social inequality, with particular issues around some deprived coastal and rural communities
- High costs of public transport discourage potential users
- Poor air quality is an increasingly prominent concern across the region

Opportunities

- Identifying and promoting urban centres/growth areas within the TfSE region, and improving connections/travel options around these locations, to reduce the need for long-distance commuting
- Increasing focus on environmental issues/climate change, which could encourage more sustainable travel choices
- Better sharing/use of data and exploiting technology advances to help manage travel demand more effectively
- First/last-mile improvements can encourage more sustainable transport for both people and goods
- Integrated ticketing and 'smarter' fares structures needed to align with changing work patterns
- Innovative approaches to investment – e.g. greater integration between land use and transport planning could help direct private sector investment from developers where it is most needed
- Improved access to international gateways, particularly via rail

ACTIVITY 2: SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES (2020-25)

Attendees were encouraged to identify schemes that are priorities for delivery over the next five years. A list of known schemes in the pipeline was provided to aid discussions and attendees were encouraged to identify gaps in the list, as well as potential schemes that were less likely to be deliverable by 2025. Recurring themes are outlined below.

Protecting the environment/supporting economic growth

- General concern over the validity of new road schemes in light of environmental issues
- Recognition that reduced environmental impact leads to more successful urban centres and more successful local economies

TfSE role

- Influencing national bodies to improve co-ordination and access to funding
- Building consensus across the region to deliver joined-up policies that help manage current issues and shape future plans
- Promoting alternatives to travel
- Delivering quick wins that help encourage more use of sustainable modes, primarily on rail and first/last mile improvements
- Looking outside the UK for best practice innovations

Specific schemes

A large number of specific schemes were identified as priorities for delivery over the next five years. The most frequently referenced schemes are listed below (in no particular order):

- Crossrail/Elizabeth line, including possible future extension into Kent
- Southern rail access to Heathrow
- A27 – multiple locations, including Lewes-Polegate, Chichester and Arundel
- M3 improvements – multiple junctions
- A3/M25 J10 – capacity and safety improvements
- Isle of Wight infrastructure improvements, including the Island Line rail upgrade
- Additional Thames crossing in the Thames Valley area

ACTIVITY 3: LONGER-TERM PRIORITIES

The focus of this roundtable discussion was on the medium/long-term policy initiatives or areas of intervention which need to be considered in order to help achieve TfSE's vision.

Climate change

- Environmental considerations should be central to the strategy – it was, however, widely recognised that decarbonisation is not a solution in itself (e.g. replacing petrol/diesel cars with electric vehicles won't resolve congestion issues).

Role of TfSE

- Suggestions included enabling and influencing discussions/negotiations with national policy makers, promoting innovation and prioritising connectivity between population centres within the region, rather than focusing on routes to/from London.
- It was also suggested that TfSE has a central role to play in building consensus around strategic priorities for the region, including encouraging closer integration between land use and transport planning to ensure sustainable transport provision can be considered from the outset as new developments take shape.

Demand management and incentivising improvements

- 'Carrot' generally seen as more preferable than 'stick', and more likely to be successful in encouraging long-term behaviour change, though there was also recognition that regulatory changes may also be required and TfSE may be better placed to take decisions that would not be politically palatable.

Tackling social inequality

- Recognition that there are pockets of deprivation across the region, particularly in coastal areas, and improving connectivity is key.

Engaging younger generations

- Younger people generally seen as more receptive to sustainable transport solutions and engaging them will be key to the success of the strategy.

Investing in technology

- Recognition that infrastructure improvements (e.g. better broadband connectivity) can help tackle congestion and capacity issues by reducing the need to travel.