

Transport for the South East
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please reply to:

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2021-08-27

Dear Sir / Madam,

Transport for the South East – current and future role

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision-makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning. If our more transport-focussed aspirations are summarised as 'Better lives through better journeys' our more strategic socio-economic approach is 'Creating competitive places with opportunities for all' and this response to your survey, which we welcome, should be viewed through that prism.

TfSE's current role

This section is about the current role for Transport for the South East and its ability to deliver the vision as set out in the regional transport strategy.

1. To what extent do you agree that TfSE's role and purpose is suitable moving forward?

a. TfSE role

To develop a regional transport strategy to enable us to speak with one voice about the strategic transport investment needs and priorities across the South East.

b. TfSE mission

To grow the South East's economy by delivering a safe, sustainable, and integrated transport system that makes the South East area more productive and competitive, improves the quality of life for all residents, and protects and enhances its natural and built environment.

Strongly agree

2. What influences your view about TfSE's role and purpose?

a. We fully endorse the two strands of TfSE's stated role as essential means to achieving its mission / purpose, "developing a regional transport strategy" and "speaking with one voice".

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

b. While we endorse the mission / primary purpose as “growing the South East’s economy” - in the broadest conceptualisation of ‘economic growth’, which for us must include reducing disparities in outcomes (‘levelling-up’, in contemporary parlance?) - we need assurances that TfSE will through its governance and statutory mechanisms equip itself with the full suite of policy levers to be able to “deliver a safe, sustainable, and integrated transport system that will

- ~ make the South East area more productive and competitive,
- ~ improve the quality of life for all residents, and
- ~ protect and enhance its natural and built environment.”

Railfuture regularly emphasises the essential logic that better connectivity is only one, though admittedly very significant, factor in a much broader landscape of policy advances necessary to achieve the exciting, but very demanding, societal goals contained in TfSE’s “Vision for 2050”. TfSE’s vision of itself has concentrated thus far on describing powers and resources for delivering a better transport system - leaving stakeholders as yet unclear about how TfSE will identify, organise and secure effective delivery of the wider policy advances.

3. Do you agree to the following statement?

"TfSE is well-equipped to deliver the 2050 vision"

Transport Strategy 2050 Vision

"By 2050, the South East of England will be a leading global region for net-zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step-change in connectivity and environmental quality.

A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door to door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life."

Neutral

If you answered 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to this question, please go to 'What do you think TfSE needs to deliver the vision?'

If you answered 'Neutral', 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' to this question, please go to 'What is preventing TfSE from achieving the current vision?'

4. What do you think TfSE needs to deliver the vision?

n/a

After completing 'What do you think TfSE needs to deliver the vision?', please go to 'How does the governance and structure of TfSE help in the delivery of the 2050 vision?'

5. What is preventing TfSE from achieving the current vision?

For Railfuture ‘the jury is still out’ on the primary question ‘is TfSE well-equipped to deliver the 2050 vision?’ - which is then rehearsed. We have no issues with the Vision itself; its policy goals are impressive and ambitious. Our concerns are whether TfSE has identified the policy levers necessary for delivery of those goals, for example:

- ~ reducing carbon emissions is an unarguable policy goal, so a question for TfSE is whether it is confident that it can both bear down directly on transport emissions and also prevail upon others for reductions from other sources;
- ~ Railfuture wholeheartedly ‘supports sustainable economic growth which seeks to achieve a balance with social and environmental outcomes’ as a policy goal and is therefore keen to explore with TfSE the mechanisms for that to be prosecuted over the coming decades;

~ TfSE's 'Planning for Successful Places' is mirrored by Railfuture's 'Creating Competitive Places with Opportunities for All'. 'A South East where villages, towns and cities can live and work with the highest quality of life' is a long-term strategic challenge at the frontiers of practitioners' knowledge; Railfuture stands ready to contribute its members' experiences!

6. How does the governance and structure of TfSE help in the delivery of the 2050 vision?

TfSE has won much praise – which Railfuture fully endorses – for its energy and confidence in creating a high-level representative Partnership Board, supported by a very broad-based Transport Forum, achieving widespread consensus for its exciting “2050 Vision”, and organising Area Forums which have brought together a wide range of relevant stakeholders.

Ambiguities about Purpose and Policy nevertheless highlight the far more challenging landscape ahead. It is stated that “The Strategic Investment Plan will set out where, when, and under what conditions packages of schemes, interventions and wider policy initiatives should be implemented to deliver the transport strategy and achieve the vision for 2050.” This leaves unresolved TfSE's view of itself – a ‘strategic transport authority’ or, per its bid to government for statutory status, a perhaps more multi-functional ‘local authority’.

UK governance has traditionally focussed on ‘vertical policy silos’, which are expected to provide visible lines of legislative and financial accountability between Westminster and delivery authorities right down the geographical and functional lines. This system has however so far defied most attempts to create ‘joined-up governance’ enabling regional and local organisations to form ‘horizontal alliances’ which bring together powers and resources from a range of ‘vertical silos’ in order to address multiple societal challenges.

If TfSE are not seeking direct powers over the main policy levers which affect the full breadth of their “2050 Vision” they will need to become ‘state of the art leaders’ in creating effective alliances. The Strategy heading ‘Planning for Successful Places’, what in Railfuture we call “Place-Making”, is a classic case in point. Without effective local alliances, fully backed by ‘big players’ such as TfSE, those parts of the TfSE region which are currently at the wrong end of the ‘prosperity gradient’ will simply stay that way as more confident communities pull further ahead. This would very seriously undermine TfSE's quality of life ambitions.

7. Do you agree to the following statement?

"TfSE's impact on transport in the South East supports my organisation's priorities."

Strongly agree

If you answered 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to this question, please go to 'How has TfSE's impact on transport in the South East supported your organisation's priorities?'

If you answered 'Neutral', 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' to this question, please go to 'Is there anything TfSE can do to further support your organisational priorities?'

8. How has TfSE's impact on transport in the South East supported your organisation's priorities?

Our five national priorities are:

- ~ attracting passengers back to rail
- ~ carbon reduction and modal shift to combat climate change
- ~ Restoring Your Railway
- ~ fares and ticketing
- ~ industry structure post-Williams / Shapps

Transport for the South East – current and future role

TfSE's impact has thus far provided strategic context for, respectively,

- ~ our 'return to rail' lobbying and public messaging
- ~ our view that transport decarbonisation in a region with a predominantly electrified railway will come primarily from substantial mode shift to rail per the Transport Strategy's expectation of a 108% increase in rail travel
- ~ our distinctive place-making approach to restoring a rail link in the Brighton-Wealden-Tunbridge Wells economic corridor between Lewes and Uckfield
- ~ our work with the House of Lords Built Environment Committee on fares and ticketing
- ~ our 'passenger and freight users first' approach to Great British Railways.

9. Is there anything TfSE can do to further support your organisational priorities?

n/a

TfSE's future role

10. Which of the following modes needs to be a bigger focus for TfSE?
Choose your top three

Ports / Micromobility / **Rail** / Active travel / Local roads / Taxis & private hire vehicles / Bus / Strategic roads / Aviation / Other

11. What do you think TfSE should be in the future?
Choose your top five

~ An organisation that supports the development of a regional response to bus transport supporting the boundary-spanning nature of bus routes

~ An organisation that provides a regional shared service for transport-centred back-office services (e.g. taxi and private hire vehicles licensing)

~ A regional resource for members providing data and modelling services to support evidence-based transport decision-making

~ An organisation that holds delivery partners to account for their performance in delivering new transport interventions by transparently tracking, monitoring progress and spend for regionally important schemes

~ **An organisation that works with the public and private sectors to identify funding and financing options for regionally important transport interventions**

~ **An organisation that brings regionally significant transport interventions to life through the coordinated development of business cases to support funding requests from various sources**

~ **An horizon scanning and thought leadership partner that provides coordinated regional responses for members by doing work to understand emerging trends in transport and policy (e.g. decarbonisation)**

~ **A proponent of the South East to central government and national strategic partners (e.g. Network Rail) to support their decision making through continued development of evidence-based transport schemes**



~ A centre of excellence identifying and sharing best practice across the region and with other statutory transport bodies and investing in research for best practice solutions to new emerging challenges

~ An advocate for consistent customer experience across transport modes in the region (e.g. cycle hire schemes)

~ Other

(No more than 100 characters)

~ A multi-talented organisation equipped with a comprehensive suite of policy levers, reflected at both staff and Partnership Board levels, with experienced practitioners in the fields of place-making, spatial planning, and economic regeneration, recognising that transport is a necessary but not sufficient intervention to secure socio-economic and environmental advancement, and demonstrating cross-sector / cross-agency alliancing between conventional and well-established policy silos.

12. What do you want to see TfSE doing in 5 years?

Operating as the primary point of reference for policy and practice in integrated sub-regional transport and development planning.

13. On behalf of which organisation or group are you completing this response?

Railfuture

14. Which best describes your organisation or group?

Transport User / interest group

15. Please indicate which TfSE stakeholder groups you sit on (if any). You can select as many as are applicable.

Transport Forum / Area Study working group or forum

Your details

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Demographic Data

Newsletter Subscription Status

Subscribed

Event Subscription Status

Subscribed

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS

Railfuture

Vice-Chair London & South East regional branch

Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board

Transport for the South East – current and future role

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