

**TfSE Transport Forum
06 October 2020
Minutes
1-4pm**

Item
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Geoff French (chair) welcomed the Transport Forum and apologies were noted. This meeting was held virtually and Geoff explained how it would be managed.</p>
<p>2. Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.</p>
<p>3. Feedback from July Shadow Partnership Board Meeting</p> <p>Geoff gave a brief update on the July Shadow Partnership Board meeting. This included the annual nominations and elections for various positions on the Shadow Partnership Board. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Interim Chair of the Transport Forum were all re-elected. Geoff also outlined the statements that were received from members of the public including one on rural transport connectivity issues which led to the subject of today's meeting.</p> <p>The final transport strategy and proposal to Government were presented to the Board before being submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of July.</p> <p>The budget proposal for 2020/21 was also agreed alongside the 2020/21 business plan. The budget that was agreed was based on zero DfT grant but TfSE have now received confirmation of DfT funding of £1.225m and an updated budget will be presented to the board in October.</p>
<p>4. Rural mobility</p> <p>Rob Dickin explained that with the geography of the South East, the issue of rural mobility is really important to TfSE and is being considered as the different technical workstreams progress. Rob explained that TfSE are listening and want the Forum to help shape how we deal with this issue. Rob introduced Renee VanBaar from Midlands Connect who was invited to present to the Forum on their recently completed 'Future of Rural Mobility' study. It is important to understand the work that has taken place in other locations that are experiencing this urban/rural mobility divide and how they are approaching the situation.</p> <p>Renee explained why the study was commissioned, the focus of the study and the toolkit/menu of options that were developed. The study also explored the opportunities for rural hubs and developed guidance for these. <u>Renee's presentation will be circulated with these minutes.</u></p> <p>Questions were asked regarding the mobility hubs, the content of Renee's presentation and next steps for their toolkit.</p> <p>The Forum moved into smaller groups to discuss the following questions, 'what are the key challenges in our geography?' and 'what are the potential solutions to these challenges?'</p>

Facilitators outlined the top three challenges and solutions to the wider group. The main themes were;

- Restrictions on the provision of infrastructure and services
- Lack of viable alternatives to the car
- Rural policy
- Funding and viability of rural public transport
- Disconnect between transport and land-use planning
- Provision for first mile / last mile leg of journeys
- Diverse geography of rural areas
- Socio-demographic characteristics of people living in rural areas

Detailed feedback from the workshops will be circulated with these minutes.

The comments will be reviewed and an update will be given to the Forum at the meeting in January.

5. Area studies

Sarah Valentine introduced the Forum to the area studies including the methodology and route map to the strategic investment plan. Sarah also outlined the locations that will be considered in each of the area studies.

Lucy Dixon-Thompson outlined the governance arrangements for the area studies and how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the process. Slides showed which sectors will be represented on the area studies forums and working groups.

An extensive stakeholder mapping process has been undertaken, and once memberships of the various groups has been confirmed, information will be shared with the Forum, and shown on TfSE's website, so everyone is clear how they can feed their views into the studies.

Lucy asked for feedback on any additional organisations or sectors that should be engaged and confirmed that specific, additional technical engagement will be undertaken with key sectors and / or organisations where appropriate. Although there will be no direct public engagement, views will be reflected via user groups and elected members including districts, boroughs, parish and town councils and MPs.

Sarah and Lucy's presentation will be circulated with these minutes.

6. Updates

Rob Dickin updated the forum on the future mobility strategy and the progress of its core tasks. Rob also explained that now funding has been secured from the DfT, procurement can progress for the freight strategy. TfSE have been speaking to the DfT freight team as a national strategy is being produced and we want to ensure we are in line with this. The Forum reconfirmed their support for this strategy and offered assistance with data provision once it is required.

Rob also outlined the TfSE submissions to the below recent consultations;

- Department for Transport - Transport Decarbonisation Plan
- Network Rail - Unblocking the Croydon Bottleneck
- Western Gateway - Draft Strategic Transport Plan 2020 – 2025
- Highways England – Lower Thames Crossing
- England's Economic Heartland – Draft Transport Strategy

Rob confirmed TfSE are aware of the London Resort and we are working with others to understand the impacts and opportunities for North Kent. TfSE are also aware of the Government's new acceleration council and also the new review into union transport connectivity.

Jasmin Barnicoat outlined the agenda and speakers for TfSE's annual conference on 14 October 2020. Jasmin explained the theme of the conference will be embedding TfSE's transport strategy in the real world and exploring the disconnect between the key components of transport and land use planning.

7. Forum comments for the Shadow Partnership Board

Forum members understand the many challenges around rural mobility and some suggested solutions could be explored as part of the current technical programme (area studies and future mobility strategy).

The feedback has shown the effect outside influences can have on transport demand (for example increasing digital connectivity to bring businesses to the area and reduce the need to travel) and the need to work in a more holistic and collaborative way to ensure TfSE's vision for the future can be realised in rural areas.

TfSE will keep in mind that a future possibility when funding allows, could be to commission a rural mobility strategy for the South East (if required) to pull these various elements together.

Forum members were also content with the proposals for the area studies engagement and will feedback to Lucy any additional organisations or sectors they believe should be engaged.

Forum members were also content with the progress that has been made with the thematic strategies and are keen to be involved in the freight strategy where appropriate.

8. AOB

An update was requested regarding the recruitment of two new posts to TfSE including their responsibilities. It was explained that both posts are fixed term for 2 years as funding for them has been secured from the DfT. The new Transport Strategy Manager will be leading on the freight and international gateways strategy and supporting the area studies and other technical work. The Support Officer will work across the whole team to provide support to the technical programme and the comms and engagement work.

Geoff confirmed the next Transport Forum meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 12 January 2021**.