

Planning for the Future Consultation
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
3rd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Emailed to: planningforthefuture@communities.gov.uk

29 October 2020

Dear Sirs,

Transport for the South East response to the Planning for the Future – White Paper

I am writing to you as Lead Officer for Transport for the South East (TfSE) to provide a response to the Planning for the Future White Paper consultation.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a sub-national transport body (STB), which represents sixteen local transport authorities. These are Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Medway, Surrey, West Sussex, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, and the six Berkshire unitary authorities. These authorities are represented on the Shadow Partnership Board along with representatives from the region's five Local Enterprise Partnerships, District and Borough authorities, the protected landscapes in the TfSE area, Highways England, Network Rail and Transport for London.

TfSE provides a single voice on the transport interventions needed to support sustainable economic growth across its geography. The South East is crucial to the UK economy and is the nation's major international gateway for people and business with some of the largest ports and airports in the country. High-quality transport infrastructure is critical to making the South East more competitive, contributing to national prosperity and improving the lives of our residents.

TfSE's vision is that 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.

To help us to achieve our vision, we need a planning system that is fit for purpose. The current planning system has provided some great examples of getting it right, but they are few and far between. The TfSE transport strategy provides an opportunity to set out the transport infrastructure investment priorities across the south east. For too long the transport planning system has been detached from land use policy. Reform is needed, but it cannot be solely driven by housing need alone.



0300 3309474



tfse@eastsussex.gov.uk



transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Transport for the South East, County Hall,
St. Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

It is not acceptable to place housing burdens on communities without regard to the economic, social and environmental infrastructure that our residents need and deserve. TfSE believes that connectivity can provide the key to unlocking the sustainable community prize.

The white paper has failed to identify how strategic, cross-boundary planning issues will be addressed. The duty to co-operate has generally been an ineffective mechanism for undertaking strategic planning and addressing cross-boundary issues and its removal is welcomed. However, it will need to be replaced. There is little regard to this in the white paper. The reforms need to consider how to plan for large scale and cross boundary infrastructure proposals that genuinely link and support housing and employment growth. Having statutory plans just being prepared at an individual borough, district or unitary level is not an effective way of undertaking the strategic planning necessary to create sustainable communities.

The TfSE transport strategy will improve business connectivity, improve labour market efficiency, unlock sites and locations that were previously poorly connected, provides access to trade gateways and support deprived communities by improving accessibility of jobs and skills.

Our strategy provides the framework to attract inward investment to support housing growth, which this paper seeks to increase. Any plans for housing growth need to be closely aligned with our strategy. Without this the drive to increase housing supply is likely to lead to further inequalities, poorer educational outcomes, constrained access to labour markets and decline.

This white paper provides the opportunity to fundamentally make the clear link between connectivity and development.

In light of the above, TfSE supports strategic spatial planning at a meaningful and relevant geographic scale. Our Regional Evidence Base and Transport Strategy provides the evidence-led approach to identifying strategic cross boundary issues related to strategic transport. Such a level of spatial planning can be informed by the relevant strategic transport plans and vice versa. By doing this, TfSE can help make the Government's ambition a reality. We would recommend the strategic transport plans are a material planning consideration and that TfSE and other STBs be statutory consultees to the plan making process.

As our transport strategy develops it is vital to align investment in transport, digital and energy systems, particularly if we are to achieve our net zero commitments no later than 2050. This means the planning system must look spatially at wider strategic infrastructure.

We also consider that the timely delivery of strategic infrastructure which requires adequate funding to both Network Rail and Highways England programmes. If there is a commitment to simplify and accelerate planning decisions, then it is essential to make a similar commitment to strategic infrastructure.

This is an officer response. The TfSE Shadow Partnership Board meets on 28 January 2021 and will consider the draft response and a further iteration of this response may therefore follow.

Yours sincerely,

Rupert Clubb
Lead Officer, Transport for the South East