

Report to: **Partnership Board – Transport for the South East**

Date of meeting: **30 October 2023**

By: **Lead Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Transport Forum Review**

Purpose of report: **To present the revised operating proposal for the TfSE Transport Forum**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the rationale for change and options that were discussed with Transport Forum members and the Audit and Governance Committee;**
  - (2) Note the feedback received from Transport Forum members; and**
  - (3) Consider and agree the revised operation of the Transport Forum as endorsed by the Audit & Governance Committee and the Transport Forum.**
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**1. Introduction**

1.1 Since April 2023, the Audit and Governance Committee have been leading a review into the operation of the Transport Forum to ensure that it continues to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to gather views on strategic transport issues to feed into the Partnership Board.

**2. Background and rationale for change**

2.1 The Transport Forum was convened in 2017 with the purpose of providing expert advice and guidance to Transport for the South East's (TfSE) Partnership Board on the development of the transport strategy.

2.2 Membership of the Forum has expanded significantly over the past six years. It now includes representatives from a wide range of stakeholder groups including operators, user groups, business representatives, ports and airports, environmental groups and district and borough authorities. A full list of those invited to participate in Transport Forum meetings is included in Appendix 1. The Forum remains an important part of the TfSE governance structure and is a critical way of engaging with the wider stakeholder base. It has been recognised by DfT, and other STBs have been encouraged to follow a similar approach when setting up governance arrangements.

2.3 Within the past 2 years, a number of TfSE thematic groups have also been established (for example, decarbonisation, future mobility and freight) with the aim of bringing together experts in those specific work areas to provide advice and guidance to the technical team. A list of these groups can be found in Appendix 2.

2.4 The members of these groups provide the level of technical expertise required to inform TfSE's work. However, as these groups have grown in number, many stakeholders now sit on multiple TfSE stakeholder groups, leading to significant risk of stakeholder fatigue.

2.5 Recent feedback from members of the Forum, particularly the active travel and environmental groups, indicated that they felt the Forum would benefit from a review. This particularly related to some administrative processes (including capturing attendance and transparency on the TfSE website) and some of the operations (i.e. concerns that it no longer had the level of influence over TfSE technical work that it used to).

2.6 Following the publication of the SIP, it was considered timely to review the Transport Forum to ensure that it remains effective, both in making best use of members time and knowledge and ensuring that it best supports the work of the organisation. The Partnership Board tasked the Audit and Governance Committee with oversight of this review.

### **3. Aims of the Review**

3.1 The desired outcome of the review was to have an appropriate structure in place to provide expert guidance and advice to the TfSE Partnership Board.

3.2 Appendix 3 sets out the terms of reference for the review and highlights that it had a number of aims, including:

- Review the current terms of reference for the Transport Forum and make recommendations for any changes.
- Review any gaps in the thematic groups and make recommendations.
- Make recommendations on how the Forum should evolve to support the Partnership Board and Senior Officer Group as TfSE moves into a delivery phase.
- Review the membership of the Forum.
- Reduce risk of stakeholder fatigue.

### **4. Approach and Feedback**

4.1 The TfSE team identified three possible options for review, that members of the Audit and Governance Committee agreed at their meeting on 25 April 2023. These options were further developed and used as the basis for discussions with members of the Transport Forum and Senior Officer Group.

4.2 The three options that were explored were;

#### **Option 1 – No change to Transport Forum**

4.2.1 The Transport Forum would continue to operate in its current form. An update to the Terms of Reference would be required, along with some changes in operational management and a clear work programme to support TfSE. It would continue to act as a route for TfSE to update the wider stakeholder group and to provide an opportunity for third parties to share information.

#### **Option 2 – Development of an Expert Advisory Group**

4.2.2 The Transport Forum would be disbanded and a new group would be established called the 'Expert Advisory Group'. The membership of this group would consist of the Chairs of all the thematic groups. They would meet

quarterly in a virtual format, one month before Partnership Board meetings. The Chair of the Expert Advisory Group would attend the TfSE Partnership Board meeting to provide feedback and advice to the Board.

4.2.3 It was recognised that there would be some gaps in the existing thematic group structure and therefore these would need to be filled.

4.2.4 In addition to the above, it was proposed that TfSE hold an in-person event once or twice a year for all stakeholders involved in the thematic groups. This would provide an opportunity for information sharing to take place.

### **Option 3 – Transport Forum mark 2**

4.2.5 The Transport Forum undergoes a large-scale review, with a slimmed down, more targeted membership and a clear, structured work programme. It would revert to the original planned approach for the Forum. However, there would still be some potential for duplication with other thematic groups.

4.3 The feedback received from the Transport Forum on these three options was used to develop a revised recommendation which is outlined in section 5, below.

4.4 Engagement took place with the Transport Forum, both in a workshop meeting and via a survey to all members. This allowed any Forum member to submit their feedback. 25 individual members provided feedback via the forum meeting or survey (31%). A detailed breakdown of this feedback can be found in Appendix 4.

4.5 In general, the respondents felt there should still be a place for stakeholders from all different sectors to come together to share views and learning. However, the meeting format should be changed to enable more people to either attend or access the content in their own time. They also valued the networking opportunity in person meetings offered them.

## **5. Recommended Proposal**

5.1 Taking into consideration the feedback received, the first element of the recommended proposal is that the Transport Forum continue to meet twice a year, in person. These in person networking meetings will be supported by a robust programme of digital engagement. Membership of the Forum will also be widened to include all those who attend thematic groups. The Chair of the Transport Forum will also Chair an advisory panel and have a seat on the Partnership Board.

5.2 The second part of the proposal is that an advisory panel is formed, to consist of one representative or the Chair from each of the thematic groups and the Chair of the Transport Forum. Their remit will be to provide feedback from all stakeholder groups to the Partnership Board (via their Chair).

5.3 Membership of thematic groups will be dependent on subject matter and specialism and each group will have an Advisory Panel representative drawn from the group membership. Where a current Transport Forum member organisation is not already represented on a TfSE thematic / modal technical group, the organisation may (in addition to being a Transport Forum member) be invited to join a relevant thematic or modal technical group. This will affect 6 Forum members.

5.4 The third part of the proposal is that a programme of digital engagement will be developed to support communication with stakeholders.

5.5 Webinars will also be recorded and available for all stakeholders to view via TfSE's YouTube channel and shared via the Connections newsletter. This would also be linked from TfSE's website.

5.6 Topical and insightful presentations will also be recorded from across TfSE's meetings. TfSE's YouTube channel will be utilised to create a 'hub' space for these to be stored. This will also be linked from TfSE's website.

5.7 As can be seen in Appendix 4, this option best reflects all of the feedback received, whilst also reducing the risk of stakeholder fatigue. It allows the Transport Forum to reflect the most appropriate way it should now support the Partnership Board in light of the other stakeholder groups that have emerged, namely providing intelligence and compelling advice to the Board and driving consensus across the transport community.

5.8 This recommended proposal was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee at their meeting on 12 October 2023. The Committee endorse this proposal and agreed it should be presented to the Partnership Board for their agreement.

5.9 This recommended proposal was also presented to the Transport Forum at their meeting on 19 October 2023. The Forum members present were content with the proposal, although raised some concerns with holding in-person meetings instead of virtual, so this will be kept under review by the secretariat.

## **6. Terms of Reference**

6.1 The terms of reference for the Transport Forum have been revised to reflect the recommended proposal. The draft revised terms of reference can be found in Appendix 5.

6.2 The purpose has been amended to reflect that the group is not intended to provide technical guidance and expertise, but that its aim is to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to gather views and facilitate a shared understanding of key issues.

6.3 The objectives have also been updated to reflect that the focus is not on providing technical guidance and expertise, but to share information, views and knowledge.

6.4 The rest of the document has been amended to reflect the change in meeting format, membership and reporting structure.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 The Partnership Board are recommended to consider the feedback received from the Transport Forum and the proposal generated in light of these comments. Members are recommended to agree this proposal, which is endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee and the Transport Forum, as the most suitable way forward for the Transport Forum to operate.

7.2 If agreed, the secretariat will begin implementing the new meeting format and create a programme of digital engagement.

**RUPERT CLUBB**  
**Lead Officer**  
**Transport for the South East**

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## **Transport Forum Membership:**

Geoff French, Chair, TfSE Transport Forum

### **District and Borough Councils**

West Sussex District & Borough Councils – Cllr Dr  
Beccy Cooper / Martin Randall  
Surrey District & Borough Councils – Cllr Ann-Marie  
Barker / TBC  
Hampshire District & Borough Councils - Cllr Philip  
North / Graham Smith  
East Sussex District & Borough Councils – Cllr  
James Partridge / Chris Bending  
Kent District & Borough Councils – Cllr Matt  
Boughton / Bartholomew Wren

### **Local Enterprise Partnerships**

South East LEP - Clive Soper  
Enterprise M3 LEP - Mike D'Alton  
Thames Valley Berkshire LEP - Bob Mountain /  
Simon Ratcliffe / Stuart Atkinson  
Solent LEP - TBC  
Coast to Capital LEP - Martin Heffer

### **Government and agencies**

Network Rail - Paula Haustead / Alex Hellier / Jaime  
Rockhill / James Craig  
National Highways - Paul Benham  
DfT - Peter Duggan

### **Train operating companies**

South West Rail - Phil Dominey  
Rail Delivery Group – Megan Roseblade

### **Bus and coach operators**

Brighton & Hove Buses & Metrobus – Ed Wills  
Confederation of Passenger Transport - Karen Tiley  
/ Gavin Miller  
Stagecoach South - Matthew Arnold / James O'Neill

### **Ports**

AB Ports Southampton – Alistair Welch / Sue  
Simmonite  
London Thamesport – Nigel Blown  
British Ports Association - Richard Ballantyne / Mark  
Simmonds  
Port of Dover - Richard Christian / Phoebe  
Warneford-Thomson  
UKMPG - TBC

### **Airports**

Gatwick Airport – Richard Higgins, Hannah Godfrey  
Heathrow Airport – Tim Wells  
Southampton Airport – Steve Thurston

### **Ferry operators**

Hovertravel - Neil Chapman

### **Road freight operators**

Logistics UK - Heidi Skinner  
Road Haulage Association - Tom Cornwell  
John Lewis Partnership – Jerry Ward

### **Rail freight operators**

Rail Freight Group - Phil Smart

### **Transport for London**

TfL – Alexander Baldwin-Smith

### **Supply chain contractors and consultants**

Civil engineering Contractors Association (Southern)  
CECA - David Allen

### **Business group representatives**

Chambers of Commerce – Richard Lavender  
Fed. of Small Businesses - Tim Colman/Alison  
Turner  
CBI – Susannah Watson

### **Transport users**

Transport Focus - Catherine Folca

### **Rail user groups**

Southeast Communities Rail Partnerships - Tim  
Sparrow  
Railfuture – Roger Blake

### **Protected Landscapes**

South Downs National Park – Alex Pringle  
CPRE / South Down's Society – David Johnson /  
David Sawyer  
South Downs Network / SCATE – Malcolm Smith

### **Environmental groups**

Friends of the Earth – Brenda Pollack

### **Bus user groups**

Steven Caulston

### **Cycling user groups**

Becky Reynolds / Lisa Scott-Conte / Sarah Wood /  
Paul Mason

### **Active travel**

Sustrans – Roddy Crockett

**Motorcycle user group**

Motorcycle Action Group - Steve Mallett

**Energy**

Energy UK – Yumann Siddiq  
Premier Energy – Jason Raymond  
Energy Networks – Dan Clarke

**Transport Planning**

Transport Planning Society – Stephen Bennett

**Health**

South East ADPH Network – TBC

**Youth / Education / Universities**

University of Portsmouth - Professor Djamila  
Ouelhadj

**Neighbouring STBs**

Western Gateway - Arina Salhotra

**Solent Transport**

Solent Transport – Conrad Haigh

**South East England Councils**

SEEC – Sean McKee

**Town and Parish Councils**

TfSE Town and Parish Councils Group –  
Cllr Sarah Barker, Cllr Robert Franklin

**Chief Planners**

Kent – Simon Cole / Dave Harris

**TfSE**

Rupert Clubb, Lead Officer  
Mark Valleley, Head of Strategy  
Sarah Valentine, Head of Analysis and Appraisal  
TBC, Programme Manager  
Lucy Dixon-Thompson, Stakeholder and  
Engagement Manager  
Duncan Barkes, Communications Manager  
Tia Shelley, PR Assistant  
Katie Lamb, Lead Transport Planner  
Mat Jasper, Scheme Development Manager  
Craig Derrick, Data and Analytics Officer  
Kate Over, Transport Strategy Manager  
Jasmin Barnicoat, Project Manager  
Emily Bailey, Project Manager  
Elan Morgan, Support Officer  
Benn White, Project Manager  
Lewis Milligan, Project Manager  
Jessica Lelliott, Executive Officer

# TFSE THEMATIC GROUPS

## GOVERNANCE GROUPS

- Partnership Board
- Audit & Governance Committee
- Senior Officer Group
- Transport Strategy Working Group

## ACTIVE TFSE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

*(SOME ALSO HAVE ASSOCIATED TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUPS)*

- Transport Forum
- Electric Vehicle Forum
- Bus Back Better Forum
- Future Mobility Forum
- Regional Active Travel Forum
- Regional Transport Decarbonisation Forum
- Funding & Finance Group
- Regional Universities Group

## EMERGING NEW TFSE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS FOR 2023/24

- Freight Forum (in collaboration with Transport East and England's Economic Heartland)
- Regional Centre of Excellence Development Steering Group
- Regional DEIA Forum (Diversity, Equality, Inclusivity and Accessibility) (TBC)
- Planning for Places (task & finish for Transport Strategy Refresh)
- Embracing the Future (task & finish for Transport Strategy Refresh)
- Adapting to a new normal (task & finish for Transport Strategy Refresh)
- Enabling inclusive choices (task & finish for Transport Strategy Refresh)



## **Transport Forum – Terms of Review**

### **Background**

The Transport Forum was convened in 2017 with the purpose of providing expert advice and guidance to the Partnership Board on the development of the Transport Strategy. Membership of the Forum has expanded and includes representatives from a wide range of stakeholder groups including operators, user groups, business representatives, ports and airports, environmental groups and district and borough authorities. A number of other TfSE thematic groups have also been established, e.g. decarbonisation, future mobility, etc and many stakeholders sit on multiple stakeholder groups - increasing the risk of stakeholder fatigue, however, these groups are currently meeting the needs of the technical expertise required for our work.

As discussed at the Partnership Board meeting in Jan 2023, following the publication of the Strategic Investment Plan in spring 2023, it is considered timely to review the operation of the Forum to ensure that it continues to provide expert advice and guidance to the Partnership Board.

It was agreed at the Board meeting in Jan 2023 that the newly created Audit and Governance Committee will lead a review of the Transport Forum operation in 2023/24.

### **Desired outcome**

The desired outcome is to have an appropriate structure of stakeholder engagement in place to provide expert guidance and advice to the TfSE Partnership Board.

### **Aims of the review**

- Review the current terms of reference for the Transport Forum (including its purpose) and make recommendations for any changes.
- Review any gaps in the thematic groups and make recommendations.
- Make recommendations on how the Forum should evolve to support the Partnership Board and Senior Officer Group as TfSE moves into a delivery phase.
- Review the membership of the Forum.
- Reduce risk of stakeholder fatigue.

### **Timescales**

Over the next few months, views will be sought from those affected by any changes to the Transport Forum.

Chairs of the Audit & Governance Cttee and the Transport Forum will then provide formal recommendations to the October 2023 meeting of the Partnership Board.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>
Audit & Governance Cttee	Agree terms of review	25 April 2023
TfSE Team	Seek their views	09 May 2023
Senior Officer Group	Seek their views	15 May 2023
Transport Forum	Hold review workshop	06 June 2023
Audit & Governance Cttee	Outcome of workshop, options & next steps	TBC July 2023
Transport Forum	Confirmation of way forward	<del>04 Sept 2023</del>
Audit & Governance Cttee	Agree content of Board report including final recommendation	12 Oct 2023
Transport Forum	Confirmation of way forward	19 Oct 2023
Partnership Board	Review outcomes and recommendations	30 Oct 2023

Feedback	Proposed Solution
Share thoughts and considerations on wider issues.	<p>Holding 2 in person Transport Forum meetings a year would encourage a mix of attendees from a variety of sectors. Also being able to watch and participate in webinars on a variety of subjects that may be different from specialist topic.</p>
Challenge silos, facilitate cross sector/topic connections.	
Interesting to hear other peoples' views.	
Multi-modal view	
Length and time of meetings – access information and updates at time that suits each individual. View section(s) relevant to the individual. Acknowledging volunteer time.	<p>TfSE will develop a communications programme to disseminate information. This could include live webinars, podcasts and in person events. Transport Forum and thematic group membership invited. Webinars would also be recorded and be available for all stakeholders to view via TfSE's YouTube channel and shared via Connections newsletter. This would also be linked from TfSE's website.</p>
Value of in person networking.	<p>Hold 2 in person Transport Forum meetings a year.</p>
Variety of topics and opportunities to expand learning.	<p>Topical and insightful presentations to be recorded from across TfSE's meetings. Utilise TfSE's YouTube channel to create a 'hub' space for these to be stored. This would also be linked from TfSE's website.</p>

Feedback	Proposed Solution
Enabling TfSE secretariat to best support large diverse stakeholder group.	Technical leads to administrate some of the thematic groups relevant to their work, reduce the number of full Transport Forum meetings and disseminate information using recordings of virtual presentations, webinars and podcasts.
Ensuring technical work is developed and scrutinised by specialist stakeholders. With contributions from wider stakeholders.	Using thematic groups of specialist stakeholders to develop the technical work but involving the wider stakeholder group when appropriate.
Reviewing terms of reference and defining purpose.	Amend terms of reference to better reflect purpose of Transport Forum.
Receive updates on all the work TfSE are undertaking.	Continue with monthly 'Connections' newsletters which contains updates on TfSE work. More in depth updates will occur via webinars, podcasts and in person events.
Still have stakeholder views represented on the Board.	An Advisory Panel Chair will have a seat on the Partnership Board and, as feedback from the thematic stakeholder groups would be included, they will be able to provide a more comprehensive update than is currently the case.

## Feedback from Survey

81% thought that regular, themed webinars would be beneficial, with one commenting that early sight of the calendar, webinars and podcasts with summarised outputs / themes would be helpful.

- 75% would like to meet in person twice a year; Gatwick or Central London were the most popular location choices.
- 13% would only attend if virtual.
- 6% said they would attend an in person meeting once a year if in Gatwick / Sussex area.
- 6% didn't comment.

- 94% either already do or would value the opportunity to participate in stakeholder groups that are focused on modal or thematic topics.
- 6% (one respondent) would not value this, however their sector is already represented on several other TfSE groups.

## Proposed Solution

TfSE will develop a communications programme to disseminate information. This could include live webinars, podcasts and in person events. Transport Forum and thematic group membership will be invited. Webinars will also be recorded and be available for all stakeholders to view via TfSE's YouTube channel and shared via Connections newsletter. This will also be linked from TfSE's website.

Combination of shorter webinars and 2 longer in-person sessions, at either Gatwick or a central London location.

Current members of the Transport Forum may be invited to join an existing modal/thematic group (where appropriate/optional). Thematic groups of specialist stakeholders will help support and develop the technical work, but wider stakeholder group will be involved when appropriate.

## Feedback from Survey

63% thought that the length of forum meetings (3 hrs) was just right, 37% felt that the meetings are too long.

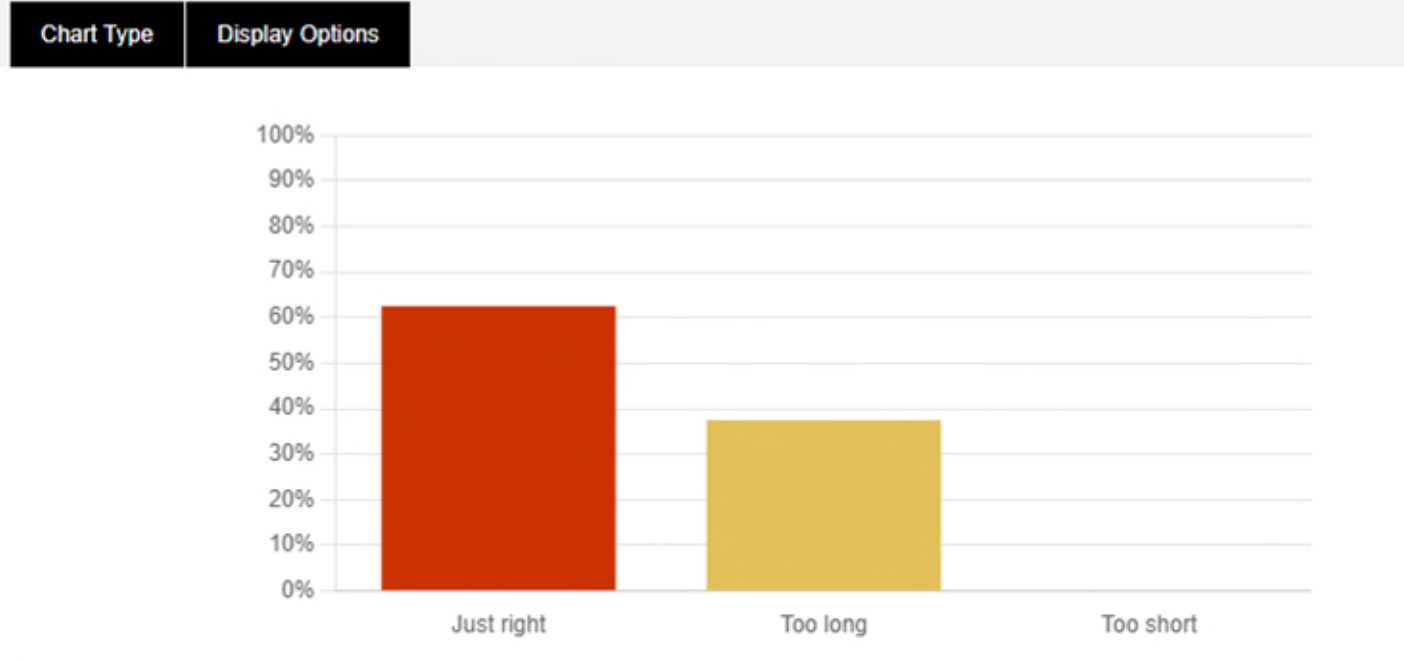
- In order of popularity, the reasons that people attend the forum are:
- To enable me to report back on the work of TfSE to my sector / organisation (88%)
  - To influence the work of TfSE (81%)
  - To hear views and perspectives from other sectors (81%)
  - To expand my learning / knowledge on specific topics (69%)
  - An opportunity to network (44%)

## Proposed Solution

Combination of shorter webinars, presentations, podcasts and longer in-person sessions.

Holding 2 in person Transport Forum meetings a year will encourage a mix of attendees from a variety of sectors. Also being able to watch and participate in webinars on a variety of subjects that may be different from specialist topic.

## Q2. How do you feel about the length of Transport Forum meetings?



### FEEDBACK

63% THOUGHT THAT THE LENGTH OF FORUM MEETINGS (3 HRS) WAS JUST RIGHT, 37% FELT THAT THE MEETINGS ARE TOO LONG.

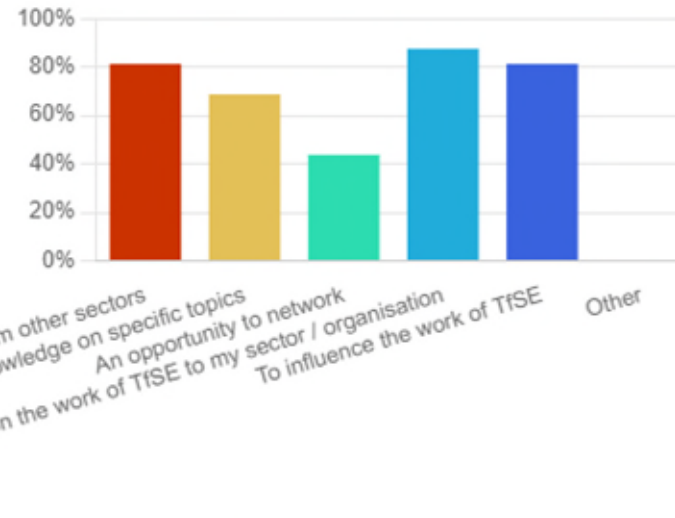
### PROPOSED SOLUTION

COMBINATION OF SHORTER WEBINARS AND LONGER IN-PERSON SESSIONS.

#### Q4. Which of these statements best describe why you attend the transport forum

Chart Type

Display Options



\* Note: As this is a multiple choice question, the percentages may add up to more than 100%.

## FEEDBACK

In order of popularity, the reasons that people attend the forum are:

- To enable me to report back on the work of TfSE to my sector / organisation (88%)
- To influence the work of TfSE (81%)
- To hear views and perspectives from other sectors (81%)
- To expand my learning / knowledge on specific topics (69%)
- An opportunity to network (44%)

## PROPOSED SOLUTION

Holding 2 in person Transport Forum meetings a year will encourage a mix of attendees from a variety of sectors. Also being able to watch and participate in webinars on a variety of subjects that may be different from specialist topic.



## **Terms of Reference for the Transport Forum**

### **Transport for the South East**

#### **Transport Forum Terms of Reference**

The Transport Forum is part of Transport for the South East (TfSE), reporting into the Partnership Board via the Chair of the Advisory Panel. The Transport Forum has a clearly defined remit and purpose.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the group is to:

- Bring together a wide range of stakeholders to gather views on strategic transport issues to feed into the Advisory Panel and subsequently, the Partnership Board;
- Facilitate shared understanding of the key issues facing users, operators and the supply chain.

The Forum will ensure that a broad range of stakeholder and partner views are heard and considered by both TfSE and the collective membership of the Transport Forum.

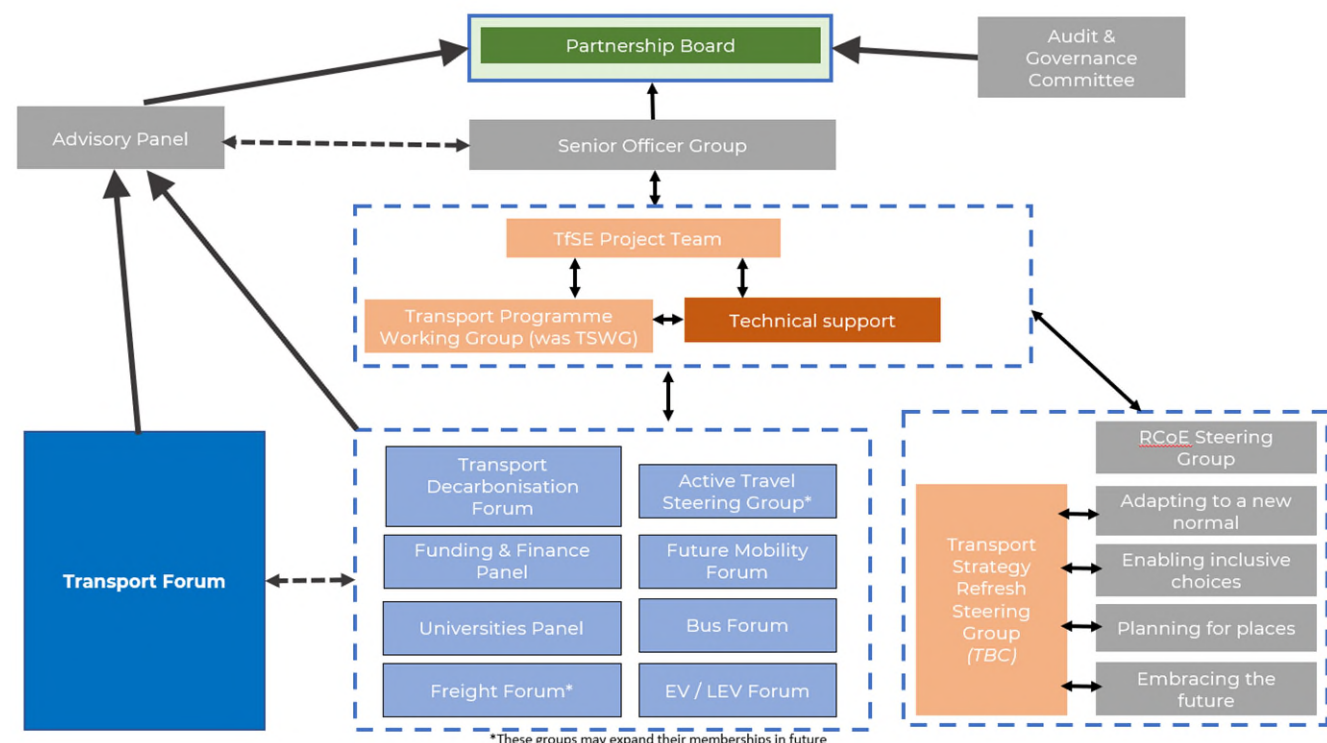
#### **Objectives of the Transport Forum**

The objectives of the Forum are to:

- Share information about the work of TfSE and empower attendees to report this back to their sector or organisation;
- Share views and perspectives from a variety of sectors;
- Provide a networking opportunity for members; and
- Bring together members of the wider thematic and / or modal TfSE stakeholder groups to share and facilitate learning and knowledge on specific topics.

#### **Accountability**

The Transport Forum will report to the Advisory Panel who in turn will report to the Partnership Board. See below a diagram showing the relationship between the Transport Forum, Advisory Panel, other stakeholder groups and the Partnership Board.



### Appointment of Chair

The Chair will be appointed by the Partnership Board for the period of one year. The Chair will also Chair the Advisory Panel.

The Chair of the Advisory Panel and Transport Forum will have a voting role on the Transport for the South East Partnership Board.

### Membership

Members of the Forum are all those who attend thematic /modal groups.

When appropriate, subject matter experts may be invited to attend the Transport Forum to support and inform the discussion.

### Frequency of Meetings

The Transport Forum will meet in person, twice a year and will be invited to participate in other virtual engagement.