

The Draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England

My comments to the Chairman of Transport for the South East on the Draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England and how it will affect my constituents.



THE RT HON SIR JOHN REDWOOD MP, D.Phil, FCSI

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Keith Glazier
Chairman
Transport for the South East
County Hall
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29 October 2019

Dear Chairman

I am writing to comment on the draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England.

Your consultation document on transport for the South East correctly stresses the current problems of congestion, lack of transport capacity and lack of investment in our economically successful part of the UK. Your forecasts rightly assume substantial increases in demand for rail and road capacity in the years ahead, given the outlook for business growth and new housing. I accept there needs to be substantial investment in many parts of the region, though of course my main preoccupation is with Central Berkshire where my own constituency and home are found.

I support the intention to introduce digital signalling throughout the rail network, as this will enable us to run more trains per hour safely on the same track. The Reading Waterloo line needs more capacity now, as you remark. Gatwick-Reading is an infrequent service which could also benefit from more trains. There are also capacity issues on Reading-Paddington to the north of the area of your study which may be intensified with the link up to Crossrail.

I was disappointed to see not a single scheme submitted for Berkshire in the ten schemes you bid for this summer. You identify the need for more capacity on the Bracknell-Wokingham-Reading road corridor without specifying how this might be achieved. You also suggest a new major link between the M3 and M4 which looks from your sketch as if it runs through my area. What is the status of this and how have local Councils responded to the identification of this line? What impact would it have on local settlements and countryside?

Wokingham Borough Council has identified a strategic local road network as requested by the Government. This needs to be considered in conjunction



with Highways England major routes as it will add more traffic to key routes like the M3, M4 and A34 when they currently lack capacity for present traffic volumes at peak times.

One of the vexed issues for local transport is that of a possible additional river crossing of the Thames to the east of Reading. Sonning has a historic bridge with a single way traffic flow at any given time, which attracts too much traffic through the village adversely affecting the environment and causing delays. Henley has a small two-way bridge with blocking traffic lights immediately on the Henley side which also causes major delays. It means people trying to go to work or for other visits to South Oxfordshire from my constituency suffer major delays at peak, as do Oxfordshire resident travelling to jobs or other activities in my area. A new bridge as part of a strategic local route or a newly adopted national route would help a lot but has so far for many years proved contentious in Oxfordshire. What is your approach to this matter?

Central Berkshire has taken a lot of additional development in recent years without proper transport provision to match. Your draft plan does not seem to begin to tackle this. I would be willing to have a further meeting to discuss more.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. R.' followed by a long horizontal flourish.