

Tom Tugendhat MBE MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

24 June 2021

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 14 June, regarding the need for east-facing slips in the vicinity of Junction 5 of the M25, Sevenoaks that was sent to me in my capacity as Chair of Transport for the South East (TfSE).

In 2017, TfSE, in common with the other sub-national transport bodies, was asked by the Department for Transport (DfT) to submit a list of priority schemes from across the region for potential inclusion in the second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2). With a limited number of schemes able to be submitted, and the need to consider and prioritise schemes from across the whole of the South east, the decision of the TfSE board, which was supported by the Kent County Council board member, was that the priorities for RIS2 in Kent should be those that are essential to support the new Lower Thames Crossing. As a consequence, a scheme to provide east-facing slips in the vicinity of Junction 5 of the M25 at Sevenoaks was not included in the priority list submitted to the DfT.

Following the publication of our transport strategy in July 2020, we are now undertaking further technical work to inform our forthcoming strategic investment plan (SIP). This includes five area studies which will identify the schemes and initiatives that will be required to deliver the 2050 vision set out in our transport strategy.

The M25 strategic corridor is under examination as part of our inner orbital area study that is currently underway. As part of this work, we are again engaging with colleagues in our constituent authorities, including Kent County Council, and Highways England, both of whom are represented on the working groups and involved in the technical work for the study.

Whilst it is too soon to know the detailed outcomes from the inner orbital study, a scheme to provide east-facing slips in the vicinity of Junction 5 of the M25 at Sevenoaks has been included within the initial longlist of potential interventions. Further assessment work will be carried out to determine whether it should be taken forward as part of a long-term regional priority investment package for the area through our SIP.

Regardless of the outcome of that work, through our involvement with their route strategy work, TfSE will also ensure that Highways England are aware of the issues so that consideration can be given to the case for the scheme in subsequent RIS periods.

I trust this explains why a scheme to provide east-facing slips in the vicinity of Junction 5 of the M25 at Sevenoaks was not included in the priority list that TfSE submitted to DfT, and also provides reassurance that the issues you raise remain under consideration through our ongoing technical work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Glazier', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Keith Glazier

Chair of Transport for the South East
Leader of East Sussex County Council