ACE response, House of Commons TSC rail infrastructure inquiry:

On the 19th September TSC published the Government’s and the ORR’s responses to the inquiry into rail infrastructure investment. As contributors to the inquiry, ACE have been asked by the TSC for comment on these responses.

ACE in its review of the responses echoes the sentiment of the committee: the response from the government and the ORR was disappointing. The responses failed to meaningfully engage with the expertise provided by industry, and the practical recommendations outlined in the report. As evidence givers, it was disheartening for ACE to see the DfT and the ORR pay such little attention to the solutions proposed by the committee, including dismissing some of them outright.

Language in both responses was broadly non-comital and focused mainly on the existing work of the Government. The response failed to acknowledge the issues raised by the committee, and the solutions it proposed. This demonstrates a reluctance to change and a failure to consider avenues for improvement that would ultimately be in the best interests of passengers on the network.

With Network Rail planning to spend more money in CP6, including funding leftover from the Transpenine route upgrade, passengers will be expecting to see an increase in performance. It will be imperative the DfT and ORR can deliver on the infrastructure investment it has promised. Failure to deliver in conjunction with not taking on board the recommendations from the committee is now inexcusable.

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