

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

Date of meeting: **22 July 2021**

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

Title of report: **Lead Officer’s Report**

Purpose of report: **To update the Board on the recent activities of Transport for the South East**

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the activities of Transport for the South East between January - July 2021.

1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2021, the DfT confirmed that TfSE had been awarded a further grant of £1.225 million. This was incredibly welcome news and enabled TfSE to progress with the planned technical work programme with all area studies now underway.

1.2 The local elections in May 2021 and subsequent appointments to constituent authorities’ administrations mean there are five new board representatives (outlined below):

- **Cllr Dan Watkins**, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Kent County Council (*replacing Cllr Michael Payne*)
- **Cllr Phil Jordan**, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Transport, Isle of Wight Council (*replacing Cllr Ian Ward*)
- **Cllr Jeremy Moulton**, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growth, Southampton City Council (*replacing Cllr Steve Leggett*)
- **Cllr Matt Furniss**, Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure, Surrey County Council (*replacing Cllr Colin Kemp*)
- **Cllr Joy Dennis**, Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure, West Sussex County Council (*replacing Cllr Roger Elkins*)

2. National policy

Bus Back Better

2.1 Bus Back Better, the national bus strategy for England, was published on 15 March 2021. The national strategy sets out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.

2.2 Alongside the strategy, they have launched a consultation on when to end the sale of new diesel buses to drive forward the decarbonisation of public transport.

2.3 Part of TfSE's April Transport Strategy Working Group meeting was used to hold a seminar on the National Bus Strategy for constituent authorities' public transport officers, with two speakers from the DfT's Bus Unit. A second session has been planned for 19 July 2021 (with bus operators invited too), as the DfT have now published their guidance on Enhanced Partnerships.

2.4 Local Transport Authorities need to have their Enhanced Partnerships with operators in place by April 2022, based on their Bus Service Improvement Plans (due to be completed by the end of October 2021).

2.5 TfSE is considering what future role it could play to help constituent authorities achieve their long-term ambitions for buses in their area and across the region.

Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail

2.6 Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail was published on 20 May 2021. The white paper sets out the Government's plan for a revolution on the railways in Great Britain. It is based on the shared vision of Keith Williams, the independent Chair of the Rail Review, and the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, the Secretary of State for Transport, to put rail on the right track to support the levelling up of our towns, cities and regions.

2.7 Its three key elements are to end franchising, to have better ticketing and to create a new "guiding mind" for the industry in the form of a new organisation called Great British Railways (GBR). GBR will take up to 5 years to set up, drawing together teams from Network Rail, Rail Delivery Group, the DfT and train operators into a single organisation.

2.8 The Government say the plan will make railways the backbone of a cleaner, more environmentally friendly and modern public transport system across the country. By replacing franchising, accelerating innovation and integrating the railways, they will deliver an efficient, financially sustainable railway that meets the needs of passengers and those who rely on rail on a daily basis.

2.9 Conversations are ongoing with the Department for Transport to understand and define the role Sub-National Transport Bodies could have in working with Great British Railway. The plan states that *'further detail on the involvement of local leaders in rail and other transport services and the levers available to them will be set out in the levelling up white paper in due course.'*

2.10 There are definite prospects for Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) to have a positive influence on railway operations and development, reflecting their respective regional strategic transport objectives. The Government have made very clear that they support partnership working to deliver the future railway. TfSE, acting as a single voice on rail in the region on behalf of its constituent authorities, is well placed to take an active part, along with its STB neighbours. In particular, there is potentially a role for TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) to partner with GBR and TfL on rail in London and the South East.

Forthcoming national policy

2.11 The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (and related papers / plans / consultations) was published on the 14 July 2021, the contents of which are currently being analysed by the team.

2.12 The Levelling up White Paper is also expected later in the year. It's anticipated that this document will also have a considerable impact on the future work of TfSE and we will provide further information to Board members following its publication.

3. Work of Transport for the South East

Future Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 TfSE have recently commissioned Arup to carry out some work on TfSE's future roles and responsibilities. This work will be important when establishing how the Strategic Investment Plan can be taken forward. The Board, Senior Officers and other stakeholders will inform this work and recommendations will be presented to the Partnership Board meeting on 18 October 2021.

Transport Decarbonisation Forum

3.2 Following the completion of the Transport Strategy in July 2020, work was undertaken to develop a carbon calculator. This will allow the impacts of the packages of interventions that are being formulated as part of the area studies on carbon emissions to be calculated.

3.3 In June 2021 a South East Regional Transport Decarbonisation forum was launched chaired by TfSE. The aim of the forum is to provide a mechanism for local authority officers and other key stakeholders to share best practice and hear about the latest thinking on what is a core challenge for us all moving forward. It will also seek to identify potential areas for collaboration and joint working. The forum is being convened to coincide with the publication of the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan and forthcoming cross-government Net Zero Strategy. It is hoped that these will provide clarification about the role that different tiers of government are to play in the transport decarbonisation challenge.

3.4 The forum membership consists of the TfSE Transport Strategy Working Group and other officer representatives (reflecting our Board membership). Officers with responsibility for climate change / decarbonisation / sustainability within our constituent authorities are also included.

3.5 The next meeting has been scheduled for 06 August 2021.

Joint STB work

3.6 Jointly the seven sub national transport bodies have circulated a transport decarbonisation questionnaire to their constituent authorities to ascertain where they, and other key transport partners are currently positioned on transport decarbonisation. This will help inform the regional decarbonisation work that each STB is developing.

3.7 In addition, the rural transport and freight STB sub-groups continue to meet and have identified a number of key themes for further investigation including development of a rural transport data evidence base and alternative fuels for freight to support decarbonisation of the sector.

3.8 The STBs also exhibited at the ITT Hub Conference at Farnborough on 30-01 July. This was a successful event that provided an opportunity to showcase some of the great work being undertaken by the regional bodies. I also joined a panel discussion at the event on Passenger Transport - Future Vehicles and Future Fuels.

Events

3.9 Since January there have been a number of events of note. On 10 March 2021, Mark Valleley gave evidence to the Transport Select Cttee for their inquiry on 'reforming public transport after the pandemic.'

3.10 On 18 March 2021 we held a webinar titled 'Mobility 2050' where we opened up the conversation on future mobility in the South East in advance of our future mobility strategy being published.

3.11 TfSE has also been involved in the testing and launch of a place-based carbon calculator tool. The interactive tool was developed by researchers at CREDS (the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions) - a research centre looking at how to decarbonise the energy demand system, including transport. The purpose of the tool is to provide a resource for local government and community organisations by mapping current emissions, which will help in the formulation of decarbonisation strategies and action plans. At TfSE we have facilitated testing of the tool via a group of potential users.

TfSE Team

3.12 Russell Spink will be leaving the team at the end of July to take up a new position at Brighton University. We wish him well in his new role.

3.13 In addition, Rob Dickin will also be leaving the team. We wish him well for the future.

3.14 We are currently evaluating what form the replacement roles should take given the impact of the evolution of our technical programme and wider work plan on the skills and capabilities required in the team.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 This year will continue to see the publication of some long-awaited key Government policy documents. These will inform the future of transport in the region and for TfSE as an organisation and will be considered carefully. In the meantime, will continue our dialogue with Government departments and continue to progress the technical work towards the development of the Strategic Investment Plan.

4.2 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the activities undertaken by TfSE.

RUPERT CLUBB

Lead Officer

Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Jasmin Barnicoat
Tel. No. 07749 436080
Email: jasmin.barnicoat@eastsussex.gov.uk