

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

Date of meeting: **18 October 2021**

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

Title of report: **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement update**

Purpose of report: **To update the board on communications and stakeholder engagement activity**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) note the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since July 2021; and**
 - (2) note and agree the communications and engagement plan for the SIP development process, attached as Appendix 1.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 Communications and engagement activity since the board meeting held in July 2021 has been undertaken in a predominantly virtual format, with a small number of meetings and one board workshop taking place face to face. Engagement has focused primarily on supporting preparation of the strategic investment plan (SIP), preparing partners and stakeholders for the forthcoming consultation process. We have continued to build relationships with current and new stakeholders.

1.2 Interest in Transport for the South East continues to grow, with over 2,800 individuals from 950 organisations now registered on our database and receiving regular communication from us.

1.3 Broader communications activity for TfSE slowed whilst the Communications Manager post was vacant over the summer. The new Communications Manager came into post in early September and is working to develop a forward plan of proactive communication and engagement opportunities. This will include increased engagement with the communications and engagement working group as we work through the SIP. We continue to receive speaker invitations to both national and local events covering a vast array of transport related topics.

1.4 We have welcomed new members to our Transport Forum, including representatives from the National Grid, Public Health sector and the Chambers of Commerce.

1.5 This paper provides an update on recent activity, as well as updating Partnership Board members on the communications and engagement that is planned for the next few months.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

Supporting the transport strategy and technical programme

2.1 In the period since the last Partnership Board meeting in July 2021, numerous stakeholder meetings have taken place to support work on the area studies and freight, logistics and international gateways strategy.

2.2 As the technical work on the area studies progressed, it became clear that the five areas needed to be brought together sooner in the process than we had envisaged. Combining the individual outputs and looking at them holistically at a regional level at an earlier stage will enable us to build and present a much clearer picture of the packages of interventions that have been identified, showing the regional, as well as local, benefits of each.

2.3 We therefore decided to amend the originally proposed ‘third and final stakeholder’ forums for each area study, and instead replace them with an event (or events) that will address the combined outcomes of the whole area study work programme. A time and date for this revised event/s is yet to be identified, but due to the need for the final two studies to “catch up” with the first three it is likely to take place in early 2022. We are very grateful for the continued commitment of our key partners and stakeholders.

2.4 Stakeholders from a diverse range of organisations continue to be actively engaged in work on the freight, logistics and international gateways strategy and we hope to continue to facilitate a freight group or forum for the region post strategy publication.

2.5 Engagement sessions with all board members are in progress and they run until early November. Meetings are being led by Cllr Glazier and are intended to provide a detailed update on our progress as we move to the development of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). These sessions will be followed by further ‘round 2’ briefings, which will commence in mid November, and will be an opportunity for Board members to hear about geographically specific potential interventions that are emerging from the area studies.

2.6 We have developed a comprehensive stakeholder engagement and communication plan for the SIP work programme and a summary of this is included as Appendix 1.

3. Broadening our engagement

3.1 We continue to facilitate discussions amongst a wide group of stakeholders who would not otherwise engage with one another. Our ability to bring people together from a variety of sectors and enable them to speak with one voice on a topic or agenda is positively received.

3.2 The universities' stakeholder group met in July 2021 and included guest speakers from the DfT who briefed the group on the Bus Back Better and Great British Railways strategies. Updates on the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) and micromobility projects were also received from Solent Transport and Kent University. As always, board members are welcomed and encouraged to attend this interesting forum if they would like to; the next meeting is on 11th November 2021.

3.3 The private sector stakeholder group is due to meet later this year and our private sector partners continue to be actively engaged with and supportive of the work of TfSE. This is especially important as we move towards the publication of the SIP.

3.4 The communications & stakeholder engagement group met in July to update partners on our technical programme, outline our early thinking on the SIP and discuss opportunities for partners to support communications and engagement, particularly around the SIP consultation. As we move towards the publication of the SIP it is intended that this group will meet more frequently and play a key role in communicating our messages to a wider audience.

3.5 The regional transport decarbonisation forum has met twice, with the third meeting scheduled for early October. There is a lot of interest in this group and membership continues to grow.

3.6 The transport decarbonisation data gathering survey that we ran on behalf of all seven STBs has been completed and response levels were pleasing nationally.

3.7 TfSE officers have presented at several online events and seminars including:

- Railtex Conference (Growth & geography panel)
- Landor decarbonisation seminar

3.8 A targeted engagement exercise with district and borough colleagues ran in July, with each of the five county areas receiving geographically targeted briefing sessions. We briefed colleagues on the progress of our technical work programme and updated them on the SIP development process. The events attracted a good number of district

and borough council leaders and relevant portfolio holders, plus district and borough officers with an interest in planning, planning policy, economic development and public health. We intend to run further sessions in Spring 2022.

4. Political engagement

4.1 We intend to provide an electronic update briefing to all of our MPs in November 2021, and will be running another series of virtual drop in engagement sessions between January and March 2022. Board members will be invited to join these sessions, where MPs will be updated about the SIP development process.

5. Upcoming Events

5.1 **'Delivering economic growth in the context of decarbonisation' (Nov 2021):** This event is being organised in partnership with the Transport Planning Society (TPS). The target audience is transport planners from across the TfSE region, but registration is open to attendees nationally.

5.2 **Joint STB conference & exhibition (26 May 2022):** A national joint STB event is being planned at The Vox in Birmingham. This will be a multimodal conference focusing on long-term and strategic issues and attracting high-level speakers and delegates. The event has the support of the DfT and TfSE will work closely with the other STBs via the joint communication and engagement groups to plan the content. Board members will be invited to attend.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 We will continue to keep our communications and engagement activities under review in light of the Covid-19 situation. We continue to ensure our engagement is appropriate to the situation.

6.2 The Partnership Board are recommended to note and agree the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since July 2021.

6.3 The Partnership Board are recommended to note and agree the communications and engagement plan for the SIP development process, attached as Appendix 1.

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Appendix 1 – Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan Summary for the SIP

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN

Communications and stakeholder engagement plan summary

Our approach to communications and stakeholder engagement activities to support the SIP process is summarised below.

Stage	Stage A Pre-engagement (process & governance)	Stage B Pre-engagement (content)	Stage C Public consultation	Stage D Analysis and review	Stage E Publication of SIP
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New board engagement (July) D&B engagement (July) Chair's 'world tour' (Sep-Oct) SOG / TSWG (summer) Brief area study forums and Transport Forum (summer) Joint LEP engagement (autumn) Other board members (NR, HE, TfL, protected landscapes) (autumn) MP electronic briefing (Nov) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair's 'world tour' 2 (Nov-Dec) Board workshop (Mar-Apr) MP briefing(s) (May) Potential 1:1 briefings with key stakeholders ISA engagement with environmental groups DfT, Treasury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital consultation platform Integrated launch comms Roadshow x5 Targeted media engagement in major cities/conurbations Stakeholder newsletter Social media promotion (paid for?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Next steps' comms to respondents and stakeholders Media activity re: close of consultation Targeted engagement activity on consultation feedback Board workshop pre-sign-off meeting (spring 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated stakeholder and comms launch campaign – media, social media, Westminster, regional events etc
Outputs and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed governance schedule for constituent authorities Newsletter update on SIP and areas studies Secure support from CAs for approach Board report approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders briefed on emerging content Any 'red flags' flagged and addressed TfSE future role defined and supported Board approval of draft SIP for consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible, digital-first consultation completed Minimal responses received outside consultation platform Well attended, locally-led roadshow events Positive media coverage Positive/constructive engagement with consultation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders are clear on 'next steps' and how we will act on consultation responses Stakeholder engagement re: any high profile issues Constituent authorities approve final SIP via internal governance processes Board approve final SIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approve final SIP