

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

Date of meeting: **18 October 2021**

By: **Chair of the Transport Forum**

Title of report: **Transport Forum Update**

Purpose of report: **To summarise the Transport Forum meeting of 21 September 2021 and inform the Board of the Transport Forum’s recommendations.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the recent meeting of the Transport Forum; and**
 - (2) Note and consider the comments from the Forum.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Partnership Board on the most recent meeting of the Transport Forum.

1.2 The meeting took place virtually on Tuesday 21 September 2021 and was attended by more than 40 members of the Forum. The Forum welcomed four new members which demonstrates the continued interest in engaging with the work of TfSE.

2. Feedback from the Transport Forum Meeting on 21 September 2021

Decarbonisation and the role for STBs

2.1 Mark Valleley (MV) presented on transport decarbonisation and the potential role for STBs. MV began by outlining the current transport decarbonisation challenge, including the policy background, pathways to net zero, the scale of the challenge and carbon budgets.

2.2 MV outlined the static nature of emissions in the transport sector since 1990 and also the breakdown of emission contributions by transport mode. The balanced net zero pathway for surface transport, as outlined by the Committee on Climate Change, was discussed as they have clearly mapped what needs to change / take place to achieve the emission reductions. One important element is to understand the proportion of miles undertaken by journey purpose, as all leisure trips make up 50% of total trips.

2.3 MV shared some of the key points of note from the Government’s Transport Decarbonisation Plan as there are some important messages and indications in the document. The strategic priorities in the plan were reviewed with 4 relevant ones discussed in more detail.

2.4 Although the plan covers many elements of transport and the key messages are welcomed, there are some aspects that will need further consideration. The plan does rely heavily on technology (which in some cases does not exist yet) to achieve the carbon reduction results. However, there are some signals in the document that mark potential positive changes, for example the reform of the way local transport infrastructure is funded to drive decarbonisation at a local level.

2.5 MV finished by outlining TfSE's work on transport decarbonisation. This has consisted of the carbon assessment work, assisting with trialling the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions' (CREDS) place based carbon calculator tool, and ongoing technical work on decarbonisation pathways (identify a carbon budget, trajectories to zero emissions and policy gaps to achieve zero emissions across the region).

2.6 TfSE is also facilitating a transport decarbonisation forum for local authority officers to share best practice and identify areas for joint working.

2.7 In addition, the DfT has identified four additional workstreams for STBs in 2021/22 and two of these are on decarbonisation (assisting local authorities to implement commitments made in the transport decarbonisation plan) and EV charging infrastructure.

Summary of Forum comments

2.8 The forum discussed some of the issues raised so far including the difficulty in shifting the mode for leisure trips. The forum also agreed that the need for a debate to occur on demand management is overdue and will have to happen soon as it will be prompted by the reduction in fuel duty.

2.9 In response to a request for TfSE to press local transport authorities (LTAs) on the need to incorporate better cycle infrastructure alongside new roads etc, MV confirmed that the aim is to have a golden thread between what TfSE and LTAs are doing. It is not for TfSE to 'police' the authorities, but to help them with the bigger schemes that do not fit into their local plans. It was also confirmed that transport interventions are being assessed for their carbon emissions in all of the area studies.

2.10 The Forum discussed Gatwick expansion and the differing views on the proposals. TfSE will not be expressing a view directly on the expansion, however, the focus of TfSE's consultation response will be based on surface transport to the airport as it is essential this is improved.

2.11 The forum discussed the transport decarbonisation plan and how politicians are aware they need to bring the public with them, and although difficult to balance, they need to be brave and stand firm on some of the more challenging aspects of what will be required.

2.12 Demand management was discussed and specifically how TfSE can address this in the SIP and offer support to Government. It was confirmed that we would offer to assist the Government in making this a reality on the ground along with other STBs.

2.13 Another key thought from the Forum was that there are things that can be implemented now to help modal shift without waiting for the technology to be created. In addition, it was agreed that TfSE should set the strategic goal across the region, especially around areas like rail freight and last mile deliveries.

2.14 The forum discussed EV charging infrastructure and also confirmed they think it is a good idea to help bring the local authorities together.

Update on area studies programme

2.15 Sarah Valentine (SV) briefly explained the background to the area studies including the purpose and the approach. Also discussed, were the identified objectives of each study including those objectives that are common across all the studies.

2.16 SV updated the Forum on the progress of each study, and explained in more detail, stage C and what work is specifically taking place in this section.

2.17 The timeline for stakeholder engagement was explained, including the reasons why the last workshop has been postponed.

Strategic investment plan

2.18 Sarah Valentine (SV) began by confirming that in the 2021 comprehensive spending review, TfSE's aim is to secure a three-year funding settlement. Some of the costs outlined in the funding bid will be for delivery costs for the initial implementation of the SIP.

2.19 The work currently being undertaken by Arup – to develop a set of recommendations on the future roles, powers and governance of TfSE, was also outlined, as they are considering the role and function of TfSE following completion of the SIP. In addition, what powers, tools and resources might be required to deliver those roles and functions. SV confirmed that a survey on the future roles and responsibilities of TfSE was circulated to members of the Transport Forum in August and responses have been collated and fed into Arup's work.

2.20 SV spoke in more detail as to what the SIP will and will not be and the procurement of the SIP consultants was outlined (currently out for tender) and the process for engaging stakeholders was explained.

Summary of Forum comments

2.21 The Forum raised some concerns around the lack of specificity to the schemes, but SV explained that there will be a large variety of interventions that will appear in the SIP including recommendations from the future mobility strategy and freight strategy. SV confirmed that the SIP will focus on the outcomes that are desired rather than the specific way that they should be achieved. SV also reminded Forum members that public transport and active travel modes all require a surface to run on, and so the term 'highway schemes' needs to be considered in the broadest context and does not necessarily mean increasing private car capacity.

Updates

2.22 Jasmin Barnicoat (JB) confirmed there has been a delay to the freight strategy workstream. JB identified the revised timeline and how the freight working group and freight forum will be engaged in the process. JB also outlined TfSE's recent consultation submissions.

Summary of Forum comments

2.23 In response to questions raised, JB will ensure consultation responses are uploaded to the website for public view.

3. Future Transport Forum Engagement

3.1 The next meeting of the Transport Forum will be held on Tuesday 14 December 2021. Part of this meeting will be used to discuss some of the Government's important policy publications expected this Autumn.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Board note the successful virtual meeting of the Transport Forum and the important communication link this provides TfSE with its key stakeholders.

4.2 The Forum members welcomed the opportunity to discuss in some detail, the transport decarbonisation issues facing the South East.

4.3 It is recommended that the Board note and consider the comments raised by Forum members. Overall, the Forum are pleased with the work TfSE is currently undertaking on transport decarbonisation and think TfSE is the right organisation to

bring local transport authorities together and to co-ordinate some of the required changes on a larger scale.

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