

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

Date of meeting: **13 March 2023**

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**

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***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

**The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:**

- (1) Note the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since the last board meeting; and**
  - (2) Note the contents of the 2023/24 communication and engagement plan**
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**1. Introduction**

1.1 This paper provides an update on recent communications and engagement activity including support provided to technical projects and upcoming events. Engagement activity relating to the publication of the SIP is covered in Agenda Item 6 (SIP Communications Plan).

**2. Recent communications and engagement activity**

2.1 We have been planning how we will engage stakeholders with the launch of the final SIP document and have been focussing early engagement activity on a small number of the region's MPs.

2.2 Presentations to cabinet and committee colleagues on the development of the SIP have continued, to facilitate a smoother sign off procedure as the final plan is taken through constituent authorities' democratic processes.

2.3 A communications and engagement plan for 2023/24 has been developed and is intended to be a live document that is updated in line with our work programme.

2.4 Early conversations have been held with some of our neighbouring STBs, beginning to explore how we may be able to streamline engagement with key stakeholders in relation to specific projects that span regional boundaries (e.g. freight).

### **3. Ongoing stakeholder engagement**

3.1 Engagement work is ongoing in relation to our additional workstreams, with stakeholder meetings held for the bus back better, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, future mobility, centre of excellence and freight and logistics projects. We are working with the lead consultants for each project to develop and support further engagement opportunities as the projects progress.

3.2 We continue to work with our neighbouring STB colleagues to explore opportunities to collaborate around stakeholder engagement opportunities and minimise the risk of stakeholder fatigue. This has initially focused on how we may be able to streamline engagement with key stakeholders in relation to specific projects that span regional boundaries (e.g. freight).

3.3 We are working closely with STB colleagues to organise the second joint STB event. Once again, the event will be held at The Vox in Birmingham on 5 June 2023. It will be a multi-modal event presenting opportunities for all seven STBs to showcase their work.

3.4 The Communications and Engagement Steering Group recently met, bringing together communications and engagement leads from constituent authorities, Network Rail, National Highways and other partners. They were all updated on progress with the SIP and plans for the communications activity pending approval. The next meeting is likely to take place in March and will include an update from Transport for London about the extension of the ULEZ.

3.5 The Universities group met virtually on 25<sup>th</sup> January at 11am. Presentations and discussions covered active travel and the centres of excellence. The meeting was well attended and facilitated some very positive conversations and knowledge sharing.

3.6 The private sector stakeholder group met on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 at the Burges Salmon offices in London. The group explored current challenges and priorities regarding private sector investment in infrastructure. Their next session will focus on how to best attract private sector investment in scheme development.

3.7 Work is ongoing with two parish councillors who are helping us to strengthen the relationship between the numerous town and parish councils in the region and TfSE. Two meetings have been held and links established with the relevant local associations, enabling us to target and streamline communication and engagement activity with this sector.

3.8 Several introductory meetings have been held with new stakeholders, to share information on knowledge and projects, including with the University of Brighton Hydrogen project and the Community Transport Association.

## **4. Upcoming events and speaker slots**

### 4.1 Previous events/speaker slots

- 17 January 2023 – South Coast Development Conference (Sarah Valentine).

4.2 We are developing a continually evolving forward plan for events and speaker slots that would provide beneficial engagement for TfSE – so far confirmed are:

### Future events/speaker slots

- 22 April 2023 Rail Future Annual Meeting
- 10 – 11 May 2023 ITT Hub Conference
- 5 June 2023 Joint STB conference
- September 2023 TfSE annual conference

## **5. Communication and engagement plan 2023/24**

5.1 A communication and engagement plan for 2023/24 has been produced and is attached at Appendix 1. Whilst this plan is written to reflect the anticipated activity for the next 12 months, it is a live document and will be updated regularly to reflect the broader TfSE work programme.

5.2 Two significant early tasks for the 2023/24 financial year are:

- A survey of stakeholders to ascertain a baseline, enabling us to monitor the effectiveness of our communication and engagement activity, and
- A refresh of our stakeholder database to ensure that we continue to comply with GDPR regulations.

5.3 A key focus of the plan is on engagement with the region's MPs, and we will be looking at new and innovative ways to best engage with this sector.

## **6. Conclusion and recommendations**

6.1 We will continue to keep our communications and engagement activities under review using virtual or physical meetings as appropriate at the time.

6.2 The Partnership Board are recommended to note the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since the last Partnership Board meeting.

6.3 The Partnership Board are asked to note the contents of the 2023/24 communication and engagement plan, which will be kept as a live document by the communications and engagement team and updated according to the TfSE work programme.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

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Transport for the South East

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# Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan 2023-24

March 2023

# Overview

This plan describes our communications and engagement activities over the next twelve months. It outlines how we will communicate and engage with all stakeholders as we work to deliver the priorities set out in our business plan for 2023-24.

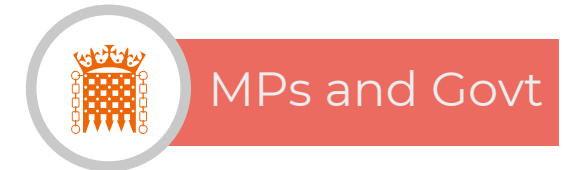
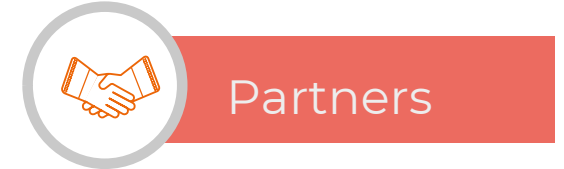
Communicating and engaging with our stakeholders is vital to ensure our stakeholders have confidence in TfSE and feel able to support the delivery of our collective vision of a more productive, healthier, happier and more sustainable south east.

We are proud of our reputation for nurturing positive stakeholder relationships, our collaborative attitude and strong partnership ethos. Everyone at TfSE shares a responsibility to uphold our communications and engagement principles, ensuring that all of our stakeholders remain well informed.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the Sub-national Transport Body for the south east of England. We work across boundaries, think long term and advocate for bold action in the interest of our communities. We speak with one voice on the South East's strategic transport needs.

# Our stakeholders

- We maintain engagement with c. **3,400 individuals and 1,200 organisations**
- We manage **19 active stakeholder groups**, covering everything from task and finish technical steering groups to the partnership board and there are a further 7 potential stakeholder groups to be initiated in the first quarter of 2023/24.
- c. **500 individuals** are involved in one or more of our current stakeholder groups, representing c. **250 organisations or institutions**.
- **Engagement with the region's MPs remains our biggest challenge** and something we will continually strive to address.
- Awareness of and engagement with residents in the region is improving and is largely facilitated via our **positive relationships with town and parish councils** and with the support of our colleagues in **district and borough authorities**.
- We produce a **monthly TfSE newsletter** that goes to all stakeholders and manage content across **Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube** as well as the **TfSE website**.





# The principles of stakeholder engagement and communications at TfSE

**Know our stakeholders,** identifying those we most need to engage and communicate with and when. Strive to take our partners with us on our journey and encourage joint ownership of, and buy-in to, projects.

**Use effective mapping techniques** to ensure the most efficient use of our stakeholders time. Ensure stakeholders are well briefed and no stakeholder feels over-burdened, overwhelmed or unsupported in regard to TfSE projects

**Tailor engagement and communications activity** to demonstrate clear benefit for stakeholder investment in TfSE and target message and content according to the audience.

**Encourage interactive, lively discussion and be active listeners.** Nurture honest relationships and open conversation both F2F and online, to maintain open channels of communication, and improve stakeholder cooperation and enthusiasm

**Identify and manage risks to corporate reputation among stakeholders and the wider public** ensuring that we react proactively to any issues, concerns or emerging non-complimentary policy across the region.

**Provide leadership on stakeholder engagement and communication,** embedding these principles into every project and providing support to partner organisations where required.



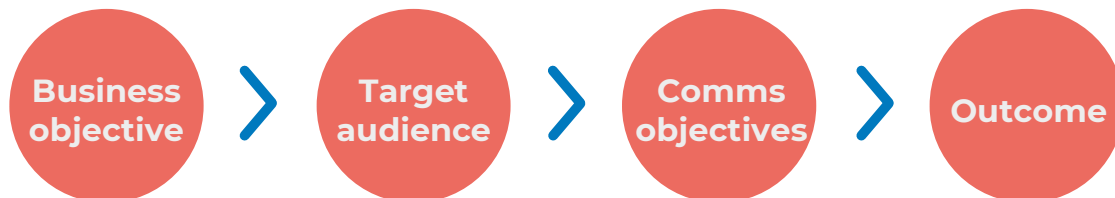
# Stakeholder mapping

# Managing our relationships

Transport for the South East is a partnership organisation with multiple external influences. It is a complex environment from an engagement and communications perspective, with audiences spanning every level from local residents and small businesses to government ministers. Each stakeholder group requires a different level of engagement and will often need to be communicated with in different ways.

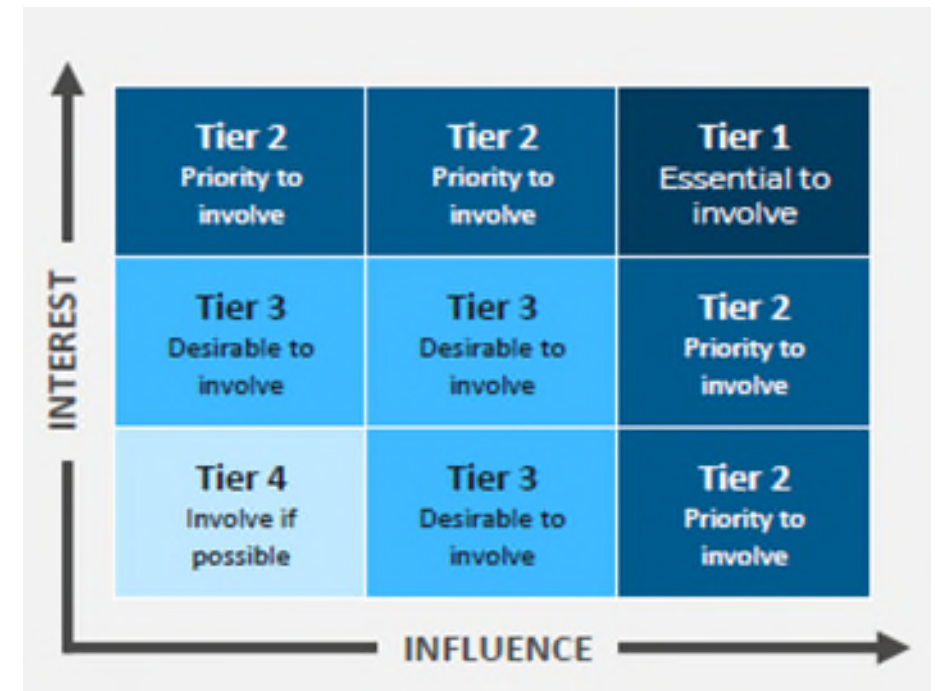
Every stakeholder is mapped according to their level of interest in TfSE and their ability to influence our work. We use a 4-tier mapping process, currently c.40% of our stakeholders are classified as Tier 1 (essential to involve) or Tier 2 (priority to involve), with the remaining stakeholders evenly split between Tier 3 (desirable to involve) and Tier 4 (involve if possible). Stakeholders may be classified in different tiers depending on the specific project or workstream they are involved in.

Jointly, we manage our external relationships through effective strategic communications: establishing clear business objectives, mapping relevant stakeholders and developing targeted communication and engagement plans with defined outcomes.



We are currently reviewing our stakeholder groups and assessing levels of engagement.

As TfSE has grown as an organisation so have our stakeholder lists and with them the number of stakeholder groups. We need to review these on a regular basis in order to avoid stakeholder fatigue from attending too many meetings or receiving too many updates.



# Our communications channels

	<b>Tier 1</b> <b>Essential to involve</b>	<b>Tier 2</b> <b>Priority to involve</b>	<b>Tier 3</b> <b>Desirable to involve</b>	<b>Tier 4</b> <b>Involve if possible</b>
Comms and engagement method	<p>As appropriate, involvement in SPB, Transport Forum (and/or working groups), Senior Officer Group</p> <p>Personalised email or phone contact</p> <p>Access to senior team</p> <p>1:1 briefings</p> <p>'Connections' newsletter</p>	<p>Regular email or phone contact</p> <p>Transport Forum working groups</p> <p>1:1 briefings if unable to attend workshops</p> <p>Access to senior team</p> <p>'Connections' newsletter</p>	<p>Email</p> <p>Transport forum working groups</p> <p>Raise interest through media and social media</p> <p>Access to TfSE comms and engagement managers</p> <p>'Connections' newsletter</p>	<p>Email</p> <p>Raise interest through media and social media</p> <p>'Connections' newsletter</p>

As well as targeted communication and engagement activities, all interested parties have access to TfSE news and updates via:

- [transportforthesoutheast.org.uk](http://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk)
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter
- 'Connections' newsletter (distributed to entire stakeholder database)
- Blog posts (on our own or partner websites)

In addition, we use Tractivity surveys to gather feedback and views on recent TfSE events and to gather information / data from stakeholders.

# Stakeholder engagement & communications action plan: April 23 – March 24

# Our priorities

As a communications and stakeholder engagement team this year we will support the delivery of the wider TfSE priorities as set out in the business plan for 2023-24 by:

1. Promoting the work of TfSE and its partners and ensuring all communications are **engaging, informative and accessible**
2. Continuing to build an **engaged database of stakeholders** who support the TfSE vision
3. **Increasing positive social engagement** with our partner organisations including developing social media connections with local authorities
4. Demonstrating through our communications activities that with our partners we are **speaking with one voice for the region**
5. Continuing to **strengthen our relationships** with the Department for Transport, National Highways, Network Rail, TfL and Active Travel England
6. Refreshing our database to **comply with GDPR** standards
7. Developing and **strengthening our relationships with MPs** and their officers through regular engagement and making better use of existing engagement opportunities such as; Early Day Motions, Westminster Hall debates, written parliamentary questions, adjournment debates, oral questions, All-Party Parliamentary Groups.
8. Ensuring all **communications are relevant and targeted** reducing the risk of overwhelming our stakeholders

Activity	Channels/tactics	Audience	Stakeholder engagement & communication priority	When
Identify and promote good news stories that demonstrate the work of TfSE and the benefits it brings to the region	Media releases, newsletters, social media	All stakeholders	1, 2, 3	Ongoing
Support the technical team with the production of written evidence (e.g. strategies and studies) ensuring they are appropriate for the intended audience are accessible and where possible are written in plain English.	Following TfSE style guide and sharing style guide with consultants, following principles of 'writing with clarity and impact' training and web/document accessibility courses.	TfSE team, consultants	1, 4	Ongoing
Support the technical team with the development of relevant stakeholder groups, helping them to grow and establish engaged and active stakeholder lists for each of their projects	??	TfSE technical team	2, 3, 5, 6, 7	Ongoing
Maintain an accessible and current web presence for TfSE			1, 4, 8	Ongoing
Maintain a GDPR compliant database of interested stakeholders			2, 5, 6, 7, 8	Ongoing
Carry out a stakeholder survey to establish a sentiment baseline		All stakeholders	2, 3, 5, 8	Annually
Review of existing stakeholder groups and Transport Forum		All stakeholder groups	2, 5, 6, 8	Q1
Promote publication of the final strategic investment plan	TfSE website, social media, media release, newsletter, F2F engagement with stakeholders including DfT and MPs.	MPs, LTAs, media (trade and local)	2, 3	Q1
Support the development and promotion of a fully accessible platform to host resources for the Regional Centre of Excellence	TfSE website	LTAs, STBs, DfT	1	Q2
Plan and deliver a regional event promoting the work of TfSE		All stakeholders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Q3
Develop and publish business plan for 2024-25	TfSE website, Partnership Board meeting	All stakeholders	1, 3, 4, 5	Q4
Develop and publish annual report for 2023-24	TfSE website	All stakeholders	1, 3, 4, 5	Q4

Priorities: 1.Promote the work of TfSE and its partners ensuring all communications are engaging, informative and accessible, 2. Continue building a **engaged database of stakeholders** who support the TfSE vision, 3. **Increase positive social engagement** with our partner organisations including developing social media connections with local authorities, 4. Demonstrate through our communications activities that with our partners we are **speaking with one voice for the region**, 5. Continue to **strengthen our relationships** with the Department for Transport, National Highways, Network Rail, TfL and Active Travel England, 6.Refresh our database to comply with GDPR standards, 7.Develop and strengthen our relationships with MPs and their officers through regular engagement, 8. Ensure all communications are relevant and targeted reducing the risk of overwhelming our stakeholders

# Measuring success



# Monitoring stakeholder growth



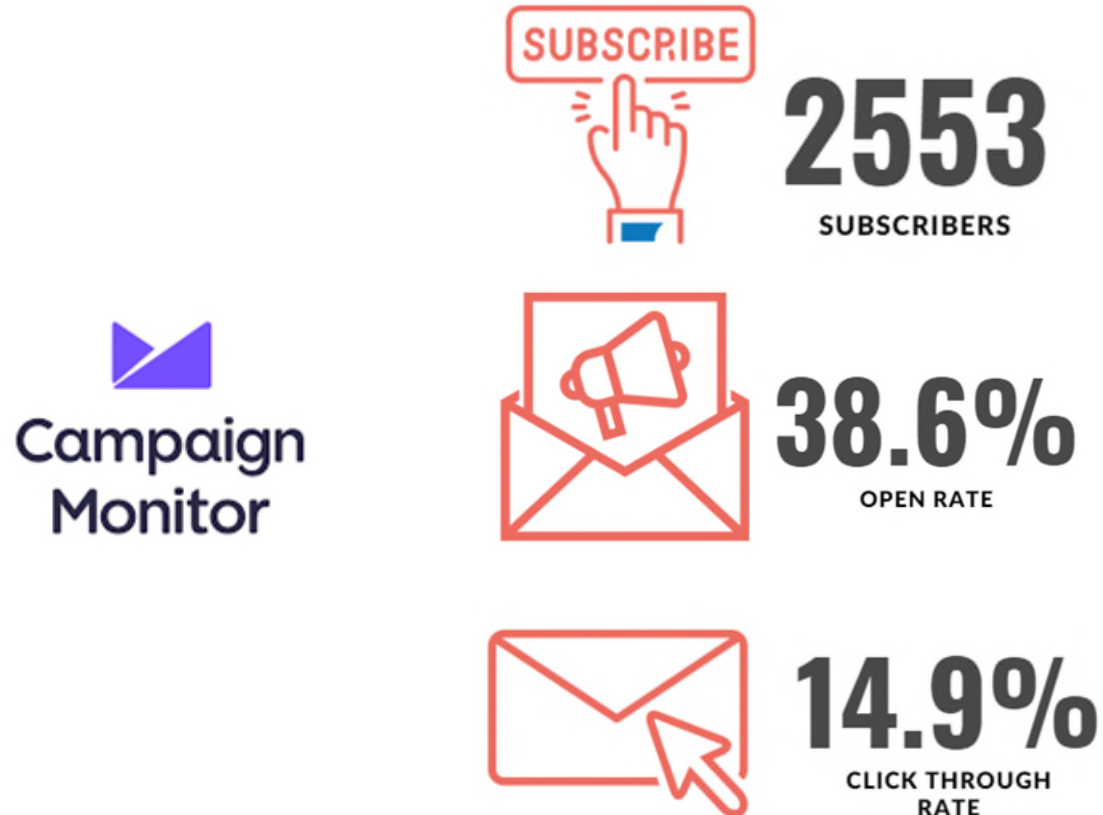
We maintain a list of active stakeholders to ensure engagement remains constant. By regularly updating our stakeholder lists and keeping them engaged with regular updates and two-way conversations we gain a greater understanding of their objectives and overall goals.

It is our ambition to continually grow stakeholder engagement by keeping them updated and informed about the things that matter to them.

#### **In the next financial year, we will;**

- Refresh our stakeholder database to ensure that we continue to meet GDPR requirements
- Lead a review of the stakeholder meeting structure including the role and format of the transport forum
- Undertake a sentiments / satisfaction survey to establish a baseline set of data

# Monitoring engagement - newsletter



Using Campaign Monitor we issue a monthly newsletter to all stakeholders updating them on our work programme and project progress.

As required, we also issue bespoke newsletters providing targeted communication around specific projects.

#### In the next financial year we will;

- Segment our stakeholder lists to ensure our communications are targeted
- Continue to grow our subscriber lists
- Maintain or improve our open and click through rates
- Ensure our newsletters consistently surpass industry standards

According to the [Ultimate Email Marketing Benchmarks for 2022](#) the average open rate for newsletters in the Government & Politics sector is 19.4% and the click-through rate is 2.8%.

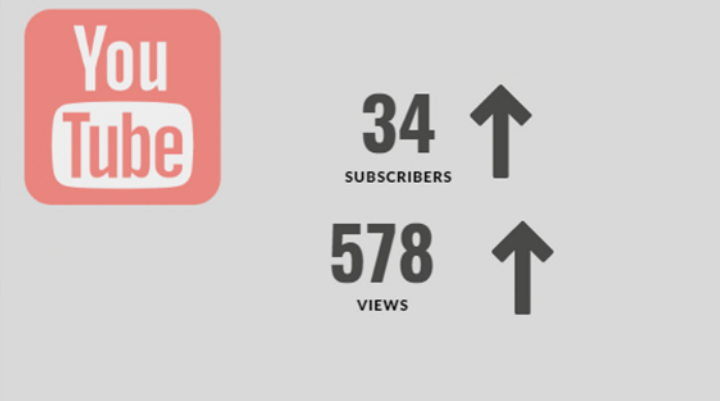
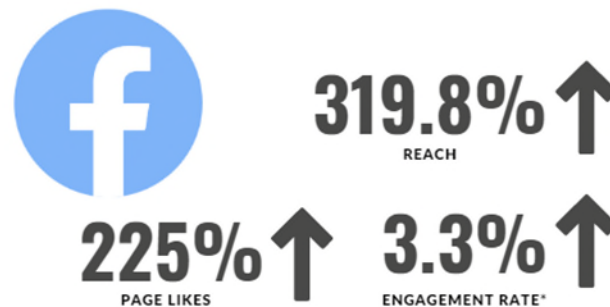
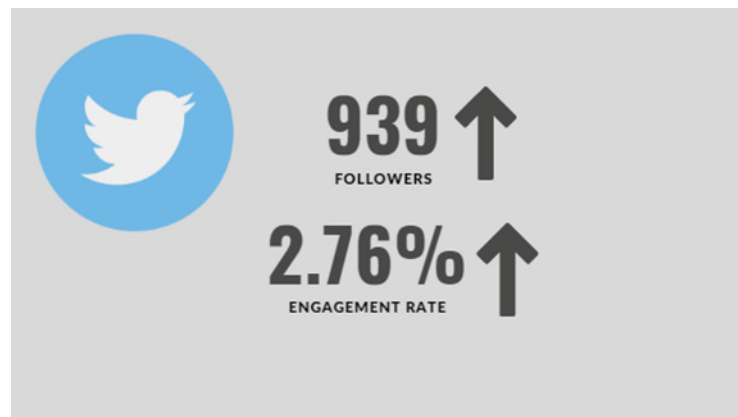
# Monitoring engagement – social media

By looking back over the last six months and measuring engagement in our communications activities we can see how our engagement has changed and identify the topics that matter most to our stakeholders.

Delivering more of the content that our stakeholders are interested in will support continual engagement of active stakeholders.

## In the next financial year, we will;

- continue to grow our followers/subscribers across all platforms,
- increase engagement, and in particular increase positive engagement in our posts and the work that we do,
- connect with district & borough authorities across the region.



Hot topics: Strategic Investment Plan consultation, highways investment

\*Based on last 90 days vs 90 days prior

**Hot topics:** Strategic Investment Plan consultation, highways investment and active travel.