

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

Date of meeting: **30 October 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**

---

***RECOMMENDATION:***

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

---

**1. Introduction**

1.1 This paper provides an update on communications and engagement activity undertaken since the last board meeting, including support provided to technical projects, the induction of new political representatives and recent and upcoming events.

**2. Recent communications and engagement activity**

2.1 An MP engagement plan has been developed and several meetings have taken place and are planned with the region's MPs.

2.2 We continue to support the planning and implementation of communication and engagement activity across the technical work programme, including the establishment of an overarching engagement plan to support the projects being taken forward under the new call off contract. We have also led the engagement activity around the review of the Transport Forum.

2.3 We continue to deliver against the objectives set in the 2023/24 communications and engagement plan, with activity supported by web content and social media coverage.

**3. Ongoing stakeholder engagement**

3.1 Engagement work is ongoing in relation to our additional work streams, with stakeholder meetings held for the bus back better, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, future mobility, decarbonisation and active travel projects. We continue to work with the lead consultants for each project to develop and support further engagement opportunities as the projects progress.

3.2 A virtual meeting of the Universities group was held on 9th October 2023. This meeting focused on the future role, aims and objectives of the group and a revised Terms of Reference was agreed.

3.3 The private sector funding and finance stakeholder group met on 9th October 2023 at the Arup offices in London. The group explored topics of shared interest and focused on identifying the future role, aims and objectives of the group. A revised Terms of Reference was agreed.

3.4 We have been supporting the engagement activity around the review of the Transport Forum and presented our recommendation to the Audit & Governance Committee and then the Transport Forum earlier this month.

3.5 We have recently undergone a website refresh and work is ongoing to develop an accessibility statement for the Transport for the South East (TfSE) website.

3.6 We have worked closely with the consultant team to create Policy Position Statements, which set out how we will deliver the SIP's global policy interventions. More information can be found in Agenda Item 8.

3.7 Briefings have been provided for new Board members, new stakeholders and new organisational contacts as and when required.

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

### 4.1 Previous events/speaker slots

- 3<sup>rd</sup> July – Rail Industry Association. Rupert Clubb spoke at this event.
- 19<sup>th</sup> September – Connecting the South East. Rupert Clubb, Mark Valleley, Sarah Valentine, Katie Lamb and Benn White all spoke at this event.
- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Gatwick Transport Forum; Katie Lamb speaking
- 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Stakeholder Management conference; Lucy Dixon-Thomson speaking
- 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Highways UK; Rupert speaking on the funding models for local roads panel

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

### Future events/speaker slots

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 – Rail Industry Association; Rupert speaking
- 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport; Mark Valleley will be speaking.

- 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Joint STB event

## **5. Connecting The South East**

5.1 The event took place at the Amex Stadium in Brighton on 19 September and saw nearly 200 delegates attend from across the region. Transport Minister Richard Holden attended and gave a keynote speech. The minister also spent time privately with TfSE Chair, Councillor Keith Glazier and gave a press interview to Sussex World. The programme of events included panels and presentations featuring a variety of contributors including Network Rail, Active Travel England, Great British Railways, Brighton and Hove Buses, RAC Foundation and the Department for Transport.

5.2 The event received media coverage on BBC Radio Sussex, on the Sussex World website and in the weekly local newspapers across Sussex. Throughout the day, the TfSE social media platforms (Facebook, X/Twitter and LinkedIn) were regularly updated with content from the conference. This has seen a significant uptick in our social media engagement in the last few weeks. One social media posting from the event was shared by Transport Minister Richard Holden.

5.3 We created a lot of our own valuable media on the day (with the assistance of a videographer) including video pieces from the Minister and many others who endorsed our work and acknowledged the importance of the south-east to the national economy. We have also created a 90-second video from the day which showcases the event brilliantly and is available to watch on the TfSE website.

## **6. The TfSE Podcast**

6.1 September saw the launch of The TfSE Podcast. This monthly podcast will cover issues and matters of interest to our community and the wider audience. The podcast is available on the TfSE website and also on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Hosted by Tia Shelley, our Comms and Public Relations Assistant (who is also an apprentice), the first episode features a conversation with Councillor Keith Glazier and Rupert Clubb. Future episodes will cover the subjects of active travel, electric vehicles and hydrogen.

## **7. MP Engagement**

7.1 We are undertaking a programme of engagement with MPs across our region. Led by Duncan Barkes, our Communications and Public Affairs Manager, MPs are being offered a virtual or face-to-face meeting with Councillor Keith Glazier and Rupert Clubb to hear about specific plans relevant to their constituency. Meetings to date have included Ashford MP Damian Green, North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale and Portsmouth North MP Penny Mordaunt.

7.2 Future meetings are planned with Gosport MP Dame Caroline Dinenage, Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling, Chatham MP Tracey Crouch, Gillingham and Rainham MP Rehman Chishti and Rochester and Strood MP Kelly Tolhurst. This programme of MP engagement will continue in 2024 until a general election is called.

## **8. Conclusion and recommendations**

8.1 In conclusion, we will continue to keep our communications and engagement activities under review following the priorities and objectives outlined in the communication and engagement plan.

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

### **RUPERT CLUBB**

Lead Officer

Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Duncan Barkes

Tel. No. 07871 107027

Email: [duncan.barkes@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:duncan.barkes@eastsussex.gov.uk)