

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

Date of meeting: **30 October 2023**

By: **Chair of the Transport Forum**

Title of report: **Transport Forum Update**

Purpose of report: **To summarise the Transport Forum meetings of 04 September 2023 and 19 October 2023 and inform the Board of the Transport Forum’s recommendations.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the recent meetings 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 meetings of the Transport Forum.

1.2 The first meeting took place virtually on Monday 04 September 2023 and was attended by 22 members of the Forum.

1.3 The second meeting was held virtually on Thursday 19 October 2023 and was attended by 15 members of the Forum. This was an extraordinary meeting to inform the Forum of the Audit and Governance Committee’s recommendations for the future of the Transport Forum.

2. Meeting of 04 September 2023

Regional Active Travel Strategy

2.1 The forum were introduced to the purpose behind commissioning the Regional Active Travel Strategy. The forum heard how and who we will engage with to develop the strategy. The timescales, programme and stages of work were also outlined.

2.2 This is an engagement rich project and we will ensure views and options are considered as the work develops. This is only the first phase of the project and at this stage there is a need to work with core stakeholders to identify strategic gaps. However, as the strategy progresses to the next phases and looks at infrastructure development etc, then wider engagement will take place with other groups.

2.3 Forum members discussed the presentation and queried when and how some groups would be engaged within the process:

- We confirmed Sustrans and Active Travel England (ATE) have been invited to join the steering group. Transport Action Network (TAN) have also been invited onto the Steering Group to represent cycling and other interest groups. Cycling UK will be engaged in subsequent phases of the project, which will be looking more at specific schemes.
- Parish and Town Councils and county access forums are likely to be engaged in subsequent phases of the project and in the meantime can continue to engage via their local authority representative on the steering group.
- It was noted that Parish Councils often have rich knowledge of rights of way and land ownership etc. It was also noted the work is regionally strategic, not local, at the current time.
- It was suggested that freight operators (via Logistics UK freight council meetings) could be engaged.
- It was confirmed cross boundary engagement will take place which will include TfL when relevant.

State of the Region Report

2.4 The Forum were introduced to the State of the Region report and the key information contained within the report on economy, society and environment. This will be a useful tool to monitor, measure success and help understand the impact of Transport for the South East's (TfSE) work in the region.

Technical Programme Updates

2.5 The Forum received updates on the technical work programme including the transport strategy, electric vehicle charging strategy, decarbonisation, future mobility, bus back better and the freight and logistics strategy.

2.6 It was noted board members are aware of the Transport Select Committee's recent report to Government which advised Government to prioritise strategic road maintenance over enhancements.

2.7 The Forum heard that the delivery action plan contains the schemes in the SIP, and that stakeholders were consulted and feedback considered as part of the SIP development. The Forum noted schemes are ultimately dependent on funding (mainly from Government) so in many cases, the full schemes are constructed in phases to take account of funding streams.

3. Meeting of 19 October 2023

Transport Forum Review Outcome

3.1 The Forum considered the recommended proposal for the future operation of the Transport Forum. The details of this proposal can be found in Agenda Item 7.

3.2 Comments about the practicality of holding in-person meetings instead of virtual meetings were noted, as well as whether hybrid meeting options should be considered. It was confirmed that any location for an in-person meeting will be central and well-connected, however, the Secretariat will keep the format of these meetings under review.

4. Summary of forum comments for the Board

4.1 Forum members were keen to ensure that appropriate organisations were going to be engaged with as part of the Regional Active Travel Strategy. All comments have been taken on board by the team working on this project.

4.2 The Transport Forum members endorsed the recommended proposal for the future operation of the meetings. Comments about the practicalities of some attendees travelling to face-to-face meetings have been noted and the Secretariat will keep the format and location of the new Transport Forum meetings under review.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Board note the content of the meetings and the comments of the Transport Forum.

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Transport for the South East

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