

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

Date of meeting: **29 January 2024**

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

Title of report: **Lead Officer’s Report**

Purpose of report: **To update the Board on the recent activities of Transport for the South East**

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***RECOMMENDATION:***

**The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the activities of Transport for the South East between October - December 2023.**

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**1. Introduction**

1.1 The focus of work for Transport for the South East (TfSE) in the last quarter has been on focussed on the thematic projects and activities contained within the board pack including the transport strategy refresh work.

1.2 The drafting of the annual business plan 24/25 has been completed and following board approval in December has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). The annual report for 23/24 drafting is underway and will be presented to the Partnership Board at the next meeting.

**2. National Policy**

2.1 The King’s Speech contained a pledge for investment in better connections in England. The King announced the Draft Rail Reform Bill, which would provide the legal framework to set up Great British Railways (GBR). An announcement was also made for plans to introduce new legal frameworks to support the development of emerging industries, such as self-driving vehicles.

2.2 The Autumn Statement saw the Chancellor announce a long-term cash freeze in investment spending.

2.3 The Government also announced their plans to amend HS2 to reflect the changing business case and their plan to transform transport through Network North.

**3. Work of Transport for the South East**

3.1 As outlined above, the 14 projects have gone through the call off contract. 3 have been completed with 5 in the pipeline. Completed projects’ themes include freight and planning and the transport strategy refresh scoping and mobilisation.

3.2 The SIP delivery plan has been well received and we are currently offering our delivery partners the opportunity to test out the story map function.

3.3 Work has also begun on the refresh of the transport strategy.

#### Joint STB Work

3.4 The joint STB chief executives met in November and were joined by officials from DfT.

3.5 As previously identified, all the STBs are also collaborating on a variety of different projects, those involving TfSE are outlined below:

- TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) joint work on producing a decarbonisation toolkit
- 7 STBs working on alternative fuelling station locations for road freight vehicles
- 7 STBs working jointly on decarbonisation

3.6 All projects are proceeding well, and more information can be found in the technical programme update report - Agenda Item 14.

#### Events

3.7 Highways UK took place on 18 October 2023. TfSE spoke on a panel - Roads as catalysts: Unleashing local transformative growth through strategic investment.

3.8 Work is underway on the upcoming National STB conference in February 2024.

#### South East Rail Partnership

3.9 TfSE, TE and EEH chairs wrote to the Secretary of State on 08 December seeking out a nominated representative of the Department to join the Partnership.

3.10 A response to the letter was received on 22 December from Minister Merriman. The letter commended the proactive approach and commitment to working closely with Government.

3.11 The Wider South East Rail Partnership meetings have now been established and are in the calendar. The first will take place on 9 February 2024. An update from the meetings will be presented to the Board.

#### TfSE Team

4.1 Keir Wilkins, Head of Programme and Policy started on 01 December on secondment from DfT.

4.2 Jaimie McSorley, Engagement Manager started 13 December and Joshua Jiao, Analysis Manager started 18 December.

### **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

5.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the activities undertaken by TfSE between October - December 2023.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

**Lead Officer**

**Transport for the South East**

Contact Officer: Jessica Lelliott

Tel. No. 07701 394894

Email: [Jessica.Lelliott@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk](mailto:Jessica.Lelliott@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk)