

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: **Technical Programme Progress Update**
Purpose of report: **To provide a progress update on the ongoing work to deliver the technical work programme set out in the 2023/24 business plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress with the work to implement the regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy;**
 - (2) Note the progress with the work to develop a regional active travel strategy;**
 - (3) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE’s future mobility strategy;**
 - (4) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE’s freight logistics and gateways strategy; and**
 - (5) Note the progress with the joint work on decarbonisation.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the delivery of a number of elements of the Transport for the South East (TfSE) technical work programme.

2. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

2.1 In March 2023, the Partnership Board approved TfSE’s regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) strategy. Following on from the publication of the strategy and accompanying action plan, TfSE has identified a number of tasks to commence delivery of the action plan.

2.2 Work has recently been completed on developing a forecasting methodology that will be used to help assess the future impact on a public charging infrastructure network from vehicle fleets across the TfSE area. Following on from the development of this methodology, TfSE has recently commenced the process for delivering a series of forecasts that will look to understand the additional demand that vehicle fleet operations could place on the south east’s future publicly available

charging network. A further update on the development of this forecasting activity will be shared with the Partnership Board in due course.

2.3 The next meeting of TfSE's regional EV Charging Infrastructure Forum will take place on Tuesday 23 January. This forum has been a successful platform for bringing together different organisations from across the south east, providing members with the opportunity to develop strong working relationships between members and has allowed attendees to share best practice with one another on how potential issues regarding EVCI rollout can be mitigated. A series of presentations were delivered to attendees which provided regional and national insight regarding the rollout of EV charging infrastructure.

2.4 Transport for the North (TfN) are currently in the process of rolling out the EVCI Visualisation Tool that they have developed to other STBs. The tool provides users with localised information on projected electric vehicle uptake and charging infrastructure requirements. TfSE will be the first STB to receive a version of this tool and following roll out, the national data sets that support the tool will be regularly updated by TfN. The process of sharing access to the tool with local authority officers in the TfSE area will take place in the early spring, through a training workshop facilitated by TfSE and TfN.

2.5 A further update on the progress of TfSE's work on EVCI will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in May 2024.

3. Regional Active Travel Strategy

3.1 As reported to the Board in October 2023 work began on the development of TfSE's Regional Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan (RATSAP) in July 2023, with the work due to be completed by July 2024.

3.2 The aim of the RATSAP is to make walking, wheeling, and cycling an attractive, accessible, and realistic choice for more journeys undertaken across the TfSE area. The strategy will complement the work being undertaken by the local transport authorities (LTAs) through the delivery of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

3.3 To date the RATSAP Steering Group has held three outcome-driven meetings. The Steering Group is comprised of representatives from each of the 16 constituent LTAs, as well as national and strategic partners including Active Travel England, Homes England, National Highways, Network Rail, Sustrans, and Transport Action Network. The project team has also worked with all 16 LTAs to gather data for the strategy's evidence base.

3.4 During the last 3 months the project team has produced the first of three Technical Reports which is the Evidence Base Report. The draft of this report was reviewed by Steering Group members in December and revisions for the final version of the report are underway.

3.5 In the coming three months, the project team will produce two further technical reports. These are the Strategic Network Identification Report and Scheme

Prioritisation Report. An Engagement Summary Report will also be produced as part of this project.

4. Future Mobility Strategy

4.1 An in person meeting of TfSE's Future Mobility Forum was held on 15 November 2023. The theme for the meeting was alternative fuels. There was a presentation from Hydrogen Sussex on the use of hydrogen, as well as a presentation from TfSE about our ongoing electric vehicle charging infrastructure workstream. The meeting also featured a workshop for initial engagement on future mobility priorities within our Transport Strategy Refresh. This involved the attendees working in smaller groups of representatives from the public, private, and third sectors about transport challenges and opportunities in the south east.

4.2 We are currently in discussions with other STBs about joint pieces of work in the coming year on mode propensity, mobility hubs, and DDRT. A further update on the progress of the work on future mobility will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in May 2024.

5. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

5.1 A final technical report has been completed for the TfSE lorry parking study which is presented to the Board in a separate item on the agenda.

5.2 A mapping tool to identify current and future alternative recharging and refuelling sites for HGV vehicles along the strategic and major road network will be trialled with a number of local transport authorities during January and February 2024. It is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of March 2024 and ready to be rolled out in April 2023. An update on the progress of this work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in May 2024.

5.3 The first Wider South East Freight Forum was held on 7 December 2023. It was held in conjunction with England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Transport East (TE) to take forward common actions identified as part of the freight and logistics strategies that have been developed in the three areas.

5.4 The meeting had 35 attendees from the freight and logistics sector, businesses and local authorities from across the region. A discussion was held to identify the topics the members would like to discuss further at future meetings, and some priorities were identified. These will now inform a work programme that will be developed in time for the next meeting in March 2024. An update on the progress of this work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in May 2024.

5.5 Two of three freight related studies have now been commissioned through the technical call off contract; the study investigating the potential for short sea shipping and the study reviewing the level of warehousing provision in the region. Both are due to be completed in Spring 2024. A proposal for the programme of work to address public sector freight blindness is in development with an expected start date of February 2024. A study on the potential for greater intermodal transfer of freight

from road to rail is due to commence in April 2024. An update on the progress with the freight forum and the study work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in May 2024.

6. Decarbonisation

6.1 As reported to the Board in October 2023 the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021, places a requirement on local transport authorities to identify how their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will deliver ambitious, quantifiable carbon reductions in transport to achieve net zero emissions.

6.2 TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) are working collaboratively to develop a Carbon Assessment Playbook. This will identify baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero in each of the LTAs in the three STB areas. Each LTA will then be able to assess the carbon reduction potential of the proposals to be included in their local transport plans. Work on the development of the tool was completed in November 2023 but further pilot testing has revealed some anomalies in the relative impact that different interventions will have on emissions. The DfT have also now come forward with comments on the tool, so further work will be needed to address both these issues. It is unlikely that the tool will be ready for release until February/March 2024.

6.3 There is still no firm date for the release of the draft guidance on the development of Local Transport Plans, which will incorporate guidance on how LTAs should assess the carbon reduction impacts of their proposals. It is now looking increasingly unlikely that the guidance will be issued before a general election. The STBs are of the view that we should proceed with the finalisation of the release of the tool as it is good practice for LTAs (the majority of who have declared climate emergencies) to be in a position to assess the carbon reduction impacts of the initiatives in their local transport plans.

7. Financial considerations

7.1 The decarbonisation work set out in this report been funded from the additional in-year funding awarded to TfSE in January 2022. The future mobility strategy, freight strategy, electric vehicle strategy implementation work, regional active travel strategy development are being funded from the DfT grant funding for 2023/24.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the progress that has been made with the various elements of the TfSE technical programme set out in this report. A further progress update report will be presented to the Board at their meeting in May 2024.

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