

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

Date of meeting: **13 May 2024**

By: **Chief 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, stakeholder meetings, media activity and recent and upcoming events.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

2.1 We continue to support the planning and implementation of communication and engagement activity across the technical work programme. We issued a press release announcing our Transport Strategy Refresh to the transport sector/local government press and a south east wide press release to local public facing media encouraging people to take part in our citizen's survey. We have led the communications work for the Wider South East Freight Forum working with our STB colleagues at Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH). The forum exists to raise awareness of the importance of freight and to discuss some of the issues facing the sector.

2.2 Our MP engagement plan continues with meetings with MPs across the region. These meetings act as a 'refresher' for MPs regarding Transport for the South East (TfSE) and are also used as an opportunity to highlight the interventions we are supporting in their constituencies.

2.3 We are delivering against the objectives set in the 2023/24 communications and engagement plan, with activity supported by web content, social media coverage, our monthly newsletter and podcast. Social media numbers are increasing. We are now using more video content to enhance further engagement.

2.4 We worked alongside our technical colleagues to pull together TfSE's Annual Report for 2023/24 which highlights our work during this period.

3. Transport Strategy Refresh stakeholder engagement

3.1 We have launched the first phase of our citizen engagement with our 'Your Voices' online survey gathering views on how transport priorities have changed since the publication of our Transport Strategy in 2020. We continue to plan for further public engagement as we develop the Transport Strategy Refresh to ensure co-design with the residents of the south east. Public engagement is supported by podcasts, and promotion through the press, social media and partnership working with our local authorities.

3.2 We have conducted dedicated engagement with representatives of protected characteristic groups. Their impact has allowed us to determine accessibility and inclusivity needs to create an equitable transport system.

3.3 We are in the middle of a programme of workshops with Senior Officers Group, working groups members and key external partners to co-develop the priorities for our emerging transport strategy refresh. Our Board will have the opportunity to engage with the refresh activity in an in-person event in July.

4. Transport Forum face-to-face event

4.1 We held our first in-person Transport Forum event, following the review in 2023, in London on April 11. With representatives from across key stakeholders including local transport authorities. The day provided increased networking opportunities in line with outcomes of the Forum review. There was also a dedicated session on the Transport Strategy Refresh to ensure the Forum's involvement in its development.

5. Transport Forum digital engagement

5.1 We have recorded and released our first 'Digital Q&A Transport Forum Webinar'. This is available 'on-demand' on TfSE's YouTube channel and features questions from the members of the Transport Forum being put to Councillor Keith Glazier and Chief Officer Rupert Clubb by Communications and Public Affairs Manager, Duncan Barkes. A further Q&A is scheduled for later this year.

6. Upcoming events and speaker slots

6.1 Future events/speaker slots

- 17 October, Highways UK, Birmingham: Rupert Clubb on 10.10am panel entitled: 'Optimising local transport: Connectivity, investment, and public accessibility'. Panel will include a rep from the Department for Transport.

7. The TfSE Podcast

7.1 Recent monthly podcasts have included an interview with the Co-founder and Chief Executive of Beryl Bike (e-bikes), a set of interviews from the STB Conference in Manchester and a podcast explaining why we are refreshing our Transport Strategy. Future podcast episodes will cover our Centre of Excellence and Active Travel.

8. MP engagement and public affairs

8.1 Councillor Keith Glazier and Chief Officer Rupert Clubb had a face-to-face meeting with Bexhill and Battle MP and Transport Minister Huw Merriman to discuss local transport matters.

8.2 Councillor Keith Glazier and Rupert had a virtual meeting with Tonbridge and Malling MP Tom Tugendhat where they discussed some of the local transport challenges facing Tom's constituency.

8.3 Rupert and Stuart Kistruck from Network Rail met Horsham MP Jeremy Quin to discuss the possibility of a new station in his constituency.

8.4 Councillor Keith Glazier and Rupert are scheduled to have a virtual meeting with Portsmouth South MP and Shadow Rail Minister Stephen Morgan on 30 April.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

9.1 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 for 2024/25, which we are also presenting to this Partnership Board.

9.2 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

Chief Officer

Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Duncan Barkes

Tel. No. 07871 107027

Email: duncan.barkes@eastsussex.gov.uk