

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

Date of meeting: **22 July 2024**

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

Title of report: **Chief Officer's Report**

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

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the activities of Transport for the South East between April-June 2024.

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of work for Transport for the South East (TfSE) in the last quarter has been on the thematic projects and activities contained within the board pack including the Centre of Excellence and Transport Strategy Refresh work.

1.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) grant allocation has been received. It was an increase on last year's allocation. Officers have revised the work plan due to a slight reduction in our ask that was set out within our Business Plan for 2024/25. More information can be found in agenda item 7.

National Policy

2.1 In May the deadline for the decision on the Lower Thames Crossing was extended from 20 June to 4 October.

2.2 The General Election took place on Thursday 4 July. Officers are working to understand how the election outcome will affect transport policy and local government policy and how this will impact the work of TfSE. Our public affairs manager is preparing new factsheets for the incoming MPs.

2. Work of Transport for the South East

3.1 The Centre of Excellence launch took place on Tuesday 18 June with officers. Local authority officers attended a site demonstration took place with two training sessions for officers in the afternoon.

3.2 Work is underway on the refresh of the Transport Strategy. The Your Voices Survey closed on the 2nd June receiving over 1500 responses from members of the public across the South East. This is a significant increase on the original Transport Strategy engagement. Further information on the work undertaken so far can be found within the board pack, agenda item 10.

Joint STB Work

3.3 The joint Sub-national Transport Body (STB) chief executives met in May and July and they were joined by officials from Department for Transport (DfT).

3.4 Transport East, Transport for the North and Midlands Connect spoke at the Transport Select Committee to scrutinise the draft Rail Reform Bill. TfSE provided written evidence to this and were able to ensure that our collective STB position on their being a larger role for STBs to have been heard.

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) have completed joint work on a Carbon Assessment playbook that will be launched in July.
- 5 STBs are working on identifying locations for alternative fuels for road freight vehicles
- 7 STBs working jointly on developing an approach to modelling freight movement within the UK
- 7 STBs working jointly on the development of a Common Analytical Framework that can be used to help develop business cases for transport scheme proposals.

3.6 All projects are proceeding well and more information can be found in the technical programme update report agenda item 16.

Events

Wider South East Freight Forum

3.7 An in person meeting was held in London on 20 June 2024. It was well attended with representatives from all the STBs (TfSE, Transport East and England's Economic Heartland), our local authority partners, representatives from the freight and logistics sector, port, river and rail freight operators, professional transport bodies, TfL and the DfT. The meeting focussed on decarbonisation issues faced by the freight and logistics sector. A number of opportunities were identified for the Freight Forum and STBs to take forward.

Wider South East Rail Partnership

3.8 A second meeting of this Partnership was held in person on 6th May 2024 in London. The meeting was well attended by TfSE, England's Economic Heartland (EEH), Transport East (TE), Department for Transport (DfT), Transport for London (TfL), Network Rail (NR) and Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT). A presentation was given about the value of passenger and freight rail to the wider south east region and the wider UK and outlined opportunities to lever wider rail industry reform to support wider policy ambitions for the south east. Discussions were held about how we can lever growth opportunities in the region to deliver wider government ambitions – noting that population, jobs, and the economy are growing faster in the wider south east than other parts of the country; and how the rail reform agenda offers opportunities for more devolution in which the Wider South East Partnership could play a role.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the activities undertaken by TfSE between April-June 2024.

RUPERT CLUBB
Chief Officer
Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: Jessica Lelliott

Tel. No. 07701 394894

Email: Jessica.Lelliott@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk