

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: **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 implementation of communication and engagement activity across the work programme. We received pleasing local and regional media coverage following our press releases promoting the ‘Your Voices’ survey as part of our Transport Strategy Refresh work. Transport for the South East (TfSE) continues to lead the communications work for the Wider South East Freight Forum working with our STB colleagues at Transport East and England’s Economic Heartland. Work continues revamping the TfSE website with a fresher design and enhanced content.

2.2 Our MP engagement plan was put on hold following the announcement of a general election and Parliament being dissolved.

2.3 The TfSE region now has 76 MPs following the general election. This is an increase of 5 as new constituencies were created following the boundary review. The political make-up of the TfSE region has changed significantly and is made up of the following: 29 Labour MPs, 28 Conservative MPs, 18 Liberal Democrat MPs and 1 Green MP. For the first time in over 5 years, we now have Liberal Democrat MPs in our region. This is also the first time in electoral history that our region has more Labour MPs than Conservative MPs. We will tailor our MP engagement programme accordingly. Over the next year, we will attempt some form of engagement with every MP in our region, to raise awareness about TfSE and build cross-party support for our work and the need to invest in the South East. Over the coming months we will offer

every new MP a briefing and send them the constituency factsheet detailing the Strategic Investment Plan interventions relevant to their area.

2.4 We are delivering against the objectives set in the 2024/25 communications and engagement plan, with activity supported by web content, social media coverage, our monthly newsletter and podcast. Social media numbers continue to increase. We are now using more video content to enhance further engagement.

### **3. Transport Strategy Refresh stakeholder engagement**

3.1 The first phase of our citizen engagement for the Transport Strategy Refresh closed on 2 June. Our 'Your Voices' online survey gathering views on transport priorities received over 1,500 responses during the 10-week survey period. 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. We have completed 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.

3.2 The survey received good promotion from MP's on their social media platforms and was also shared widely by local authorities across the region. We received good local newspaper, online and radio coverage about the survey which helped promote the TfSE brand to the wider public in the TfSE region.

3.3 We continue to reach out to local authority partners across to gather feedback on our engagement processes and how can improve engagement and communication with our Local Transport Authority officers.

### **4. Upcoming events and speaker slots**

#### **4.1 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. We are in the process of finding slots for other TfSE contributors.

### **5. The TfSE Podcast**

5.1 Recent podcast episodes have covered our Centre of Excellence and the importance of data in the transport sector. Future podcasts planned include Active Travel, The Solent Freeport and the Port of Dover.

### **6. MP engagement and public affairs**

6.1 The dissolution of Parliament took place on 30 May which means we paused our MP engagement activity until after the general election.

6.2 Prior to the general election announcement, Councillor Keith Glazier and Rupert Clubb had virtual meetings with Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan and Reading East MP Matt Rodda. The meetings were positive with both MPs requesting more

information from TfSE on various matters. Follow-up letters containing the requested information was sent before Parliament was dissolved.

6.3 We will have a significant number of new MPs in the TfSE region. This provides us with the opportunity to freshly engage with new names and faces to promote our work and evolution.

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

7.1 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.

7.2 The Partnership Board are recommended to note and agree the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since the last Board meeting.

**RUPERT CLUBB**  
**Chief Officer**  
**Transport for the South East**

Contact Officer: Duncan Barkes

Tel. No. 07871 107027

Email: [Duncan.Barkes@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk](mailto:Duncan.Barkes@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk)