

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 28 October 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 July-September 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 Transport Strategy Refresh and Centre of Excellence work.

2. National Policy

2.1 Local Transport Authorities have been asked to submit an expression of interest to Government in relation to devolution. TfSE continues to support Local Authorities and will work through this where appropriate.

2.2 Government have issued the Bus Bill in Parliament which proposes to improve bus services with the recent legislation focussing on increased powers for Local Authorities, including bus franchising, alongside enhanced partnerships and municipal ownership. TfSE will work with partners and Government to support bus improvements.

3. Work of Transport for the South East

3.1 Work on the Transport Strategy Refresh work continues at pace. The Task and Finish group which is formed of Board members have now met twice. The Task and Finish group provided steers on the five missions for the transport strategy and the route maps for each mission. Further information on the work undertaken so far can be found within the Board pack, agenda item 10.

3.2 The Board members met on Tuesday 3 September to attend a Business Planning workshop. The workshop came at the result of a request for ore involvement in the development cycle. Made up of two sections. The first was to ensure our Business Plan

will deliver on the government's missions and maximise the amount of funding we can receive for the region. The second focused on local authority objectives and pressures, and how TfSE can best support local authorities in response to this.

3.3 Board members raised a number of key points in the workshop: TfSE has a vital role in making the case for infrastructure investment; that the resilience and maintenance of the existing network is as important as new infrastructure; and the importance of achieving lower public transport fares and greater reliability. Board Members comments have been reflected in the draft Business Plan, which Board Members are asked to initially sign off. This draft Business Plan is attached in the Board pack, agenda item 6.

Joint STB Work

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

3.5 TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) have completed the joint work on a Carbon Assessment playbook which was officially launched on Friday 23 August.

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

- 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.

All projects are proceeding well and more information can be found in the technical programme update report agenda item 17.

Events

3.7 On the 10 September, Rupert Clubb, attended the Rail Industry Association London & South Summit. He spoke about TfSE's role in securing future investment in our rail network, through our Strategic Investment Plan, the newly formed Wider South East Rail Partnership, and our technical work on rail.

Wider South East Rail Partnership

3.8 TfSE has been working as part of the Wider South East Rail Partnership alongside EEH, TE and senior representatives from DfT, the Shadow Great British Railways (SGBR), Network Rail (NR) and TfL.

3.9 A Partnership meeting took place on 6 September 2024 in London. SGBR provided more information about the Shadow body's five priorities, including its focus on

passengers, unlocking delivery barriers, financial sustainability, designing the end state GBR organisation and appointing a chairperson.

In the interim, Network Rail will remain accountable for long term planning and this Partnership will be helpful in building its investment pipeline. Rail reform is not anticipated to delay investment decisions but future investments will be reviewed within the financial challenges that exist.

DfT discussed the National Transport Strategy explaining that it would align with wider initiatives, such as the Budget, Spending Review, and second railway bill, as well as other contextual considerations such as the National Highways strategy for roads. The timescale for the development of the Long Term Strategy for Rail will also be influenced by the timeline for the National Transport Strategy.

TfL shared its key priorities for rail investment including target mode share of 80% consisting of active travel and public transport use; unlocking housing in a sustainable way; productivity and job growth; and access to services and opportunities. Given this similarity between the priorities of TfL and the STBs it was agreed that we would work together more closely, particularly in the area of data sharing.

There would be significant resource implications for SGBR and DfT to work with individual combined and local authorities directly. As a result, it would be important to design a process from the outset to streamline this engagement and this Partnership is well positioned to contribute to this.

The STBs also explained that they are continuing to work on a position paper outlining the Wider South East Strategic Rail Priorities for their next meeting in December 2024. This will provide more detailed regional and local information to inform future collaboration and discussion between the STBs, SGBR, DfT, NR and TfL.

Wider South East Freight Forum

3.10 There have been no meetings of the Wider South East Freight Forum since the last Partnership Board meeting in July 2024. The next will be held virtually 14 November 2024 and the project team are in the process of finalising the agenda and speaker attendance. A further update on the agenda can be provided at the next Board meeting.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the activities undertaken by TfSE between July – September 2024.

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