

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: 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. 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 (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH).

2.2 We are continuing to contact all the new MPs in the TfSE region to offer a face-to-face or virtual meeting following the general election.

2.3 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 and infographics to enhance further engagement.

2.4 The Transport for the South East website has now been redesigned. We will launch the redesigned website at the October Partnership Board meeting.

3. Transport Strategy Refresh stakeholder engagement

3.1 Following the completion of the Your Voices survey earlier this year, the report was made public and shared with those respondents who had expressed a desire to be kept informed of public updates. The next stage of wider engagement for the public consultation on the draft Transport Strategy is in development.

3.2 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, and how TfSE working groups, forums and steering groups can be best structured to enhance engagement and value for participants.

4. Events and speaker slots

4.1 Past events

- Active City Leicester, 17 July – Katie Lamb spoke about the Regional Active Travel Strategy & Action Plan project.
- Urban Mobility Partnership Annual Summit, Liverpool, 5 September – Katie Lamb spoke on a panel about the integration of transport and land uses.
- Rail Industry Association Southern Conference, 10 September, Rupert Clubb spoke about TfSE's role in securing future investment in our rail network, through our Strategic Investment Plan, the Wider South East Rail Partnership, and our technical work.
- Highways UK, 16 October – 17 October, Rupert Clubb sat on a panel: Optimising local transport: Connectivity, investment, and public accessibility.
- Transport SMART Class, 10 October, Keir Wilkins spoke about the role of Sub-national Transport Bodies in a changing policy landscape.

4.2 Future events/ speaker slots

- Future Transport Forum, 22 January – 23 January 2025.
- STB Conference 28 February 2025.

5. The TfSE Podcast

5.1 Recent podcast episodes have covered our Transport Strategy Refresh and the challenges and opportunities the new government will face. Future podcasts planned include Healthy Streets, Buses and Accessibility.

6. MP engagement and public affairs

6.1 We have contacted every new MP in the TfSE region requesting an introductory meeting and have started to receive positive responses. This has taken time as Parliament was in recess for all of August and many MPs had yet to set up their offices and recruit staff.

6.2 Meetings have taken place to date with the following new MPs: Bexhill and Battle MP Dr Kieran Mullen (20 Sept), Chichester MP Jess Brown-Fuller (23 September), Guildford MP Zoe Franklin and Woking MP Will Forster (24 September).

6.3 There is a meeting scheduled on 19 November with Peter Lamb, the new MP for Crawley.

7. Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Plan

7.1 We continue to keep our communications and engagement activities under review following the priorities and objectives outlined in the Communications and Engagement Plan for 2024/25.

7.2 By completing the redesign of the TfSE website we have already achieved one of our key performance indicators as detailed in the Communication and Engagement plan for 2024/25.

7.3 We have exceeded our podcast listens 2024/25 target. In 2023/24 the podcast average listens were 50 per episode, our current listens per episode are over 100, with the August episode 'New Government opportunities and challenges' receiving 120 downloads.

7.4 Further progress has been made towards increasing our reach on social media to 2000 followers. TfSE have gained 102 new followers and over 6,500 new impressions on LinkedIn since April.

7.5 Our target of 2000 followers on Twitter have not progressed. We currently have 1,055 followers and we will continue to develop creative content to grow the numbers. We are confident the numbers will increase during the consultation for the Transport Strategy Refresh.

7.6 The success of our 'Your Voices' campaign, including over 1,500 responses and promotion from MPs and local councils across the TfSE region, will inspire future projects and how they gain engagement online.

7.7 By the end of 2024 we will have also held our two in-person Transport Forum events for the year, with increased membership and district and borough representation, strengthening our stakeholder relationships with these authorities.

8. Recommendations

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

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