

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 27 January 2025

By: Co-Chairs, Business Advisory Group

Title of report: Business Advisory Group

Purpose of report: To update the Partnership Board on the Business Advisory Group

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the recent work of the Business Advisory Group.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Business Advisory Group (BAG) was formed in October 2024. It is co-chaired by Vince Lucas and Daniel Ruiz. The group provides a business voice to support, advise and contribute to the Partnership Board.

2. Business Advisory Group – recent meetings

2.1 The BAG have met twice since the last Partnership Board meeting virtually.

2.2 The BAG members have finalised their terms of reference asking for there to be a specific focus for the group on economic growth. The members also recognised the importance of using the meeting to record outputs and an opportunity to hear each member's top transport related opportunities and challenges for business.

2.3 The BAG received an update on Transport for the South East (TfSE) noting the work of the draft Business Plan 2025/26, Centre of Excellence and the Transport Strategy Refresh consultation.

3. Business Advisory Group – Opportunities and Challenges

3.1 As set out within the Terms of Reference the meeting would allow each member to raise their top transport related opportunities and challenges for business. The following were identified:

- **Heathrow Western Rail Access** – a specific ask was given to TfSE to provide £10,000 to part-fund Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to conduct an economic refresh study and confirm TfSE's position on this challenge. Officials

are following up with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, along with Network Rail and DfT and will update the Partnership Board in March.

- **Transport-related social exclusion** – the BAG asked if TfSE could develop work on the impacts of poor transport links to health and economic deprivation. Officials highlighted Transport for the North’s work on transport-related social exclusion in England. This work offers a good initial evidence base, identifying parts of the TfSE region that suffer from poor transport connectivity and deprivation. Inclusion and integration has been identified as one of TfSE’s five missions in the Transport Strategy Refresh. If this is signed off by Government later in this year, this could be a good starting point for additional work.
- **Port of Dover** – EU entry exit system, awaiting implementation date. Impacts to the infrastructure, freight, tourism and local business.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the progress of the Business Advisory Group.

Daniel Ruiz and Vince Lucas
Co-Chairs – Business Advisory Group
Transport for the South East

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