

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 27 January 2025

By: Chair of Transport Forum

Title of report: Advisory Panel and Transport Forum Update

Purpose of report: To update the Partnership Board on the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel.

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the recent work of the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel.

1. Introduction

1.1 The fourth meeting of the Advisory Panel took place on 9 January.

1.2 The second in-person meeting of the Transport Forum for 2024 took place on 18 November in Southampton. On 30 January another in person Transport Forum event will be held focussed solely on the draft Transport Strategy.

2. Transport Forum

2.1 The second in person Transport Forum event of 2024 took place on November 18. The Forum took place in Southampton to reflect feedback that we should host more events in the Transport for the South East (TfSE) region, alongside London. The session had good attendance from regional partners including Network Rail, National Highways, local transport authorities and representatives from transport operators and user groups.

2.2 As part of the in-person event stakeholders had the opportunity to hear about the emerging draft Transport Strategy and to ask questions in response. Key themes from attendees were around ensuring accessible consultation materials and clarifying the weight of influence the Transport Forum would have during the consultation. TfSE officers clarified there would be a dedicated session for Transport Forum members, and this is due to take place on 30 January in London. In addition to this dedicated session, Transport Forum feedback will be considered as part of the final consultation report.

2.3 In the second session of the day, attendees were taken through the recent consultation on Devolved Powers and had the opportunity to give feedback. There was notably broad support in the room for many of the powers proposed by TfSE, however the need for some clarification emerged particularly where powers may align with similar powers held by local authorities, or where TfSE could act on their behalf.

Attendees felt that there was a role for TfSE as a statutory consultee in rail strategy and investment but not in day-to-day operations of the rail network.

3. Advisory Panel

3.1 In the meeting on 9 January the Advisory Panel provided feedback on from their thematic groups. The Advisory Panel noted that thematic groups were performing strongly, with good attendance from DfT policy officials.

3.2 The Advisory Panel discussed the Devolution White Paper. The Panel discussed possible rail powers and agreed that it would be helpful for TfSE to provide support to emerging authorities as this is an area where local authorities do not currently have powers.

3.3 The Advisory Panel also felt that TfSE had a key role in ensuring collaborative working between authorities, especially if different areas progress with devolution at different times.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Partnership Board note the work of the Transport Forum and Advisory Panel.

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