

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 27 January 2025

By: Chief Officer, Transport for the South East

Title of report: Communications and Stakeholder Engagement update

Purpose of report: To update the Partnership 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 Partnership Board meeting.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on communications and engagement activity undertaken since the last Partnership 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 Transport for the South East (TfSE) continues to support the implementation of communication and engagement activity across our technical work programme, and lead the communications work for the Wider South East Freight Forum, working with our Sub National Transport Body (STB) colleagues at Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH).

2.2 Our plan to contact all the new MPs in the TfSE region and offer a face-to-face or virtual meeting remains, and this will continue into the New Year.

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. Video content and infographics has helped to enhance our social media engagement as we continue to increase follower numbers, and this will also feature in our activity planned to support the Transport Strategy Refresh in 2025.

3. Transport Strategy Refresh stakeholder engagement

3.1 Our public consultation on the draft Transport Strategy began on 10 December. To support this, a number of engagement and communications activities are underway or are planned during the consultation period to March 7. As part of this, we have

created and distributed media packs to our local authorities and key partners to help us promote the consultation, and we continue with our own social media promotion. Bespoke podcasts are planned to support the consultation as well as emails to our regional MP's. To engage the wider public, we are also hosting a number of roadshows across the region, where TfSE officers will staff an exhibition stand and answer questions from the public on the draft Transport Strategy,

4. Events and speaker slots

4.1 Past events

- East Sussex Association of Local Councils & West Sussex Association of Local Councils Joint Committee, Brighton, 4 November – Mark Valleley presented an update on the ongoing work at Transport for the South East.
- Transport Select Committee, Private Briefing, 27 November – Rupert Clubb attended alongside the other STB Chief Officers to provide a briefing on the role of STBs and the transport priorities of the different STB regions.

4.2 Future events/ speaker slots

- Future Transport Forum, 22 January – 23 January 2025.
- STB Conference 4 March – 5 March 2025.

5. The TfSE Podcast

5.1 Recent podcast episodes have covered our neighbouring STB partner, Transport East, and the challenges and opportunities within their region, the accessibility of the transport sector, and scheme development. Future podcasts planned include Healthy Streets, buses and our year ahead.

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 Since the last Partnership Board meetings have taken place with the following new MPs: Portsmouth North MP Amanda Martin (28 Oct), Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Kevin McKenna (28 Oct) Wokingham MP Clive Jones (18 Nov) and Surrey Heath MP Al Pinkerton (8 January). There are also a small number of meetings which have been cancelled at short notice which we are looking to reschedule.

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 We have exceeded our podcast listens target for 2024/25. We will continue to produce monthly podcasts and seek new and varied transport topics to cover that will be of interest to our audience in 2025.

7.3 Further progress has been made towards increasing our reach on social media to 2000 followers. TfSE have gained 30 new followers on LinkedIn since October and impressions on Facebook has increased by 284.

7.4 The success of our 'Your Voices' campaign, including over 1,500 responses and promotion from MPs and local councils across the TfSE region, has inspired the communications plan for our draft Transport Strategy.

8. Integrated National Transport Strategy Roadshows

8.1 As part of the Department for Transport's work to develop an Integrated National Transport Strategy for England, they plan to host roadshows in each STB region to capture the views of regional stakeholders. The Department for Transport have asked Transport for the South East's assistance in identifying key stakeholders. We expect the TfSE roadshow to take place in Brighton on 27 February, but we are waiting on final confirmation of this.

9. Recommendations

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

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