

**Report to:** Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

**Date of meeting:** 17 March 2025

**By:** Co-Chairs, Business Advisory Group

**Title of report:** Business Advisory Group

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

---

***RECOMMENDATION:***

**The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to review and comment on 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 met on Thursday 25 February virtually.

2.2 The BAG received an update on the recent Partnership Board meeting that took place in January, the Business Plan 2025/26, Centre of Excellence and the Transport Strategy Refresh consultation.

2.3 The BAG reviewed the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy Roadshow and how the business voice is a valuable input into the day. Representatives from the BAG will attend the roadshow, incorporating feedback from the group.

**3. Business Advisory Group – Opportunities and Challenges**

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

- **Alternative Fuels** – a challenge that has been identified by the group is implementing alternative fuels, which impacts different sectors. The BAG heard about the success of hydrogen buses in Crawley and opportunities for different types of fuel. The group discussed several factors which are impacting the use

of alternative fuels such as planning restrictions and storage of hydrogen. A case study is being prepared on the hydrogen buses. The group will review this topic again at future meetings and look to ensure this is a key topic for the upcoming Wider BAG meeting taking place in July.

- **Heathrow Western Rail Access** – TfSE have met with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and Network Rail to discuss the economic refresh study. TfSE have offered support with communication and speaking to officials.
- **Skills** – The current challenge of skills gaps was raised by several of the representatives on the BAG. Chambers of commerce raised awareness of the Local Skills Improvement Plans which they lead on to identify those gaps that colleges / providers should develop on.
- **Port of Dover** – EU entry exit system, awaiting implementation date. Impacts to the infrastructure, freight, tourism and local business. Heard the planning that Eurotunnel have implemented using a kiosk approach and AI for traffic modelling.
- **Buses** – challenges with the buses fare cap which has increased from £2, to £3 for a year, not all operators are using the fare cap due to the increase. Seeking better certainty on funding.
- **Freight** – Eurotunnel are looking at a piece of work to move more freight on to the railways, engaging with Network Rail.

#### **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**

**Contact Officer:** Jessica Lelliott

**Email:** [Jessica.Lelliott@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk](mailto:Jessica.Lelliott@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk)