

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 17 March 2025

By: Chief Officer, Transport for the South East

Title of report: Technical Programme Progress Update

Purpose of report: To provide a progress update on the ongoing work to deliver the technical work programme set out in the 2024/25 business plan

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- 1) Comment on the progress with the ongoing implementation of the Centre of Excellence;
- 2) Comment on progress with the work to implement the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy;
- 3) Comment on the progress with the delivery of the Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy;
- 4) Comment on the progress work on rail; and
- 5) Comment on the progress with work on decarbonisation.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the delivery of a number of elements of the Transport for the South East (TfSE) technical work programme.

2. Centre of Excellence

2.1 Development of the TfSE Centre of Excellence began in September 2023, and it was formally launched in June 2024. The platform was codesigned with local authority officers across the region and offers a wide range of resources including webinars, events, training, resources, and case studies. To date, the site has 275 registered users which include local authority officers, universities, Department for Transport (DfT), national agencies, and professional institutes.

2.2 To ensure the site continues to meet users' needs and requirements, a capability survey will be issued in April 2025 to assess the region's capacity and capability requirements. The results will help identify areas for bespoke support to be

commissioned in 2025/26 and will also be compared to last year's baseline in order to understand the impact and value that the platform has contributed.

2.3 The proposed programme of support and results of the monitoring and evaluation will be presented to the Partnership Board at their meeting in July 2025.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

3.1 As reported to the Partnership Board in January 2025, an initial pioneering piece of work has been completed which aimed to assess the impacts of the electrification of commercial vehicle fleets on a publicly available charge point provision. A follow-on project has recently commenced, which aims to develop a guidance framework for local transport authorities to support them with planning the roll out of EV charging infrastructure that will be more accessible to commercial fleet vehicles. This will include the development of case studies in Slough Borough Council and Brighton and Hove City Council areas. This work was started in December 2024 and is due to be completed in May 2025.

3.2 Work has also recently commenced on a 'state of the region' report that aims to establish the progress being made with the rollout of EV charging infrastructure across the TfSE area. The work will include engagement with Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to identify the key issues and challenges being faced with the rollout of future EV charging infrastructure. This intelligence will then be used to help inform TfSE's future work in this area. This piece of work is due to be completed by May 2025. A further update on TfSE's work on EV Charging Infrastructure roll out will be presented at the next Partnership Board meeting in July 2025.

4. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

4.1 Work is continuing on improvements to the Alternative Freight Fuel Infrastructure (ALFFI) tool developed by Midlands Connect, which ranks and evaluates potential locations for public HGV alternative recharging sites. The use of additional local data will enable a GIS map to be produced to show where these potential HGV recharging sites could be located in the TfSE area. Once this work has been completed TfSE officers will be engaging with our local authority transport and planning officers to demonstrate the application of the tool to help identify potential sites.

4.2 Another meeting of the Wider South East Freight Forum, which covers the TfSE, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East areas was held on 6 March 2025. The main focus of the meeting was on the issues faced by freight and logistics operators when planning for freight infrastructure with presentations on the early findings from the TfSE Warehousing Provision and Intermodal Rail Freight studies. There were also updates on the amended National Planning Policy Framework and the completed outputs from the DfT HGV Parking Task and Finish Group, including a paper on HGV parking facility standards, and guidance for planning applications for both local authorities and freight and logistics operators. Some members of the Forum are also participating in a Data Sharing Working Group which will look at ways in which freight and logistics operators and local authorities can share their freight data. This will help both parties in the preparation of evidence in support of infrastructure developments and the allocation of land required to support the logistics sector.

4.3 The first Freight Awareness Programme working group has been held to help identify both the type of content and training that the programme should develop. The

first meeting will take place in March 2025 and will have representatives from local authorities across TfSE, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East areas, Logistics UK, the Road Haulage Association and Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. The first needs assessment phase of the work is due to be completed in April 2025. A further update on TfSE's work on freight and logistics will be presented to the Partnership Board at their meeting in March 2025.

5. Rail

5.1 Work continues on the Intermodal Rail Freight Study project covering the TfSE area. A workshop to introduce the project was held in February 2025 with local authority transport, planning and economic development officers, local freight and logistics operators, Network Rail and the Great British Railway Transition Team. Following this, individual meetings are now taking place with stakeholders to discuss their further involvement going forward. The project is due to be completed in April 2025.

5.2 Work on the TfSE Rail Strategy will commence in April 2025. This will aim to develop a stronger evidence base with which to advise the Secretary of State, Great British Railways and the Office for Road and Rail and its partner local authorities on the rail priorities for the TfSE area. A further update on the progress of the work on rail will be given to the Partnership Board Meeting in March 2025.

6. Joint work on decarbonisation

6.1 As reported to the Partnership Board in January 2024, the Carbon Assessment Playbook, jointly created by the seven STBs, enables the baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero in each of the LTAs to be identified. Each LTA is then able to assess the carbon reduction potential of the proposed transport interventions included in their local transport plans. To help LTAs become more proficient in using the tool, a programme of 1-2-1 support is now underway to enable representatives from the LTAs to meet the consultant that developed the tool to ask any questions they may have about its use. This work will help identify potential enhancements to the tool to be undertaken in 2025-6, subject to the availability of funding. A further update on the progress of the development of the Carbon Assessment Playbook will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in July 2025.

7. Financial considerations

7.1 The work on the Centre of Excellence, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, freight, rail and decarbonisation set out in this report is being funded from the DfT grant funding for 2024/25.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Members of the Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the progress that has been made with the various elements of the TfSE technical programme set out in this report. A further progress update report will be presented to the Partnership Board at their meeting in July 2025.

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