

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 27 October 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 comment on the communications and engagement activity that undertaken since the last 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, and recent and upcoming events.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

2.1 Transport for the South East (TfSE) continues to use communication and engagement activity to support the implementation of our technical work programme and the promotion of the organisation with our audiences.

2.2 We are delivering against the objectives set in the 2025/26 Communications and Engagement Plan, with activity supported by website updates, social media coverage, and our monthly *Connections* newsletter.

2.3 The team has played a central role in supporting colleagues with the SIP refresh and development of the rail strategy, through combined engagement plans and the co-ordination of meetings for multiple officer groups and partnership board representatives.

3. Transport Strategy Refresh stakeholder engagement

3.1 We have supported colleagues over the summer on the refreshed Transport Strategy, developing a production timetable, proofing both the updated strategy and summary documents and liaising with the consultants who are producing it.

3.2 We have produced a communications plan for the launch of the strategy, should the board agree to adopt it. Plans include a social-media campaign, using examples of work and projects to illustrate each of the five missions, due to start in November.

4. Events and speaker slotsPast Events

4.1 In July, we hosted the first TfSE Business Advisory Group (BAG) summit in Guildford. Hosted by BAG reps Daniel Ruiz and Vince Lucas, the summit was an opportunity to bring together regional representatives from business and commerce.

4.2 The day focused around delegate discussions on three transport-related current and future challenges identified by the Business Advisory Group: access to international connectivity; energy availability; and rural transport.

4.3 TfSE is producing a report based on the feedback received from delegates and is producing a report to present to the DfT during the autumn.

Future events/speaker slots

4.2.1 In October, Rupert Clubb will deliver the keynote speech at the Transport Smart Class conference in London about devolution and the impact on local bus services.

5. MP engagement and public affairs

5.1 We met Sojan Joseph, MP for Ashford, in Westminster to introduce TfSE and discuss key issues within his constituency including the international rail link.

5.2 MP engagement was lower than usual due to Parliament's summer recess. In Autumn we will look to engage all our region's MPs on the refreshed Transport Strategy, should the Board agree to adopt it, which will help to raise our profile.

6. Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Plan

6.1 Following the approval of the 2025/26 Communications and Engagement Plan in the July board meeting, we will follow the priorities and objectives outlined and monitor outcomes and progress of our communications and engagement activities.

6.2 We are monitoring devolution and local government reorganisation, and the impacts that may have on our region. We are planning to produce a document that sets out TfSE's role, impact and how our work helps to support local authorities.

6.3 Over the months ahead, we will engage with local authority officers on plans for the Centre of Excellence, in line with successful engagement earlier this year, to give us a better understanding of the ways we can support them in 2026-27.

6.3 We are looking at ways we can utilise our social media channels over the autumn, particularly supporting the Transport Strategy. Since March, we have seen a 2.9% increase in followers on LinkedIn, which stands at 1410 against our 2025/26 target of 1500. This is our primary social media channel. We have seen a small 0.7% increase of followers on Facebook and a fall of 0.6% on X.

6.4 Our Connections newsletter subscriber base has fallen slightly this quarter, but we will actively increase promotional activity and post articles from Connections onto social media more regularly, with sign-up prompts.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 The Partnership Board are recommended to comment on the communication and engagement activity undertaken since the last Partnership Board meeting.

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