

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 19 March 2026

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 continued to support colleagues on the development of the SIP refresh, coordinating engagement activity and arranging meetings with officer groups and partnership board representatives.

2.4 We have worked with analytical team to produce a series of Regional Transport Survey leaflets which summarise key stats for the South East, as well as region-focused leaflets which we will give to LA officers this month.

3 Events and speaker slots

Past Events

3.1 In January, Transport Manager Kate Over represented TfSE at the Pathways to Net Zero conference in Birmingham, where she spoke on an expert panel about opportunities for net zero freight and the importance of planning and collaboration between regional and local authorities and the freight sector.

3.2 We hosted a Transport Forum in March in London which saw a university-led session exploring future challenges facing the transport sector and how they can be met through partner collaboration. Members also had presentations about challenges to the transport sector from TfSE's and industry representatives as well as an update on progress of the Strategic Investment Plan refresh

Future events/speaker slots

3.3 We are planning a second Business Advisory Group Summit in June at Gatwick Airport, building on the inaugural Summit in Guildford last year.

4. MP engagement and public affairs

4.1 We emailed Chichester MP Jess Brown-Fuller after the February Westminster Hall debate she hosted on transport in the South East, which featured some of our MPs. The email highlighted our own activities and ambitions on the issues discussed and provided a reminder about our expertise on strategic transport in the region.

4.2 In February, Head of Strategy Mark Valleley and Comms Manager James Boyes met with a representative of the secretariat of a new All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the South East and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway. Mark outlined TfSE's extensive evidence base including Transport Strategy and planned Strategic Investment Plan update. The APPG is hosting a deep dive into integrated transport within the region in the Spring, which TfSE aim to support.

5. Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Plan

5.1 We continue to follow the priorities and objectives outlined and monitor outcomes and progress of our communications and engagement activities.

5.2 Devolution and local government reorganisation remains a key issue. We are monitoring possible impacts for TfSE and developing material for new officers and councillors that sets out TfSE's role and how our work helps to support local authorities.

5.3 The number of LinkedIn followers has continued to increase and is now 1521, surpassing our 2025/26 target of 1500. We have also worked with our website hosts on a short audit of the website to improve efficiencies and make it more robust for the demands of AI. We will continue to monitor this throughout the year.

5.4 The audit showed that 92% of visitors to the website were new over the past 12 months (2230 out of 2417 overall). This increase in traffic has primarily been the result of increased social media activity plus the launch of the new Transport Strategy.

5.5 Our December Connections newsletter which summarised our activity during 2025 saw a 41% open rate, higher than our usual rate which is nearer the industry average of 36%. We are planning to refresh our Connections newsletter during 2026.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

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

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