

Report to: Partnership Board –Transport for the South East

Date of meeting: 19 October 2026

By: Chief Officer, Transport for the South East

Title of report: Communications and 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 and comment on the communications and engagement activity that has been 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 and stakeholder meetings.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

2.1 We continue to use communication and engagement activity to support delivery of our technical work programme and promote the organisation to key audiences.

2.2 The team has worked with colleagues to promote TfSE's freight work. In August, we issued a press release to key transport and local government stakeholders announcing the launch of the Freight Training Programme developed in partnership with Transport East, England's Economic Heartland and CIHT, which hosts the online resource.

2.3 We also supported colleagues and our consultants in arranging meetings with local authority officers to begin work on the development of the Freight Fuel Infrastructure Strategy.

2.4 We have produced a new Centre of Excellence (CoE) fact sheet, which provides background information on the site and outlines the key functions. We will work with members of the CoE Steering group to encourage distribution across their organisations to increase sign-ups to the site. This will be particularly valuable as LGR progresses with roles evolving and officers moving between, or being recruited to, local authorities. This can be viewed as appendix 1 to this paper.

3 Events and speaker slots

3.1 Earlier this month, Transport Strategy Manager Kate Over presented at the Motor Transport Decarbonisation Summit in Birmingham. As a member of a panel discussing the future of freight, devolution and the role of regional transport partnerships, Kate highlighted TfSE's work in this area and future plans, including the officer training programme for ongoing role of the Wider South East Freight Forum.

3.2 In September, TfSE Chief Officer Rupert Clubb presented to the Transport Knowledge Hub Board Meeting about the recent *Rewiring the State* paper from the government. Rupert outlined what this means for the South East, including the opportunities arising from greater devolution and place-based decision making, transport's role in supporting growth, and how TfSE's existing strategy, evidence base and partnerships can help support delivery.

4. MP engagement and public affairs

4.1 In August, TfSE Chair Cllr Simon Curry wrote to the Secretary of State, Heidi Alexander, following the former Chair's correspondence in May, which presented the Transport Strategy and refreshed Strategic Investment Plan.

4.2 The letter reinforced the value of TfSE's regional perspective and its role in supporting a more integrated transport network across the South East. It also emphasised the need to secure long-term arrangements for pan-regional collaboration beyond the Department for Transport's current funding period, which ends in March 2027.

4.3 Cllr Curry reiterated TfSE's commitment to reflecting the priorities of local authorities, businesses and communities across the region while supporting growth, connectivity and opportunity. The letter also requested a meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss this further. The letter can be viewed as appendix 2 to this paper.

5 Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Plan

5.1 We continue to deliver against our communications and engagement priorities and objectives while monitoring outcomes and progress across all activities.

5.2 Devolution and local government reorganisation remain ongoing. We have mapped out the expected LGR and devolution changes expected over the coming years to identify key milestones and assess their likely impact on TfSE. While recent announcements on LGR may change the approach, it has been a helpful tool to support the development of the Future Funding Model.

5.3 We have refreshed the schedule for the CoE's two newsletters, by incorporating the Resource Round-up into the main newsletter and issuing it twice-monthly. This maintains the overall content while ensuring timeliness and strengthening focus.

5.4 We have completed the streamlining of the TfSE website to make it easier to use and navigate. This has included uploading refreshed MP factsheets following the SIP refresh earlier this year.

5.4 The number of LinkedIn followers has continued to rise and is now 1640, representing 69 additional followers since July's figure of 1571, a 4% increase.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

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

RUPERT CLUBB

Chief Officer

Transport for the South East

Contact Officer: James Boyes

Email: James.Boyes@transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Have you signed up to the Centre of Excellence?

Did you know that as a local transport officer in the South East you are eligible for full access to the Centre of Excellence (CoE)? The CoE is a free online resource managed by Transport for the South East (TfSE), designed to support you in your role.

The site aims to strengthen your skills and knowledge through online resources and cross-authority collaboration, helping you to achieve better transport outcomes for our communities.

Sign up to the site to access a range of case studies, key tools, up to date guidance and news from the industry, monthly webinars on key topics, and in-person events.

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Keep up to date with the latest transport news and guidance



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Benefit from officers' experiences using transport case studies across the region

Who are Transport for the South East?

TfSE is the Sub-national Transport Body for the South East, providing a single, joined-up voice on the region's strategic transport needs.

We work with our 16 local transport authorities and wider partners to identify priorities and make the case to Government for investment and policy support in the region.

Coming up in 2026/27

Scheme appraisal – support on the development of appraisal modelling and developing the economic case for transport schemes.

AI in transport planning – understand AI in transport planning, including guidance on the DfT Connectivity Tool and other emerging applications.

Modelling and forecasting – introduction to the TfSE modelling system and land use model, as well as guidance on using mobile network data to support forecasting and analysis.

Stakeholder engagement – support in transport strategy and plan development.

Policy and strategy development – introductory and detailed sessions on accessibility planning and developing deliverable transport plans.

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The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Via Email – pocorrespondence@dft.gov.uk

12/08/2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Chair of Transport for the South East (TfSE), and to welcome the opportunity to continue the constructive relationship that TfSE has built with you and the department over recent years.

It is a real privilege to take on this role and to build on the strong collaborative work already underway across the South East. I know that you recently corresponded with my predecessor, Keith Glazier OBE, following the publication of TfSE's refreshed Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan. I was pleased to see your recognition of the value a regional perspective gives, and of the contribution TfSE has made in supporting a more integrated approach to transport across the South East.

As I take up the Chair, I am clear about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The South East, outside London, is the gateway to Europe and one of the country's largest economies, and we will continue make the case for the investment required to support growth, opportunity and connectivity across the region. With no Department for Transport funding currently available to TfSE beyond March 2027, securing the resources needed to maintain effective pan-regional collaboration will be an important priority.

I want TfSE's approach to be grounded in the needs of the people and communities we serve. I have already heard directly from residents, including young people, about the role that transport plays in their daily lives. These perspectives will be invaluable, in shaping our priorities alongside those of our local authority partners, business community and wider transport sector.

As devolution and local government reform gather pace, it will be important to retain the relationships, expertise and shared understanding that have been developed across the region up over many years. That is where TfSE can help. We already bring local authorities together to tackle issues that extend beyond administrative boundaries, and we provide a trusted forum for working through difficult challenges collectively. At a time of significant change, TfSE offers continuity, a strong connection between government and local places, and a practical way of turning reform into real improvements for the people and businesses of the South East.

In your recent correspondence, you recognised both the importance of local members having greater influence over the future of TfSE, and the continuing value of pan-regional collaboration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and to explore how TfSE can continue to work closely with you and your department to support the South East and contribute to the government's own ambitions for economic growth and improved connectivity.

I would therefore be very pleased to meet with you at your earliest convenience, both to introduce myself formally and to discuss the opportunities, challenges and priorities and facing the South East.

I look forward to working with you and continuing the positive and constructive relationship between TfSE and government.

Yours sincerely,

SM Curry

Cllr Simon Curry

Chair of Transport for the South East
Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration Medway
Council