

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

Date of meeting: **21 March 2022**

By: **Lead Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement update**

Purpose of report: **To update the board on communications and stakeholder engagement activity**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:**

- (1) note the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since January 2022; and**
  - (2) note the communications and engagement plan for the SIP development process, attached as Appendix 1.**
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**1. Introduction**

1.1 There has been an increased amount of communications and engagement activity over the last few months as we have continued to focus on preparing partners and stakeholders to participate in the development of the strategic investment plan (SIP) and the forthcoming consultation process. There has been a particular focus on engaging with MPs from across the South East region and making plans to communicate with our district and borough authorities, ensuring all key stakeholders are up to speed with progress so far.

1.2 Interest in Transport for the South East remains strong, with over 2,800 individuals from 950 organisations registered on our database and receiving regular communication from us.

1.3 This paper provides an update on recent activity, as well as updating Partnership Board members on the communications and engagement that is planned for the next few months.

**2. Recent communications and engagement activity**

Supporting the development of the strategic investment plan

2.1 Since the last Partnership Board meeting in January 2022 we have concluded our engagement with key stakeholders, providing numerous opportunities for stakeholders to hear about the emerging outputs from the area studies before they are fed into the draft SIP.

2.2 A combined stakeholder forum took place on 3 March to address the combined outcomes of the whole area study work programme. [Detail to be added following meeting]. We are very grateful for the continued commitment of our key partners and stakeholders.

2.3 The freight, logistics and international gateways strategy will soon be published on the TfSE website – there will be more communications activity around this when it is formally launched at the ITT Hub in May including video promotion, a podcast and number of activities to promote the strategy at the ITT Hub itself. We hope to continue to facilitate a freight group or forum for the region post strategy publication.

2.4 The inception meeting with the engagement specialist, ECF, commissioned to work with us on the SIP consultation took place on 21 February and plans are now well underway to develop a robust digital consultation using Engagement HQ. We will continue to meet fortnightly with the engagement specialists as we develop the consultation.

2.5 Working with the engagement specialist we continue to develop our stakeholder engagement and communication plan for the SIP work programme and will include this by way of update to the board as work progresses - see Appendix 1.

2.6 Plans for a SIP consultation event on 5 July at G Live in Guildford are well underway. There will also be a number of virtual engagement sessions to support the launch of the consultation. More details will be shared with Board members as they are confirmed.

### **3. Broadening our engagement**

3.1 We continue to facilitate discussions amongst a wide group of stakeholders who would not otherwise engage with one another. Our ability to bring people together from a variety of sectors and enable them to speak with one voice on a topic or agenda is positively received.

3.2 The universities' stakeholder group met on 2 March 2022 and discussion was focussed on the impact of covid on university staff and students travel behaviour. The next meeting is on 1 July, after the SIP consultation launches. It will be an opportunity for discussion around the SIP and there may also be presentations from TfSE and

University of Surrey with an electric vehicle focus. As always, board members are welcomed and encouraged to attend this interesting forum if they would like to.

3.3 The private sector stakeholder group met in March. Our private sector partners continue to be actively engaged with and supportive of the work of TfSE. This is especially important as we move towards the publication of the SIP.

3.4 The communications & stakeholder engagement group met in February providing an update on plans as we move towards development of the SIP. A briefing note was shared with those who were unable to attend. The group continue to be extremely supportive of sharing information about the work of TfSE and the meetings are providing a mutually beneficial opportunity for participants to update each other work of interest. The next meeting is 31 March 2022, at this meeting we hope to share more details of our communications and engagement approach for the SIP consultation and enlist their active support.

3.5 The regional transport decarbonisation forum met again in February 2022 with the next meeting scheduled for April 2022. There is a lot of interest in this group and membership continues to grow.

3.6 Our Connections newsletter was issued in February including updates on the publication of the freight, logistics and gateways strategy, further priority road scheme funding, the funding received from DfT for additional work streams, the success of the parliamentary reception and upcoming events, The next update is scheduled for the end of March 2022.

3.7 Two virtual briefing sessions took place at the beginning of March to update leaders, chief executives and relevant portfolio holders from districts and borough authorities on the emerging outputs from the area studies and the SIP development process. Attendance and engagement at both events was good with positive feedback on the emerging outputs.

#### **4. Political engagement**

4.1 TfSE hosted a parliamentary reception at the House of Commons on 1 February 2022. The event was supported by a number of Board members and attended by MPs from across the south east region. These were followed by a series of four virtual engagement sessions where a greater level of technical detail on the emerging outputs of the area studies were shared and discussed. Ongoing MP engagement will be an important strand to our work as we finalise our SIP. We will look to expand our MP engagement programme and set up further engagement events and would welcome board members encouraging their local MPs to attend. We are grateful for board members support with MP engagement to date.

## 5. Upcoming Events

5.1 **ITT Hub (11-12 May):** TfSE will be using this event to launch the freight, logistics and gateways strategy. The event provides an opportunity for TfSE to highlight the relevance and importance of the freight strategy with private providers as we attempt to tackle freight blindness the public sector. We will be encouraging providers to join the conversation via our re-launched freight forum.

5.2 **Joint STB conference & exhibition (26 May 2022):** A national joint STB event is being planned at The Vox in Birmingham. This will be a multimodal conference focusing on long-term and strategic issues and attracting high-level speakers and delegates. The event has the support of the DfT and TfSE will work closely with the other STBs via the joint communication and engagement groups to plan the content. Board members have been invited to attend and if you have not yet registered for a place we would encourage you to do so.

5.3 **Connecting the South East: A bold and ambitious plan (5 July):** Hosted at G Live in Guildford this event will celebrate the launch of the consultation on draft strategic investment plan. The event will be aimed at around 200 senior stakeholders and will feature an array of speakers. Baroness Vere will be invited as the keynote speaker.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 In conclusion, we will continue to keep our communications and engagement activities under review using virtual or physical meetings as appropriate at the time.

6.2 The Partnership Board are recommended to note and agree the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since January 2022.

6.3 The Partnership Board are recommended to note the updated communications and engagement plan for the SIP development process, attached as Appendix 1.

### **RUPERT CLUBB**

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