

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

Date of meeting: **26 September 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**

RECOMMENDATION:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to note the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since the last board meeting.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on recent communications and engagement activity including the promotion of the draft strategic investment plan consultation, ongoing stakeholder engagement outside of the consultation and upcoming events.

2. Recent communications and engagement activity

The strategic investment plan consultation

2.1 Communications activity to promote the consultation launched across all platforms on 20 June as the consultation went live. This included; a social media campaign, a launch web article, press release and newsletter.

2.1.1 Media coverage of the consultation was wide reaching and included both print and broadcast media. Coverage in local and trade press has been largely positive with more than 30 articles directing people to the consultation – see appendix 1.

2.1.2 The launch newsletter was issued to 2,254 contacts and has an open rate of 36.6% (industry standard is 19.4%), click through of 13.4% (2.8%) and click to open rate of 38.6% (14.3%). Reviewing all previous newsletters, they are all surpassing industry standards (figures in brackets) with every newsletter.

2.1.3 Engagement on our own social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) has been strong with over 40k impressions and an engagement rate of

3.8% on Twitter, 10k impressions and an engagement rate of 2.3% on Facebook and 6,867 impressions and an engagement rate of 2.9% on LinkedIn. According to industry standards an engagement rate of 0.5% is considered good and anything over 1% is extremely good.

Comments received on social media have been broadly supportive but there have been some challenges from campaign groups around investment in roads - we have responded to these where appropriate to encourage consultation responses and drawing attention to it being a multi-modal plan. We have also published an article that attempts to address some of these concerns in greater detail and directs readers to the consultation.

[Changing the mindset on investing in roads - Transport for the South East](#)

2.1.4 Alongside the launch of the consultation, we published a communications pack on our website which includes key messages, newsletter and web copy and social media content including images. This has been widely used by our constituent authorities who are promoting the consultation via their own channels.

2.1.5 To boost engagement and ensure a wide-reaching consultation we have been reviewing the consultation responses throughout and adapting messaging as appropriate. This has allowed us to address any arising issues and encourage participation from underrepresented groups.

Midway through the consultation we recognised a lower response rate from women and those ages 16-34.

To address this and to boost general engagement, for weeks 8-12 of the consultation period we used paid social media advertising to increase reach.

We ran four adverts on Facebook, Messenger and Instagram all targeting the South East region. One was a generic advert targeting people aged 16-65, one specifically targeting women aged 16-65 using an article about gender bias in transport planning as a hook and the final one focussing on the SIP as a long-term plan and targeting people aged 16-34.

See appendix 2 for further details.

A full update on the effectiveness of these adverts will be given at the board meeting.

2.2 The following consultation events took place:

2.2.1 Parliamentary reception at Portcullis House (9-11am, 22 June)

12 MPs and 9 board members were booked to attend this event, unfortunately there was a rail strike on the day of the event which did affect attendance, but we did meet with five MPs and were supported by two board members.

2.2.2 Connecting the South East: A bold and ambitious plan (All day, 5 July)

167 people attended this event, a combination of local government representatives, industry experts, activists and interested members of the public.

We heard presentations on the strategic investment plan as well as discussions on how transport can enable businesses and communities to thrive and on transport's role in making the south east a leading global region for net-zero carbon and sustainable economic growth. We benefited from a fantastic range of speakers and panellists including industry experts, Government officials (including Baroness Vere), academics with backgrounds in transport or the environment and professionals working within the transport industry. Feedback has been extremely positive.

The full list of speakers can be found here:

<https://www.connectingthesoutheast.com/speakers>

2.2.3 Webinar: Connecting the South East: A bold and ambitious plan (11 & 12 July)

Both sessions were well attended with 77 attendees at the virtual event on 11th July and 48 attendees at virtual event 12th July. The presentations were well received and generated a good discussion.

2.3 The presentations delivered at Connecting the South East event in Guildford were recorded and can be found on the TfSE YouTube channel: [Connecting the South East 2022: Consulting on our draft Strategic Investment Plan - YouTube](#)

2.4 As part of the SIP consultation process, individual meetings were offered to all constituent authorities to discuss emerging thoughts and clarify any outstanding queries. These meetings ran from June to September 2022.

2.5 Several board members have taken up our invitation to present to cabinet and committee colleagues following the SIP consultation close, during the period mid Oct – end Dec '22. The aim of these sessions is to inform those political colleagues (who potentially haven't been so actively involved with the process to date) of the SIP process and content, aiming to enable a smoother sign off procedure as the final plan is taken through Councils' democratic processes.

3. Ongoing stakeholder engagement

3.1 Engagement work is ongoing in relation to our additional work streams:

Bus Back Better

A steering group has been established to guide the work associated with this project and a mapping exercise completed to identify the correct contacts within local authorities and amongst bus operators. An online survey was sent to both Local

Transport Authorities and operators in mid August, to identify current progress with Enhanced Partnership arrangements to deliver Bus Service Improvement Plans and to scope the work programme for how effective engagement will be achieved.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

There are several new stakeholder groups associated with this project, including a steering group, forum and two working groups. Identification and mapping of the relevant stakeholders is complete, with the lead consultant to identify private sector contacts. The first meetings of the forum and steering group took place in early/mid September with further meetings planned throughout the life of the project (to end Jan '23).

Freight and Logistics

Initial membership of the freight, logistics and international gateways forum has been scoped and agreed. There are several further working groups associated with this project and it is yet to be decided exactly how they will operate, however the scoping exercise to identify potential membership has been started.

3.2 Due to low attendance the Universities meeting planned for 1 July was postponed. The group will now meet on 4th October, 2-3.30pm. 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 on Friday 23rd September. It was a face to face meeting in London, hosted by Addleshaw Goddard. Our private sector partners continue to be actively engaged with and supportive of the work of TfSE.

3.4 The communications & stakeholder engagement group met on 20 June to make the launch of the consultation and discuss the communications support required. We continued to communicate with the group on a regular basis throughout the consultation and met again at the beginning of September.

4. Upcoming and previous events and speaker slots

4.1 Previous events/speaker slots

- 1 July, Rupert Clubb spoke at CECA Transport Group's event where they discussed the future of transport in the South East region.
- 6 July, Sarah Valentine joined a panel on exploring the work and transport strategies of sub-national transport bodies at the NCE Future of Roads Conference.
- On 18 August, Sarah Valentine joined a panel on Levelling up at the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transport's monthly webinar.

4.2 Future events/speaker slots

- November 2022 - Highways UK
- December 2022 – Westminster Forum conference
- June 2023 – STB conference

5. Conclusion and recommendations

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

5.2 The Partnership Board are recommended to note and agree the engagement and communication activity that has been undertaken since the last Partnership Board meeting.

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SIP launch – in the news

[Plans to create transport network in the south east revealed | The Independent](#)

Also reported on [Yahoo](#), [Redditch & Alcester Advertiser](#), [Brighton & Hove news](#)

[Transport for the South East unveils £45bn plan to transform Kent and the South East's transport infrastructure by 2050 \(kentonline.co.uk\)](#) - as a result of Rupert's interview

[Elizabeth line to Ebbsfleet extension could cost £3.2 billion \(ianvisits.co.uk\)](#)

[How a £3.2bn Crossrail extension into Kent could be funded | New Civil Engineer](#)

[UK railway news round-up | Rail Business UK | Railway Gazette International](#) – paragraph on the consultation included in their news round-up

[Huge package of transport investment for East Sussex proposed | SussexWorld \(sussexexpress.co.uk\)](#)

[Landmark plan sets out steps to decarbonise transport in South East England \(intelligenttransport.com\)](#)

[£45 billion plan to improve transport in Sussex | The Argus](#)

[Proposed £45bn plan to decarbonise transport across South East | CiTTi Magazine](#)

[Landmark plan sets out the transport investment needed in the South East - Rail Engineer](#)

[Southampton could benefit from £45 billion transport plan | Daily Echo](#)

Readers reactions: [Readers react to plans for a Southampton underground rail link | Daily Echo](#), ['Not needed.... I'd use it... pipe dream' - Readers react to Southampton underground rail link plan \(yahoo.com\)](#)

[Consultation starts for £45 billion plan to 'decarbonise the transport system' \(yahoo.com\)](#)

[Huge package of transport investment for East Sussex proposed | SussexWorld \(sussexexpress.co.uk\)](#)

[Transport for the South East – Strategic Investment Plan Consultation – Wadhurst Parish Council \(wadhurst-pc.gov.uk\)](#)

[Plans to create transport network in the south east revealed | Denbighshire Free Press](#)

[Plans revealed for new carbon neutral transport network in the south east | ITV News Meridian](#)

[Island not included in investment plans – Isle of Wight Observer News \(iwobserver.co.uk\)](#)

[Landmark plan sets out the transport investment needed in the South East - Industrial News](#)

[TfSE launches consultation on £45bn plan | RailBusinessDaily](#)

[New train station near Horsham, M23, A27 upgrades and reopening railway line included in £45bn plan - SussexLive](#)

[Plans revealed for new carbon neutral transport network in the south east | ITV News Meridian](#)

[New plans could decarbonise transport and bring economic growth to South East - NewStartMag](#)

[New plans could decarbonise transport and bring economic growth to South East - EnvironmentJournal](#)

[Ambitious plans unveiled for new underground rail link in Southampton \(yahoo.com\)](#)

[Price of bringing Crossrail Elizabeth Line extension to Ebbsfleet via Dartford calculated at £3.2bn - but could end up costing more \(kentonline.co.uk\)](#)

[£45bn of infrastructure projects proposed by Transport for the South East \(ukreiff.com\)](#)

[London-style underground rail link between Southampton and Netley proposed - The Business Magazine](#)

[£45bn of infrastructure projects proposed by Transport for the South East \(built-environment-networking.com\)](#)

[Bitterne Park's local website - bitternepark.info - Share views on £45 billion transport plan](#)

[South East To Decarbonise Transport Through New Plans - \(quadrant-transport.com\)](#)

Print coverage (likely to be more but we don't have access to print editions across the region)

Worthing Herald - 30/06/2022: Big Transport investments – Improvements to the A27 among major plans

Interview requests

ITV news – pending

Kent Online – Rupert put forward

Sally-Ann Hart's office – statement from Cllr Glazier given

Heart Sussex – Rupert put forward

Southampton Daily Echo – Provided links and page references for detailed info on Southampton interventions

Hampshire Independent – As above

[Appendix 2](#)

- **Generic**
Media: Strategic Investment Plan animation (created inhouse)

Transport for the South East Sponsored ·

The draft strategic investment plan is out for consultation until 12 September. If you live, work or travel in the south east we ...See more

500,000 more rail trips each weekday

transportforsoutheast.uk.eng...
Transport for the South East - Strategic Investme... [Learn more](#)

Like Comment Share

Dates: 16-31 August
 Lifetime budget: £70
 Audience: people aged 16-65 living in the South East region
 Reach: 19,078
 Link clicks: 615
 Click through rate*: 3.8%

- **Increasing responses from women**

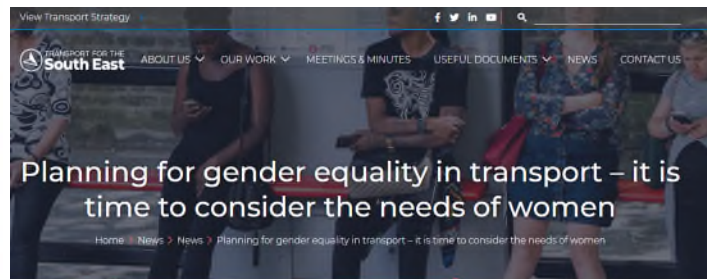
Media: Article on gender bias in transport planning, image of women of varying ages at a bus stop

Transport for the South East Sponsored ·

Transport has a gender bias problem - play your part in tackling it.

transportforsoutheast.org...
Planning for gender equality in transport - it L... [Learn more](#)

Like Comment Share



Planning for gender equality in transport - it is time to consider the needs of women
 16 August 2022

Historically, decisions around transport planning have been made by people working nine to five, in offices. Typically, these decision makers have tended to be men. This has meant that often the travel and safety needs of women when traveling, have been overlooked.

But with [over half the UK population being female](#) isn't it time this changed?

Why is there a gender bias in the transport industry?

It is simple. [Women make up 97 per cent of the UK workforce yet remain underrepresented in the transport sector, accounting for only 20 per cent of wages.](#) Which means, when transport plans are developed, it tends to be by men, often overlooking the needs of the female population. Whether they're designing strategic transport networks, making decisions about lighting at bus stops or facilities at truck stops. Forcing many women to opt for the safety of using a private car over public transport when travelling at night, or discouraging women from

Dates: 16.08.22 – 23.08.2022
 Lifetime budget: £70
 Audience: women aged 18-65 living in the South East region
 Reach: 12,580
 Link clicks: 1,262

Click through rate*: 14.9%

- **Increasing responses from people aged 16-34**
Media: Strategic Investment Plan animation (created in collaboration with Steer)



Dates: 23.08.2022 – 30.08.2022

Lifetime budget: £70

Audience: people aged 16-34 living in the South East region

Reach: 11,568

Link clicks: 218

Click through rate*: 2.5%

*For reference the industry benchmark for a good Click Through Rate (CTR) on social media adverts is between 2-5%.