

Report to: **Partnership Board – Transport for the South East**
Date of meeting: **3 July 2023**
By: **Lead Officer, Transport for the South East**
Title of report: **Technical Programme Progress Update**
Purpose of report: **To provide a progress update on the ongoing work to deliver the technical work programme set out in the 2023/24 business plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress with the ongoing work to assist local transport authorities with the implementation of their bus service improvement plans (BSIP);**
 - (2) Note the progress with the work to implement the regional electric vehicle infrastructure strategy;**
 - (3) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE's future mobility strategy;**
 - (4) Note the progress with the delivery of TfSE's freight logistics and gateways strategy;**
 - (5) Note the progress with the joint work on decarbonisation; and**
 - (6) Note the progress with the work to develop a regional active travel strategy.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on delivery of the TfSE technical work programme.

2. Bus Back Better

2.1 As reported to the Board in March 2023, TfSE has led a joint project with Transport East and England's Economic Heartland, to identify and deliver the support needed to assist local transport authorities (LTAs) with the delivery of their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs). The support is being provided to all LTAs in these three areas regardless of whether or not they received funding for their BSIPs. The value of the bid was £100,000 per STB area, with a total project value of £300,000.

2.2 The first stage of the work involved questionnaire surveys and a workshop, involving LTA officers and bus operators (grouped by STB area), to identify and prioritise the additional capability support it was felt LTAs needed to deliver their BSIPs. Eleven support packages were identified and delivered, covering topics including the role of demand responsive transport, alternative/low-emission fuels, low cost and quick wins, fares and ticketing, and making a strong case for bus priority improvements.

2.3 Delivery of the support packages commenced in December 2022 and was completed in April 2023. The webinar recordings and guidance documents produced as part of this project will remain available for colleagues' continued use. Evaluation of the recent surveys issued to stakeholders is underway which will be used to identify whether there are further areas of support that LTAs would gain benefit from once the current programme has been completed.

2.4 Bus forums have been established in each of the three STB geographies as part of this work. The most recent forum for the TfSE area was held in April, which was used as an opportunity for LTAs, operators and other interested parties to share guidance and best practice. An opportunity for LTAs to present their progress to date was a useful insight and will feature on future agenda items. The next bus forum will be held in July 2023.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

3.1 In March 2023, the Partnership Board approved TfSE's regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy. Following on from the publication of the strategy and accompanying action plan, TfSE has identified a number of tasks to commence delivery of the action plan.

3.2 As part of the commission for developing our electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy Arcadis developed a web-based application that aims to support local transport authorities with the future rollout of EV charging infrastructure within their respective areas. The 'EVCI Locate' application will help officers identify and prioritise suitable locations to expand EVCI networks through an assessment of a range of different parameters. TfSE will soon begin the process of rolling out this application to local transport authorities by organising a formal launch of the tool with support from Arcadis.

3.3 The EV Infrastructure Forum, which was set up as part of the strategy development and has 70 individual organisations represented, will be relaunched this summer in order to help take forward the implementation of the actions identified within the strategy action plan. This forum has been a successful platform for developing strong working relationships between members and has allowed attendees to share best practice with one another on how potential issues regarding EVCI rollout can be mitigated.

3.4 A further piece of work which aims to commence the development of future forecasts for EV charging infrastructure demand resulting from the electrification of

vehicle fleets across the TfSE area will also be undertaken this year. As well as forecasting demand, this work will also include any data collection exercise that will be needed to supplement existing data on fleet vehicle operations.

3.5 A further update on the progress of the work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in October 2023.

4. Future Mobility Strategy

4.1 Further technical work that will be needed to take forward the implementation of the future mobility strategy will be supported by consultants through the forthcoming TfSE call-off contract. TfSE staff will also be managing the implementation of the strategy through:

- Organising and facilitating the meetings of the South East Future Mobility Forum (next meeting in September 2023);
- Setting up and supporting working groups (as and when they are needed);
- Progressing the development of briefs for further study work.

4.2 The last Future Mobility Forum meeting was held on 18 May 2023. The WSP Future Mobility team gave a presentation on their work following “drivers of change” that influence transport as well as other areas such as housing and health. The meeting also featured a workshop session on the development of a Shared Learning Hub for future mobility. A summary of the presentation that was delivered to the working group on Piloting in the South East held on 4 May 2023 was also shared.

4.3 Since the last Board meeting in March 2023, WSP have prepared specifications for the following future mobility-related technical work and studies identified as priority work areas in the future mobility strategy, which will be used to progress implementation of the strategy in the coming months:

- Shared knowledge hub;
- Mode Propensity Tool;
- Future Propulsion strategy.

An update on the progress of the work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in October 2023.

5. Freight, Logistics and Gateways Strategy

5.1 As reported to the Partnership Board meeting in March 2023, TfSE have been working with consultants, AECOM, on a small study to quantify the scale of lorry parking and types of driver facilities on the Strategic (SRN) and Major Road Network (MRN) in the TfSE area. This work will identify: the availability of current facilities; current & future lorry parking pinch points; potential future locations for parking and welfare facilities; and possible funding for these future sites. In March and May 2023 AECOM carried out audits at various SRN and MRN sites, including both recognised, operator run sites and informal sites such as laybys. The final technical report has been completed and was made available in June 2023. The report will be shared with our local transport authority partners to inform them of where the current and future pinch points are and we will support them in addressing these going

forward. Potentially, HGV alternative fuel recharging and refuelling sites could also be co-located in the lorry parking areas, and we will also work with our local authority partners to investigate options for this further.

5.2 Our work with Midlands Connect, Cenex and Atkins on producing a mapping tool for current and future alternative recharging and refuelling sites for HGV vehicles along the strategic and major road network, which started in May 2022 was completed in June 2023. The tool will be rolled out to our partner local authorities in the next few months after some initial testing within TfSE. The tool includes electric, hydrogen and biofuel sites, can be accessed by using either a spreadsheet or a web-based map and can be updated by local authorities as and when new sites come into operation. All STBs, except Transport for the North (TfN), have contributed to this work, and they will be providing data over the course of the next couple of months. Once completed this mapping tool will be available for sites across England.

5.3 As reported to the Partnership Board Meeting in March 2023, we are re-establishing a freight forum to take forward the actions identified as part of the Freight, Logistics and Freight Strategy. In April 2023, both England's Economic Heartland and Transport East agreed to join us in the formation of the freight forum across all three regions and the procurement of the further studies. Following consultations with procurement specialists from the accountable body, tenders were received from three suitably qualified consultants in June 2023 to take forward further technical work. A verbal update to announce the name of the successful consultant will be given at the Board meeting. The further work will include two studies and one work programme covering:

- An investigation into the potential for moving freight via coastal shipping and/or inland waterways in the TfSE and Transport East areas to establish whether this is a viable alternative to the transshipment of freight by road. The study will identify what infrastructure is required, and how and where it would need to be provided. If the outcome is positive, then further development work will be carried out.
- A review of the warehousing provision in all three regions to gain a better insight into the impact of current trends in logistics land and property provision and to provide some forecasting of likely future demand in all three areas.
- The preparation of a multi-year work programme of activities to help address the issue of 'freight blindness' in the public sector. As identified as part of the Freight Strategy, the freight industry is poorly understood by the public sector and this work programme will aim to boost the technical knowledge of local authority officers involved in both transport planning and land use planning. Activities could include going out with a driver for the day and/or visiting freight and logistics operations as well as classroom session and webinars on freight related issues.

5.4 The contract for this project will be signed at the beginning of July 2023 with the first meeting with the consultants currently scheduled for the week beginning 10th July 2023. A verbal update on progress with the procurement will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in October 2023.

6. Decarbonisation

6.1 As was reported to the Board in March 2023 the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021, places a requirement on local transport authorities to identify how their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will deliver ambitious, quantifiable carbon reductions in transport to achieve net zero emissions.

6.2 TfSE, Transport East (TE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) are working collaboratively to develop a decarbonisation assessment tool. A consortium consisting of WSP, City Science, and Steer have been appointed to undertake the work. Work is underway to identify baseline carbon emissions and trajectories to net zero emissions in each of the LTAs in the three STB areas. Work is also progressing on the development of a carbon assessment tool which LTAs will then be able to use to assess the carbon reduction potential of the proposals to be included in their local transport plans.

6.3 The draft guidance on the development of Local Transport Plans, which will incorporate guidance on how LTAs should assess the carbon reduction impacts of their proposals, is due to be published before the end of July 2023. STBs have been approached to help the DfT deliver regional seminars to launch the guidance. A verbal update on this will be given at the Board meeting on 3 July 2023. The aim is to have the carbon assessment tool ready for use by LTAs once the final version of the guidance is published.

7. Regional Active Travel Strategy

7.1 The procurement process of selecting a consultant to help develop a Regional Active Travel Strategy is now complete. A select list of consultants were invited to submit a tender response in April 2023. We received five responses, which were evaluated by a panel consisting of both internal and external evaluators. The successful consultant was City Science Corporation Limited and they will begin work in June 2023, with the work due to be completed by June 2024.

7.2 The aim of a regional active travel strategy is to make walking, wheeling, and cycling an attractive, accessible, and realistic choice for more journeys undertaken across the TfSE area. It will seek to meet a number of the strategic priorities set out in the transport strategy by reducing carbon emissions through modal shift, delivering liveable communities, achieve better health and safer travel for all, and reduce inequalities through improved access to jobs, health, and leisure activities for those using active travel modes. The strategy will complement the work being undertaken by the local transport authorities through the delivery of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

7.3 Stakeholder engagement will be a key part of this work. An important part of this will be engagement with local authorities within the region to understand the opportunities and challenges they face when planning and delivering active travel schemes. An update on the progress of the work will be given at the Partnership Board Meeting in October 2023.

8 Financial considerations

8.1 The Bus Back Better, EV Charging Infrastructure strategy, decarbonisation, and local capability have been funded from the additional in year funding awarded to TfSE in January 2022. The future mobility strategy, freight strategy and EV strategy implementation work, the active travel strategy development and work on the transport strategy refresh are being funded from the DfT grant funding for 2023/24.

9 Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the progress that has been made with the various elements of the TfSE technical programme set out in this report. A further progress update report will be presented to the Board at their meeting in October 2023.

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