



## Transport East Forum

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**Item:** Item 4: Transport East Communications Plan  
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# Transport East Communications & Public Affairs Strategy

## Draft – 10.07.20

### ***1.0 Background***

Transport East is the Sub-Regional Transport Board for the East of England, made up of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex County Councils and Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils as principal members.

To achieve Transport East's vision, we must successfully communicate with and influence partners and decision makers who have the ability to help bring about desired changes. Through communications and advocacy, TE can secure support for its objectives, build a case for change and position the organisation as a leading voice and champion for the economic growth of the region.

TE will be operating in a crowded space competing for Government attention and ultimately, funding. Clear, effective communications and securing advocates who will our behalf will be important in gaining traction.

A key element of this strategy, and TE's approach to communications and public affairs, will be our offer, a more important proposition than our ask in gaining attention.

This is outlined later in this paper within TE's key messages.

### ***2.0 Communication and Public Affairs objectives:***

Ensuring that TE's messages and asks are being clearly conveyed to the right people - who have the ability to determine investment decisions - and that we speak their language will be crucial. Successful communications and advocacy can make TE stand out from the crowd and achieve cut-through.

TE's key messages to these audiences are:

- Transport East is the Sub-national Transport Board (STB) for the east of England - representing Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Southend and Thurrock - tasked with delivering a cohesive transport infrastructure strategy.

- We are driving forward a truly connected and integrated transport network and securing vital investment in future infrastructure, allowing for transformational growth in the East of England.
- As a partnership, Transport East brings together local transport and planning authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and business leaders, alongside Network Rail and Highways England. We enable the region to speak with one voice on the issues of transport and infrastructure investment, influencing decisions currently made by Central Government.
- Our vision is of a thriving economy for the East, with fast, reliable and resilient transport networks, driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.

## ***2.0 Strategic context***

### ***Our offer - We are connecting our growing economy with the rest of Britain and the world.***

We are:

- Achieving a truly connected and integrated transport network and securing vital investment in future infrastructure, to enable and support transformational growth in the East of England.
- Bringing together the combined forces of local transport and planning authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and business leaders, alongside Network Rail and Highways England. We enable the region to speak with one voice on the issues of transport and infrastructure investment, influencing decisions currently made by Central Government.
- Fulfilling our vision of a thriving economy for the east, with fast, reliable and resilient transport networks, driving forward a future of inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.

### ***Our ask - We need Government support to seize opportunities, to enable businesses to innovate, thrive and grow. We need Government support and ministerial endorsement to make our objectives a reality.***

- We require funding to deliver a mixture of road and rail projects across the region. These have the potential to unlock under-performing areas while radically enhancing regional productivity.
- We want to see increased devolution of powers that enable us to co-create strategic road and rail investment programmes at a regional scale, allowing for greater integration and innovation. The success of regional growth corridor taskforces show what can be achieved when local authorities and MPs work across boundaries for the benefit of the region.
- Our region is emerging and showing its potential. To help us realise the benefits we would like parliamentarians to fully understand and advocate the east's potential as a dynamic economy and one of the major exporting regions of the UK.

## **4.0 Key audiences:**

The public – locally, regionally, nationally, internationally.

The media

Elected members – MPs, Peers, county, city, district, town and parish councillors

Officials across government departments

Local authority officers

Industry/businesses/workplaces.

## **5.0 Communications approach:**

The strategy is made up of five elements which are distinct but related.

These are: Identity, Geography, Delivery, Engagement and Influence.

- The **Identity** pillar is designed to build the brand of Transport East; TE is not just another Sub-Regional Transport Board, it is a key part of wider ambitions for economy growth and national prosperity. The identity of Transport East is different to other SRTBs – and it is seizing the opportunities of the post-Covid world.
- The **Geography** pillar builds on the unique attributes of the region – its coastline, energy production, and ports and airports. The East has more international ports and airports than any other region; it is the gateway to the UK. It is also home to the UK's largest sources of renewable energy, enabling the Government's ambitions to build back better and develop low-carbon and carbon neutral trvale and transport options.
- The **Delivery** pillar is where campaign-led activity to secure TE's ambitions will be focussed, with strategic objectives communicated through a range of activities including briefings, media relations and social media. A revamped website and social media presence will be key elements.
- The **Engagement** pillar is we ensure that priorities and strategies are informed and meet the ambitions of our key partners across industries, businesses and public services. The focus of this activity may be in the East, but it's influence and impact on the regional and national economy stretch far further.
- Finally, the **Influence** pillar contains the programme through which we will build relationships through which we will ensure our ambitions for transport in the region are understood and are at the front of the queue for consideration. Virtually or in person, Transport East will be at the table

## **6.0 Key messages:**

- We are an exemplar in rapid regional growth: with an economy worth £71bn, the east plays an important role in the overall success of UK and is one of the fastest growing regions outside of London.

- We are creating links between our high growth, booming clusters: enhanced links between our fastest growing places and business clusters are enabling the area to function as a coherent economy and boosting productivity.
- We are a gateway connecting the country to world markets: Connections to the rest of the world will be more important than ever, and early adoption of emerging technologies will be vital to keep us globally competitive. Better connected ports and airports help UK businesses thrive and boost the nation's economy through greater access to international markets and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment.
- We are energising coastal communities: we are creating a reinvented, sustainable coast for the 21st century which delivers on our ambition to become the UK's foremost all-energy coast, as well as supporting a year-round, competitive visitor offer.

## ***7.0 Barriers and mitigation:***

In comparison with other STBs, we lack profile and brand awareness.

This strategy is designed to address this, but we need to be realistic that we are starting from a point behind other STBs.

Alongside our work influencing Government, establishing our brand, credibility and active participation with the private sector, and chiefly, operators, carriers, shipping lines, the supply chain and investors in transport, will be essential.

We will undertake a survey of key stakeholders in a year's time, in order to assess the degree of recognition, understanding and buy-in of our mission, aims and objectives and how successful we have been in deliver of this strategy.

## ***8.0 Public Affairs – Our narrative***

We need Government support to seize opportunities for the region.

- We have exciting ambitious for a mixture of vital transport schemes, for which we are seeking funding. These have the potential to radically enhance regional productivity.
- We want to see increased devolution of powers enabling us to co-create strategic road and rail investment programmes at a regional scale, allowing for greater integration and innovation. The success of regional growth corridor taskforces show what can be achieved when local authorities and MPs work across boundaries for the benefit of the region.
- We need government support and ministerial/wider parliamentary endorsement to make our objectives a reality. The East has traditionally been overlooked as a region by successive governments. We would like to see funding for our major infrastructure projects, but beyond that, we want to see Ministers and parliamentarians recognising and advocating the east's potential as a dynamic economy and one of the major exporting regions of the UK.

## ***9.0 Our initial programme***

A six-month rolling programme of public affairs activity has been established and is included below as Appendix 1. This will be augmented incrementally and initially, based around virtual meetings and opportunities. It will be reviewed by Members on a quarterly basis.

## **Appendix 1: Transport East Communications & Public Affairs Programme: The First 6 Months**

### ***Objectives***

To achieve Transport East's (TE) vision, we must successfully communicate to stakeholders and decision makers who have the ability to help bring about desired changes. Through a campaign of communications and advocacy, TE can secure support for its objectives, build a case for change and position the organisation as the leading voice and champion for the region.

Ensuring that our messages and asks are being clearly conveyed to the right people - who have the ability to determine investment decisions - and that we are speaking their language will be crucial. Successful communications and advocacy can make TE stand out from the crowd and achieve cut-through.

### ***Understanding the national context – how can TE best engage with government at this time?***

All of Government's current efforts have been directed towards **tackling the COVID-19 pandemic**. We have seen the Government take unprecedented steps to support the economy during this time. As lockdown restrictions begin to lift, attention is now turning to rebuilding the economy and society. Amidst the pandemic, there has been consideration given to what may want to be retained and using this opportunity to '**build back better**'. The Government has recently talked about their ambition to deliver a 'cleaner, greener, more resilient economy which will create new jobs'.

It is essential to ensure that TE's communications strategy recognises the pressures that this government is operating within – and then directly responds to those. As government now looks to rebuild rather than just manage, aligning TE's messaging to wider national ambitions, with a clear offer from the East of England, will be crucial.

*The below sets out a series of engagement opportunities and actions that the forum could undertake to both build its profile and develop the essential relationships it will need to deliver its core objectives.*

### ***Proposed 6 Month Engagement Programme***

Activity	Timeframe
<p><b>Message house and supporting collateral</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Develop and refine TE's political-facing messages</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Produce supporting collateral</b> such as short briefings papers and infographics that can be used as engagement tools</li> <li>▪ <b>Begin to establish a social media presence</b> that can be used to disseminate content</li> </ul>	<b>ASAP</b>
<p><b>Fiscal stimulus package</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chancellor unveiled his fiscal stimulus package – 'A plan for Jobs 2020' - on the 8<sup>th</sup> July. TE to undertake a <b>full assessment of the Chancellor's announcements</b>, with consideration of how the TE strategy helps to deliver and enhance the Government's plans.</li> <li>▪ Send a <b>briefing into Treasury</b> detailing the core areas the forthcoming National Infrastructure Strategy – to be announced in the Autumn – should address.</li> <li>▪ Consider a short <b>written submission to BEIS's <u>economic recovery initiative</u></b></li> </ul>	<b>July</b>
<p><b>Building relationships with the East of England MPs &amp; relevant Peers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are 58 MPs for the Eastern region (and a number of relevant Members of the House of Lords) – TE will map and prioritise these, developing a <b>tailored outreach programme</b>, linked to the new strategy and vision for the forum, seeking to build a coalition to promote the value of the forum into DfT and with parliamentary colleagues.</li> <li>▪ This could include <b>creating a working group of 'MP &amp; Peer champions'</b> tasked with undertaking regular activity in Parliament, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Parliamentary debates</b>, to which DfT ministers have to respond</li> <li>○ <b>Parliamentary questions</b> to raise pertinent issues and ensure that TE's messages are gaining traction</li> <li>○ <b>EDMs</b> to demonstrate TE's breadth of support</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Consider holding a <b>Parliamentary surgery for East of England MPs &amp; relevant Peers</b> to raise transport issues with TE and encourage them to feel they have some ownership of its work, as well as roundtable breakfasts with existing party groups such as <b>Labour East</b>.</li> <li>▪ TE to also <b>send all East of England MPs &amp; relevant Peers a regular newsletter and update briefings</b> to ensure they are fully informed &amp; engaged</li> </ul>	<b>August-December</b>

<p><b>DfT policy engagement: Consultation – Creating a plan to decarbonise transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department for Transport has opened a new consultation calling for ideas about the next steps to reducing emissions in transport and creating a decarbonisation plan ensuring we are net zero in emissions by 2050.</li> <li>TE to develop a submission and seek direct engagement with the DfT team leading the consultation to discuss its ideas in person.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consultation deadline</b> <b>31 August</b></p>
<p><b>Budget / Comprehensive Spending Review / National Infrastructure Strategy – all to be announced in the Autumn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A punchy, visual, data-led submission sent into both DfT and HMT</b></li> <li><b>Highlight the submission to both departments through a high profile joint letter</b> from East of England MPs and council leaders, published in local media</li> </ul>	<p><b>August-September</b></p>
<p><b>East of England APPG Parliamentary event - Transport and Digital Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Transport East to be key-note speaker and launch new branding / strategy</b> for the forum within this parliamentary setting</li> </ul>	<p><b>15<sup>th</sup> September</b></p>
<p><b>Think tank engagement during party conference season</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While party conferences have been cancelled, many think tanks will still be running their own online events and conferences. TE to <b>organise initial conversations with key think tanks</b> and consider supporting individual events and streams of work.</li> <li><b>TE to speak with the Labour and Conservative business relations teams</b> and consider some commercial sponsorships and targeted party events</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sept / Oct</b></p>
<p><b>Launch of the Transport East Manifesto</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>To be launched within a parliamentary setting</b> – remotely or in person.</li> <li><b>Leverage new relationships with East of England MPs and secure a ministerial keynote speaker.</b></li> <li><b>Organise targeted follow-up roundtables</b> with smaller groups focussed on individual areas of interest.</li> <li><b>Issue an op-ed from Andrew Summers</b> putting the manifesto in context, with a surprising facts and a punchy media hook that can be sold into the nationals.</li> </ul>	<p><b>October</b></p>

<b>Transport Committee engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organise a face-to-face briefing with <b>Huw Merriman</b> (the chair) and interested members</li> <li>▪ Submit written evidence to the committee's Coronavirus: implications for Transport inquiry (deadline 29<sup>th</sup> October)</li> </ul>	<b>October</b>
<b>DfT Ministerial visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal visits audit to identify the most compelling locations to host a visit.</li> <li>▪ Create a sample visit plan with details and imagery to share with ministerial offices.</li> <li>▪ Involve wider regional MPs in the visit.</li> <li>▪ Reinforce with a strong communications package, including op-eds/blogs.</li> </ul>	<b>November-December</b>