

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Board Meeting

Paper G

Date **2 October 2024**

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 of the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body.**

Recommendations:

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. To note the progress of the programme update report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report contains an update on the progress of a number of elements of the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (STB) technical work programme.

2. Freight Strategy Implementation and freight forums

- 2.1 In 2022, the Southwest Freight Strategy was published to set out the region's objectives for freight, with a focus on the environment, economy, and society. A monitoring report of what has been achieved in Year 2 following the publication of the Freight Strategy is now finalised and can be found on our website. A summary includes the continued success of the Freight Forum and progress on key interventions as detailed within the Monitoring Report which highlighted the work on the impact of bridge strikes, lorry parking and facilities, backloading trial, shifting freight to rail and maritime and drone delivery engagement with UWE.
- 2.2 As part of year 3 priorities, the freight forums (3 sub-groups and the main forum) will be continuously maintained with a focus on fostering a broader range of engagement. Forum meetings have been coordinated to take place in Autumn and Winter. Discussions are ongoing with officers on conducting workshops and campaigns that will look to raise awareness of freight among members and officers of local authorities. This work is expected to complete in Spring 2025, with support from consultants.

- 2.3 A further update on the development of the workshop and campaigning activity will be shared with the Partnership Board at the meeting in November 2024.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

- 3.1 Earlier this year, Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway STB undertook an analysis on electric vehicle (EV) uptake and electric vehicle charge point (EVCP) requirements across the region up to 2050. The findings and full report were published on the website.
- 3.2 During the last few months, both STBs organised two successful EV Southwest working group meetings, to see how the STBs can best support the LAs. These were well attended by officers from Local Authorities and wider EV operators across the Southwest.
- 3.3 Work has been underway to produce a Strategic Action Plan which identifies tangible measures the STBs can undertake to support the accelerated delivery of regional EV charging infrastructure. The Strategic Action Plan will also identify how the STBs can add value in addition to the work being undertaken by Local Transport Authorities. This work is expected to complete in December 2024.
- 3.4 The Strategic Action Plan will be shared with the Board for approval in December 2024.

4. Coach Strategy

- 4.1 AECOM were commissioned to deliver the first and second phases of the coach work and are in the process of being commissioned for the third phase.
- 4.2 The coordination of the next Southwest Coach Sector Forum is underway, with the next meeting scheduled for 22nd October 2024. The meeting will focus on summarising the work that has been done since the previous forum and outlining plans for the next phase of work.
- 4.3 The feasibility study of first of three priority routes identified in the phase 1 strategy is completed and under review by Western Gateway officers.
- 4.4 The proposal for the third phase of work is focused on a) coach parking and facilities, including site surveys and audits, b) surveys with drivers and passengers and c) feasibility assessment of priority routes 1 and 3 from the Strategy. The procurement for phase 3 commissioning is required to be completed prior to the commencement of the work.
- 4.5 Peninsula Transport have decided not to formally join in with the coach work at this stage, but are attending the fora. National Highways are initiating some work into coach and we will liaise with them regarding potential opportunities.

5. Rail Strategy

- 5.1 In 2020 the Rail Strategy was published to highlight the key objectives and priorities for the rail network across the region.
- 5.2 Work is currently underway on the process for promoting the Heart of Wessex Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC), share findings with DfT to investigate potential funding streams for full business case.
- 5.3 Dorset Metro and West of England line (Tisbury Loop) basic service agreements have been signed with Network Rail who will undertake the work to SOBC. Both SOBCs are expected by March 2025.

6. Regional Centre of Excellence work

- 6.1 Western Gateway's new Transport Model has now been completed. We have used the model to provide an analysis of possible future road traffic levels and distribution across the region, based on four different growth and behaviour scenarios (Common Analytical Scenarios).
- 6.2 Results were shared with officers on 11th September 2024 and members on 19th September 2024, to help inform future thinking and planning. A written report will follow in October 2024.
- 6.3 Western Gateway's Carbon Assessment Playbook will also be available for use by partners by 2nd October 2024. An introductory session for officers and members was held in Sept and follow-up support sessions for officers will follow in late October/early December 2024.
- 6.4 New tools, including DfT's Connectivity Tool and Local Transport Carbon Infrastructure Benchmark Tool, will shortly be released and Western Gateway are also providing introductory sessions for partners.

7. Consultation, communication and engagement

- 7.1 This update has been discussed by the Programme Management Team and approved by the Senior Officer Group.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 No adverse impact on any protected groups

9. Legal considerations

- 9.1 The Western Gateway STB remains an informal non-statutory partnership.

10. Financial considerations

- 10.1 The technical programme is produced within the allocated budget as spelt out in the business plan.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 This paper provides a summary of the various element of the Western Gateway technical programme of work and the progress made since the last board meeting. The Board is recommended to note the progress that has been made with the various workstreams.

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