

# COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Update Report

4 December 2020

***Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Board before taking effect.***

## RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that:**

- (a) The Communications and Engagement report is noted.

### **1. Background/Introduction**

The Board at its meeting in March 2019 approved the Communications Strategy. This report provides an activity update for the period September 2020 to December 2020 and a look forward to upcoming activities.

### **2. Communications and Engagement Update**

#### **2.1 Website**

The website [www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk](http://www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk) helps to explain the purpose and work of Peninsula Transport and provides links to schemes, minutes, governance arrangements and news.

Regular news items have been added to the website to align with other public affairs activities such as the letter to the Secretary of State with regard to the whole route strategy (A303, A358, A30, M5, A38) and announcements from the DfT such as welcoming funding for the North Devon Link Road and the announcement on the 12<sup>th</sup> November by the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hons Grant Shapps MP, to approve Highways England's Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A303 Stonehenge (Amesbury to Berwick Down) scheme.

Following agreement with the Department for Transport (DfT) on funding for the 2020-21 work programme, and in accordance with the DfT request, a new section has been added to the website "Planned work 2020 - 2021" outlining the schemes which are being progressed.

#### **2.2 Social Media**

The Twitter account @PensTransport is used to help share news, build awareness with stakeholders and drive traffic to the website. The account is also used to share information from other stakeholders such as Great South West, DfT and Network Rail Resilience Forum. This is building engagement with a range of audiences.

All news announcements on the website are shared on the social media account. We have seen a significant rise in the numbers of impressions on the account, new followers and engagement levels (retweets and comments). Our most popular tweet was the one announcing the DfT funding.

#### **2.3 Media**

Regular news items are posted on the website, sent to local media and comment given to reporters as and when appropriate. Reporters also attended the September virtual Board meeting which resulted in coverage on the whole route strategy.

## 2.4 Publications

Any new publications are added to the website as and when they are approved by the Board. No new publications have been added in the period covered by this report.

## 2.5 Transport Forum

We held a virtual forum in late August and the next virtual forum is planned to be in the New Year to coincide with the engagement around the high level Transport Vision. A database of stakeholders who are interested in the work of Peninsula Transport is being built so that when we are in a position to consult on a high-level Transport Strategy for the Peninsula we will have an effective method of engaging stakeholders.

## 2.6 Stakeholder briefings

Our Chairman, alongside the seven other STB chairs, met with Baroness Vere of Norbiton in late September to press the case for investment. We have sent letters to the Secretary of State for Transport with regard to the whole route strategy (A303, A358, A30, M5, A38) and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer putting the case for infrastructure investment in the Peninsula as part of the spending review. Our MPs are sent regular briefings on the work of Peninsula Transport with the latest briefing sent in November.

## 2.7 Joint STB Communications and events

Regular teleconferences have been undertaken with the Communication leads for the other Strategic Transport Bodies (Transport for the North, Midlands Connect, Transport for the South East, Transport East, Western Gateway) to discuss approaches to areas of shared interest.

We provided speakers (Cllr Davis, Mike O'Dowd-Jones and Sally Farley) to several panel sessions on STB day at Highways UK on 5 November as well as organising one panel session.

## 3. Next Quarter

Looking forward the key activities for the next three months are to:

- Complete building the PT stakeholder database;
- Engage stakeholders on the high-level Transport Strategy through events and online;
- Produce MP briefings in January to provide an update on the work of Peninsula Transport and identify how they can contribute to the Transport Strategy engagement.

## 4. Financial Considerations

Costs are within the financial envelope agreed.

## 5. Summary

The Communications and Engagement are being delivered in line with the agreed strategy.