

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Update report

07 March 2024

Please note that the following recommendations are 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

This paper provides an outline of the communications activities that have taken place over the period December 2023 – February 2024, as well as setting out the up-and-coming programme.

2. Communications activities since December 2023

Since December 2023 activity has largely focussed on supporting the consultation of the transport strategy. These activities are summarised separately within the paper relating to the Peninsula Transport Strategy along with the full consultation and engagement report.

Outside of the consultation, the STB conference took place on 28th February, the STB reflected on the 10 year anniversary of the seawall collapse at Dawlish and the achievements of the South West Rail Resilience Programme, the first engagement session for the development of rural mobility pilots took place, the Rail Strategy was published and finally the STB launched its first E-newsletter.

2.1. Strategic communications and programme development

The communications strategy and communications activity plan are subject to ongoing development to ensure communications are effective.

Recent activity includes:

- Ongoing development of the monthly communications activity plan
- Ongoing review of the overarching 2023/2024 milestone plan to guide the monthly communications activity plans
- Delivery of the comms and engagement consultation plan for the transport strategy consultation.
- Recommendations for continued engagement following transport strategy consultation.

2.2. Stakeholder communications

Working with stakeholders is vital to shaping the work of Peninsula Transport. Recent stakeholder engagement and communications activity includes:

- One-to-one responses to inbox enquiries for Peninsula Transport and managing the Peninsula Rail Task Force's (PRTF) mailbox.
- The Rail Strategy briefing was issued to the stakeholder database to highlight publication.
- A rural mobility pilot engagement session took place in Taunton, in partnership with Western Gateway in order to begin the pilot development process. One to one engagement sessions will be the next step following the initial session.
- The STB issued the first E-newsletter during the transport strategy consultation to over 350 email addresses signed up to our mailing list. The newsletter focused on wider news from the Peninsula Transport as well as the transport strategy consultation. The mailing list now has 380 people signed up for updates.
 - Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/b5c80197b3ad/peninsula-transport-news?e=cc4bb30f28>
- Invitation to the STB conference issued to the STB stakeholder database

2.3. Online communications

Website

The website www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk helps to explain the purpose and work of Peninsula Transport and provides links to schemes, minutes, governance arrangements and news. The Peninsula Transport website is updated in line with the work programme and any key news announcements.

Key updates:

- Rail Strategy: <https://www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk/rail-strategy-for-the-south-west/>

Social media

Both Peninsula Transport and PRTF Twitter accounts, @PensTransport and @SWRailTaskforce respectively, are used to help share news and build awareness with stakeholders.

Peninsula Transport social media activity is ongoing, focusing on re-tweeting relevant news and proactive content focusing on programme milestones.

A LinkedIn profile was launched in March 2023 and is regularly updated with a programme of content to help build a picture of Peninsula Transport's work to date as well as promoting new work as and when it comes online. The page now has 156 followers, building on the 85 followers from November 2023. Page link: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/peninsula-transport/>

Latest social media posts include roundups of the Transport Forum and Rural Mobility Pilot engagement workshop, the STB's piece on Dawlish as well as the STB conference.

2.4. Media management

This section does not include press releases issued as part of the transport strategy consultation. Please see the paper relating to the transport strategy for more information.

- Press release (30 Nov 2023): new rail strategy – Plan highlights future economic and environmental benefits of South West rail services <https://www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk/news-articles/new-rail-strategy-plan-highlights-future-economic-and-environmental-benefits-of-south-west-rail-services/>
- Press release (5 February 2024): Dawlish ten years on: working together to protect South West rail links <https://www.peninsulatrtransport.org.uk/news-articles/dawlish-ten-years-on-working-together-to-protect-south-west-rail-links/>

- Councillor Andrea Davis, Peninsula Transport Chairman was interviewed on BBC Spotlight
- Coverage from partner releases relating to the anniversary of Dawlish
 - <https://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/news/video-ten-years-on-from-dawlish-storm-gbp-165m-investment-is-better-protecting-iconic-coastal-railway>
 - <https://www.voicenewspapers.co.uk/news/railway-line-into-cornwall-better-protected-10-years-on-from-devastating-storm-664069>
 - <https://www.railadvent.co.uk/2024/02/video-ten-years-on-from-storm-dawlish-has-been-made-more-resilient.html>
 - <https://www.torbayweekly.co.uk/video/local-news/1424265/10-years-strong-dawlish-celebrates-its-recovery-from-coastal-chaos.html>
 - <https://www.railtechnologymagazine.com/articles/dawlish-railway-rises-above-waves-ps165m-resilience-plan-proves-effective>

2.5. Public affairs

All MPs within the Peninsula Transport area were issued a copy of the briefing on the Rail Strategy. Please see the transport strategy paper for more details on the MP briefing for the transport strategy.

2.6. Joint STB Communications and the STB Conference 2024

A Communications Group comprising of the communications leads for STBs (Transport for the North, Midlands Connect, England's Economic Heartlands, Transport for the South East, Transport East, Western Gateway as well as Peninsula Transport) meet on a monthly basis to discuss approaches to areas of shared interest. All STBs came together on February 28 2024 in Manchester for the annual STB Conference.

Peninsula Transport's stand

Each STB had a stand, Peninsula Transport's key messages were as follows:

- Staycations, economic recovery, new clean industries, connecting our rural communities and more – quality transport and digital connectivity is at the heart of a successful peninsula
- Accessible, affordable, zero-emissions transport for everyone, as well as a cleaner freight network that maximises rail and maritime opportunities to meet the decarbonisation challenge
- Transport investment across the peninsula, which includes upgrading our strategic routes, could deliver £10.5bn in economic growth in a region where transport enhancement is vital to levelling up the economy
- Raising the standard and choice of transport across the region by making sustainable travel easier through integrating ticketing and coordinating timetables
- Continued investment in the mainline rail network is vital for resilience and for future-proofing it against the impacts of climate change

STB conference overview

- EV wicked challenge: Peninsula Transport presented headline findings from joint studies on electric vehicle charging and alternative fuels for freight
- Freight wicked challenge: our work was promoted as part of the introduction to the session by Transport for South East's Mark Valleley
- Connecting rural communities and businesses: Western Gateway presented joint work and insights from pilot and intervention trials in the South West

- Enabling infrastructure delivery: Peninsula Transport presented the South West Rail Resilience Programme, the ongoing commitment to rail network resilience ten years on from the 'hanging rails' at Dawlish
- Round up: speaking with one voice, Peninsula Transport's take home message was around collaboration - the learnings between STBs as well as best practice and solutions that come out of our individual work is a significant part of our strength as STBs in supporting regional strategic transport
- Social media content was posted in real time throughout the day as well as overarching LinkedIn posts.

3. Future work activities

The following work will be undertaken in the coming months:

- Transport Strategy adoption, launch communications and engagement
- Communications strategy update – in line with the final transport strategy
- Communications activity plan for 2024/2025
- Publication of EV chargepoint study in partnership with Western Gateway
- Utilise opportunities to promote Peninsula Transport's key messages through proactive news stories, events etc

4. Financial Considerations

Costs are within the financial envelope agreed for communications activities.

5. Environmental Impact Considerations

There are no environmental impact considerations associated with this paper.

6. Equality Considerations

There are no specific equality considerations associated with this paper. The interim communications strategy has been developed mindful of the need for the work of the STB to be accessible to all.

7. Legal Considerations

There are no legal considerations associated with this paper.

8. Risk Management Considerations

There are no risk management considerations associated with this paper.

9. Public Health Impact

There are no public health impacts associated with this paper.

10. Summary

The communications activity is being delivered in line with the interim communications strategy and agreed monthly communications activity plan.