

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD**

Date: 13 July 2006

Subject: **Thames Gateway: Investment Priorities**

Report of: South East England Regional Assembly

Recommendations:

1. The Board note the progress made by the Regional Planning Bodies in identifying transport investment priorities across the Thames Gateway.
2. A further report from the Transport Advisory Sub Group is prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Strategic Partnership.

I. Progress Report

- I.1 At the TGSP meeting on 11th May it was agreed that the experience of the South East England Regional Assembly, East of England Regional Assembly and GLA/TfL in identifying priorities for transport investment should be used to produce an overview of the transport requirements resulting from the growth planned in the Thames Gateway. A key issue was the need to identify more clearly the linkage between investment and the outcome it enables.
- I.2 Subsequent to that meeting officers from the GLA, East of England Regional Assembly, South East England Regional Assembly, TfL and Thames Gateway Strategy Division have worked together on this task.
- I.3 This work has drawn upon a number of sources of information, including the work undertaken by the Regional Planning Bodies to identify transport priorities, the planning work undertaken at sub-regional level, the work undertaken by Local Delivery Vehicles and work undertaken previously on a pan regional basis led by the Thames Gateway Strategy Unit.
- I.4 The information is being collated using a common format and attempts to relate the proposed investments to the spatial priorities identified for the Thames Gateway. A map depicting the relationship between transport and spatial priorities is being produced as part of the work.
- I.5 The initial outcome of the work highlights that progress is being made in terms of delivering transport investment in the Thames Gateway, however it

remains clear that more needs to be done if the objective of achieving sustainable communities is to be realised.

- I.6 A key issue emerging from the work to date is that of addressing delays in delivery on infrastructure. The cause of such delays needs to be the focus of the discussion at the Transport Advisory Sub Group. Particular aspects that should be considered further include the certainty of public sector funding, the availability of private sector funding (in particular considering issues related to the timing of such contributions in relation to the delivery of infrastructure to support planned growth), the scale and phasing of planning applications related to large scale developments.
- I.7 In addition the Transport Advisory Sub Group will need to consider whether the lack of funds available to support revenue investment in transport services is acting as a barrier to delivery of planned growth. It is noticeable for example, that in the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership part of the Gateway the timing of investment in public transport improvements lags behind that proposed in respect of the highway network. The extent to which this is a concern is something that the Transport Advisory Sub Group should be asked to consider.
- I.8 The work to date has highlighted the importance of ensuring that any discussion on transport priorities includes consideration of longer term investment requirements. Given the timescale associated with the development and implementation of strategic investment in transport infrastructure, there is a need to examine the case for such investment as a matter of priority.
- I.9 Principal amongst these issues is that of a Lower Thames Crossing. There is common ground amongst the statutory Regional Planning Bodies that this is an issue on which some initial work should be undertaken as a matter of some urgency. Past Government led studies, such as the ORBIT multi modal study and the study of freight movements commissioned by the Thames Gateway unit have served to emphasise the constraint that the capacity of the M25 crossing places on movements within and around the Thames Gateway.
- I.10 It is proposed that the outcome of the work to date, and the issues arising from it, form the basis for discussion at the first meeting of the Transport Advisory Sub Group.

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