

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: 23 May 2001

Subject: **New Planning Policy Guidance on Transport (PPG13)**

Report of: Director of Planning and Transport

Recommendation:

1. That the Committee welcome publication of the revised Guidance Note on Planning and Transport, PPG13, and note that it will now be used in the monitoring and review of Regional Guidance for the South East.
 2. That the Committee register disappointment that the Guidance did not provide stronger encouragement for the evolution of Transport Development Areas as key locations to demonstrate the practical application of integrated transport and land use.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 PPG13 (Transport) is one of a series of Guidance Notes on Planning and Transport produced by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, and periodically revised. Although referred to as "Guidance", they are in practice treated as a significant material consideration for planning decisions by local authorities. In effect they are statements of Government policy and local authorities are expected to adhere closely to the Guidance. The original version of PPG13 was first issued in 1994 and marked quite a radical step in the evolution of Planning Guidance. It was one of the first Government documents which sought actually to integrate transport and land use planning within a clear framework of sustainable development principles.
- 1.2 Since 1994, Government policy has significantly developed and moved forward, especially in respect of the evolution of the sustainable development agenda. Updating PPG13 was therefore necessary to take account of the development of both policy and practice over the last seven years. The draft of the revised Guidance was first published for consultation as long ago as October 1999, when of course the Assembly had no planning responsibilities. There was then a long delay until the final version of the new Guidance was published on 27 March 2001. There are several significant amendments made to the earlier draft in the final version; it is particularly relevant to note that the final version places considerable emphasis on the growing importance of Regional Planning as a means of encouraging better co-ordination of land use and transport planning and practice.

2.0 Comment

- 2.1 The new Guidance is, in overall terms, clear, concise and helpful. The 1994 Guidance contained a considerable number of ambiguities which made its practical application difficult. The new Guidance has removed much of this uncertainty. The Summary section of the Guidance Note is appended to this report and members will particularly note paragraph 6 on Objectives, and paragraphs 7 and 8 which emphasise the important role which Regional Planning must play in assisting the co-ordination of transport and land use planning.
- 2.2 Sections of the Guidance provide advice in respect of planning policies, managing travel demand and implementation. There are annexes about transport provision, parking standards and planning for specific transport modes such as aviation.
- 2.3 One of the significant changes from the draft Guidance is the relaxation of the very tight maximum parking standards originally proposed. The published Guidance still imposes significantly tighter restrictions on parking standards across a range of land uses than has previously been the case. It has, however, acknowledged widespread concern that the original proposals would have been so restrictive in respect of new development relating to city centres, that they might well have resulted in an undermining of the centres' competitiveness vis a vis existing edge of town retail areas. The latter often enjoy extensive free parking facilities and generous provision of parking spaces, as a result of past planning decisions. It is important that we do nothing that might undermine the future viability of our town and city centres, particularly as they are still facing severe competition. In some cases their future role is far from assured. New parking standards will still encourage a movement away from reliance on the car but they now offer the prospect of an evolutionary change, which can be accommodated in a more pragmatic and practical manner. The modification is therefore to be welcomed.
- 2.4 Also to be welcomed is the acceptance in the new Guidance that park-and-ride schemes can be located in the Green Belt. Park-and-ride schemes often perform an invaluable role in persuading motorists to leave their car for at least part of their journey into congested town centres and urban areas. It is, however, frequently difficult to find suitable sites for these park-and-ride schemes within the existing built-up area. In parts of the country where towns are surrounded by tight Green Belts, such as of course applies in substantial parts of South East Region, this makes the effective provision of park-and-ride sites very difficult. It is therefore very much to be welcomed that the Government has realised the degree of this problem and has now accepted that park-and-ride schemes, well designed, have a proper function and role in the Green Belt. This also serves as a timely reminder that the Green Belt was never intended to be a "No Go" area for new uses. The original purpose of the Green Belt was to act as recreational lung for towns and cities, whilst remaining substantially undeveloped. To some extent that original purpose has been eroded in recent decades by attempts to fossilise land uses. There is scope more actively to encourage a wide range of recreational and other appropriate uses of Green Belt, and it is therefore

- doubly welcome that the appropriateness of park-and-ride schemes is now properly acknowledged.
- 2.5 The Guidance also places emphasis in rural areas on supporting increased diversification of agricultural businesses. Here, however, the Guidance is rather less convincing in its definition of appropriate activities. On occasions, diversification can have significant environmental implications which may, especially cumulatively, lead to inappropriate scales of activity. This is a dimension which will therefore have to be explored further as part of the work of the Committee's new Rural Advisory Group.
- 2.6 Throughout the Guidance, emphasis is placed on the need to locate development in a manner which encourages accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking, as well as by car and lorry. It emphasises that, in both urban and rural areas, this will often mean encouraging larger uses or more intensive activity to locate in or close to local service centres. The Guidance also points out that local authorities should actively promote more sustainable travel choices by ensuring that interchange facilities are physically planned for and encouraged to develop. This element of Guidance is welcome, as well-planned and organised interchanges often provide the best location to focus intensive land use activity, in a manner which can be served by a range of transport modes. Yet, our record in this country in providing such effective interchanges has, on the whole, been poor. This contrasts with the much more effective provision that has been made in a number of other European countries in respect of interchanges, notably the Netherlands or Denmark and parts of Germany and France.
- 2.7 It is nevertheless disappointing that the Guidance did not go further in this regard and specifically encourage local authorities to focus both development and transport improvements around a number of Transport Development Areas. This concept, developed by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and others through recent research programmes, takes the logic of higher density urban development and the need to develop effective alternatives to the private car, and proposes deliberate clustering of development around appropriate interchanges. Using masterplans and high quality design standards, gradual redevelopment around these Transport Development Areas can create sufficient density development, with an attractive range of land uses, which will in themselves support a high quality and frequent public transport system. Although the Government has indicated that it supports the concept of such Transport Development Areas, it has not in practice incorporated specific guidance for local authorities into its planning policy statements. PPG13 would have been an opportunity to do so.
- 2.8 The Planning Committee should therefore point to this omission and also encourage the Government to provide specific support for the development of GDAs through improvements to the process of land assembly and specific grants through Local Transport Plans to assist in the development of the necessary transport facilities.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 Despite the reservations expressed relating to rural diversification and Transport Development Areas, the Guidance Note is in overall terms timely and valuable. It will therefore form a valuable element in the evolution of our monitoring and review arrangements for Planning Guidance in the Region.

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Director of Planning and Transport

14 May 2001

From: Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 Transport
DETR publ March 2001

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Transport Policy Context

1. Our quality of life depends on transport and easy access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services; we need a safe, efficient and integrated transport system to support a strong and prosperous economy. But the way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic is damaging our towns, harming our countryside and contributing to global warming.
2. In response to this challenge, the Government set out its policy for the future of transport in the White Paper *A new Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* (July 1998), to extend choice in transport and secure mobility in a way that supports sustainable development. The New Deal for Transport aims to deliver an integrated transport policy. This means integration:
 - Within and between different types of transport;
 - With policies for the environment;
 - With land use planning; and
 - With policies for education, health and wealth creation.
3. Land use planning has a key role in delivering the Government's integrated transport strategy. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling. Consistent application of these planning policies will help to reduce some of the need for car journeys (by reducing the physical separation of key land uses) and enable people to make sustainable transport choices. These policies are therefore part of the Government's overall approach to addressing the needs of motorists, other road and public transport users, and business by reducing congestion and pollution and achieving better access to development and facilities. They will also help to promote sustainable distribution. In this way, planning policies can increase the effectiveness of other transport policies and help maximise the contribution of transport to improving our quality of life.

Objectives

4. The objectives of this guidance are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional strategic and local level to:
 - Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
 - Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
 - Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
5. This guidance sets out the circumstances where it is appropriate to change the emphasis and priorities in provision between different transport modes, in pursuit of wider Government objectives. The car will continue to have an important part to play and for some journeys, particularly in rural areas, it will remain the only real option for travel.
6. In order to deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, local authorities should:
 - Actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport, and focus major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges;
 - Locate day to date facilities which need to be near their clients in local centres so that they are accessible by walking and cycling;
 - Accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
 - Ensure that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offers a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
 - In rural areas, locate most development for housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services in local service centres which are designated in the development plan to act as focal points for housing, transport and other services, and encourage better transport provision in the countryside;
 - Ensure that strategies in the development and local transport plan complement each other and that consideration of development plan allocations and local transport investment and priorities are closely linked;
 - Use parking policies, alongside other planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys;
 - Give priority to people over ease of traffic movement and plan to provide more road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public

transport in town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas with a mixture of land uses;

- Ensure that the needs of disabled people – as pedestrians, public transport users and motorists – are taken into account in the implementation of planning policies and traffic management schemes, and in the design of individual developments;
- Consider how best to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and seek by the design and layout of developments and areas, to secure community safety and road safety; and
- Protect sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choices for both passenger and freight movements.

Integration between Planning and Transport

7. To assist in the co-ordination of transport and land use planning and highway authorities should have regard to the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) which forms part of the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). RTSs provide the long-term strategic framework which informs development plans, local transport plans and transport operators in developing their plans and programmes. In preparing the RTS, the Regional Planning Body (RPB) should identify transport needs and integrated strategies for meeting them. The RPB will have worked closely with a wide range of transport and transport user interests and this should ensure that the RTS represents a broad consensus on the key transport issues at the regional level. Although the RTS covers a fifteen to twenty year period, it is important that it specifies the immediate five year regional transport priorities period, it is important that it specifies the immediate five year regional transport priorities within the long term strategy to assist the development of local transport plans. The RTS should take account of existing plans and programmes of transport operators, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) and Railtrack and help inform their subsequent development.
8. PPG11 on Regional Planning provides guidance on the preparation of the RTS and sets out those issues which the RTS, and more widely RPG, should cover. It also provides advice on the treatment of new regional transport investment, previously covered in PPG13 (1994). The RPB and other stakeholders in preparing RPG and RTS should take into account the policies set out in PPG13.
9. PPG12 on Development Plans provides advice about maintaining consistency between local transport plans and development plans. Separate arrangements for London are set out in Annex A. The guidance also provides advice on the treatment of transport policies in development plans. It emphasises that only those policies which are genuinely strategic should appear in structure plans/UDPs (part 1). Policies with a degree of site specificity are best dealt with at the local plan level. It further advises on the appraisal which should form part of the process of drawing up development plans.

10. Local transport plans (for authorities outside London) have a central role in co-ordinating and improving local transport provision. *Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans* (DETR March, 2000) provides advice on the transport measures which should form part of the local approach to the integration of planning and transport. The Transport Act 2000 makes the preparation of local transport plans a statutory requirement.
11. Local air quality is a key consideration in the integration between planning and transport. Local authorities are required under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality in their areas, and to designate air quality management areas (AQMAs) and draw up action plans where national policies and instruments alone appear unlikely to deliver the Government's health-based national air quality objectives. These action plans will need to be closely integrated with and reflected in local transport plans and other local and regional planning and transport strategies.