

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 8 December 2004

Subject: **Transport – Update**

Report of: Head of Regional Transport Planning

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee:

1. note the publication of the Railways Bill;
  2. express its grave concern at the announcement that Crossrail will not be serving Ebbsfleet and that it pursues this concern with the Secretary of State for Transport as a matter of urgency.
- 

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a further update on the issues of regional significance in the wake of the White Papers on transport and rail published by the Government in the summer.

**2. The Future of Rail**

- 2.1 The Railways Bill 2004 was published by the Government on 25 November. The Bill gives effect to the proposals that require primary legislation following on from the “Future of Rail”. There are three aspects of the Railway Bill that are direct interest to the Regional Assembly.
- 2.2 Part 1 of the Bill provides for the SRA to be wound up and for the SRA’s strategic and financial functions to pass to the Department for Transport and, in some cases, to devolved administrations. The Assembly’s reaction to the “Future of Rail” highlighted the importance of ensuring that the progress made following the establishment of the planning team within the SRA in improving the dialogue between the rail sector and regional planning is continues to develop and evolve.
- 2.3 Part 2 of the Bill covers the role of public authorities in the running of the rail sector. It will be under this part of the Bill that powers relating the role of

GLA/TfL in the specification of rail services will be sought. It is essential that any proposals (including those that provide for the Government to take enabling powers) take into account the Assembly's position that the Mayor for London should have undue influence on the specification of rail services operating to/from the region.

- 2.4 Part 4 of the Bill sets out procedures for modifications to the pattern of rail services and in particular the amendments required to enable a quality bus quality contract to be entered into as an alternative to an existing rail service. Providing an improved mechanism for achieving an integrated approach to the provision of bus and rail services is an important step forward.
- 2.5 The secretariat is studying the detail of the Railways Bill, and in particular the aspects identified above. The Committee will receive a further (verbal) briefing on the Bill at its meeting on 8 December.

### **3. Progress on Crossrail**

- 3.1 On 24 November Cross London Rail Links announced that, to “ensure delivery of a fast and frequent service, trains on its South Eastern section should terminate at Abbey Wood.” The implication of this announcement is that Crossrail services would **NOT** serve Ebbsfleet directly but rather through an interchange between services at Abbey Wood.
- 3.2 The Assembly has consistently emphasised the importance of ensuring that Ebbsfleet is the eastern terminus of Crossrail services in order to support delivery of the planned level of development at that location. The announcement by the Cross London Rail Links undermines this strategy and appears to be yet another example of the Government not being prepared to provide the funds required to bring forward infrastructure upon which sustainable growth is conditional.
- 3.3 The Assembly should pursue with the Secretary of State its grave concern at this announcement as a matter of urgency.

### **4. Meeting with the SRA**

- 4.1 The Assembly has been invited to attend a meeting with the Chairman of the SRA (David Quarmby) on 9 December. The aim of the meeting is to brief the Assembly and local authorities on progress with rail issues in the Thames Gateway area, and specifically on the Regional Planning Assessment and other major projects that the SRA is currently carrying out.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 Further reports on progress with issues arising from the White Papers will be brought to this Committee as appropriate.

**Martin Tugwell**  
**Head of Regional Transport Planning**  
26 November 2004

Contact: Martin Tugwell, Head of Regional Transport Planning  
T: +44 (0) 1483 555232 E: [martintugwell@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:martintugwell@southeast-ra.gov.uk)