

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

Date: 24 January 2008

Subject: **Items for Information**

1. **Mobility Management**
2. **Local Transport Bill**
3. **Motorway Service Areas**
4. **Freight**
5. **Passenger Transport Body Consultation**

Report of: See individual items

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the group note the contents of this report.

I. Mobility Management

- I.1 Work has commenced on all four work packages (and the mobility management action plan) approved by the Regional Transport Board (RTB) at its last meeting in October 2007 (see 26 October 2007 RTB papers at: <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings/rtb/2007.html>).
- I.2 Work package A: LDF and transport conformity
 - I.2.1 Following a tendering process at the end of 2007, Steer Davies Gleave has been appointed to produce this guide, designed to ensure that the transport aspects of the South East Plan (the Regional Transport Strategy) are properly reflected in statutory Local Development Frameworks.
 - I.2.2 The guidance will be signed off by an officer steering group comprising Regional Assembly officers and representatives from Districts (as Local Planning Authorities), the Local Transport Authorities, and other key stakeholders by the end of March 2008. The final guidance will be presented to district planning authorities at a workshop scheduled for May 2008.

- I.3 Work packages B and C: Rail station travel plans and integrated ticketing and travel information
 - I.3.1 The Assembly held a workshop with interested stakeholders to discuss and scope the actions required to deliver work packages B and C in November 2007. The outputs of the workshop are now being formulated into project plans for each work package, identifying key stakeholders, tasks, timescales and potential pilot projects for taking forward these work areas.
 - I.3.2 The Assembly will be considering potential pilot projects suggested by Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and other stakeholders for taking forward these work packages in the context of:
 - i) implementing the policies of the draft South East Plan (March 2006);
 - ii) delivering projects identified in the Implementation Plan (October 2006) that accompanies the draft South East Plan; and
 - iii) having regard to delivering the projects included in the Regional Transport Programme (2006 – 2016).
- I.4 Work package D: Resource centre
 - I.4.1 The consultant brief for the resource centre is currently being worked-up. It is anticipated that the resource centre will be a web-based facility that will provide a “one-stop-shop” for mobility management stakeholders to find out information on other projects taking place in the region, contact details, key publications and updates on news and events.
 - I.4.2 The practicalities of implementing this project are being worked through and it is anticipated that it will be in a position to go to tender some time in February 2008.
- I.5 Joint commission with Tourism South East: Removing barriers to South East England’s transport networks for disabled and reduced mobility passengers
 - I.5.1 As part of the Regional Assembly’s wider role in taking forward behavioural change, and in support of the region’s activities supporting the 2012 Games (considered elsewhere on this agenda), Mott McDonald has been appointed jointly by the Assembly and Tourism South East to examine the coverage of disabled access and access for reduced mobility passengers to the public transport networks in the region. This work will inform the mobility management action plan and work packages (as appropriate), and links to the 2012 Games transport strategy in the South East.
 - I.5.2 The commission includes an audit of current disabled access to the region’s public transport network; a workshop in mid-February 2008 for transport operators and disability groups to discuss and share experiences of removing

physical and behavioural barriers to public transport use; and recommendations on how to embed key principles for improving such access into the wider mobility management work programme. The project will be complete by the end of March 2008.

Fiona Thorp
Regional Planner

4 January 2008

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2. Local Transport Bill

- 2.1 On 7 November 2007, the Local Transport Bill (the Bill) had its first reading in the commons, and is currently passing through the legislative process. This Board made several comments on the draft Bill and subsequent daughter documents, which formed the basis of responses from both the Board and the Regional Planning Committee (RPC).
- 2.2 In terms of the final proposed legislation, the Government appears to have taken on board most of the comments of the Board, in particular in strengthening voluntary partnership agreements and enhancing enforcement regimes. However much of what the Board discussed had more to do with successful implementation of the bill, in particular issues surrounding funding. In response, the Government proposes to release further information on applying and delivering the aims of the Bill, and intends to hold a series of workshops in the coming months. It is important that we do not lose momentum, and continue to press the Government on issues surrounding funding mechanisms and resource implications.
- 2.3 Similarly, the Government has expressed (an in principle) willingness to invest in innovative transport solutions and programme management, albeit that distinct funding commitments are less apparent. As such, it is important that the region continues to be proactive in offering solutions to the Government, for example through the mobility management work packages (see item 1 of this report). It is anticipated that the Assembly will continue to promote these objectives, and will report any opportunities to make further representation to this Board.
- 2.4 Further information on the Bill will be presented verbally at the meeting at the Board's request.

James Renwick
Regional Planner

18 December 2007

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3. Motorway Service Areas

- 3.1 The Regional Assembly has submitted an officer response to the Highways Agency's draft policy on the provision of motorway service areas (MSAs). The response builds on, and is within the framework of, the Assembly's submission to the original policy review consultation (via the Regional Planning Committee in January 2007). The final policy has addressed all the concerns raised by the Assembly, in particular compliance with PPS6 and engagement with local authorities.
- 3.2 However, the further response does call for the final MSA policy to be explicit that the Agency will consider wider sustainable transport objectives at a local and regional level, prior to determining the impact of proposals. In particular, the Assembly draws attention to the work being undertaken on strategic bus and coach networks, which may require the use of MSAs as coach interchanges.
- 3.3 A copy of the response is attached as an annex to this document (see Annex A).

James Renwick
Regional Planner
30 November 2007

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4. Freight

- 4.1 The Assembly has continued to develop work on identifying key infrastructure requirements to enable modal shift of freight from road to rail. A critical aspect continues to be the need to provide an adequate policy basis to implement the Strategic Rail Authority's policy on inter-modal terminals. It has become increasingly clear that this particular aspect of freight policy must to be dealt with across on a pan-regional basis across the Wider South East, and requires both planning and delivery issues to be addressed. In response, the Regional Assembly and SEEDA have agreed with their respective counterparts from London and the East of England to undertake further work to build the necessary evidence base needed to assist the implementation of necessary infrastructure. In the first instance, the regional bodies are seeking clarity from both the Department for Transport, and the Department for Communities and

Local Government, on what they require from a transport and spatial planning perspective.

- 4.2 A letter to this effect has been submitted to the respective Departments, and is attached as an annex to this report (see Annex B).

James Renwick
Regional Planner
30 November 2007

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5. Passenger Transport Body Consultation

- 5.1 At the end of 2007 the Department for Transport (DfT) published a consultation document on “Options for strengthening bus passenger representation”. The consultation runs until the **17 March 2008**. The document can be viewed online at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pdf/consultations/open/buspassenger/busconsultation> .
- 5.2 The discussion document was released as part of the Local Transport Bill supporting documentation, and focused on establishing a Public Transport Users Committee. The committee is intended to create a voice for public transport users, and is proposed to have a key role in consultations, research and lobbying.
- 5.3 The main point of interest is whether a single issue bus passenger user group should be set up, like Rail's 'Passenger Focus', or whether the two should be integrated to form a multi-modal public transport users group. An officer response to the consultation may be submitted as appropriate.

Fiona Thorp
Regional Planner
7 January 2008

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Officer response to Motorway Service Area consultation

Kathryn Burgess
Spatial Planning Team
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27 November 2007

Dear Ms. Burgess

ROADSIDE FACILITIES POLICY REVIEW: CONSULTATION RESPONSE

In our response to the original consultation on this policy statement (November 2006) we called for the final version to reflect key national spatial planning principles, and for the Agency to recognise the importance of ensuring its policy fits within and complements the statutory regional and local planning policy framework.

We are pleased to note that the publication of the Roadside Facilities Policy Review (November 2007) appears to have incorporated most of our recommendations.

Based upon our previous response we have the following additional points to make in respect of the policy statement:

We welcome the emphasis placed on ensuring that roadside facilities should not become 'destinations in their own right', in particular the proposed primacy to be given to the principles of PPS6. As such we also support the Agency's reaffirmation that on-line facilities are most preferable, and such sites should only incorporate 'back access' from local roads where required for deliveries and employee access.

We are pleased that the Agency has developed the review within the principles of the Department for Transport Circular 02/2007, and as such recognise the importance of providing adequate information to local authorities to enable the need for such sites to be incorporated into local development frameworks.

The review appears to recognise the balance between preserving network performance, improving safety and retaining strategic principles. However, we believe that there is a need to give greater recognition within the final policy that in considering the need for facilities the Agency will give appropriate weight to wider local and regional objectives.

In particular, we are pleased that the Agency recognises the important role that MSAs and trunk road service areas could play both as locations for strategic park and ride and as coach interchange points. The South East England and East of England Regional Assemblies are currently examining the potential to develop the strategic inter-urban coach network in the wider South East, and are engaging with the Highways Agency in taking this work forward. We are keen to ensure that the Roadside Facilities policy recognises the strong potential that strategic park & ride and strategic coach services have in encouraging the use of more sustainable and space-efficient modes, and thus reduce traffic congestion on both strategic and local road networks.

As such, the Regional Assembly requests that the final policy is worded to ensure that the Impact Assessments required of proposals will take fully into account the contribution of proposed facilities to make a positive contribution towards meeting congestion reduction and sustainable travel objectives on the wider transport network. We are also keen to ensure that requirements for additional facilities (such as additional toilets) to serve coach interchange points are not over-onerous or a barrier to the implementation of proposals – one attraction of using MSAs as coach interchange points is the presence of already-existing high quality facilities for interchanging passengers.

If you have any queries on any aspects of the submission, please direct these to James Renwick at the Regional Assembly in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Tugwell', followed by a horizontal line.

Martin Tugwell
Director of Development

c.c Susan Stuart GOSE
 Gwyn Drake Highways Agency
 Simon Posner Confederation of Passenger Transport
 Clive King Confederation of Passenger Transport

Freight letter to Government Offices

5 December 2007

Dear

STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT TERMINALS

Planning Policy Statement 11 directs Regional Planning Bodies to “provide advice for both Local Transport Plans and Local Development Documents on the promotion of sustainable freight distribution where there is an appropriate regional or sub-regional dimension “. In particular, PPS11 in its current form requires that a Regional Spatial Strategy should identify broad locations for multi-modal freight interchanges, with key regard given to the former Strategic Rail Authority’s Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) policy (SRA 2004).

The SRFI policy suggests that there is a need to provide three to four strategic interchanges in the Greater South East. However, the policy is neither site nor location specific in terms of the where these facilities might be located. The longer term objective of the SRFI policy is that these ‘interchanges will make a major, essential, contribution to developing the national strategic rail freight network linking, freight interchanges of all types, ports and the Channel, connected by a range of competitive rail operator services’ (SRA 2004).

The evidence base underpinning the SRFI policy dates from 2001 and has not been tested through an independent Examination in Public. In addition it is highly probable that changes within the operation of the logistics industry in the intervening period of time may have implications for the potential demand for such facilities. It therefore appears timely to reconsider policy and re-examine the evidence base in support of the provision of SRFI.

Such a review would allow us to take into consideration recent policy announcements at the national level including the commitment set out in the Rail White Paper to develop a strategic freight network. It would also need to take into account the Department’s response to the Eddington review and recent changes to the track access charge regime for freight movement on the rail network. The review would also need to examine how the wider social, environmental and economic impacts of a SRFI should be taken into consideration in the development of a clearer strategic policy framework.

Cont:.....

The three regions are committed to providing a clearer policy framework at the strategic level within which specific proposals can be brought forward by the private sector. We are also committed to undertaking this work on a joint basis thereby addressing a recommendation of the Panels for our respective Examinations in Public.

We believe that updating the policy position and reviewing the evidence base will be a necessary step to enable SRFIs to be successfully brought forward. It will provide the basis on which the regions can outline policy and help identify broad locations for SRFI, based on an up to date assessment of future market trends across the Greater South East. Such an approach would be in keeping with the Panel recommendations referred to above.

We propose to commission the work required to update the evidence base that underpins the SRFI policy as it currently stands, and early discussions with you on Policy would help scope the range of issues that require to be considered. We propose to carry out this work on a joint basis and welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the relevant Government Departments (primarily the Department for Transport and Communities and Local Government) as well as representatives from Network Rail and the Highways Agency.

We would be grateful for your support for this initiative. We propose holding an initial meeting to scope the nature of the review in the near future and would welcome your participation in that meeting. The initial contact is James Renwick on 01483 555205 or jamesrenwick@southeast-ra.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely