

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND  
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD**

Date: 24 January 2008

Subject: **Olympic Transport Plan**

Report of: Regional Planner  
South East England Regional Assembly

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Records its disappointment and concern that the Olympic Transport Plan fails to give adequate consideration to the importance of transport connections between the Olympic sites and the South East England region;
- ii) Agrees the response to the Olympic Delivery Authority attached at Annex A on behalf of the South East Partnership.

**Purpose of Report:**

To brief the Board on the key issues arising from the publication of the first Olympic Transport Plan and to seek approval for a response on behalf of the South East Partnership.

**Key Issues:**

The Olympic Transport Plan was published in October 2007 following the ODA's Consultation Draft of autumn 2006. The Board submitted its joint response to the Consultation Draft (with the South East Partnership for the 2012 Games) in February 2007.

The key concerns in respect of the first Olympic Transport Plan continue to centre on the lack of apparent consideration of issues of strategic access between the Olympic venues and the adjoining region. This is particular concerning given the significance of South East England both as a gateway to the UK and as a base for visitors attending the Games. In addition there remains deep concern at the lack of attention given to issues of access associated with the Olympic venue at Eton Dorney.

## **I. Context**

- I.1. Following the United Kingdom's successful 2012 Olympic Games bid of July 2005, efforts have been centred on delivering the services and infrastructure that will be critical in delivering "The Best Games Ever" for London.
- I.2. The South East has been highly active in stepping up to the significant challenges, but also opportunities, presented by the 2012 Games, the most notable success to date being the recent announcement that the Team GB training camp will be at Aldershot. When coupled with the South East's status as the birthplace of the Paralympic Games movement, centred on Stoke Mandeville, there is now an unrivalled opportunity to promote the South East as a true Olympic and Paralympic region in support of the 2012 Games
- I.3. The challenges and opportunities extend to transport and infrastructure. This Board, working alongside the South East Partnership for the 2012 Games (SEP2012) submitted the region's response to the Consultation Draft of the Olympic Transport Plan in February 2007.
- I.4. The first Olympic Transport Plan (the first of three iterations to be published in 2007, 2009 and 2011 respectively) was published in autumn 2007. This was considered by SEP2012 at their meeting in December 2007. The broad consensus at the meeting was that while the day-to-day engagement of ODA officers has been positive and much appreciated, the Transport Plan itself is deeply disappointing and cause for concern. In particular it is concerning to note that in many respects it has not significantly moved forward the proposals of the Consultation Draft.
- I.5. Our detailed examination of the Transport Plan has identified a number of concerns, specifically:
  - i) The lack of recognition of the region's critical roles both as the key International Gateway and host for visitors attending the Games: by the ODA's own figures, 21% of spectators will be staying in the South East and the movements of these spectators to the venues requires management on a pan-regional basis, not just London;
  - ii) The lack of integration of any significant component of the South East's transport strategy or transport priorities related to the 2012 Games as set out in the February 2007 submission;
  - iii) The lack of appreciation on the part of the ODA as to their role in helping project promoters address the challenges in delivering the infrastructure in the region identified as necessary to support the smooth running of the Games;
  - iv) The lack of explicit support for the extension of some of the "Olympic Javelin" rail services from Ebbsfleet to Ashford;
  - v) The lack of consideration given to using the Olympic Transport Network (in part) to facilitate express coach and bus services to the venues from the Strategic Park and Ride sites hinted at in the Transport Plan;

- vi) The lack of proposals for extending 2012 Games branding beyond the few locations identified in Transport Plan. The region has identified the need to apply the branding to key gateways in the region such as Gatwick Airport, Southampton Airport, Dover and Southampton Ports, and Ebbsfleet and Ashford International rail stations;
- vii) The failure to acknowledge the potential add value of supporting delivery of improved public transport access to Heathrow Airport, in particular support for the Airtrack proposal;
- viii) The inappropriateness of Taplow rail station to serve as a strategic entry point for Olympic family spectators to Eton Dorney; while suitable for local movements the region's consistent advice has been that facilities at Windsor, Maidenhead and Slough rail stations are more appropriate and have the capability to handle the throughput of spectators;
- ix) The need for Southampton airport and port, and rail services on the South West Main Line to support links from London and the South East into Weymouth, the main 2012 Games sailing venue.
- x) The need for work on integrated ticketing and information to cover locations outside London as well as Greater London, and the need for this region to be involved in this work from the outset.

## **2. Next Steps**

- 2.1. Members are invited to consider the consultation response attached at Annex I and are recommended to approve this for submission to the Olympic Delivery Authority on behalf of the SEP2012. The previous response to the ODA of February 2007 is attached for reference.
- 2.2. ODA officials have been invited to make a presentation to the Board, and this will provide Members with an opportunity to explore with them ways of addressing the concerns set out in the region's response

**Martin Tugwell**  
**Director of Development**

14 January 2008

Contact: Andy Mak, Planning Manager  
T: 01483 555215 E: [andymak@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:andymak@southeast-ra.gov.uk)



XX January 2008

Mr David Higgins  
Chief Executive  
Olympic Delivery Authority  
One Churchill Place  
Canary Wharf  
London  
E14 5LN

Dear David

**SOUTH EAST PARTNERSHIP COMMENTS: OLYMPIC TRANSPORT PLAN, OCTOBER 2007**

The South East Partnership submitted its advice in respect of the draft Olympic Transport Plan in February 2007 as part of the consultation process undertaken by the ODA.

Our response focused on three themes: firstly, the institutional and delivery context in the South East; secondly, the transport strategy for the region that we believe is necessary to support a successful Games in London; and finally, the need for the ODA to closely engage with the transport delivery sub-group of the South East Partnership to ensure that delivery policies and priorities were aligned to the maximum extent.

While appreciative of the willingness of ODA officials to engage with us on a day-to-day basis, we are deeply concerned at the lack of evolution in the Transport Plan since the consultation draft. The lack of serious engagement with the authorities seeking to identify the most appropriate access arrangements for Eton Dorney is particularly concerning. We also remain concerned about the status of the "Olympic Javelin" service to Ashford, which also remains at best unclear. I cannot over emphasise the need to work with the agencies in the region on integrated ticketing and information for the Games if we are to collectively ensure that all visitors to the Games can enjoy a seamless travel and entrance process to the London Venues.

It is appreciated that the Olympic Transport Plan will continue to evolve over time and in the light of experience of the 2008 Games. However, the reality is that in order for us to ensure the transport infrastructure in our region provides the level of service required we must be committing resources to addressing the issues identified by this region now.

We are deeply committed to ensuring that South East England is able to play its own part in ensuring that the 2012 Games are a success not only for London but for the entire country. We believe that our previous advice on transport and infrastructure matters provides a solid foundation on which we can begin to engage constructively.

I look forward to developing our working relationship rapidly over the coming months so that we may achieve this common objective and enjoy the 'best ever Games'.

Yours

**Pam Alexander**  
**Chair**  
**South East Partnership for the 2012 Games**

**South East Partnership for the 2012 Games  
South East Regional Transport Board**

**Response to the First Olympic Transport Plan:  
January 2008**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The South East notes the publication of the Olympic Transport Plan (the “Transport Plan”) in October 2007 as a key stage in the process of delivering the transport services and infrastructure required to support “the best Games ever”.
- 1.2 The South East recognises the efforts and consultation process that has been undertaken by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in development this first iteration of the Plan. We also recognise the engagement undertaken by ODA officials with the South East Partnership’s Transport and Infrastructure sub-group and look forward to continuing this engagement throughout the lead up to the Games. However we are deeply concerned that the content of the Transport Plan fails to address the key issues identified in the region’s advice submitted to the ODA.

**2. Context: South East England Submission February 2007**

- 2.1 The region’s advice put forward our advice in respect of the transport strategy for the region necessary to support the 2012 Games. The key elements of the strategy are:
- i) The delivery of AirTrack (Heathrow to Staines rail link) at the earliest opportunity;
  - ii) The development of a strategic coach and express bus network in the Thames Valley, incorporating High Wycombe Coachway, Windsor Park and Ride and, central to the concept, high quality bus services to Eton Dorney for the duration of the Games;
  - iii) Improved transport ticketing and information for the 2012 Games, with close working relationships with both the ODA and Transport for London, supported by Wireless Broadband roll-out;
  - iv) Public realm enhancements, to be focused on public transport interchanges (such as the proposed Olympic Interchanges), and a programme of branding and enhancement at the key International Gateways and transport corridors.
- 2.2 This programme is designed to maximise the legacy of the Games for the South East, and to maximise the potential of delivering a “low carbon Games” in the meantime.
- 2.3 Our advice placed these schemes within the context of a comprehensive strategy that complemented proposals being developed for within the Greater London area.

### **3. Comments on the First Olympic Transport Plan**

- 3.1 It is important to remember that the region is second only to Greater London in terms of the extent to which it is expected to accommodate both UK spectators (16%) and overseas visitors (21%) to the Games.
- 3.2 In this context it is deeply disappointing to note the lack of progress in integrating the region's advice as part of the Olympic Transport Plan. We continue to emphasise the need to give urgent attention to working on a joint basis to identify the strategic linkages between the region and London. We also emphasise the need to work with the region in developing specific proposals to deal with the access requirements associated with the Olympic venue located at and also to Eton Dorney. We remain convinced that more can, and should, be done to maximise the effectiveness of mechanisms such as the Olympic Route Network and Javelin rail services to link those travelling from the South East to Games venues. While the focus for much of the Transport Plan is understandably on the access needs within London, we continue to be concerned that the pressures on the strategic linkages to and from the South East are still not being given adequate consideration in the Transport Plan.
- 3.2 We welcome the work underway to plan for the "Olympic Javelin" rail services and look forward to having the opportunity to work closely with the ODA in finalising the proposals. We believe it is important that a limited number of Javelin services are run through to Ashford during the period of the Games on the basis that this will widen access for visitors to public transport services.
- 3.3 Although we acknowledge that the Transport Plan for the Eton Dorney Venue is still evolving, we continue to be of the view that Taplow rail station is entirely inappropriate as the primary public transport interchange for services to the venue. Our advice continues to be that services in support of the venue should be concentrated on more appropriate locations such as Slough, Windsor and Reading. Not only is such a strategy likely to be more effective for managing the strategic movements to and from the venue, it would have a greater legacy benefit.
- 3.4 We continue to consider it crucial that the ODA support the proposal to construct a Park and Ride facility at Windsor. The proposal is supported by the Regional Transport Board and a proportion of the funding required has been identified from the region's own funds. In addition the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has committed substantial funds to take forward the detailed development of the proposal. The lack of explicit support for this proposal from the ODA casts doubt on the project that may ultimately delay its delivery.
- 3.5 We would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the ODA in the development of connections from the Olympic Route Network into the region. In particular we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how our work on developing a network of strategic coach services in the region can be related to the ODA's work on bus and coach services. We would also

welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the ODA in ensuring that proposals are brought forward that recognise the significance of Southampton Airport, together with the Ports of Southampton and Portsmouth, as gateways for visitors en route to the Olympic regatta venue at Weymouth.

- 3.6 Overall, we remain deeply concerned at what we believe is the overly London-centric focus of the Transport Plan. The failure to reflect the region's significance as a gateway to the UK and the base for so many visitors to the Games is a serious flaw in the structure of the Plan. Failure to address this weakness at this stage will make the task of ensuring the transport infrastructure is in place in time all the more difficult. We look forward to working with your officials on the matters discussed in this response, and to the ODA's support for the key elements of infrastructure that form the basis of the region's advice.

**South East Partnership for the 2012 Games**  
**South East England Regional Transport Board**  
January 2008

Contact: Andy Mak  
South East Partnership for the 2012 Games  
(Transport and Infrastructure Sub-Group)  
T: 01483 555 215 E: [andymak@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:andymak@southeast-ra.gov.uk)