

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND  
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD**

Date: 15 May 2008

Subject: **Regional Delivery Plan**

Report of: Director of Development  
South East England Regional Assembly

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Endorse the preparation of the Regional Delivery Plan;
- ii) Consider the content of the Regional Delivery Plan at its next meeting;
- iii) Welcome the commitment by Government to retain and expand the scope of the Regional Funding Allocation process;

**Purpose of the Report**

To advise members on the current thinking in respect of the preparation of the Regional Delivery Plan.

## **I. Context**

- I.1 The region's input into last year's Comprehensive Spending Review set out the importance of working towards the development of a single Regional Delivery Plan. The impetus for this lay in the acknowledgement of the benefits of greater alignment of the implementation dimension of the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy.
- I.2 The publication of 'Prosperous Places: Taking Forward the Review of the Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration' in March of this year outlined the Government's proposals to change regional governance arrangements in England.
- I.3 Under the proposals the statutory role of the Regional Planning Body would pass from the Regional Assembly to SEEDA (as the Regional Development Agency). SEEDA would be responsible for leading the preparation of a new Regional Strategy. This would see the South East Plan and Regional Economic Strategy brought together into a single integrated strategy for the region.
- I.4 Government has set out its expectation that the Regional Strategy will influence the policies, plans and investment decisions of central Government departments and public agencies, including the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Learning and Skills Council, the Technology Strategy Board and Natural England.
- I.5 While SEEDA will be responsible for preparing the Regional Strategy, it is explicit that the task has to involve Local Authorities throughout the process. The Government's proposals state that a forum of local authority leaders, representing all local authorities in the region, would sign off the draft Regional Strategy and help hold the RDA and its regional delivery partners to account.
- I.6 The consultation document also sets out the Government's proposals in respect of the Regional Funding Allocation process. It notes that the 2005-6 RFA exercise, which included transport, housing and economic development budgets, was very well received by regional stakeholders. The consultation document confirms Government's commitment to a second, expanded, round of RFA advice.
- I.7 The Government intends to launch this second round later in the summer. Further guidance is expected on the scope of the RFA exercise however it is already clear that the Government will once again seek the region's advice on strategic priorities for investment. It is also clear that the Government will seek the views of the region on how the money included within the RFA might be moved between funding streams to help deliver agreed regional objectives.
- I.8 The consultation document encourages a greater focus on delivery. It states that Government is considering whether there should be a requirement for a delivery plan setting out the actions and investment priorities, and the nature of

accountability arrangements for such a plan. It is this dimension of the consultation document that forms the focus of this paper.

## **2. Focusing on Delivery**

- 2.1 Our experience as a region has highlighted the importance to be attached to ensuring that the delivery dimension is given increased emphasis. The Board's approach to prioritisation has been predicated on the basis of ensuring that the funds available are targeted in supporting delivery of the objectives set out in the regional policy framework – the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 2.2 The importance attached to delivery by the consultation document is something that we should strongly welcome. More importantly the document provides us with the flexibility to promote a solution for the region that best suits our needs, rather than having to apply a 'one-size fits all' approach.
- 2.3 In looking to the future it will be important for the region to build upon our success to date in achieving greater alignment between planning and delivery. This Board has been a key part of that success. It is therefore envisaged that this Board will continue to exist and play a key role in advising on the allocation of funds as part of any future regional governance arrangements.

## **3. The Regional Delivery Plan**

- 3.1 Our initial thinking on the focus and structure of the single Regional Delivery Plan has evolved.
- 3.2 We now envisage the following arrangements forming a central part of regional planning in the future:
  - i) An implementation framework – which will form an integral part of the Regional Strategy and which turns the policies into a set of agreed outcomes. As with the current crop of implementation plans this framework would need to set out in broad terms who needs to be involved in delivering the Regional Strategy's policies, what needs to happen and when it needs to happen. The time horizon for the implementation framework would match that of the Regional Strategy – i.e. 15-20 years.
  - ii) The Regional Delivery Plan – this will use the context set by the implementation framework to produce an action plan that whose time horizon is shorter – typically 3-5 years. The Regional Delivery Plan will be the mechanism for identifying investment priorities at the regional level and for then ensuring that the funds available through the RFA are targeted in the most effective way to deliver the objectives agreed and

set out in the Regional Strategy. Feedback derived through the monitoring process will enable the investment priorities to be adjusted if required. The time horizon of the Regional Delivery Plan relates well to that of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

- 3.3 The primary focus of this Board's work is to advise on how the funds available for investment might be best targeted to deliver the policy framework set out at the regional level. This Board will therefore have a key role to play in helping shape and monitor the success of the Regional Delivery Plan.
- 3.4 Our attention must now focus on preparing for the second round of RFA advice. We have an established regional policy framework – set out in the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy. We also have two implementation plans at the regional. We will now use these documents to produce our first Regional Delivery Plan so that it can form the basis of this region's submission on RFA later this year.
- 3.5 The intention is to prepare a draft of the Regional Delivery Plan over the course of the next 2-3 months. This should be possible given the point from which we are starting. The draft of the Regional Delivery Plan will then be consulted on over the course of the summer and early autumn. A revised version of the Regional Delivery Plan will then be produced in time to inform the RFA submission.
- 3.6 The advice of this Board on the content of the Regional Delivery Plan will be sought at its next meeting.

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8 May 2008

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