

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Date: 14 September 2007

Subject: **Regional Transport Board, 13 July 2007**

Report of: Chairman of the Regional Transport Board

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report.

**Purpose of Report:**

To update the Executive Committee on the meeting of the Regional Transport Board held on 13 July 2007.

**1. Meeting on the 13 July 2007**

- 1.1 The Board thanked Pam Palmer for her contributions to the Board, as she was retiring after this meeting. It also welcomed new members Cllr. Cec Tallack, and Cllr. Tony Page following the May elections.
- 1.2 As part of the work of advising on the Regional Funding Allocation the Board has recently been adopting approaches to how it will address significant cost increases to schemes. The Board adopted a protocol to address this issue at the meeting, which will now be used to inform both promoters and the Board of how to address these issues in the future.
- 1.3 The Board then moved on to discuss the latest programme information. This included a discussion on the announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) that exceptional maintenance bids would now be funded through the RFA. Currently there is no clear guidance and the Board agreed that there was an urgent need for clarification from DfT.
- 1.4 The Board was also informed that work was still underway with regard to Bexhill to Hastings Link Road and A23 Handcross to Warninglid, the outcome of which would reported to the Board at the next meeting in October. A number of other cost increases were also reported, and action was agreed to

either approve or address the issues as part of the refresh of priorities later this year.

- 1.5 The Board was also updated on the financial support by regional bodies to the development of schemes across the region, which is approaching five hundred thousand pounds. It agreed a process for Assembly contributions being authorised in the future by Chair of the Board.
- 1.6 A brief update was given to the Board on the Transport Innovation Fund Productivity strand. Whilst the approach to how to maximise any opportunity to secure funds should be formulated, it would be unrealistic to expect significant additional funding as a matter of course, due to the likely draw on the fund. It was also recognised that smaller, more local schemes are likely to struggle to obtain funding. A Task and Finish Group has been set up to report back to the Board in due course.
- 1.7 The Board then received two presentations. The first was made by the Port of Dover, and covered the growth in future demand for port facilities and the planned expansion of the Port. The Board discussed the issues around the expansion plans, how this would relate to the Ports Policy Review, and also the potential demand on landside infrastructure. The second was by the Highways Agency on Operation Stack. This narrated the progress to date on addressing the issues caused by Operation Stack, and also the progress being made in managing this issue.
- 1.8 The Board has long held a desire to assist with the development of Smarter Choices. A paper was presented setting out a criteria for selecting proposals for funding and the other work underway by the Assembly. The Board noted that although the capital funding for such schemes may come via the RFA, there is a need to consider potential funding sources for revenue funding. There was a strong recognition of the need for a partnership approach to this type of project development.
- 1.9 The Board then moved on to an update on Thames Gateway Sub-Region. Work is ongoing to arrive at a prioritised list of transport schemes which will facilitate delivery in the whole of the Thames Gateway, building upon the Board's prioritisation process. Work will continue on this over the summer, and the outcome of which will be reported at the next Board meeting in October.
- 1.10 Building on the Sub-regional theme a joint presentation was made by Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council on the work which had been carried out in the South Hampshire area. This illustrated the level of progress that can be achieved when adjoining authorities work together on common issues.
- 1.11 The most significant piece of work for the Board in the coming year is the refresh of priorities in 2008. The Board agreed a number of issues related to gaining a better understanding of the finances of already prioritised schemes to ensure that the maximum use of available funding can be made. The Board will sign off the process at the meeting in October.

1.12 Finally the Board discussed a response to the Local Transport Bill consultation. This focused on the need to ensure that local authorities have a variety of controls and actions to improve bus use/services. At the current time there was a perception that the draft Bill sets out a 'one size fits all' approach, and there was a need for it to recognise that the need for a suite of options to suit different issues in different locations.

**Cllr Nick Skellett**  
**Chairman of the Regional Transport Board**

14 August 2007