

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION GROUP**

**25 April 2006**

**ACTION NOTE**

Attendees:

Paul Bevan	South East England Regional Assembly (Chairman)
Martin Tugwell	South East England Regional Assembly
Andy Mak	South East England Regional Assembly
Andy Barton	South East England Regional Assembly
Mick Sutch	Kent County Council
Bob Wilkins	East Sussex County Council
Mike Ford	Highways Agency
David Cooper	Government Office for the South East
George Burnett	Surrey County Council
Gary Bartlett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Owen South	Oxfordshire County Council
Pat Baxter	Reading Borough Council
Julian Lomas	Portsmouth City Council
Mike Link	West Sussex County Council
Geoff Walters	Medway Council
Iain Reeve	Hampshire County Council
Gary Bartlett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Peter Brunskill	Southampton City Council
Paul Hudson	SEEDA
Jon Freer	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Kevin Whiteside	Milton Keynes Council
Liz Motherwell	Slough Council
Chris Wells	Isle of Wight Council

**1. Apologies**

Andrew Renaut	Brighton & Hove City Council
Andy Roberts	Government Office for the South East
Peter Mann	Oxfordshire County Council

**2. Action Note of the Last Meeting**

2.1 The Action Note of the meeting of 11 January was approved without amendment.

**3. Matters Arising**

3.1 Olympics – update on work

- 3.1.1 The Group were informed that the consultant's report looking at infrastructure opportunities associated with the Olympics had been received and following final checking by the Regional Olympic Co-ordinating Group, it would be published on the Assembly website. A regional workshop event was to be held at Sandown Park Race Course on Tuesday 2 May 2006 at which stakeholders would have the opportunity to comment on the infrastructure proposals identified by the consultants as representing opportunities to progress due to the Olympics. It was acknowledged that there were a range of investment requirements associated with the Olympics, however the five priorities had been identified on the basis that increase emphasis need to be given to them in order to ensure that they are available in time for 2012.
- 3.1.2 The five priorities identified are:
- Airtrack – improving public transport access to Heathrow Airport;
  - The Wi-Fi region – bringing forward SEEDA's aspiration for a wireless region from 2016 to 2012;
  - Thames Valley Strategic Bus and Coach Network – linking in with the need to improve public transport access to Dorney Lake;
  - Public realm enhancements – comprising three elements: improvements to public realm in major urban areas so that they can feature as locations for public events during the Olympics; "greening" and tidying up the strategic transport corridors serving London; enhancement of the international gateways in the region;
  - Thames Basin Heaths – opportunity to implement a world class solution to managing pressures on the environment while enabling development and enhanced visitor access.
- 3.1.3 Subsequent to the regional workshop, the transport and infrastructure sub-group of the ROCG would be asked to ensure that maximum opportunity is taken to progress these proposals. It was emphasised that there is no additional funding available to support their delivery. However identification of the linkage between these proposals and the Olympics should be used as further weight to the argument that they should be delivered as part of the legacy of the Olympics.

## 3.2 Rail Prospectus Update

- 3.2.1 The brief will be finalised shortly enabling work on this project to begin. The Assembly has commissioned an analysis of historic ticket data that has looked at travel patterns in relation to the spatial strategy set out in the South East Plan. This has highlighted a number of interesting movement patterns, one that traditionally have not been picked up by the rail industry, who undertake their analysis on the basis of rail routes. The report from the research is available on the Assembly website.

**ACTION: Secretariat to email the final brief for the Rail Prospectus to the Group.**

## 4. Forward Programme

### 4.1 Review of Prioritisation Methodology.

4.1.1 The Group was updated on the work undertaken on reviewing the questionnaire used to collect information from delivery agencies for input into the prioritisation methodology. A workshop of the Transport Advisory Group had discussed at great length the key issues arising from the earlier work on prioritisation. A key outcome of the workshop was the importance of ensuring that the policy compatibility questions focus on the contribution of specific proposals to delivering the outcomes defined by regional policy documents.

4.1.2 A revised version of the questionnaire was circulated to the Group and formed the focus of a detailed discussion. Key points arising from that discussion were:

- To stress the importance of updating the guidance notes included on the questionnaire as these will be critical in assisting delivery agencies completing them;
- To stress the importance of ensuring that the questions relating to policy compatibility are objective in their treatment of each issue;
- Endorsement of the focus given to relating information to desired outcomes;
- To stress the importance of staying focused on the regional/sub-regional level and avoid seeking information that is more local in nature;
- Further consideration needs to be given to the issue of weighting as applied to individual questions on the policy compatibility and the overall balance of weighting across the questionnaire;
- To emphasise the importance of including a specific question in respect of safety issues.

4.1.3 The Group endorsed the proposed approach to dealing with “corridor/linked” schemes; promoters would be able to identify linkages between schemes on the questionnaire and this would be flagged up in the information presented to the RTB. This approach would also enable cross border/inter regional schemes to be flagged to the RTB.

4.1.4 After an extended debate the Group agreed that proposals specifically targeting safety related issues needed to be separately identified to the RTB. It was accepted that in the majority of cases proposals for major schemes would address a number of policy objectives. However evidence from the local transport authorities supported the view that the policy impact of safety related schemes tended was more narrowly focused.

4.1.5 There was also a debate on the issue of so-called “small majors” – those schemes that cost in the region of between £5m-£15m. There was a concern amongst some authorities that the benefit of these schemes might not be properly reflected within the prioritisation process. However an analysis of the work on prioritisation so far tended to suggest that this concern was

more a perceived as opposed to real issue. A review of the results showed that a number of smaller “major schemes” had emerged as high priorities. This tended to suggest that the scale of the scheme was immaterial and a scheme would emerge as priority for investment on its own merits. It was agreed that this issue would be kept under review as work on prioritisation progressed.

**ACTION: The prioritisation questionnaire be updated in light of the comments received from the Group;**

## 4.2 Identification of Spatial Priorities

4.2.1 The Group discussed the extent to which the RTB should provide guidance to delivery agencies on potential spatial priorities for the allocation of funds available as part of the Regional Funding Allocation. While the Group endorsed the principle of the RTB providing some guidance on this issue, they emphasised the importance of providing stability in terms of the guidance provided.

**ACTION: The principle of the RTB providing guidance on overall spatial priorities to delivery agencies is supported when identifying priorities for investment in the period post 2010/11.**

## 5. Major Scheme Funding

5.1 The Group discussed the contents of a paper circulated in advance of the meeting. Key points expressed during the ensuing discussion were:

- Concern that the requirement for scheme promoters to fund at least 10% of the total cost may disadvantage smaller authorities, particularly Unitary Authorities and may preclude proposals coming forward that would be essential to support planned growth;
- Concern that the reference to seeking a higher contribution in those instances where a scheme has wider benefits may create delays in scheme delivery;
- Support for the proposed changes to the funding of preparatory costs;
- Support for the proposed arrangements for the allocation of risk in instances where scheme costs exceeded the original estimate;
- The importance of emphasising to Government its role in providing a clear and stable policy context within which specific proposals are developed, reflecting the fact that changes in policy emphasis during the development of a proposal can increase scheme cost and lead to delay in delivery.

**ACTION: Secretariat to produce a draft report for consideration by the RTB drawing on the points raised by the Group.**

## 6. Scheme Progress Monitor

- 6.1 The Group agreed that in addition to providing advice on regional priorities for investment it was important that the RTB monitored progress with the delivery of those priorities. To that end it was agreed that this Group would have as a standing item on its agenda the need to review scheme progress. The expectation was that the monitoring process would be done on a “reporting by exception” basis. Where appropriate concerns identified by this Group would be reported, together with a recommendation for consideration by the RTB.
- 6.2 During the ensuing discussion, the Group identified the following areas of concern:
- M4 Junction 11 – this proposal had reached a critical stage. A number of statutory processes were time limited and those limits would be reached within a matter of weeks. The RTB had been asked to offer a view on this proposal in summer 2005, however in the absence of a clear decision by Government there was a strong probability that delivery would be delayed by a substantial period of time bringing with an increase in scheme costs;
  - A21 corridor schemes – it was noted that in the absence of a response to the region’s advice on Regional Funding Allocations delivery agencies were unclear as to which schemes they should give priority to in allocating design resources. The implication is that some schemes may already be incurring delays in their delivery programmes;
  - A2 corridor schemes – it was noted that the HA was currently undertaking a review of costs for proposals on this corridor; again the practical implication of this might be for individual schemes to incur delay in their delivery programme;
  - Milton Keynes Public Transport – concern was expressed that the DfT contribution towards this scheme had yet to be confirmed.

**ACTION: It was agreed that these issues would be brought to the attention of the RTB at its next meeting and that the Board should seek to raise them with the Secretary of State at the earliest possible opportunity.**

## 7. Dates of future meetings:

5 July 2006  
13 October 2006

[Note: all meetings to be held between 2:00pm and 4:00pm]

Venues for future meetings to be confirmed in due course.

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