



**DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
PUBLIC EXAMINATION**

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION
FOR**

SESSION C: INTRA-REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Question 7

Do the strategy and policies sufficiently recognise the differences that exist across the region, including between urban, suburban and rural areas?

1. The draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is a partial review of Regional Planning Guidance 9 (RPG9) and as such, the spatial strategy and policies remain unaltered. The key driver of RPG9 is the delivery of an urban renaissance through the integration of land use and transport provision.
2. Achieving a more sustainable pattern of development is dependent on accepting that the transport system within the South East is a resource that has a finite capacity at any point in time. The focus of the spatial strategy on delivering an urban renaissance will encourage and support a rebalancing of both the structure and the use of the transport system which is essential if better use is to be made of this finite resource. This rebalancing will positively contribute to enhancing accessibility and reducing social exclusion, important issues for rural, suburban and urban areas alike and which the hubs and spokes concept underpins this.
3. The objectives of the draft RTS have been based around sub-regions, drawn from those identified in RPG9. The characteristics of each sub-region vary and include areas of regeneration, areas of economic success as well as major areas of growth. The draft RTS has sought to provide a transport perspective of this wider policy framework. In doing so, the hubs and spokes concept supports the development of a more polycentric structure within the region. This approach encourages a rebalancing of the transport system to favour investment in modes and infrastructure other than the private car.
4. Whilst the need to support an urban renaissance has been the focus of the draft RTS, the Hubs and Spokes concept is as applicable to rural and suburban areas as to urban areas. This is particularly appropriate in tailoring transport requirements and investment to the context of more local economic settlements and transport networks in a way that encourages a more sustainable pattern of development and activity. The draft RTS has identified a number of regionally significant transport hubs within the region as the focus of regional transport investment and major economic development. It is not appropriate for the draft RTS to be specific on the location of hubs and spokes at the sub-regional or local level. This is most appropriately undertaken through the Local Transport Plan system and sub-regional working, for which the draft RTS provides a policy framework.
5. Integral to the approach contained within the draft RTS is the Mobility Management concept (Policies T1 and T11). In terms of managing a resource that has a finite capacity, Mobility Management reflects the need to manage travel demand more positively, so that, over time improved travel choice reduces our dependence on the car, yet ensures the level of accessibility to services and facilities is maintained.

6. No one solution is applicable to the whole of the region, be that urban, suburban and rural. Outputs from the Strategic Transport Model (STM) confirm the need for a different policy approach between sub-regions to achieve the best outcome for transport policy in the region. What the draft RTS proposes is a transport interpretation of the spatial strategy (hubs and spokes) and management of the system (mobility management), to deliver the more sustainable patterns of development and travel RPG9 seeks.

Question 8

Is the treatment of rural transport and traffic appropriate for regional guidance?

7. In developing the policy framework within the draft RTS, our remit was to provide added value to the existing policy frameworks at the national level. Account was taken of guidance provided at the national level in Policy Planning Guidance 13 (PPG13): Transport and the Rural White Paper and through the guidance on Local Transport Plans. The context set by this guidance highlights the need to:
 - Help promote social inclusion;
 - Reduce isolation by improving access to services;
 - Ensure services (jobs, shopping, cultural, and community) are sited at the most accessible locations or where accessibility can be improved as a result of policies in the RTS or Local Transport Plans;
 - Encourage service providers to work together to deliver transport more economically;
 - Consider enhanced accessibility for residents, workers, tourists and visitors; and
 - Consider the potential for cycling and walking in combination with public transport.
8. As the RTS is a partial review of the existing RPG9 document, the transport policy framework has to be set within the context of the spatial strategy that is already in place. In Chapter 5 of RPG9 (Quality of Life in Town and Country) there are a number of policies already in existence, that deal with rural issues and which need to be read in conjunction with the policies in the draft RTS. The policies are Q7 – Rural Development and Q8 – Sustaining Rural Communities (Annex A). In brief, these policies seek to ensure the vitality and viability of rural areas is maintained through development to meet the economic and social needs of local people and visitors and provision of services on a more equitable and local basis. In particularly policy Q8 b (i) requires regional partners and local authorities to develop innovative approaches to managing travel demand in rural areas.
9. The draft RTS complements this existing policy framework by highlighting on the one key issue that has been identified as being regionally specific; the need to give greater focus on the development of locally based innovative public transport solutions to rural access. This reflects that within the region the high level of car

ownership within the rural community gives rise to accessibility issues that are more localised.

10. Also to be read conjunction with the RTS is policy TSR7 from the proposed alternations to RPG9 for Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation (Annex A). This policy requires local authorities to draw on the mobility management context within the draft RTS to address the travel demand impacts arising from visitor pressures associated with tourism, sport and recreational activities. Poor visitor management can lead to adverse environmental pressures, and needs to be managed accordingly. This policy focuses the tourism and recreation sector on the need to consider the impacts of these types of activities on travel demand and supports the development of visitor management plans to manage this demand. It is particularly relevant to rural areas where tourism and recreation are increasingly becoming an integrated part of the rural economy.
11. We recognise in the draft RTS that for the foreseeable future the car will be the dominant mode of transport in the rural areas, and that there is no single model for delivering flexible and responsive transport services in diverse rural communities. Drawing on the policy framework in RPG9 and the draft Regional Strategy for Tourism, Related Sport and Recreation, the rural transport context is well defined. Accordingly, the draft RTS does not seek to repeat these policies or existing national/local rural transport policy.
12. In applying transport policy in rural areas reference should also be made to the hubs and spokes (T5 and T6), mobility management (T11) and travel planning (T14) policies in the draft RTS. These can and should be applied at the local level to assist in managing the impacts of increasing travel demand in rural areas and also to enhance access to local, sub-regional and regional transport hubs.
13. The development of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which will consider rural and urban issues in the context of a revised regional strategy, will provide the opportunity to review the complexity of issues associated with rural accessibility on an integrated basis.

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RPG9 Policies

Annex A

Q7 – Rural Development

A multi-purpose countryside should be secured and where necessary investment and renewal in rural areas should be encouraged. The quality and character of the rural environment should be maintained and enhanced, while securing necessary change to meet the economic and social needs of local people and visitors. Special consideration should be given to the economic and social needs of the Rural Priority Areas.

a Development plans should:

- i Encourage investment in rural towns and villages to help provide and maintain a range of local services, cultural facilities and employment opportunities for the local community;
- ii Encourage farm based diversification to allow the development of alternative sources of income and employment for those in rural areas. In particular, initiatives which would add value to the agricultural product of the farm, provide for tourism, leisure and cultural activities or other appropriate economic activities, should be promoted. Local authorities should ensure that the scale of any diversification activity is appropriate to its setting and that proposals do not lead to an unacceptable impact on the local transport network or landscape character;
- iii Encourage good quality development which contributes to local distinctiveness and reflects national guidance in PPG7 (*The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*) on the location and scale of development in rural areas, including the reuse and adaptation of rural buildings; and
- iv Safeguard the setting and character of historic towns and villages. Further guidance is provided in chapter 6 (Environmental Strategy and the Countryside) of this guidance.

b In addition:

- i Regional Development Agencies, the Countryside Agency, local authorities and other regional and local partners need to work together to develop programmes encouraging enterprise in the rural economy as well as integrated initiatives to sustain diverse rural communities; and
- ii These partners should, where appropriate and eligible, take advantage of grant schemes which form part of the England Rural Development Programme. This programme explains how the Government intends to use funding available as part of the European Union's Rural Development and sets out a list of objectives and priorities for rural development in the South East.

Q8 – Sustaining Rural Communities

A more equitable, and locally based, provision of services (including education and health, recreation, leisure, transport and cultural facilities) should also be achieved in rural areas.

- a Development plans, and where relevant local transport plans, should:
 - i Include policies, and proposals for the provision for services within rural areas, particularly through support for the role of market towns as a focus for services and facilities. For example, encouraging mixed use developments which incorporate health care provision with other uses;
 - ii Ensure that employment, services and facilities are sited in accessible rural locations;
 - iii Clarify the inter-relationships between rural settlements and urban areas; and
 - iv Contain policies and proposals which cater for both the needs of the rural population and the needs of tourist, whilst protecting the character of the countryside and promoting safe routes for walking and cycling.
- b In addition, local authorities and relevant partners, should:
 - i Develop innovative approaches to managing transport demand in rural areas. For example, the shared use of existing services such as post and school buses and mobile libraries or the use of telecommunications infrastructure to help address the problems of remoteness;
 - ii Make use of the range of tools now available to help establish and meet the needs and aspirations of rural areas. Initiatives such as Rural Strategies, Planning for Real, Village Appraisals and Village Design Statements as well as local authority community strategies can help involve a wide section of the local community in working with local authorities, health, education and other service providers, the private sector, the Countryside Agency and other Government agencies to bring forward sensitive development planning in rural areas;
 - iii Develop locally agreed strategies to assist in the delivery of sensitively designed affordable housing to meet local needs. Further advice on affordable housing is contained in chapter 8: and
 - iv Take steps, as in urban areas, to ensure that crime prevention considerations are incorporated in the design of new development in rural areas (refer to policy Q2 – Form and Design of Urban Development).

Proposed Alternations to RPG9 – Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation

Policy TSR7 – Visitor Management and Access

- i. Development plans and sub-regional/county tourism or cultural strategies should identify areas which would benefit from the development and implementation of integrated visitor management plans. Where different local authority areas form part of a single tourism destination or market, opportunities should be taken to co-ordinate or integrate the development and implementation of visitor management plan(s).
- ii. Development plans and local transport plans should address the management of tourism related travel demand in an integrated way as part of a wider visitor management approach to managing tourism pressures and reflecting the priorities in the Regional Transport Strategy. Depending on the nature of the tourism offer, this should include:
 1. Promoting a multi-modal approach to access to attractions and large events. Local authorities should facilitate this by encouraging operators to establish mobility management plans for attractions and events generating large numbers of trips;
 2. Developing a range of travel planning approaches to specifically address transport impacts associated with urban and rural tourism;
 3. Making stronger links to regional and sub-regional transport planning advice.