



**DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
PUBLIC EXAMINATION**

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION
FOR**

SESSION E: GATEWAYS AND FREIGHT

Question 11

Is the concept of Regional Gateways appropriate and are they correctly defined? Is there a strong enough steer on:

- i) **the future role of ports and their surface access and water access requirements?**
 - ii) **the surface access implications of committed airports capacity?**
1. South East England is in many ways the UK's international gateway. A substantial proportion of international passenger and freight movements transit the region's major ports and airports. Policy Planning Guidance 11 (PPG 11): Regional Planning sets out that one of the requirements of the draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is to provide a strategic steer on the role and future development of, inter alia, airports and ports.
 2. The identification of ports of regional significance was undertaken on the basis of tonnage of freight throughout and/or number of passengers. The SEAPORTS study examined the region's ports within three principle sectors; deep-sea container ports, mainland Europe ferry ports (including the Channel Tunnel) and niche ports (ports engaged in markets such as bulk fuels, bulk aggregates, trade vehicles, agricultural goods and fresh produce). Some of the larger ports, for example Southampton, cater for vessels operating in all three sectors, whereas others, for example Ramsgate, tend to operate primarily in only one.
 3. The scale of operations at Southampton, Portsmouth, Dover, Channel Tunnel, and within the Medway port system are such that they are of regional significance and are identified as being regional gateways. Port operations at Shoreham, Newhaven and Ramsgate, while not of the same order of magnitude, are nonetheless of sub-regional significance. All other port operations were considered to be of a scale small enough to enable their role and landside infrastructure requirements to be considered at a more local level.
 4. It is not within the scope of the draft RTS to determine the basis for future investment in individual pieces of port infrastructure as national policy guidance clearly states that it is for the private sector to bring forward such proposals. However, in order to meet with the requirements of PPG 11 it is appropriate for the draft RTS to give general guidance on how port-related movements fit within the overall operation of the region's transport system. The efficiency of port operations are inextricably linked with the quality of the landside infrastructure providing hinterland connections.
 5. The SEAPORTS study, although criticised by some, served to highlight the vital role of the region's ports in supporting the national economy. The study set out the scale of recent growth in several sectors in recent years, most significantly in the deep-sea container, ro-ro and passenger ferry markets. Although there was a difference of opinion as to the accuracy of the forecasts used in the study

(particularly with regard to the deep-sea container sector) there was common agreement that the scale of future growth is likely to be equally significant and will require investment in landside infrastructure if the ports are to remain competitive.

6. The SEAPORTS was used to identify potential landside infrastructure improvements that needed to be included within the investment frameworks of the draft RTS. This approach provides the strategic steer on the future development of the port sector required by PPG I I, while at the same time avoiding being overly prescriptive as to the detail of future investment in port facilities. As individual proposals for new port infrastructure are brought forward by the private sector the investment frameworks will need to be reviewed and amended if required.
7. The draft RTS has been prepared on the basis that the primary focus for ro-ro services will continue to be across the Dover Straits using either cross channel ferry services operating via the Port of Dover or shuttle services operating through the Channel Tunnel. The investment frameworks include a number of small scale investment proposals that will assist in improving landside connections, however in the longer term further consideration will need to be given to the capacity of road and rail connections serving both facilities. Reference to this issue has been made as part of the submission to Session B.
8. Cross channel ferry services operating out of Portsmouth are of significance for the region as well as the South West and the Midlands. Again, reference to the need to consider landside infrastructure in support of this role has made as part of the submission to Session B. Although the opportunity to develop ro-ro operations may be more limited in their scale at Newhaven and Ramsgate, they do represent a significant opportunity that needs to be supported. The investment frameworks include proposals that would improve rail access to Newhaven in this context.
9. In terms of the deep-sea container market the draft RTS reinforces the importance of improving rail access to the region's deep-sea container port facilities at Southampton and Thamesport in order to support existing operations. Such is the scale of the operation at Southampton that the rail corridor from Southampton to the West Midlands is identified as the priority corridor for improvements to enhance capacity for the movement of freight.
10. There is consensus amongst all key stakeholders that additional port capacity will be required within the deep-sea container sector. SEAPORTS concluded that at this stage none of the proposals currently under consideration should be ruled out within regional planning frameworks. The Regional Assembly's view is that the study did not provide a robust basis on which to allow consideration of the landside infrastructure requirements of any future expansion to be identified at this stage.
11. The Regional Assembly is discussing with adjoining regions work to enable this deficiency to be addressed. The potential locations for any increase in capacity are limited and notwithstanding the need for further work, an initial assessment of

these locations show that they are well related to the transport corridors identified within the draft RTS and that accordingly the robustness of the strategy set out is not compromised.

12. The issue of water access to the region's ports is of increasing importance within the context of the European Commission's encouragement of short sea shipping, and in particular the development of the concept of the "motorways of the sea". The Commission's proposals in respect of the latter have yet to be developed, although it is understood that a consideration as to whether or not a port would be eligible for inclusion on the "motorway" network is likely to be both the scale of port operations and the quality of the landside infrastructure. In this respect the draft RTS provides a sound basis for engaging with the Commission on the implementation of the concept.
13. Within the airport system serving London and the South East four airports account for around 98 per cent of the total passenger traffic. Of these only Gatwick Airport is located within the region. However, while Heathrow Airport is located just outside of the region, it has a substantial spatial, economic, and, by implication, transport linkage with South East England. Of the remaining airports located within the region Southampton Airport has an important role as a business airport serving central Southern England. The Government's recent consultation on the future development of air transport in the South East (also known as SERAS) confirmed the wider role of Southampton Airport through its identification as a "Tier 1" airport. All other airports in the region were considered to be either Tier 2 or below.
14. It is within the above context that Heathrow, Gatwick and Southampton airports have been identified as regional gateways in the draft RTS. As with the ports sector, all other airport operations were considered to be of a scale small enough to enable detailed consideration of their role and landside infrastructure requirements to be considered at a more local level.
15. As major traffic generators, the region's gateway airports operate as transport hubs in their own right. It is acknowledged that each airport is required to prepare its own airport surface access strategy. As each strategy becomes due for revision the expectation is that due account will be taken of the draft RTS.
16. The draft RTS provides clear guidance on the need to improve overall levels of accessibility by non-car modes to all of the gateway airports, and in particular public transport improvements to enhance access by rail and bus. This is particularly relevant to the development of Heathrow Terminal 5. The investment frameworks identify the need for improved rail access from both the south (via Staines) and to the west (via the Great Western main line) of the airport as being essential in order to support the expansion of Heathrow to 89 million passengers per annum. Gatwick has a higher level of accessibility by public transport, in particular rail, at present. Enhancements to rail and local bus services (such as Fastway) will ensure

this accessibility is maintained as the airport grows to its maximum planned capacity of 40mppa.

17. The draft RTS draws attention to the important role that both Heathrow and Gatwick Airports play as part of the national coach network. The draft RTS highlights the need to build upon these existing operations to develop the role of the coach and express bus network as part of the overall transport system serving the region.
18. Southampton's role as a business airport and for local aviation is crucial to the economic prosperity of the South Hampshire sub-region and has a key role to play in providing an attractive local alternative to both Heathrow and Gatwick. In addition to identifying the need for improvements to the existing airport parkway station the investment frameworks also highlight the need for improvements to Junction 5 of the M27.

Question 12

Does the draft RTS make adequate provision for freight movement, including priorities for rail freight investment and inter-modal terminals?

19. The movement of freight and goods has a major contribution to make to the success of the national and regional economy. However the freight section of the draft remains inadequate as far as the Regional Assembly is concerned. The failure of the MMS programme to adequately consider the requirements of the freight distribution sector, coupled with the failure of the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) to provide information that supports the case for the inter-modal facilities are the principal reasons for this failure.
20. This failure is all the more regrettable given that the region's role as a gateway to the rest of Europe is acknowledged in chapter 2 of RPG9. This role has a direct impact on the nature and form of the transport system in the South East, particularly for freight and for the access to the ports and airports. It is therefore important to ensure the connections with Europe are fully considered within this strategy.
21. At the national level the Ten-Year Transport Plan target to achieve an 80% increase in the volume of freight moved by rail is a key objective for the region and delivery agencies such as the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). The draft RTS clearly recognises the importance of developing the capacity of key rail corridors to accommodate additional freight movements in policy T15.
22. Incorporated within the selection of these regional rail freight corridors is the recognition that rail access to the ports is critical to capturing long-distance freight traffic move to and from Europe. Also important is the acknowledgement that London, as a current focus for rail freight routes, is a bottleneck and needs to be

addressed particularly for goods bound for the Dover straits. In parallel with the rail routes, the road network around London, namely the M25, is also considered a blockage in European networks and needs to be addressed. It is within this context that the draft identifies the need to develop a freight bypass for London. The proposal to examine the potential for a Lower Thames Crossing as part of the eastern corridor identified under policy T2 is an indication of the importance attached to the provision of such a bypass and the importance of securing a synergy with the regeneration within the Thames Gateway.

23. At the regional level, the draft RTS acknowledges the more limited role that rail freight will have in moving goods within the region. Clearly roads will be the dominant mode of transport due to costs and viability, and therefore the RTS seeks to maximise efficiency in the movement of goods to minimise the associated impacts travel by lorry would bring. Reliability is a key issue in this context and better management of the highway network will be a major contributor to improving this. Policy T16 promotes the need to support more efficient distribution systems, and cites the example of Freight Quality Partnerships as a potential mechanism for achieving this.
24. Notwithstanding the limited opportunities to realise more localised rail freight facilities, policy T16 in the draft RTS provides the framework to secure sites which may be possible locations for inter-modal terminals in the future, be that by road, rail or water. The provision in this policy is also there for local authorities and developers to apply locational policy to ensure developments generating high levels of freight movements are located close to sites where the opportunities to enable multi-modal travel are greatest.
25. The present guidance on inter-modal terminals is not as detailed as the Assembly would have wished. Whilst initial work by the SRA has identified the need for 3-4 terminals around London, the basis of this conclusion has not been publicly available. The Regional Assembly continues to seek clarification from the SRA of the planning case in support of this level of provision in order that the policy framework within the draft RTS to provide better guidance to local planning authorities on potential areas of search for such sites.

June 2003