INFORMATION NOTE 5

Transport

South West Regional Assembly
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South West England

CONTENTS

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

INFORMATION NOTE 5

TRANSPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into effect in May 2004. This Act amends existing legislation (The Town and Country Planning Act 1990), and has changed the planning system in several important ways.

1.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West supersedes when approved) Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) 10, which was prepared in the late 1990's and was approved by Ministers in 2001. The Draft RSS looks forward to 2026 and its purpose is to set out a framework to manage the development that the South West will need, if it is to rise to the challenge of a growing population and play its role in national prosperity.

1.3 The Strategy will decide how much development there should be, how it will be distributed around the region and how it will be delivered. More specifically it will provide guidance on the location and scale of development for implementation through Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The Draft RSS will also provide a spatial context for the plans, programmes and investment decisions of other agencies in the region. It will make a difference to what happens locally to the environment, infrastructure, transport, housing, economic development, employment, minerals and waste. In relation to transport the Draft RSS guides decisions on investment priorities and provides a framework for the preparation for Local Transport Plans (LTP).

1.4 The **purpose of this note** is to provide a brief overview and explain the policy approach to transport in the Draft RSS. It summarises:

- the current state of the region in terms of present transport infrastructure;
- the main issues in regard to transport;
- the processes by which the key policies were formulated;
- how the RSS addresses transport; and
- the evidence which justify the policies.

1.5 More information in a greater depth can be found in the Transport Background Technical Report (TBTR) - http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/media/SWRA/RSS%20Documents/TransportBackgroundTechnicalReport.pdf This note only provides a quick overview.

2. State of the Regi0n- in transport terms

In order for any economy to function, an efficient, resilient and reliable transport system must be in place to transport goods to markets and people to work. The region faces many transport challenges that may relate to or are affected by its geography and characteristics. Indeed the basic geography of the region has a significant influence on the regional transport network. For example the regional transport requirements are affected by the peninsular nature of the region, peripherality, the settlement structure, rurality, and the fact that many people come into the region for leisure and holiday purposes. The relative ease of movement within the region and to other regions is therefore, a major issue which influences many aspects of regional social and economic life.

2.1 Present Transport Systems and Trends in the South West

- The regions road network consists of two categories of road: national and international routes (the M4 and M5) and regional routes such as the A303, A30, A38, A31, A35,A417/419. Flows on the major east –west routes vary considerably between winter and peak summer months leading to seasonal congestion. Access into and out of the region is dependent on one major route with maintenance and accidents having considerable impacts on business efficiency as a result of delay.

- Car use and ownership in the South West is relatively high- higher than the national average. Around 2/3 of the journeys made in the region are by car. This is a reflection of the large distances between the major centres of the region and its dispersed population and settlement pattern.

- Traffic flows on the M4 range between around 60,000 at the eastern end [average daily flows], reducing to about 50,000 in rural Wiltshire but rising again to about 90,000 around the urban fringe of Bristol. Traffic flows on the M5 around Bristol are approximately 80,000, and range between 50-65,000, over the rest of its length to Exeter. There is congestion around Bristol in the peak hours, particularly at Avonmouth Bridge which is a pinch point as the only river bridge on the western side of the city centre. A Highways Agency study (The Regional Network Report) identifies current and projected future congestion on the network.

- At present bus availability and passenger numbers are low. People in the South West have some of the least accessible bus services in England, with only 82% living within a 13 minute walk of an hourly service compared to the English average of 90%. This may partly explain why just 6% of trips were made by public transport, the lowest recorded in any region. However bus use is increasing where targeted investment has taken place particularly on urban bus corridors.

- The Region has five main rail networks/lines: the Great Western Mainline (GWML) The Exeter to Waterloo line, South Coast to Bristol and South Wales Route (SCBSW), Cross Country Network and the South West Mainline (SWML). The GWML is the most significant, providing an important link to/from the Region to London. In 2002/03, 75 million journeys were made within, to and from the GWML, around 8% of national passenger journeys. 27 million of those were to/from central London.

- Rail patronage, in contrast to that of buses, has increased rapidly over the past decade. Around 44% of the people polled believed train punctuality was getting better and 51% said that rail was the most convenient and easiest form of public transport to use.

- Due to the peninsular nature of the region, the South West has an extensive coastline and a long history of maritime activity with many ports. The region has an important location in the peripheral maritime region of the European Atlantic Arc, and has good sea links with Brittany, Normandy, Ireland and Spain.

- The regions ports provide many functions such as providing commercial and passenger links to Europe, recreation and leisure. Ports and water borne transport are important for the movement of goods in and out of the region. The volume of sea freight passing through the regions ports has risen at a faster rate than for the country as a whole. Overall the region handled 20 million tonnes of freight in 2003. Bristol Port is the region's main port. Its cargo traffic increased by 6.3% p.a. over the period 1990-2002, well above the national traffic growth rate of 1.1%.

- The region has five notable airports in terms of passenger movements; Bristol, Plymouth, Bournemouth, Exeter and Newquay - although Bristol is by far the most significant. There are smaller airports at Gloucestershire, Penzance and St Mary's Airport on the Isle of Scilly.

- The region's airports currently have complementary roles: Bristol, Bournemouth and Exeter have the most traffic in terms of international destinations. Plymouth, Newquay, Penzance and Gloucestershire airports have roles in meeting regional business needs by feeder services to London and in maintaining links with the Isles of Scilly.

- Overall growth in air passengers in the region stands at 13% pa with Bristol experiencing the highest growth at 14%pa in 2003.

- The region has the highest number of journeys made by foot and bike in the country. Walking and cycling accounted for 26% of all trips in the region in 2004, but most journeys were made by private transport, which accounted for 69% of journeys and public transport 4%. However the number of walking and cycling trips in the South West decreased between 1994 and 2004.

3. Transport Issues

The South West as a peninsular region has a unique set of transport issues. They were identified following extensive consultation (The Options Consultation 2004 and the Summer and Winter Debates 2005) with stakeholders. The four key issues are:

1. The need to maintain and improve the reliability and resilience of transport links from the region's major areas to the South East and London and connectivity within the region;

2. How to deliver a step change in public transport supported by demand management measures to ensure the region's Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) are attractive places and are capable of supporting the growth envisaged in the RSS;

3. The need to improve accessibility to jobs and services and address social exclusion; and

4. Reduce the impact of transport on the environment including climate change.

3.1 Connectivity

The main road and rail networks perform a dual function of supporting inter and intra regional connectivity. Studies carried out in conjunction with the South West Regional Development Agency have identified the need for reliable and resilient connections to London and the West Midlands. These routes are seen as critical to the regions economic performance. The London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS) emphasised the importance of maintaining and improving the reliability and resilience of such routes in the context of increasing traffic flows and congestion.

Key issues on the road network include the rising number of cars on the road, which is leading to congestion and the fact that the region only has one high standard road route which is vulnerable to service interruption due to maintenance, accident or extreme weather. The seasonality of traffic flows also causes major congestion. Businesses have identified the reliability and resilience of the road and rail network as an important factor influencing the future economic performance of the region (The Great Western Mainline Economic Assessment)

Issues concerning rail include the need for infrastructure investment and renewal on the GWML, while the Exeter-Waterloo Line experiences a capacity problem due to infrastructure constraints. There is recognition in the region of the potential of the South Coast to Bristol and South Wales Route. Rail franchising provides an opportunity to enhance the service to the south west as well as ensuring that the capacity is built in to accommodate growth projected in the Draft RSS.

Air services from the region are provided by a number of airports with the main issue being to reduce 'leakage' to other regions, especially the South East and ensuring that there are effective surface access links to airports sites. The increase in air travel has come under criticism in the Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA), stating that this would have detrimental effect on the environment. This is discussed later in the note.

3.2 Making Urban Areas Work

The Draft RSS focuses the majority of future development in the region's SSCTs. Future development must be supported by new or enhanced transport networks, especially enhanced public transport, which if not in place will lead to major congestion problems. Good transport infrastructure can 'make urban areas work' and allow a place to function well and compete economically. In order for those developments to function smoothly, there has to a sufficient injection of investment to provide for key transport systems. Many problems can arise if this does not happen such as congestion, health impacts, air and noise pollution and social exclusion. 24 air quality management areas have been established in 12 local authorities in the region. These are primarily in urban areas, to monitor and reduce air pollution mainly from traffic.

The level of motor vehicle traffic is projected to increase as more cars get on the road. The level of traffic in the region increased from 39, 435 to 47, 148 million vehicle km's in the period 1994-2004. Urban roads carried more traffic in the region than rural roads: urban roads carried 30.6 bn vehicle km's whereas rural roads carried 17.2 bn vehicle km. This is a trend that will continue as the majority of development is focused on the region's main urban areas.

Work carried out by local authorities during the preparation of the Draft RSS demonstrate that without a step change, congestion will severely impact on economic performance and undermine the Spatial Strategy by providing an incentive for people to commute from more attractive rural areas. Demand management measures accompanied by a 'step change' in public transport are vital to help to encourage a modal shift and ease congestion.

3.3 Accessibility

Effective transport links and increasing accessibility can greatly reduce social exclusion on both a rural and urban setting. Rural accessibility is a difficult issue due the region's dispersed settlement pattern. Most of the region's residents own private cars and personal mobility is therefore an issue for those without access to a car. Residents without private transport are presented with a barrier in gaining access to employment and key services. This is certainly the case in the more rural parts of the region. Recent research by Faber Maunsell (The Significance of Transport Availability and Cost in limiting access in Training and Jobs) has concluded that transport is one of several factors that influence accessibility. Others include the placement of critical services, location of jobs and the demographics of an area. Therefore integrated solutions need to be planned which include organisations working in partnerships at a local level.

3.4 Transport and the Environment

Impacts on a regional scale are noise and air pollution such CO_2 emissions and direct effects on the historic, biological and community environments. The Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA) picked up issues of conflict between transport and the environment. The SSA questioned whether a regional approach to transport alone could decrease CO_2 emission and whether it was sustainable to increase air travel in the South West. Although measures can be built into the transport network, solutions have to be multi-faceted and take into consideration future economic development, people's attitudes to transport and investment priorities. The Draft RSS currently seeks a reduction in the growth of car traffic given the rural nature of the region but aspires to an absolute reduction. In submitting the Draft RSS, the Regional Assembly highlighted the need for change in the national policy context to be able to achieve a strategy to reduce growth in car use.

3.5 Sub Regional Issues

The Draft RSS contains many Sub Regional Strategies that lay down the foundations for future development at a sub regional level, thus recognising that the 'one size fits all approach' is inadequate for the South West. Different pressures and opportunities will give rise to transport issues that are unique to each sub region. Key transport infrastructure requirements are identified for each sub region in Section 4 of the Draft RSS. The issues for each sub region are explained in more detail in the Transport Background Technical Report.

4. Process

The identification of the transport policies contained in the Draft RSS was guided by the formation of officer advisory groups set up by the Regional Assembly. These groups helped to identify and discuss the key transport issues and outcomes that were of importance to the region.

The Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Group (RSPTG) main task is to oversee the development and preparation of the Draft RSS, and to recommend to the Regional Assembly its submission to the Deputy Prime Minister. In relation to transport, the Group's role is to oversee the review of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) as part of the revised RSS and to ensure that the review of the regional spatial and transport strategies is consistent with and supports the development and implementation of the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS). RSPTG is made of Assembly Members and meets on average 4 0r 5 times a year.

The Regional Assembly Transport Officer Sub-Group (RATOSG) is made of local authorities, the South West Regional Development Agency (SW RDA), the Highways Agency, Network Rail and The Government Office for the South West (GOSW) and is the main technical advisory group, which provided input into Section 5 of the Draft RSS. Topic sub groups were formed to explore the development of policy on specific topics including demand management, public transport, freight and accessibility. The group has met approximately every six

weeks during the process of preparing the Draft RSS and discussed draft policies at three meetings.

The second advisory group is the Regional Transport Forum, which comprises of a wider range of people: local authorities, regional organisations, the voluntary sector and interest groups. The Forum provided advice and input into the formation of the transport policies. Various sub groups within the Forum examined particular matters such as freight, public transport and demand management and provided more specific advice. The Forum was a useful body as many interests were represented and numerous aspects of transport could be discussed including a debate about the content of Section 5 of the Draft RSS.

Transport studies commissioned by the Regional Assembly or conducted by other organisations have provided an input and examined specific issues which could be expressed in the Draft RSS. These studies also provided the evidence base that is used in the Transport Background Technical Report to justify each policy in Section 5. Steering groups were set up to advise the Regional Assembly in managing the contracts and considering the consultant's reports.

In addition to the strategic transport issues and policies contained in section 5, transport formed an integral part of the Joint Sub Area studies commissioned on behalf of the Regional Assembly to prepare land use/transport strategies and policies for the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns. These studies were guided by steering groups set up locally.

Early consultation took place on the Spatial Options for the Draft RSS in November 2004 and on the Draft RSS in the Summer and Winter Debates 2005. The consultation events included views on what people would like to see happen to the regional transport network in the future. Section 5 policies were modified after comments were received. The Pre-Submission Consultation Statement report provides more detail on the formal and informal consultation carried by the Regional Assembly during the preparation of the Draft RSS.

Lastly, European and National Policy have had an influence in shaping the transport policies. The European Commission's Transport White Paper stated that travel should be split between modes, which is expressed in the Draft RSS. National Policy in the form of White Papers such as the 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone', 'The Future of Transport, A Network for 2030', 'The Future of Rail', 'The Future of Air Transport', contain aspirations for national transport systems which are incorporated into the Draft RSS. More information is available in the Transport Background Technical Report.

5. Transport in the RSS

The Draft RSS does not contain a separate document that can be distinguished as a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) as it was felt that transport was a cross cutting theme that has an input into many policy areas. Instead transport has been integrated throughout the document (Section 1 in Climate Change, Section 4 in the Sub Regional Strategies and Section 8 in Tourism).

The strategic transport policies are set out in Section 5 and state that proper planning for transport will assist in achieving the Spatial Strategy. Planning development carefully can influence movement in the region, particularly by car. Actually reducing the need to travel is a significant challenge given the geography of the region, its rural nature and the sparsity of the population. The Strategy aspires to a reduction in traffic but takes the view that until the national framework is further developed it will only be possible to seek to reduce the growth in traffic levels.

Transport networks assist the ongoing activities within the region and support the regional economy by facilitating the movement of goods and people. Appropriate transport investment is therefore required across the region to deliver the RSS as well as the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and meet the wider aims of the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS), in addition to facilitating spatial development.

The formulation of the transport elements of the Draft RSS derive from a series of documents which have been the subject of discussion within the region. RPG10 has been taken as the starting point. RGP10 sets out a set of transport objectives and issues which were then developed further in a document called Developing the Regional Transport Strategy (DRTS), to reflect the changing nature of transport in the region and changes in national policy. It was approved by the Regional Assembly in September 2004 and was intended as an interim and informal "update" of RPG10. Its primary purpose was to provide guidance to local transport authorities in the preparation of Local Transport Plan's in advance of the formal review of the Spatial Strategy. In particular it gave updated guidance on emerging regional priorities but did not seek to revise the objectives or review policies set out in RPG10.

The issues, objectives and potential policy solutions were further developed in a document called the Review of the Regional Transport Strategy (RRTS), which was produced in July 2005. A regional transport objective was drawn up which would be achieved through more detailed key objectives. Each of these objectives would be achieved by key policy outcomes/principles. These have essentially been carried over and are integrated into the Draft RSS. The regional transport objective is:

> ***'To create a modern, efficient and integrated transport system that will meet the demands of a dynamic regional economy, help overcome regional peripherality and support the spatial strategy'.***

The detailed objectives which would achieve the regional transport objective are:

- Facilitating economic and social regeneration, investment and development by tackling congestion and accessibility in urban areas;
- Providing reliable connections to the UK, European and International markets to assist economic investment and reduce regional disparities;
- Regional connectivity-facilitating reliable movement of goods and people in the region; and
- Improving rural accessibility.

6. Evidence Base

A range of studies provides the evidence base that supports the transport policy approach organisations (such as the Regional Assembly and South West Regional Development Agency), national policy and studies carried out by other organisations. The table below summarises which studies /literature supports each transport policy.

Policy	Studies	Justification
TR1- Demand Management and Public Transport in the SSCTs	▪ Demand Management Policy Review- *Mott Macdonald* ▪ Demand Management- *Ove Arup* ▪ Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) - *Atkins* ▪ Consultancy Framework Agreement for the Transport Planning Services-*Atkins* ▪ Developing public transport policies for the South West PUA's- *Ray Bentley*	All studies mention possible demand management measures that can be used in urban areas (SSCTs), which can help introduce a 'step change' in transport. All studies underline that demand management can be used to help urban transport systems function smoothly.
TR2-The M4 and M5	▪ London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)-*Halcrow* ▪ Network Performance Study- *Highways Agency* ▪ Regional Freight Map- *Atkins* ▪ South West Regional Network Report- *Highways Agency*	SWARMMS and the HA Study noted the importance of the M5 in a regional context and suggested measures that can be implemented to improve its resilience.
TR3-Second Strategic Route	▪ London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)-*Halcrow* ▪ Network Performance Study- *Highways Agency* ▪ Intra Regional Connectivity in the South West- *DTZ* ▪ A303 Stonehenge Improvement-Scheme Review-Stage 1 Report- *Highways Agency*	Conclusions stated that a second strategic route would improve connectivity into/from the region. The second route would also create a more robust regional road network.

TR4- The Remainder of the Trunk Road Network	▪ Network Performance Study- *Highways Agency* ▪ London to South West and Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)- *Halcrow*	Studies stated that unless the remainder of the road network was managed then, its reliability and resilience would be compromised.
TR5- Inter-regional Rail Network	▪ Great Western Mainline Economic Assessment- *Halcrow* ▪ London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)-*Halcrow* ▪ Intra Regional Connectivity in the South West- *DTZ* ▪ The Future of Rail-White Paper - *DfT* ▪ Great Western Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (GWML RUS)- *Strategic Rail Authority* ▪ South West Mainline Route Utilisation Route (SWML RUS) - consultation draft- *Network Rail* ▪ The Mainline they shouldn't ignore-South Coast to Bristol and South Wales Route- *Rail Passengers Committee* ▪ South Western Franchise report- *DfT*	Findings suggested that rail had a significant role to play in connectivity and economical terms. Specific measures are suggested to improve the reliability and resilience of the inter-regional rail network.
TR6-Inter-regional Bus and Coach Network	▪ London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)-*Halcrow* ▪ Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS)- *Atkins* ▪ Intra Regional Connectivity in the South West- *DTZ* ▪ Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study (BB2SC)- *WSP*	Studies suggested that inter-regional coach links had a role to play in reducing congestion, improving connectivity and encouraging people to use alternative modes of transport for long distance journeys.
TR7-Ports	▪ RDA Gateways Strategy - ▪ Developing policy on ports and shipping- *URS*	Conclusions stated that the region's ports do have the potential to engage in short

	Dames and Moore ▪ Promotion of Short Sea Shipping in the Atlantic Arc- Interreg 111 B- *Various* ▪ Regional Freight Map- *Atkins* ▪ Ports Policy Review-*DfT*	sea shipping hence reducing road freight. Ports also have the potential to provide space for new recreation activities and support maritime activities.
TR8-Bristol Port	▪ Gateways Strategy - ▪ Developing policy on ports and shipping- *URS Dames and Moore* ▪ Bristol Port Economic Assessment- *Roger Tyms and Partners* ▪ Strategic Green Belt Review- *Colin Buchanan*	Bristol Port is the largest port in the region and has the potential to be a major gateway to the region. The port can play a major role in the regional and sub-regional economy.
TR9-Airports	▪ Future of Air Transport - White Paper *DfT* ▪ Development of an Air Transport Strategy for the Far South West of England-*Avia Solutions* ▪ The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South West- *DfT*	The White Paper sets out that aviation and associated infrastructure will grow over the next 30 years. Airports in the region can meet most of the regional demand, which can reduce the number of trips made to SE airports.
TR10- Regional Connectivity	▪ Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study (BB2SC)- *WSP* ▪ Intra Regional Connectivity in the South West- *DTZ* ▪ A31 to Poole – *Buro Happold*	Transport corridors can help create public transport links and encourage a modal shift. They can also reduce the impact of transport on the environment as the Poole Study suggests.
TR11-Intra-Regional Public Transport	▪ The significance of transport availability and cost in limiting access in training and jobs - *Faber Maunsell.*	Access to jobs and services is crucial in improving quality of life. Conclusions state that transport does have a role to play in reducing social exclusion.
TR12-Regional Freight Map	▪ Regional Freight Map- *Atkins*	A regional freight map will allow road freight to be transported to/from and within the region in a consistent manner, using designated routes
TR13-Rail Freight	▪ Regional Freight Map- *Atkins*	Freight capacity will need to increase in the future,

Interchange Facilities	▪ Great Western Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (GWML RUS)- *Strategic Rail Authority*	therefore freight interchanges will be required to transfer more freight from road to rail and vice-versa.

Mala Bhardwa
Planning and Policy Assistant
South West Regional Assembly