

Chapter 5: Transport

Matter 5; 5/1, 5/2

Policies TR1, TR2, TR3, TR4, TR5, TR6, TR7, TR8, TR9, TR10, TR11, TR12, TR13

Introduction

5.1 In this chapter we consider the issues arising from the draft RSS Chapter 5, titled *Regional Approach to Transport*. We particularly give consideration to the need for a Regional Transport Strategy as an integral and clearly identifiable part of the draft RSS.

Background

5.2 PPG13 *Transport*¹ sets the national planning context in terms of transport. The key themes arising from PPG13 are to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, through better management of urban growth and by encouraging mixed-use developments to reduce the length of trips. It also provides encouragement to ensuring that high trip generating uses are located close to sustainable transport infrastructure and that parking provision is controlled in such a way that it does not encourage greater use of the car where there are alternative, more sustainable transport choices available.

5.3 PPS11 *Regional Planning*² sets down the Government's objectives for Regional Spatial Strategies and states that the Region's Transport Strategy (RTS) should be an integral and identifiable part of the RSS. It should set out how national transport policies and programmes will be delivered in the region, and should be careful to avoid detailed local schemes which are better dealt with through Local Transport Plans. In particular PPS11 requires that RSS transport priorities are costed and can be realistically implemented during the life of the strategy. PPS11 sets out the main aims of the RTS and states that the RTS should provide³:

- regional objectives and priorities for transport investment and management across all modes to support the spatial strategy and delivery of sustainable national transport policies;
- a strategic steer on the future development of airports and ports in the region consistent with national policy and the development of inland waterways;
- guidance on priorities for managing and improving the trunk road network and local roads of regional or sub-regional importance;
- advice on the promotion of sustainable freight distribution where there is an appropriate regional or sub-regional dimension;
- a strategic framework for public transport that identifies measures to improve accessibility to jobs and key services at the regional and sub-regional level, expands travel choice, improves access for those without a car and guides the location of new development;
- advice on parking policies appropriate to different parts of the region; and

¹ Planning Policy Guidance 13: *Transport*, ODPM, March 2001.

² Planning Policy Statement 11: *Regional Spatial Strategies*, ODPM, 2004.

³ Planning Policy Statement 11: *Regional Spatial Strategies*, ODPM, 2004, Annex B p.58.

- guidance on the strategic context for local demand management measures within the region.

Air Transport

- 5.4 *The Future of Air Transport*⁴ White Paper (ATWP) was published in December 2003 and sets out a policy framework to inform decisions on the future development of the UK's airports. The ATWP anticipates significant potential for beneficial growth at existing airports in the South West:
- The expansion of Bristol Airport, including a runway extension and a new terminal to cope with 10-12 mmpa is supported.
 - Additional terminal capacity to cope with up to 4mmpa, within the airport boundary at Bournemouth is supported subject to action to minimise impacts on environmentally sensitive sites and improved access.
 - Any proposals to develop Exeter, Plymouth and Newquay Airports should be decided regionally and/or locally.
- 5.5 The ATWP was the subject of a *Progress Report*⁵ in December 2006. This was undertaken in the light of Government policy on climate change and confirmed the ATWP strategy as being a 'balanced and sustainable' air policy for the UK. Specific support is given for the growth in regional airports.

Resource Availability

- 5.6 The Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) process provides some guidance on the scale of resources available for transportation investment, but rail investment is largely excluded. The advice presented to Ministers, which was submitted in January 2006, includes many public transport proposals for the period up to 2016. Paragraph B8 of the Statement on Matter 5/1 by the Regional Assembly indicates that nearly 50% of the RFA allocation is focussed on public transport and claims that it is one of the highest proportions in the country. In his response to the Regional Assembly on the RFA guidance the Minister indicates that the advice has substantially met the aim of showing how related priorities can be drawn together to form a coherent strategic vision for improving transport performance in the region. He recognises that the focus of the advice will greatly assist the future sustainable growth in key urban areas. The Minister notes that if all of the schemes included in the priority lists proceeded there would be an overspend against the regional budget and highlights the heavy call that the Second Strategic Route is likely to place on the RFA funds in the later RFA years.

Transport Assessments

- 5.7 Future traffic demand on the main East-West inter-regional network was derived from the *London to South West & South Wales Multi-Modal Study*⁶ (SWARMMS study). This modelled future growth in traffic within the region, having regard to the levels of change set out in RPG10 and the national estimates of traffic growth. This study showed that the trunk road network will increasingly suffer from delays and congestion, with journey times

⁴ *The Future of Air Transport*, The White Paper, DfT, 16 December 2003.

⁵ *Air Transport White Paper Progress Report* DfT, 14 December 2006.

⁶ *London to South West & South Wales Multi-Modal Study*, Halcrow Group Limited for GOSW, May 2002.

becoming increasingly unreliable. It also identified a lack of resilience in the network with overdependence on the M4/M5. The SWARMMS study proposed a package of measures, including selective investment and demand management.

- 5.8 The SWARMMS Study has been supplemented by the *South West Regional Network Report*⁷ prepared by the Highways Agency, which assessed current and future stress on the Trunk Road network. This report took into account the future growth in population and households set out in the draft RSS. It compared anticipated growth in traffic to 2026 with link capacity of the network and identified parts of the network which are likely to exceed capacity.
- 5.9 Given the geography of the region and the fact that SWARMMS only looked at east-west movements, GOSW commissioned a specific study of north-south movements in the east of the region. The *Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study (BBSCS)*⁸ identified the A34 as the main national route with HGV traffic being directed to use the route where possible. Other routes were identified as having a regional function with an emphasis on corridor management rather than increased capacity.
- 5.10 These regional studies were supplemented by transport studies of each of the JSAs prepared by local authorities. The Joint Study Area work assessed alternative levels of growth as well as spatial options. Work is still going on in some parts of the region where detailed technical modelling needs to be further up-dated and developed to fully understand the future demand for transport.
- 5.11 The South West Regional Planning Assessment⁹ (RPA) for the railway process emerged subsequent to the publication of the draft RSS. This process, has not however, as a technical rail assessment, been able to fully 'factor in' potential changes such as implementation of demand management measures on the trunk road network or road pricing.

Issues

- 5.12 In our view the issues which require to be considered are:
- the need for an identifiable RTS;
 - the adequacy of the proposed demand management measures;
 - the need to make the SSCTs work;
 - the implications of strategic transport corridors;
 - transport implications of ports and airports;
 - provision for freight, including modal interchanges;
 - priorities for investment.

An Identifiable Regional Transport Strategy

- 5.13 The Regional Assembly has treated transportation as a cross-cutting aspect of the draft RSS. As a result broad strategic transportation matters, under the heading of connectivity, feature in the consideration of the regional spatial strategy emphases. The consideration of Policies

⁷ *South West Regional Network Report*, Highways Agency, November 2006.

⁸ *Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study, Final Reports*, WSP, 13 February 2004.

⁹ *South West Regional Planning Assessment for the Railway*, DfT, May 2007.

A, B and C is also based on the need to ensure a closer link between jobs and housing provision with a view to obtaining the more sustainable pattern of development and the reduction in the need to travel sought by Policies SD1 and SD4. Paragraph A1 of the Regional Assembly Statement on Matter 5/2 states that Section 4 of the draft RSS ‘sets out spatially specific transport requirements to support the sub-regional strategies.’ Paragraph A1 also states that Section 5 of the draft RSS ‘provides a strategic steer for the development of detailed policies’, but paragraph B1 indicates that the policy framework set out in Section 4 and 5 of the draft RSS does not prioritise between “Connectivity” and “Making Urban Areas Work.”

- 5.14 Paragraph B2 states that *‘It is the Implementation Plan which seeks to state the region’s priorities for investment, supported by the RFA advice, but within the context of para. 3.9.1 of the draft RSS, which identifies strategic priorities for investment to support the strategy.’*
- 5.15 This approach spreads the consideration of transport matters from the principles established in Section 1 of the draft RSS through the consideration of strategic implications in Section 3, the sub-regional implications in Section 4, some policy implications in Section 5 and the priorities in the Implementation Plan. In our opinion this does not fulfil the requirement of PPS11 for an identifiable RTS. It is considered that it is possible to maintain the cross-cutting approach, but at the same time provide a more identifiable RTS. While this approach may require some degree of duplication it provides the opportunity for a more meaningful RTS. We recommend therefore that Section 5 should be recast as an identifiable RTS.

Recommendation 5.1

- That Section 5 of the draft RSS should be recast as an identifiable RTS based on the guidance set out in PPS11.

Transportation Objectives

- 5.16 An identifiable RTS requires, in our view, a set of transportation objectives. GOSW advised us that the Government’s key objective remains that of reducing the need to travel. A number of participants argued that the draft RSS should seek to achieve an absolute reduction in traffic over the plan period. The evidence submitted to the Panel and the discussions at the EiP highlighted the linkage between Policies SD1 and SD4 and the consideration of transportation matters in the overall document. Policy SD1 indicates that the region’s Ecological Footprint will be stabilised and then reduced by:
- minimising the need to travel by better alignment of jobs, homes and services, reducing the reliance on the private car by improved public transport and effective planning of future development and a strong demand management regime applied in the region’s main centres in particular;
 - requiring a shift towards the more sustainable modes of transport.

- 5.17 Policy SD4, which deals with the establishment of sustainable communities, also includes transportation measures. To some extent they replicate the requirement of Policy SD1 by seeking to create and maintain Sustainable Communities throughout the region by:
- linking the provision of homes and jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self contained and the need to travel is reduced;
 - promoting a step change in public transport, taking steps to manage demand for travel and promoting public transport ‘hubs’ and access to them.
- 5.18 The Regional Assembly drew our attention to the findings of the *Greater Bristol Strategic Transportation Study (GBSTS)*¹⁰. The Study indicated that even with a strong package of public transport investment and demand management car use is projected to increase. Our attention was also drawn to the particular geography of the region and the likely increased propensity to travel generated by higher economic growth. We concur with the Regional Assembly and a number of other participants that it would be unrealistic to aspire to an absolute reduction in the level of traffic. We therefore conclude that the main objective of the draft RSS should be a reduction in the rate of traffic growth.
- 5.19 The transportation measures proposed in Policies SD1 and SD4 suggest that consideration should be given to objectives related to self containment of settlements, more effective linkage between development and transport facilities and a greater emphasis on sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.20 The draft RSS places considerable emphasis on the linkage between the provision of dwellings and the projected employment growth. We note however that the Regional Assembly in paragraph B2 of the Statement on Matter 5/1 acknowledges that ‘*the draft RSS cannot require people to live close to where they work.*’ Some participants drew our attention to the fact that, as there is an increasing number of households with several economically active persons, achieving proximity to work for both workers is more difficult. It was also pointed out that the high level of change within the employment structure of many areas within the region also acts against self-containment. In transportation terms we would be concerned if too much reliance was placed on self-containment. We are aware that considerable commuting can still be generated between two well-balanced communities. Nevertheless we do support the objective of seeking a better alignment between jobs, homes and services as a means of reducing the need to travel and conclude that this should be included as an RTS objective.
- 5.21 A number of the sub-regional strategies place an emphasis on linking new development areas to the availability of existing and proposed public transport facilities. Some participants supported the intensification of development around transport hubs as suggested in Policy SD4. We conclude therefore that the draft RTS should seek a more effective linkage between transport facilities and development as a means of reducing the need to travel particularly by car.
- 5.22 In paragraph 5.2.6 the draft RSS places great emphasis on the need for a step change in public transport and also supports the encouragement of walking and cycling. Our attention was drawn to the fact that many car journeys are relatively short and therefore susceptible to

¹⁰ *Greater Bristol Strategic Transportation Study Final Report*, Atkins, June 2006.

diversion to more sustainable modes. We conclude, therefore, that the draft RTS should seek the transfer of journeys to the more sustainable modes of transport, particularly walking and cycling.

- 5.23 The employment projections indicate the continuation of economic growth and the *Regional Economic Strategy (RES)*¹¹ is based on the support of this process. As the draft RSS should be consistent with the RES there is a need for transportation planning to reflect the need to support this growth. We therefore conclude that the draft RTS should seek to support economic growth.
- 5.24 PPS11 requires the draft RTS to set out a set of regional objectives for transport investment and management. On the basis of the above conclusions, we recommend the introduction of a new Policy TRANs1.

Recommendation 5.2

- Insert new Policy TRANs1 with the wording indicated in Appendix C.

Demand Management

- 5.25 The *Eddington Transport Study*¹² found that ‘better use’ options, which include demand-side measures to influence travel choice and behaviour such as road pricing and ‘smart’ measures offer a very significant potential to improve the performance of the transport network. Paragraphs 5.2.5 to 5.2.11 and Policy TR1 deal with Demand Management in the draft RSS.
- 5.26 GOSW proposes that the draft RSS should include clear advice on demand management measures, including parking policies, appropriate to different parts of the region. GOSW accepts that the precise form of demand management is for Local Authorities to determine, but suggests that the draft RSS should identify those locations where congestion is particularly acute and indicate where other policy instruments might be necessary. The Regional Assembly highlight the demand management measures identified in the sub-regional sections of the draft RSS and state in paragraph C7 of the Statement on matter 5/1 that ‘*It is difficult to see what else could be considered at a regional level taking into account the diversity of the region and the context of current national policy and in view of the on-going studies for the SSCTs*’. The North and Central Strategic Authorities proposed that the range and degree of implementation should be related to the functional role of the individual SSCT and suggested that the toolkit of measures set out in paragraph 5.2.8 of the draft RSS should also be available to authorities dealing with Development Policy B settlements. We agree that the intensity of demand management measures will vary according to the role and function of the settlement and we conclude that some parts of the demand management ‘toolkit’ would be relevant to ‘B’ settlements.
- 5.27 We note that there is only one pilot scheme in the South West, under the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), which is looking at the potential implementation of congestion

¹¹ *Regional Economic Strategy*, South West Regional Development Agency, February 2006.

¹² *Transport's role in sustaining UK's Productivity and Competitiveness: The Case for Action*, HM Treasury and DfT, December 2006.

charging. This is in the West of England where the authorities concerned are currently using TIF pump priming funds to research the merits of road user charging options combined with significant public transport improvements. We note that other bids were submitted, including bids dealing with Exeter, but were not successful and that further discussions are ongoing with DfT with regard to possible future bids. In our view the scale of the West of England conurbation and the existing traffic conditions justify the TIF support and we believe that the scale of the Plymouth and Bournemouth/Poole conurbations is likely to justify the application of some form of congestion charging. We are of the opinion that the rate of development at Exeter combined with the pressures on the urban core may also require a similar approach. We conclude therefore that Policy TR1 should highlight the need to give early consideration to some form of congestion charging in Bristol, Plymouth, Bournemouth/Poole and Exeter.

- 5.28 Policy TR1 relates specifically to the SSCTs and a number of participants mentioned the role demand management could make to the efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network and particularly the M4 and M5 motorway. We were informed that the introduction of a national road-pricing scheme was at least 10 years away. The South East Strategic Authorities suggested that an earlier introduction of congestion charging on the M4/M5 could bring major benefits to the region. The Regional Assembly indicated in paragraph C12 of the Statement on Matter 5/1 that the Highways Agency is working with the Regional Assembly and other stakeholders to promote measures to control demand for travel on the M4/M5. Known as the “ITM Study”, this work is focussed on the M4/M5 around Bristol. We note that Policy TR2 deals with this issue as far as it can do so prior to wider national policy changes.
- 5.29 The role of the Highways Agency in managing the motorway and trunk road network is acknowledged, but a number of participants drew our attention to the use of the Agency’s powers of direction. It was pointed out that the Agency had objected to all the allocations in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, but the objections were subsequently resolved. The Agency expressed concern that there is insufficient guidance in the draft RSS on the dependency between proposed growth, the transport improvements needed to support it and how this infrastructure will be funded. In our opinion the views of the Agency seem like a counsel for perfection and seem to be made in isolation from wider Government policy to accommodate higher levels of growth. In this context we consider that the wording of TR4 should take a more pragmatic approach.
- 5.30 On the basis of the above conclusions we recommend that Policy TR1 should be replaced by new Policy TRANS2 and Policy TR4 be replaced by new Policy TRANS3.

Recommendation 5.3

- Replace Policy TR1 by new Policy TRANS2 and replace Policy TR4 with new Policy TRANS3 as indicated in Appendix C.

Parking Policy

- 5.31 Cornwall County Council indicated that variation in the price of parking and parking availability were important elements in demand management and suggested that the absence

of a specific policy on parking was a serious weakness of the draft RSS. The North and Central Strategic Authorities proposed a new policy to meet this deficiency. The South East Strategic Authorities accepted the difficulty of setting regional parking standards, but sought a policy expression on the role of managing parking and stressed the need for a consistent approach to avoid wasteful competition between competing centres. The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) indicated that the reduction of town centre spaces and increasing the price enhances the attraction of out-of-town/edge-of-town centres.

- 5.32 The Regional Assembly explains in paragraph C9 of the Statement on Matter 5/1 that consideration had been given to the question of developing regional parking standards, but that the diversity and size of the region made it difficult to set standards at a regional scale. Paragraph C10 indicates that the consideration of parking issues for the draft RSS had suggested that the focus of the policy should be to manage car use rather than to seek to control car ownership. Paragraph C11 indicates that the SWRA is revisiting the issue and anticipates that the work should enable car parking standards to be set for the region, which will reflect various character areas such as urban centres, suburban, market towns and rural areas.
- 5.33 In our view the absence of a parking policy is a serious weakness. The majority of the comments on this matter were focussed on the need to manage car use and confirm the view of the SWRA that the emphasis should be on managing the use of the car. We also note the views of the FSB and are of the view that any policy should put the emphasis on discouraging commuting while protecting the commercial viability of town centres. We therefore propose a new Policy TRANs4 to deal with parking issues.

Recommendation 5.4

- Insert new Policy TRANs4 on Parking with the wording as indicated in Appendix C.

Making Urban Areas Work

- 5.34 A major aspect of the Strategy proposals set out in Chapter 3 of this report is the concentration of development at the SSCTs. In Chapter 4 we have sought to ensure that the new development areas have a range of uses and are well integrated with the public transport systems in order to allow a high level of movement by sustainable transport modes. In each sub-regional section of Chapter 4 we have identified the most important elements of transport infrastructure required to support the regional strategy. These elements of transport infrastructure have also been set out in the Implementation Report to allow for their further development.
- 5.35 Without this element of transport investment the strategy will not be delivered and therefore an integrated, but identifiable RTS must recognise this component of investment. This view is supported by the balance of investment proposed through the RFA process, which places substantial emphasis on public transport and local roads investment within the SSCTs.
- 5.36 Paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 recognise the need for investment in the urban areas and for the preparation of transportation strategies for each of these areas. Reference is made to Policies D and F of the draft RSS, but these policies relate to overall provision and deal on

the one hand with the more general need for cross-boundary co-operation in the provision of a wide range of infrastructure and on the other hand with the more detailed master planning of development areas. In our view the RTS should include a policy which requires the preparation of a transport strategy for each SSCT or groupings of SSCTs taking into account the elements of key transportation infrastructure identified in each sub-regional section and in the Implementation Plan.

- 5.37 The Bristol Civic Society suggested the establishment of Passenger Transport Authority for the Greater Bristol Area. This suggestion was also made by the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways. Our attention was drawn to the need for co-ordinated action across the conurbation and the opportunity to attract trips from private cars to public transport through more integrated ticketing arrangements. Given the cross-boundary nature of the key public transport proposals for the Greater Bristol area and the complexity of the transport services, we are of the opinion that this type of initiative would be appropriate. It was put to us that there is a need to extend the scope of such a body to allow it to deal with the transportation issues between Bath and the West Wiltshire area and we support this suggestion in view of the need to reduce the level of private transport within the World Heritage Site.
- 5.38 In response to these conclusions we propose a new Policy TRAN5.

Recommendation 5.5

- Insert new Policy TRAN5 with the wording indicated in Appendix C.

Strategic Transport Corridors

Inter-Modal Relationships

- 5.39 In paragraph 5.3.4, on page 115, the draft RSS sets out a description of the Inter-Regional Road Network and the Strategic Rail Links and then proceeds to deal with these two elements separately. In addition paragraph 5.5.2 sets out a list of Regionally Significant Road Routes, which at the EiP the Regional Assembly proposed should be regarded as Corridors rather than Road Routes. In our view there is a benefit in using the corridor approach in a more strategic way. Our attention was drawn to the relationship between the effectiveness of the M4/M5 motorway system and measures proposed to make the SSCTs work. It was suggested that the effectiveness of the M5/M4 around Bristol was highly dependent on the public transport measures for the conurbation.
- 5.40 Our attention was also drawn to the relationship between proposals for Inter-Regional Rail Links and the measures required to make the urban areas work. The most obvious example are the proposals in Policy TR5 for investment in the Worle loop and Bristol Parkway station to facilitate the reliability of inter-regional services, which will also contribute to the enhancement of the cross-conurbation rail services in the Greater Bristol Area. Some participants highlighted the role that enhanced local rail services could play in making transportation in the Exeter urban area more sustainable. The effectiveness of the proposed new rail station to serve the new developments to the east of Exeter will be dependent on the frequency of services on the London/Basingstoke to Exeter line. The proposal in Policy TR5 for additional passing loops between Exeter and Salisbury can therefore be seen to

contribute not only to connectivity with London and the South East, but also to a more effective transportation system for the Exeter area.

- 5.41 Policy TR5 includes improvements in the rail services between Wales, Bristol and the south coast in order to facilitate modal shifts, address overcrowding and improve the network. The improvements are to be achieved by enhancing speeds, frequencies and the capacity of passenger services. In our view this proposal must be related to the M4 to South Coast corridor which encompasses the suggested West of England to South East Dorset Corridor and the A36/46 road route.
- 5.42 These multi-modal relationships also apply in our view to the more strategic connectivity issues. It was pointed out that the proposal in Policy TR3 for a Second Strategic Route, which involves the upgrading of the A303 and the A358 to dual carriageway status, is paralleled by the London/Basingstoke rail link. Some participants suggested that priority should be given to the more modest rail investment. Our attention was drawn to the importance of the proposal in Policy TR5 for appropriate engineering measures to secure the long-term future of the Great Western route through Dawlish. Many representations and EiP Statements stressed the importance of these measures to connectivity between the peninsula and the rest of the country.

Strategic Corridors

- 5.43 In our view the corridor management approach proposed by the Regional Assembly in relation to Policy TR10 should be widened to take a more strategic and multi-modal approach to the consideration of the transport system in the South West. This approach allows the output from the sub-regional considerations to be seen in the wider context that includes investment in connectivity. Taking into account the above examples and other representations we conclude that there are eight strategic corridors to consider. These are set out below with a commentary on the important relationships within each corridor.

A Exeter to London via Bristol.

This corridor includes the SSCTs of Exeter, Taunton, Bridgewater, Weston-super-Mare, Bristol, Bath, Chippenham and Swindon. The planning of these SSCTs will have important implications for the effectiveness of the M4 and M5. The planning of the Great Western Mainline operation will have important implications for making the urban areas work, providing synergy between road and rail operation. The rail services between Taunton and Reading we regard as part of this corridor. This corridor provides access to the Port of Bristol and Bristol Airport and at the eastern end outside the region provides access to Heathrow Airport.

B Exeter to London via Salisbury and Basingstoke.

This corridor is more rural in character, but the SSCTs of Yeovil and Salisbury can be seen to be part of it. The major issue in this corridor is the balance to be struck between the connectivity benefits of the Second Strategic Route and the connectivity and urban systems benefits associated with improvements to the rail link. Exeter airport falls within this corridor and is convenient to the proposed new station for the new community at Cranbrook.

Exeter to Plymouth and Penzance.

The main issue in this corridor is connectivity in terms of the Dawlish investment for the security of the rail link to the west and the need to improve the A30 and the A38. The public transport investment proposed for Plymouth can be seen as linked to the effectiveness of the A38 in terms of connectivity.

C Weymouth to London via South East Dorset.

This corridor includes the linked SSCTs of Weymouth and Dorchester and the conurbation of South East Dorset, one of the largest urban areas in the region. The rail and road facilities within the corridor are important to the proper functioning of the SSCTs. The ports of Poole and Weymouth also relate to this corridor and it provides access to Bournemouth Airport.

D Bristol/Bath to the South Coast.

This corridor encompasses the suggested 'Intra-Regionally Significant Transport Corridors' of West of England to South East Dorset corridor and the South East Dorset to Swindon corridor. The Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study (BB2SC) linked future investment in the A36/A46 and A350 routes to improvements to the parallel rail services proposed in Policy TR5. Some participants suggested that enhancement of the rail network east of Bath should be considered as a contribution to making Bath SSCT work more effectively.

E Bristol to the North via Gloucester/Cheltenham.

The effective working of the M5 in this corridor is linked to the planning of the two SSCTs of Gloucester and Cheltenham and their hinterland. Some participants suggested that the rail network in the area could be more effectively used to reduce travel on the road network. The A419 and the Swindon to Gloucester rail link can be regarded as north-south links, but they also have an east-west function in the link to London.

F Exeter to Dorchester

There is no direct rail route in this corridor, but the provision of the Yeovil Chord could provide an interchange opportunity. Public transport provision is likely to largely depend on bus/coach services along the corridor to provide an alternative to car journeys. In terms of the road network in the corridor, there are no outstanding proposals and the corridor approach would be appropriate with an emphasis on safety and reliability of journey speed.

G Exeter to Barnstaple

This corridor has a rail service from Exeter to Barnstaple and the main road connection is via the A361 from Barnstaple to the M5, the North Devon Link Road. The rail service provides an alternative to car journeys from the Barnstaple SSCT. There are no specific proposals in the corridor so a corridor management approach is appropriate.

- 5.44 The latter two corridors cover primarily rural areas. They are important connections for the areas served, but do not raise wider strategic issues.

Strategic Conclusions

- 5.45 Our proposed new Policy sets out the main aim of the RTS as seeking to reduce the rate of growth of traffic and includes a subsidiary objective of achieving a transfer of journeys to the more sustainable modes of transport. We note the opportunity offered in each corridor to achieve some measure of modal transfer from vehicular traffic to more sustainable modes. While this transfer is most critical within the urban areas we are of the opinion that opportunities should be taken at the strategic level. We are also mindful of the *Eddington report*¹³ proposal that emphasis should be given to proposals that provide multiple benefits.
- 5.46 An evaluation of the corridor characteristics set out above confirms the strategic importance of the Exeter to London via Bristol corridor. It can be expected to continue to make the greatest contribution to inter and intra-regional connectivity as it also provides the most likely onward connectivity component for the south-western part of the region. The South West Regional Network Report provided by the Highways Agency indicates that the whole of the motorway network in this corridor is expected to be experiencing more than 100% stress by 2026.
- 5.47 As the corridor contains the largest number of SSCTs, including the Greater Bristol conurbation it is important that the land-use and transportation proposals for these urban areas are fully integrated in order not only to make the areas more attractive to live and work in, but also to reduce the impact on the strategic road network. It is clear from our conclusions regarding the land use proposals and the appropriate transportation packages for each sub-region, that they are intended to ensure the viability of the corridor as well as improving the effectiveness of each urban area.

Greater Bristol

- 5.48 The Greater Bristol area is the most critical part of the Exeter to London corridor as the motorway sections involved carry the largest volumes of traffic and parts of the rail network are known to be incapable of dealing with the desired improvements in inter-city services and local cross-city services. The West of England sub-regional strategy places the correct emphasis on the linkage of new developments to the public transport network and we note and support the priority given in the RFA guidance to the Greater Bristol Bus Network proposal as well as to a number of Rapid Transit Routes within the conurbation. We note and support the approach set out in Policy TR2 to seek measures to manage demand on the M4 and M5 including Intelligent Technology Measures and Access Control Measures. Policy TR5 includes proposals for the following improvements to the rail system in the Bristol area:
- New/Improved Parkway Stations at Worle and Bristol Parkway;
 - Investment in the Worle (Weston-super-Mare) loop to facilitate the reliability of inter-regional services; and
 - Re-signalling and route modernisation of the Great Western Line.

¹³ *Transport's role in sustaining UK's Productivity and Competitiveness: The Case for Action*, HM Treasury and DfT, December 2006.

- 5.49 We recognise that these measures together with the turn-around facility at Yate, which is linked to our recommendation for additional growth in that location, will assist in the improvement of the local cross-city services. We are concerned however that the draft RSS does not highlight the potential synergy between the inter-city infrastructure and the local cross-city services that could ease congestion on the local and strategic road network. We are also concerned that the proposed re-signalling and route modernisation does not indicate any degree of priority for the Bristol part of the Great Western Main Line.

The Second Strategic Route

- 5.50 Policy TR3 in the draft RSS proposes that regional stakeholders will work with the Highways Agency to achieve a second strategic route into the region from London to dual carriageway standard. Policy TR5 proposes additional passing loops on the rail line between Exeter and Salisbury in the same corridor. As is noted above this corridor is not highly urbanised with only the SSCTs of Yeovil and Salisbury falling within the corridor and therefore any major transportation investment in the corridor must be linked to connectivity.
- 5.51 The proposed passing loops on the rail line between Exeter and Salisbury are intended to allow the provision of an hourly timetable on the service to London. At the Exeter end of the rail line a new station is proposed in the sub-regional package to serve the new community of Cranbrook. We anticipate that this station will also be able to serve the additional development area, which we have proposed to the north of the rail line. To be effective this station will have to be able to offer more than an hourly service and this links to proposals for an enhanced local rail network serving the wider Exeter area. In our view provision should be made to allow for higher levels of service on the Exeter to Salisbury rail line to support the enhancement of local services as well as achieving an hourly inter-city service to London.
- 5.52 It is clear from the response of the Minister to the regional guidance on the Regional Funding Allocations that the costs of the Second Route proposal are threatening to distort the overall transportation budget. In addition to the implications of the A303 Stonehenge scheme review it would seem from the costs of the proposed A358 Ilminster to Taunton/A303 Ilminster Bypass that this is a relatively costly scheme in relation to the cost of other important public transport and local road improvements elsewhere in the region. As noted above, the cost of the scheme will include the costs of the improvements in the vicinity of Stonehenge, which are affected by the desire to protect the setting of a national heritage site. Taking into account our appreciation of the need to invest in the urban areas to allow the proposed level of growth to be satisfactorily accommodated, the investment required to protect the effectiveness of the M4/M5 motorways and the needs of the inter-regional rail network, we consider that the scale and timing of investment on this route must be managed to avoid diverting resources from those higher priorities. In view of this conclusion we are of the view that Policy TR3 should be replaced and the reference deleted to the achievement of dual carriageway standard for the whole route and that the emphasis should be placed on achieving reliability of journey times along the route.

The Peninsula

- 5.53 An examination of Figure 5.2 in the *South West Regional Highway Report*¹⁴ by the Highways Agency suggests that apart from a few stretches of the A30 from Exeter westwards the route is projected to be operating at the lowest level of stress. We note that the RFA advice includes two schemes which are already in progress that will enhance the operation of this route. The imminent delivery of these improvements was observed on the Panel Tour. It also identifies additional schemes to further improve the performance, but we note that these are not included in the lists of schemes included in the Minister's response on the RFA. We assume that these are regarded as longer-term schemes that would be dealt with under Policy TR4 of the draft RSS.
- 5.54 It is also evident from Figure 5.2 that two of the stress areas relate to the SSCTs of Plymouth and Camborne-Pool-Redruth. We note that the Minister's response includes investment on the East of Plymouth Developments Stage 1, including Deep Lane Junction, which is related to the requirements of the Sherford New Community and the Langage Employment Site. The Minister's response also includes the Camborne-Pool-Redruth Transport Package, which will minimise the impact on the A30 of the increased level of development within the SSCT. This integration of trunk road investment and the needs of the proposed development areas is not well reflected in the draft RSS policy framework.
- 5.55 Our attention was drawn to the proposed South Devon Link Road, which is otherwise known as the Kingskerswell Bypass. This route does not form part of the main corridor, but clearly provides access to the Torbay area. As noted in the Torbay HMA Section of this Report consideration of this proposal has to be seen in the context of the wider urban area, including Newton Abbot. It is a relatively expensive scheme and needs to be considered in the light of the need to adjust the wider network in the area to accommodate the proposed growth. We believe that a local corridor approach should be applied to the full length of the A380 and its extension to Brixham via the A3022.
- 5.56 The other strategic issue within this corridor is the need to secure the long-term future of the Great Western route through Dawlish. Part of the justification for this investment can be regarded as improving the resilience and reliability of existing infrastructure to cope with the consequences of climate change as proposed by Policy SD2. This rail link provides the services to Plymouth, the second largest urban area in the region, and also connections further west to the SSCTs of West Cornwall and other major towns such as Penzance, Newquay and St Austell. We support the inclusion of this project within the draft RSS.

The South Dorset Corridor

- 5.57 Many representations were submitted on the A354 Weymouth Relief Road despite the fact that it had been included in the Minister's response on the RFA as an approved scheme not yet underway. We understand that the planning application for the scheme has been approved and therefore we do not see a purpose in making any further comments on the matter.
- 5.58 The South East Dorset Strategic Authorities highlighted the need for improvements in this corridor particularly where it serves the South East Dorset conurbation. The Strategic

¹⁴ *South West Regional Network Report*, Highways Agency, November 2006.

Authorities claim that there is a need to upgrade the A31 to dual carriageway status through the conurbation to allow the area to accommodate the high level of economic and housing growth planned for the area. The scheme was included in the advice provided to Ministers on the RFA as a longer term scheme beyond 2016 and although it did not therefore feature in the Minister's response, it is identified as a longer term priority in Annex A of the South West Regional Network Report. The scheme is not highlighted in paragraph 4.3.14 as part of the key infrastructure required to support the sub-regional strategy, presumably because it is part of the trunk road network. In our view this conceals the integration required between investment to support the urban areas and enhance the strategic road network.

- 5.59 The rail line within this corridor is part of the South West Main Line and apart from the connectivity function towards London it provides an important transportation facility for the two major urban areas, the South East Dorset Conurbation and the Weymouth/Dorchester area. In both areas there would seem to be opportunities to intensify the use of this facility. In our view this opportunity is not adequately set out in paragraph 4.3.14 of the draft RSS.

Bristol/Bath to the South Coast

- 5.60 The BB2SC Study highlighted the need to have an integrated approach to this corridor and Policy TR5 reflects the rail service part of that approach. The suggested corridor approach for Policy TR10 by the Regional Assembly sub-divides the broad corridor into the West of England to South East Dorset corridor and the South East Dorset to Swindon corridor. These two corridors cross over at Warminster and to some extent have a common destination in terms of the M4. In our view they should be considered as a single broad corridor. The draft RSS does not adequately demonstrate the integrated approach required between road and rail.
- 5.61 We note that the BB2SC Study concluded that the A350 did not act as an inter-regional route. The Study tested the impact of a dualling of the A350 to the M4 and found that even that level of improvement did not achieve the relief of north/south traffic from the Bath area. At the EiP it emerged that views on the acceptability of the routing of the north south traffic on the A36/A46 through Bath may be changing. In those circumstances we conclude that there is a need to review the conclusions of the BB2SC Study in the light of greater traffic restraint in the Bath area.
- 5.62 A number of participants highlighted the potential contribution that the rail network to the east of Bath could make to reducing car journeys from West Wiltshire into Bath. Our attention was also drawn to the poor quality of the services involved and the potential benefits of operating them as part of a wider sub-regional network. The evidence available to us supports the view that towns such as Trowbridge have a strong functional relationship with Bath in particular. Despite encouraging greater self-containment we conclude that a high level of interaction is likely to continue. In view of the projected congestion on the road network within Bath and its status as a World Heritage Site we are of the opinion that this proposal should be pursued.

South West to the Midlands

- 5.63 The critical part of this corridor is the Gloucester/Cheltenham urban area. The Highways Agency expressed concern about the risk of additional growth generating more local trips on the M5 motorway. The locations for new development have been selected to reduce this

tendency and the requirement for the developments to be integrated with the local public transport network should also minimise any impact. Inevitably two major urban areas such as Gloucester and Cheltenham will interact and this can be expected to generate trips across the motorway. Paragraph 4.2.39 of the draft RSS indicates the provision of an integrated transport package, but does not highlight the need for that package to operate at a sub-regional rather than a settlement level.

- 5.64 We accept that the sub-corridor between Swindon and Gloucester/Cheltenham fulfils a double role in that it facilitates movement between Swindon and the Midlands, but it also provides the connection between Gloucester/Cheltenham and London and the South East. The growth of Swindon presents both a threat and an opportunity to this corridor. The extension of Swindon to the east across the A419 could threaten the effectiveness of the link to the M4. To avoid this problem, the list of infrastructure for the Swindon SSCT includes a requirement for segregated crossings of the A419. We have also accepted the need for further development on the western side of Swindon and there may be an opportunity to take advantage of the rail line to provide more sustainable transport for the new development.

Policy outcomes

- 5.65 We have considered the policy structure set out in the draft RSS. We accept that it is a response to the requirements set out in PPS11 by setting out guidance on priorities for managing and improving the trunk road network and local roads of regional or sub-regional importance and a strategic framework for investment in the strategic rail network. The segregation between road and rail, and inter-regional, and local results in a failure to identify the need to integrate in the following ways:
- integration between the sub-regional strategies and the management and improvement of the inter-regional road and rail infrastructure;
 - integration between local rail and inter-regional rail investment; and
 - integration between road and rail investment to provide a more sustainable solution.
- 5.66 Policy TR5, which deals with the inter-regional rail network, includes two measures that relate to service quality and passenger facilities, including interchange facilities. Policy TR6, which deals with inter-regional bus and coach services, includes measures to enhance the level of services and interchange facilities. Policy TR11 deals with intra-regional public transport and includes measures to improve rail, bus and coach services including enhanced station and interchange facilities. In many cases the distinction between inter-regional and intra-regional facilities and services is artificial. Rail stations often handle both types of rail services and coach and bus stations are more effective if they deal with local and long distance services. The measures to introduce better quality trains, buses and coaches in Policies TR5, TR6 and TR11 are similarly applicable to all services. In our view there is a need for a single policy to bring these ambitions together in a more meaningful way.
- 5.67 Policy TR10 sets out a corridor management approach for the Regionally Significant Corridors suggested by the SWRA. In our view the approach set out could be applied more generally within the region. We are of the opinion that there is scope to develop modal shift opportunities on a wider scale across the region and make more sustainable use of the networks. Policy T10 seeks to improve the reliability and resilience of journey times in the Regionally Significant Corridors and Policy TR4 seeks measures to maintain safe, efficient

operation and reliability of journey times on the ‘Remainder of the Trunk Road Network.’ Policy TR2, which deals with the management and improvement of the M4 and M5, seeks to maintain the reliability of journey times into and out of the region. While we accept that the prime function of the motorways is to handle inter-regional journeys we are of the opinion that it will always have to accommodate some intra-regional journeys as part of the natural functioning of the region e.g. journeys to Bristol for higher-level services. Policy TR5, which deals with inter-regional rail facilities, seeks to ensure the provision of reliable train services. In our view there is scope to combine these policy intentions in a single policy for all the strategic corridors within the region.

- 5.68 As a result of these conclusions we propose that Policy TR2, Policy TR3, Policy TR5, Policy TR6, Policy TR10 and Policy TR11 should be replaced by a new set of policies TRANs6 and TRANs7, which includes general policies on public transport service quality and a corridor approach policy with associated corridor policy statements TRANs7A, TRANs7B, TRANs7C, TRANs7D, TRANs4E, TRAN4F, TRANs4G and TRANs4H. Map 5.1 South West Regional Transport Network was acknowledged to be inaccurate in a number of ways, particularly in relation to the rail network. We are of the opinion that this map should be corrected and retained as a base for the illustration of the corridors identified in the above policies. We suggest that the corridors be identified using broad shaded areas.

Recommendation 5.6

- Replace Policy TR2, Policy TR3, Policy TR5, Policy TR6, Policy TR10 and Policy TR11 with new policies named Policy TRANs6 and Policy TRANs7 including associated corridor policy statements named TRANs7A, TRANs7B, TRANs7C, TRANs7D, TRANs4E, TRANs4F, TRANs4G and TRANs4H with the associated wording identified in Appendix C.
- Map 5.1 should be corrected and used to illustrate the Strategic Corridors.

- 5.69 Policy TR5 includes two proposals for action outside the region. These relate to improved platform capacity at Reading Station and junction improvements at Reading, and to direct links to Heathrow Airport from the Great Western Main Line. In our view these proposals should be expressed as recommendations to DfT.

Recommendation 5.7

- The Department for Transport be recommended that provision should be made for:
 - Improved platform capacity at Reading Station;
 - Junction improvements at Reading; and;
 - Direct links to Heathrow Airport from the Great Western Main Line.

Ports and Airports

Ports

- 5.70 There were some comments on wider connectivity concerning the ports at Weymouth and Poole, but the Panel has no reason to question Policy TR7 in the draft RSS other than to rename it as Policy TRANs8. There were representations on Bristol Port that related to land provision around the Royal Portbury Docks and these have been dealt with in the West of England sub-regional section. In view of our comments regarding the need for a comprehensive review of the future of the port, we are concerned that Policy TR8 requires LDDs to demonstrate how the projected growth of general and container freight at Bristol can be supported. As noted earlier we are of the opinion that this assessment could only be made across the whole dock complex, which involves two authorities. As the Bristol Port Company has already publicised ambitious expansion plans for the Avonmouth part of the dock system, we are of the opinion that the Company should be involved in any such ‘demonstration.’ We note the suggestion by SWRDA that a port masterplan should be prepared and conclude that Policy TR8 should be modified to seek such a document. We propose the following modification of Policy TR8 and rename as Policy TRANs9.

Recommendation 5.8

- Rename Policy TR7 as Policy TRANs8 with the wording as indicated in Appendix C.
- Modify Policy TR8 relating to Bristol Port and rename as Policy TRANs9 with the wording indicated in Appendix C.

Airports

- 5.71 The issue of the growth of airports in relation to Policy SD2 on Climate Change has been dealt with earlier in this report. At this point in our considerations our concern is whether Policy TR9 adequately reflects the ATWP and provides measures to ensure that a proper emphasis is placed on achieving a high proportion of trips to and from the airport by public transport. Policy TR9 of the draft RSS does not mention the levels of growth set out in the ATWP and does not adequately deal with the issue of seeking a sustainable transport package for surface access.
- 5.72 Bristol Civic Society suggested that Bristol airport should be provided with rail access as a means of reducing emissions. In our view this proposal is both physically and economically unrealistic. The implementation of such a proposal would inevitably have to be at the expense of other more worthwhile projects. We conclude that public transport access will remain bus orientated, but note that road improvements associated with the strategic release area to the south east of Bristol could provide the opportunity to improve access to the airport. In our view the airport operator should be required to ensure that the bus services are designed to attract a significant proportion of the journeys to and from the airport.
- 5.73 As a result we propose to modify Policy TR9 and rename as Policy TRANs10.

Recommendation 5.9

- Modify Policy TR9 and rename as Policy TRANs10 with the wording indicated in Appendix C.

Freight Transport

- 5.74 There was considerable discussion at the EiP over the value of Map 5.2 Regional Freight Map. Many participants found it confusing and it was suggested that it be deleted. We were informed by the Regional Assembly that the Freight Map hierarchy of roads has the following purposes:
1. to inform the priority for maintenance investment;
 2. to inform a review of the Primary Route Network, to be completed by 2010;
 3. to inform the network strategy for certain intra-regional transport corridors
 4. to inform policies for rest and service areas; and
 5. to assist Freight Quality Partnerships in the region.
- 5.75 It was explained that use by lorries of those roads most fit for purpose will help to protect the environment and minimise harm to local communities, whilst meeting the economic needs of the region.
- 5.76 Map 5.2 is clearly wrong. The A361 from the M5 to Barnstaple is indicated as a national route, but it does not form part of the Trunk Road Network. Furthermore the A36/A46 is shown as a 'County Route' whereas it is shown on Map 5.1 as a 'Regionally Significant Road Route'. Apart from drafting errors, we were given the impression that the freight route map was the outcome of discussions/negotiations and the selection of the network was not evidence based. There are certain parts of the region where the network of 'Regionally Significant Routes' does seem to be sparse, but given the continuing role of 'County Routes' to provide access to freight facilities, we are of the opinion that the network shown on Map 5.1 should be used in the meantime. There is clearly a need for an evidence based review of the regional route network and this should be part of the work for the next review. As a result we propose the following modification of Policy TR12 and its renaming as Policy TRANs11. We also make a recommendation to initiate an evidence-based review of the 'Regionally Significant Road Routes'.

Recommendation 5.10

- Modify Policy TR12 and rename as Policy TRANs11 with the wording indicated in Appendix C.

Recommendation 5.11

- *Map 5.2 Regional Freight Map should be deleted. An evidence-based review of the 'Regionally Significant Road Network' should be conducted as soon as possible and prior to the next review of the RSS.*

Interchange Facilities

- 5.77 There was little criticism of Policy TR13 on Rail Freight Interchanges. As a result we do not propose any modification to this part of the draft RSS but rename it as Policy TRANs12.

Priorities for investment

- 5.78 The guidance to Ministers on the Regional Funding Allocations sets out priorities for transport investment for the first ten-year period of the plan. We note that the Minister indicates that the priorities set out in the guidance reflect the need to support the overall strategy. In our view the investment proposals put great emphasis on making the urban areas work and also on ensuring the effectiveness of the M4/M5 corridor.
- 5.79 The Eddington Report emphasises the value of schemes that provide multiple benefits. In our view this approach is relevant to the circumstances within the South West. We are of the opinion that transport investment in many of the SSCTs will not only serve the wider strategy of concentrating growth in the urban areas, but is essential to the effective operation of the motorway and trunk road network, which is critical to delivering economic connectivity.
- 5.80 From a basic geographical assessment it is clear that the Exeter to London Corridor serves wider interests. The effectiveness of this corridor is important to the economic connectivity of the peninsula to the west of Exeter. This is likely to remain true for a good part of the plan period even if the full "Second Route" was initiated at an early date, due to the time it would be likely take to complete that project.
- 5.81 The RTS Objectives that are set out in new Policy TRANs1 provide guidance on priorities. In our view the objectives support public transport measures that reduce the rate of traffic growth and that achieve a transfer of journeys to more sustainable modes. While investment in a wide range of public transport projects, including inter-regional services, will assist in meeting these objectives, we conclude that investment within the SSCTs will provide the greatest contribution to the objectives.
- 5.82 The proposed RTS Objectives also place importance on economic connectivity. In this context we note that in economic connectivity terms the greatest delays are often in the first 5 miles and the last 5 miles of a journey i.e. within urban areas. The justification for the "Second Route" relies on the benefits that it provides for economic movement, but a number of participants pointed out that the additional capacity that it will provide will generate additional journeys. In our view the proposal is likely to conflict in some degree with the main objective of reducing the need to travel and the subsidiary objectives related to transferring journeys to more sustainable modes. We conclude therefore that less emphasis

should be placed on capacity and speed enhancement and more on the reliability of journey times. This approach may serve not only to reduce the environmental impact of the proposal but should also to reduce the pressure on the regional transportation budget and allow other more critical investments to go ahead.

5.83 We conclude that the Transportation Priorities should generally reflect the objectives in Policy TRANs1 and on that basis we suggest that the following sequence be adopted:

- SSCT public transportation investment, particularly where it benefits the effective operation of the motorway and trunk road network.
- SSCT roads investment, particularly where it benefits public transport operations and urban regeneration.
- Investment in the motorway and trunk road network, particularly where it improves the operation of a SSCT.
- Investment in the inter-regional rail network.
- Demand management measures on the motorway and trunk road network.