5 Regional Approach to Transport

5.1 Revised Section 5

Picture 5.1 Transport Map



Picture 5.1 Transport Map

Transport

Transport Transport

This section completely replaces section 5 in the draft RSS including all policies and supporting text. Changes are not, therefore, shown through strike-through and highlighting, as the original draft RSS section has been deleted in its entirety. The Inset Diagrams have also been updated to be consistent with the changes.

5.1.1

This section forms the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the South West to 2026. It replaces the existing RTS, published in September 2001, and takes into account subsequent national policies and announcements impacting on it, for example the White Papers on Aviation and the Future of Rail, and the Towards a Sustainable Transport System document.

5.1.2

The RTS sets the Government's long-term regional objectives and framework for determining the priorities for transport investment and management across all modes to support the aims of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It indicates how the transport policies will support economic development and will inform and assist the South West of England Regional Development

Agency (RDA) in the development and implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). It will inform national and regional transport policies and programmes including those prepared by Department for Transport and Network Rail. It will assist the Region in preparing its advice on Regional Funding Allocations. It will also provide the context for Local Authorities producing Local Transport Plans, Local Development Documents and other policies and proposals that are transport related.

Objectives

5.1.3

The main aim of the RTS is to support the RSS and reduce the rate of road traffic growth through the following:

- Supporting economic development (identified in the RES) by maintaining and improving the reliability and resilience of links from the region's Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) to other regions (particularly the South East and London), international markets and connectivity within the region;
- Addressing social exclusion by improving accessibility to jobs and services;
- Making urban areas work effectively and creating attractive places to live by developing the transport network in support of the strategy to concentrate growth and development in the SSCTs; and
- Reducing negative impacts of transport on the environment including climate change.

Regional Approach to Transport

5.1.4

Maintaining reliable and resilient connections between the South West and the rest of the UK (particularly London and the South East) and international markets beyond, has been identified in the RES as the most important transport factor affecting the performance of the regional economy. The terms reliable and resilient are key here. Maintaining the reliability and predictability of 'end-to-end' journey' times generally matters much more to users than a reduction in average journey-time. Resilience in this context is the ability of air, rail, road and ferry networks to return to normal service patterns following incidents or disruptions. Making best use of existing transport networks, targeting new infrastructure to unlock pinch points to improve the reliability and resilience of journey times, and maximising opportunities to achieve reductions in the growth of road traffic are essential to ensuring that the transport system functions effectively and is able to support the aims and planned outcomes of the RSS and RES. These transport outcomes will be achieved through the development of a corridor management approach and through the implementation of policies for freight and the Primary Route Network, ports and airports. The RTS Key Diagram illustrates the corridors of national and regional importance and the locations of the ports and airports.

5.1.5

The corridor management approach should also address the challenges of accessibility to jobs and services, social exclusion and an ageing population through capacity enhancements including improved bus/rail services and interchanges.

5.1.6

In order to support the RSS core spatial strategy to concentrate growth and development in the SSCTs and to improve accessibility to jobs and services and tackle social exclusion, transport networks need to be developed which make urban areas work effectively, whilst creating attractive places to live. This will involve the implementation of demand management measures

in SSCTs that reduce reliance on the car, encourage use of sustainable transport modes and reduce the impact of transport on the environment

Corridor Management

5.1.7

The RTS identifies corridors of national and regional importance and provides a framework for making best use of existing transport networks, improving the reliability and resilience of journey times and developing opportunities to facilitate a shift from cars to public transport, walking and cycling.

5.1.8

There are two corridors of national importance; the London - South Wales (via Bristol) corridor and the Exeter - Birmingham (via Bristol) corridor, which include the M4, M5, the Great Western Main Rail Line and the Cross Country Network Rail Line to Birmingham. The significance of these corridors has been identified in the South West Regional Planning Assessment for rail and by the Secretary of State for Transport through the designation of the M4 and M5 as routes of strategic national importance. They provide the Region's main links to London, the Midlands and South Wales; connecting them to the majority of the Region's SSCTs (including Bath, Bristol, Bridgwater, Cheltenham, Chippenham, Exeter, Gloucester, Swindon, Taunton, Weston-super-Mare). These corridors also provide access to the Port of Bristol, Bristol/Exeter Airports and to Heathrow Airport.

5.1.9

The corridors of national importance are likely to come under significant pressure during the RSS time frame, particularly at the SSCTs along the corridors, from local commuters using the routes for local journeys. Substantial priority therefore needs to be given to the improvements to the transport networks serving these SSCTs that will reduce pressure on the national corridors.

5.1.10

There are a number of regionally important corridors across the South West which contribute to the connectivity objectives of the RSS and RES and support the planned growth at a number of the SSCTs. The priorities attached to improvements along these corridors should be commensurate with the level of growth requiring support and take account of the extent to which measures would significantly contribute to wider spatial strategy objectives.

5.1.11

The corridor between Exeter and London (via Taunton and/or Salisbury) includes the A303/A358, Exeter to Waterloo rail link and Exeter to Paddington rail link (via Taunton and Reading). The SSCTs along this corridor include Exeter, Salisbury, Taunton and Yeovil. The RES highlights the important connectivity and resilience role this corridor performs for the western part of the region. This corridor will continue to be of regional importance.

5.1.12

The corridor between Exeter and Penzance (via Plymouth or Okehampton) includes the A38/A30 and the main line rail link. The SSCTs along this corridor include Exeter, Plymouth, Truro and Camborne-Pool-Redruth. The corridor provides the far west of the region with its connection to the rest of the country's road and rail network. This corridor provides an important link for many rural parts of the region; supporting economic growth and sectors such as tourism as well as providing social connectivity for otherwise isolated areas.

5.1.13

The corridor between Weymouth and London (via South East Dorset) corridor includes the A354/ A31/ A338/ A35 and Weymouth to London Waterloo rail link. The corridor provides an important link from this part of the region with the south east and London, supporting economic and housing growth in the SSCTs in this area.

5.1.14

The corridor between Swindon and Gloucester/Cheltenham includes the A417/A419 and the Kemble/Stroud rail link. This corridor provides an important link between the SSCTs of Swindon, Gloucester and Cheltenham and to London and the Midlands beyond. It plays an important role in supporting the economic and housing growth expected at these SSCTs.

5.1.15

The corridor between Bristol/Bath and South Hampshire includes the A4/A36 and the Cardiff to Southampton rail link. As with other regionally important corridors this route plays an important role in supporting the economic and housing growth at the SSCTs along its route which include Bristol, Bath, Trowbridge, Salisbury and Southampton.

5.1.16

The corridors between Torbay and Exeter (which include the A380 and the Exeter to Paignton rail link), and Barnstaple and Exeter corridor (which includes the A361 and the Exeter to Barnstaple rail link) both provide these parts of the region with an important link to Exeter which is not only a key hub for a number of regionally and nationally important corridors but also serves as a sub-regional centre for services, retailing and cultural activities.

5.1.17

The corridor between Exeter and Dorchester (which includes the A35 and the rail service via Yeovil) provides an important link between these SSCTs and to the wider regional and national transport networks beyond.

5.1.18

The corridor between Penzance and the Isles of Scilly via the ferry and air services is critical to providing the Isles of Scilly with a lifeline to main land services and for improving equality of opportunity and economic prosperity.

RTS1 - Corridor Management

RTS1 - Corridor Management

In the following corridors of:-

National importance:

- London South Wales (via Bristol); and
- Exeter Birmingham (via Bristol).

Regional importance:

- Exeter London (via Taunton and/or Salisbury);
- Exeter Penzance (via Plymouth or Okehampton);
- Weymouth London (via South East Dorset);
- Swindon Gloucester / Cheltenham;
- Bristol/Bath South Hampshire;
- Torbay Exeter (via Newton Abbot);
- Barnstaple Exeter;
- Exeter Dorchester; and
- Penzance Isles of Scilly.

In order to improve the reliability and resilience of journey times, to develop opportunities to facilitate a modal shift and support growth at the SSCTs, provision will be made to manage the

demand for long distance journeys and reduce the impacts of local trips on these corridors. Measures will include:-

- Demand management measures and improvements to the local transport networks serving the SSCTs along the corridors (particularly walking, cycling, public transport and interchange facilities) that will reduce the rate of road traffic congestion on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Developers managing down the impacts of their developments on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Access control measures on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Improvements to road junctions that will reduce the rate of road traffic growth and congestion on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Proposals that will make the best use of the existing infrastructure;
- Improvements in information management, including the timetabling of rail services;
- Engineering measures to enable increasing frequency of rail services; and
- Capacity enhancements to the corridors, including rail passenger services.

Substantial priority should be given to those measures that will have the greatest impact in reducing the rate of growth of congestion on the corridors of national importance. Priority on corridors of regional importance should be commensurate with the relative level of economic and housing growth along and within the corridor.

Demand Management and Sustainable Travel Measures at the SSCTs

5.1.19

The SSCTs are where there is the greatest scope for efficient public transport and more use of walking and cycling. Improvements in public transport, walking and cycling and specific measures to encourage sustainable travel behaviour should be coupled with further traffic management, to reduce the rate of growth of road traffic. Transport at the urban extensions should be focused on sustainable links with the rest of the SSCT and not simply connections to the road network.

RTS2 Demand Management and Sustainable Travel Measures at the SSCTs

RTS2 Demand Management and Sustainable Travel Measures at the SSCTs

Demand management measures should be introduced progressively at the SSCTs to reduce the growth of road traffic levels and congestion. This should be accompanied by a 'step change' in the prioritisation of sustainable travel measures serving these places. The range and degree of demand management measures should be determined by the functional role of the SSCT and the availability of sustainable travel modes. Priority should be given to those measures that will have the greatest impact in relieving congestion at the most congested SSCTs. Consideration should be given to the following range of measures:

- better walking and cycling measures;
- the promotion of more sustainable travel behaviour (e.g. 'Smarter Choices');
- improved facilities for public transport;
- new and expanded park-and-ride;
- improved management of road space including schemes to improve average bus speeds and high occupancy vehicle lanes;

- parking strategies including charging regimes
- congestion charging/road pricing;

Parking

5.1.20

It is not practical or desirable to seek to apply a uniform set of parking standards in the South West region. The diversity of the region means that standards that might be appropriate in some of the larger urban centres may not be so in some of the SSCTs or the smaller towns and villages. Therefore parking standards should be based on an assessment of accessibility by sustainable modes.

5.1.21

Appropriate parking provision and management can positively contribute to demand management objectives and be an important tool in encouraging a shift towards public transport, walking and cycling. Local Transport Planning Authorities are required to develop and deliver accessibility strategies and plans for their areas through their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) either individually or through Joint LTPs with neighbouring authorities. These accessibility strategies should be developed in close partnership with District Councils and should set out detailed parking policies and standards. The parking policies should not only meet the requirements of national policy, but should also reflect the geographical diversity of the region.

RTS3 - Parking RTS3 - Parking

Parking measures should be implemented to reduce reliance on the car and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. Relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals for:

Parking Standards

Standards should promote sustainable transport choices. In those parts of the region (particularly the SSCTs) where levels of accessibility by sustainable modes are high (or are planned to be high), lower levels of parking provision for new development should be provided.

Parking Provision

The total parking stock should be managed to reflect local circumstances and the relative accessibility by sustainable transport modes.

Parking Charges

Parking charging regimes should be designed to:

- Discourage commuting while protecting the commercial viability of town centres;
- Avoid wasteful competition between different locations; and
- Reflect the availability of alternative more sustainable travel modes.

Freight and the Primary Route Network

5.1.22

Much of the freight moved into, and within, the region is for distribution. Mineral extraction and agriculture are, however, important features of the regional economy, both of which generate significant volumes of freight traffic.

5.1.23

Rail freight flows within the South West region are limited in number, and are concentrated on a small number of particular markets such as china clay, stone, coal and cars. There is, however, consistent growth in some freight markets, such as stone movement. The longer term interaction between freight and passenger flows in terms of the operation and maintenance of the network was considered as part of the South West Regional Planning Assessment for the Railways prepared by DfT. Generally, freight volumes from and to the South West limit the viability of rail freight so road-based haulage will remain the primary means of freight transport.

5.1.24

The rail network in the region is unable to handle the 'high cube' 2895mm tall (9' 6") marine containers on conventional rail wagons. The Network Rail Freight Route Utilisation Study, published in March 2007, does not identify the South West region as a priority for gauge enhancement based on demand forecasts and the likely business case for investment. While accepting this position in the short to medium term there is concern about the impact of gauge limitations on the future competitiveness of the region. Where demand arises, 2895mm (9' 6") high containers could be transported using specialist rail wagons.

5.1.25

Work carried out through the London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (also known as "SWARMMS" - South West ARea Multi Modal Study) and by Local Authorities identifies the scope for a road/rail freight interchange at Exeter.

5.1.26

The primary route network has been designated by the Secretary of State for Transport as providing the most satisfactory route for through traffic between places of traffic importance. The network should be the basis for identifying priority for maintenance investment and for working with freight operators to ensure freight utilises the roads most fit for purpose, unless required for local access or connections. Use of these routes should help to protect the region's environment and social interests while meeting the economic needs of the region.

5.1.27

Local Authorities, working with the Highways Agency and freight transport representatives, should review the provision of rest areas for HGV traffic for all routes having regard to the requirements arising from the Working Time Directive and assess the scope for 'break bulk' interchanges to serve the major urban areas in the region. Appropriate sites should be allocated or safeguarded for these facilities and referred to in LTPs as part of the freight strategies for the SSCTs. In addition, Local Authorities, working through Quality Freight Partnerships, should encourage the development of local supply chains to minimise the need for long distance freight movement. Developments which generate high volumes of freight movements should be encouraged to locate close to appropriate rail or water freight facilities to support more sustainable distribution in the South West.

RTS4 - Freight and the Primary Route Network RTS4 - Freight and the Primary Route Network

Relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals for rest and service areas for freight vehicles.

The primary route network (including motorways and trunk roads) should be promoted for use by HGVs in preference to other roads. The routes should be signed appropriately. Environmental weight restrictions should not be placed on these routes.

The priority for road maintenance investment should reflect the importance of the corridors identified in RTS1 and the rest of the Primary Route Network.

A site for a road/rail freight interchange should be identified and safeguarded in Local Development Documents at or near Exeter subject to viability.

Ports

5.1.28

The South West has an extensive coastline bordering the English and Bristol Channels and seaborne traffic plays an important part in the Region's economy. Overall, South West ports handled approximately 20 million tonnes of freight in 2006. The concentration of sea-borne freight on larger vessels means most activity is now centred on a small number of locations.

5.1.29

Bristol is the largest port in the region, and the only South West port of national significance, with an annual throughput of some 12 million tonnes (source DfT, 2006). Bristol Port has a number of strengths, including deep-water capacity and good connections to rail and motorway networks. A 'Study of Bristol Port' commissioned by the RDA, identified that its traffic has the potential to grow to 18.5 million tonnes by 2012 and over 24 million tonnes by 2022. Future landside infrastructure requirements should be identified and planned for to allow the Port to meet its potential to benefit the region.

5.1.30

Plymouth, Poole and Weymouth are the main ferry ports in the region, handling freight and passengers on scheduled ferry services to France, Northern Spain and the Channel Islands.

5.1.31

Poole, which has recently been dredged to 7.5 metres, has the potential to become a regionally significant container feeder port, making use of its existing rail connections. Plymouth has a continuing role as one of the nation's prime naval establishments. However, changes in military requirements may in due course provide opportunities for commercial use of the current naval facilities.

5.1.32

When considering individual applications for port development, decision makers should take into account the wider environmental, community and economic benefits of proposals, whatever their scale, and should give consideration to minimising any impacts resulting from construction and including physical loss, damage or harm to biodiversity, atmospheric emissions, noise, odour, water pollution, flood risk, and the disposal of waste. In particular, development at Bristol, Plymouth, Poole, Weymouth, Fowey or St Marys Harbour should not lead to adverse effects on the qualifying features of the following:

- Severn Estuary pSAC, SPA and Ramsar site (Bristol Port);
- Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC and Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA (Plymouth Port);
- Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar site (Poole Port);
- Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar site (Poole Port);
- Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC (Poole Port);
- Chesil Beach & The Fleet SPA and Ramsar site (Weymouth Port);
- Polruan to Polperro SAC (Fowey Port); and
- Isles of Scilly Complex SAC, SPA and Ramsar site (St Mary's Harbour).

RTS5 - Ports RTS5 - Ports

Relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals that maintain and enhance the role of the following:

- Bristol Port to meet its potential for providing general and deepwater container freight;
- Plymouth, Poole and Weymouth as the main 'roll-on/roll-off' freight and passenger ports in the region;
- Plymouth, Poole and Fowey serving niche markets; and
- Penzance and St Mary's Harbours in providing the sea link to the Isles of Scilly.

Bristol, Plymouth, Poole and Fowey ports should give priority to the preparation of 'Masterplans' as a means of identifying future landside infrastructure requirements and demonstrating how conflicts between existing and future uses in the port or on adjacent land can be managed.

Airports and Heliports

5.1.33

The aim of the RTS Airports policy is to meet more of the South West's demand for air services within the region, to reduce journeys to airports outside the region, particularly road traffic to Heathrow and Gatwick.

5.1.34

The Aviation White Paper, published at the end of 2003, establishes the national policy framework. This supports the development of Bristol as the main regional airport but also supports improved access and development at the region's other airports. No new airports are proposed. Overall, the region's airports are forecast to grow from 4.5 million passengers per annum in 2000 to almost 20 million passengers per annum by 2030.

5.1.35

The South West airports also provide for general aviation which supports the regional economy. The needs of general aviation will be taken into account in future decisions regarding airport capacity in the region.

5.1.36

When considering individual applications for airport development, decision makers should take into account the wider environmental, community and economic benefits of proposals, whatever their scale, and should give consideration to minimising any impacts resulting from construction and operation including air quality, loss or harm to biodiversity (e.g. flight paths of birds and bats), landscape and visual impact, atmospheric emissions, noise, odour, water pollution, flood risk, and the disposal of waste. In particular, development at Bristol, Bournemouth and Plymouth airports should not lead to adverse effects such as harm to qualifying bird species at the following:

- Chew Valley SPA (Bristol Airport);
- Severn Estuary pSAC, SPA and Ramsar sites (Bristol Airport);
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site (Bournemouth Airport)
- Tamar Estuaries Complex SPAs (Plymouth)

RTS6 - Airports and Heliports RTS6 - Airports and Heliports

Airports within the region should meet an increasing proportion of regional demand for air travel to reduce 'leakage' to other regions and the London airports. Relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals that:

- Support the development of Bristol, Bournemouth and Exeter within the currently agreed levels of growth set out in the 'Future of Air Transport' White Paper;
- Support Plymouth City Airport and Newquay to sustain and enhance their roles of serving local catchment areas;
- Support the role of Gloucestershire and Filton Airports in continuing to serve business aviation needs; and
- Support the role of Land's End Aerodrome, Penzance Heliport, St Mary's Airport and Tresco Heliport in providing lifeline air services to the Isles of Scilly.

Airport operators required to prepare Masterplans should also prepare Airport Surface Access Strategies and set targets for their airport to achieve:

- Minimising the environmental impact of surface access; and
- A higher modal share in favour of public transport, cycling and walking.