

Regional Spatial Strategy / Regional Transport Strategy Examination in Public, January 2007

Note of evidence given by Travel Watch NW.

TWNW supports NWRA's revised RT1/2 with its emphasis on:

- Multi-modal integration (both inter-modal and mono-modal).
- Soft measures to achieve modal shift.
- Demand-management measures (including parking controls, pricing and P+R).

Matter 5A: Overall Transport Strategy

(i) Regional Transport Framework

TWNW commends RTS focus on a Regional Transport Framework which can reflect RSS and RES policies. The RTS should support not only the Framework's infrastructure (including effective multi modal and mono modal interchanges) but also its utilization by the securing of a regulated (by statutory contracts or partnership agreements) hierarchy of regional, sub regional and local integrated public transport services.

TWNW would like to see the RTS better reflect:

- Local transport authorities' duty (Transport Act 1985 s 88) to co-ordinate the provision of public, education and social services transport
- The potential use of new opportunities (Road Transport Bill 2007) to regulate bus services where necessary to secure a properly co-ordinated and integrated public transport services to meet the accessibility needs of the region.
- The potential use of Demand Responsive, Community Transport and Small Passenger Vehicles.
- The potential of hypothecating demand management revenues to public transport as a precondition of road user charging.

NB After bus de-regulation the main remaining barriers to effective public transport integration are competition law and inconsistencies between taxi and bus licensing, both of which the Road Transport Bill could address.

No opportunity arose to raise this last point, however TWNNW would like to suggest that the NWRA further consider these two matters.

(i) Impact of developments proposed in the RSS on the public transport network

- TWNNW considers that Airports, Ports and Road/Rail terminals are major “gateways” which should be well connected to the Regional Transport Framework.
- Policies should however discourage them developing as “freight villages” or public transport interchanges where loads or passengers transfer without either passing through the “gateway” or exchanging modes. Amended 10th Jan by TWNNW Management Committee to add in respect of Public Transport Interchanges at Airports “except where this fulfills local needs”
- They should also address the impact on public transport of congestion at rail hubs and on Motorways.
- Freight movements have the potential to impact on public passenger transport and TWNNW supports rail gauge enhancements, rail facilities at gateways and rail freight terminals at sustainable sites that can help achieve modal transfer.
- TWNNW is very supportive of “soft measures” such as walking and cycling. The policy could address not only networks but also the carriage of cycles by public transport.
- TWNNW supports a presumption against out of town “comparison” retail centres, or their spurious designation as “town centres”
- TWNNW suggests that visitor management policies¹ should link parking controls with the provision of good public transport links to attractions, which can in turn also help serve the indigenous rural population ²

Matter 5B: Demand Management

- The RTS probably does not give clear and sufficient guidance on what is meant by demand management and when and where such measures might be used, but this fault will most likely be corrected by the provisions of the anticipated Road Transport Bill 2007 which is expected to be heavily prescriptive!
- TWNNW made a response to NWRA’s consultative document on Demand Management in September 2006 that was generally supportive of their approach. The need for co-operation between adjacent Local Transport Authorities to avoid “beggar my neighbour” strategies was supported.
- Park and Ride policies which do not incentivise more dependence on the private car are a particularly welcome recent demand management addition to the Draft, as are the proposed Coach Parking policies ³.
- TWNNW believes that reallocation of road space ought to be made on the basis of passenger units rather than vehicle units ⁴.

¹ Para 8.27

² see RDF3

³ recently examined by TWNNW and reported to the NWRA.

⁴ One DD bus can carry the equivalent of 72 single occupancy cars – R Tripp GMPTE

Matter 5C: Investment

(i) Investment Priorities

- Clearly the most contentious issue in the Regional Transport Strategy, and TOWNW shares general concerns about the prioritisation methods used, which seem merely to reflect the status quo in terms of affordability and deliverability.
- TOWNW's scoring criteria would obviously differ and seek to give more weight to passenger benefits. Some "priorities" such as support for a Heysham bypass in preference to enhancement of the existing rail links and the demotion of the Manchester Rail Hub to "contingency" funding would then have different priorities on that basis! Both NW TAR and Northern Way gave strong support to upgrading the Manchester Rail Hub

(ii) Achievable outcomes

- TOWNW commends the RT8 over riding policy of safeguarding and making best use existing assets and networks.
- There appears to be no obvious selection criteria for sites of significant economic development - some of the sites may prove unsustainable from a transport perspective - it is not evident from the RTS how large employee &/or freight movements might be served.

Matter 5D: Airports

- This policy has clearly been forced to recognise that regard must be had to the Air Transport Services White Paper (2003) which states the primacy of planning to address restrictions to airports' access which might constrain their economic growth
- TOWNW considers that to a large extent it embraces the predict and provide policies which have already been shown to be flawed in respect of highway development! This was largely pre-empted and to some extent circumscribed by the Inspectors' preamble to Matter 5D
- There is widespread disquiet over airport growth targets ⁵, largely shared by TOWNW, and which the policy does not address.
- Many TOWNW members believe that high speed rail connections within the UK and beyond through the Channel Tunnel, are a more appropriate means of satisfying predicted travel growth ⁶. The Inspectors' questions presented no opportunity to raise this matter.
- TOWNW agrees the principle that surface links to Airports should be developed to improve interchange but believes this policy should nevertheless contain a proviso to address the problems of the unintended consequences of the generation of unwanted land side interchange traffic except where this fulfills local needs

⁵ Especially in the light of the Stern Report on Climate Change November 2006

⁶ Despite the Eddington Report on UK Transport failure to endorse this view.