



Steering Group Meeting

Venue:	Government Office for the South West (GOSW), The Pithay, Bristol	
Date held:	17 October 2000	
Present:	Peter Botham (GOSW & Chair)	PB
	Mike Birkin (Sustainability SW)	MBi
	Nick Carter (Highways Agency – HA)	NC
	Claire Gibson (South West Regional Development Agency – SWRDA)	CG
	Ian Harrison (South West Regional Assembly – SWRA)	IH
	Matthew Lodge (shadow Strategic Rail Authority – sSRA)	ML
	Ciara Mulligan (DETR Central)	CM
	Iain Reeve (Government Office for the South East – GOSE)	IR
	Martin Tugwell (South East England Regional Assembly – SEERA)	MT
	Martin Williams (South West Regional Assembly – SWRA)	MW
	David Mills (Contract Manager, GOSW)	DM
	Andrew Page-Dove (Assistant Project Manager, GOSW)	APD
	Peter Dawson (Regional Transport Team Leader, GOSW)	PD
	Eddie Shimmin (Regional Transport Team, GOSW)	ES
	Theo Wood (Central Office of Information – COI)	TW
	David Bayliss (Project Director, Halcrow)	DB
	Martyn Brooks (Project Manager, Halcrow)	MBr
	Gareth Walters (Project Co-ordinator, Halcrow)	GW

Notes of Steering Group Meeting

Action

1. Apologies for absence.

- 1.1 - Tony Carroll (National Assembly for Wales)
- Anthony Slack (South East England Development Agency – SEEDA)
- John Wilkinson (CBI)

1.2 Introductions for new attendees:

- Ian Harrison (South West Regional Assembly)
- David Bayliss (Halcrow), who replaces Michele Dix as Project Director

2. Minutes of previous meeting

- 2.1 Actions noted in previous minutes all considered. Items of detail from specific actions noted below:

	Action
- Social Inclusion topic group has been discussed with relevant parties in GOSW. Meeting is still to be arranged.	GOSW
- Feedback to topic groups has gone out, and roles of groups should have been clarified (Halcrow to check). The SWRDA queried that the planning topic group had been re-convened without input from them. Agreed to forward Planning Topic Group notes to RDA. Chair noted that the groups that had subsequently met were concerned only with the technical issues of the planning reference case (see later in minutes).	Halcrow
2.2 Steering Group (SGp) accepted that minutes of previous meeting (8 th August 2000) represent a fair and accurate representation of events.	
3. Commissioning Report	
Halcrow said that comments on the report had been received from SGp members, and wanted to clarify the process for producing the report. SGp agreed that only those sections that had been amended (specifically that detailing study objectives) should be circulated to them prior to approval.	Halcrow
4. Participation	
<i>Local Workshops</i>	
4.1 Halcrow described the recent local workshops. Six have been held covering sub-areas of the overall study area – Bristol (25 th Sept), Reading (26 th Sept), Swindon (1 st Oct), Andover (2 nd Oct), Yeovil (3 rd Oct) and Plymouth (4 th Oct). The first session at each workshop highlighted problems and issues within the appropriate sub-area. Subsequently, the second session asked participants to suggest some (local and strategic) solutions to the particular problems (or sets of problems) identified in the first session.	
4.2 Feedback from attendees was good, with most participants marking both sessions as effective and/or very effective. Halcrow speculated that this is partly because participants found it easier to relate to problems and issues when asked to consider specific geographical locations or areas.	
<i>Local Authority liaison</i>	
4.3 Three Local Authority briefings were held in mid September 2000 – in Newbury, for authorities in the SE area with Bath and Exeter being the venues for authorities in the SW area. All local authorities including unitary, county and district authorities were invited to send either member and/or officer representation.	
4.4 Each session had reasonable, but by no means full, attendance and enabled reasonable debates to take place. at	

Action

- 4.5 Invitations have also been issued to 'highway' authorities for one-to-one meetings to discuss the study. This arose out of the study team presentation to the Technical Officers Group (TOG) of the South West Regional Assembly in late August. To date seven authorities have requested meetings.

Cross-Regional Workshop (2nd Strategy workshop)

- 4.6 Halcrow briefly described the session held in Exeter on 13th October 2000. The event brought together invitees from the three sub-regional workshops held in July 2000 (Bristol, Salisbury and Exeter). Around 90 people attended. SGp requested an attendance list to see how representative it was. Halcrow
- 4.7 Halcrow said that the event was successful in the outputs generated, but it is acknowledged that there was some criticism. Some sessions worked better than others, and a small minority of attendees sometimes dominated questioning in plenary periods. When considering the feedback forms filled in by participants, the whole day was broadly neutral, with an almost 50:50 split of participants rating the day as 'effective' versus 'ineffective'. However, some participants did not understand the aims of some of the tasks, and for these tasks the responses were 'ineffective'. Halcrow said that the initial sessions of the workshop had brought out information from previous workshops but no critical comments were made at that stage in the proceedings.
- 4.8 sSRA (having attended) agreed there was a lack of understanding by some attendees, but that this was not helped by problems with the minority who thought they were 'signing up' to a collective view on strategies, and not just issues for testing. IH (who did not attend) queried the composition of the workshop, in terms of groups represented, and said that the only person he had feedback from was uncertain of the verdict.
- 4.9 DETR said that it was important to get individual views (from key groups) as well as collective views from workshops, and that care should be taken in declaring the workshop 'successful', as individuals and individual organisations may consider the day and their contribution differently. It was queried whether individuals' comments at the workshop could be identified from workshop notes. Halcrow said no. Sustainability SW said that CPRE have already made specific comments in a letter to SGp members.
- 4.10 Chair, who had observed the day, had noted that there were significant tensions between points of view of attendees, but felt that the event had been well managed overall.
- 4.11 Halcrow indicated that the final cross-regional (3rd strategy) workshop was provisionally set for 4th December 2000, at which the emerging overarching strategy would be discussed. Agreed further discussion of this date under Agenda Item 7.

5. Consultation

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- 5.1 The mobile exhibition has completed its itinerary, with 16 exhibitions taking place. The Paddington station exhibition had to make way for a commercial exhibition and was thus cancelled by Railtrack. Halcrow noted that part of the tour had coincided with the fuel crisis, but that attendance on only one day had been adversely affected (A303 Podimore services – very little traffic on the A303).
- 5.2 Almost 13,000 newsletters/questionnaires have now been distributed (via local authorities, direct mail and the exhibition). Around 700 have been returned so far. Key results from the questionnaires analysed to date (around 250) include:
- serious problems with road congestion, poor bus frequencies, too many lorries, cost of rail fares, poor interchange, lack of rural public transport, high rural traffic speeds, volume of holiday season traffic, local environmental problems;
 - support for improving rail and bus services, interchanges and information. Widening roads was split with around 50% supporting and 40% against. Restraining car use was not popular. Almost universally, it was agreed that doing nothing is not an option.
- 5.3 Halcrow indicated that final analyses would also provide breakdowns of results by age, gender, car availability and location. There is no specific closing date for questionnaires, and an attempt may be made to enhance non-car available responses, though the survey is not intended to be a statistically robust sample. Halcrow noted that it might also be useful to compare results with other similar surveys from (for example) CfIT or the AA. HA suggested it might be useful to note (if) any specific anomalies exist between the survey and other results. Halcrow
- 5.4 SGp noted that this sort of survey is difficult statistically to increase in terms of coverage and doubted the validity of doing so. GOSE queried whether car use could be used as another peg for breakdowns of results. Chair invited SGp to provide ideas of analysis methods. SGp
- 5.5 SGp discussed 'loss' of Paddington as a distribution point for newsletters. Agreed to find a new date for the exhibition at Paddington. Halcrow
- 6. Media Coverage**
- 6.1 COI outlined some of the media initiatives that have been followed, but noted that it has been difficult as they are primarily dealing with local media, for whom local issues are of interest, and more abstract strategic concepts are difficult. However, a series of 13 radio interviews and 9 print media interviews had been held.
- 6.2 COI said that the Western Morning News is particularly interested in hearing more. They expect general media (and public) interest to increase as options and strategies, that imply

implications on the ground, become more refined.

7. Strategy Elements, Options & Testing

7.1 Halcrow started by going through the procedures carried out at the workshop. The initial 14 elements of strategy options were:

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| 1. Local Action I | 8. PT IV (bus & coach) |
| 2. Local Action II | 9. Sea & Air |
| 3. Demand Management I (tolling) | 10. Road Net I (upgrade M3,A303,A30) |
| 4. D.M'gmt II (reducing need to travel) | 11. Road Net II (upgrade M4 & M5) |
| 5. Public Transport I (rail Waterloo-Exeter) | 12. Road Net III (upgrade A30 & A38) |
| 6. PT II (rail Paddington-Penzance) | 13. Road Net IV (making better use) |
| 7. PT III (rail Reading-Bristol-Taunton) | 14. The Next Generation |

7.2 At the workshop, some changes were suggested, resulting in 19 elements. Changes included the addition of 'Freight', 'Integration' and 'Links to Main Corridors' as separate elements, and the separation of existing elements 8 and 9 into '8a Local Bus' and '8b Long-Distance Bus', and '9a Sea' and '9b Air'.

7.3 Subsequently, a series of 7 strategy option 'titles/themes' to be used for testing purposes was derived at the workshop that incorporated some or all of the elements. The workshop was asked to begin to fill in the details of what a strategy under the titles/themes should include. The 7 titles/themes' are:

1. Minimum Intervention – incorporating elements common to others (reducing the need to travel, integration and the next generation)
2. Local Action
3. Maximum Public Transport
4. Freight
5. Demand Management – smaller scale road improvements, restraint, charging
6. Road based – larger-scale road schemes
7. Maximum Intervention – all elements included

7.4 Halcrow indicated consideration, by the SGp, of the 'titles/themes' for testing is required. It was explained that each would have to be an 'integrated' strategy capable of implementation, though should not be considered a discrete option list from which one is to be chosen. While the GOMMMs procedure is being used for assessment, the process would allow the best bits to be 'teased-out'. Halcrow also accepted that Tourism and Charging are key issues.

7.5 Halcrow noted that what is required are views on whether we have the right ingredients for strategies (elements), whether the broad themes suggested for testing are appropriate, or indeed whether the theme-based approach was appropriate.

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- 7.6 General discussion followed. Notable issues raised included; filling out the headings into strategies, the generality of some of the elements, spatial dimension, how do we go forward into the plan stage of the study, and the timing of responses from SGp vis-à-vis producing the emerging strategy.
- 7.7 After a break to formulate a way forward, Halcrow agreed next steps are to 'fill-out' the themes into strategies to be tested. The themes are then tested and appraised (using GOMMMS); how each contributes to the success or otherwise of a strategy is drawn out. From this process, an emerging preferred overarching strategy is derived.
- 7.8 Halcrow suggested extending the timetable by 1 month for completion of the overarching strategy to the end of February 2001. This would allow 3 weeks to 'fill-out' the themes and to hold another SGp meeting in mid-November to agree the testing procedure. This in turn pushes the consultation on the emerging overarching strategy (including the last strategic workshop) from December 2000 to January 2001, and subsequently the date for the final overarching strategy to February 2001.
- 7.9 Revised programme for final (3rd stage) strategy workshop agreed to introduce a second workshop, to encourage greater attendance by stakeholders (particularly from the eastern end of the study area). Suggested venues are Exeter and Reading (dates TBA in late January). Programmes for each day would be the same. Halcrow
- 7.10 Further meetings to be arranged include local authorities and regional assembly briefings for both the SE and SW, as well as an MP/MEP briefing (due in early 2001). GOSW
- 7.11 DETR(c) noted that road user charging is something that has to be assessed implicitly by the multi-modal study, and it may be appropriate to consider it as a sensitivity test at different stages of the study.
- 7.12 Agreed timetable:
 - w/b 6th Nov'00 Halcrow to 'fill-out' the strategy themes – include original '7' plus Tourism. Key information required is what each strategy theme comprises, the justification/reasoning for this, and how this addresses the identified problems and issues (if different from justification). Halcrow
 - 16th Nov '00 SGp meeting to agree strategy themes and testing.
 - 6 Dec '00 Now cancelled. Halcrow
 - mid Dec '00 Newsletter detailing strategy themes and assessment process – distributed to stakeholders.
 - 19th Dec '00 SGp meeting to monitor progress on emerging overarching strategy.
 - 18th Jan '01 SGp meeting to discuss emerging overarching strategy.
 - from late Jan '01 Consultation on preferred strategy, including briefings for local authorities (x3), briefings for regional assemblies (x2) and

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- stakeholder workshops (x2 – geographically split to encourage participation from both east and west).
- end Feb '01 Agree Final overarching strategy – SGp meeting at this time to be agreed.

7.13 The SGp meetings on 19th Dec' 00 is optional for those SGp members particularly interested in the strategy development process.

'Committed' Schemes

7.14 Halcrow said the study needs advice on the schemes to be included in a base case against which testing will be carried out (particularly on road and rail schemes). SGp

7.15 Sustainability SW indicated their concern that the Stonehenge & Winterbourne Stoke scheme should be considered as a 'given' by SWARMMS, and that tests/appraisals should include the scheme 'in' and 'out' of the network. Sustainability SW also noted that there is a view that the worth, or otherwise, of schemes further west on the A303 (notably those 'on-hold') could be affected by the presence of the Stonehenge improvements. Chair indicated that the Government's view on the Stonehenge scheme is clearly that it is 'committed'. GOSW noted it is in the Targeted Programme of Improvements from the Roads Review. Thus, for the purposes of SWARMMS, Stonehenge must be 'in' any future-year networks used for testing/appraising.

7.16 sSRA queried the timescale for testing horizons, vis-à-vis the likelihood of commitment to rail schemes. Halcrow said the paper on strategy themes would give an indication of this. GOSW noted that, at the eastern end of the Study we need to be aware of what the Orbit Study is doing.

8. Planning Reference Case

8.1 Halcrow noted that at a recent meeting (6th October), the approaches to producing a planning reference case used by the SWARMMS, Orbit and SERAS studies were discussed, to ensure consistency. In essence, the basic discussion has been whether to use a 'trend' or 'policy' approach, as the current 'trend' tool (Tempro) is inconsistent with the latest versions of RPG. Approach followed by SWARMMS is to use the RPG-based figures, allocated with advice from GOSW and GOSE, as well as relevant local authorities and Regional Assemblies. Eventually, the expectation is that DETR will update Tempro to reflect most recent RPG.

8.2 GOSW said that Russell Harris (HETA) will adjust Tempro to reflect RPG for use in the Orbit study. SEERA noted that extreme sensitivity is required when dealing with housing issues in the South East.

9. Role of Steering Group Members

	Action
Paper produced by GOSW as a result of discussions at the last SGp meeting (8/8/00). SGp discussed detailed wording and content around the table. Agreed another draft to be produced.	GOSW
10. Work Programme	
10.1 Halcrow need to produce a new work programme to reflect changes agreed during this meeting within the next two weeks.	Halcrow
10.2 SEERA asked whether it is the intention of SWARMMS to seek formal approval for the overarching strategy through the regional planning bodies, as this would delay the study. No. Chair said it is the intention to get as much 'buy-in' from SGp constituent groups as possible. It was accepted that there would not be time formally to consult.	
11. AOB	
There was no other business.	
12. Next Meeting	
Date of next Steering Group meeting – 16 th November 2000, at The Pithay.	