

London to South West and South Wales Multi-Modal Study



Steering Group Meeting

Venue:	HSE, InterCity House, Bristol	
Date held:	13 th December 2001	
Present:	Richard Bayly (Government Office for the South West – GOSW) – chair	RB
	Mike Birkin (Sustainability South West)	MBi
	Paul Collins (DTLR – Multi-Modal Studies Unit)	PC
	Clive Farnham (Highways Agency – HA)	CF
	Claire Gibson (South West Regional Development Agency – SWRDA)	CG
	Matthew Lodge (Strategic Rail Authority – SRA)	ML
	Chris Mitchell (South West Regional Assembly – SWRA)	CMi
	Catherine Mullins (NAW)	CMu
	Iain Reeve (Government Office for the South East – GOSE)	IR
	Martin Tugwell (South East England Regional Assembly – SEERA) – part	MT
	John Wilkinson (CBI)	JW
	Cliff Baston (GOSW)	CB
	Andrew Page-Dove (GOSW)	APD
	Robert Gage (COI Communications South West)	RG
	David Bayliss (Project Director, Halcrow)	DB
	Martyn Brooks (Project Manager, Halcrow)	MBr
	Gareth James (Halcrow – appraisal/modelling)	GJ
	Gareth Walters (Project Co-ordinator, Halcrow)	GW

Notes of Steering Group Meeting

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Note that PC, ML, IR and MT joined the meeting at 11:30 (due to problems with their train) towards the end of item (3) HA/SRA early involvement

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Peter Botham (GOSW)
- Ian Harrison (SWRA)
- Anthony Slack (South East England Development Agency – SEEDA)

2. Minutes of previous meeting

- 2.1 Issues of detail:
 - Para 3.1 – MBI queried when research for ITEA relating to reducing the need to travel would be available – DB noted that Chris Smith at ITEA is canvassing opinion internally within government, with the intention of releasing something soon (may be full report on DTLR website).

- 3.11 – reference to “MT” should be “MBi”

Paras 3.9-3.12

- 2.2 MBI felt that the text did not fully explain the Statutory Environmental Bodies' views. Essentially, MBI contended that the SEBs are not fully 'signed-up' to the principal of a dual-carriageway A303. Also, that a potential scheme in Cranborne Chase AONB is causing some concern for English Heritage and that there were some issues with the appraisal so far. Noting that he had seen some correspondence to back this up.
- 2.3 CB indicated he did not agree with MBI's comment, that the minutes are accurate. MBr noted that the SEBs workshops that had taken place included discussion of alignments with local impacts identified, and that this is an on-going process and no firm views are expected yet. Also, MBr noted that appraisal of the emerging strategy (etc) had indeed been queried by the SEBs, but that this process was in line with GOMMMS at the time. The guidance has now been changed to reflect these very sorts of concerns and the new approach will be used in future appraisals. MBr also agreed with the minutes, noting that he had seen correspondence from the SEBs that did not indicate the minutes were wrong in interpreting their views.
- 2.4 RB noted that drawing the simplistic conclusion that the SEBs 'support' the outcomes should be avoided as the situation is continually developing. APD felt that the minutes reflected the outcomes of the SEBs workshops, and do not indeed assume full SEB 'agreement' or 'support'. Also noting that Halcrow's environmental team leader had suggested that the SEBs be involved in detailed appraisal of the preferred strategy to avoid disagreements over process.

Para 4.2 – Sensitivity Tests

- 2.5 GJ noted that the problems with the figures in the sensitivity tests paper discussed at the last meeting are related to aggregation of effects along the railway lines concerned (Exeter-Waterloo and Berks & Hants lines). When these are examined in more detail, the answers are sensible. RB indicated that reporting of sensitivity tests should perhaps bring out these sorts of 'local' details to help comment on timing and do-ability of schemes.
- 2.6 Discussions considered the implementation of schemes vis-à-vis Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and SWARMMS outputs/Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). CMi noted that the RTS will frame the LTPs, but there is some suggestion that any potentially regionally significant schemes should be referenced directly by the RTS. CG noted that upgrades to Exeter-Waterloo would be regionally significant.
- 2.7 MBI queried reporting of sensitivity tests. GJ indicated that sensitivity testing fits in well with 'What If' testing that will be carried out later in the study.

Para 5.13 – area to be covered by TVMMMS

- 2.8 CB noted that the agreed position is that TVMMMS will cover the 'M3' corridor (i.e. the M3 from its junction with the A303 and Basingstoke-Waterloo railway).
- 2.9 JW queried the role of South West agencies in TVMMMS. APD noted that at the last TVMMMS steering group meeting, the issue was debated briefly. Idea is that GOSW will approach SWRA and SWRDA to suggest they could attend and participate, but not be formal members of the steering group. APD noted that IH had not been at that meeting (or here today) and his views were unknown. CG indicated she didn't think IH was keen on that approach, as membership or otherwise it could relate to the 'weight' given to an individual's views.
- 2.10 RB suggested this discussion continues later in the meeting when IR is present (see section 7; AOB – South West involvement in TVMMMS)

3. HA & SRA early involvement

- 3.1 CB indicated that the note submitted to the SGp adds to the quick discussion at the last meeting. In essence, it summarises the instruction given to the HA (by GOSW) relating to on-going work that goes beyond SWARMMS timescale. It also summarises how HA involvement is seen nationally, and indicates how steering groups should be consulted at various points. However, CB noted that these instances may be irrelevant to SWARMMS, as the study has moved on from these positions. CB noted that SRA involvement was aimed at evaluating and appraising rail schemes to aid DTLR to see what is coming out of the MMS process (including SWARMMS).
- 3.2 RB noted it is not yet clear how exactly rail schemes are to be considered, but it is looking like the SRA criteria will be more than just 'financial', although not exactly the same as GOMMMS-type MMS criteria. CMi noted there is some potential for mis-match between the short-term priorities of the SRA and the RTS' long-term aspirations.
- 3.3 CMu asked whether the schemes with HA involvement are the same as those in the progress Technical Note. CB noted they are, but that the relative priority has not been assessed yet. CMu queried whether the NAW will be party to decisions made by the Secretary of State. CB says yes.
- 3.4 MBi queried why schemes west of Exeter are included in the list for now. MBr noted that the strategy calls for the dualling of the A30 into Cornwall, but acknowledged that the HA is taking a small risk of abortive work to progress things.

4. Plans I – general progress

- 4.1 MBr noted that the afternoon 'workshop' session includes three suggested topics (A303 Blackdown Hills vs A358, Reducing the need to travel and Rural access). Intention is to avoid these topics in the main meeting. OK.

- 4.2 GJ outlined that the note submitted to the SGp represents 'work in progress' on the corridor and area plans, although theme plans will be discussed as well. Each 'plan' has been discussed in terms of rail, other public transport, strategic park and ride, traffic control and highways schemes, and includes some measures that are likely to be included in the final recommendations.
- 4.3 GJ noted some general points:
- Rail focus is service frequency and what that means in terms of infrastructure. The aim is to produce information compatible with the SRA RPP framework. Example is the Waterloo-Exeter route is looking like total re-doubling on single sections is required. Any scheme including less than total re-doubling would be restricting in that it could only facilitate a specific timetable. Also noted that SWARMMS is monitoring some SRA work, such as the Bristol rail capacity and Great Western economic studies.
 - Other public transport is essentially coach and express bus networks and coachways.
 - Strategic park and ride deals with the main urban areas. The aim is to review and add to local authority schemes as appropriate.
 - Traffic control is generally aimed at increasing flow stability and incident detection and treatment. Examples include proposals for 'controlled motorways' around Bristol.
 - Highways schemes include some that are firmly included and other not (particularly between Ilminster and Exeter). Also include smaller schemes at junctions and motorway lane measures such as climbing lanes.
- 4.4 CG noted that issues on the A38 relate to alignments as well as junctions and safety. Also that LRT in Bristol should be considered a regional issue. Further that completion of the ring-road through south Bristol is considered vital for the economic regeneration of the area (some master planning work for South Bristol).
- 4.5 MT noted that the language employed in documents should be considered carefully. For instance, the note gives the impression that Waterloo-Exeter re-doubling is a 'poor' scheme, whereas what is meant is that it should be promoted as the only scheme for this route. MT also queried treatment of long-distance trains running into the south east where there are constraints now, noting that the Orbit steering group had been told that SWARMMS is doing a sensitivity test on this issue. MBr noted that current work is based on broad feasibility and optimal choice of schemes and measures, The 'what if' tests will allow issues such as non-removal of constraints in the south east to be considered.
- 4.6 MBi noted that references to road schemes south of Bristol had not been made before. RB suggested this is discussed under the next agenda item.
- 4.7 IR noted that MIDAS goes all the way to the M25, and that the HA and Orbit need to be informed and involved.

5. Plans II – Bristol

- 5.1 RB outlined some of the information and discussions from recent discussions with former Avon are Chief Execs and WESP. RB noted that 50% of traffic on the M4/M5 has origins and destinations in the former Avon area. There is significant congestion that will not necessarily be tackled by schemes entirely off-road. Options on-road are difficult:
- do nothing – not really an option
 - close junctions – diversions are likely to be unacceptable
 - new motorway – south of Bristol not justified
 - more general-use motorway lanes – difficult.
 - pricing – politically difficult
 - distributor roads – no plans exist
- 5.2 RB noted it will be difficult for Halcrow to bring forward detailed proposals for the Bristol area, as the boundary between strategic and local travel is blurred. There is no overall strategy to link to. This is recognised by the former Avon authorities and WESP, and something will be done to remedy this. Hence SWARMMS should not answer all the questions. Options would be to delay SWARMMS, or produce a Bristol Plan within SWARMMS that can be linked with a future overall strategy.
- 5.3 CMi noted that the Regional Transport Strategy could revisit parts of the Bristol areas' strategy. DB noted that SWARMMS cannot provide all the answers, and that there is already some potential delay in SWARMMS due to the Bristol RUC model. Need to be clear how the 'local' strategy will affect the strategic network.
- 5.4 JW not keen on a delay to SWARMMS. Suggest agree the parameters of a future 'former Avon area' strategy and leave SWARMMS incomplete on that basis. CG noted that SWRDA prioritising of issues has transport solutions around Bristol near the top. Also that the former Avon area strategy needs to involve the wider region, also that the Bristol area is a key part of the whole SWARMMS 'plan'.
- 5.5 CF queried the 'togetherness' of the former Avon authorities. RB noted they are generally in agreement, although there are sometimes different agendas in different areas.. CMi noted that sub-regional nature of Bristol issues need to be recognised.
- 5.6 MBI queried whether any de-linking of SWARMMS from a Bristol strategy would affect access to funding. RB noted that the perception that the Multi-Modal Studies are 'bidding' for part of a pot of money is false (PC agreed). Essentially, schemes will need to be justified and seek funding through the appropriate channels. The MMS process is part of the framework of determining the sorts of schemes that are needed.
- 5.7 IR noted that a 'PTE-plus' scenario is being promoted in South Hampshire to look at transport across boundaries – and is being supported by GOSE. Also that LTPs should

consider linkages across boundaries (but often/generally don't do this well or at all). Similar issues are being considered in TVMMS.

- 5.8 MT noted that the Green Paper on the planning system has just been released and could herald some major changes – including regional organisation. CMi noted that linkages between the RPG RTS and land-uses are important. RB noted that some local land-use issues do not help transport problems.

6. AOB – Rail issues

- 6.1 ML noted that the SRA's strategic plan is due to be published on 14-Jan-02. The content is fixed, but ML is not able to reveal anything until it is published. In general, ML noted that 'large' rail schemes that come out of MMS should be considered deliverable only in the long term (>10 years) – there are a lot of schemes. Essentially, the SRA's programme and budget is full for the next 10 years or so. For many schemes, a lot of further work is required in any case, but this can (should) proceed in the interim. The SRA is looking to take forward some schemes early to Ministers. To this end they need early feasibility assessments to avoid surprises.

- 6.2 JW queried whether it is worth including Waterloo-Exeter upgrades, as they will not take place for some years at the earliest. Also noted that its role to relieve Paddington is important.

- 6.3 PC noted there is no 'pot' of MMS money. The SRA, HA, etc will feed outputs into their plans and seek funding as necessary. Do not lower sights at this stage. MT queried if any large schemes are 'vital' and potentially cannot be delivered. RB noted this can be a subject for the What If tests.

- 6.4 PC also noted that there is a need to consider short/medium term for benefits. The 10-year plan will be reviewed and the base allocations can be changed to include MMS schemes as appropriate (based on 10-year plan objectives). ML indicated that post-10-year plan major schemes will be developed on the way.

- 6.5 CMi noted there is a risk that peripheral areas' schemes will not be as 'good' as other schemes, and could get pushed down the list. PC noted that ministerial decisions need not follow the maxim of the most attractive scheme or the most people effected. Good schemes will be taken forward.

7. AOB – South West involvement in TVMMS

- 7.1 IR noted that the TVMMS steering group does not vote and hears the views of all those attending equally. The way that the TVMMS steering group will seek to involve South West groups is that members of the SWARMMS steering group could attend the steering group meetings as and when there are agenda items that interest them. There would be no pre-suggestion of attendance based on topics. IR also noted that one-to-one meetings could be arranged with individuals/organisations who have a particular desire

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for detailed discussions.

7.2 CG thought this may be OK, but is keen to avoid TVMMS being overloaded by South West representatives. RB suggested that GOSW can liaise with GOSE to sort out agenda items and attendees. GOSW
GOSE

7.3 MT noted that the caution being presented about making South West representatives into full members of the steering group is predicated on existing problems with the membership or otherwise of some organisations within the South East.

8. AOB – Wider Economic Effects

8.1 MBI indicated he would like to see the outcomes of this piece of work. MBr indicated it is still on-going, but that although it has progressed a long way, there are still some elements to complete. MT queried whether the methodology paper for this work could be made available. Paper to be circulated. Halcrow
GOSW

8.2 CG noted that DTZ Pieda had not been in contact with SWRDA in relation to this work and suggested they ought to do so. Halcrow
DTZ

In the afternoon session, JW also suggested that, as well as SWRDA and CBI, contact should be made (preferably by meeting) with Objective 1 & 2 in Cornwall and Devon and South West Tourism. MBI indicated he would like to attend such a meeting.

9. AOB – other issues

9.1 MBI queried whether the additional appraisal criteria derived and used for appraisal of the composite strategies and emerging strategy are to be re-visited, particularly as in a written submission on behalf of Sustainability South West he had suggested there is double-counting of journey-time benefits. APD/MBr noted there is no intention to re-visit the additional appraisal criteria.

10. Next Meeting

10.1 Earlier discussions at the meeting noted that detailed involvement of the SGp in the study is something to be done at appropriate times and may not be best accomplished in formal meetings. A suitable format, as employed today, is to complete the meeting in the morning and go on to hold more detailed discussions in a 'workshop' for as long as required in the afternoon.

10.2 Currently, the next programmed meeting is 28th February 2002. However, it was felt that this is too far along in the process and that an interim meeting should be held. This meeting could potentially be the same as today or more of a 'workshop' than a meeting. Hence, next two meetings are:

- 3rd week in January 2002 (date to be arranged in week beginning 21st January 2002)



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- 28th February 2002