REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM – 10th September 2010

Shared Services: A Discussion Paper

Report by: Judith Barker, CURE (Capacity in Urban Renaissance in the East) Programme Director, Regional Cities East

Purpose of the report:

To explore the potential for sharing service delivery to achieve efficiency savings and improved performance in transport provision and the opportunity of working with Regional Cities East to achieve this.

Recommendation:

1. To complete the attached questionnaire (Appendix 1);
2. To work with RCE over the autumn to further scope shared services in the sector; and
3. Request a report to the December Regional Transport Forum.

Background

RCE is a partnership of the local authorities of 6 regional cities: Southend, Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich, Peterborough and Luton. The partners aim to collaborate, rather than compete, to enable stronger housing and jobs growth. The Capacity for Urban Renaissance in the East (CURE) programme, supported by Improvement East, is one RCE work stream and focuses on improving skills and capacity to deliver sustainable development. One element of CURE in 2010/11 has been to explore the potential for achieving greater efficiency and stronger performance by sharing services across the network and potentially beyond. At their Board meeting in July 2010, RCE agreed to focus this activity on:

- Carbon reduction
- Transport
- Culture and arts
- Culture and arts

The purpose of this paper to the RTF is to explore the potential for sharing transport services.

Within the East of England there are numerous models, both proposed and live, where groups of local authorities are working together to jointly provide services to their customers; most examples are around the sharing of back office functions which has the least customer impact and is often essentially administrative and a ubiquitous requirement. However, increasingly authorities are looking at how high level strategic services can be sourced.

Within RCE we are exploring models for how such high level services could be provided across the RCE network. We have framed some early objectives around:

- Achieving quantifiable efficiency savings
- Improving performance
- Improving the resilience of the service
- Enabling the delivery of growth of housing and jobs in the participating cities
We are promoting an incremental model which could grow as more authorities identify a value to joining. It would be an incremental model in several respects:

- The number of authorities that wish to participate
- The service areas that may be involved
- The type of operations to be included
- The extent of that service that is/can be provided through a shared service model
- The scale, type and cost of the model considered – for instance: internal market across the authorities, central core team, procured services, social enterprise

As stated above, the Board has asked that three service areas are scoped.

Although this is all at an early stage, work is furthest advanced on the carbon reduction discussion where a discussion paper has been prepared between RCE and Climate East. This model is looking at supporting carbon management across all local authority services to enable local authorities to achieve the Climate Change Act 2008 targets. In this case, current proposals suggest that RCE cities could act as a 2011 pilot for a wider model. We are happy to work with a wider group of authorities to achieve the service improvements with and beyond RCE.

**Shared Services in Transport**

From the discussion on 13 August at STSG we are beginning to capture the current picture of partnership working and shared services and some interesting schemes have been identified (see Appendix 2). As other authorities complete the questionnaire attached (Appendix 1) we will develop a greater understanding of the progress and scope for further development.

Of the six cities in RCE, there are 3 unitaries and 3 lower tier authorities. This of course dictates the responsibilities in terms of transport and influences what each authority may wish to share in terms of services but all lower tier authorities have delegated responsibilities as well as the responsibility for carbon reduction and health and economic well being.

It would be helpful at today’s meeting if we could discuss the policy areas where members feel that there may be a basis for sharing high level strategic services on transport within RCE and beyond and the role RCE could play in developing this with the Regional Transport Forum.

**Potential Policy Areas**

One obvious area that links with the RCE objective on carbon reduction is around the implementation of the November 2009 *East of England Transport and Carbon Study*. There may be scope to connect the work with Climate East to see how the Regional Transport Forum, Climate East and Regional Cities East could work together to bring forward a shared service model on this agenda.

Alternatively, the East of England’s Plan’s Urban Transport policy provides another area where we could begin to work on shared services. The policy states how towns and cities drive the economy but how congestion holds this back. Additionally it is shown how urban
areas provide the greatest scope for modal shift leading to greater economic growth. Perhaps this is a policy and delivery area where we could work on a shared services model.

Related to the above, the Coalition Government have recently received proposals for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) which should provide the strategic leadership in their areas to set out local economic priorities. The Coalition Government have indicated that they regard LEPs as being central to their vision for local economic renewal and that partnerships will therefore want to create the right environment for business and growth in their areas, by tackling issues such as planning and housing, local transport and infrastructure priorities, employment and enterprise and the transition to the low carbon economy. Given the importance of transport to achieving local economic outcomes there may be scope for a shared services model that looks at how best economy-driven transport policies and priorities should be developed.

Other policy areas where RCE could work on are access to airports as Luton, Norwich and Southend are all RCE cities or the freight movement and access to ports as Ipswich and Colchester are members.

Another approach would be to consider support with respect to the development of Local Transport Plans.

**Delivery Approaches**

As well as identifying service or policy areas, we can also look at delivery methods:

Shared services are a developing area of work and experience is being built up with RCE. It may be possible to share tools for service review across the region that would enable us to evaluate the best ways to deliver services in the future.

The involvement of the private sector is another area. Procurement is an area where considerable savings are achievable and indeed the establishment of the Eastern Highway Alliance in 2010 will aim to set up a framework contract for local authorities to select contractors on schemes between £50,000 and £10M, from April 2012. This initiative by the East of England Directors of Environment and Transport (EEDET) may well provide further opportunities for sharing services we could follow up.

Additionally Government is encouraging local authorities to look at other models including the voluntary sector and social enterprise. We can consider the opportunities that the third sector provides and look at existing examples and how these can provide models for the future.

**Conclusion**

The CURE programme is about developing capacity and skills in urban renaissance for Regional Cities East. The RCE Board has asked us to explore the potential for sharing services on the transport agenda. We welcome the opportunity to explore with Regional Transport Forum the various opportunities, barriers, models and policy and delivery areas above. It would be useful to identify next steps arising from this meeting and this will be reported to the next RCE Board on 24 September.
Appendix 1  Draft Questionnaire for Regional Transport Forum Local Authority Members:

1. Name of Local Authority

2. Name and job title of person completing questionnaire

3. Contact details for person completing questionnaire

4. Name and Contact details of an officer at your local authority who leads on the shared service agenda

5. Please list any arrangements that your local authority has for sharing transport related services with other local authorities (this may include delegation arrangements as well as upper/lower tier and cross border activity)

6. Please indicate the objectives for each of the above examples of shared activity

7. Please indicate if you are aware of any discussions related to sharing services on transport issues in the future with other local authorities or public bodies

8. Please indicate any high level key objectives that your local authority would have from sharing transport services
9. Please indicate any policy areas or delivery areas that might be of particular interest to your local authority (either from the attached paper or other areas you may be aware of)

10. Any other comments/suggestions

Thank you for your time. The results of this questionnaire will be available to Regional Cities East and Regional Transport Forum.

Please complete and return to:

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Or via e-mail: judithbarker@live.co.uk
Appendix 2  Preliminary Questionnaire results: list of transport related shared services

- RTPI sub regional partnership with Essex and Thurrock for the provision of bus priority systems. This coordinates the bus priority systems and management of real time ticketing displays on street.

- Essex Safety Camera Partnership

- Concessionary Fare Scheme is co-ordinated by Essex County council on behalf of the Essex Districts and Southend is a partner in this.

- South Eastern Travel Line Information (TravelLine) combination of regional authorities including Southend and Essex – this co-ordinates the travel information.

- Co-ordination agreement between Essex Districts and Southend for education purposes – is crossover between allowing schools to share travel arrangements based on curriculum choice.

- Sharing of web based travel planning and use of Essex Traffic Control Centre of Message signs and broadcast of traffic delays etc.

- Development of Major Scheme Business Case for South Essex Rapid Transit – jointly with Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

- Ultra Low Carbon Vehicle Network and Plugged in Places Project

- Regional lift share scheme to cover Central Bedfordshire and Luton

- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) sub regional partnership

- Luton and Bedfordshire Casualty Reduction Partnership

- Joint Local Access forum covering Luton and Central Bedfordshire