REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM – 11 March 2011

Regional Transport Forum Future Arrangements

Report by: Southend Borough Council
(EEDET Strategic Transport Sub Group Secretariat)

Purpose of the Report

- This report sets out the arrangements for the East of England Regional Transport Forum during 2011/12.

Summary of Recommendations

1. To note the future arrangements of RTF;
2. RTF are asked to agree the terms of reference shown at Annex A;
3. To agree the future RTF dates and the hosts, see Table 1;
4. RTF are asked to agree the use of £15,000 from the annual levy contributions to be used to assist the funding for the Secretariat during the transition year;
5. RTF are asked if the remaining levy amount be available to fund any research or evidence gathering studies that the forum may wish to commission in the coming year; or future year administration costs beyond 2011/12 if the forum so wished; or returned to the original contributors;
6. The Department for Transport are asked to comment on what they see as the future role of RTF; and
7. RTF are asked to note the future work programme and add items if they wish.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared following a request at the RTF meeting in January 2011 to assist members of RTF and EEDET STSG on the future role and management of the Regional Transport Forum (RTF).

1.2 At the last RTF meeting on 14th January 2011 it was agreed that:

- The present RTF should continue for a further year in a transition phase as there is strong support for Members and Senior Officers to meet.

- It was agreed that the frequency of meetings during the transition period should drop to every 4 months, instead of every 3 months.

- It was agreed that Southend would continue to act as the Secretariat, coordinating meetings, pulling together the agenda, commissioning and drafting papers, writing the minutes, chairing the RTF meeting and leading STSG and reporting to EEDET.

- It was proposed that the venue and the hosting costs for future meetings, including the linked STSG meetings should be shared out between all
authorities on a rotation basis starting with those authorities that have not acted as Secretariat to date.

- It was agreed that the credit remaining from previous years annual levy contributions should be used to assist the funding for the Secretariat during the transition year.

- It was agreed that the membership for the time being should continue to be the 11 shire and unitary authorities of the East of England together with national and regional government organisations (that remain) that have a managing responsibility in transport. Any emerging new sub-national transport forums will have to consider their own membership criteria based on their own terms of reference. Should circumstances change then a further report and recommendations will be brought to the RTF.

- The draft terms of reference were agreed. The terms of reference have now been amended and are at Annex A.

2. Meeting Dates and Venues

2.1 At the 14th January 2011 RTF it was agreed that the frequency of meetings during the transition period should drop to every 4 months, instead of every 3 months.

2.2 Following the RTF meeting, EEDET STSG was tasked with organising future meeting dates and venues.

EEDET Board are meeting on: 18th March 2011
15th July 2011
18th November 2011

The following table shows the RTF and STSG proposed dates and venues which fit around EEDET Board.

Table 1 – RTF and STSG Future Dates and Venues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDEET Board</td>
<td>Fri 18th Mar</td>
<td>Thurrock Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STSG</td>
<td>6th or 13th May</td>
<td>Thurrock Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTF</td>
<td>Fri 4th July</td>
<td>Thurrock Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEET Board</td>
<td>Fri 15th July</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STSG</td>
<td>23rd or 30th September</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTF</td>
<td>4th or 11th Nov</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEET Board</td>
<td>Fri 18th Nov</td>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STSG</td>
<td>20th or 27th Jan</td>
<td>Peterborough City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTF</td>
<td>2nd, 9th or 16th Mar</td>
<td>Peterborough City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) RTF Future Arrangements  Page 2 of 6  RTF – 11th March 2011
3. **Financing of RTF**

3.1 At the 14th January RTF it was agreed that the credit remaining from previous years annual levy contributions should be used to assist the funding for the Secretariat during the transition year.

3.2 The levy is in credit at approximately £50,000. RTF are asked to agree the use of £15,000 of the credit remaining from the annual levy contributions to be used to assist the funding for Southend to carry out administration for RTF and STSG during the transition year.

3.3 There will be a large amount of the levy still available. Below are some suggestions on what the levy could be used for:

a) The remaining amount could be returned to the Local Authorities, with shire authorities receiving twice that of Unitaries, as shires contributed more in the first instance.

b) The remaining levy could be available to fund any research or evidence gathering studies that the forum may wish to commission in the coming year, for example:
   - Studies that are strategic and cross-boundary
   - Proposals that improve efficiency and encourage sharing of best practice/service
   - Match funding for transport studies proposed by other organisation e.g. DfT

c) The levy could fund future year administration costs beyond 2011/12 if the forum so wished.

4. **Future Programme of Works**

4.1 Although much of the organisation of the business of the Regional Transport Forum in terms of setting the agenda and deciding areas for discussion was delegated down to STSG (Strategic Transport Sub-Group), papers were produced by the Regional Assembly with support from the Development Agency and the Government Office. With all these bodies having been abolished or being abolished, this work will fall to individual Local Authorities. This has started to happen and will have to continue.

4.2 Up to now the RTF has had an important role in responding to Government requests for advice on the prioritisation of major schemes and on the allocation of funding from the RFA. It had a decision-making role in addition to being a forum for discussion and best practice sharing. It was this funding decision-making role that interested most participants, as evidenced by the higher attendance at meetings when key decisions had to be made.

4.3 With the Department for Transport indicating that they are keen that some form of regional or sub-national funding advice process continues, albeit with a different name, and that this may come through the LEP’s there will be business for sub-national transport forums. The Highways Agency have indicated that they value the opportunity to meet with Local Authorities together so that consistent messages can be given. Problems and issues in one area can also be shared with those responsible for other areas leading to greater understanding. Network Rail have voiced similar views, in particular citing the benefit of engaging at a sub-national level on rail capacity studies.

4.4 Below are some suggestions as to the content of future meetings:-
Presentations and discussions:
- centred around the attendance of recognised National Experts in key fields
- centred around the attendance of Senior Executives from leading transport operators or companies
- centred on the attendance of Senior Civil Servants from DfT and other Government Departments
- centred on the attendance of the Secretary of State for Transport or other Ministers of Transport.
- on key corridors / cross boundary schemes.
- discussion and support for improvements to key corridors (each meeting could be focussed on a specific corridor)
- on innovative funding.
- working to seek innovative ways of financing new major schemes (e.g. pursuing Tax Incremental Financing initiatives between authority areas)

4.5 The following gives a list of future items that shall be discussed during RTF over the next year:

- Topics varied by EEDET sub-groups
- Permit scheme
- ELGIN
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- Implementation of LTP3
- Future use of transport modelling
- Highway asset valuation
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Shared Services
- Community Infrastructure Levy

4.6 We look forward to hearing more from the Department for Transport on how they envisage future engagements with sub-national transport structures at this RTF meeting. (see agenda item 4)
Annex A

Transport Authority Forum East
Terms of Reference for the Transition Period
(2011/2012)

1) The East of England Regional Transport Forum will exist as a transition body until new strategic transport partnerships emerge as consortia of new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

2) To provide the principal forum enabling discussion, co-operation and collaboration between Local Authority Transport Portfolio Holders / Officers, the Department for Transport, Highways Agency, Network Rail and other organisations at the invitation of The Forum. Only Local Authority Transport Portfolio Holders will be entitled to vote.

3) To encourage the exchange and sharing of knowledge, ideas and best practice between Local Authorities and to enable Local Authorities to build a consensus for the co-operation and planning of cross boundary transport interventions. To receive presentations on topical transport issues from representatives of the Department for Transport, Highways Agency, Network Rail and / or other organisations or eminent experts at the invitation of The Forum.

4) The Forum will meet 3 times during 2011 or as otherwise agreed by Local Authority Transport Portfolio Holders.

5) Since the RTF has been established each Local Authority contributed £6000 (counties) and £3000 (unitaries) in the form of an annual levy. For the year 2011/2012 the accumulated annual levy funds from the previous year will be used to provide a budget for administration costs, studies and other work of The Forum. The costs of hosting the meeting, such as venue costs will be paid by the hosting Authority. Auditable accounts will be maintained and a single Local Authority will be appointed in the role of Forum Treasurer. A report will be presented at each meeting of The Forum.

6) Southend will be the Forum secretariat for the transition period, with The Forum meetings chaired by the Transport Portfolio Holder of Southend. The secretariat will also Chair the EEDET STSG meetings, the officer group that supports The Forum. Costs associated with the role of secretariat will be drawn from the annual levy funds.

7) In addition to chairing The Forum and EEDET STSG meetings, the secretariat will take responsibility for pulling together the agenda for each meeting, commissioning topic papers from members of The Forum, and writing and circulating the minutes of meetings.

8) All Local Authorities will contribute and support the writing and presentation of topic papers for The Forum meetings. Forum papers will generally be in the form of a concise report and recommendations.

9) Hosting Forum meetings, the associated EEDET STSG meetings and the costs of hosting will rotate between each Local Authority. EEDET STSG will compile a rotation order, starting with those authorities who to date have not yet acted as secretariat.