

8 Transport in the North West – Connecting People and Places

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Transport Objectives

The Regional Transport Strategy embraces the spatial principles (DP1-9) and the regional and sub-regional spatial frameworks (policy RDF1) and sub regional policies. In particular it seeks to:

- maintain existing transport infrastructure in good order;
- improve journey time reliability, tackle congestion and overcrowding in the region's main transport corridors shown on the Key Diagram, particularly within and between City Regions;
- secure a shift towards the use of more sustainable modes of transport;
- secure safe and efficient access between residential areas and key destinations, including centres of employment, schools, shops and other services;
- improve surface access and interchange arrangements at the international, national and regional gateways (as defined in Appendix RT(b));
- reduce the adverse impacts of transport, in terms of safety hazards, climate change, environmental degradation, residential amenity and social exclusion;
- integrate the management and planning of transport systems.

8.1 The RSS transport policies (RTS) support the vision and objectives of RSS by concentrating on the development of better transport links within the region, and between the North West and other parts of the UK, Ireland, mainland Europe and beyond. They aim to do this by significantly improving the quality and provision of public transport and by promoting a more structured approach to managing and selectively improving the region's highway network. In doing so, the policies align with the RES objective to develop the North West's strategic transport, communications and economic infrastructure, and with the policy priorities of the Northern Way Growth Strategy, particularly in terms of improving road and rail access to the North of England's main ports and airports and creating better integrated public transport services within and between City Regions. This chapter of RSS also advocates policies and proposals which should contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector.

Policy RT 1

Integrated Transport Networks

Transport problems and issues in the region should be examined on a multi-modal basis to develop sustainable, integrated and accessible solutions for all users. The management of routes in the Regional Highway Network should be closely co-ordinated with relevant Route Utilisation Strategies on the rail network where available.

Plans and strategies should seek to make best use of existing infrastructure and to capitalise on developments in intelligent transport systems and information and communications technology. They should focus on improving journey time reliability in the transport corridors shown on the Key Diagram and in Appendix RT(a) and enhancing the accessibility of the region's gateways and interchanges, particularly the international ones, as listed in Appendix RT(b).

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8.2 A sustainable approach to integrated transport requires each mode to contribute to future travel needs in an efficient and complementary way. The transport corridors essential for both external and internal connectivity are as shown on the Key Diagram, together with international gateways. These transport corridors include the public transport and highway networks for which policy frameworks are set out in Policies RT3 and RT4 respectively. Local authorities, the Highways Agency, the rail industry and other transport providers will need to work together to ensure that all of the region's transport networks are planned, managed, operated and improved in an integrated context.

8.3 It is now widely accepted that constructing new roads to accommodate future traffic growth is neither environmentally nor economically sustainable. The emphasis should therefore be on increasing the role of public transport together with making best use of existing highway infrastructure through the development of effective strategies for network and demand management. Congestion has a significant impact on journey time reliability, affecting the productivity of businesses and industry, and in urban areas reduces the reliability of road-based public transport. It can also affect access to key ports and airports, potentially undermining the region's economic competitiveness and growth potential. Although congestion on the highway network occurs mainly during peak periods, these are becoming increasingly longer.

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Policy RT 2

Managing Travel Demand

The Regional Planning Body, local authorities, and other highway and transport authorities should develop a coordinated approach to managing travel demand. Early consultation with the Highways Agency will be required for any proposal that may affect the trunk road network. In particular, efforts should be aimed at reducing the proportion of car-borne commuting and education trips made during peak periods and tackling the most congested parts of the motorway network including M6, M56, M60 and M62. In rural areas, the focus should be on major tourist areas where visitor pressure is threatening the local environment and quality of life. Measures to discourage car use should consider improvements to and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling.

Plans and strategies will need to be specific to the nature and scale of the problems identified, set clear objectives and specify what is being proposed, why it is necessary and what the impacts will be. They should:

- ensure that major new developments are located where there is good access to public transport, backed by effective provision for pedestrians and cyclists to minimise the need to travel by private car;
- seek to reduce private car use through the introduction of ‘smarter choices’ (see examples in paragraph 8.6) and other incentives to change travel behaviour which should be developed alongside public transport, cycling and pedestrian network and service improvements;
- consider the effective reallocation of road space in favour of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists alongside parking charges, enforcement and provision and other fiscal measures, including road user charging;
- make greater use of on-street parking controls and enforcement;
- incorporate maximum parking standards that are in line with, or more restrictive than, Table 8.1, and define standards for additional land use categories and areas where more restrictive standards should be applied. Parking for disabled people and for cycles and two-wheel motorised vehicles are the only situations where minimum standards will be applicable.

8.4 Road traffic is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions, with increasing car use contributing towards global warming and climate change. Policy DP5 seeks to reduce the need to travel and to assist people to meet their needs locally, whilst at the same time ensuring that all new development is genuinely accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Travel in the North West is currently over-reliant on the private car, particularly for journeys to and from work and educational establishments. The dispersed patterns of development that have taken place in recent years have contributed to an increase in both the number and length of journeys undertaken. For journeys to work, 74% of residents travel by car ⁽⁷⁶⁾, and it is estimated that around 20% of vehicles on the road during the morning peak period are associated with the ‘School Run’ ⁽⁷⁷⁾. In rural areas, many tourist attractions and facilities are largely dependent on access by car.

76 National Travel Survey, Department for Transport, 2004.

77 No More School Run: Proposal for a National Yellow Bus Scheme in the UK, The Sutton Trust, June 2005.

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8.5 Strategies need to be developed to manage the demand for travel in the most sustainable way, and a co-ordinated approach across local authority boundaries should help to prevent inefficient competition between different locations. A thorough understanding of relevant problems and issues will be essential if local authorities are to ensure that specific proposals are the most appropriate solutions to achieving desired outcomes, and are politically, socially and environmentally acceptable. The Highways Agency currently updates Stress Maps on an annual basis. These should serve to inform strategic decision making and monitoring of developments on the strategic road network.

8.6 ‘Smarter choices’, including company, school and personal travel plans, safer routes to school, travel awareness campaigns such as TravelWise, car pooling, car sharing schemes, car clubs and park and ride schemes, the availability of real time travel information and integrated ticketing and the increasing popularity of home working can contribute towards changing travel behaviour and will complement enhancement of the public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks (Policies RT3 and RT9) and the exploitation of new technology to manage existing transport infrastructure more effectively. Fiscal measures such as charging for travel on congested roads or for workplace parking are also likely to be an important factor in influencing the number of people prepared to switch from private cars to public transport, and funds raised could be re-invested in public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks.

8.7 Parking charges, enforcement and provision are all key elements of an effective strategy to manage the demand for travel by car as the availability and cost of parking is potentially a major influence on travel decisions and can promote more sustainable transport choices. To maximise effectiveness, parking policies and provision should complement wider land-use and accessibility plans and strategies.

8.8 The North West Parking Standards as set out in Table 8.1 specify the upper limit of parking to be provided at developments. Guidance is given as to how the appropriate standards for a particular site should be determined. These standards are equally as restrictive as those contained in PPG13 and are based on current regional practice. The urban values are intended to be more restrictive than the regional ones as there are generally higher levels of public transport accessibility and development densities in the former. Standards could be even more restrictive in those areas that have the highest levels of public transport accessibility and development density and, where appropriate, in environmentally sensitive areas such as the Lake District National Park. Further advice and examples are given in Appendix RT(c).

Table 8.1 North West Parking Standards

Land Use	Regional ⁶	Urban ⁶
A1: Shops		
Food Retail	1 space per 14 sqm	1 space per 16 sqm
Non-food Retail	1 space per 20 sqm	1 space per 22 sqm
A3: Restaurants and Cafes		
Restaurant	1 space per 5 sqm of public floor area	1 space per 7 sqm of public floor area
A5: Hot Food Takeaways		
Fast Food & Drive Through	1 space per 7.5 sqm of gross floor area ¹	1 space per 8.5 sqm of gross floor area ¹
B1: Business		
B1 including offices		
Stand alone offices	1 space per 30 sqm	1 space per 35 sqm

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Land Use	Regional ⁶	Urban ⁶
Business Parks	1 space per 35 sqm	1 space per 40 sqm
B2: General Industry		
General Industry	1 space per 45 sqm	1 space per 60 sqm
B8: Storage and Distribution		
Storage and Distribution	1 space per 100 sqm	1 space per 100 sqm
C1: Hotels		
Hotels	1 space per bedroom including staff ³	1 space per bedroom including staff ³
D1: Non-Residential Institutions		
Medical and Health facilities	1 space per 2 staff plus 4 per consulting room	1 space per 2 staff plus 3 per consulting room
Higher and Further Education	1 space per 2 staff ^{2,4}	1 space per 2 staff ^{2,4}
D2: Assembly and Leisure		
Cinemas and Conference Facilities	1 space per 5 seats	1 space per 8 seats
Other leisure facilities	1 space per 22 sqm	1 space per 25 sqm
Miscellaneous		
Stadia	1 space per 15 seats	1 space per 18 seats
Notes:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For predominantly drive-through/take-away establishments. For 'Drive-through' restaurants featuring significant seating then they should be considered as a conventional restaurant. 2. To be backed up with a more detailed justification including 'Travel Plans' proposals. 3. Additional facilities, such as leisure and conference facilities should be considered separately if appropriate. 4. Parking for students should be included within this figure. Separate consideration would be required for any parking related to residential facilities. 		

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Land Use	Regional ⁶	Urban ⁶
5.	The standard for students relates to the total number of students attending an educational establishment rather than full-time equivalent number.	
6.	Local Development Frameworks should identify the areas where 'urban' and 'regional' standards will apply.	

Policy RT 3

Public Transport Framework

The Public Transport Framework set out in Appendix RT (a) defines the North West's main public transport corridors. These are also shown in Diagram 2 of Appendix RT. Appendix RT(b) defines a hierarchy of gateways and interchanges in the North West. Similar frameworks should be developed by local authorities for sub-regional and local networks and set out in Local Transport Plans.

Plans and strategies should seek to reduce existing or forecast overcrowding along the main public transport corridors by improvements to transport infrastructure in partnership with operators and delivery partners including Network Rail where appropriate. Local authorities and station operators should consider making additional provision for car parking at railway stations, so as to promote maximum use of the rail network.

Local authorities should introduce measures to enhance the accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking of the regional centres and towns / cities identified in RDF1. In rural areas, priority should be given to providing access from rural hinterlands to key service centres.

Local authorities should work in partnership with public transport providers to improve the quality and provision of public transport services. Proposals and schemes to enhance services in the corridors identified in Appendix RT(a) should include priority measures to improve journey time reliability. Interchange and service improvements should be supported by better information provision, marketing and integrated ticketing.

Local authorities should identify in Local Transport Plans where existing public transport provision is insufficient and where public, community and demand responsive transport networks should be developed which link employment, education and training opportunities with areas of need.

Regional public transport priorities for investment and management are included in policy RT10.

8.9 Travel by car dominates movement in the North West with the average person making 672 journeys per annum by car compared to 63 by local bus and 27 by other public transport. This is also reflected in commuter choices: 74% travel by private car; 8% by bus and only 2% by heavy rail. Nevertheless, the percentage of modal share by public transport equates to 66 million rail journeys and 470 million bus journeys across the region each year. As the regional

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economy has grown, the extra demand for travel generated has placed a significant strain on the public transport network. Successful urban regeneration and economic development requires an integrated approach to public transport, walking and cycling whilst at the same time discouraging car use and improving public transport accessibility. Development of the rail network as part of a comprehensive integrated public transport system is particularly important in the Manchester and Liverpool city regions, where the greatest potential exists to increase patronage.

8.10 Opportunities for the physical expansion of public transport, especially with regards to heavy and light rail, are restricted by the high cost of providing new infrastructure, and the limited funding available for local bus services. Furthermore, the significant improvements in public transport provision necessary to support the Regional Spatial Strategy will not be fully achieved unless the critical issues of regulation and revenue support are addressed. However, Authorities should be encouraged to explore alternative funding opportunities, for example through partnership with private funding streams. As a result, the policy concentrates on making best use of existing resources to ensure that corridors which connect city regions and those that provide links within them continue to function effectively and are improved in such a way as to make public transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car. As overcrowding is already an issue on a number of the rail and bus routes that serve the regional centres of Manchester/Salford and Liverpool, local transport authorities should work with operators to ensure that passenger capacity is increased where required.

8.11 Sub-regional and local public transport frameworks should complement the regional framework identified in this policy and ensure access to jobs and services (especially in disadvantaged areas) in line with the Department for Transport’s “Guidance on Accessibility in Local Transport Plans”⁽⁷⁸⁾. This is especially pertinent in areas of deprivation which can suffer isolation and lack access to job opportunities and often have the lowest levels of car ownership.

8.12 Effective interchange both within and between modes is essential, and can be achieved through improvements to the quality and attractiveness of bus and rail interchanges, introducing measures such as through-ticketing and providing better information to make journeys easier to plan. Local authorities should work in partnership with operators to deliver improvements to the public transport network including addressing issues of personal safety and security, and, where practicable, the promotion of solutions to reduce the impact of public transport on the environment. If partnership working does not prove to be possible, provided the lack of engagement is not due to the restrictions of competition legislation, the local authority should seek to introduce bus quality contracts. Local authorities and other stakeholders should engage with government and the rail industry to deliver the greatest benefit to passengers through the rail refranchising process. Targeted marketing initiatives should also be used to attract people to public transport, especially once improvements have been made. With regard to accessing public transport services, adequate consideration needs to be given to parking provision (including suitable secure facilities for cycles and two-wheel motorised vehicles).

8.13 Community and demand responsive transport has an important role to play in improving access to employment, services and facilities. This is particularly so in rural areas where traditional commercial bus services are less likely to be financially viable and revenue support opportunities are limited. Furthermore, it is essential that adequate community consultation is undertaken when changes to service provision are proposed to ensure that proposals deliver the desired benefits to likely users of services.

78 Guidance on Accessibility in Local Transport Plans, Department for Transport, December, 2004.

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Policy RT 4

Management of the Highway Network

The region's road network is vital to the economy of the North West, providing the means to transport goods and people within and outside the region. However, existing and forecast traffic congestion is a constraint on economic growth and needs to be addressed if the North West is to reduce the productivity gap.

The Functional Road Hierarchy set out in Appendix RT(c) and shown on Diagram 3 of Appendix RT identifies those routes which comprise the Regional Highway Network. Local authorities should extend the concept of functional hierarchies to sub-regional and local highway networks.

The Highways Agency and Local Highway authorities should prepare Route Management Plans in accordance with Regional Planning Body guidance for all routes in the Regional Highway Network. Plans should make best use of existing infrastructure and proposals for major highway improvements should only be included following an examination of all practical alternative solutions to a particular problem.

Plans and strategies for managing traffic should focus on improving road safety, reducing traffic growth and maintaining a high quality environment through mitigating the impacts of road traffic on air quality, noise and health, with traffic encouraged to use the most appropriate routes wherever possible. In rural areas, particular emphasis should be given to maintaining the tranquillity of the countryside. Where safety is not compromised, highway engineering measures should reflect local character, including landscape and conservation.

Where a route is the responsibility of more than one highway authority, the relevant authorities should adopt a consistent approach to maintenance and management, including the adoption of appropriate speed limits by reference to the road's function, standard and environmental context. The harmonisation of speed limits across highway authority boundaries should be considered to achieve consistency on routes of similar function and standard. Maximum use should be made of secondary and recycled aggregates in road construction and maintenance schemes in line with policies EM9 and DP4.

Local authorities should work with freight, coach and parking operators to develop plans and strategies to identify sites for the provision of driver rest and parking facilities.

8.14 Application of the Functional Road Hierarchy concept to sub-regional and local road networks should help to ensure a consistent approach to highway management and maintenance across the Region, and provide a framework through which local authorities can develop their role as a network operator. Networks of sub-regional importance should be identified in Local Transport Plans. In defining such networks, local authorities will need to take account of the environmental and social impacts of road freight transport. Routes of less than sub-regional importance should not form part of the Primary Route Network.

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8.15 Route Management Plans should be prepared in accordance with separate guidance to be developed by the Regional Planning Body. Where a particular route is the responsibility of more than one highway authority, a single Route Management Plan should be developed and a consistent approach to management and maintenance agreed.

8.16 The King Review (HM Treasury, 2007) indicates that road transport has dramatically enhanced the mobility, economic prosperity and quality of life for millions of people. However, the lack of a systematic approach to highway management in the past has contributed in part to a multitude of different problems, including through traffic using residential streets in urban areas to avoid congestion at junctions on main roads and an increasing use of unsuitable local roads in rural areas to avoid congestion on strategic routes (for example, the M6 corridor through Cheshire). On the other hand, the effective operation of some sections of motorway in the Manchester City Region is undermined through extensive use by local traffic making short distance trips, particularly during peak periods (for example, the M62/M60 between Junctions 12 and 18). In addition to the problem of congestion and its impact on journey time reliability, inappropriate use of the highway network has significant health and safety implications, including road safety and the environmental and social consequences of traffic in towns, villages and the wider countryside. Road transport has a significant impact on the natural, built and historic environment. Across the North West there is growing concern that local communities in both urban and rural areas are now suffering from the negative effects of traffic, including problems of road safety, poor air quality, noise, severance and visual intrusion. In rural areas, where traffic growth is increasing at a faster rate than elsewhere, the loss or fragmentation of tranquil areas and light pollution are also issues of concern.

8.17 Whilst good progress has been made in the North West towards the 2010 casualty reduction targets for killed and seriously injured (KSI) compared with the 1994 to 1998 average, road traffic collisions remain one of the principal causes of injury and loss of life in the region, affecting pedestrians and cyclists as well as drivers, passengers and motorcyclists. The majority of children killed or seriously injured on the region's roads are either pedestrians or cyclists hit by vehicles travelling at speed. Road traffic collisions have consequences for health service resources and delays arising from additional congestion and disruption can have an adverse impact on the economy. It is important, therefore, that road safety considerations are taken into account in regional transport planning, particularly those relating to issues such as the observance of speed limits and inappropriate speed, which can be of benefit for all road users.

8.18 EU legislation ⁽⁷⁹⁾ obliges drivers of freight vehicles and coaches to take statutory breaks, creating a need for appropriate short stay and for lorries, in particular, overnight parking facilities. Local Authorities should work with freight, coach and parking operators to develop a comprehensive approach in providing these facilities, as increased pressure to develop land in urban areas has led to goods vehicles being forced to park in unsuitable locations. In tourist and other areas that attract large numbers of coaches, local authorities should identify short stay drop-off and pick-up points close to amenities along with nearby, secure long stay parking areas.

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Policy RT 5

Airports

Plans and strategies should support the economic activity generated and sustained by the Region's airports, in particular, the importance of Manchester Airport as a key economic driver for the North of England and Liverpool John Lennon Airport for the Liverpool City Region. Airport operators, in partnership with stakeholders, should implement surface transport initiatives which ensure that access by public transport, walking and cycling for both passengers and employees across the site is continually enhanced to reduce car dependency and ensure that all local environmental standards are met.

For Manchester, Liverpool John Lennon and Blackpool Airports, the future operational and infrastructure requirements, surface access demands and environmental impacts for each airport should be identified and measures to address and monitor them included in Airport Master Plans and other relevant plans and strategies, based on the strategic framework for the development of airport capacity set out in the White Paper 'Future of Air Transport'. For Carlisle Airport, proposals for development should be considered through the local planning process. If proposals exceed 20,000 air transport movements annually by 2030 the airport should consider developing an Airport Masterplan.

Airport boundaries, as existing or as proposed, should be shown in Local Development Documents. Development that would impede the operational requirements of an airport should not be permitted within this boundary.

In determining requirements for the expansion of an airport beyond its existing boundary, plans and strategies should take account of:

- the scope for intensification and rationalisation of activities and facilities within the existing boundary;
- the scope for relocating existing activities or facilities off-site;
- the scope for developing proposed activities or facilities off-site.

Plans and strategies for airports and adjacent areas should include measures to regulate the availability of car parking space for passengers and employees across the site.

In considering applications for development at airports, account will be taken of:

- the extent to which surface access and car parking arrangements encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling;
- the effect of the proposed development on noise and atmospheric pollution, and the extent to which this can be mitigated;
- the effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of local communities; and
- the adverse effects on sites of national and international nature conservation importance to ensure that these effects are avoided, mitigated or compensated as appropriate.

In formulating plans and strategies, account should be taken of the contribution general aviation makes to the regional and local economies, and the role smaller airfields have in providing for both business and leisure.

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8.19 This policy should be read in conjunction with RDF 4 (Green Belt) and DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality) which are particularly relevant given the location of some of the regions airports. Development at Liverpool John Lennon Airport could lead to impacts upon the integrity of the sites of international importance found within the wider Liverpool Bay area and at Carlisle Airport on the sites associated with the Solway. Accordingly, proposals and plans related to airport development which would be likely to have a significant effect on the areas listed above would be subject to assessment, under the Habitats Regulations.

8.20 Airports generate employment, attract businesses to the area, open up markets and encourage tourism and visitors. The Future of Air Transport recognises that building of local supply chain and capacity for the aviation industry could bring important benefits to the economies of regions and promotes the establishment of Centres of Excellence outside the South East of England. However, regionally significant business development that is not required for the operation of an airport should be located in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy W2 above. Manchester Airport is by far the largest in the UK outside of the South East of England, serving some 21 million passengers each year and offering a broad range of flights including long-haul scheduled services. More intensive use of the two runways could see the Airport increase the number of passengers it caters for up to 50 million per annum. Liverpool John Lennon Airport is the North West's second airport and has seen rapid recent growth in recent years with passenger numbers exceeding 4 million annually. Blackpool Airport has recently experienced considerable growth in scheduled routes and now caters for around 300,000 passengers per year, supporting the resort's tourism-led regeneration and serving the Central Lancashire City Region.

8.21 The Government's Air Transport White Paper ⁽⁶⁰⁾ sets out a strategic policy framework for the development of air services in the UK to around 2030. The White Paper does not authorise or preclude any particular development, but intends to inform plans and strategies and guide decisions on future planning applications. Airport operators, in conjunction with the Highways Agency, local authorities, the rail industry and transport providers, need to address issues that restrict access to airports by road and rail for passengers, staff, freight operators and visitors, which may impede the development of the national and regional economies. It should, however, be recognised that the significant growth in aviation forecast in the White Paper will have environmental and social impacts and must be managed in such a way that these are minimised. Airport operators should also set themselves challenging targets for increasing the proportion of journeys made to airports by public transport, cycling and walking in Surface Access Strategies that will reduce dependence on the private car, and environmental targets that will reduce noise and atmospheric pollution from surface activities. Airport development should be contingent upon adherence to such targets, and this principle should be incorporated in development plan policy.

8.22 Smaller airports can serve local business needs, especially in more remote areas, as well as accommodating recreational flying and providing training facilities. Local authorities should therefore recognise in their plans and strategies the contribution general aviation can make to the regional and local economies. As demand for commercial air transport grows, general aviation users may find that access to the larger airports becomes increasingly restricted and hence they are forced to look to smaller airfields to provide facilities.

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Policy RT 6

Ports and Waterways

The region will optimise the use of its ports and waterways assets, for trade and leisure, whilst at the same time protecting the environment and the integrity of their biodiversity. Plans and strategies should support the economic activity generated and sustained by the Region's major ports and waterways, in particular, the Port of Liverpool, as the North West's key international sea port, and the Manchester Ship Canal. Port operators in partnership with stakeholders should develop land-side surface access plans to accommodate existing and projected freight and passenger traffic. There should be a presumption in favour of making best use of existing infrastructure where possible, and opportunities to secure the transfer of port-related freight from road to rail or water should be explored.

It is recommended that for the Port of Liverpool, the Manchester Ship Canal, Port of Heysham and Fleetwood, the future operational and infrastructure requirements, surface access demands and environmental impacts for each port should be identified and measures to address and monitor them included in Port Masterplans and relevant plans and strategies. For navigations and waterways, Local Authorities and operators should work in partnership with appropriate navigation authorities to investigate and identify bottlenecks and develop solutions.

Port boundaries, as existing or as proposed, should be shown in Local Development Documents. Development that would impede the operational requirements of a port should not be permitted within this boundary. There should be a strong presumption in favour of safeguarding land close to ports for logistics, transport and port-related development where there is at least a reasonable likelihood of restitution to significant operational use within fifteen years and where the alternative use in contemplation is one, such as residential development, which will be difficult to reverse. Land with wharveside frontages should also be protected for future uses that require a water connection where there is a likelihood of such re-use in the short term.

In determining requirements for the expansion of a port beyond its existing boundary, plans and strategies should take account of:

- the scope for intensification and rationalisation of activities and facilities within the existing boundary;
- the scope for relocating existing activities or facilities off-site;
- the scope for developing proposed activities or facilities off-site.

Plans and strategies for ports and adjacent areas should include measures to regulate the availability of car parking spaces to accommodate existing and projected passengers and employees across the site.

In considering applications for development at ports, account will be taken of:

- the extent to which land-side surface access can assist the transfer of port traffic from road to rail and/or water;
- the extent to which it reduces unsustainable use of ports in other UK regions;

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- the effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of local communities; and
- the adverse effects on sites of national and international nature conservation importance to ensure that these effects are avoided, mitigated or compensated as appropriate.

8.23 This policy should be read in conjunction with policies RDF3 (The Coast) and EM6 (Managing the North West’s Coastline) and DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality). The proximity of potential port developments at Liverpool, Birkenhead and the Manchester Ship Canal and the ‘in-combination’ impacts of such development on the integrity and conservation objectives of the sites of international importance found within the wider Liverpool Bay area will need to be assessed and mitigated against. Similarly such assessment and mitigation may be necessary at Heysham and Fleetwood, where there may also be ‘in combination’ disturbance impacts of development on the integrity of the sites of International Importance associated with Morecambe Bay and Liverpool Bay. The impacts from development include (but are not limited to) construction and shipping related disturbance and pollution and land take leading to a potential risk of “coastal squeeze”. “Coastal squeeze” occurs when rises in sea levels along with coastal development reduce the available coastal strip between the land and sea.

8.24 The North West ports and waterways are important gateways for trade and travel and provide opportunities to promote the cultural diversity and history of the region. In 2005, 47.5 million tonnes of cargo was moved through the region’s ports. In addition to handling freight, the ports provide major leisure and tourism opportunities for the region. 984,000 passengers (2005 based figures) used the roll-on, roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry services which operate from Liverpool, Birkenhead, Heysham and Fleetwood, which are of major importance to the economies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. There are also opportunities to develop cruise liner facilities, particularly at the Port of Liverpool. The North West Ports Economic Trends and Land Use Study⁽⁸¹⁾ has informed policy development. National policy is set out in ‘Modern Ports: A UK Policy’⁽⁸²⁾ which is being reviewed. In the North West, Liverpool, Manchester (Manchester Ship Canal), Heysham and Fleetwood are categorised as major ports by the Department for Transport in that they handle at least one million tonnes of cargo per annum. Other ports are located at Barrow-in-Furness, Silloth and Workington in Cumbria, Glasson Dock near Lancaster and Garston Dock on the River Mersey.

8.25 Liverpool is by far the most dominant port in the Region and in 2005 handled 33.7 million tonnes of cargo, an all time record. It operates the UK’s largest Freeport zone with extensive facilities on both sides of the River Mersey, acting as a hub connecting world-wide deep-sea services with an extensive network of Continental, UK and Irish Sea short-sea services. Birkenhead in particular and Seaforth Container Terminal have the potential for significant further development. Ports in the North West also have a role to play in supporting EC initiatives to encourage the transfer of freight from land to water transport (see Policy RT7 and RT8).

8.26 North West ports benefit the regional economy by helping to attract investment and new employment opportunities, assisted by their capacity to act as multi-modal interchanges and to provide logistical services and manufacturing on-site. The availability of suitable land to accommodate these facilities is essential, as are good road, rail and inland waterway connections. Port estates often have land available where industry could locate, reducing the need for onward distribution of goods by road and delivering environmental benefits. The development of rail

81 North West Ports Economic Trends and Land Use Study, NWDA, December 2005.

82 Modern Ports: A UK Policy, DETR, November 2000.

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facilities at ports will generally require support from the Government's Sustainable Distribution Fund to make investment viable, but once such facilities are in place, the potential exists to increase the volume of port-related traffic moved by rail.

8.27 Port-related road traffic, particularly bulk and unitised freight, can contribute to congestion and damage environmental quality on approach routes to ports. Road and rail access to the region's main ports is an important issue, particularly in terms of the potential to reduce unnecessary and unsustainable use of ports in other UK regions such as east and south-east of England. Improvements that include measures to assist the transfer of port traffic from road to rail and/or water will be necessary to maintain the region's continued economic competitiveness. Land-side surface access strategies should include proposals that maximise opportunities for shifting traffic away from road and onto rail and water, and to minimise the adverse impact of heavy goods vehicles on local communities and the natural environment.

Policy RT 7

Freight Transport

Plans and strategies should take account of the aims and objectives of the Regional Freight Strategy. Local authorities should develop sub-regional freight strategies, including the establishment of Freight Quality Partnerships to promote constructive solutions to local distribution problems and issues.

The Regional Highway Network, as detailed in Appendix RT(c), forms the North West's strategic network for the movement of freight by road, supplemented by sub-regional highway networks defined in Local Transport Plans. Heavy Goods Vehicles should not be restricted from any routes in these networks.

Local authorities should work with distribution companies and their customers to develop a consistent approach to lorry management, including access restrictions and curfews. Signing strategies should be developed and introduced for key freight routes and local destinations.

Local authorities should work with rail, port and inland waterway operators, Network Rail, the freight transport industry and business to capitalise on the opportunities available in the North West for increasing the proportion of freight moved by short-sea, coastal shipping and inland waterways. This will encourage a shift from road based transport.

Local authorities should work with airport operators to facilitate the development of air freight at the region's airports, in line with the White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport', having particular regard to the need to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts (including night noise).

8.28 The Regional Freight Strategy ⁽⁸³⁾ has informed policy development and also provides guidance to local authorities on developing sub-regional and local freight strategies. Road haulage accounts for the majority of all goods moved in the North West, and will continue to be the dominant mode in the foreseeable future. Local authorities, distribution companies and

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customers all influence the choice of route taken by road freight vehicles, and there are benefits to be gained from interested parties working together to develop strategies and to gain a mutual understanding of distribution problems and issues.

8.29 Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs) can be instrumental in finding constructive solutions to a wide range of challenges, including balancing the needs of local businesses with local environmental and social concerns, identifying the need for and location of lorry parks, and understanding the contribution that sustainable distribution practices can make towards improving air quality and reducing noise pollution. It will be essential for adjacent FQPs to liaise with each other to ensure a consistent approach is applied across local authority boundaries. Concerns about issues such as the incidence of bridge strikes by road vehicles, which may result in significant disruption to both road and rail networks, can be addressed through, for example, partnerships between highway authorities and Network Rail.

8.30 Increasing opportunities exist for ports and inland waterways in the North West to benefit from the potential to transport cargoes such as containers and bulk freight by water. This is particularly encouraged by the EC in its White Paper on transport, published in 2002⁽⁸⁴⁾, and funding is available through, for example, the Marco Polo Programme⁽⁸⁵⁾. Short-sea and coastal shipping, operating between ports within the UK, is a substantially under-utilised mode, and can contribute towards reducing the volume of freight moved on the region's road and rail networks. More stringent drivers' hours regulations arising from EC legislation⁽⁸⁶⁾ are likely to place upward pressure on road freight costs and may make the case for sea transport more compelling. Ports closest to the origin or destination of the freight could provide transfer facilities, thereby reducing the requirement for lengthy journeys by road. This may be of benefit to the Cumbrian ports of Barrow-in-Furness, Silloth and Workington in particular.

8.31 The growth in container volumes, combined with the trend for container lines to use feeder services to distribute containers from hub ports by sea offers significant potential for the River Mersey ports and Port Manchester (Manchester Ship Canal) in particular. The Ship Canal also has the capability to play a greater role in the internal transportation of freight as, to a lesser degree, do small waterways such as the Weaver Navigation and navigable rivers. However, this cannot be achieved without the necessary wharves, warehousing and facilities to enable interchange between road, rail and water. This in turn requires land to be identified, allocated and safeguarded in Local Development Frameworks for such developments. The Government's Sustainable Distribution Fund⁽⁸⁷⁾ can provide useful financial contributions towards the capital investment associated with the transfer of freight from road to water.

84 European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide, European Commission, 2002.

85 The MARCO POLO Programme (2003-2010), http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/marcopolo/index_en.htm

86 Road Transport Sectoral Directive EC/2002/15.

87 Sustainable Distribution Fund: A Single Pot for Investments in England, February 2005

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Policy RT 8

Inter-Modal Freight Terminals

Plans and strategies should facilitate the transfer of freight from road to rail and/or water by the identification of sites for inter-modal freight terminals, and by encouraging greater use of existing terminals and private sidings. Consideration should be given to the allocation of land for inter-modal freight terminals in the following broad locations:

- South West Greater Manchester (with access to rail and the Manchester Ship Canal);
- Widnes (with access to the West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch));
- Newton-le-Willows (with access to the West Coast Main Line and Chat Moss rail route);
- Birkenhead Waterfront and Eastham Docks (Wirral Waterfront SIA).

Proposals for inter-modal freight terminals should satisfy the following criteria:

- be accessible from the Regional Highway Network and Regional Rail Network as listed in Appendix RT(c) and consistent with its operation and management;
- conform with rail industry strategies for freight and network and capacity utilisation and the Regional Planning Assessment;
- be compatible with the local environment and adjacent land uses;
- be capable of accommodating, as required,
 - an appropriate road and / or rail layout;
 - facilities for water-borne freight;
 - provision for the development of activities that add value; and
 - scope for further growth;
- develop a site Travel Plan prior to approval that sets out measures for providing genuine access to the site for potential employees other than by private car;
- address potential community, health, and quality of life impacts, including air and light pollution, visual intrusion and noise.
- the effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of local communities; and
- the adverse effects on sites of national and international nature conservation importance to ensure that these effects are avoided, mitigated or compensated as appropriate.

Local authorities should satisfy themselves that the prime purpose is to facilitate the movement of freight by rail and/or water and that rail access and associated facilities are available before the site is occupied.

A review of the Green Belt boundary in the local development framework would be justified in order to accommodate an inter-modal freight terminal in accordance with this policy. If land is removed from the Green Belt in accordance with this policy, the relevant development plan document should include a presumption against its development for purposes other than an inter-modal freight terminal.

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8.32 The transfer of movement of freight from the highway network to rail or water could potentially yield substantial benefits in reducing carbon emissions, and easing road congestion. Attempts to increase the volume of freight moved by rail or water in the region could be constrained by a shortage of inter-modal freight terminals close to the major origins and destinations of freight in the North West. Delivery will, however, be through the private sector, and the fact that significant capital investment is required before such facilities become operational means that investment is only likely when there is a clear market opportunity and the rail network operator is able to provide the necessary train paths. Although financial constraints make any significant improvement to loading gauge a long term aspiration, advances in wagon technology offer potential for development of the inter-modal freight business in the short to medium term, as will incremental capacity enhancements through small-scale measures such as improvements to terminal and port infrastructure and access. Existing terminals and private sidings across the region also have a role to play, and greater use could be made of these to encourage modal shift.

Policy RT 9

Walking and Cycling

Local Authorities should work with partners to develop integrated networks of continuous, attractive and safe routes for walking and cycling to widen accessibility and capitalise on their potential environmental, social and health benefits. A high priority should be given to routes linking residential areas with employment areas, transport interchanges, schools, hospitals and other community services.

Local authorities should ensure that proposals and schemes for new developments incorporate high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities, including secure cycle parking. Routes should connect with those in nearby developments, and provision of all facilities should take into consideration integration with likely future development.

When considering improvements to the region's transport networks, scheme promoters should take the opportunity to enhance walking and cycling provision, including crossings, signage, lane markings, allocation or re-allocation of road space, and off-road routes wherever possible.

8.33 Better provision for pedestrians and cyclists can contribute towards reducing car dependency and assist with the achievement of wider regional objectives, including the development of sustainable communities, enhancing accessibility for all to a range of facilities, improving community health and supporting tourism. The introduction of measures such as pedestrianisation, Home Zones, Quiet Lanes and segregated cycleways, together with more effective demand management (Policy RT2) and highway management (Policy RT4), can have a significant impact on the walking and cycling experience.

8.34 Local Authorities should produce action plans for the development of walking and cycling networks in line with the DfT publication 'Walking and Cycling: Action Plan'⁽⁸⁸⁾; these should be combined with 'Rights of Way Improvement Plans'. Integrated networks of regional and

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sub-regional footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, quiet lanes and greenways should also be developed, linked to each other and to National Trails and the National Cycle Network. Walking and cycling networks can provide important elements of 'Green Infrastructure' (Policy EM3) and/or contribute towards the objectives of Regional Parks (Policy EM4). Canal towpaths and disused railway lines should be incorporated if practical.

Policy RT 10

Priorities for Transport Management and Investment

The general priorities for transport investment and management will be determined in accordance with the Regional Economic Strategy, RSS transport objectives, spatial principles (DP 1 – 9) and the regional and sub-regional spatial frameworks in RDF1 and sub regional policies (chapters 10-13). The region's principles for investment are set out in the Implementation Plan. The Plan includes schemes for which funding has been provisionally allocated, subject to Department for Transport approval, and those under development.

8.35 The Eddington report ⁽⁸⁹⁾ recommended that in carrying out long-term transport planning it is important to consider the full range of policy options in order to identify those which offer the best value for money, alongside other advantages, such as long-term flexibility. This consideration should include (but need not be restricted to) the following types of actions ⁽⁹⁰⁾:

- behavioural change;
- getting better use out of existing infrastructure;
- technology and innovation;
- pricing signals;
- regulation and enforcement;
- changes to public transport services;
- small infrastructure schemes which address a specific need;
- major infrastructure schemes.

8.36 The region's transport networks are a valuable resource, but scope for their improvement is limited by financial, physical, environmental or social constraints. It is therefore imperative that these assets are adequately maintained and in particular, deterioration in the condition of local roads halted. There is, however, still the need for further targeted investment in infrastructure if the Vision for the North West is to be achieved.

8.37 The implementation plan includes the region's priorities for major transport investment, based on work undertaken for the Regional Planning Body by JMP Consulting ⁽⁹¹⁾. It includes those schemes which have been given full approval by the Department for Transport and for which funding has been allocated. It also sets out the investment programme up to 2015/16, depending on the availability of resources, which emerged from the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) work ⁽⁹²⁾. Contingency schemes should additional funding become available or if schemes within the investment programme receive funding from other sources such as the Transport

89 The Eddington Transport Study The case for action: Sir Rod Eddington's advice to Government, 2006.

90 Towards a sustainable transport system

91 A Methodology for Determining Regional Transport Priorities in the North West, Final Report, JMP Consulting, January 2006.

92 Regional Prioritisation of Major Transport Schemes Study Report, Atkins, January 2006.

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Innovation Fund are also included. Given that all schemes are subject to detailed appraisal and relevant statutory processes, it is possible that delivery of some schemes within the programme may be deferred or withdrawn. The region may need to revisit the list of RFA priorities if requested to do so by Government, if scheme costs increase or the overall funding envelope reduces. The implementation plan also lists those schemes and broad interventions currently under development for delivery by 2021. Delivery will however depend on the availability of resources within the relevant funding mechanism. The progress of schemes will be kept under review as part of the RSS Implementation, Monitoring and Review process.

8.38 Decisions about transport investment priorities beyond 2014 may be influenced and informed by the Government's strategic transport planning framework which it will be seeking to produce in 2012 in line with its response to the Eddington and Stern reports. The intended framework will comprise a strategy document and output specification covering all modes.