

Infrastructure for Sustainable Regional Growth

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Overview

- Implicit, fundamental questions about regional transport investment
- Key recent regional transport decisions
 - Second strategic road route
 - Regional funding allocations
- Conclusion
 - Nature of regional consensus
 - Sustainability of regional transport infrastructure priorities



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FUNDAMENTAL POLICY QUESTIONS



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Fundamental Q1: Why have Regional Transport Decision-making?

"...within a common national framework, public services should be responsive to the varying circumstances around the country. Unless there are clear and significant economies of scale or scope, regional market failures should be addressed at the regional level" (HMT, 2004 p5)

- Why more appropriate than subregional or local levels?
- Transferring administrative burden and politically unpalatable decisions?



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Fundamental Q2: What do we mean in practice by 'infrastructure'?

- Regional processes still essentially about which roads to build?
- Enough emphasis on maintenance and climate change-proofing?
- Sufficient consideration to non-traditional modes and soft engineering?



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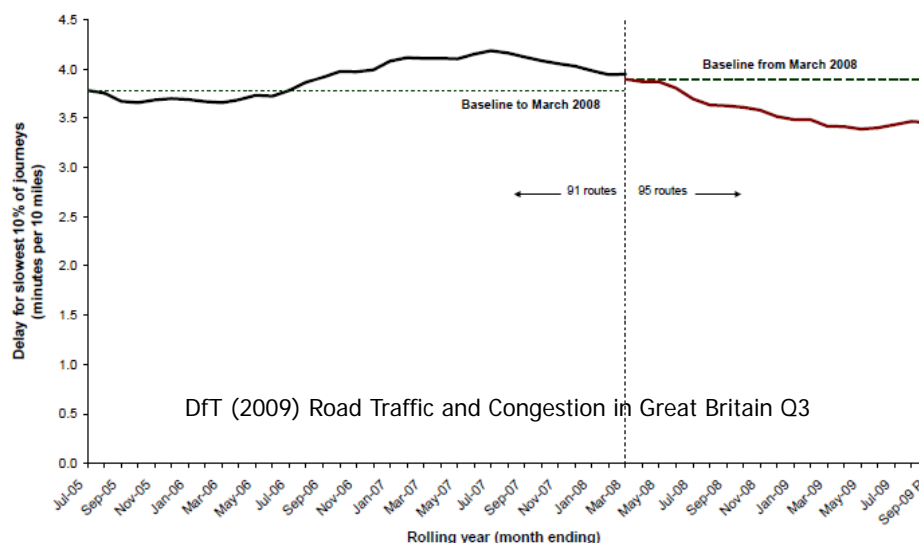
Fundamental Q3: What is meant by Sustainable Mobility/Growth?

- Short-term pressure to increase road capacity reduced
 - 5% contraction in GDP in 2009
 - 1-2% contraction in road traffic since 2007
 - Most delayed 10% of journeys 20 secs per 10 miles faster since May 2008
- Role of transport infrastructure investment in leading growth debated
 - SACTRA & 'two-way road' argument
 - Dynamism vs accessibility



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Journey time reliability on Strategic Road Network



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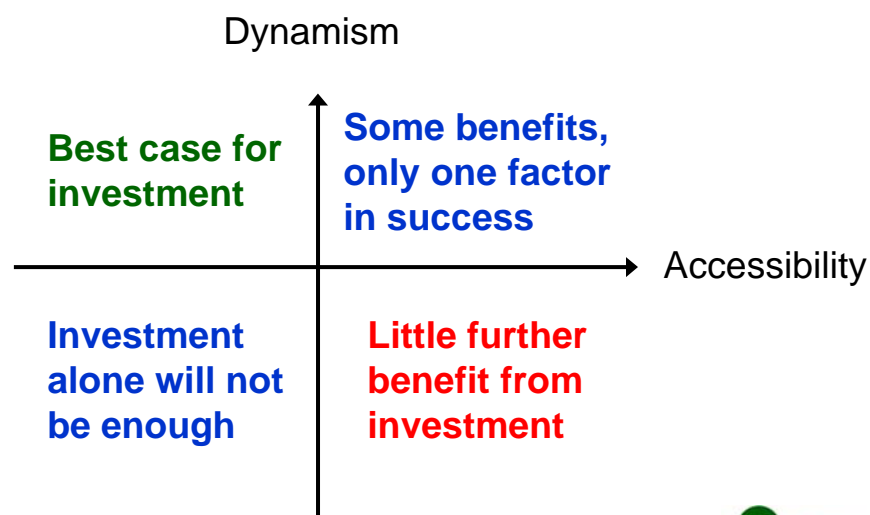
Peripherality and the 'two-way road'

- Improved infrastructure reduces business costs within region
- Improved infrastructure reduces transport costs for travel into region
- Net result may be economic growth or relocation of economic activity outside



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Dynamism vs Accessibility



Bannister, D., Berechman, J., (2000). Transport Investment and Economic Development. University College London Press.



Regional Spatial Strategy

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- Planning Policy Statement 11 requires that the RSS

“articulate a spatial vision of a more sustainable future” (PPS11)



Key 'Positive' RSS Transport Principles

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- Supporting spatial planning policies through strategic and local investment in transport services and facilities
- three spatial planning emphases
 - stimulating economic activity in the west of the peninsula,
 - realising the potential of the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns in the centre and north of the region
 - allowing carefully managed growth in the South East of the region



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Key 'Negative' Principle

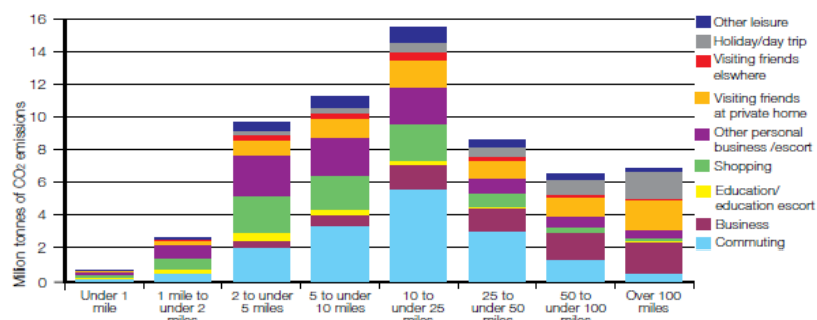
"Planning development carefully can have a noticeable effect on movement in the region, particularly by car, and in turn can help reduce the rate of increase in greenhouse gas emissions, so reducing regional contributions to climate change..." RSS 5.1.2

- And ideas to deliver reduce car dependence:
 - "Action to minimise use of main longer distance routes by local commuter traffic at peak times"
 - 'Park and Share' facilities
 - 'congestion charging' to manage the demand for road space



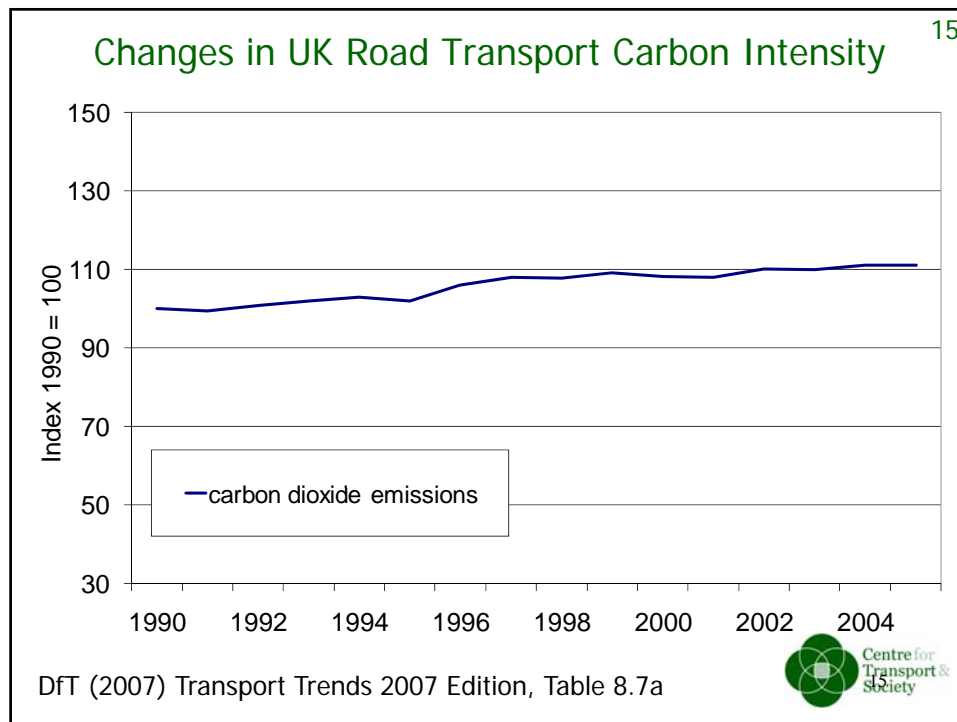
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Car use to and for work now a key target for reducing emissions



DfT (2009) Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future Fig 2.6





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RECENT REGIONAL DECISIONS

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'Second Strategic Route to the SW'

RSS Policy TR3 Second Strategic Route:

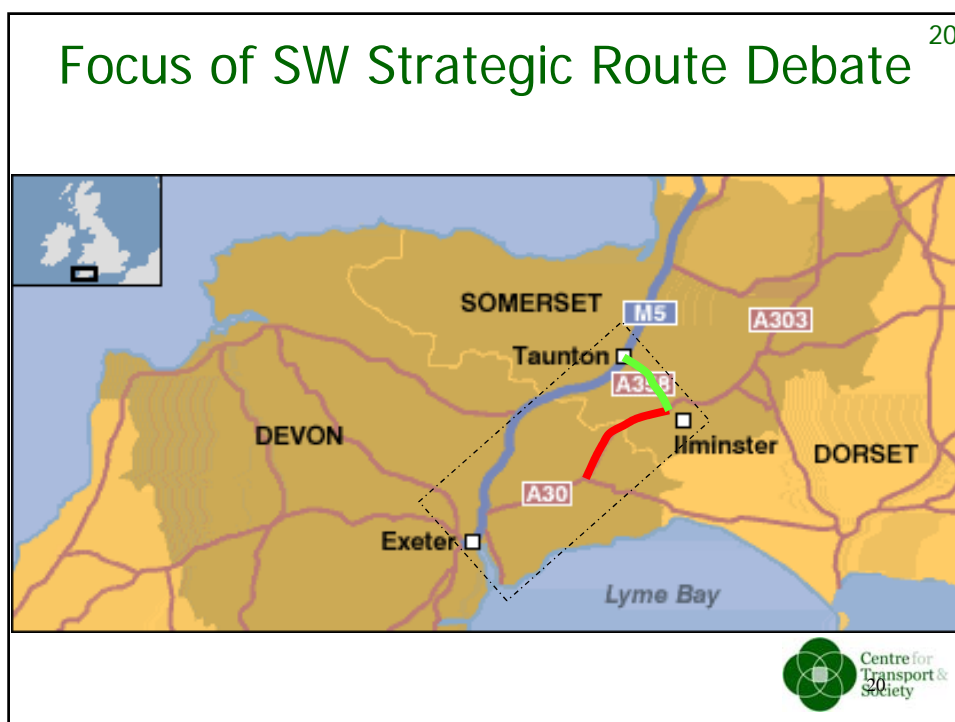
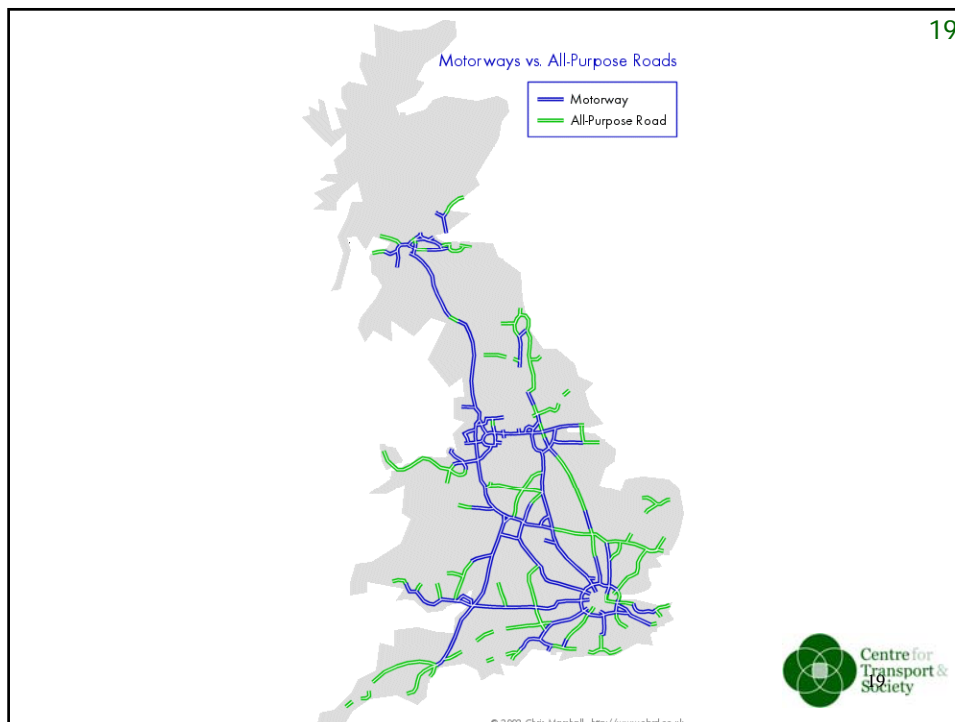
"The Regional Stakeholders will work with the Highways Agency to achieve a second strategic route into the region from London to dual carriageway standard utilising the A303/A358 in order to improve the resilience of the interregional network and maintain the competitiveness of the South West."



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Regional Trunk Road Routes





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Outcome of the Regional Debate

- 2004 SWRA vote effectively a tie
 - 42:41 A303:A358
- SoS determines in favour of A358
 - In line with environmental evidence
 - Influenced by A358 being lower-cost route
- Represented a reduction in consensus
 - 2002 SWRA vote
 - 56:14 A303:A358

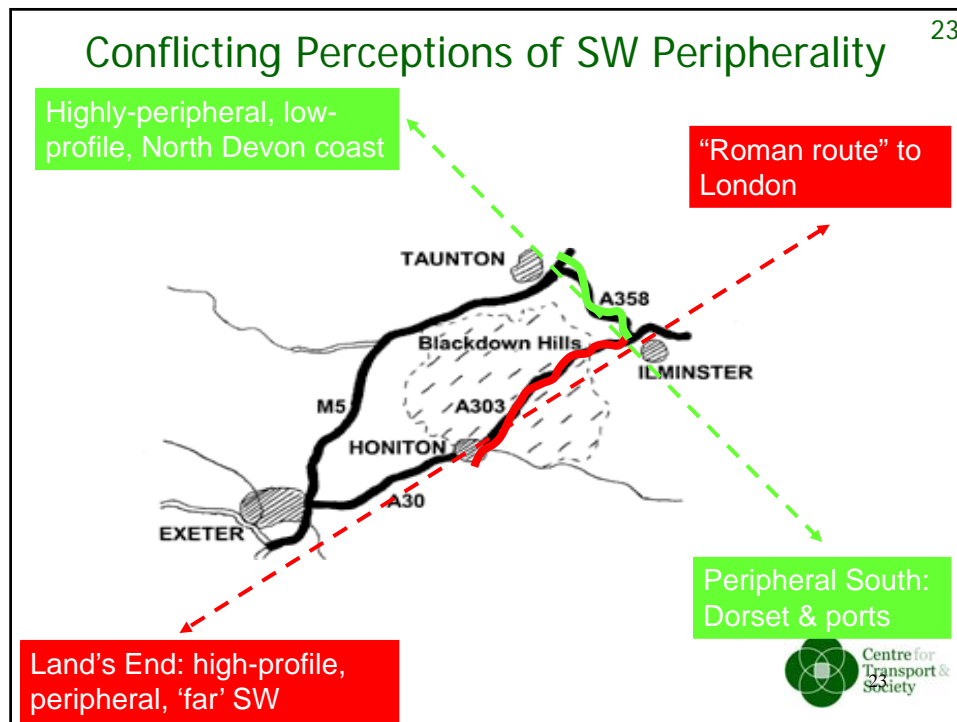


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Emergence of 2 coalitions

- Pro-303
 - High-profile business interests (including SWRDA, Exeter, Plymouth chambers of commerce)
 - Plymouth & Exeter City, Devon & Cornwall County Councils
 - Communities fronting A303
- Pro-358
 - Somerset and Dorset County, Taunton Deane and North Devon District Councils
 - 'Environmental establishment' Sustainability SW/English Heritage/English Nature/Environment Agency
 - Freight Transport Association and Dorset Ports

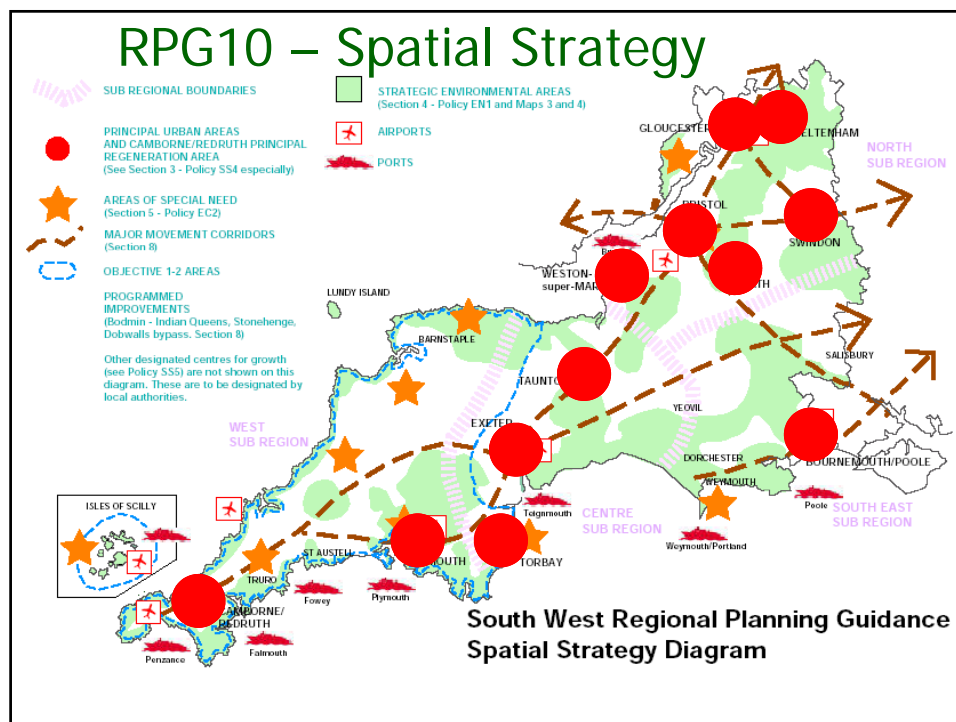




Ideas and Constructs of the A303 lobby 24

- Far SW interests emphasise access into region
 - Strong belief that road would create economic benefits
 - North Devon 'expressway' satisfies North-South needs
- Technical highway arguments focus on
 - overall capacity to handle peaks
 - vulnerability of M5 as 'sole artery'
 - Upgraded A358 would not attract A303 traffic
- Objective 1 status of western Cornwall
- Cannot avoid high value landscapes in SW
 - Known about when AONB designated
 - have to sacrifice somewhere
 - Short route saves climate change emissions which compensates landscape loss
- RPG 10 – need to support Exeter PUA

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Ideas and Constructs of the A358 lobby

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- A358 is solution for whole region – E-W link plus:
 - North Devon access to A303/30 & Dorset access to M5
- Technical highway arguments focus on
 - Time savings of A303 route marginal, and not worth environmental costs
 - Routes merge at Exeter – most sensitive part of M5
 - A303 gradients offset modelled travel time/emission benefits (7 mins for cars?)
- RPG 10 – need to support Taunton PUA
- Objective status of north Devon
- Building through Blackdown Hills would be 'own-goal' against regional image of unspoilt nature reserve
 - Tourists prefer some routes 'closer to the environment'

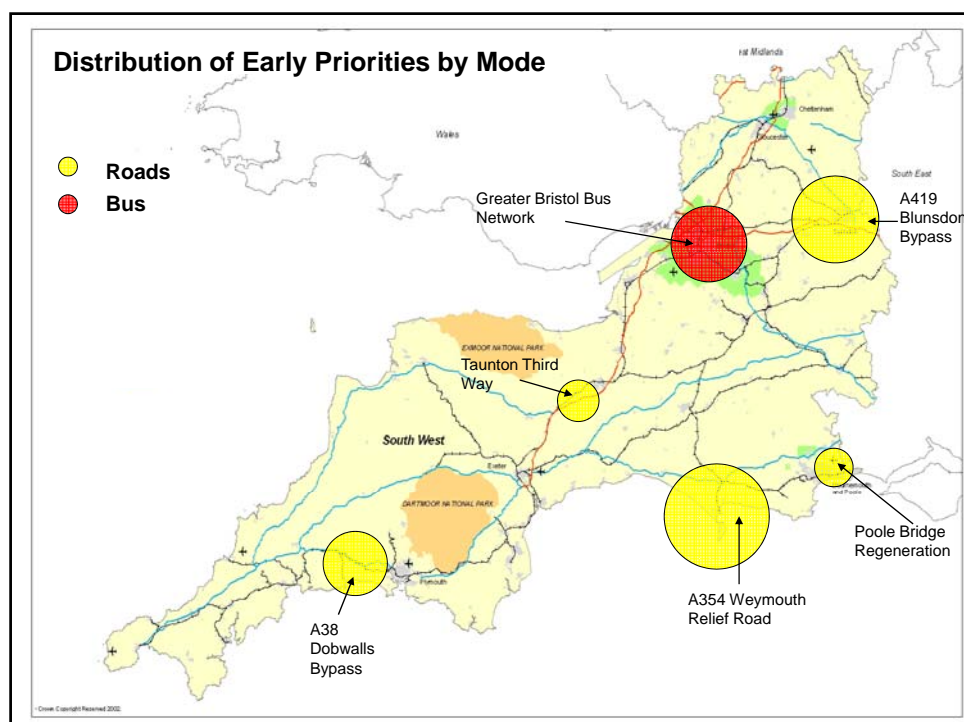
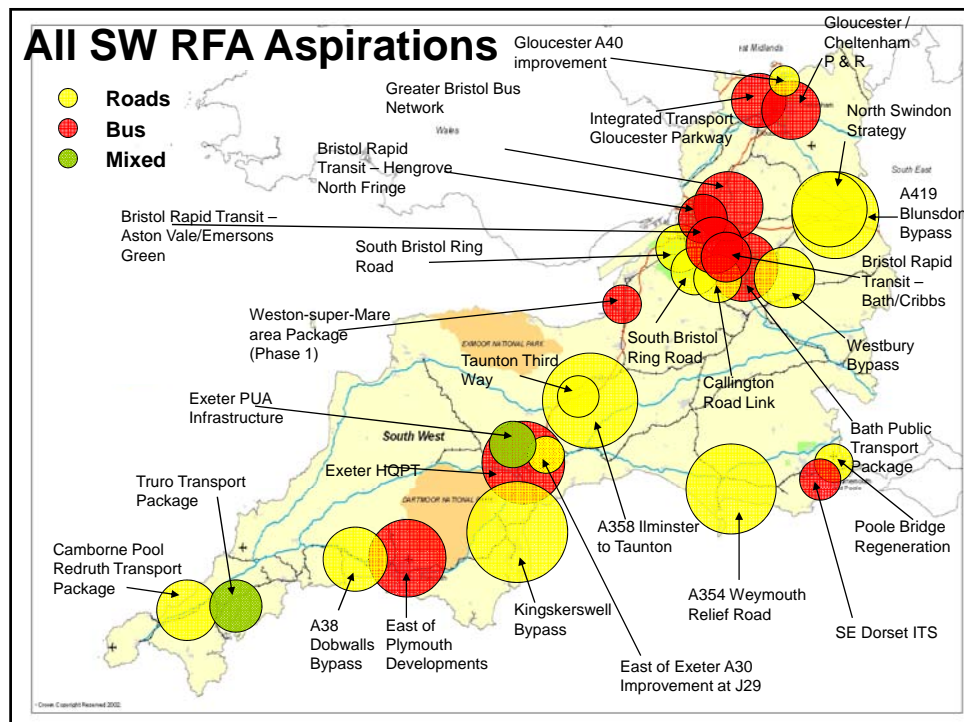
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English RFA – Transport 2006 Round

- Covered major schemes other than rail schemes and national road schemes
- In SW circa £95m available per annum
- Identified schemes to reflect
 - DfT/ regional “shared priorities”
 - Regional Spatial Strategy
 - Public Service Agreement targets
- Strong evidence base required
- Consensus expected
- Six months between publication of guidance and required submission of advice!



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SW Priorities for 2006/07-2008/09 Start

- Value approx. £250 million
- Following approved by DfT to proceed:
 - Blunsdon Bypass £57.5 million
 - Greater Bristol Bus Network £43.0 million
 - Taunton Third Way £13.0 million
 - A38 Dobwalls Bypass £31.7 million
 - Weymouth Relief Road £70.0 million
 - Poole Bridge Regeneration £14.0 million



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How far supporting sustainable growth with a regional consensus?

- Prioritisation reflecting an existing consensus document
- 'Shovel ready' schemes prioritised favouring roads
- Olympics significant in elevating the priority of the Weymouth Relief Road
- Mismatch in timing with key emerging regional sustainability guidance causing a
 - "...gap' between the sustainable policies in the RSS and the proposed [RFA] priorities for implementation, with the latter including schemes that are outdated in regional policy terms, especially rural bypasses." (CPRE, 2007 para 7)
- Other schemes more closely aligned with emerging spatial planning priorities



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RFA2 (2009-19)

- Submitted Feb 09
- Greater emphasis on
 - deliverability due to underspend in RFA1
 - Subregional planning
 - Contributing to carbon reduction targets
- Rail now included



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Programme Entry Schemes Identified

■ Poole Bridge Regeneration Initiative	£13.8m
■ Isles of Scilly Sea Link Harbour Improvements	£23m
■ Taunton Third Way Somerset	£6.16m
■ Northern Distributor Road Somerset	£16.47m
■ Camborne Poole Redruth Transport Package	£34.6m
■ Bath Public Transport Package	£48.65m



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SW Supporting Analysis

- More explicitly linked to regional spatial strategy
- Theme of resilience (economic and climate change terms)
- Seeks to address modal balance of spend
 - Majority of 45 schemes identified as “predominantly public transport”
 - ‘unbundling’ suggested as means of increasing deliverability of large, complex schemes
- Requests national support for
 - second strategic route + A417/A419
 - rail electrification
- Forecast increase of 4-11% in carbon emissions from road transport acknowledged



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DfT Response

- Concern about scheduling of public transport schemes

“We note the region has slipped a number of schemes to later years...based on substantive spend. A number of these schemes are strong public transport candidates that are closely connected with growth and regeneration. DfT would encourage the region to challenge, through its programme management processes, whether deferring some of these schemes delivers the right outcomes for the region.”
- Clear message that second strategic route to be funded from within RFA
 - Although national support for GWML electrification to South Wales promised in July.
- Subsequent requirement that £30 million for Westbury Bypass transferred to Swindon-Kemble rail upgrade



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CONCLUDING COMMENTS



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Conclusions: Regionalisation

- SSR debate suggests no natural geographical consensus
 - Region too diverse
- Region has however followed RFA 'rules of game' fairly successfully to secure share of funds for region
 - winners and losers potentially emerge from scheduling more than overall choice of priorities



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Conclusions: Infrastructure

- Significant deliverability issues favour shovel ready rural roads over emerging, complex urban public transport schemes
- Deliverability bias to roads enhanced by:
 - Non-inclusion of rail in RFA1
 - Emphasis on 'spend-by' dates
 - Evidence that DfT intervention is influencing this balance
- RSS notes potential innovative measures but main focus on traditional road/rail engineering & BRT
- Role for
 - Express coaches
 - Subregional/Regional taxibus systems
 - Regional Smartcard
 - Strategic carsharing
 - Low carbon modal integration



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Conclusions: Sustainable Growth

- In absence of significant new restraints on motoring (i.e. road pricing), not possible to promote road construction without increasing car dependence and carbon emissions
 - Should public be given a clearer choice?
- Resilience issues?
 - Coastal railway flooding
 - Deck lifting of elevated motorways
 - Winter weather readiness
 - not as attractive as developing new infrastructure but major growing concern

