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FOR THE SOUTH EAST

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EAST KENT PUBLIC ASKED FOR VIEWS ON TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

The South Coast study is now asking for suggestions from local people, businesses and other organisations between Margate and Southampton on how key transport problems in their area could best be managed in the future.

The South Coast study focuses on the long-term transport challenges facing the whole of the South Coast area, including the impact and influence of rail, bus and other public transport routes, roads and the potential of short sea journeys along the South Coast. A dedicated website – www.socomms.org.uk – provides information on the scope of the participation, as well as a timetable.

Dr Mark Brown, Project Director for Halcrow, the study consultants, said:

“Feedback from the general public and businesses about the first stage of consultation has been extremely encouraging. However, now that the key issues have been established, we need local people to tell us what sort of solutions they would like to see implemented across the study area.”

Some of the key concerns raised by the first stage of participation included:

- General concern about increasing car use and its impact on the environment
- Worries about road safety – especially traffic speed – in urban and rural areas
- Problems with the quality of rail services and lack of investment in lines and stations
- Although there is generally good access to the rail network from key centres along the coastal corridor – access in rural areas is poor
- Weekday bus services in and between key centres in the study area are considered to be generally good but congestion, unreliable journey times, lack of sufficient bus lanes and limited operating hours were identified as problems
- Poor integration and interchange between different transport types and lack of an integrated transport policy across the area
- The dangers associated with traffic and poor footpath provision were singled out as an issue, although town centre pedestrianisation schemes and cycle lanes were considered to be good by walkers and cyclists

For the Dover/Folkestone area in particular, the study revealed that the general public's main concerns were centred upon issues of safety, congestion and the environment resulting from high levels of traffic on the roads. In particular, the A259 was cited as a trouble spot.

Public transport, was felt to be inaccessible with a lack of integration between different types modes of transport. A particular concern was the quality of the provision of rail services.

People expressed the view that the current provision of bus and rail travel was not of a particularly high quality.

The feedback from the initial public participation now forms the basis of this second stage of participation, which continues until mid November. The study as a whole is due to report next summer. Copies of a leaflet relating to the second stage of the

study, including a feedback questionnaire, are again available through selected local libraries, council offices and train and bus stations.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

1. The study is being undertaken by transport consultants Halcrow on behalf of the Government Office for the South East.
2. The report of the study will be passed to the South East England Regional Assembly, who will make recommendations to the secretary of state for transport, local government and the regions.
3. The Government Office for the South East represents central government within the region, working on behalf of a number of departments, including the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions.
4. Additional information about the study is available on the GOSE website – www.go-se.gov.uk.

ENDS.

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