

The Study

The SoCoMMs study is one of a number of multi-modal studies commissioned by the Government to look at the future challenges and issues facing all methods of transport and how these might be addressed to serve the needs of people, businesses and the environment.

The study aims to develop a framework for a better transport system for those who live and work along the South Coast between Southampton and Thanet, and for those travelling through the area.

The Newsletter

This is the third newsletter in a series designed to keep you up-to-date on the SoCoMMs study. It summarises the key findings from the public participation process so far and sets out our current programme for identifying transport solutions.

This newsletter also provides us with an opportunity to say thank you for the interest you have shown in identifying:

- problems and issues within the study corridor; and
- the types of solutions that you would like to see examined.

Following further analysis of the transport issues, the proposed solutions will be put forward for your consideration in late Spring/early Summer 2002. This information will be available through the next newsletter and will include public exhibitions across the study area.

What consultation has happened so far?

An important part of the SoCoMMs study has been to involve and inform the public of the study's developments. This has been achieved through the distribution of newsletters and questionnaires, advertisements in local papers and information on our website.

The results of your participation

Initially the study identified a wide range of transport challenges in the South Coast Region. These challenges relate to congestion, overcrowding, the environment, safety, economic regeneration and public transport.

Your comments and views have helped us identify the transport problems associated with these challenges and the types of solutions that you would like explored.

Some of the major themes emerging from this process are:

- strong support for public transport as a priority (e.g. wider coverage, type and performance of services, accessibility, safety and security);
- the need to provide better transport and land use integration;
- the need to provide efficient and sufficient road capacity;
- increased emphasis on efficient movement of freight;
- an increased focus on reducing travel demand; and
- the need for commitment to funding and implementation.

SoCoMMs – the study process

Date	Project Task
April 2001	Commencement of the study
June 2001 issues	Understanding current problems and
September 2001	Understanding future problems and issues
October 2001	Identifying possible solutions
November 2001	Developing a strategy*
Late Spring/	Consulting on the strategy
Early Summer 2002	Developing local action plans
Summer 2002	Refinement and final recommendations

* *we are here*

The Key Problems and Issues

By getting a better understanding of the current and future problems and issues that you have raised in the South Coast Region, we have identified one of the key transport problems relates to a high dependency on the car, in both urban and rural areas.

A number of associated problems with the car such as congestion in town centres, congestion on approaches to town centres and on the main through routes in the South Coast Region are also experienced. The high level of car use also leads to a poorer urban environment including an increase in traffic noise, reduced air quality and an intrusion on the local amenity.

In rural areas, the increasing reliance on the car, combined with the decline in public transport services has lead to other problems. These include not all members of the public having access to transport services to fulfill basic needs. This is particularly experienced by those who do not have ready access to a car such as the young, the old, the less well off, those looking after young children and people with a disability.

For most people in the South Coast Region, the existing transport system is seen as an unattractive alternative to the car. This is mainly due to low levels of investment spent on the transport network resulting in slow journey times and poor levels of convenience, safety and reliability.

These factors, when combined with poor integration such as limited number of links with different types of transport, lack of ticketing options and information services and the various individual transport operators operating in isolation of the overall transport network, all detract from using alternative travel modes.

The South Coast Region's road network is an important part of the region's transport system. Roads support freight and business travel, cross-town and short trips, and many off-peak movements. They also increasingly support multi-modal uses by providing the necessary infrastructure for buses, high occupancy vehicles and cyclists.

Efficient freight movement is important to the region's economy and depends on an efficient rail, road, air and sea transport network. Road traffic congestion and poor accessibility causes problems for port and airport operators, freight hauliers and businesses.

Your input has identified numerous problems and issues. From our analysis the following issues have been highlighted in more detail:

- reduce journey times for all modes of public transport;
- provide better accessibility to public transport services;
- reduce the number of highway conflicts and bottlenecks;
- manage the growing demand for road-based travel;
- improve safety and security throughout the transport system;
- target short-distance trips to reduce the reliance on the car;
- focus on the overall performance (including quality) of all modes;
- link urban solutions to regeneration and environmental initiatives;
- design transport solutions to support land-use policies; and
- ensure that transport solutions are deliverable.

The Possible Solutions

The public consultation undertaken in June 2001 identified a wide range of solutions to the problems. These included:

- providing new roads and railways;
- making better use of our existing roads and railways by reducing our dependency on the car; and
- making use of different forms of travel tolls, parking charges and public transport subsidies to change the cost of travel by different modes.

Other initiatives relating to the growth of travel demand were also identified. These initiatives included:

- changes in the size and location of future urban developments;
- changes in traffic and highway laws;
- changes in transport responsibilities;
- raising public awareness of the impacts of private car use; and
- encouraging more sustainable transport choices to meet personal travel needs.

Your input during further consultation in October 2001 identified the following preferred solutions, in order of preference:

- improve integration between transport modes;
- improve the opportunities for using public transport, walking and cycling;
- give priority to public transport and freight vehicles over other traffic;
- change proposals for future development, so as to ensure that less travel demand is generated;
- make better use of the existing rail and road systems, so as to address some of the current transport problems;
- encourage individuals to change their lifestyles and work patterns, so as to reduce our overall need to travel;
- provide new infrastructure, both road and rail; and
- increase the costs associated with car travel.

The Way Forward

Your input is now being carefully considered by the study team with a view to identifying the most appropriate solutions.

So far our analysis suggests that there are no easy solutions to meet everyone's needs. Consequently, some compromises will need to be made. The final answer is most likely to be a result from compromises needed to be made and will include a combination of solutions to address the numerous problems and issues you have raised.

How to get involved in discussing these options

A series of public exhibitions are proposed in late Spring/early Summer 2002. These will be held at a wide variety of locations within the study area and will specifically set out:

- the overall aims of the SoCoMMs study;
- the problems that the study addressed;
- the range of possible solutions that are available;
- the criteria used to appraise these solutions;
- the appropriateness of different initiatives;
- the choices that need to be made; and
- the over-arching strategy(ies) put forward for public comment.

To find out more about this project or if you wish to provide any comments on the SoCoMMs study you can:

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