

Chief Executive
Local Transport Authority

10 October 2008

Dear Chief Executive,

Re: RFA2 – an opportunity for you to invest in public transport

After discussion with the Department for Transport, we want to make sure you know about your opportunities to fund public transport improvements through the Regional Funding Allocation 2. We've heard that some local authorities are unsure about which projects can be paid for in this way, so we've sent this letter to the chief executives of all county councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan borough councils and PTEs in England (excluding London).

Our discussion with the Department has made it clear that:

RFA2 can be used for capital spending on a wide range of public transport schemes

- Bus schemes – infrastructure costs, such as bus stops and bus lanes
- Buying buses
- Tram schemes – infrastructure costs
- Buying trams
- Reopening/opening a railway line
- Reopening/opening a railway station
- Railway junction/signalling improvements
- Buying train carriages to provide new or more frequent services
- Buying train carriages to lengthen trains – and reduce overcrowding
- Improving/building public transport interchanges

Rail improvements can include passenger and freight schemes.⁽¹⁾ Schemes must be additional to those already included in the Government's plan for the railways from 2009-14, the High Level Output Specification.⁽²⁾ Additional subsidy costs resulting from new rail schemes would need to be met from existing revenue budgets.

The Department is willing to consider authorities' plans to have new train carriages funded, but there are risks associated with this so you will need to obtain further advice from them.

Proposals for investment in public transport in the short term should already be included in the Local Transport Plan. However, you can also suggest public transport schemes for the medium (post 2011) and longer term (post 2015), so **even if your schemes are not worked up in detail you could suggest them for consideration in the longer term.**

(1) For advice on freight schemes, contact Freight on Rail (philippa@freightonrail.org.uk or 020 8241 9982).

(2) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/whitepapercm7176/whitepapersustainable railway1>

Public transport schemes should be high on your region's priority list; they can help you meet your goals:

1. Public transport is often the best solution for congestion

Government guidance suggests that regions look first at problems and then at solutions.⁽³⁾ Public transport alternatives can often meet regional transport needs better than new roads, particularly in the long term. New roads generate additional traffic whereas modal shift to public transport reduces traffic and congestion.

2. Public transport measures work well as part of a package

Government guidance recommends a package approach, looking at how a combination of major schemes and smaller measures can solve transport problems.⁽⁴⁾ A package approach works best if smaller measures that change travel behaviour are considered – and these are likely to be public transport/smarter choices measures. Regions could look at, for example, funding a railway line reopening combined with new bus stops and bus lanes throughout the area.

3. Improving public transport will help you meet your CO2 reduction targets

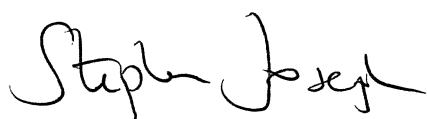
One hundred local authorities have signed up to a priority that commits them to reduce CO2 in their area from, among other things, road transport.⁽⁵⁾ The Government has asked the regions to estimate the effects of prioritised proposals on CO2 emissions and to develop advice which supports the reduction of CO2 emissions.⁽⁶⁾ Road schemes tend to increase CO2 emissions. Public transport schemes, on the other hand, tend to reduce emissions by providing an alternative to car use, so they will help you to reduce CO2 from transport.

Although the guidance issued by the Department does not explain the points above in detail, the Department is prepared to talk to local authorities and PTEs that are interested in exploring public transport schemes, to explain the process to them.

Thank you for your time. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

We would be grateful if you could pass this letter on to the executive member responsible for transport.

Yours sincerely,



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Executive Director

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(3) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/rfa/rfaround2/RFA supplementarynote1.pdf> (12)

(4) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/rfa/rfaround2/RFA supplementarynote1.pdf> (47)

(5) For more information about National Indicator 186 'Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area' go to <http://www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk/NIRresults.aspx?NIRef=NI%20186>

(6) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/rfa/rfaround2/RFA supplementarynote1.pdf> (16)