



## **SWELTRAC Response to “Planning for a Better London” 2008**

SWELTRAC is a sub-regional transport planning partnership covering ten Boroughs in the south and west London area. These include the London Boroughs of Croydon, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, and Wandsworth and the Royal Boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Kingston upon Thames. Each of these authorities will have responded directly to this consultation, but we are also pleased to have the opportunity to offer the views of the SWELTRAC Partnership as a whole on the transport elements of the Mayors “Planning for a better London” document.

### **Section 1: The Mayor’s Approach**

SWELTRAC welcomes the Mayor’s renewed consensual approach to working with the Boroughs. This will offer greater discretion for individual Boroughs to have more control over issues of strategic local nature. However as a sub-regional transport partnership we are concerned that there is little mention of the role of partnerships, which bring together boroughs and other partners on essential regional issues. We believe that sub-regional partnerships such as ourselves, uniting individual Borough issues, will become increasingly important as London’s population continues to grow.

The Mayor highlights his intentions to increase the focus on Outer London areas. Although the commitment to support the city centre should remain, this will provide a change from the previous Mayoral regime and deviate from what we believe is a current London Plan primarily focused on city centre issues.

We welcome the proposed review of current sub-regional working, restructuring the boundaries identified in the London Plan. As transport is an intrinsic inter-regional subject, we hope that this review will create permeable boundaries to promote better joint arrangements between the sub-regions.

A Planning Convention would help to highlight planning issues in London bringing different groups, politicians and practitioners together. SWELTRAC would welcome the opportunity to participate in such an event to highlight both the work we are doing but also to emphasise what we feel is needed to improve the transport infrastructure in the South-West sub-region.

### **Section 2: The Key Challenges**

Although our primary focus is on transport related issues, which are more appropriately addressed in the Mayor’s “Way to Go!” document and the forthcoming Mayor’s Transport Strategy in 2009, there are a number of key challenges identified in this document.

The latest statistics indicate that London’s population is growing significantly with recent projections of 8.6 million - a 1 million increase in 20 years. This will have

obvious implications on an already creaking transport network. Even though the housing market has suffered a blip in the recent times, city centre residential sales and rental rates remain beyond the means of a large percentage of Londoners. This is conveyed by the continuous migrations to cheaper suburban and outer London locations.

The document discusses the importance of decentralisation to outer district centres. However, this is difficult to successfully achieve in a Metropolis of London's stature. We will need to make such district centres more attractive to local communities and future investors.

We welcome the continuing focus on addressing climate change. We support concerted action to improve quality and accessibility in Green Belt areas nearest the metropolitan built-up areas.

Throughout this document the Mayor also illustrates his commitment to promoting walking and cycling as viable sustainable means of transport in the capital. Although, not specifically referred to in this document, the Mayor has also shown his dedication to the advancement in alternative fuel technologies such as the promotion of electric vehicles. As SWELTRAC has been heavily involved in a sub-regional electric vehicle charging point scheme in recent years, we welcome these views.

We encourage the continuing measures to realise Crossrail. This provides a marvellous opportunity to cater for London's increasing commuter flows. However, we feel there needs to be increased emphasis on planning for the potential economic development that Crossrail can bring. We support the proposal for introducing a new airport in the Thames Gateway and decisions not to proceed with a third runway at Heathrow. This will provide for a more neutral balance, not just with air travel, but also surface travel in the entire south east region.

### **3. Key Policy Responses**

The current Transport Strategy from 2001 is obsolete. The increase in the Greater London Area's population alone since 2001 warrants its renewal. Therefore we welcome the early priority given to reviewing the Transport Strategy. We support measures to reduce the need to travel and that investment is co-ordinated to ensure Outer London's potential is realised.

The policy to use the planning system to generate contributions towards the cost of Crossrail is extremely appreciated. It portrays commitment and confidence that the scheme will be realised, as opposed to endless encumbrance through political circles.

In economic terms, Heathrow is an important global crossroads. However, we join the Mayor in opposing a third runway and agree that the scope for a new airport in the Thames Estuary should be examined.

We have been impressed by the Mayor's commitment to promoting more sustainable means of travel, particularly walking and cycling. We are involved in many schemes – particularly in relation to station access - which require much joined up thinking with regards to integrated transport. The development of the supplementary guidance on cycle parking standards and implementation of a bicycle hire scheme will bring welcome benefits to the capital as a whole as well as to our sub-region.

The use of the River Thames for the transportation of people and goods is an option which is regularly overlooked. As the Thames dissects our sub-region we consider it an untapped artery for transportation. We need to create initiatives to promote river transport.

#### **4. Making it Happen**

The proposed revisions to the London Plan are a move in the right direction. We note the production of SPG to support London Plan policies and welcome the intent to get interested parties involved in the early stages of developments. We would be pleased to be involved in this process.

We reiterate that we welcome the steps being taken to progress Crossrail. This conveys very good intent; but it will not solve all the problems. The new Transport Strategy will have to seriously address the disparities in the transport network between the South and North of London. We believe that a lot that needs to be done to improve the transport infrastructure, not just in our South West sub-region but across the whole of South London. Although we are eagerly awaiting the review of the Transport Strategy in 2009, we ask that that the relationship with this intended review is indicated in the revised London Plan.

**Gavin French**  
**SWELTRAC Transport Partnerships Manager**

**14-11-08**

*We apologise for the lateness of this response. There was a mix up of deadline submission dates on our behalf.*