

South Eastern and Southern Regional Planning Assessment for the Railways

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Tom Harris): The Department for Transport has today published the South Eastern and Southern Regional Planning Assessments for the railway (RPAs), the latest in the series of eleven RPAs covering England and Wales.

Copies of the documents have been placed in the House Libraries and can also be downloaded from the Department's website www.dft.gov.uk.

The South Eastern RPA covers south east London, Kent and Hastings and the Southern RPA covers south London, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and parts of Berkshire.

RPAs provide the link between regional spatial planning (including preparation of regional transport strategies) and planning for the railway by both Government and the rail industry, and are designed to inform the development of the Government's strategy for the railway. They look at the challenges and options for development of the railway over the next twenty years, in the wider context of forecast change in population, the economy and travel behaviour. The relevant regional spatial strategies for these two RPAs are the London Plan and the Draft South East Plan.

Regional Planning Assessments do not commit the Government to specific proposals. Instead it sets out the Government's current thinking on how the railway might best be developed to allow wider planning objectives for a region to be met and identifies the priorities for further development work.

It is the Government's intention to publish the Thames Valley RPA covering west London, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, later this year.