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Consultation Response

## **Urban Challenge Fund**

*pteg* response

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Jonathan Bray

*pteg* Support Unit  
Wellington House  
40-50 Wellington Street  
Leeds – LS1 2DE  
0113 251 7445  
info@pteg.net

## **1. Focus on the city regions**

- 1.1. We believe that the PMSU report's analysis was sound and that its approach to urban transport challenges was correct. The UCF should follow on from and reflect the PMSU's analysis and findings.
- 1.2. The PMSU report, and other reports (like Eddington) demonstrate that focusing investment in congested urban areas will result in best value being achieved. To have the greatest impact at a time of limited resources, the fund should be focussed on the Metropolitan areas.
- 1.3. This may also help counter-balance the wider distortions in DfT funding which currently favour London and National Rail (which enjoy long term investment deals) when compared with the city regions.

## **2. Don't waste time and money reinventing the wheel**

- 2.1. A great deal of time, energy and investment has been sunk into LTP 3, as well as successive TIF and Sustainable Cities bids. At a time of constrained public spending it would be sensible to use these bids as the basis for Urban Challenge Fund bids and for this to be explicit in any guidance.

## **3. Synergies with LTP3**

- 3.1. The LTPs will set the framework for transport for the city regions so UCF needs to exploit the potential for synergies and go with the grain of emerging LTPs.

## **4. Set clear timescales for decisions and funding**

- 4.1. Previous competitions for major funding flows have suffered from considerable uncertainties and delays on the timescales by which DfT made decisions and provided funding. This in turn leads to waste and inefficiencies for LTAs in responding to these uncertainties. Clear and unambiguous timescales for decision-making would result in a more cost effective process.

## **5. Devolve the definitions**

- 5.1. During previous competition for major funding flows uncertainty and delay has been injected into the process over how the urban areas concerned are defined (cities, Met areas, wider city regions). The decision about the area for which any bid would be prepared is best left to be determined by the areas concerned.

## **6. Outcomes focus - and a simple and clear framework for bids**

- 6.1. The UCF should be based on achieving outcomes on the ground which match PMSU objectives. The guidance on what bidding documents the DfT is seeking should reflect this. The guidance should also be clear and unambiguous on what it is asking for (including on the volume of the bid documents). It should also be linked to a simplified and transparent appraisal process. The PMSU report gives greater priority to health and quality of life benefits than has hitherto been the case for transport funding programmes. It would be helpful to understand in the guidance on bidding how these aspects of a bid might be presented and appraised.

## **7. Health benefits and health budgets**

- 7.1. Given that achieving UCF objectives would bring clear health benefits (and thus cut the cost of healthcare spending) thought needs to be given to how health department funding could be utilised for the UCF. Particularly when Department of Health funding is receiving more protection from spending reductions than Department of Transport funding.