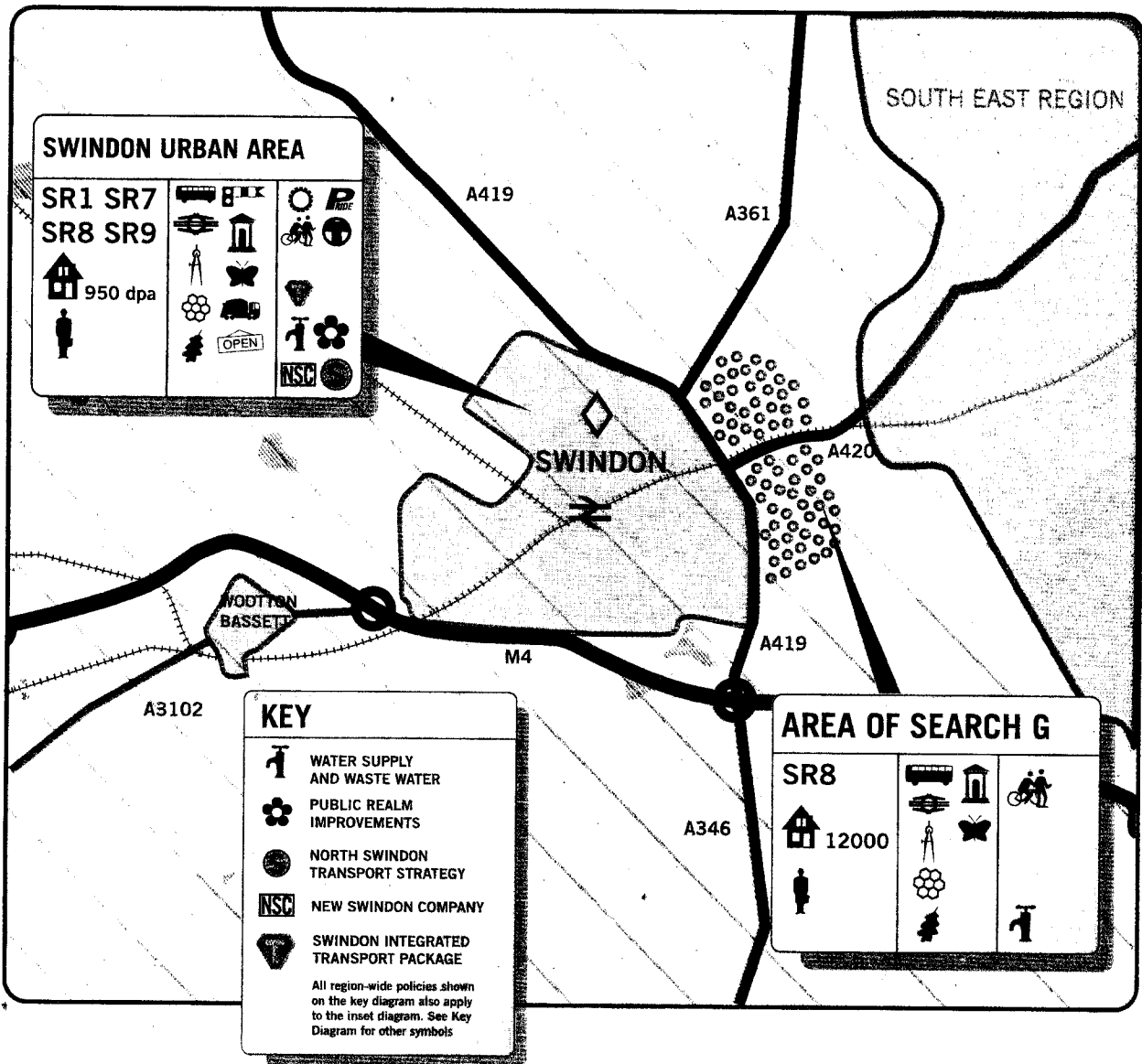


Inset Diagram 4.2 Swindon



**Swindon Spatial Strategy**

**4.2.24** Swindon (population 155,000) has good accessibility to London and the South East and Bristol, resulting in strong economic, skill and knowledge flows that benefit the area immensely. The influence and economic advantages of its geographic location have enabled Swindon to prosper and this is anticipated to continue into the future. The significant potential of the town is recognised in 'The Way Ahead', Sustainable Communities submission for the region and its possible designation as a national growth centre.

**4.2.25** A key regional economic driver, Swindon's economy has withstood some major shocks and has benefited from high levels of economic

growth, investment, economic activity rates, new business formation and a labour force increasing at a faster rate than the national level. Jobs in the Swindon TTWA are projected to increase by about 26,000 to 32,000 jobs over the plan period, offering the potential to increase access to, and dispersal of, prosperity across a greater cross-section of the community. Realising its economic potential and balancing the provision of housing and jobs will be critical in creating more sustainable development and travel patterns, reducing the overall levels of in-commuting to Swindon from rural communities in Cotswold, North Wiltshire and Kennet Districts within the region, and Vale of White Horse District in the South East region.

- 3.5 This Plan Area Strategy fully reflects that of the Structure Plan to 2011 with the exception of the first bullet point that has been altered and previously read - "continued concentration of development in the main towns including Swindon", and third bullet point that has also been altered to include reference to the need to "provide for local housing needs".
- 3.6 Sustainable development is more likely to be secured by urban concentration than by dispersed development, with Swindon and the Strategic Service Centres playing a major role. Other towns will continue to play an important role as centres of employment and local services for the wider rural area and development will be necessary to ensure the vitality and viability of these centres is supported and enhanced. Some development in rural areas is inevitable and, indeed necessary to enable diversification of the rural economy, and to permit local needs housing. The Strategy needs to support and sustain rural communities, by affording scope for increased local employment opportunities and the development of low cost housing at settlements throughout the rural areas of the County.
- 3.7 The Structure Plan therefore seeks to secure a sustainable pattern of development by concentrating development at the main urban areas, but also provides some scope for limited development in smaller towns and villages. The specific distribution within each area will be a matter for the Borough and District Councils to determine in preparing their Local Development Documents. The scale and nature of development at each settlement should reflect a range of considerations, namely, its role and function, location within or adjoining areas of protected countryside, the scope for links to major employment centres by public transport, the availability of necessary infrastructure and the need to achieve balanced growth in population, job opportunities and access to services.

### **Other Main Elements of the Strategy**

- 3.8 The distribution of the 60,000 net additional dwellings required by RPG10 to be provided in Wiltshire over the period 1996 to 2016 is shown in **Table 3.1**. For the Plan Area as a whole, the average building rate in the period from 1978 to 2003 was about 3,350 a year. About 20,700 dwellings were built between 1996 and 2003, although the net increase in the housing stock over this same period was only about 18,650 dwellings. However, losses over this period were exceptionally high (due to the demolition of married quarters in Bulford and Tidworth<sup>1</sup> and the Precast Reinforced Concrete replacement housing programme in West Wiltshire), and it is expected that they will now revert to their long-term level of around 100 dwellings a year. Consequently, a build rate of about 3,280 will be required over the remainder of the Plan period to reach the policy total of 60,000 net additional dwellings by 2016.
- 3.9 In Swindon, the Strategy proposes 26,000 dwellings (**Table 3.1**). The average building rate in the period from 1978 to 2003 was about 1,100 a year, a total which is strongly influenced by the high build-rates which prevailed through most of the 1980s. Since that time, however, build-rates have been affected, firstly by the

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<sup>1</sup> Although MOD married quarters housing is monitored and counts towards the overall build rate for Wiltshire, it does not count towards meeting the Structure Plan quantum.

housing-market collapse of the late 1980s, and then by the recessionary conditions of the early 1990s. Although rates have since recovered, the number of dwellings completed in the Borough remains relatively modest, with about 5,900 dwellings having been built between 1996 and 2003, resulting in a net increase to the stock of about 5,800 dwellings. From 2003, a build rate of over 1,500 dwellings a year will need to be sustained to reach the policy total of 26,000 net additional dwellings by 2016.

- 3.10 In the towns of the western part of Wiltshire, the local authorities have pursued regeneration for some time. These towns have suffered major losses to their traditional employment base and much effort has been needed to encourage new employment. There remains a need for regeneration to address existing economic problems, and improvements to transport links, in particular the A350, are seen as vital to this process. The regeneration of this area remains an important part of the Structure Plan Strategy
- 3.11 After allowing for further windfall developments (potential for redevelopment of brownfield sites) and existing commitments, **Table 3.1** also provides an indicative assessment of the estimated capacity of new greenfield sites required to be allocated in Local Development Documents. This indicates that there is little or no potential to identify additional greenfield sites over and above those provided for in current and emerging Plans to 2011. The reasons for this are set out in more detail in **Paragraphs 4.30 to 4.34**. However, within the guidelines of the Structure Plan, and as part of the development plan process, it will be the responsibility of the Borough and District Councils to determine the location of development by means of urban capacity studies and the assessment of other potential for development. As part of the review of Local Plans (as Local Development Documents), the Councils should reappraise any outstanding allocations to determine whether they are needed within the period to 2016 and whether there are any alternative sites where development would be more sustainable.

Strategic Planning Authorities on Matter 2/2 subsequently identified scope for the de-allocation of capacity amounting to 970 dwellings. This means that the level of provision for West Wiltshire District can be reduced to 11,500 using the rounding methodology in the *Housing Background Paper*. As a result this capacity can be re-allocated to Swindon PUA, giving a level of provision of 26,250. This is in accordance with our recommendation in Chapter 5.

- 3.27 The Government Office indicated that a logical interpretation of the term 'most' would be 50% or more. A 50% share of the total provision of 60,000 dwellings would be 30,000 dwellings, which compares with the proposed provision of 26,000 dwellings. This would require the re-allocation of an additional 4000 dwellings from the other Districts to Swindon. There is no evidence from the housing background papers that sites with planning permissions represent a realistic source of capacity for re-allocation to the PUA. The main sources can be expected to be the local plan allocations and windfall provision, but it is very difficult to challenge the windfall component at the strategic level. In some of the Districts the windfall component has already been scrutinised at a local plan inquiry, but in some others that process is still awaited.
- 3.28 Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.5 of Appendix 1 of the *Housing Land Background Paper Update*<sup>7</sup> provide the details on the local plan allocations in the Districts outside Swindon. The total capacity identified amounts to 8314 dwellings and therefore to achieve the target of an additional 4000 dwellings in Swindon about 48% of all of the local plan allocations in these districts would be required. Some of these allocations cover previously developed land in very sustainable locations. As we noted in paragraph 3.16 we regard the development of such sites as being consistent with the Regional Strategy. The brownfield component of the local plan allocations amounts to 2877 dwellings, leaving a capacity of 5437 dwellings on the greenfield component. The largest element is the West Wiltshire District allocations, 2871 dwellings, and this will be reduced by 970 dwellings leaving an overall balance of 4467 dwellings. The capacity of Salisbury District greenfield allocations amount to 1665 dwellings. Apart from the Amesbury allocation which would appear to be committed, we do not consider that this is out of scale with the role and function of Salisbury. We are of the opinion that it would be undesirable and unrealistic to seek the re-allocation of sufficient capacity to achieve 50% of the overall provision at the PUA.
- 3.29 Appendix D of this report consists of the table of housing completions for the Swindon area, which was included in the Briefing Note on *Swindon PUA Development Programme*<sup>8</sup>. This table was considered at the EIP and received general approval from participants as a reasonable description of the likely output from the various housing development components. The table also includes an annual rate of development derived from the balance of the housing level of provision for Swindon. The table demonstrates that it would be reasonable to assume an output from a new major source of development of about 400 dwellings per annum. On this basis, the

<sup>7</sup> *Housing Land Background Paper Update*, prepared by the Strategic Planning Authorities, April 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Swindon PUA Development Programme*, prepared by the Strategic Planning Authorities, June 2004. Included as Appendix D of this report.

achievement of an additional 4000 dwellings would require a start to be made on such a component about 2005/2006. On the information available on the provision of infrastructure and the other processes to be undertaken prior to such a development, such a programme would be unrealistic.

- 3.30 The table also shows the annual rate of completions. The ability of the market to absorb the increased rates of development from 1217 dwellings in 2003/04 up to a maximum of 2100 dwellings in 2009 was discussed. It was generally agreed that this level of development could be absorbed. The New Swindon Company expressed confidence that the proposed housing in the central area would be competitive with the output from the other sources of supply. Concern was expressed that a further increase in the maximum level of development could have an adverse impact on the brownfield housing programme. The achievement of a 50% share of development at the PUA would require an increase in the maximum level of development of about 20%. On this basis the aspiration to achieve a 30,000 dwelling development programme for Swindon appears to be not only unrealistic, but also undesirable over the plan period.
- 3.31 Taking all of these findings into account we conclude that we cannot support the aspiration for a 30,000 dwelling share of the overall level of provision for the Swindon area. We accept the conclusion of the Strategic Planning Authorities that the level of provision for West Wiltshire District should be reduced to 11,500 dwellings. Consequently, on the basis of the Regional Strategy, we are of the opinion that the Swindon PUA level of provision should be increased by 250 to 26,250 dwellings.

### **Recommendation 3.1**

Modify new policy DP3 as follows:

- i) Reduce the dwelling quantum for West Wiltshire District from 11,750 to 11,500;
- ii) Increase the quantum for Swindon PUA by 250 to 26,250; and
- iii) Insert specific housing policy quanta for the towns of Salisbury, Trowbridge and Chippenham.

### **Local housing needs**

- 3.32 We were asked to consider whether the housing distribution allows for local needs to be met across Wiltshire, including provision of affordable housing. The Briefing Note on *Locally Generated Housing Demand* provides a context for this issue. The Note presents two measures of locally generated need. The first is based on the concept of zero net migration and the other is described as allowing for natural change. We accept that these are relatively theoretical concepts, but believe that they provide a useful benchmark against which to evaluate this question.

Actual & 'Forecast' Completions on Strategic & Other Major Sites Sites

a) Annual Rates

Year	WDA	NDA	SDA	Coate	EDA
1	36	81	50	50	50
2	351	300	250	300	300
3	296	447	350	300	400
4	539	800	450	300	400
5	952	626	450	300	500
6	1036	369	450	300	500
7	806	424	450	250	500
8	923	411	450		500
9	782	418	450		500
10	811	511	450		500
11	774	550	300		500
12	955	600	200		500
13	854	600	200		500
14	538	600			500
15	269	550			500
16	182	550			500
17	124	550			500
18	70	550			350
19	238	200			
20	221				
21	210				
22	118				
23	82				
24	45				
25	1				
Total	11213	9137	4500	1800	8000
Average	449	481	346	257	444

gives a steer on longer-term issues relating to housing supply. It provides a set of pointers for public expenditure on the provision of social and affordable housing in the region. It therefore has an important relationship to the implementation aspects of the South East Plan, and particularly the delivery of the Plan's housing policies. A new version of the RHS, covering 2006-08, was published in July 2005.

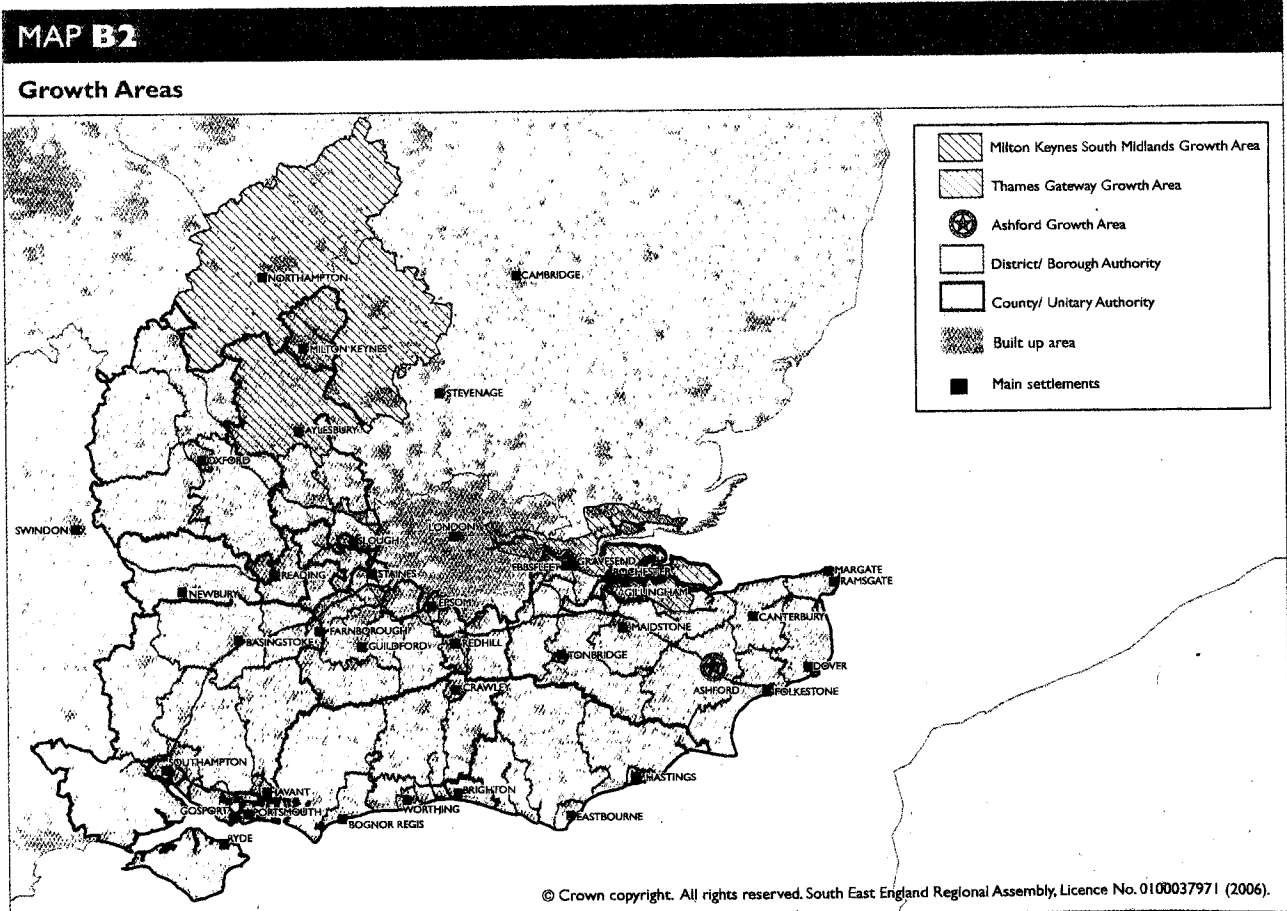
- 10.5 Topic Alterations/Reviews –** When RPG9 was approved the Government drew attention to the need for early selective reviews of specific topics. The Assembly has devoted considerable time and effort to the pursuit of these reviews and all have now reached an advanced stage. Because of their currency, they form important building blocks for the South East Plan and have been incorporated into the Plan on that basis. They are referred to more fully in the appropriate sections of the Plan, but in summary they cover the following topics:
- i Transport - Approved by Secretary of State July 2004
  - ii Energy Efficiency and Renewable

Energy - Approved by Secretary of State November 2004

- iii Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation - Approved by Secretary of State November 2004
- iv Waste Management - Secretary of State proposed modifications consultation autumn 2005
- v Minerals - Secretary of State proposed modifications consultation autumn 2005.

**10.6 Growth Areas –** The Assembly has also taken forward proposals for the three Growth Areas approved in principle in RPG9. Again, that work is now well advanced and forms an important component of the Plan (See Map B2). Their current position is as follows

- i Ashford Sub-Regional Strategy - Approved by Secretary of State July 2004
- ii Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy - Approved by Secretary of State March 2005
- iii Thames Gateway Inter-regional Planning Statement – Published July 2004.



need to improve travel choice in rural areas for those with no or limited access to the car. Given the disparate and fragmented nature of the residual transport need in this region, these needs are unlikely to be met simply by more bus services. Targeted and innovative schemes will therefore need to be developed, making creative use of available resources.

## **POLICY T2: RURAL TRANSPORT**

**Local Transport Plans covering areas that are not wholly urban should:**

- i **Take a co-ordinated approach to encouraging community-based transport in areas of need**
- ii **Include a rural dimension to transport and traffic management policies, including looking for opportunities to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians between towns and their nearest villages**
- iii **Develop innovative and adaptable approaches to public transport in rural areas that reflect the particular and longer-term social and economic characteristics of the region.**

### **Gateways, Hubs and Interchanges**

- 1.13 The gateway function of the South East, in providing connectivity to the rest of Europe and the rest of the world, has shaped the transport networks that are seen today. These are shown on Map T1 along with the corridors of international and inter-regional importance. This highlights the location of international gateway ports and airports which are of both national and regional importance.
- 1.14 Policy CC8b (section D1) establishes the concept of regional hubs as centres where the provision (or potential to provide) a range of multimodal transport services, which support the concentration of land uses and higher order economic, cultural and service activity. These are fundamental to the way in which the region's transport

services operate, and will need to be planned to operate into the future.

- 1.15 In some instances a high level of public transport accessibility does not in itself warrant identification of the location as a regional hub, but the high level of accessibility and interchange is of regional significance. The role of these transport interchanges should be protected and enhanced where possible. The pattern of gateways, hubs and interchanges are set out in Map T1.

### **Regional Spokes**

- 1.16 In order that the full potential of the regional hubs as centres of economic activity within a more polycentric structure might be realised, they must be supported by a network of regional spokes: corridors of movement that are not mode specific and whose significance is reflected in management priorities and investment proposals brought forward by delivery agencies. The pattern of spokes is set out in Map T2.

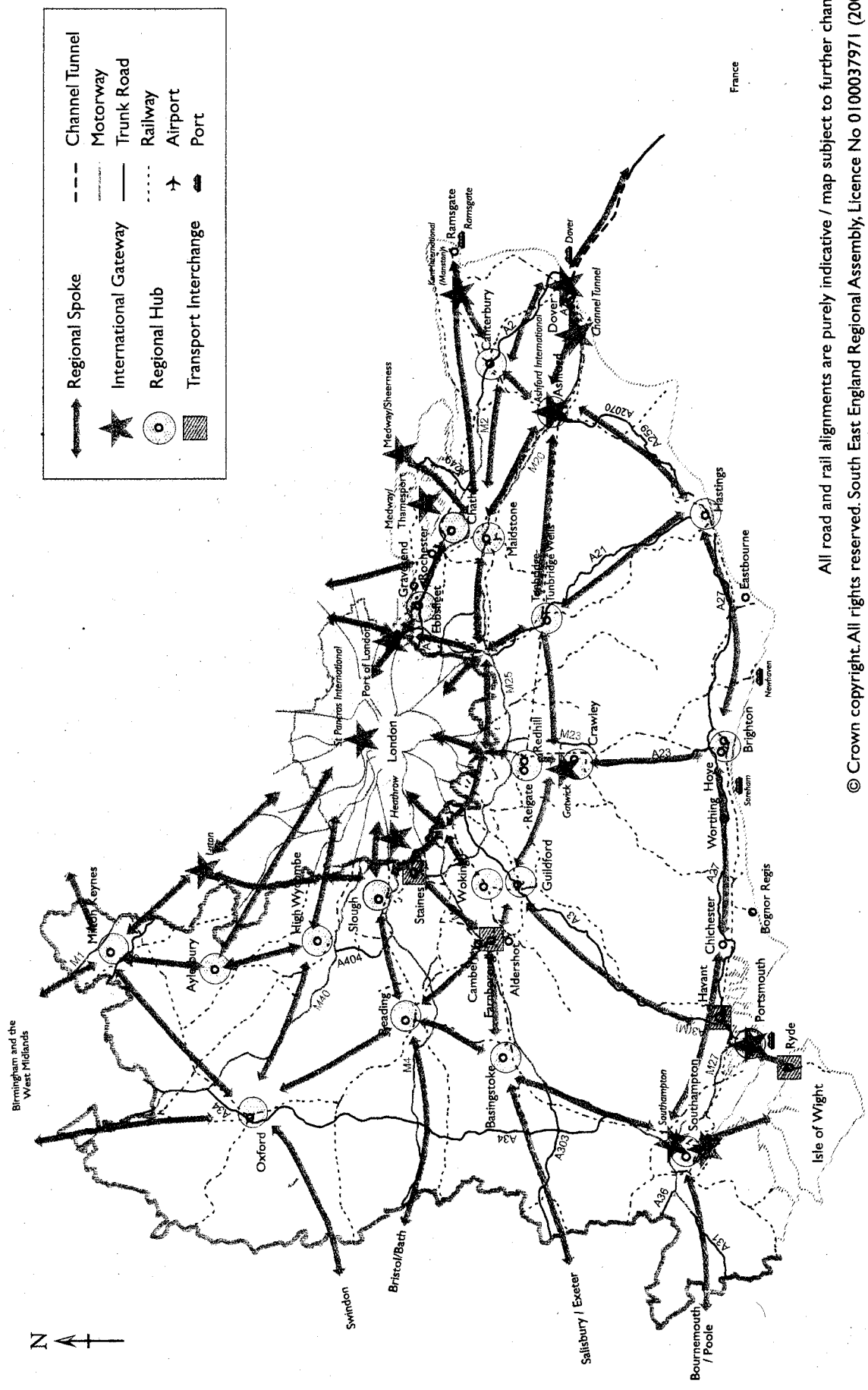
## **POLICY T3: REGIONAL SPOKES**

**Relevant regional strategies, Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans will include policies and proposals that support and develop the role of regional spokes by:**

- i **Providing a level of service that supports the role of regional hubs as a focus of economic activity**
- ii **Delivering improvements in journey time reliability that support the rebalancing of the transport system in favour of non-car modes**
- iii **Developing a complementary and integrated network of rail and express bus/coach services along spokes and inter-regional corridors**
- iv **Addressing identified bottlenecks**
- v **Improving access to international gateways.**



Regional Hubs and Spokes



All road and rail alignments are purely indicative / map subject to further changes  
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