

5. The towns  $A$  and  $B$  lie inland and the town  $C$  lies on the coast as shown in Figures 1 and 2. A port  $P$  will be built on the coast and connected to the towns  $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $C$  with straight roads. The cost of constructing the roads connecting  $P$  to  $A$  and  $P$  to  $B$  is  $10^5$  £/km, and the cost of constructing the road connecting  $P$  to  $C$  is  $k \times 10^5$  £/km. The port will be built at the location for which the total cost of constructing these roads is the smallest.

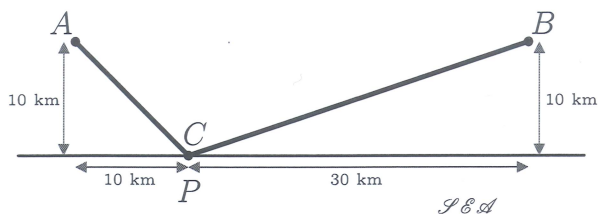


Figure 1

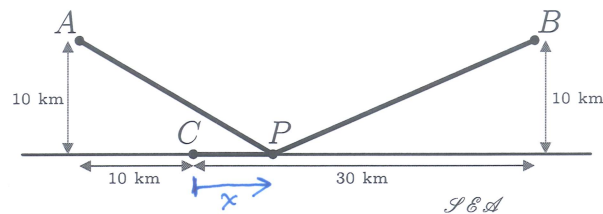


Figure 2

For some values of  $k$  the smallest total cost will be achieved when  $P$  is built at  $C$ , as in Figure 1; whereas for others it will be achieved, if at all, when  $P$  is built somewhere else, as in Figure 2. Determine the smallest value of  $k$  for which the lowest total cost is achieved by building  $P$  at  $C$ .

The total cost is given by

$$K(x) = (1^2 + (x+1)^2)^{1/2} + (1^2 + (3-x)^2)^{1/2} + k \cdot |x| \quad \text{for } -\infty < x < \infty$$

in units of  $10^5$  £, where the distances are measured in units of 10 km and  $x$  is the directed distance from  $C$  to the right. Then:

$$K'(x) = \begin{cases} (x+1) \cdot (1+(x+1)^2)^{-1/2} + (x-3) \cdot (1+(x-3)^2)^{-1/2} + k & \text{if } x > 0 \\ (x+1) \cdot (1+(x+1)^2)^{-1/2} + (x-3) \cdot (1+(x-3)^2)^{-1/2} - k & \text{if } x < 0 \end{cases}$$

① If  $k < \frac{3}{\sqrt{10}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$ , then  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} K'(x) = -\left(\frac{3}{\sqrt{10}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right) + k < 0$  and therefore  $K'$  is negative on some interval  $(0, a)$ . Then  $K$  is decreasing on  $[0, a]$  as  $K$  is continuous. Therefore, the absolute minimum of  $K$  does not occur at  $x=0$ .

$$K''(x) = (1+(x+1)^2)^{-3/2} - (x+1) \cdot (1+(x+1)^2)^{-5/2} + (1+(x-3)^2)^{-3/2} - (x-3) \cdot (1+(x-3)^2)^{-5/2}$$

$$= (1+(x+1)^2)^{-3/2} + (1+(x-3)^2)^{-3/2} > 0 \quad \text{for all } x \neq 0$$

$\Rightarrow K'$  is increasing on  $(-\infty, 0)$  and  $(0, \infty)$ . In particular:

② If  $k = \frac{3}{\sqrt{10}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$ , then  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} K'(x) = 0 \Rightarrow K'(x) > 0$  for  $x > 0$ , and  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} K'(x) = -2 \cdot \left(\frac{3}{\sqrt{10}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right) < 0 \Rightarrow K'(x) < 0$  for  $x < 0$ . Therefore,  $K$  has its absolute minimum at  $x=0$ .

① and ②  $\Rightarrow \frac{3}{\sqrt{10}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$  is the smallest value of  $k$  for which the absolute minimum of  $K$  occurs at  $C$ .