Reprinted with permission from
Planning for an Urban Future - Charging or What?
Editor Glen Lyons
© 2004 CICC ISBN 0 948 294 14 0 or 978 0 948 294 14 3
Copies available from
CICC 17 Westmead London SW15 5BH Tel 020-8788 5337
Email emilysmith@cicc-conferences.org.uk

Chapter 1

DELIVERING OUR URBAN FUTURE

Professor Glenn Lyons*

As transport professionals we live in testing times with scope for both optimism and despondency perhaps in equal measure. We are now in the sixth year of the Government's integrated transport policy and four years into its ten year plan for transport. Last year saw the introduction in London of one of the world's most ambitious pricing-based traffic restraint schemes with resultant reductions in traffic levels and increases in public transport service provision and use. However, 2003 also saw the Government concede that key targets in its ten year plan, not least that relating to congestion reduction, were unlikely to be met.

All would agree that managing society's seemingly insatiable demand for travel is a tall order and yet failure to do so must surely spell eventual disaster. The need to manage demand rather than only accommodate it has elevated the significance of the transport planning profession which holds the key to securing a future for our towns and cities that does not see them dominated and choked by the car. The contributions provided in this volume offer the reader an opportunity to reflect upon where we are currently, what we have learnt from the past and what the future might hold. The London scheme has been symbolic in its implementation of a solution which for decades, many transport planners have been advocating as necessary to alleviate urban congestion. It has demonstrated that institutional and political barriers to putting planning into practice can be overcome. The question now arises – has London set a precedent that other cities will follow? If the answer is 'no' then we must ask – what are the alternative solutions on offer?

*** Professor Glenn Lyons is Director, Centre for Transport & Society, University of the West of England, Bristol**

This first Chapter aims to whet the reader's appetite and offer some highlights drawn from the later contributions. These contributions provide a rare treat – a chance to read first-hand accounts from a number of key individuals who have played and continue to play major roles in transport planning, policy and implementation.

The following Chapter is by Derek Turner, an individual bestowed with the rare privilege and formidable challenge to deliver a contentious transport scheme at the behest of a steadfast and visionary political master. We are taken on a journey from the not too distant past that was the 1960s, characterised by a thirst for motorway construction and urban transportation modelling systems, to present day London, 'basking' in the aftermath of successfully delivering the sort of integrated remedy to congestion that has been talked about by so many transport experts for so long. Perhaps what is most refreshing about London's congestion charging scheme is that it has managed to break out from the politically comfortable cycle of deliberation, procrastination and review. 'Let's commission another feasibility study' is a call that has for once been drowned out by cries of 'let's get on and try something and see what can be achieved and what can be learnt'. The London scheme has seen many commentators hail it a success but there remain questions over the impact it is having on businesses and London's economy. Nevertheless, Derek Turner reminds us of the business mood that prevailed at the time of electing an executive Mayor for London – 'Big Business was threatening to move to continental Europe {in the face of a capital whose transport was on the brink of seizure} where it was considered that the situation was much more favourable'. What is perhaps most pertinent to our reflections on the prospects of delivering similar schemes to other cities is the reminder that successful delivery remains vulnerable to the weakest link in the chain. The links themselves range from political leadership through public attitudes to technical feasibility. All of these must be strong to deliver success.

Chapter 3 takes us from London to the capital of the west country. Councillor Helen Holland offers her perspective as someone who has been at the political sharp end of delivering integrated transport locally. Experiences are shared of Bristol's endeavours to confront the realities of its traffic problems arising not least from a journey to work catchment totalling 1 million people. Bristol's politicians have sought to listen to their technicians and policy advisors and emulate Ken Livingstone's political commitment and leadership and give serious consideration to investigating forms of traffic restraint. That Bristol has not followed in London's footsteps as yet in terms of the actual introduction of congestion charging is doubtless attributable to a number of factors. Nevertheless, the city has ventured beyond the relatively safe territory of desk studies. Indeed Councillor Holland suggests that 'Bristol is increasingly recognised as a centre for innovative research into transport, and one of the principal laboratories for investigating pricing and parking restraint schemes within the UK'. It continues to engage in a number of research and demonstration projects working with partners in Europe to explore the role of, reactions to and effectiveness of road pricing. This Chapter cites the good progress that it being made in first delivering the 'carrots' in Bristol with reference to the new Showcase Bus Route which, through the mechanism of a Quality Bus Partnership, is delivering that rare treat of growth in bus passenger numbers. Politically it seems that Bristol is unstinting in its support of the 1960s Buchanan and Smeed view, namely that urban congestion must be tackled

with a coordinated use of 'carrot' and 'stick' measures. However, Councillor Holland also reminds us of yet another potentially weak link in the chain of successful delivery – the media.

Our travels then take us in Chapter 4 to Cambridge where Tony Hargreaves introduces us to the not-for-profit organisation 'Cambridge Futures' and the planning role it is playing by drawing upon its apolitical independent status and upon the technical expertise of professionals in land use – transport modelling. The planning for Cambridge has been a staged process. The first stage was a scenario planning exercise to assess the development options. The startling outcome was the overturning of half a century of planning policy that had capped the city's population at 100,000 to yield a Structure Plan providing for 40,000 new dwellings by 2016. Here we see the transport problems exacerbated by development pressures. Accordingly the second stage has been to assess the transport policy approaches that Cambridge might adopt in order to suitably accommodate expansion. Key approaches that were modelled were public transport improvements, highway improvements, demand management (cordon-based congestion charging) and a combination of all these measures. The results appear to reinforce once again the inherent strength of an integrated approach. The public transport option was shown to be costly but with only modest increases in public transport trips. The highway scheme was seen to have economic benefits and an attractive rate of return on investment but with some environmental disbenefits. The study results indicate that a charging scheme would force employer relocation with adverse equity and economy implications. The combined approach meanwhile would achieve a modest rate of return, would enable (part) funding of new infrastructure and would bring about positive changes in travel patterns and modal usage. It is illuminating that Tony Hargreaves shares a 'success story' for modelling as an influential planning tool at a time when views have become more divided over the merits of modelling as a reliable basis upon which to base future decisions.

Pat Armstrong draws us back to the present day reality that it is delivery of light rapid transit in Nottingham. Present day refers to the opening of the first Line of the Nottingham Express Transit in early Spring 2004. However, the story in fact began some 16 years ago when the concept of a light rapid transit system for Nottingham was first promoted seriously. Pat Armstrong offers a very sobering insight into the procedural challenges and contextual volatility which public and private sector stakeholders alike can face. At the point when approval in principle was gained to grant funding for the scheme, Government attitude to expensive light rail schemes became far less receptive in the face of transport funding cut-backs. Over a five year period seeking funding commitments then had to be pursued in a 'rapidly changing financial environment'. This had uncertainty and workload implications. The complexity of procedural matters is highlighted by some details of the scheme in Nottingham. At £200m, the PFI arrangement that has been set up to deliver the scheme is the largest local authority arrangement. The private sector investment side to the scheme alone involves 13 banks. At the conclusion of the project over 200 agreements, schedules and related documents had been generated.

From the lengthy and tortuous process of delivering Nottingham's light rapid transit we move to Birmingham and the tale of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) being transformed into the M6 Toll. The BNRR was conceived as a solution to the congestion problems on the M6

and expected to be a public road. The private sector was invited to come forward as a mechanism to build, maintain and operate this new piece of infrastructure. However, rather than the appointed Midland Expressway Ltd reaching an agreement with the Government on shadow tolls, a 55 year concession was awarded to MEL to collect actual tolls. A submission to Government by the West Midlands Districts sough to stress that to pursue this would mean a road scheme that failed to achieves its primary objective, namely to relieve the West Midlands conurbation of 'extraneous traffic'. The submission held no sway and the M6 Toll opened in December 2003. Alan Wenban-Smith, who in 1994 was responsible for planning and transport policy in Birmingham, takes us through these developments to the present day where the early evidence suggests that "the flow on the M6 toll is nearly double the reduction of the traffic on the M6. This may be because it is relieving traffic on other routes (e.g. the A5) but also suggests the possibility of an increase in overall traffic through release of suppressed demand". It appears that the contractual arrangements between MEL and the Government now mean that the West Midlands has a major piece of new infrastructure which is a commercial venture and for which the purpose of relieving congestion has become a side effect.

Chapter 7 brings us back to London's congestion charging scheme for an update on the range of effects of the scheme that are being observed. One of the remaining controversies of the scheme is the potential adverse effect on businesses within the zone and particularly the retail sector. The media have been only too pleased to put this issues to the fore. However, Transport for London cannot be accused of not doing their homework when it comes to monitoring and evaluating the Mayor's scheme. This Chapter accordingly offers some helpful viewpoints on the matter. TfL's own survey of businesses in Autumn 2003 found that 70 per cent of businesses support congestion charging with only 20 per cent opposed. As to the decline in retail trade, we are reminded that there are externalities to consider in accounting for any decline in sales – not least that the UK economy was in a period of general slowdown at the time of the scheme's introduction.

Chapter 6 highlighted the persisting challenge of how most effectively to finance investment in the transport system. Hypothecation from congestion charging is one option as we have seen in London. Another option, the principles of which appear to be currently enjoying a renaissance, is a public-private partnership involving value capturing. In Chapter 8 Paul van de Lande offers some insights on this issue in the context of planning in the Netherlands. He considers particularly the accessibility improvements that accrue from the introduction of high-quality public transport and the consequent impacts on location value. Empirical research is cited which demonstrates the increases in rent price relating to increases in accessibility. Accordingly it can be argued that landowners and developers should contribute to the cost of providing improved access, i.e. the investment needed to deliver high quality public transport. However, it seems that while the concept is attractive it has yet to move beyond being a focus of exploratory work in the Netherlands, much as is the case in some other countries including the UK. Paul van de Lande identifies reasons for this failure to pursue land value capture. These include the lack of a suitable and accepted methodology for determining the land value gains and distribution of the associated benefits as well as the simple lack of experience of this kind of private sector engagement.

In Chapter 9 Chris Martin of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly focus on regional planning and transport strategies, looking at how they plan for urban regeneration. There is then some reflection on whether they are actually delivering in relation to what the public actually wants.

Having revisited London in Chapter 7, Chapter 10 provides a second visit to Cambridge as seen from the perspective of the Assistant Director of Environment and Transport at Cambridgeshire County Council, John Onslow. The thrust of this Chapter is achieving delivery. However, what it aptly does is highlight the inescapable links between land-use planning, economic development and transport. For many years Cambridge was characterised as a University town of international importance and the post war planning framework sought to halt the City's growth and instead allow an outside ring of villages to evolve beyond the green belt. However, Cambridge subsequently enjoyed a boom in terms of attracting technology industries. The consequent growth in employment opportunity fuelled house prices in the City and consequently demand for cheaper housing in the ring of villages. This has led in effect to a land use pattern and accompanying patterns of people movements that are not easily served by public transport and which have caused a growth in car trips across the green belt and into the City. Another important reminder which John Onslow leaves the reader with at the end of the Chapter is that the transport system does not exist for its own sake. It exists to support the City and as such planning the future should, in the first instance, be less about planning future transport than about planning the sort of City in which people want to live, work, study and play.

Tom Magrath provides a tantalising statement early in Chapter 11 – 'we are looking for the strategies and schemes, which will deliver that elusive step-change in public transport use'. He believes that such a step change will be dependent upon 'a radical change in the current culture of scheme delivery'. Central Government is putting more money at the disposal of local authorities and it is rightly seeking to see its investment judged by outcomes rather than outputs. Nevertheless a problem with which those in the professional are all too familiar is that of the skills base both in quality, type and volume. The rapid increase in capital funding from Government cannot be matched by a similar rapid increase in the availability of sufficient staff. The distinction too between capital and revenue funding is also made – 'new infrastructure needs to be maintained, cleaned and repaired often to a higher standard than the old.' Tom Magrath acknowledges the importance of having member-level champions for transport – an issue also focused upon in earlier chapters.

Chapter 12 very much provides the incentive to delve deeper into a recent publication produced by the Strategic Rail Authority – 'everyone's railway: the wider case for rail'. Steve Atkins from the SRA highlights the apparent divergence of the image of the railway being pedalled by the media and that experienced by passengers. There was concern that public understanding of the role of rail was insufficiently clear. Therefore a report was produced to address this apparent divergence. With the style and presentation of the report very much trying to get away from a corporate rail service publication, there was a dependence on images of how the railway formed part of people's lives rather than on the more conventional pictures of track and rolling stock. Some impressive statistics are available in the report, for instance: "passenger kilometres travelled on the network have grown by 38% since 1995 and now exceed the levels of 50 years ago, carried on a rail network half the size"; and "seven out of ten

passengers are satisfied with their journey" (one wonders what the satisfaction statistic would be for long distance car drivers).

Chapter 13 explores a challenging question, namely 'should transport be serving, supporting or shaping society?' Colin Eastman's answer is that it should be doing all three. In arriving at this answer he probes a range of issues but in particular the funding issues surrounding transport. It seems that the notion of paying for the use of transport infrastructure at the point of use (road user charging) is by no means a new phenomenon. Turnpikes, canals and railways were all funded by private investments and only in 1888 was it that 'the relatively new concept of publicly funded transport infrastructure emerged.' For more than 1000 years previously we had existed with privately funded transport infrastructure. The Chapter highlights an intriguing issue of pricing differential. While most utilities including public transport modes expect the user or consumer to pay more when demand is highest, this is not true of car use. Accordingly Colin Eastman notes that 'at the times of day when transport policy is trying to reduce traffic congestion and encourage mode switching, the pricing differentials between the car and its alternatives are at their greatest'. This would tend to suggest that congestion charging has an important equalising or normalising role to perform. Increase in land value associated with transport improvements is touched upon again in this Chapter, this time with reference to the Jubilee Line Extension which, while costing taxpayers £3.5bn to build has reportedly delivered land value increase windfalls for neighbouring landowners in the order of £13bn.

Chapter 14 considers a fundamental approach to planning for an urban future – namely visioning and backcasting. David Banister advocates such an approach on the grounds that transport planners need to think more imaginatively about the future in the face of an external world that is continually changing, global sustainability concerns and the need in turn truly see an urban renaissance. The Chapter outlines, through the example of visions of the sustainable city in 2025, how visioning and backcasting is carried out. In essence there are three stages – sustainable development (including transport) targets are set; different visions of a future that would be able to meet such targets are then conceived; and finally policy packages are then constructed in a back pass from the future vision to the present day. In his conclusions David Banister stresses the importance of selling the visions to all parties that would need to engage in the process of implementation to work towards the preferred vision.

Malcolm Buchanan provides some candid reflections in the final Chapter of this volume in which he offers his views concerning different approaches to the congestion problem and their efficacy in contemporary society. Some approaches are seen to be attempts to put the clock back which amount to little more than wishful thinking. For example are the UK targets for cycling realistic? In cycling we have a mode that is now struggling to keep up with destinations that are moving further away. Perhaps it is time to given the powered bike much more central attention. The tram, it is suggested, is also little more than a comparatively more expensive means of travel when compared to the bus which can do what the tram does and more. A somewhat startling thought to conclude on, and perhaps one which resonates with the call for greater creativity issued in the previous Chapter, is 'how the basics of transport can have been so little changed' when we are now in the midst of a second industrial revolution 'which has already affected so much of our lives.

Books on Planning and Transport

Transport Policy in Transition
Ed Martin Higgitt
CICC Publications 2008 Price £45

Transport Challenges Facing the UK : Major Scheme Funding and the Environment
Ed Dave Whyte
CICC Publications 2007 Price £45

Wasted Miles, Wasted Money a less congested, more energy efficient future
Ed Greg Marsden
CICC Publications 2006 Price £45

Transport Excellence through Practical Delivery
Ed: Victoria Hills
CICC Publications 2005 Price £45

Planning for an Urban Future - Charging or what?
Ed: Professor Glen Lyons
CICC Publications 2004 Price £45

Sharing in Success - good news in passenger transport
Ed: Susan Thomas
CICC Publications 2003 Price £45

Delivering the Transport Renaissance - Locally
Ed: Martin Richards OBE
CICC Publications 2002 Price £45

Passenger Transport - Time to Deliver
Ed: Dr CGB (Kit) Mitchell
CICC Publications 2001 Price £45

Passenger Transport - Regional Strategies, Local Solutions
Ed: Allan Dare
CICC Publications 2000 Price £45

Transport Policies in Practice
Ed: Stephen Lockley
CICC Publications 1999 Price £45

The Transport Jigsaw - Making the Pieces Fit
Ed: Darien Goodwin
CICC Publications 1998 Price £45

Influencing the Transport Decisions
Ed: Bob Pinkett
CICC Publications 1997 Price £45

Local Public Transport for the Millennium
Ed: Dr Martin Higginson
CICC Publications 1996 Price £45

Quality Transport for the New Planning Environment
Ed: David Beaman
CICC Publications 1995 Price £45

Public Transport in the Commercial World
Ed: D. Scott Hellewell
CICC Publications 1994 Price £45

Passenger Transport: the New Framework
Ed: Tony Cross
CICC Publications 1993 Price £45

Passenger Transport: Putting it to Work
Ed: Kenneth Swallow
CICC Publications 1992 Price £45

Passenger Transport and Urban Survival
Ed: Peter Headicar
CICC Publications 1991 Price £45

Passenger Transport for the 90s
Ed: Roger W Tripp
CICC Publications 1990 Price £45

Public Transport & the Enterprise Culture
Ed: John G Glover
CICC Publications 1989 Price £45

Public Transport Options: Making Money Work
Ed: Keith J Orford
CICC Publications 1988 Price £45

Public Transport *All Changed*
Ed: Paul Addenbrooke
CICC Publications 1987 Price £45

Public Transport Futures
Ed: Garth DS Goddard
CICC Publications 1986 Price £45

Passenger Transport: Planning for Radical Change
Ed: John D Carr
CICC Publications 1985 Price £45

Planning for Passenger Transport Integration
Ed: Richard Winfield
CICC Publications 1984 Price £45

Planning for Public Transport in Town and Country
Ed: Garth DS Goddard
CICC Publications 1983 Price £45

Public Transport Policy & Planning
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
CICC Publications 1982 Price £45

The Urban Transport Future
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
CICC Publications 1981 Price £45

Outdoor and Transport Advertising
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
CICC Publications 1980 Price £45

Urban Planning & Public Transport
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
Construction Press 1979 Price £45

Design for Passenger Transport
Ed: Professor Frank Height
Pergamon Press 1979 Price £45

Rural Transport and Country Planning
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
Leonard Hill 1978 Price £45

Passenger Transport and the Environment
Ed: Roy W Cresswell
Leonard Hill 1977 Price £45

These Books are a unique documentation of the development of passenger transport and built environment planning over many years. If titles are only available as photocopies the price will be slightly higher than the standard one above. Where this is the case purchasers will be informed before orders are actioned. Special arrangements exist for Libraries wishing to purchase the complete set. Send Orders to

CICC Bookshop Supplies 17 Westmead London SW15 5BH
Tel 020-8788 5337 email emilysmith@cicc-conferences.org.uk