

A summary of the fifth report from the Transport Visions Network

This is a summary of the fifth in a series of eight reports to be produced by the Transport Visions Network. The Network is a novel venture to project the views of young professionals into the debate concerning the future of transport and its role in society. It is comprised of individuals who are aged 35 or under from universities, public authorities, consultancies and industry both in the UK and overseas. The series of reports will cover eight different topics and aims to build up a coherent vision for the future of transport. Each report is produced through a managed process of discussion involving e-mail debate, a face-to-face workshop and the writing of the report with input from an editorial board.

The first report in this series, Society and Lifestyles, considered a myriad of issues and trends that are shaping or have the potential to shape the way we live in the future and our travel needs. In the second report, Transportation Requirements, the Network set out twelve guiding principles for the design of future transport systems. In the remaining six reports the Network explores possible solutions to current and emerging transport problems. The Network will not be seeking merely to guess or predict what the future of transport holds in store. In acknowledging that the future is not predetermined and is ours to shape, the reports will identify developments we would like to see and perhaps those we should guard against.

The third report in the series, Land Use Planning, considered the role of land use planning in shaping transport. Visions were developed for four different aspects of land use planning. The fourth report, Vehicles and Infrastructure, examined ideas for vehicles and infrastructure that could apply to the UK surface transport network in the future. Six visions of how vehicles and infrastructure might change to meet current and future transport needs were developed.

This report considers the nature of local travel and how it may be influenced. The report provides a

Network perspective on local travel in the form of a 'Toolkit for Local Travel'. The Toolkit is a collection of concepts and ideas associated with the Network's own transportation requirements described in its second report. As such the Toolkit represents a shopping list rather than a recipe for success. It should not be assumed that all Toolkit components are complementary to one another.

The emphasis upon local travel rather than local transport reflects the Network's aim to look at the behavioural and social factors that give rise to and influence decisions concerning local travel. The Network believes that addressing these issues is a fundamental prerequisite to achieving effective transport solutions. In essence, we need to fully consider why we travel locally in the ways that we do, before we can address how we can travel locally in a more sustainable fashion.

*The first Tube station ever opened was
Baker Street in 1863.*

What was the point of that?

Where would you go?

What was the rush hour like?

By the way I live locally.

Well I always have lived locally.

Wherever I live I always make damn sure its local.

There's no point in living ten miles from your house.

You'd never get back at night.

Extract from Paul Merton monologue.

If we are bounded by dictionary definitions of local and travel then the phrase appears somewhat antithetical. The word local is associated with a defined area, with places and people, with relationship and responsibility. By contrast, travel when considered as being merely the process of getting from A to B, involves the disassociation of the individual from a particular physical space, it is impersonal and temporary.

Terms like local travel and local transport are widely used in society and in government policy and practice. Indeed, the job titles of many Network members are prefixed by such terms, and

yet ironically, these terms are rarely defined or explained.

In order to develop targeted solutions to local travel problems the Network believed it would be useful to explore what actually constitutes local travel. A series of possible defining characteristics of local travel were discussed:

- ◆ Distance and Time
- ◆ Journey Purpose
- ◆ Modal Options
- ◆ Administrative Boundaries
- ◆ Convenience
- ◆ Familiarity
- ◆ Proximity
- ◆ Personal Perspectives

Examination of these characteristics revealed that local travel was multi-faceted and that achieving a single, catch-all definition would be unhelpfully simplistic. However, exploring some of the multiple meanings and definitions of local travel should ensure that visioning and solution formulation are robust against a range of considerations and perspectives and well informed of the complexity of the local travel context.

A Toolkit for Local Travel

In seeking to develop its own solutions to the problems of local travel the Network considered mirroring the Local Transport Plan (LTP) approach. It was suggested that the Network might construct its own model LTP. However, it was felt that for the Network's LTP to be truly comparable with existing LTPs it would have to adhere to Government guidance. The quantity and prescriptive nature of the guidance for LTPs would restrict innovative thinking and confine the Network to solutions applicable only within a present day or five year timescale.

It was resolved instead that the approach that would be most consistent with the aims of the Network would be for the Network to develop its own Toolkit for Local Travel within which the scope for innovation would be bounded only by the Network's own guiding principles for future transport solutions. The Network agreed upon a collective headline objective for the Toolkit:

To achieve local travel that is sustainable both in terms of its levels of provision and its modal distribution and to

mitigate the adverse effects of local travel on communities and the environment.

The Toolkit produced 43 components. These are listed below and, for illustration, four of the components are then described in more detail.

- ◆ **Accessibility**
Consolidated settlement patterns; decentralised services and facilities; local service areas
- ◆ **Mobility**
Adult + child cycling proficiency testing; utility bikes and cyclescapes; mobility pricing
- ◆ **Costs**
PFI car ownership and use; in-vehicle display of trip costs; company car clubs
- ◆ **Environment**
Enviroscore; people zones; through traffic charging
- ◆ **Trip Type**
Sustainable Sundays; NHS style funding and payment approach for public transport; local yellow networks; premium charging
- ◆ **Health and safety**
Footscapes; walking and cycling within the driving test; tax free cycle purchase; park and cycle + tax incentives for commuting by bike; company bicycles; education in schools of benefits of cycling alongside provision of facilities to enable use
- ◆ **Electronic communication**
Virtual tracers; virtual mobility accelerators; secondary effect steering
- ◆ **Land use**
High density, mixed use development; residential parking allocations; air rights
- ◆ **Reliability**
Introduction and retention of slack in local transport systems; comparative reliability information available during travel
- ◆ **Social participation**
Local provision of goods and services; local loyalty card scheme; parking charges at out-of-town developments hypothecated to fund public transport access
- ◆ **Stakeholders**
Community local travel audit; sustainable local travel contracts; citizen's transport juries
- ◆ **Information**
Bus stops become one-stop-shops for bus information; colour coded bus services; travel information at activity centres; on-street travel counsellors; responsible car advertising;

bus/bus shelter advertising revenue reinvested in public transport advertising; public transport advertising funded by hypothecated tax from car advertising

Mobility Pricing

The Network proposed variable distance-based pricing for both car and public transport use. The pricing mechanisms are illustrated in a basic form in Figure 1 below.

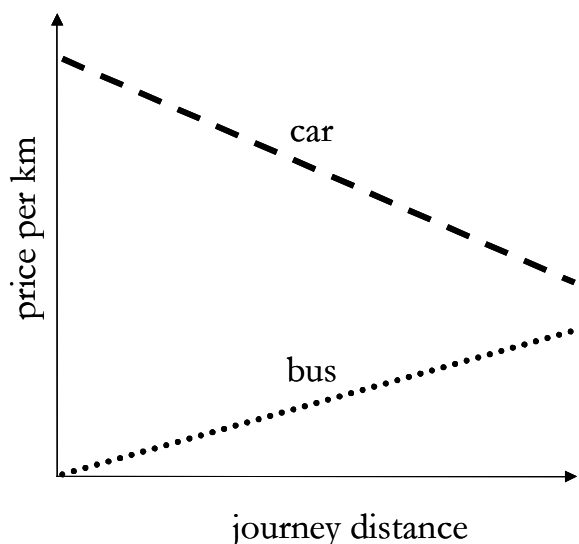


Figure 1: Variable distance-based pricing

The rationale for the above is that people travelling short distances are likely to perceive the cost of using the car as negligible, even though over such short distances use of alternative modes (bus, bicycle or foot) should be possible.

The pricing mechanism attaches a high premium to very short journeys by car so that it becomes disproportionately expensive to make a short journey by car compared to a longer one. The mechanism is such that for longer distance journeys the premium on car travel diminishes. This is a reversal of how, for business travel, the payment rate for car use is often applied - a higher rate for the first so many miles is paid and then for all subsequent miles for a given round trip the rate reduces to a lower rate deemed to be comparable with the cost of public transport.

The price mechanism for bus use seeks to positively encourage bus use rather than car use for local travel. Revenue from such a pricing mechanism for car use could subsidise public transport operators if necessary for the reduced fares. People would still have the choice of whether to cycle or walk at no cost as an

alternative to using their car (or the bus) for local travel.

A challenge to this proposition comes in the form of how it could be operated in practice. With the emergence of smart-card ticketing for public transport it should be a simple matter in due course to price bus journeys according to the distance travelled. For car journeys the difficulty would be how to identify and record discrete trips and distinguish between individual trips and trip chains. A combination of GPS tracking and milometer readings linked to smart-card debiting should make the application of this pricing mechanism feasible. If such a system were technically and legally implementable then it would pave the way for a whole range of additional and potentially more sophisticated pricing mechanisms.

Envirocore

The Network supported the idea of local authorities measuring the quality of their environments through an "Envirocore" process. The Envirocore measurement process would not be based on national benchmarking but on a local determination of environmental measurements that should be made.

The Envirocore process would provide information to citizens, businesses and other interested parties concerning the environmental quality of local areas and focus attention on local environmental problems to assist local actors in taking steps to improve quality.

The Envirocore process would be expected to consider many different aspects of environmental quality and might include the following transport-related aspects:

- ◆ Air quality and vehicle emissions
- ◆ Proportion of dwellings lying within People Zones (where speed limits of 15 mile per hour apply and there is a specified standard for footpaths, cyclepaths and public space)
- ◆ Proportion of school travel undertaken by walking and cycling
- ◆ Proportion of travel undertaken by low emission/low energy vehicles
- ◆ Visual impact

The EnviroScore would need to be simple to understand for citizens. There should be a headline value covering all environmental aspects as well as separate scores applying to different areas (e.g. transport, energy, waste/recycling, etc). The transport environmental rating would be referred to as the Transport EnviroScore. Regional planning authorities would be expected to prioritise the distribution of transport investment funding to local authorities who have made a sound case for how funding will be used to improve their EnviroScore and who have involved their citizens in the process.

Sustainable Sundays

Sustainable Sundays is an initiative aimed at promoting local travel. It is based on the premise that on Sundays most people's travel is discretionary and they will be more willing and able to change their travel behaviour than at other times of week. There are different possible versions of Sustainable Sundays depending on the degree of coercion involved. At the 'lighter' end are awareness campaigns, exhorting local citizens to be loyal to their locality by spending time there on Sundays. At the 'heavier' end is the banning of non-commercial private motorised travel on Sundays, involving a large degree of enforcement. Somewhere in between there could be a mix of discouragements (e.g. high parking charges) and inducements (temporary pedestrianisation).

Before introducing such initiatives it is vital to establish improved public transport services on Sundays so that alternative means of travel are available. Liaison should be made with public transport operators to look into the possibility of offering free travel on Sundays as a marketing initiative to encourage greater use at other times.

It would take time for people to adapt to the restriction on their mobility but it is expected that they would be able to adapt by fitting in some activities at other times of the week, carrying out new and former activities locally on Sundays and making use of public transport. Sundays could be used to carry out repairs of highways in a similar way that they are used for rail engineering works.

Citizen's Transport Juries

It was proposed that transport juries, operating on terms comparable with legal juries would be an innovative solution to the current problems of

inadequate stakeholder involvement in the process of planning and scheme and policy appraisal. The jurors would have a much heightened sense of involvement and responsibility because they are genuinely involved in the decision making process. Doubts were raised about the dangers of being committed to the decision the jury takes. It was suggested that there should be the safeguard of a kind of senior chamber, a transport committee of councillors and representatives from the citizen's jury who actually make the final decisions.

Conclusions

A large proportion of the Toolkit components are primarily designed to achieve a sustainable modal distribution of local travel. Whilst very few components were conceived specifically to address the environmental impacts of local travel this aim is a likely secondary benefit of almost all measures directed to achieve other aspects of the headline objective.

The range of components that address the different aspects of the headline objective illustrates that many different combinations of Toolkit components could be brought together to achieve the aims of the Network regarding local travel. This suggests that the Toolkit offers a high degree of flexibility and diversity in terms of the approaches that could be undertaken by local areas when seeking to deploy solutions. In this regard the Toolkit accommodates the high degree of variability that can exist in terms of the circumstances and aspirations of different local areas when seeking to address their own local travel problems.

To obtain the full report:

<http://www.trg.soton.ac.uk/research/TVNetwork>

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