

A summary of the third report from the Transport Visions Network

This is a summary of the third in a series of 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 will explore 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 first of the six reports on transport solutions addresses land use planning. Land use planning and transportation are very much inter-related and the Network has sought to identify new ways of planning development that might help in overcoming the transport problems we face today and that might facilitate the development of transport systems in the future that better serve our needs. The report has four main sections each of which deals with a different aspect of land use planning: (i) settlement form; (ii) where we live; (iii) economic push and pull; and (iv) rural and

urban environments. In each section a vision is presented preceded by a summary of key parts of the Network's discussion which gave rise to the vision. The Network hopes that the report will be thought provoking and valuable in its own right. Further to this, the intention is that the land use planning visions will provide a basis for thinking about specific transport solutions in the subsequent work of the Network. The four visions are now summarised.

Spider Web City

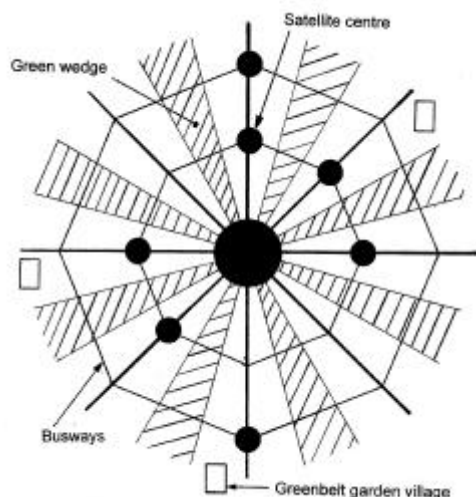
The Spider Web City is a vision of urban form that enables people to have a good level of accessibility without needing to own personal motorised transport. It incorporates some of the ideas currently finding favour amongst urban planners. It has a dense core of mixed development (the 3-D city) connected to the rest of the city through high capacity, radial transport links, along which satellite centres lie. Between the radial links lie green wedges. Greenbelt garden villages are located at the edge of the city. Cross-city journeys are possible via paths that can be used by pedestrians, cyclists and other slow forms of transport and via rings of limited access busways spaced out at regular distances from the city centre. At the centre of the city there is an efficient interchange system for cross-city connections and connections to places outside the Spider web city.

The 3-D city dweller - "I haven't been outside Cloudbreak Building for a few days. I went to the 5th floor doctor the other day to have my all-over health check. Otherwise I've just been to the office on the 83rd floor. I need to get out of Cloudbreak Building to go to the Head Office tomorrow. I could go outside and skate over and if it rains switch to the skywalks. Or maybe I'll take the PRT."

The satellite centre dweller - "I enjoyed spending time at the weekend in Beechwood Forest. Now

they've restored the forest, people realise where we got the name for our neighbourhood. I cycled over there with the kids. We took a picnic with us. I really enjoyed the fresh strawberries that we're getting from the village outside the city. Its much better than the tasteless stuff we got before from overseas. On the way back from the forest we visited my aunt in her semi on the forest side. Its nice she's got all that space for herself, but like most people these days I prefer not to have the hassle of looking after a garden."

The greenbelt garden village dweller - "When we first moved here I thought we would always need to keep a car at the interchange point, but when they built the improved metro interchange we haven't needed to have a car here. We can still get into the city quite easily - a 15 minute walk across the fields and a half hour journey in on the metro. Living here, we have the benefit of a garden and use some of it to grow strawberries for sale in the city."



When cities first grew, they tended to develop in a similar way to the Spider Web City with concentrated centres connected to outer areas by radial routes. The natural desire for more spacious homes along with widespread car ownership have changed this pattern of development and resulted in urban sprawl. The current trend towards re-urbanisation provides a natural opportunity to aim towards the Spider Web City vision. It would be an incremental process of gradually introducing better quality public transport along radials, reducing or phasing out roads space for private motor vehicles and increasing building densities in city centres and along transport corridors.

The Informed Householder

People's choices of where and when to relocate can have profound impacts on long-term requirements for travel. Opportunities exist to improve the decisions people make in a way that both improves the outcome for them personally as well as delivering benefits to society as a whole. The Informed Householder is a vision of a system that allows people to make an informed choice of where to live which minimises their travel burden.

The Householder - "It's six months since Jane and I moved now. I didn't think we'd ever leave our four bedroom semi in Surbiton. I'm not one for change and I think the two of us would still be rattling around in that big old house if it hadn't been for the new Homestead Direct service. We got our interactive e-Pack from Homestead Direct a few months after our youngest son, Adam, finally left home. The e-Pack summarised its understanding of our present situation and highlighted how aspects of our lives had changed. It was a real surprise to see how much time we spent travelling and how much we relied on the second car.

We completed a short virtual interview with the e-Pack to provide more precise details on our current circumstances. Having told Homestead Direct what specific requirements we would have in moving house the e-Pack listed about a dozen suitable properties and after a virtual tour of each we fell in love with the house we now occupy. It's a two bedroom terraced cottage which is a mile from the local Parkway station. Jane had been anxious about not having our second car for visiting the grandchildren, but she now enjoys the rail journeys to visit them. As for me, I still drive to work, but it's no longer the 70 minute commute I used to endure and I also have the benefit of being only a bus ride away from my local tennis club - I used to have to drive ten miles to get there and always felt peeved that I couldn't enjoy a couple of pints after a match."

The Local Authority - "The Government is certainly getting to grips with the housing issue now. Its legislation requiring householders to provide information relating to a house move in terms of their reasons, rationale and priorities, as well as factual details concerning a move, has certainly paid off. We've got national data for the last ten years now which has been a real eye opener in understanding the dynamics of

residential relocation. The national GIS facility now includes housing information allowing us to see in detail the nature and distribution of housing stock within our area and how it is being used. We are much better placed to make effective decisions concerning any provision of new housing stock, both in terms of its type and location. To some extent, provision is geared towards addressing the demand statistics that are fed back to us from Homestead Direct. However, we are also able to use development decisions to more positively influence urban structure within our authority boundary. What's more, we are now permitted to use hypothecated funds from the new Space/Occupancy Ratio Tax (SORT) to subsidise house purchases where we consider that to do so will achieve a more compatible match of housing stock with household type.

We've come a long way too since the early days of company travel plans. All employers with over 20 staff are now legally required to counsel new staff on relocation decisions. In effect, they become middle men for Homestead Direct with the benefits of adding their more detailed local and regional knowledge to what the service has to offer. Our colleagues in the Transport Section are certainly inspired by the figures coming back from Homestead Direct on travel. In its first two years of operation the service has facilitated over 2000 house moves into or within our authority area. In 14% of these cases household car ownership has been reduced. There are also hints now of a downturn in traffic levels on our major roads."

Location, Location, Relocation

Location, Location, Relocation is a vision where business is located more efficiently in terms of transport. In the vision, excessive travel will no longer be tolerated by businesses and employees getting to work. The vision is based on fiscal and educational measures to bring about change.

The Manager - "A new city, a new start. I am hoping the incentives we have been offered mean that we can offset the costs of moving and the loss of staff over the next 18 months or so. Productivity is already up. Staff turnover at businesses inside the M25 is such that we just couldn't build up our knowledge base where we were. Besides, most of our staff didn't even live in the London region anymore and giving people time allowances for commuting just doesn't add up. There are still so many businesses sticking to

the rather passé concept that you need London to have a global image. We've left a satellite promotions office in a state-of-the-art business promotions facility round the corner from the Houses of Parliament, connected to our main operations through telecommunication links. Besides, Nottingham has a strong global identity with Robin Hood and a fantastic city centre with a number of cultural sites of interest. We've located near the middle of line 6 of their LRT system. We can access the regional airport by express shuttle every 20 minutes and the town centre by LRT every 5 minutes. Parking at our site is limited but that's the benefit of locating by an LRT line and our incentive scheme should hopefully strike the right balance of journeys to our site."

The Worker - "We sold our second car last week. Paying for parking outside our house, parking at work, hydrogen prices are as high as ever and we only ever used the car for John's commute. That doesn't make sense anymore now the LRT system has opened on this side of the city. As well as the savings on not running a car, we also get a tax break if I take the LRT to work. When John relocates to the new business park at the end of the line, we'll really be laughing. We'll have a lot less taxiing to do as well when the kids can access the LRT line. I never realised how much time and money I spent travelling to work. Everyone else did it and it never really crossed my mind not to. No one wanted to live round the corner from where they worked but I can't really remember why? Mind you, we were limited by the housing we could afford. This tax break should make it easier for us to find that next house, in fact, my employer should have a list of suitable opportunities first thing tomorrow."

The Local Authority - "I think we'd still be arguing now about the location of the new guided busway line if we hadn't demonstrated the importance of the system to local business. We have to meet reliability targets of journey times on all modes before we can encourage further growth in our area. This is in stark contrast to Warwickshire, where they seem to get one new business commitment a week since their integrated Warwick, Coventry, Stratford tram system has been up and running. Still, whilst we aren't attracting as much inward investment as before, we are seeing our existing businesses grow at the fastest rate for two decades. We have a lot to be proud of."

Sustainable Local Living

Sustainable Local Living is a vision which sees local economies revived by a concerted return to localised methods of production and consumption of goods and services inspired by a high social priority being placed on quality of life and sustainability. This, in turn, stimulates the regeneration of regions, as past specialisms in goods and services that have died out under national and international market pressures are revived.

The planner- "Looking back it's hard to see what alternatives we had, but I am still proud of the way we managed to get sustainability to the top of the agenda when designing for the new communities. Of course, the cause was helped by the way the scale of the floods grew in the first decade of the century. The climate change awareness campaigns of those years certainly brought home the scale of the problem to the public and the 2005 projections of land loss to the elements over the following fifteen years certainly shook things up in political circles. Having to accommodate so many people in a comparatively short period of time rendered green belt development inevitable, but the fact that it had been necessitated by such clear environmental problems ensured that the garden village model gained a great deal of public support".

The village dweller- "I see that the last of the hypermarkets in the area has gone to the wall. It is always sad to see jobs lost but everyone knows that business success depends upon understanding and adapting to changing markets. Perhaps they were a bit like the dinosaurs, too big and cumbersome to adapt. I suppose I am one of the success stories. Setting up my own chain of locally sourced farm shops was largely a response to customer demand; the continual health scares over globalised and industrial food production produced a consumer outcry that perhaps no one could have predicted. This pressure, allied to the revolt of the producers in response to attempts by retailers to pass on to them the expense of a rigorously pursued, environmentally costed, food transport policy, helped see 'local organic' become the most desired label around".

The urban dweller- "The return to local sustainable urban communities was in many ways a reaction to the success of the garden villages. As the communities were replicated in the hinterland

of towns and cities which were unaffected by flooding, it became clear that the scale of social change was considerable and that it was being driven as much by cultural aspirations as environmental necessity. I wanted to buy into that lifestyle but didn't see why I should have to move to do so. I wanted to stay in the urban environment with such easy access to my friends and leisure interests AND live in an environment where I could bring up a family. The government clampdown on land use inefficiency really opened people's eyes to the sheer waste of land in most of our cities and gave the impetus to many projects which sought to turn unused or derelict buildings into well designed open spaces. I suppose it is quite ironic that the catalyst for car free housing estates and the revival of local urban communities centred around thriving shopping centres and mixed with extensive green areas should come from the supposedly 'dying' countryside environment".

Although the four visions address different aspects of land use planning they also complement each other and might be seen as pieces of a jigsaw that could be used together for a coherent approach to future land use planning. The Spider Web City involves a new model of planning land use and transport, while the other three visions involve socio-economic changes as well as planning measures. This illustrates the need to consider policies in many different areas. It is clear that in the past settlement patterns have become less sustainable as car use has increased. To some extent current planning policy is attempting to reverse this process by changing settlement patterns so that car use decreases. However, the Network promotes a strategy where long term investment in appropriate transport schemes attracts development that can be serviced in an efficient and sustainable manner. Instead of a pipe end solution, this approach is an attack on the source of the smoke which has the potential to be much more effective.

To obtain the full report:

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

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