

PERSONAL TRANSPORT ISSUES

Transport provides us with the means to reach our place of work and for the movement of goods and services in an ever-dispersing country. The social aspects of transport are often overlooked when discussing sustainable development, yet it makes a major contribution to the quality of our lives through driving, cycling, boating and arriving at leisure destinations. Our 'appetite' for travel is growing and in the absence of a viable integrated public transport system, we are becoming more dependent on personal travel by private car. Although Agenda 21 does not contain a specific chapter on transport, the document nevertheless contains clear recommendations for transport planners and policy-makers – 'governments should integrate land-use and transportation planning to encourage development patterns that reduce transport demand and adopt urban transport programmes favouring high-occupancy public transport communities' (Chap. 9).

The recommendations included in this chapter are vital when considering that in the EU the highest energy user is transport. The transport sector in the UK accounted for a fifth of CO₂ emissions in 2001, of which 90% was road transport. Transport related energy use is predicted to increase by 50% between 1993 and 2010. In 1952 there were 2 million cars on the road in Britain. Now there are 22 million and traffic is still continuing to grow. According to the Government's own figures it is projected to become half as much again by 2026.

The UK has the highest levels of traffic delays in Europe which are a result of the high congestion through increased private car use. Added to the UK's lack of success in reducing congestion delays, high levels of pollution can be directly linked to UK policies implemented to 'meet the demand' through new road building rather than 'managing the need'. A central cause of the UK's high congestion levels is that British people make more use of cars than any other European country, despite having below average car ownership (Commission for Integrated Transport – www.cfit.gov.uk/research/ebp/key/index.htm).

This growth can be directly equated to traffic induced environmental problems of higher energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. As vehicle numbers increase, transport energy efficiency schemes and technology advances are cancelled out by the sheer increase in the volume of car use. An observation that is analogous to the other issues in this report: technology advances are continuously being offset by increases in purchases, usage and overall numbers.

Personal travel increases with economic growth and a key question is how to promote sustainable mobility in today's society. Sustainable mobility implies a transport system that meets everybody's needs to access goods, jobs, education, leisure and information. In the UK today the present transport system is not providing the optimum mobility that is required and hence the increasing reliance on the 'personal' car. Public transportation is potentially a good alternative but while privatisation, competition

and deregulation have been responsible for a number of improvements in public transport in the UK, it is still not considered satisfactory by most of civil society. It is perceived to be too expensive, and even though UK operators achieve the lowest operating costs per vehicle kilometre they charge the highest fares in Europe. A typical public transport trip by any mode in Britain costs 15% more than in Germany, 60% more than in France and nearly three times as much as in the Netherlands (Commission for Integrated Transport – <http://www.cfit.gov.uk>). The lack of investment hampers its popularity and despite the availability of sophisticated public transport systems in many urban areas, private car travel remains the dominant mode of travel for most.

What is sustainable transport?

Domestic sustainable transport must encompass the ideals of sustainability, hence providing positive contributions in terms of economic, environmental and social wellbeing. Within the EU the definition of sustainable transport will be a system that includes the following:

- allows the basic access needs and development of individuals, companies and societies to be met safely and in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health, and promotes equity within and between generations;
- is affordable, operates efficiently, offers choice of transport mode, and supports a vibrant economy, and regional development;
- limits emissions and waste within the planet's ability to absorb them, uses renewable resources at or below their rates of generation, and, uses non-renewable resources at or below the rates of development of renewable substitutes and minimises the use of land and the generation of noise".

Ref: Integrating the Environmental Dimension – A Strategy for the Transport Sector. Final Report. Joint Expert Group on Transport and the Environment – Working Group 2. Commission of the European Community (DG Transport and DG Environment). Brussels, Belgium, 1999.

KEY ISSUES CONSIDERED:

1. Institutional barriers

The Centre for Sustainable Transportation stated in 1997 that in Canada, 'overcoming the institutional barriers that prevent good decision-making for transportation may be a greater challenge than overcoming the technological barriers that stand in the way of reducing the use of fossil fuels' (<http://www.cstctd.org/CSTcstpub.htm>).

In the UK, the current transport plan is an investment strategy. However, the working group emphasised that the amount of money available for strategic purposes is small and taxes are not continually re-distributed into the transport system. Therefore, it was recommended that a framework for sustainable transport is required, consisting of a mixed package of actions within all levels of decision making. It is imperative that such a framework involves full commitment by all key players.

2. Resistance from consumer behavior

While the political and industrial framework of public transport is expected to expand for the long term good of the environment, many consumers seem reluctant to take positive action. An opinion poll conducted by National Opinion Poll (NOP) for Keynote Research (<http://www.keynote.co.uk>) during February 2001 showed that there are more people who prefer to use private cars when they can, than those who support increased government funding for public transport or would like to see cars banned in city centres. It appears that this is because the transition to public transport will only have significant effects once improvements have been made, hence the reluctance to change in civil society.

The success of any transition was said to be dependent upon, 'political will, backing from the industry and the public at large taking on green issues more wholeheartedly.'

3. Practical action for a framework

T1. RECOMMENDATION

The UK government should facilitate wider communication of flagship projects which incorporate greater sustainability in transport systems.

A catalogue should be established of successful and innovative sustainable transport initiatives that will show civil society examples of practical actions which can be widely implemented. Actions already taken by communities around the world that are

not dissimilar socially or environmentally would encourage greater thinking 'out of the box' by local government, authorities and community leaders. The catalogue of initiatives should be widely communicated to encourage take up.

A list of example initiatives and practical actions is provided below:

- Positive experiences from personalised travel planning schemes such as those in Australia should be promoted through local authorities, for example Living Neighbourhood® and Travel Blending® and Sustrans "TravelSmart" in the UK.

The DTLR report, A Review of the Effectiveness of Personalised Journey Planning Techniques, from January 2002 provided similar points in its recommendations but with less clarity and without a promotional aspect that was required from the working group outcomes to ensure a greater response from society.

(<http://www.local-transport.dtlr.gov.uk/travelplans/pjourney/summary.htm>)

Living Neighbourhood® and Travel Blending®

The Living Neighbourhood® project team works with the community to find ways that together they can bring about positive changes in the neighbourhood by:

- providing personalised information to individuals to motivate them to evaluate and make changes to their travel behaviour
- encouraging community participation within the neighbourhood
- offering people who use the area the opportunity to think about ways in which they can make their community a better place to live

The project has shown to have increased local economic activity, more people on the streets and a reduction in graffiti, greater attitude changes towards environmentally friendlier modes of transport, and a greater feeling of contributing to the community.

Travel Blending® uses a personalised approach which:

- measures current travel behaviour
- presents this in a simplified way to the individual
- provides personalised tips for making simple, incremental change
- gives people a chance to implement changes and measure them

The Travel Blending® tool was used to measure the success of the programme. The Holland Park pilot estimated the following changes:

- changes in distance travelled (km) -15.3%
- changes in time spent driving -19%
- changes in time spent walking +40%
- change in public transport usage +9%
- changes in carbon dioxide emitted -44 tonnes

http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/council_at_work/improving_city/living_neighbourhoods/index.shtml

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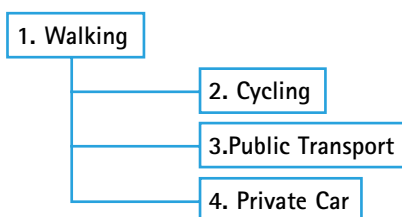
SUSTRANS – "TravelSmart"

Individualised marketing has been used to motivate people to think more effectively about their daily travel and to identify their individual needs for information and support and promoting the use of public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives to car travel. Personal experience is employed to tackle misconceptions. Pilot projects have shown that a significant reduction in car use is achievable in a short space of time, without investment of alternatives. <http://www.sustrans.org.uk>

- **Develop a hierarchy of transport**

This would aim to change the way that civil society views various forms of transport. Current behaviour shows that driving a car is considered to be 'superior' to biking and walking such that if people are given an option to drive, walk or bike to a nearby destination, the majority would choose to drive.

Proposed hierarchy for personal travel:



A hierarchy can be promoted through School Education/ Promotional Campaigns that may include advertisements showing the unsociability of driving for example pollution and health. This should also be incorporated into corporate transport policy decision making.

- Include examples of best practice about public transport in rural areas and encourage community action, e.g. link postal and bus services or introduce US style
- The number of journeys to school by car has nearly doubled in the last ten years, from 16 to 30 per cent.
- During term time at 08:50 one car in five on urban roads is taking children to school.
- The school run is extending London commuter journey times by up to 50 per cent and trends are similar across the country.

Source: BBC, Programme 4x4 Programme

Average journey lengths to/from schools have increased over the last decade with a resultant decrease in the number of pupils walking to school. Therefore there is a need for either more buses or a different type of bus system. An American bus system, which is

spc@ic.ac.uk

also used in other countries such as Canada and Australia, is one example that needs to be further evaluated in the UK if congestion levels at peak times are to be reduced.

As part of the commitment to providing schooling for children in large cities as well as recognition of working parents, school boards in these countries set aside funds in order to bus children to school. A system such as this would most definitely reduce the number of cars at peak time, improve the air quality around the school and more importantly reduce the risk of health problems associated with congestion around schools.

Money for such a scheme should not come directly from education funds but in association with DTLR. Equity between departments is essential for a successful project to be implemented. However it is urged that communities are proactive in the development of the schemes, particularly as money and time spent on car transport will be saved.

- **Develop more cycle lanes. This should primarily be incorporated into existing planning strategies.**

Bike ownership is high in school children, although less than 5 per cent cycle to school. Some children express a wish to do so, but traffic dangers and a lack of secure parking facilities deter them (DTLR - www.mobility-unit.dtlr.gov.uk/ypc/index.htm). This is not surprising when the World Health Organisations statistics show that pedestrians and cyclists account for 45% of all road deaths in the UK. Cycle lanes are essential to the promotion of cycling in the UK, which can ultimately be achieved by promoting examples of cities both here and abroad in order to show planners and engineers of their success.

4. Transport decision making

T2. RECOMMENDATION

The UK Government should reconsider the political levels at which transport decisions are made.

This recommendation arose from concern that transport and planning decisions are currently made at different levels - "Is it sensible to make transport decisions at a local level when there is conflict between local and national interests?"

Institutional barriers are considered a problem in implementing effective integrated sustainable transport strategies at the local and regional level. Transport integration should be more influenced by regional and local authorities based on local information. The

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lack of power of regional and local authorities, as well as uncertainties in funding, is currently preventing long-term strategic planning.

The UK should note existing transport integration systems in many European countries, where a more holistic approach is taken. The greater responsibilities given to Regional authorities allow for a more effective sustainable transport strategy. The forthcoming Regional Governance White Paper will give an opportunity to extend this, ensuring that the current structures and institutions are strong enough to exert the necessary regional influence in delivering the outcomes.

5. Communication and Education

T3. RECOMMENDATION

Although Government Departments may have different priorities, a clear and consistent message should be communicated centrally.

T4. RECOMMENDATION

Local councils should be encouraged to provide information about their sustainable transport programmes to all members of their community.

T5. RECOMMENDATION

Relevant information needs to be provided for people to make informed and conscious decisions about how they travel.

Communication of information about the various modes of transport and the impacts they have is key to influencing changes in behaviour in civil society. Currently in the UK the public have to search, primarily via the Internet, to access the relevant information to make informed decisions on travel arrangements and appropriate transport modes, including buying cars. The recommendation of the working group was for this information to be made more easily available, thereby increasing awareness of the impacts such that conscious decisions can be freely taken.

5.1 Young and future drivers

Effectively communicating with younger people who are eager to 'hit the road' in their older, less efficient, petrol, low cost cars as soon as they reach the age of seventeen is necessary if we are to influence the future generation of drivers. This is also crucial because this generation believes that transport problems will be a thing of the past because 'green' cars will have been introduced to solve them.

For the future drivers of the UK, raising awareness, predominantly in schools, will be the ideal method to educate about sustainable transport. In the current education system, there is little time in the curriculum for transport/environment related issues and so awareness should be raised either through local authorities or privatised transport companies.

The emphasis for future generations is that public transport should be the norm and not an alternative for when the car is being serviced!

The Government's Mobility Unit reported that campaigns need to use images and the media which 'speak to' young people and attract and maintain their interest. Although it is a marketing cliché, the use of appropriate celebrities could be particularly effective in promoting public transport amongst young people. The underlying issue is that the younger generation should not be talked 'at' but communicated 'with'.
(www.mobility-unit.dtlr.gov.uk/ypc/index.htm)

5.2 Promoting sustainable transportation

As part of a sustainable transport plan the various modes of transport should be advertised. Information on the plan would include data on journey times, emissions and ease of use. This initiative should be used in conjunction with other awareness raising schemes and should concentrate on billboards sited at congestion hotspots to ensure that car drivers take notice. Such schemes may attract criticism for spending local authority budgets on expensive advertising but this should be countered by the benefits of decreased private car use.

PRACTICAL ACTION

Local Authorities should establish partnerships with privatised transport suppliers and other corporate bodies to promote more sustainable modes of transport via roadside billboard posters.

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Consumer impacts – Educating the missing links

Gallons by which daily U.S. oil consumption would drop if SUV's average fuel efficiency would improve by 3mpg: 49,000,000.

Gallons per day that the proposed drilling of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is projected to yield: 42,000,000.

Reference: Harper's Index

5.3 Product Information

Car advertisements say little about the efficiencies of their products. Only recently, and particularly in Europe, has this become a feature of car marketing. Consumers may soon choose cars on factors other than the '0-60' acceleration figure or 'top speed'. The rising costs of oil and petrol, particularly in the UK, have meant that the efficiency of a car is moving up the priority list, although the current cost level does not yet act as a sufficient deterrent for most car drivers. Furthermore, consumers do not yet appear to have fully understood the link between efficiency and climate change (CO₂ emissions) and it is the awareness of this that has to be incorporated into the overall strategy by UK Government.

As part of France's implementation of the 1999 EU Directive on car efficiency and emission labelling (ED 03/11/99) its environmental agency has introduced a consumer guide to fuel efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions of all 3,643 types of new car. The example of France can be seen as a simple first step to consumer understanding of the impacts that the car has on the environment and a comparison of all car types. One step further would be that of the Australian fuel label scheme. The scheme, to raise awareness and reduce greenhouse gases, was jointly developed by the Australian Greenhouse Office and Department of Transport and Regional Services, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including the motor vehicle industry. It ensures that details of the efficiency of the prospective purchase are available to the consumer at the point of sale on the windscreen of the vehicle. www.greenhouse.gov.au/fuellabel/label.html

The UK, through the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), has had a voluntary labelling system based on the requirements of Directive 99/94/EC in place since 1999 and information on fuel consumption can be obtained from the Government's Vehicles Certification Agency. However, comparative point of sale information is still in consultation with DTLR and the proposed label will not be promoted on the vehicle as with the example in Australia, thus removing an effective measure to influence more efficient cars in the market.

In the UK the Energy Saving Trust has the main responsibility for awareness raising through the Cleanup and Powershift campaigns which are part of TransportAction. Unfortunately, however, very little is being done in the UK to make private car drivers aware of the impact they have on the environment, in particular climate change.

The TransportAction CleanUp campaign aims to improve air quality in the UK by encouraging the fitting of emissions reduction equipment to the most polluting corporate diesel vehicles. <http://www.cleanup.org.uk/>

TransportAction PowerShift is a programme to help establish a sustainable market for alternative, clean fuel vehicles in the UK. It aims to create the conditions for clean fuel vehicles to be practically and economically viable. All applicants seeking grant funding for clean fuel vehicles (CFVs) must choose vehicles that appear on the PowerShift Register. <http://www.est-powershift.org.uk/>

Road fuel tax is the most obvious method the Government has introduced to make a discernable change in the behaviour of UK drivers. The tax was brought in firstly to attempt to reduce car journeys in order to protect the environment through behavioural change, and secondly to raise revenue. However these are opposing objectives. Fuel is an excellent source of revenue for the government and even with price rises the reduction in consumption is minimal showing that behaviour is not changing. On the other hand, if it did change then an important source of revenue would be lost – what some may describe as "shooting themselves in the foot".

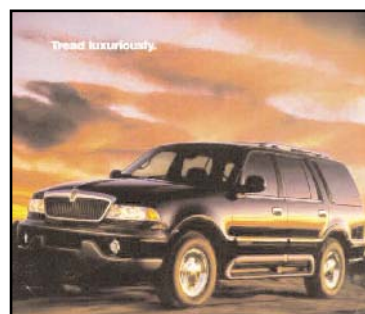
PRACTICAL ACTION

The UK Government should implement policy measures for statutory fuel efficiency labelling, not just on cars at point of sale but on all car advertisements.

5.4 The present state of advertising

T6. RECOMMENDATION

The UK Government should have greater influence over car advertising, if necessary by increased regulation.



"Tread lightly and luxuriously in Lincoln Navigator, the most powerful luxury SUV on the continent."

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The British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion, which is the 'rulebook' for all advertising except radio, television and cable commercials, states that all advertisements:

- Should be legal, decent, honest and truthful;
- Should show responsibility to the consumer and to society;

The line between what is responsible to the consumer and to society and what is not is finely judged, case by case. Is driving a car that consumes vast amounts of petrol and emits the equivalent of two small cars, responsible to society? Is luxury, as the Lincoln advertisement calls it, enjoyed by only one consumer, showing responsibility to the global society?

The Committee of Advertising Practice Codes has a central obligation that all advertisements should have a "sense of responsibility to consumers and society". In the case of car manufacturers they have to show the selling points of their cars, i.e. top speed and acceleration, in such a way that might not be considered socially irresponsible such as dangerous and aggressive driving. In addition to its general rules, the Codes contain specific rules for motoring advertisements. These include the requirements that:

- Advertisements for motor vehicles, fuel or accessories should avoid portraying or referring to practices that encourage anti-social behaviour.
- Advertisers should not make speed or acceleration claims the predominant message of their advertisements.
- Advertisers should not portray speed in a way that might encourage motorists to drive irresponsibly or to break the law.

Perhaps these should be extended to make specific reference to encouraging the purchase of more socially/environmentally responsible vehicles, based on their greater fuel efficiency and use of resources in their manufacture.

5.5 Claims

T7. RECOMMENDATION

The Government should encourage the advertising industry to adopt more socially/environmentally responsible approaches to product promotion and to advise its clients accordingly. This can be developed further by offering full support from both government and industry to the UNEP Advertising and Communication Forum on Sustainability programme.

www.uneptie.org/pc/sustain/advertising/advertising.htm

Brand loyalty and creating needs are the primary reasons for

advertising in the UK. The slowly changing values of the consumer, specifically in relation to cars, are also having an effect on the advertisers. Has the need for speed and power reached a plateau – do we need to go any faster? The consumer increasingly wants efficiency and more considerations to safety and (possibly) the environment. The Advertising Standards Authority states that advertisers appear to be moving away from excessive claims of speed and performance and concentrating on issues such as safety. www.asa.org.uk/research/documents/upl_2.pdf

In response to this, various claims from car manufacturers are being seen. Alan Durning, author of the 1992 book, "How Much is Enough: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth", who once portrayed advertisers as parasites, describes how advertisements and product labels now make claims about the 'environmental friendliness' of a product, yet hardly ever justify the claim. He used the example of Lufthansa: "Fly Lufthansa for a better environment, help get cleaner air and a better environment." This claim was based on Lufthansa using a more modern plane.

More recently the Honda Civic has had advertisements withdrawn because of excessive 'environmental' or economic claims on efficiency. The company had claimed the car would do "38 miles per gallon around town" and that "It's an economical monster". The complainant objected that this was not true. The official Department of Transport figure for urban driving was 25 mpg for this car.

The Government should review existing advertising standards for the car manufacturing industry and should discuss with the industry how consumer awareness of the problems associated with increasing private car use can be raised and reflected in advertising of their products. At the very least consumers should be encouraged to purchase vehicles that are most appropriate to their pattern of use, make least impacts on the environment and are not just seen as 'fashion accessories'.

5.7 Making public transport more effective

Unfortunately for the environment, the majority of the world's civil society sees the car as a 'sexy' accessory, but an accessory that has a purpose. Public transport needs to be made equally attractive, if not more so, to increase its popularity.

The answer to why the car has become something of a seductive accessory, when it merely transports us from A to B, can be partly attributed to the work of the manufacturers' sales and marketing departments. With the possible exception of perfumes and

cosmetics, no other product is given such an alluring appeal. In marketing terms this may be perfectly acceptable but it is essentially promoting a product that is enhancing climate change when more sustainable systems of transport are available.

Furthermore, in order to 'compete' with the private car, public private transport companies, local authorities and the government should make public transport more attractive and change its current drab image.

Corporate sponsorship of public transport is one way to achieve this. "In the past, public transportation has been an unlikely focus for corporate sponsorship because of its somewhat, 'unsexy' image: now, with the growing importance of environmental protection issues, this is changing" European Partners for the Environment. Eco-sponsorships through public-private partnerships have been used successfully in Germany through partnership between Nokia, the telecommunications company, and a public transport operator VRR. www.epe.be/workbooks/sourcebook/3.16.html

Attractive public transport is reliable public transport. Integrated public transport information – informing users of the quickest and easiest options for travel and implications of travel choices – is an opportunity for the government to enhance public transport without the large costs currently associated with improving it. For example:

- Direct information to mobile phones wherever they are (this could use the telephone to identify their position or possibly a text message service) which will provide advice on when the next bus is actually due
- More real time bus information
- A fully integrated transport information service: Bus/cycle hire and network/train/pedestrian route information shared at all key transport related sites, including bus/train stations, in town centres, at cycle/car hire shops etc would ensure that a journey is not dictated by one mode of transport's timetable, and that changes between modes are made easy.
- Integrated European timetable website with all transport companies updating their timetables/fares direct to the site so people can plan integrated journeys

6. Communicating the benefits of improved health

T8. RECOMMENDATION

The UK Government should promote the health benefits of reduced car use, particularly to help overcome potential resistance from car drivers.

6.1 Low car use, greater health

A study by the World Health Organisation on the effects of car pollution on health found that the number of people dying from respiratory or cardiovascular problems which could be attributed to car fumes far exceeded the death toll from car crashes. In 1995, according to the WHO statistics, there were two million traffic accidents resulting in 120,000 deaths and 2.5 million injured people in the whole European region. The total costs from adverse environmental and health effects of transport, including congestion, are estimated to be 260 billion euros. With further research linking car fumes to increasing numbers of asthma sufferers, health related problems attributed to transport are becoming a major concern.

It is clear a majority of people are unwilling to reduce the use of their private car and transfer to alternative forms of public transport currently available. A strategy, such as increasing integration of the transport and health agenda needs to be developed to reverse this situation and promote the health aspects of the alternatives to private car use – "The Carbohydrates, not Hydrocarbons" approach. Walking and cycling are obvious examples which occur in health advertisements and TV programmes to encourage healthier lifestyles and reducing cardiovascular diseases – "Thirty minutes walking a day can significantly reduce the probability of cardiovascular illnesses".

In Italy in 2000, car-free Sundays received overwhelming support and 174 towns banned cars and motorcycles for between eight and ten hours. Air pollution in some cities fell by as much as 56%. The European Car Free Day (22nd September) is observed here in the UK although with less commitment from most authorities. A notable exception however is Camden, London. www.camden.gov.uk/green

6.2 Publicising health benefits

The primary locations for publicising the increased health benefits are doctors' surgeries, hospitals, health centres, and gyms. It is essential to integrate the planning aspects of cycle and walking routes with the recommendations of enhanced health strategies.

Wherever possible, cycle and walk-ways should be separated from other road transport to avoid direct pollution from car and lorry exhausts. It is equally important that cycling is an integral part of an overall sustainable transport planning strategy and not simply an add-on element after public transport. When designing and planning cycle paths it is essential that the involvement of local communities, in any decision making, is used constructively.

7. Partnerships and Regulation

Government and businesses should lead by example. If councils charge to park in a town centre to encourage use of public transport, businesses should eliminate 'free' staff parking as part of the initiative. Businesses have an important role to play in reducing domestic transport in the UK by encouraging employees to take alternative modes in reaching the workplace. Disincentives to drive can range from interest free loans for season ticket travel passes or bicycles, to subsidising employee bus services.

Public transport companies also have their role to play in facilitating other forms of transport and reducing the need for private car use. A noticeable example is 'getting a lift to the station', local planning authorities should guarantee safe and secure bike locking facilities and also train and bus operators must meet the need of cyclists wishing to take their bike on to other forms of transport. It should be made a requirement for train operators to provide areas on trains for bikes and not eliminate them as has recently been seen on South West trains, where they have banned bikes for rail commuters (see www.ctc.org.uk).

7.1 Green transport plans

Local Authorities and businesses should initiate Green Transport Plans with employees in the same way as the Living Neighbourhoods[®] example described earlier. This would include advice on the most sustainable method to commute to work and incorporate schemes such as car sharing, subsidised public transport, free or subsidised works buses where appropriate. Reducing the need for using valuable land for employee car parking will free this land for other use and hence result in economic benefit to the organisation. This in itself should be a major incentive. The UK Government has also introduced Tax and National Insurance incentives to help employers set up Green Travel Plans aimed at reducing the number of car journeys made by employees travelling to work. For more information visit: <http://www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/travelplans/>. The system adopted should have greater transparency and be more actively promoted with employees so that they are encouraged to make the transition from

private car to public transport.

7.2 Company car fleets

T9. Practical Action recommendation

The UK Government should further encourage the establishment of green business travel plans.

Many businesses are already adopting greener transport strategies. A 400 strong 'green car' fleet can save around £50,000 per year (Dr Reid, UK Minister for Transport 1999, speaking at the Cleaner Vehicle Task Force Fleet Leasing Seminar). With growing public concern about the environment, there are other potential commercial advantages for companies that can demonstrate their environmental credentials by publicising such strategies.

Company fleet procurement decisions have changed over recent years as the UK government amends Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and company car taxation. More than 45 per cent of new cars in last year's fleet market had a CO₂ rating below 165g/km, the lowest tax threshold under the new company car tax rules. In total, cars registered to fleets averaged 175.5g/km CO₂ in 2001, slightly below the overall market average of 177.7g/km (Source: Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders Ltd report UK New Car Registration by CO₂ Performance).

The average new car CO₂ emissions are down 6.4% on 1997 baseline figures (SMMT), which is the result of technological achievements in aerodynamics, improved fuel efficiency and the use of more lightweight materials but also a shift toward smaller vehicles. The shift to smaller cars has coincided with increased competition and the growth in 'fashionable' and economical (city) cars, for example MCC Smart car and the new BMW Mini. With figures continually declining there is an argument that company car fleets are a good way of introducing new more efficient cars into the UK's national fleet more rapidly, particularly as large fleets (25 vehicles or more) accounted for 42 per cent of the 2001 Market (SMMT).

Parking "Cash Out"

"Cashing out" means that commuters who receive free parking are also offered a cash alternative if they use other modes. This typically reduces driving by 10-30%, and provides non-drivers with a benefit comparable in value to what drivers receive. USEPA Commuter Choice Program (www.epa.gov/oms/traq); Local Government Guide to Parking Cash Out, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, (www.iclei.org/us), 1998.

However the argument will only hold true if the gross emissions of the UK's fleet decline. The reason is that buying-in company fleets for whatever reasons, whether it is for tax offset or simply keeping employees sweet, will still nurture the practice that 'if it's there, I'll use it' and prevents a rational decision being made on which mode of transport to use in particular circumstances. It would be more 'sustainable' to offer company cars for essential needs and provide other employees with a mileage rate which did not allow them to 'profit' out of use of their own car on business. At the same time offer them real incentives to use public transport or cycles instead.

PRACTICAL ACTION

Businesses should be encouraged by local and national government to eliminate designated staff parking thus promoting greater use of public transport or staff transport systems. Provide better washing facilities (shower room), offer incentives such as health club reductions, free breakfasts for cyclists etc.

8. Localisation

T10. RECOMMENDATION

Local Government and businesses should cooperate to establish integrated transport systems in support of inner city developments. This would reverse the current trend towards decentralisation of basic services and the splitting of communities.

Advances in technology and decentralised planning encouraged 'out-of-town' retail parks, shopping malls and hi-tech business parks, for example the M4 corridor. All of these encourage increased car use, especially where they are not accompanied by viable public transport schemes. Where transport planning was not integrated with such building planning, the introduction of suitable transport systems has been very slow.

The publication of PPG13 (the planning policy guidance note on transport) in England in 1994 was a major step towards planning land uses and transport together. It aimed to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to encourage means of travel which are more environmentally friendly.

Although this report was quite innovative, it appears that little note was taken of it. Businesses are still offered better rates out-of-town compared to in-town, encouraging them to move away, leaving employees and consumers with no option but to drive to work or the shops. Encouraging business to move back to high-density areas, where there are higher levels of public transport is

difficult where offset out-of-town rates are cheaper. The only way forward is centralised planning that encourages higher use of public transport with appropriate incentives for business from local authorities.

In the US, employees and consumers use cars more or less exclusively to reach out of town work and shops and this has created what is known as the "doughnut effect", where the urban sprawl has left the inner city 'empty'. UK planners should be encouraged by such cultural changes that have happened in cities like Melbourne in Australia. Where there was a 'doughnut effect' this has been reversed with a movement back to the city centre, where there is better existing transport, leisure, cultural and educational facilities.

9. Domestic air travel

T11. RECOMMENDATION

The UK Government should encourage further dialogue on the sustainability of flying domestic short haul air routes, with a view to encouraging a switch to alternatives, especially rail.

Although in the context of domestic transport, air travel is limited to flights within the UK, the taxing of aviation fuels to internalise the externalities of climate change gases was addressed. The working groups would like to see the UK Government drive issues that will make air transport more sustainable, for example taxing aviation fuels, and other fiscal measures to include full environmental costs, clearer stakeholder information and promoting other forms of transport on to international agendas and national strategies.

The problem is that applying an aviation fuel tax is unlikely on its own to reduce air travel. Increased costs will be passed on to the customer and an increase in the ticket price of (say) 10% is unlikely to deter air travellers, in much the same way as rising petrol costs have done little to deter car use. Research has shown that for a rail journey of 5 hours or under, city centre to city centre, most travellers would prefer to take the train, if costs were identical. For longer journeys, the preference starts to switch to air (From Planes To Trains, FOE, 2000 - http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/planes_trains.pdf). Clearly many short domestic air routes could be eliminated on this basis (as could many shorter routes to continental Europe) if costs were indeed identical. But the expansion of 'cheap, no frills' airlines has meant an increased demand for air-travel, especially short-medium distance and so the challenge to reverse the trend is even greater than before. It will take more than an aviation fuel tax, even the 'internalisation of externalities,' to encourage a switch back from air to rail travel.

PERSONAL TRANSPORT ISSUES

The air transport industry is growing at rates clearly above the average of the economy of the European Union. The growth is also faster than the industry is currently producing and introducing technological and operational advances, which reduce the environmental impact at source. The aviation industry, and indeed the tourism industry overall, is a rapidly growing source of greenhouse gases leading to significant climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on aviation and the global atmosphere shows that passenger traffic has grown since 1960 at nearly 9% per year, which is 2.4 times the average GDP rate. Despite the fact that subsonic aircraft operating today are about 70% more fuel efficient per passenger-km than 40 years ago, and that a 40-50% improvement in fuel efficiency is projected for the future, the growing environmental problem will be because global aviation in 2050 will be about six times higher than in 1990. See IPCC report 'Aviation and the Global Atmosphere. Cambridge University Press, 1999, Summary for policy makers' www.ipcc.ch

The growth in aviation in itself may reduce the expansion in domestic air travel. Given that there is a limit to aircraft movements, priority may be given to long haul flights and transferring passengers for short haul travel to trains.

This report does not address in detail the practicalities and problems of taxing aviation fuel. However, the overall internalisation of all environmental costs and impacts by air travel should still be a priority for the UK, preferably globally but at least within the EU. This would at least restore the balance with other forms of travel, especially rail travel, and allow the latter to be optimised without cost/price disadvantage.

One way in which the UK could lobby for an acceptable introduction of 'environmental charges' to the aviation sector at the international level would be to insist that any charges levied should be 'ring-fenced'. The monies would be used for environmental and social protection programmes, including where necessary further research and technology development, at tourism destinations, especially in less developed countries. This would allow those economies to benefit from income from tourism without running the risk of environmental and social degradation as a result of it. This would be similar to the current Landfill Tax Scheme, although it is recommended that all, not part of the revenue raised should be channelled into the improvements suggested. (See box on Environmental Charges for further information)

Environmental Charges

Environmental charges could take the form of the following levies:

- a) a levy added to the passenger ticket fare
- b) a levy based on the distance flown and aircraft engine characteristics to be collected via EUROCONTROL with en route charges differentiated on the basis of the environmental performance of the aircraft used;
- c) a levy associated with airport LTO charges.

There are, in addition, several basic options for the revenues collected

- a) revenue-neutral application (i.e. only modulation on the basis of environmental performance);
- b) the funding of general public policies, of different environmental enhancements (R&D, investments in new technologies etc.) or of compensatory measures for environmental damage either directly related to the air transport sector, or not (forestation, house insulation);
- c) a combination of a) and b) in the form of a base rate emission charge targeting the external environmental costs plus a modulation giving a premium in favour of "clean" and a sanction against "dirty" operations.

See "A European Environmental Aviation Charge" by Centre for Energy Conservation and Environmental Technology, Delft, 1998 and report "Emission Charges and Taxes in Aviation, The Hague, 1998

Domestically this will be a feasible solution to internalise the externalities and the practicality of a UK scheme should be achievable on a Europe wide scale. A study by Bleijenberg (1998) shows that a properly designed environmental aviation charge is both environmentally effective and probably feasible. The European Commission believes, subject to further studies, that the inclusion of environmental charges into the system of en route charges seems to be a promising technique.

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- Total greenhouse gas emissions per passenger: warming effect equivalent to 5313kg carbon dioxide.
- This flight would cost an extra £430 if tax and duty were charged at the same rate as petrol.
- In a global context this is just over one year of a persons total sustainable emissions budget for all purposes.

Source: <http://www.chooseclimate.org/flying/mf.html>

³Bleijenberg, A.N & Wit Delft, R.C.N. (1998) A European environmental aviation charge Feasibility study. 195 p. Dfl. 63,00