

Sustainability Committee

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Transport Impacts - Issues and Steps to Delivery

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Introduction

The Wales transport Strategy is set out in terms of three key areas - social, environmental and economic. The WelTAG consultation document refers to these as Welsh Impact Areas and in this way attempts to put the strategy and the evaluation together.

Transport has a derived demand. It is rarely bought as a product in its own right. However without transport there would be great difficulties in delivering the economic, social and environmental objectives of governments, the business objectives of industry and the enhancement of our lifestyles. It links sources and markets whether that be moving people to work, moving goods to markets or providing for our leisure activities. Even the oil which powers so much of our economy is dependant on the transport industry for its availability.

Transport is also a significant contributor to the level of carbon emissions. This briefing does not address the technical aspects. Rather it examines the issues under the three outcome headings contained in the Wales Transport Strategy - social, economic and environmental. It considers the transport issues under each of these and suggests 'steps to delivery' for policies and planning actions which will contribute to a reduction in pollution whilst also impacting on other lifestyle aspects such as land use planning and social inclusion.

Social

Issues

- good road and rail links along south and north Wales coasts; interior and rural Wales has limited rail and bus services and a low capacity road network

- public transport travel is generally slower, point to point than car travel although the new north south rail service provides competitive timings

larger cities have a concentration of both public transport and traffic congestion

cross border journeys to work between south east and north west Wales and adjacent English regions

the demands of the tourist areas have to be met to reflect the industry's importance to the economy of Wales

long distance car commuting reflect these journeys and the difference in housing supply and house prices in these regions of Wales and their adjacent English regions

centre of Wales' bigger cities are becoming more popular places to live particularly for some age groups

the perception of public transport (particularly bus and local train) as inconvenient, uncomfortable and possibly unsafe are more factors than availability and cost. This image has to change as a pre requisite of modal change

travel is seen as a characteristic of improved lifestyle and increased leisure time

access to Cardiff International Airport and the Metrix development at St Athan

Steps to Delivery

social (and economic) benefits must determine the provision of long distance links (rail, bus and road capacity). Sometimes at the expense of preferred personal travel

Wales has a strategic problem in the European land bridge to/from Ireland through both the north and south of Wales

London is a major market and a major financial centre. The south east of Wales has social (and economic) potential resulting from high speed rail links

development of air links (both internal and international) which assist economic development

an internal long distance bus and coach network based on "Traws Cambria" and franchised by the WAG fills the gaps in the rail network and would be promoted as an integrated part of the Wales long distance travel network

rural Wales has low usage conventional public transport can be replaced/supplemented by demand responsive intelligent transport provision (as with the WTRC/Carmarthenshire/WAG BWCABUS network), higher frequency limited stop local bus, community transport operations and car sharing/taxi schemes

higher car occupancy schemes in particular for work, shopping and leisure events travel

increased use long distance commuter bus lanes or tram/street car priority provisions in urban and suburban areas of our larger towns and cities

out of town commercial, retail and sporting land use has to be discouraged brown field, other central business district central adjacent sites, or those which can be served by existing (or easily provided) public transport must be considered first. Transfer of sites purely for commercial gain and incomplete consideration of social/and economic and environmental consequences of increased car travel should be excluded from regional transport plans

the school run is a traffic generator accounting for 30% more of term time peak traffic. Solutions to these movements have to be found

car ownership levels are an important economic generator in Wales (through car component factories). However, car usage is not the same factor and it is this which has to be discouraged through reduced need to travel, or incentives to use improved quality of more sustainable modes

where it is possible, new technology provides a process to reduced travel - internet shopping, home deliveries, tele/video conferencing; 'white collar' work at home day. However, their limits of effectiveness have to be realised - 'blue collar' workers in factories, construction and many service industries are unlikely to be able to change their work location in the next 20 years

advertising has a significant effect in lifestyle decisions. The UK car industry annual spend on advertising is £500m. Public transport advertising is nearer £60m. Intervention on transport demand advertising is required along the same legislative lines as cigarette and drink/driving advertising. The reduction in smoking and drinking and driving indicates the public's lifestyle changes in terms of social acceptability and views towards health and road safety.

access to Cardiff International Airport (CIA) is currently the subject of a public consultation exercise. The options include new/improved road access and improvements to public transport. If the airport is to grow at the hoped for rate, a balance with that has to be drawn between the carbon impacts of increased air movements and increased car flows to/from the airport. One option is to increase rail service frequency along the Vale of Glamorgan line and construct a new 'Gateway' railway station and dedicated short/direct bus bus/lane between it and the CIA terminal building. Both end points would have high quality interchange facilities with buses adjacent to the railway station and a covered bus facility adjacent to the terminal. This might involve Abertis, CIA's owner and/or owners of adjacent properties in the provision of a rail facility much superior to that at Rhoose/CIA station. Funding would be an issue and a partnership arrangement might be envisaged between WAG/Vale of Glamorgan Council and an environmentally sensitive property developer. The basis of such schemes exists in the Netherlands where the ABC planning permission process allows developments so long as they may be access by a given percentage of travellers on existing public transport (tram/rail/bus) services.

Economic

Issues

planning policy is already in place for most traffic generating uses. However, many examples exist where in retail, commercial and sporting developments, there is evidence of the policies not having been followed. Regional Transport Plans should include all planned land use changes and those presented subsequently should only be considered within the scope of the following year's plan amendments

congestion will grow particularly in urban areas and along major inter urban corridors, creating delays, slow moving traffic, increased particulates and carbon emissions with subsequent health consequences

severe localised peak congestion at interchanges, along key routes and within urban centres eg Cardiff, Swansea, Port Talbot, Aberystwyth, Deeside (Queensferry) and Wrexham

movement levels between north and south Wales would have a positive economic effect on the total intra Wales economy of the corridors linking them were improves. This would to some extent be at the expense of employment and commercial links with adjacent English regions

Steps to Delivery

land use planning/spatial planning at national regional and local levels in relation to the associated transport demand is essential

regional transport plans and local development plans have to be co-reactive, must support sustainable transport objectives and have to give priority to minimising car usage and maximising sustainable modes

the public sector must take a lead in providing administrative centres and public buildings at locations where sustainable transport modes can provide mobility and accessibility for workers and visiting members of the public. While this has not always been followed, there are many good examples of its achievement

out of town developments (usually private sector retail/commercial/sporting facilities but also public sector developments) have occurred and subsequent appeal decisions there have not always concurred with the transport objective of minimising motor car use. Such developments must be carefully considered in the regional transport plan

the impact of government services (e.g. health, education and social services) must be considered in terms of their use/impact on the

transport network through the regional transport plan

all development planning projects (private or public) must be considered in terms of the multi modal transport implications for both passenger and freight movements

on rural and inter town routes, capacity for private transport should only be enhanced where public transport cannot provide an adequate alternative along the whole route or at the urban end of a route

a large part of road congestion is caused by inadequate junction capacity or poor junction design. These options should be fully considered before increases are made in highway capacity

New road capacity provision should be a last resort unless it is part of a public transport enhancement package

Road capacity should be made available for urban public transport on radial routes from residential into the central business district or to peripheral developments where the critical mass of traveller justifies such measures

Where a railway line exists as a through route it should be retained for public transport use along its entire length. Opportunities have been lost where such rights of way have been interrupted by inappropriate or, occasionally unauthorised land use developments

The employment impact of improved public transport should be assessed in determining new or improved infrastructure and in providing bus/rail subsidy or other interventions

Economic development and employment generation should be leading criteria in decisions on new infrastructure funding (road, rail, airports, seaports)

When considering highway or rail investment national expenditure and regional transport plans should consider both freight and people movements in terms of efficient movement and sustainable patterns of consumer and producer demand

The needs of Wales major employment sectors (agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and financial/commercial services) should be a key aspect of any new plans or infrastructure provision. Efficient and sustainable means of access should be sought whilst being aware that many of Wales tourist destinations have natural beauty, historic importance and a distinctive Welshness as their main attraction.

Environmental

Issues

the growth in car based travel and air travel has been proved to be linked to increased carbon emissions and global warming

large infrastructure problems cannot escape having an effect upon landscape, the built environment and ecology

can environment factors be made paramount or at least increasingly influential on the design and build transport infrastructure without impacting on economic prosperity

Steps to Delivery

good design of infrastructure in urban areas which takes the ambiance of the built environment and of open space into account

improved location of housing in relation to other activities through mixed land use can reduce travel needs

development of urban transit systems when new housing estates are constructed. In the initial years there may need to be intervention through taxation on developers (development gain) or through intervention (e.g. subsidy). This will attract a share of the journeys to work onto public transport before new households invest in additional motor cars which will otherwise become the main transport mode

introducing road user charges at rates which vary with costs to the environment based on sections of road, areas and times of day

energy (mainly oil) consumption can be minimised through free flowing traffic on inter urban routes and orbital/radial routes in urban areas

many of the steps to delivery of social and economic issues can make a significant contribution to the achievement of sustainable objectives

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