

RTPI NEWS

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Planners must understand thinking behind people's transport decisions

While total carbon emissions are dropping, those from transport are rising and now account for a third of the UK's output. *James Gleave* looks at what transport planners can do to reverse this climate-damaging trend

In a move unforeseen by many transport planners, the DfT launched its low-carbon transport strategy last summer, setting out its plans for reducing the carbon impacts of transport in the UK.

There is a clear need for such a strategy. Data from the DECC shows that in 2007, transport accounted for 28 per cent of the UK's annual carbon emissions — 153 million tonnes per annum.

While overall carbon emissions have decreased by 8.5 per cent since 1990, transport emissions have risen by 8.5 per cent over the same time — the only end user to record an increase during this time. Producing this strategy was also required under the ambitious Climate Change Act 2008, which aims to reduce national carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

Of particular interest to many was the strategy's focus on technology, infrastructure and better public transport services. Incentives for low-emission transport and proposals for high-speed rail drew particular attention. However, what is perhaps the most important element of the strategy — promoting more sustainable travel modes — has been largely overlooked.

While better technology and infrastructure play an important part in a low-carbon future, the primary role of these interventions is to provide opportunities for more sustainable travel.

What planners need to do as a matter of urgency is to change people's attitudes towards how they travel. However, as many people prefer to travel by car — a means contrary to a low-carbon future — this will be a challenging task. Research revealed by DEFRA in *A Framework for Pro-Environmental Behaviours* indicates that reducing



Car use: promoting more sustainable travel choices is key to strategy

car use is only deemed acceptable by 18 per cent of the population.

To meet the government's climate change goals, transport planners need to gain a fundamental understanding of what drives people's decisions about using transport. A failure to do that will mean that messages are ignored. Fortunately for transport planners, much of this work has already been done by sustainable transport planning strategy Smarter Choices, with some excellent results.

Six sustainable travel demonstration towns have shown that an intensive programme of Smarter Choices techniques, intended to influence people's travel behaviour, can reduce urban peak traffic by as much as 21 per cent. Travel plans can also cut commuting by car by 18 per cent.

Even the motor industry can be a source of inspiration. Can you recall recent advertisements for Nissan,

Vauxhall, Ford and others? And why do you recall those campaigns and not others?

All these approaches are based on the same idea — identify your market and message clearly and changes in attitudes will follow. This message needs to be consistent, interesting and relevant. After all, you don't see Peugeot using the same advertisements that it produced five years ago.

It is only when public attitudes change that the benefits of new infrastructure and services can be fully realised. Such a change takes a considerable amount of time and requires consistent effort and resources on behalf of transport planners, local authorities and the government. Action strategies will not be cheap, with the DfT's new search for a sustainable travel city estimated to cost £29 million over three years.

Without intensive programmes such as this to encourage people to think more about how they travel, targets for carbon reduction are unlikely to be reached. More critically, whether programmes are likely to survive the impending squeeze in public sector funding over the coming years, particularly the revenue on which such programmes rely, remains to be seen.

James Gleave is planning and transport planner at Central Bedfordshire Council. The views expressed are his own and are part of the Transport Planning Network (TPN)'s contribution to the RTPI's Planning to Live with Climate Change — Our Seven Commitments initiative. For more information, or to join the TPN, which is a forum for people with an interest in planning for transport, please email transport@rtpi.org.uk

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Transport planners need to gain a fundamental understanding of what drives people's transport choices

Marrying development and capital

Recently announced government initiatives will affect development planning systems and their delivery, explains *Janice Morphet*



Morphet: initiatives show promise

The relationship between development planning and capital investment took a major leap forward last month with new initiatives announced in chancellor Alistair Darling's pre-budget report (PBR).

The report included the establishment of advisory body Infrastructure UK. Also announced was capital spending streamlining programme Total Capital, based on the Total Place model which aims to identify and avoid service provision overlap and duplication within an area.

Planners now need to consider how these new initiatives will work and what their significance is for development planning. As a background to this, local development planning systems in Scotland, Wales and England all include a require-

ment to identify the resources and mechanisms available to support their delivery.

This has been taken furthest in England, with all local development frameworks now submitting an infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) to support the core strategy and area action plans. This includes working with delivery partners under the local strategic partnership.

IDPs have taken off over the 18 months since PPS12 was reissued in

June 2008. In the year ahead, the role of the IDP will become increasingly important in support of Homes and Communities Agency single conversation bids.

It is also a mechanism for identifying key infrastructure projects for sub-regional programmes to feed into new regional implementation plans that are now under way. This is a consequence of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

In Wales, infrastructure planning and delivery processes are established at regional level but these seem to have little relationship with development planning. In Scotland, the second national planning framework, also published last year, has been the main indicator for infrastructure investment priorities, albeit with less activity at local level. The four city-regions of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow could emerge to fulfil this role.

The PBR initiatives, which seem to have won cross-party support, suggest further developments in these processes. In England, the launch of Total Capital supports the

work that is already being carried out through Total Place.

In the pilot areas, including Birmingham and Swindon, there is now an established process to identify all possible sources of public sector capital funding, together with any barriers that prevent these streams being used together. Local development framework IDPs can support this strategy so they should be locked into the process.

At UK level, the founding of Infrastructure UK will provide a mechanism that can identify and support major infrastructure projects. Schemes already under way in Scotland and projects approved by the Infrastructure Planning Commission in England are prime candidates for support from the new body. The role of the local development plan IDP is central to all these processes, including bids and delivery, and is likely to grow in importance.

Janice Morphet is a director of RMJM Consulting and visiting professor at the Bartlett School of Planning at University College London.

Sign up to access experts in time of change

This year's Planning Convention will explore how planners can shape the future. *Kate Webster* reveals highlights of the planning event of 2010



Planning Convention: set to explore industry role in shaping the future

The 2010 Planning Convention will be bigger, more interactive and more relevant than ever before. It offers unbeatable value for money and essential information and inspiration for changing times.

Planning – Shaping the Future, to be held from 28 to 30 June at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London, will include hot topic discussions with a group of expert speakers. Those confirmed to appear include Sir Peter Hall, Town and Country Planning Association chief planner Hugh Ellis and Nick Cuff of CB Richard Ellis.

A new feature will be a *Question Time*-style event *Shaping the United Kingdom's Future*. The panel will include DCLG chief planner Steve Quartermain and Scottish Executive chief planner Jim McKinnon as well as representatives from Wales and

Northern Ireland. Delegates will hear directly from the people who are influencing national planning policy and have the opportunity to put questions to them.

A question facing UK planning is how to create a national strategy that is successfully delivered locally. The RTPI will be bringing together local and national representatives, including Swindon Borough Council deputy chief executive Celia Carrington and Homes and Communities Agency corporate director of

strategy, policy, performance and research Trevor Beattie to discuss this issue.

Looking beyond the UK, *Shaping the Global Future* will consider how international cities tackle climate change, particularly in the recession. Speakers including Cambridge-shire Horizons chief executive Alex Plant and Shelter director of communications, policy and campaigns Kay Boycott will discuss how effective planning can help shape the economic recovery.

Helping you prepare for whatever the future may bring, the RTPI is offering a choice of surgeries, including *Shaping Your Future Career in an Uncertain World* and a drop-in session with Quartermain and his colleagues from the DCLG. A series of practical and in-depth *New Knowledge, New Skills* workshops will equip delegates with usable skills to take back to work.

The RTPI's 2010 president Ann Skippers will talk on how the institute is shaping the planning agenda with an update on its seven commitments to climate change. Coming soon after the general election, delegates will also hear the latest on the politics of planning.

The event will close with its traditional debate chaired by consultant planner Kevin Murray, of Kevin Murray Associates. Hall and Ellis will be two of the speakers considering whether planning is the problem or the answer. Delegates can also be the first to see *Grotton Revisited – Planning in Crisis!* a satirical look at one council's planning strategy, which is to be launched during the convention.

Kate Webster is RTPI marketing officer. To book a place, please visit www.theplanningconvention.co.uk. For more details of the programme, visit www.rtpi.org.uk

Smarter choices show the way to sustainable transport

The effectiveness of different travel initiatives was investigated at a recent event, reports *Jon Harris*

The Smarter Choices event, supported by the RTPI, provided an opportunity for delegates to engage in the smarter travel debate. Presentations covered why smarter choices should be considered in planning, how the approaches are being embedded, lessons from case studies and what the future holds for making sustainable travel work.

The Highways Agency's regional manager for its influencing travel behaviour initiative Graham Riley showed the scope for incorporating smarter choices into policy. An example showed the provision of car sharing lanes on sections of motorway, which has proved successful in reducing journey times.

4NW regional transport adviser Dave Colbert presented the region's insight into sustainable transport's contribution to wider objectives. He offered an update into the Royal Statistical Society document, which is currently at the consultation stage. It was suggested that the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System goals will be a key driver for strategy and performance monitoring and tools such as carbon modelling will be central in the future.

MVA Consultancy director of smarter travel Conrad Haigh looked at the effectiveness of developing assessment tools and the use of software in managing travel plans, using London as an example.

Mouchel's contribution provided case studies of success in incorporating smarter travel initiatives early in the planning process, particularly in residential schemes. This overview showed the influence that initiatives such as street design can play and how to encourage indi-



Harris: pressing sustainable travel

viduals' adoption of smarter choices through targeted marketing.

Questions were raised on the successful implementation of residential travel plans and best practice guidance from other countries, with discussions on how to target a larger audience. The consensus was that there need to be infrastructure improvements alongside behavioural changes. Guidance such as the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) smarter travel guide will help in sharing best practice.

The DfT will be running free seminars covering the DfT-DCLG good practice guidelines on delivering travel plans through the planning process in March, supported by the IHT, RTPI, the Transport Planning Society and ACT Travelwise.

Jon Harris is technical director of smarter choices at Mouchel and a member of the RTPI transport planning network. To join the network, email transport@rtpi.org.uk. More details on the seminar will be available soon at www.ihf.org and www.rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Bulletin Board

Tenders sought on measuring the added value of Planning Aid
Planning Aid England and the RTPI wish to commission researchers to scope evaluation of the added value brought by the Planning Aid service to economic, social and environmental development outcomes. The recommendations will underpin the enhanced collection, assessment and use of Planning Aid data. The successful contractor will demonstrate expertise in the evaluation of third sector programmes and detailed understanding of community engagement and development processes. The deadline for tenders is 25 January. For information on the tender specification, please visit www.rtpi.org.uk/the_rtpi/tenders or email Peter Daws at contractsandcompliance@rtpi.org.uk

Conference explores progress in social housing delivery
A few free places are offered to RTPI network members in the public or third sectors for a conference on achieving sustainable housing goals. The event is to be held on 24 February at the Barbican in London and speakers include Hemingway Design co-founder Wayne Hemingway, Homes and Communities Agency corporate director for strategy, policy, performance and research Trevor Beattie, Empty Homes Agency chief executive David Ireland and Sustainable Energy Academy chairman John Daggart. They will explore how the £8.4 billion committed by government to its Building Britain's Future campaign will be distributed to deliver 155,000 energy-efficient homes. Also on the agenda are the successful regeneration of existing social housing, the implications of private finance initiatives and public-private partnerships and using the 784,000 empty UK properties. To book, please email your contact details to malmond@publicservice-delegates.co.uk and mention your membership of the RTPI network.

Events

Planning for Demographic Change
11 February. RTPI East of England. St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich. This conference will discuss whether the planning system is preparing for changes anticipated in the East of England and beyond, with speakers from the Office for National Statistics, the Met Office, the Optimum Population Trust, the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit and Suffolk County Council. Cost: £110 + VAT. To book, email eastofengland@rtpi.org.uk or call 01359 233408.

Green Space, Green Belt and Green Infrastructure Conference
24 February. RTPI Yorkshire. Leeds. Do pre-existing and new planning concepts conflict or support each other in modern spatial planning and development imperatives? This event will be part debate and part exploration of alternatives to current green belt policies, plus analysis of the implications policy-change could have for planners. Cost: £20-£110 + VAT. To book, call 0113 204 2464 or email yorkshire@rtpi.org.uk



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