The National Policy Perspective

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Social Impacts and social equity issues in transport workshop
St Anne’s College, Oxford, 15 September 2010
Key facts and figures

- By 2031, 27m of the UK population will be over the age of 50. Those aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 10% in 2008 to 23% by 2033.

- Disability rates increase with age: 9% of adults aged 16-24, about 44% in the 50 to retirement age category.

- Number of people on low incomes lower than early 1990s but much greater than early 1980s.

- 2/5 jobseekers say lack of transport is barrier to getting a job.

- 6% 16-24 year olds turn down training or further education because of transport problems.

- 31% people without a car have difficulties travelling to local hospital.
Why Accessibility is important

Links between transport, social exclusion and access to opportunities have a key impact on life chances and social mobility (‘Making the Connection’, Social Exclusion Unit, 2003)

Accessibility is about connecting people with jobs, services, facilities, family and friends. It can therefore help with:

- Maintaining independence
- Health
- Preventing social exclusion
- Employment

Problems exacerbated when live in areas with fewer opportunities and poorer services eg rural areas.

Not just a transport issue
**Policy context**

- Relevant commitments in the Coalition Agreement include:
  - promoting equal opportunities and achieving a fairer society
  - meeting the needs of low income groups, BME communities, children and older and disabled people
- Localism:
  - decentralisation of powers to individuals, communities and councils
- Spending Review 2010:
  - conduct in way that “protects the poorest and most vulnerable in our society”. Existing duties under equality legislation to consider impacts of proposed savings on women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people.
Barriers to using transport

• Accessibility – can a person actually board the bus, train or taxi, or access the station?

• Availability – is there an appropriate service level on a particular route?

• Affordability – can different groups afford the various travel options?

• Acceptability – are different groups deterred from travelling because of concerns about staff attitudes, crime, lack of information?
Improving access to public transport

- 31% compliant rail vehicles are already in service (42% heavy rail)
- 62% of buses low-floor
- £370m ‘Access for All’ fund
Further contributions to improving accessibility

- Accessible taxis (Equality Act 2010) – provisions aimed at increasing availability of accessible vehicles and ensuring assistance provided

- Community transport – Local Transport Act (Sections 19 and 22)

- Blue Badge Reform Strategy

- DfT contributing to personal mobility by supporting provision of assessments and advice to disabled people, to help them use cars for longer and safely
Availability

• Transport to be within easy reach of where people live
• Takes people to where they want to go
• At times and frequencies that suit
Affordability

- Supporting income levels
- Targeting specific groups
- Funding transport to specific services
- Concessionary fares
Acceptability

• Improve information to increase options and choices
• Promote training amongst operators
• Review bus conduct regulations
• Develop strategy for providing travel training to aid confidence
• Work on anti-social behaviour
Issues and Decisions (1)

- Need for robust evidence on the effectiveness of different transport interventions.
- Need to ensure transport is better understood outside the world of transport and Govt needs to engage better.

Accessibility

- We do not yet know how many disabled people or people with reduced mobility are using the increasing physically accessible transport system.
- Until all buses are fully accessible, should we require LAs to provide alternatives to concessionary bus fares for eligible people?
- Are we doing enough to encourage OGDs (& their statutory partners) to use accessibility planning?
Issues and Decisions (2)

Affordability – and the impact of the recession

• Should we be doing more to help young people and job seekers have cheap(er) bus fares?

• Should we be tackling high rail fares or promoting part time concessions for transport excluded groups?

• Are all eligible groups taking up their concessionary bus fares (e.g. BME groups)?

Availability

• What more can we do to help rural accessibility?

• Could/should we be looking at longer term funding for transport schemes?
Acceptability

- Is enough being done to improve the ‘whole journey’ experience?
- What role does DfT have to encourage greater customer care (particularly in bus travel)?
- What role does DfT have in widening people’s travel horizons (particularly job seekers)?
- What should we be doing to improve perceptions of and actual levels of transport crime (particularly in bus travel)?
Future challenges

- Demographic trends
- Budgetary constraints
- Exploiting technological developments eg smart card technology
- Engaging with other Government Departments, local authorities, operators, manufacturers, and disadvantaged people