Integrated transport and land use planning

The facts, fiction, fallacies and future of the Government's integrated transport and land use planning strategies ... plus answers to a good few mysteries

Construction Industry Council

Thomas Telford

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Foreword

One of the central purposes of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) is to align the views and diverse contributions of the wide ranging professional bodies of the industry – architects, builders, engineers, landscape architects, planners, project managers, research institutes, surveyors, transport planners and many others. In this way, the CIC can help to create a better quality of built environment.

In this mission, there can be no more important topic currently than that we, the inhabitants of the UK, are able seriously to debate, on the basis of the factual evidence, what must be done (and is being done) to improve the connectivity of our transportation networks and their relation to land use patterns.

Without continuous improvement through focused investment, the UK's outdated transportation system devoid of proper connectivity both between its individual components and with the spatial land use patterns it serves, will inhibit regional and national prosperity. Thus the quality of life to be enjoyed by all inhabitants will suffer.

To make real progress on this difficult complex issue it is necessary to try to lift the debate above rhetoric and fashion, away from party politics, in order to concentrate on the big picture and longer time horizons.

Accordingly, the CIC decided to build on the initiatives of the Urban Renaissance Task Group of Lord Rogers and the Urban and Rural White Papers by setting up a widely based working panel comprised of leading experts in planning and land use, transportation planning, architecture, urban design and property development, civil and environmental engineering, and municipal and rural affairs.

The result is this carefully compiled report researched on a multidisciplinary basis. The principal aim is to contribute clarity to the national, regional and local debate among politicians and lay persons alike.

The report has been written as a conversation piece to prompt wider discussion and debate. Whilst frank and critical at times is it is also strongly practical, being concerned to encourage focused action and investment (of inevitably limited resources) to greatest effect.

For the first time, the UK has a 10 year plan for transport which is in itself very significant. However, this is not yet linked to a 20+ year plan for national and regional spatial redistribution of economic development and land use planning, yet the two are complementary, and greater integration/co-ordination between them would bring long-term benefits by contributing to a change of attitude towards travel and through more effective and prudent investment of the nation's limited resources. Meanwhile, there is a danger that we the public are being encouraged to expect too much from current strategies.

On behalf of CIC, I hope this publication will prompt informed debate and argument – passion even – and lead to changes being made to current thinking and strategies and so assist in solving our country's serious transport and land use problems.

My great thanks to David Green for chairing and championing this report and for the time, intellect and experience generously contributed by all panel members to its rounded content.

Michael Dickson FREng
Chairman of the Construction Industry Council

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A. N. Other	(Known well to the Working Party but regrettably unable to admit his involvement, but not forgotten!)	

I am greatly indebted to all the members of the Panel for their input, advice, good-natured argument and good humour, and for their forbearance with my occasional lack of understanding and idiosyncrasies. That they were so willing to give so much time and thought to these issues does them and their companies/organisations much credit. I particularly wish to thank David Bayliss, Harley Sherlock, A. N. Other (who must remain nameless!), John Oldham, John Dean and Robert Upton for support well beyond the call of duty. I am grateful too for the help afforded by Nick Spencer as Secretary to the Panel and his diplomatic skills in keeping me at it. Finally, many thanks to Michael Dickson and Graham Watts for inviting and encouraging me to chair the Panel and write this 'conversation', which has been intellectually stimulating and a real privilege and pleasure.

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David Green FREng, FICE
Chairman of and Author to the Panel

Preface

Transport is now high on the political agenda. Past complacency by all political parties has turned to commitment. Promises are being made, and if improvements aren't delivered by the time of the next election, not only will some heads roll but it seems the balance of power in Parliament will change. The public now want improvements – they demand them – whether it's on the railways, on the roads or on the buses. They are fed up with talk and dogma and about jam tomorrow: they want action now and to see an end to jams today. The bandying about of billions of pounds of expenditure no longer cuts any ice with the public and doesn't seem to be cutting congestion or delays for passengers or freight. They want to see and experience real tangible practical benefits.

And because transport is something that everyone is dependent on, everyone experiences, everyone has views about it – their opinions being coloured and their demands influenced by what they suffer each and every day. Everyone can see for themselves what the problems are: on the roads, on the buses, on the rails, on the streets. The facts speak.

And Government, knowing the facts, seeing the dissatisfaction, says that it has the answers and it will all be better. Soon. All is under control. Just be patient – a little longer – and it will be sorted.

But what if the facts are misunderstood? What if fact is fiction? What if the answers are wrong? What then? What price the promises, the political fall-out?

Well, we believe that some of the so-called facts are fiction. That some of the answers are wrong; that some of the facts are misunderstood; and that some of the reasoning underpinning the present strategy is faulty. If we're right – and we think we are, providing chapter and verse herein – then the outcomes will be serious, politically, socially, economically and nationally. Worse still, valuable time and resources will have been wasted whilst the problems get worse and solutions

Bad news has a bad effect.

False good news has a worse effect.

even harder to find. We therefore feel we must speak up. We have no axe to grind, nothing to gain by putting our heads above the parapet, and are not peddling some vested interests. We are, we hope, being objective and unbiased.

There are several reasons behind the problem. They include:

- Much misunderstanding and confusion about:
  - Some of the terms used – even integrated transport and land use planning, the very rocks on which the Government's transport strategy (the '10 Year Plan') is built, as well as congestion, one of the main problems to be tackled.
  - What can and cannot be achieved through improved public transport.
  - What the public's real preferences, wishes and intentions are.
- Over-optimism and unrealistic expectations of what the current strategy can achieve.
- Too small a vision and too little imagination of how much better it all could and should be.
- Lack of meaningful and monitorable targets, meaning the strategy cannot be properly managed or the public ever know whether or not it's succeeding or failing.
- Too little enthusiasm for making something – anything – happen.

Therefore we seek herein to blow away some of the confusion, explain some of the mysteries, explode some of the myths and distinguish between fact, fiction and fantasy.

And 'we' are a range of senior professionals – all movers and shapers in our respective fields having the respect of our colleagues – all concerned with some aspect of transportation and/or land use planning in our work-a-day worlds. Individually rather than collectively we are responsible from time to time for advising central or local government, industry or business on related matters or making decisions about investment in infrastructure or new developments. We include architects (building and landscape), housing and property developers, civil engineers, surveyors, transportation planners, environmental experts and researchers. Our backgrounds are varied – the public and private sectors as well as academia and research institutes; clients, consultants and developers; and all hues of political persuasion. We are occasionally on opposing sides! Herein, we have been direct – sometimes contentious – to make our points clearly; we recognise that on occasion this may have led to some oversimplification. Where so, we seek your indulgence.

And we don't all agree on everything herein – nor will no doubt all the members of the various bodies represented! Each of us have had to bite our tongues on occasion and compromise a little to help achieve our over-riding common aim: to better inform government – central and local – Parliament, industry, the professions and the general public – about what integrated transport and land use planning can and cannot achieve, so helping to ensure that sensible decisions are taken for the long-term benefit of the UK. We therefore seek to give clear, practical and (we think) affordable and timely advice as to the way forward. But, contrary to what some would have us and the public believe – there are no quick fixes, although with real Government commitment, some could – and should – be made much quicker!

Thus the title, *The Facts, Fiction, Fallacies and Future* ….

Our report

- is written informally that it might inform many people
- is succinct that it might be read
- is frank that it might awaken interest and concern
- is practical that it might lead to action
- is conversational that it might prompt wide discussion and debate.

Introduction

Some ideas gain a credence and following quite beyond their worth or achievability. From the South Sea Bubble in 1720 to Dot Com companies in 2001, history illustrates how prone we can be to believing what we want to believe and that the latest technological advance or concept will in next to no time and at little cost give us untold riches. In consequence, hopes are raised to unrealistic levels and investment follows, leading to:

- embarrassment and frustration when the expected outcomes and returns don't materialise
- political and government ambitions and professional reputations are undermined as it becomes clear that promises can't be fulfilled or only at a cost in monetary, social or freedom terms that is impossibly high or disproportionate to the expected benefits or in a timescale which is way beyond the public's horizon
- an awareness from hindsight that scarce resources have been misspent and valuable time wasted in the pursuance of unrealistic aims, making it even more difficult and pressing to overcome the original problem which meanwhile has grown in extent, whilst confidence in other untried options has been undermined.

Of course, many dreams do materialise, many ideas and initiatives do lead to step changes in the advance of humankind and many suggested solutions do deliver their intended results or sometimes provide greater benefits than even the most optimistic proponents had initially envisaged. Alexander Graham Bell when asked *circa* 1876 whether he thought his telephone would prove useful, said modestly that he anticipated that one day there would be one in every town!

The *Guardian*, June 1997

John Prescott: 'I will have failed if in 5 years time there are not many more people using public transport and far fewer journeys by car. It's a tall order but I urge you to hold me to it'

It's now 2002. Time's up!

Sometimes likely faults, limitations, misunderstandings or false assumptions become apparent early on, providing opportunity to abort, change direction, amend the methodology or lower expectations before much effort and resources have been expended and with minimum loss of face or time.

Extracts from the 2000 urban White Paper, *Our Towns and Cities: The Future*

Some statistics/facts (relating to England):

- 3.8 million more households by 2021 (a 19% increase over the number in 1996)
- Migration from urban areas into rural towns and countryside: 90,000 annually between 1991 and 1997.
- Urban areas provide 89% of jobs.
- Only 9% of the population live in very high-density areas; the rest of urban residents live in 'suburbs' of medium density.
- In contrast with some other European nations, we have proportionally more houses than flats.
- Culture, leisure and sport are increasingly becoming economic sectors in their own right.

Consequences of urban exodus:

- Dispersal of the population.
- Greater distances for all journey purposes.
- Greater dependence on car use.

Proposed actions include:

Overall, a new vision of urban living through attractive and well-kept towns and cities; design and planning geared towards enabling sustainable living; creating and sharing prosperity; quality services; people shaping the future.

Changes will include:

- More jobs by 2004.
- Crime reduction with set targets.
- Higher standards of education.
- Efficient public transport.
- Improved social housing.
- Better health services.
- Improved targets for reusing land.

We think that that applies to the Government's transport strategy, 'Transport 2010 – The 10 Year Plan', in which *integrated transport* and *land use planning* are some of the main policy initiatives to help solve this country's transportation and socio-economic problems. If we continue down the current path there is a serious risk that the hoped-for benefits won't materialise, and in consequence as a nation we will have wasted time and scarce resources and made no significant advance on solving the underlying problems, which meanwhile will have grown in scale and complexity. The likely outcomes will prove to be seriously deficient compared with what are needed and probably won't even be noticeable insofar as reductions in congestion, the quality and reliability of journeys by public transport and carbon dioxide emissions are concerned. Yet the impression continues that the current integrated transport strategy (with a spoonful of land use planning thrown in) is the panacea for all our current and future concerns from congestion to meeting our Kyoto Protocol targets, to facilitating cheap and accessible transport for all between anywhere and everywhere. It is misunderstood as a concept, and the ways in which it is being pursued are likely to prove ineffective whilst minds have been closed to rethinking the principles or to variations.

As a country therefore, we are in danger of putting our belief (and economic well-being) in false dreams and inadequately thought-through principles and policies.

The First Annual Report from the Commission for Integrated Transport, published in the autumn of 2000, endorsed the Government's Ten Year Plan by supporting the approach of 'focusing the lion's share on public transport, local transport and maintaining the road and rail networks'. Lord Macdonald responded by saying that we now had the building blocks in place to deliver our integrated transport strategy.

At the same time, land use planning (seen as a means to make a significant reduction in travel patterns and the need for travel) is even less well understood and more difficult to manage whilst its ability to make any noticeable change in a reasonable time is limited. The statistics in the box on the preceding page well illustrate both the demands and the limitations. Economic, employment and environmental factors, public preferences and desires, population and household growth, precedents, local and regional competing priorities, international pressures, new and changing technologies, sunset and sunrise industries – all have impacts, many beyond either the ability or will of central or local government to foresee or influence. Over the years there have of course been some notable achievements – the establishment and protection of our National Parks, the retention of green belts, the belated curbing of out-of-town shopping centres and, more recently, maximising the re-use of brown-field sites and encouraging the enlivening of city and town centres through increasing within them the proportion of residential development.

Land use planning can 'enable' reductions in travel demand, but doesn't secure these on its own. It should be seen more as a contribution to reducing travel demand by allowing a choice of lifestyles less dependent on car use and a means to help change public attitudes to the car-culture. We must not be carried away on a flight of fancy that land use planning can – or will – make any marked difference for the better in overall travel patterns or congestion in the next decade save occasionally in some very specific local circumstances. Indeed, the pointers are that things will get worse in the coming 10 years. But, in the long run, improved land use planning today will prove itself by helping to reduce distances travelled in the future. The significant gains should come through the location – even relocation – of certain 'magnets' (hospitals, distribution centres, industrial estates, schools, etc.) or changes in policy which reduce the need to travel to such centres, but in the main, I – and I guess most of us – won't be around to see the effects! That, though, is no excuse for not taking it seriously. For land use planning, the future starts NOW, and it needs to be pursued in tandem with any debate and actions on implementing an integrated transport strategy.

Sights need to be raised, as does the current low appreciation of the importance of transport infrastructure to the economic and social well-being of our country and to its industry and people. We are woefully behind our EU partners in those respects, whilst other emerging countries with whom we are increasingly likely to compete see investment in such infrastructure not only as vital but likely to give big dividends in the medium to long term. Sadly, it's still seen in the UK as expenditure to be avoided.

The phrase 'public services', which seems to engender so much argument and rhetoric, just needs transposing a little: 'services for the public'. It really doesn't matter a fig who provides them, providing they are provided! If the effort that goes into arguing the toss between public and private provision was invested in actually delivering the services, we'd all benefit and notice the improvements.

Thus:

- First, we seek to explain the basic issues and separate fact from fiction.
- Secondly, we unravel many of the mysteries and myths.
- Thirdly, we focus attention on what needs to be done and how.

Enjoy the conversation! Start talking about the issues to others. Press for action!

Executive summary

Four major conclusions

1. The expectations of what the Government's strategy, 'Transport 2010 – The 10 Year Plan', can achieve are unrealistic.
2. The public and industry continue to be misled into believing that real change for the better is on the horizon whereas the truth is that in the foreseeable future things will get worse.
3. Improvements to public transport alone will not solve congestion.
4. Land use planning – spatial planning – can make a difference long term: that future starts NOW.

Six recommended actions

1. Refocus investment to where it will give better and best value to the economy
2. Accept the need for direct charging on busy roads, subject to the income being reinvested in transport infrastructure. The Government to lead from the front.
3. Invest in additional road capacity in key corridors and pinch points – both on the strategic network and in some urban areas.
4. Create a new partnership for the railways with clear and realistic objectives which all parties sign up to.
5. Get on with improving the London Underground – for the future as well as the past.
6. Councils to be set targets for congestion reduction.
7. Fast-track infrastructure of national and regional importance – fast.
8. Introduce national spatial planning policies.

Yes – we know we have eight not six recommended actions. But that's because we want to make the point that far, far more needs to be done than promised!

A diagrammatic summary

Our view on the Government's transport and land use strategy. (Congratulations on having one – we mean it, whatever else follows!)

Aspect	Succinct summary	Our view
Strategy (game plan)	Takes an integrated approach to transport planning (giving equal emphasis to road, rail, public transport, air, cycling and pedestrians) and land use planning	Best idea around but in its present form won't deliver what is claimed
Goal	To transform the nation's transport system over 10 years	Will miss (by some distance). No-one will notice any difference. The hype is hope, not reality
Aims (by 2010)		
Public transport	High-quality public transport locally and nationally – with more choice and more integration	Will be improvements but not enough to woo people from their cars
Less congestion	Reduction of 5%	Will be worse than it should be; better than it might be; not as good as it needs to be
National rail	50% increase in passenger journeys; 80% increase in freight; less overcrowding; more high-speed trains	Trying to get a quart into a pint pot. No-one will be satisfied. Unreal
London Underground	A transformation!	May eventually make up for past inaction but still won't match future growth or deliver what London needs. Funding/ structure proposals flawed – bonds are better – but no more arguing, action now
Environment	Less adverse impact.All modes more sustainable	Technology will reduce noxious emissions – not the strategy. That's about it
Land use planning	Will reduce travel demand and car (and lorry) dependency and impacts	No early dividends. Worthwhile in the long run – which starts NOW!
Social inclusion	Improved accessibility, choice and quality for all	Gains likely to be offset by higher charges. Don't rely on transport to make it happen
Pedestrians and cycling	Easier walking. Treble the number of cycle journeys	Unnoticeable change
Freight	More on rail. Less congestion on the strategic road network	A bit more on rail AND more on roads
Dependencies		
Private sector finance	50% contribution	Providing the Government guarantees it
Local government	Has to deliver the policies locally, including raising some cash	Will fail unless the Government leads from front
Processes	Have to deliver projects, finance and land use planning	Many projects/concepts will fall at this hurdle

A commentary on our views, recommending changes and actions, follows.

Proposed change	Recommended actions
Strategy Recognise that: ❍ Current strategy won't deliver what's been promised ❍ Modes are not equal	1. Cross-party agreement to a long-term adequately funded transport strategy 2. Set new realistic objectives 3. Refocus investment to where it will do most good
Goal ❍ Plan for at least 20 years – not 10 ❍ Increase momentum (it's gone off the boil)	4. Build on and extend the current 10 Year Plan 5. Set clear long-term aims and understandable and monitorable intermediate targets
Aim: public transport ❍ Refocus on bus rather than light rail ❍ Accept the need for greater bus regulation	6. Promote and require quality bus contracts 7. Lessen infatuation with light rail, redirecting resources to more cost-effective unimpeded bus routes
Aim: congestion ❍ Start taking it seriously ❍ Stop assuming that public transport improvements alone will cure it ❍ Stop retaining it as a deterrent to car use	8. Accept the need for direct charging 9. Invest income therefrom in increased capacity/quality 10. Implement a capacity improvement programme in the most critical corridors and urban pinch points 11. Set targets for congestion reduction in urban areas: name and shame
Aim: national rail ❍ It's now in such a mess that we hesitate to add to the turmoil. Perhaps sufficient to plead for an end to a blame culture and a start to a partnership culture	12. Reduce the plethora of competing demands/priorities 13. Initiate a partnership agreement between the players
Aim: London Underground ❍ Just get on with it and more of it! ❍ Regard it as an investment – not as an expenditure to be avoided	14. Stop the bickering and start building 15. Complete the three new lines 16. Invest further for the future, not just to remedy the past
Aim: environment ❍ Recognise technologies will make the difference in the short to medium term – not the strategy	17. Retire all pre-K (1993) registered cars (and pay for this as in France) and so halve harmful emissions 18. Seriously tackle congestion to bring environmental benefits
Aim: land use planning ❍ Enhance its role looking for mid- to long-term benefits	19. Introduce spatial land use planning at the national level 20. Encourage mixed and compact developments 21. Concentrate on magnets – major attractors – to help maximise public transport dependency
Aim: social inclusion ❍ Accept the limitations of what this strategy can achieve	22. Stop pretending that much can be achieved on this front, through the strategy
Aim: pedestrians and cycling ❍ More care/attention to footways and maintenance	23. Redirect investment in cycleways; currently often a waste
Aim: freight ❍ Accept that freight is poorly served by current strategic roads/rail network and that more capacity required	24. Introduce freight-only lanes on some strategic roads 25. Duplicate some main rail lines to provide increased capacity
Dependency: private sector finance ❍ Lever it in by whatever means necessary ❍ Recognise that this brings in little extra real money	26. Manage the risks (including guarantees for the loans) in the most cost-effective ways 27. Be prepared to invest public funds directly where necessary
Dependency: local government ❍ Central government to stop passing the buck on the difficult parts of the strategy to local government	28. Central government to lead from the front, not the back
Dependency: processes ❍ Give over-riding priority to projects of national and regional importance	29. Fast-track planning and approval of national and regional projects

Integrated transport and the 10 Year Plan

Understanding the issues

What is integrated transport?

It depends
who you are,
where you are,
what you want it to be,
what you want it to do!

If you're the public, rightly or wrongly you probably think it means one or more of the following, the choice depending on what sort of journey you've just had:

- A seamless journey using different means of transport, which will readily take you (and whoever you want to go with) wherever you want to go, whenever you want to go (and of course get you back – even late at night and at weekends) with minimum hassle.
- A means by which:
  - public transport will be more attractive and convenient
  - congestion will be reduced so that it's no longer a problem
  - trains will run on time, be reliable, clean, comfortable and safe
  - much freight will be shifted from road to rail
  - we – not you of course – will give up our cars in favour of public transport, cycling or walking
  - all the country's transport problems will be solved.

On the other hand you may have grown cynical over the last few years as you've seen everything worsen on the roads and rail and think it's just a means to:

- Make life so uncomfortable for the car driver that he/she has little option but to use public transport!
- Get the motorist, business and industry to pay more through congestion charging and/or parking.

If you're central government, you probably think it means joined-up integrated policies and regulatory frameworks that work together to help enable and ensure that:

- seamless journeys can and do happen
- people are persuaded to use public transport in preference to their cars
- there's a meaningful foundation on which to build the nation's 10 year transport strategy
- road congestion, harmful emissions and anything else that's bad can be overcome by 2010!
- social inclusion can be improved
- no-one will notice that their freedom is being restrained
- more money can be raised without increasing taxes
- it's so complicated that whatever happens or doesn't happen you'll be able to claim that things have improved
- you'll get returned to power on the back of it!

If you're a bus or train company, you probably think it means:

- a seamless journey using your company's facilities with minimum reliance on other undertakings
- contributing travel information (times/connections/fares/routes) to central agencies who interface with the broader travelling public
- co-ordinating your company's timetables (and routes – so far as is possible) with those of others to maximise passenger numbers and use of your services and thus profitability
- having regard to the timetables and routes of other competing companies to help ensure that you maintain and ideally increase market share.

If you're local government you probably think it means:

- something you strive for in conjunction with local planning and transport policies and practices
- enabling and trying to ensure the provision of integrated local travel information (times, fares, connections, routes, parking) for the several modes – buses, trains, taxis, cycling, walking – is provided in user-friendly ways.
- real-time electronic information at all bus stops
- a way to increase investment in public transport rather than roads with the aim of reducing car use and thus congestion
- a major plank in central government's transport strategy which you'll ignore at your peril (i.e. loss of grant)
- a chance to raise some extra cash for hard-pressed services by charging motorists for adding to congestion and/or workplace parking
- a useful phrase which sounds convincing and can mean anything to anyone at anytime.

If you're business/industry you probably think it means measures to:

- make most motorists travel by public transport so freeing up the roads for the movement of freight
- try and force you to transfer much of your freight movements from road to rail
- a way for the Government to avoid/delay increasing road capacity.

So which is right? And please don't say they're all right!

Sorry – but yes – there's some truth in all of them! That's because, unfortunately, integrated transport has come to mean all things to all people. There's no single definition, no single overriding aim. That's part of the problem. People are all focusing on – expecting, hoping – for different things.

But someone must have thought it up? What did they reckon it meant?

A bit embarrassing this. We believe it was first coined in December 1982 in an episode of 'Yes Minister' ('The Bed of Nails') when the Minister, Jim Hacker, accepted with alacrity the appointment of Transport Supremo with the task of drawing up an Integrated National Transport Policy. His naivety was soon pointed out to him by Sir Humphrey (see the Appendix – page 97)! So seemingly, was Integrated Transport born. If so, then it would be apposite don't you think? Anyway, whatever its pedigree, the phrase has stuck, though it would be better – more realistic and accurate – to call it a 'coordinated transport strategy'. Integrated means 'a unified whole', to which no-one can reasonably aspire.

Well, 'unified whole' or not, which ideas are the most right and the most wrong?

Most wrong

The idea that:

- It will reduce congestion.
- It will shift freight from road to rail.
- It will cause a significant number of people to give up their cars.
- It is a cure-all.

Most right

The idea that:

- It is the foundation of the nation's 10 year transport strategy.
- The strategy is insufficient.
- Congestion will get worse.

- There will be improved travel information and ticketing.
- There will be greater investment in public transport at the expense of roads.
- Things won't improve significantly for cars or rail users.
- Greater priority will be given to public transport and goods vehicles.
- Cars and roads are out. Buses, bikes, boots and trains are in.
- Life will be made harder and more costly for car owners through congestion and workplace parking charges.
- Interchanges will become more user friendly.
- Air transport has a growing role in domestic transport.
- Oh – and because it's unclear as to what it is, excuses will be made and no-one held accountable.

But, surely, if integrated transport is at the heart of the Government's transport strategy, it must have defined it?

Sorry, but no.

- It's not in the 1998 White Paper that sets out the Government's transport policies.
- It's not in the Government's 10 Year Plan.
- It's not even in the Annual Report of the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT).
- In fact, nowhere is it simply defined.

So what do you think it – this integrated transport strategy/ 10 Year Plan thing – means?

Well, what we think it's come to mean in government speak is trying to deliver a transport system that embraces the car as well as alternative modes (i.e. trains, buses, cycling, walking, etc.) which supports sustainable development (i.e. not doing something today which messes it up for everyone else tomorrow!).

Say again!

Trying to deliver a transport system that meets the needs of people and business irrespective of whether these are served by road or rail, public or private, freight or passenger, taking equal account of cars, planes, trains, buses, cyclists, pedestrians, and planning policies.

In essence the transport strategy is a good thing, and whatever its shortcomings we should at least acknowledge that the Government has had the foresight to set out a longer-term policy and plan. We moaned when we didn't have one and now that we do have one we complain that it's inadequate. Thus, despite the criticism herein – which we hope is constructive – it takes nothing away from our recognition of the merit of a 10 Year Plan and several of its enterprising features.

So what actually is the current strategy?

That's a bit complicated but we'll try and make it simple, though in so doing we might gloss over a few matters of importance. In trying to compress a few hundred pages into about ten lines you're bound to miss out something!

The overall strategy has a very worthy goal of transforming our transport system over the next 10 (sorry, now about 8) years – by 2010. And we should be glad that we at least have a longer-term plan. By then the aim is that there should be:

- high-quality public transport locally and nationally – basically more of everything, more choice and more use – with integrated (let's say 'co-ordinated') information, ticketing, connections, planning and management
- less congestion
- a transport system that makes less impact on the environment.

The Government says that land use planning will help contain demand and growth of journeys and thus traffic as will the £121 billion …

Oh no! Not more billions! Give it a rest. There's been billions for this and billions for that …

I understand! You're a bit sensitive to the use of billions to explain what's going to happen – the NHS, education, roads, rail. So let's put it into more understandable terms. A billion pounds is about £17 for each and every person in the UK or about £41 for each household. So, when the Government says that £121 billion is going to be spent over 10 years on transport that's about £500 per year per household. But (there's always a but!)

- some of it is due to come from local councils and
- about half is due to come from the private sector as it invests in buses or railway rolling stock or certain roads say – which hopes to get it back through a combination of the fares or charges people pay or by capital repayments from the Government.

Whether the private sector really invests that sort of money will depend on how sure it is that it will make a satisfactory return on it and whether the Government will continue to fund its share. At the moment, expecting the private sector to come up with all of what's required looks as if it's going to be either a bit dodgy or a bit pricey – not least because of what's happened to Railtrack. There's a few question marks over local councils too.

Then remember that, like all of the Government's spending plans, it's subject to the country's economic growth matching forecasts, and of course no U turns being made or the cash being put to some other use.

So if one partner fails to deliver their part, then the whole strategy is put in jeopardy. That could well happen.

But all I want to know is what will it mean for me? Will it make life better for me?

The temptation is to look at each mode – roads, rail, buses, biking, walking, etc. – separately but that wouldn't be integrated! Thus it's necessary to break it down into:

- urban areas
- rural areas
- inter-urban

and, of course,

- London.

Why 'of course London'?

Because it's different in so many ways. Size, structure, politics (it's got it's own mayor with specific responsibilities for transport), international standing, its underground system, …

OK. I've got the picture. So …?

So in **urban areas** it should mean:

- more light-rail or tram lines
- more reliable bus services, including some guided-bus schemes and new links to under-served urban areas
- up to 100 park and ride services
- congestion down by more than 5% on recent (year 2000) levels in major cities
- more facilities for cyclists – even though only 0.6% of trips are by bike, and falling: an example of the danger of dogma driving decision making
- possibly some congestion and workplace parking charging.

Rural areas should get

- bypasses – 50 odd
- regular buses – an hourly service within a 10 minute walk for a third more rural households
- support for various community transport projects.

And in **both urban and rural areas** local councils will be responsible for making it happen, helped by increased funding from Whitehall and the raising of extra cash through things like congestion charging, fares, parking and Private Finance Initiative ('PFI') schemes. The last will help lever in private sector cash and so get jam today but paying for it – like a mortgage – tomorrow and the next day and the next … for 20 years or so. And just like a mortgage – the repayments will have first call on councils' and the Government's cash, and those pre-commitments will limit future flexibility.

Much of that funding will be subject or linked to Government approval of local transport plans – sort of annual local strategies – so ensuring that councils toe the line and don't go off and do their own thing or spend it on something else, which is what a lot of them have done in the past – that being part of the reason why so many roads have been so poorly maintained.

In reality councils have to ask what the people want locally but then have to do what the Government wants nationally. In that way, councils will get the blame if nothing changes for the better and the Government will claim the accolades for any successes. Clever, that!

And what about the M1, M6 and the M25 and all those other blocked up motorways and me getting from here to there and so on?

That comes under the heading '**inter-urban**'. Here it's split between rail and roads.

For rail:

A bigger, better and faster *railway*:

- higher standards of safety, service and comfort
- reduced crowding
- the Channel Tunnel rail link plus upgrading of the East and West Coast lines
- improved protection and warning systems
- a 50% increase in passengers
- an 80% growth in rail freight
- cross rail links.

That target for a 50% increase in rail passengers over the 10 year period of the Government's transport strategy is, however, pretty meaningless on two counts:

- In terms of aiding or judging the integrated transport policies unless the increase arises from modal transfer, i.e. from car to train. Although there have been increases in rail use, a significant proportion of the rise on the strategic routes is the result of 'new journeys' – the filling of spare capacity in off-peak times – and not through the attraction of car users. Rail journeys on the London and South East rail systems have grown by 30% since 1994/95 whilst London Underground traffic has risen by 27% over the same period. Increases in commuting and off-peak travel lie behind the majority of those two rises, and it's not yet possible to say what proportions result from economic growth in and around London or from a transfer from cars.
- It fails to relate it to any qualitative terms – not comfort, reliability, seating availability, cleanliness, frequency or speed. The majority of passengers – certainly commuting passengers – want improvements in quality, not more people being squashed into already overcrowded, grubby carriages with uncertain departure and arrival times.

18 February 2002. Stephen Byers published Rail Performance Indicators …

- punctuality and reliability
- safety
- quality – the average age of the rolling stock.

Byers said: 'This set of indicators focuses on the issues that matter most to passengers: punctuality, reliability, safety and quality …'.

But what a way to measure quality! The age of the rolling stock! Really! Is that it? And there are no targets for improvement whilst the base benchmarks are so low that it will be practically impossible not to show some improvement over time!

But if you think the trains are overcrowded now and likely to get worse before they get better, just wait till you get a few pages further on to see how many bodies are involved in making and bringing about change on the railways. It makes the 8.07 a.m. from Aylesbury look empty!

For roads:

Targeted improvements to the existing *road network*:

- widening of 360 miles of trunk roads
- 80 junction improvement schemes
- better traffic management
- speeding up the introduction of cleaner fuels and cleaner vehicles
- reducing congestion by around 5% on recent (year 2000) levels.

And in London?

London *should* get:

- a transformation of the Underground
- better bus services
- at least two new tram or guided-bus systems
- an extension of the Docklands Light Railway to the City Airport
- Crossrail or a similar east–west link
- East Thames river crossings
- congestion charging (or road tolling).

Investment in the London Underground

£16 billion to be spent upgrading the Underground … but that's over 15 years – roughly £1 billion per year.

There were 970 million passenger journeys made in 2000–2001, so the planned investment is about £1 per journey. (Meanwhile it's losing 29p on every journey made.)

We say 'should', rather than 'will' get, since the transformation of the Underground is dependent on the public–private partnership (PPP) on which work was started in 1997 but which was only finally agreed by the Government in early 2002: four years of cost and effort and enormous legal and accountancy fees quite apart from design costs – without anything to show so far. Four years in which nothing has actually been done on the ground; four years in which the Underground has been crying out for transformation; four years in which a bad situation has become far worse. What are we about as a country – the fourth largest economy in the world – that we can't sort out the Underground? It makes one weep, and we should be ashamed of ourselves for letting it happen, and this Government and past Governments should be ashamed of themselves. Sorry about that, but it needs to be said. Get on with improving the Underground, and while your about it don't just do so to remedy problems from the past but build on what we've inherited and increase capacity and expand the network to meet and attract future demand. Now, where were we?

You were outlining the strategy. And that will make everything right?

Er … no, not exactly – in fact not even inexactly. *The idea that the planned improvements to public transport alone will overcome congestion and transform urban areas is unrealistic*.

What do you mean 'unrealistic'?

Well, to be truthful and blunt – a nonsense. Not a chance.

By aiming to get congestion to less than it was in 2000 and 50% more passengers on trains – when everyone is already outraged by conditions on both road and rail – means that, in 2010, even if the Government does succeed in meeting those targets, it won't be nearly good enough to satisfy the public's expectations – let alone meet the country's needs.

The best that can be hoped for is for public transport to be a bit more attractive to some than sitting in a car in congestion – but that's not the same as reducing congestion.

So how will we know when we've got as much as they expect us to get? When we've 'arrived'? When we've got 'integration'?

Er…. we won't.

What do you mean we won't? What's the point of having a transport strategy – a 10 Year Plan – if you don't know whether it's delivering – has delivered – what you wanted it to in the first place?

Because no-one has yet said what they expect – let alone require – an integrated transport strategy to achieve specifically – in the round as it were. There are some options that local councils can take up if they wish, and some broad objectives and several targets – but they're not, well, *integrated*. By that I mean, they are largely independent of each other, and some aren't defined and thus aren't measurable let alone monitorable. You can see what I mean from Table 1.

You see the problem? In many cases there aren't any targets, and where there are targets, many are so bland and broad that they're hardly monitorable let alone measurable – certainly not by or for the public. And if they can't be measured, how can they be managed? How is anyone to know whether the strategy is on course or the public to be convinced that the Government's delivering?

That all looks a bit suspect to me:

- congestion is expected to get worse and then get better, but only to as bad as it is now
- there's to be 50% more rail journeys on the same lines by 2010 even though they're overcrowded now
- buses don't seem to have to get any better from now on
- there are no targets for actually moving people out of cars and on to buses or trains or for improving the reliability and time of travel for motorists
- and the motorist and haulier might have to pay for using some roads on top of what they already pay.

Or have I missed something?

No – that's about the measure of it.

Table 1. *Targets in (or not in!) the 10 Year Plan*

Topic	Target
Inter-urban roads: road congestion on the inter-urban network and other strategic roads	Below year 2000 levels by 2010
Rail use (measured in passenger kilometres)	Increase from 2000 levels by 50% by 2010
Bus use in England (measured by the No. of passenger journeys)	Increase from 2000 levels by 10% by 2010
Light rail (measured by the No. of passenger journeys)	Double from 2000 levels by 2010
Air quality	Improve by meeting national air quality strategy targets (for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1,3-butadiene)
Greenhouse gas emissions	Reduce by 12.5% from 1990 levels by 2010
Road accidents (No. of people killed or seriously injured – KSI)	Reduce by 40% by 2010, and the No. of children killed or seriously injured by 50% compared with the average for 1994–1998
Rail freight	Significant increase in share of freight market by 2010 to around 10% from 7% in 2000
Rail passenger satisfaction	Monitor only
Local transport:	
Cycling	Treble No. of cycling trips compared to 2000
Rural areas	Achieve a one-third increase in proportion of households within a 10 minute walk of an hourly or better bus service by 2010
Extra powers (if local councils want to use them)	(For noting only: congestion charging and workplace parking charges)
Bus reliability	By June 2001 no more than 0.5% of services cancelled for reasons within operator's control
Bus fleet	Average age down to 8 years by June 2001
Bus punctuality	None. Local authorities to set targets
Bus passenger satisfaction	None. Monitor only
London:	
Rail overcrowding	Reduce by 2010 to meet Strategic Rail Authority standards (i.e. all passengers expected to have seats for journeys of over 20 minutes. For shorter journeys, a train would usually count as being overcrowded when more than 30% of passengers are standing)
Passenger satisfaction	None. Monitor only
London Underground journey times	No specific targets yet: to be agreed with the Mayor
Road maintenance:	
Strategic road network	None. Maintain in optimum condition
Condition of local roads	Halt deterioration by 2004. Eliminate backlog by 2010
Modal share (i.e. passenger journeys covering car, public transport modes, cycling and walking)	None. Monitor only
Freight intensity (change in overall freight traffic and lorry traffic relative to GDP)	None. Monitor only

Source: the 10 Year Plan (Tables 6.22, 6.33 and 6.62 and Annex 2).

So how am I – how is the general public – to know whether things have got better or got worse if there are no measurable targets that I – they – can understand or check out and whether all this enormous investment is giving value for money – my money?

With difficulty I'm afraid. It would be much better if central government required each local council to set some targets for time and reliability of travel by car, lorry, bus, train, foot and bike say from A to B, C to D, E to F and so on (and back again of course) on a regular basis at different times of the day and year and published them so that we could all see what was happening: where things were improving, where things were getting worse, and where the pinch points were, and what was being done to sort them. And they could do something similar for the number of journeys by car, bus, rail and so on, to see if there was a change in the modal split (i.e. how many were travelling by what means). And on trains they could measure not just punctuality and cancellations, as they do now, but overcrowding, seat availability, cleanliness and so on – and publish those results.

And why don't they?

Not sure. Perhaps nobody's thought of it. Or perhaps they think that if the ship's going down, what's the purpose in measuring its rate of descent!

Or the powers that be saw if that happened the public would know too much – know if things weren't getting better say?

Possibly. But you said that – not *me*!

But if we really do want things to improve then we need to know what's happening or not happening and be ready and able to hold someone to account. It's dogma, complacency and side-stepping of accountability that are the root causes of the current state of affairs; dogma which lacks objectivity; complacency by past and current Governments; complacency by us, the public, that we've been – still are – prepared to put up with such appalling transport systems and complacency by some who have been/are responsible for providing and delivering such services and systems; an inability for anyone to be really held to account as Ministers make promises in unsound sound-bites that are quickly forgotten or can be later avoided through a lack of measurable data. But like school and hospital league tables – if the public knew the facts about transport then they'd have the reason and means to demand change for the better.

Why do we want this integrated transport strategy then?

In principle, it makes sense to look at all the various means of travel, land use and transport needs issues together and then try and get a balance between the many competing demands, opportunities and resultant payoffs from investment/planning decisions. Before – if we're honest – there had been too much concentration on roads and travel by car and not enough on public transport and walking and cycling – and too much thought about transport and not enough on land use and planning. And on top of that, in the last few decades we've paid little heed to the impact of what we've been doing today on tomorrow's world.

So if the concept makes sense in theory, what's wrong with it in practice?

Let's see …

- The expectations of what it can achieve are unrealistic, from the transfer of car users to buses to reductions in congestion and more. (Unless the government and local councils go in really hard – probably unrealistically hard – and stick their necks out and introduce widespread congestion charging and workplace parking policies).
- The assumption that just because some aspect of integration works in one area (like London Travelcards whereby on the one ticket you can travel by bus, tube and train) doesn't mean that it's a panacea for all ills, for everywhere, everyone and everything.
- A false belief leading to complacency that real change for the better is on the horizon whereas the truth is that in the foreseeable future (10–15 years) things will get worse – much worse.
- False fears that the only cures might be worse than the disease – higher charges, environmental impact, lack of affordability, infringements on liberty – so an inclination to put up with the problems.

- Lack of effective means for the public and industry to monitor progress and hold people to account.
- Insufficient hard-headed pragmatism – policies being based on airy fairy notions about unproved alternatives rather than the likelihood that current trends will continue.

OK. So how realistic are the objectives and – dare I say it – targets, such as they are?

Better to call them aspirations, we think. In theory, if it all happened as the Government would like it to happen – if people reacted and responded as it'd like them too – if nothing went wrong – there could be some improvements but …

But in practice … I know what you're going to say. In practice …

Yes, in practice it won't all come up roses, and there are some underlying and fundamental wrong assumptions that have been made and that continue to be pursued even though it's now known that they're faulty – or at least very iffy.

Give me some for instances!

Well, take public transport. The assumption is that by improving the reliability, quality, services, information and ticketing of buses and trains, many car users will abandon their vehicle in favour of those modes. But experience shows – both here and abroad – that:

- Better buses mainly help people without cars.
- The average number of people in a car is 1.6 (1.2 for commuting) whilst for buses it's 10.8 (including London), 12.5 for London and below 9 outside, so the idea that a bus is particularly effective and efficient or will replace umpteen cars is wrong.
- The average percentage of people that use buses (outside a large metropolitan area like London) in Western Europe is 8%, whilst in England (outside London) it's already 6%. Thus the likelihood of achieving a significant shift from car to bus in most areas is minimal whilst a 2% increase on that 6% to bring it up to the EU average would translate into 30% more bus journeys being made here – a quite unrealistic shift overall. (In major conurbations the split is roughly 15% by bus and 85% by car.)

(**Sources**
National Travel Survey: 1998/2000 Update (DETR, 2000, Table 5.3)
London Transport Annual Report 1999–2000 (London Transport, 2000, p. 60)
Strategic Rail Authority (p. 6))

A 50% increase in bus use in metropolitan areas would only reduce car travel by 6¼% if all the additional bus riders were car drivers. In practice, only a quarter would be, so the reduction would be about 1½%.

- Car use in the UK is not significantly high, and is less than that in France, Sweden and Denmark, often countries that are held up as examples to us.
- The growth in train journeys over the past few years since privatisation (and ignoring the adverse impact of the Hatfield crash) has in the main been generated by extra journeys through improved marketing of off-peak offers rather than through attracting regular car users off the road.
- Oh – and of course – any space (less congestion) gained by some car drivers opting for other options will quickly no doubt be partly taken up by others! So we're likely to be back where we started with very little gained by all the investment in public transport. In fact, the Government aim for 2010 is that congestion will be just a smidgen under what it is now. But as the public don't actually know what it is now they'll have no way of telling whether the Government hits the target or not – and by 2010 they'll have forgotten what it was like in 2000 (the base year) anyway!
- The abandonment of the 'fuel duty escalator', which you'll recall increased the duty by more than inflation each Budget Day to make the cost of motoring higher and so deter car travel.
- And then, of course, there's bound to be some unforeseen problems on some of the associated construction projects and some will cost more than expected, so the cash won't go as far as expected. Something will have to give – or be given up.

We need to stop regarding transport projects just as construction projects and start seeing them as the delivery of a service.

Hang on! You're not suggesting that the Government and industry shouldn't invest anything extra in public transport? That can't be right!

No, far from it! Rather, I'm pointing out the dangers of the country relying too heavily on improvements in public transport to resolve the underlying problems of congestion. The facts and public opinion just don't bear that out.

What facts? How do you know? That's not what the Government seems to be saying ... and they should know

The facts arising from research by the Government's own departments (which are in the public arena), such as

- *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2000 Edition* (DETR, 2000)
- *National Travel Survey: 1998/2000 Update* (DETR, 2000)
- *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (DETR, 2000)

and from a Mori poll of public opinion conducted in 2001 – not for us but for the independent but Government-appointed Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT), chaired by one of the Government's special advisers – Professor David Begg.

Unfortunately, it seems that the Commission (which advises the Government on integrated transport policy) may have interpreted the results insufficiently objectively so that they appear to justify a policy of investment in public transport as a major means to reduce congestion – perhaps because that was what Government wanted – but without

- spelling out the limitations and implications of such a strategy
- working out whether its going to be the most cost and sustainably effective solution
  - saying who's going to pay for it
  - whether it's practical
  - if and when it might deliver the hoped for results
  - what the risks are of depending on such a strategy.

Table 2 helps illustrates the points. Over 50% of the poll respondents said that either they'd never use a bus or would only do so if – in effect – umpteen impractical improvements were first made. Difficult to interpret that as 'encouraging' or 'particularly supportive'!

Well, that seems a bit of a fiddle. If you're right aren't there serious implications for the sense of the strategy?

Well, let's say that like all statistics they can be interpreted differently, depending what you want them to say. Although the report does outline much dissatisfaction and anecdotal critical comments about public transport, we think that they appear to have taken a rather optimistic or narrow view of the opinions given by those interviewed in the Mori poll, and used them to bolster justification for their rather rocky policy – that improving public transport will largely solve the country's transport problems. Many of the items on the wish list are just that – unachievable or clearly unaffordable – yet in assuming that the public will transfer to public transport the CfIT seem to have ignored or at least down-played those facts. The poll clearly demonstrates that it is quite unrealistic to believe that – to misuse a 1960's expression – a significant number of people will 'burn their cars' and rely on public transport. Hardly a sound foundation on which the transport investment strategy for the nation should be built.

As an aside, have a think about the two questions in the boxes at the bottom of the opposite page. These are the kinds of questions and comparisons that need to be made. There are some hard choices, but just putting cash into everything without working out the comparative cost–benefits and prioritising investment accordingly isn't an integrated approach: rather, it leads to a misuse and waste of scarce resources and, worse, prolongs the agony of congestion and all that results from it, further delaying and undermining our ability to solve the problems. *There's a need to refocus investment to where it will give better and best value to the economy.*

***Table 2**. Comparison of respondents' views with the interpretation made in CfIT's report*[a]

What the CfIT said to the Government	What the respondents to the Mori poll actually said
'Encouragingly, people are telling the government "put in good public transport and we will use it" ' 'The public is particularly supportive of policies to expand and improve public transport' 'One in 5 of the population say improvements in public transport say it would make it easier for them to get the jobs they really want' 'One in three believe such improvements would have a positive impact on their social lives' *'Half the population say they would travel less by car if local bus services were better and one in three would do so if local train services were better'	About a third said that all the following would have to improve for them to consider using buses more: ❍ frequency (41%) ❍ punctuality and reliability (38%) ❍ journey times door-to-door to be similar to a car (27%) ❍ parking spaces at or around bus stops. (18%) ❍ cost of tickets (33%) ❍ lower cost of parking (17%) ❍ better connections (16%) ❍ modern/comfortable vehicles (15%) ❍ real-time information (minute by minute) (12%) ❍ plus 18 other like changes for the better (about 15%) 1 in 5 said that whatever was done they wouldn't use buses more 1 in 3 of the population said that whatever was done they wouldn't use trains – whether local or long distance – more 51% said that nothing would induce them to cycle more 80% said that much more investment was required in public transport before measures to reduce car usage should be introduced (In relation to the asterisked statement, the question posed did not ask respondents to define 'better' although as we've seen above, the list of improvements required to persuade even 1 in 3 to use buses more would be impossible to meet)

[a] *The CfIT Report 2001: Public Attitudes to Transport in England* (*MORI*) (CfIT, 2001).

Planned investment in the high-speed East Coast Line upgrade will marginally improve an already good service. Is that an appropriate aim or a sensible investment in integrated transport when one of the biggest problems is on the adjoining M1 which will be largely unaffected?

The 10 Year Plan is due to invest 10p per passenger kilometre travelled by public transport compared to 1p on roads. Is 10 times justified? Is it the right ratio?

I see what you mean. There's an over-reliance on public transport in solving the country's transport problems and so the current strategy won't deliver

Right! As we said in the Introduction, as a country we are in danger of putting our belief (and economic well-being) in false dreams and in inadequately thought-through principles and policies. Whilst transport dominates the local agenda – ahead of crime, health and education when people were asked what were the major problems they faced in the area they lived in – the Government is promising more than it can deliver. Neither the Government nor the country can afford to continue to believe that public transport, even as part an integrated policy, can solve so many of the problems.

Public sector spending on Transport in 1998–1999 was 35% down on that in 1994–1995 (after allowing for inflation.) It won't be until 2003–2004 that it will be restored to even 1994–1995 levels.

So it's not just the public and industry who should be concerned, but the Government too?

Yes – since the Government has now recognised that the public only have limited patience and if they don't deliver this time round they're unlikely to be forgiven through the ballot box next time round. And as we've seen, the strategy won't – can't – deliver what's actually required. Not a chance!

And the funding? How realistic is that?

Um. I thought you weren't interested in billions. Have a look at Table 3 and see what you think. But first, remember that although the numbers seem impressive it's not as much as was being put in a few years ago. It's small beer particularly when you recall how little has been done over the last 10 years and what now needs to be done to overcome the backlog, catch up with demand and develop the road, rail and bus infrastructures for tomorrow's needs. Even the All Party Transport Committee have said as much, and that's chaired by a Labour MP! And don't forget that business about relying on the private sector to come up with some dosh – almost half the total spend, mostly on the railways. That's £45 billion out of £96 billion over 10 years. Then there's the risk of possible cost overruns on large complex projects which are not yet fully designed let alone costed. Thus, it's unlikely that all the planned improvements will be achieved even if all the money is forthcoming. So whatever anyone from the Government tells you, take it with a pinch of salt.

It doesn't look good. I can begin to see why you think the 10 Year Plan is unlikely to deliver. But if it doesn't, where does that leave us?

In a pretty sorry state. What's happened – well, what's not happened – is really a disgrace. We can blame successive Governments for under-funding and failing to take their role as trustees of the country's infrastructure seriously; we can blame bodies like the National Audit Office and the Audit Commission for failing to speak up more effectively; we can blame legislation for making a pig's ear of bus and train competition and their management; we can blame managements; we can blame anyone and everyone who had a part to play, but didn't. But in the end it's we – you and I – the general public who were also at fault, for imagining that it can all be done on the cheap, that infrastructure will not only look after itself but grow and develop like a tree so allowing successive Governments to do nothing, or practically nothing, when they really knew better but also knew they could get away with it. Crazy!

And not only is there not enough money being spent but the way it's divvied up doesn't seem to make sense now either. Look at Table 3.

Note the figures highlighted in the fifth column of Table 3. Now look at Table 4.

***Table 3**. Expenditure by type of traffic according to the 10 Year Plan*

Mode	Expenditure	Passenger traffic (per passenger kilometre, pkm)[d]	Freight traffic (per truck kilometre, tkm)[e]	Equivalent spending rate	
				Passenger traffic (per pkm)	Freight traffic (per tkm)
Strategic road	£21.3 billion[a]	2500 billion	1100 billion	**0.9p**	1.9p
Local road	£37.8 billion[b]	4900 billion	650 billion	0.8p	5.8p
National rail	£60.4 billion[c]	490 billion	250 billion	**12.3p**	24.0p

Sources: [a]*Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (DETR, 2000, Table 2); [b]*Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (DETR, 2000, Tables 2 and A2); [c]*Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (DETR, 2000, Table 2); [d]*Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Tables 1.1 and 4.10 (factored up to 10 years with 10 Year Plan growth rates)); [e]*Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Table 4.10), and *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (DETR, 2000, Table 6.24 (factored up to 10 years with 10 Year Plan growth rates)).

***Table 4**. Percentage of journeys by different modes of transport*

Mode	Modal share			
		Journeys		
	By journey (%)	Per person per year	No. of journeys by car for each journey by other means	By distance (%)
Car	62	639	–	78
Walk	26	271	2.5	3
Local bus	6	58	11	4
Rail (including the London Underground)	2	19	**34**	6
Cycle	2	16	40	1 (just!)
Other (including taxi, motorcycle, coach and air)	2	27	24	8
Total	**100**	**1030**	–	**100**

Source: *National Travel Survey: 1998/2000 Update* (DETR, 2000, Appendix B).

I think I've got the message. The integrated strategy is going to spend 13 times as much on rail as on strategic roads even though there are 34 journeys by car for every journey by rail and 11 journeys by car for every journey by bus. Is that it?

Yes. So it seems. We've simplified it quite a bit by taking out revenue support – which can't in any event be forecast more than about 3 years ahead – and also what might come in through the fare box – what bus and train customers pay – not because it's very complex (which it is) but rather because such annual net income (after dividends, interest, tax and basic running costs have been met) is still only really available for funding ongoing maintenance, not upgrading and development. And in case you're wondering where the figures came from, they're all in the Government's 10 Year Plan. We really do need to refocus investment where it will give better and best value to the economy. You'll find other similar anomalies in regard to expenditure on cycleways further on.

And what about the information in that last box, on page 19? Are you really saying that all this money is still less than what was being spent a few years ago? That can't be right – all these billions?

'Fraid so. And it's even worse than that. The Government makes a lot of noise about how much of our money it's going to spend, but it really is less than what was being spent in 1994–1995 – more than a third down – and that's after allowing for inflation. And when you think how little was spent before then – evidenced by the state everything is in now, well …!!

And how does that compare with what's happening on the Continent – what our EU partners are doing?

Table 5 says it all. It gives the investment in infrastructure as a percentage of the GDP (gross domestic product) for selected European countries.

The figures in Table 5 clearly underline our poor record on improving – investing in – infrastructure, explaining why, as a recent article in the *Economist* said, 'we are exceptionally run down compared with the rest of Europe'.

***Table 5**. Investment in infrastructure as a percentage of GDP for selected European countries*

Country	Percentage of GDP
Britain	1.3
Austria	1.8
Germany	1.9
Italy	2.3
Sweden	2.4
Finland	2.7
The Netherlands	3.0
Spain	3.2
Portugal	4.1

Source: OECD Economics Commission, quoted in the *Economist*, 8 Feb. 2002.

But what about local roads – buses – tackling congestion in towns and cities. What does that look like?

Dodgy. Distinctly dodgy.

This is where local councils come in to the frame. They're expected to reduce traffic demand and crack congestion and improve buses and bus performances in line with the Government's targets. But when it comes to investment to fund it all, the Government is relying heavily on the private sector – the bus companies for example – to come up with the cash. But there are some anomalies, as you can see from Tables 6 and 7.

***Table 6**. Government (central and local) and private sector expenditure on local roads and buses*

	Amount of revenue support/investment by			
Mode	**Central government**	**Local councils**	**Total**	**Private sector (e.g. bus companies)**
Local roads	£140 million	£3.1 billion[a]	£3.24 billion	–
Local buses	£362 million	£780 million[b]	£1.142 billion	£2.42 billion

Sources: *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Table 1.18); *A Bulletin of Public Transport Statistics: Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Annex B (Table 19)).
[a] 1999–2000, otherwise 2000–2001.
[b] Includes £283 million support to concessionary fares and £312 million support for services (e.g. social bus services).

***Table 7**. Comparison of journeys and distances travelled and investment in local roads and buses in Great Britain for 2000–2001*

Mode (No. of journeys and distance (km) travelled annually)	**Equivalent revenue investment over 10 years**
Local buses	
4.3 billion local bus passenger journeys annually	15p/bus journey
2 billion bus km annually	25p/bus km
Local roads	
256 billion vehicle km annually (cars, motorcycles, buses and coaches)	1.5p/vehicle km (1.1p/vfm if all vehicles are included)

Sources: *A Bulletin of Public Transport Statistics: Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Annex B (Table 10)); *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Table 4.9); *National Travel Survey: 1998/2000 Update* (DETR, 2000, Table 5.3).

The Government's strategy assumes that:

- Increased patronage will fund increased investment in buses. The risk is that it won't.
- That carrots such as improved bus services and sticks such as congestion itself and congestion charging will attract sufficient numbers away from cars to reduce congestion in urban areas in line with the targets. The certainty is that this won't happen – save possibly in London.

Didn't I read somewhere that bus use has decreased? If so, how realistic is it to assume it's going to go up?

The trend for bus journeys outside London over the past 6 years is down – even further down on what had been a relentless fall for the previous 20 years or so – and there is little reason to believe that that will change, and certainly not markedly. The Government may wish away, but it's unlikely that its dreams will come true unless something quite unforeseen happens. Table 8 illustrates the point.

***Table 8**. Recent trends in bus journeys in and outside London*

	Bus journeys in London – regulated		Bus journeys outside London – deregulated	
Year	No.	Total rise or fall compared with 1995–1996	No.	Total rise or fall compared with 1995–1996
1995–1996	1205 million	–	3178 million	–
1996–1997	1242 million	+3%	3108 million	–2%
1997–1998	1294 million	+7%	3036 million	–4%
1998–2000	1279 million	+6%	2970 million	–7%
1999–2000	1307 million	+8%	2973 million	–6%
2000–2001	1359 million	+13%	2950 million	–7%

Sources: *A Bulletin of Public Transport Statistics: Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Table 10).

That doesn't look hopeful. So how well is the integrated transport strategy doing now?

Too early to say, but the prospects don't look good in several areas: plus, as we've seen, the targets are either non-existent, impossible to measure, or just too complex to be meaningful to the public. Yet if action is taken now, the Government might – just might – be able to rescue something. But if it goes on as it is – no chance.

The strategy provides for progress to be 'sort of' monitored using:

- Performance Indicators and targets for, for example, the Government's own Highways Agency.
- The Strategic Rail Authority's monitoring of the train-operating companies directly and through public satisfaction surveys.
- The Rail Regulator's performance targets for Railtrack
- Local authorities' annual reports on their performance (which started in 2001) on progress with local transport plans.
- The Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT), through monitoring progress towards objectives and targets and policy reviews.

The Times, 12 Nov. 2001

Consignia to switch away from rail freight

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

CONSIGNIA, the renamed Post Office Group, is to take a large amount of its mail off rail services and put it on the roads to try to improve punctuality. The move comes amid a review of transportation that could lead to the end of all rail freight postal services.

The cutting of three key mail trains is a further blow for the rail freight industry, which has suffered substantial falls in business following delays on the lines after last year's Hatfield disaster.

In the new year Consignia will end contracts with the country's leading freight company EWS (English Welsh and Scottish Railways) for some night mail trains running between its larger distribution centres in Willesden, North London, and Motherwell and Swansea and between Motherwell and Bristol.

Consignia said the cuts were part of the general review of its transport provisions which is due to be completed in January. 'We are looking at the entire transport system to try to ensure the most reliable service.' A source said that the review could lead to Consignia coming off the railways completely or making a significant reduction in favour of road and air.

Consignia has been heavily criticised for missing its delivery targets and in turn it has blamed some of the problems on difficulties with rail services. The company is liable to fines for poor service after it became subject to regulation in the spring.

The postal group has a £65 million a year contract with EWS for all its 58 night rail services until 2006 but it has been able to abandon the three routes early because of missed performance targets.

EWS, which also carries much of the UK's bulk freight loads such as Corus steel and many aggregates, said it was unable to comment on the three routes but blamed delays on the lines for its failure to meet targets. A spokeswoman said: 'Over the past three months delays to Consignia services due to EWS causes have been the lowest in the history of the contract but some of the constraints on the system and the condition of the track are lower than we would expect to work with.'

But to be more specific …

On rail

Well, it's not going anywhere at present it seems, which is hardly surprising for it suffers from:

- Lack of past investment for decades, which the public were led to believe by the Government could and should be put right in no time at all.
- A structure which separates track from operations without any requirement for the several parties to form a strategic alliance or partnering arrangement to achieve common objectives for the good of passengers. (The Government continues to concentrate on the separation issue – which truth to tell would

still occur even if it was brought under one huge umbrella. The real issue is the need for all parties to work together in partnership, and that could have been achieved without demolishing the whole structure so putting back investment and improvements another couple of years.) Within the construction industry, partnerships between clients, contractors, consultants, subcontractors, material suppliers, funders, end-users – indeed, across and along the whole supply chain, and on both complex capital projects and term service contracts – is becoming the norm. Likewise, in many other sectors of industry. *That philosophy is missing from rail and needs to be introduced – rapidly – with all parties signing up and working to a common agreed charter and objectives, each recognising and supporting each other's strategic business needs and co-operating to provide a seamless quality service to the customers.*

- Far too many competing priorities, demands and restrictions – some of which result from the many regulators, amongst whom it seems that there's as much separation as there is between the rail companies and Railtrack! (We'll be looking at all this in a bit more detail later.)

Is it any wonder rail's in such a state. Perhaps that's what the 'State' in Secretary of State stands for!

On buses

Whilst the planned-for investment in new vehicles appears to be on target there is no indication that there has been the hoped for increase in bus travel nor a transfer from car to bus.

On local roads

The first local authority reports are awaited, but the history and the effects of the investment on which they will report will be too recent to give any worthwhile perspective. Local authorities seem to have more money to spend compared to recent years, but it's unlikely that they'll spend it on the right things, because the Government's priorities – imposed on councils through vetting/approval of local transport plans – are wrong. Frankly, the country might better offer off if councils were able to react to what people want locally than being constrained by the straitjacket imposed by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR).

On strategic roads

The highways Agency indicates that these are broadly on target, but other reports suggest that the Government may have underspent against the planned programme by as much as two-thirds in the financial year 2001–2002.

On reducing congestion

Nothing happening, which is hardly surprising since there appear to be no common measurements at a local level – in fact, most-times, no measurements at all. Anecdotally, it appears to be getting worse – and, to be fair, that's what the strategy assumed. But there's little reason to believe that it won't continue to get worse and worse and worse – right up to 2010 and on and on ….

The quicker that the Government faces facts and changes direction a bit the better then?

Yes, but I'm not saying the whole strategy is wrong. The concept of a (rolling) 10 Year Plan is good, as is the idea of looking at things holistically. There's much to be said, too, for an integrated – well, co-ordinated – transport strategy. But significant changes do need to be made and rapidly.

Okay, but if the idea of an integrated transport strategy is right, why isn't transport integrated already?

This needs to be answered on two levels.

Level 1

If you mean why haven't Governments in the past taken a holistic approach to determining priorities and investment strategies – road, rail, bus, bikes and walking say – that's largely because:

- Car usage has been dominant – none of the modes come remotely close to it in the number of journeys made.
- There hasn't been the political will nor public pressure to change strategies
- The statistics demonstrate (both in the UK and Western Europe) that the degree of modal transfer that can be achieved through investing heavily in public transport at the expense of, say, roads can't be justified in economic or reduction of congestion terms, not even when environmental issues are added to the equation, so there has been little incentive to go down this route.

But two – possibly three – things have happened in recent times:

- First, sustainability principles and global warming and all the rest have raised public consciousness of the issues and created a head of steam – possibly carbon dioxide would be a better metaphor! – to think again.
- Second, there have been vociferous lobby groups which have oftimes distorted reason and unnerved Governments (and industry too on occasion), who were in any event grateful for any excuse to transfer scarce resources into health and education at the expense of transport and help avoid putting up taxes to keep the electorate – us – happy. But, of course, we aren't!
- There's a possible third which some might lean on, and that's the need for an estimated approximate 4 million new homes between 1996 and 2016 to match demographic change and the increase in single-person households – putting pressure on previous established planning policies which largely relied on green-field developments. That didn't occur over night – probably over many nights! – but it should have been foreseen, most likely was foreseen, but I guess nobody wanted to face up to it.

In combination these gave a new impetus and set new agendas – the integrated transport and land use agendas.

Level 2

If you mean why isn't there through ticketing and joined-up information and connections and the like (let's call it 'integration in public transport'), the short answers are that:

- there hasn't been the call or pressure for it until fairly recently
- there's been little incentive for the private sector to invest in it, the returns being low and the risks quite high whilst it could aid competitors
- on rail there has not been and there still isn't any regulation requiring the train-operating companies to integrate with other modes
- there have been higher competing priorities for scarce resources
- some of the technologies that can help deliver it are fairly new or still in embryonic stages.

That said, it's not all negative. There is some integration – maybe not enough or not as much as it should be and could be in the future. Indeed, we've got so used to being told that this is the missing ingredient that we believe it, and think there isn't any at all, even though there are several good examples and more initiatives coming on stream fairly regularly. But the improved information – helpful as it is – doesn't appear to have made any significant difference to modal transfer (to public transport) – nor we think is it likely to.

There are some practical examples in the box below.

Transport Direct is a Government initiative which aims to introduce systems which will:

- tell travellers what choices they have when they are planning their journey
- allow travellers to book and pay for their journey at the time of making the enquiry and receive their travel authority/tickets
- advise travellers about how their chosen travel option is performing in real time before they set off.

All via kiosks in the high street, mobile phones and interactive digital TV.

So there already is a degree of integration, and more will follow as technologies develop, as public sector investment flows to prime and partly subsidise what would otherwise be unprofitable initiatives and as legislation is introduced to empower and facilitate the co-operation needed between – in particular, but not solely – the bus companies.

Perhaps Table 9 will help you to determine what Integration of Public Transport means and should mean and where we should be going on this front. Note that different people will likely have different priorities. Whose should hold sway? Nothing's simple!

***Table 9**. Possible elements of integrated public transport*

Means to aid integration of public transport	Priority as probably seen by the public, providers and industry and you the reader			
	Public	**Provider**	**Industry**	**You**
Readily accessible multi-modal information	1	6	6	
Through ticketing enabling any number of different modes to be used during a journey	2	7	5	
'Passes' that can be used on all public transport in an area or region regardless of the provider or mode	3	8	4	
Design of facilities and services to promote ready interchange between modes	4	5	7	
Consistent pricing of transport modes including external costs	Not seen as relevant	4	8	
Consistent appraisal criteria for different modes	Not seen as relevant	3	9	
Consistent budgeting for different modes	Not seen as relevant	1	3	
Design of facilities and services to match the strengths of individual modes	Not seen as relevant	2	2	
Relating transport to land use, social, economic and environmental factors	Not seen as relevant	9	1	

But don't all other developed countries have integrated transport systems already?

That's a difficult one, partly because it depends, as we've just seen, on what you mean by 'integrated' and partly because comparable facts and figures are hard to come by. It's probably better to talk in terms of overall provision of transport infrastructure and then look at how many use what mode. I say that because we've tried to be accurate and objective and as yet there are no satisfactory studies which prove conclusively one way or the other. Have a look at Tables 10 and 11, which provide some interesting comparisons.

Caution: When looking at Table 10, beware of drawing false conclusions! The base is kilometres per million people whereas other factors have a part to play. If one were to use, say, the density of population as a base instead, you would get other answers, and the UK might not look quite so bad. But as a rough comparison, and as we are so far adrift, it should give substance to the points I'm making below.

Many conclusions can be drawn from the figures in Tables 10 and 11, but the main ones are:

- We've far less of everything in terms of transport infrastructure – roads, rail, light rail and motorways. Looks like fewer buses too.
- The UK's congestion figures are way over the top compared to other EU countries – our road links congested for more than 1 hour per day, are significantly higher than for any other country save Portugal.
- Car ownership is not outrageously high in the UK and is less than in France, Germany and Italy, and is significantly below the EU average.
- Commuting time is the highest of any EU country, which seems to reflect, in part, population density.
- Bus use is lower than in any other country save France.
- Rail use is lower than in any other country save Spain.

'European railways are terrible – if you show up at the station just ten minutes late the train has already gone'

***Table 10**. Comparison of European transport system provision in kilometres per million people (km/m)*

	Railways		Light rail (electric railways)		Roads		Motorways	
Country	**km/m**	**Rank**	**km/m**	**Rank**	**km/m**	**Rank**	**km/m**	**Rank**
Belgium	335	9	250	5	14,000	6	165	=5
Denmark	420	8	120	11	13,600	7	165	=5
Germany	465	7	225	7	7,950	12	140	=8
Greece	240	14	0	15	10,950	10	45	14
Spain	310	10	175	9	4,200	15	225	2
France	540	5	245	6	16,550	2	185	4
Ireland	525	6	10	14	24,850	1	30	15
Italy	280	13	180	8	5,450	14	115	10
Luxembourg	680	4	645	2	12,500	8	290	1
The Netherlands	180	15	130	10	8,150	11	140	=8
Austria	700	3	420	3	16,050	3	200	3
Portugal	290	=11	90	=12	12,000	9	80	12
Finland	1,150	2	400	4	15,300	5	100	11
Sweden	1,270	1	90	1	6,650	4	165	=5
UK	**290**	**=11**	**90**	**=12**	**6,650**	**13**	**60**	**13**
EU[a]	410		195		9,400		135	–
USA	140[b]/900		10		24,300		305	
World	210		40		4,800		35	

Sources: *EU Energy and Transport in Figures: Statistical Pocketbook 2001* (EC, 2001, Tables 1.3, 3.2.1, 3.2.5 and 3.2.6); *EU Energy and Transport in Figures: Statistical Pocketbook 2000* (EC, 2000, Table 2.4).

[a] Average of the 15 countries listed.

[b] Passenger railways.

***Table 11**. Comparisons of who uses what and where, congestion, household expenditure on transport and time spent commuting*

Topic	Country								
	UK	Denmark	France	Germany	Italy	The Netherlands	Spain	Portugal	EU[b]
GDP in PPP[a]	102	118	101	107	99	112	82	75	100
Population density (people/km^2)	244	123	109	230	191	381	78	109	116
Population (millions)	59.5	5.3	59.1	82.1	57.7	15.8	39.4	10.0	375.9
Modal split (% of passengers/ km, 1999))									
Car	86.8	79.4	84.3	81.4	76.6	81.5	78.6	78.1	81.0
Bus and coach	6.2	13.4	4.9	7.4	10.5	8.1	12.1	11.0	8.6
Tram and metro	1.0	0.0	1.3	1.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.5	1.1
Rail	5.3	6.4	8.0	7.9	4.8	7.7	4.6	4.1	6.2
Cars per 1000 of the population	399	338	478	504	577	372	389	292	454
Road links congested for more than 1 hour per day (%)	24	0	4	8	9	15	18	29	NA
Household expenditure on transport (% of total expenditure)	15.1	15.8	15.0	14.1	10.9	11.4	14.8	14.8	13.7
Average time spent commuting to and from work (minutes/day)	46	38	36	45	23	44	33	33	38

Sources: *EU Energy and Transport in Figures: Statistical Pocketbook 2001* (EC, 2001, Tables 1.1, 1.3 and 3.5.3).
[a] Purchasing power parity: the number of currency units of a theoretical 'common currency' chosen for convenience (set at 100 currency units for the EU average in our case).
[b] For the 15 countries listed in Table 10.

It also seems fair to conclude that the higher use of public transport in other countries – bus and rail – is likely to be due to a combination of:

- more provision and thus greater availability
- better standards
- better co-ordination and integration and
- some geographical and cultural differences.

That penultimate point is supported by many examples from throughout the EU, the citizens of several cities enjoying standards which are so far in advance of ours that even to imagine dreaming about them seems wishful thinking. The following box illustrates this, and serves to reinforce the point that the 10 Year Plan's vision of improvements to public transport doesn't take us far and is unlikely to change perceptions. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Europe their standards and co-ordination and integration will be advancing still further, whilst we are not even catching up with where they are now.

Extract from a letter to *The Times*, 14 Jan. 2002, by a reader in Germany

This evening (Friday) I will be home at 6.25. I can predict my arrival time with certainty almost every day. I catch a tram into the city centre that connects with the underground trains, and when I leave the train I wait less than five minutes for a bus through the village where I live.

The worst case scenario will be if I miss the tram, but as trams and trains run every ten minutes (even on Sundays) and the bus every 15, that is hardly a hardship. I can even catch a different tram, two trains instead of one, and still be on the same bus.

My monthly season ticket allows me unlimited use of trains, buses and trams within roughly 10km of the city centre. After 7.30pm and all day at weekends or on public holidays I can take my wife and four children at no extra cost. My ticket is transferable, so I can lend it to my neighbour if she wants to go into town.

The cost? 59 euros a month, slightly less than thirty-seven quid.

Alan Green. Frankfurt am Main

So, putting it all together – public transport and roads – we're in a pretty dire state and that guy who said we're the worst in Europe wasn't far wrong. Is that about it?

***Table 12**. Infrastructure provision per million people*

11th out of 15 in railways
12th out of 15 in light rail
13th out of 15 in roads
13th out of 15 in motorways

Source: derived from Table 11.

That's about the long and short of it. Whichever criteria you use we come out badly (Table 12).

Is it any wonder that we have congestion, overcrowded and unreliable trains and complaints from the public about transport generally?

In terms of congestion we're seventh out of eight (Portugal being worse, but those are historical figures, and if you see what investment they've been and still are putting into transport, we're probably by now already below them too).

We're at or close to the bottom of the class whichever mode of transport you choose, yet still the Government would have us believe that it's not too bad, is getting better and we'll soon be up there in the premier division! The complacency is astounding.

Meanwhile, the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DLTR) requires councils under the Government's Best Value regime to consult with and respond to the concerns of their communities and aim for the top quartile in terms of performance of all of their services from social services to waste collection to parks, highway maintenance and transportation – failing councils being threatened with being taken over by another council or private sector management. Yet at central government level – national level – we're pretty well rock bottom and have been for a few decades. We're a failing country when it comes to transport – deserving to be taken over, or at least overtaken, by events.

There's through ticketing in London with integrated bus, tube and rail travel cards …

Nationally, you can ring a single number (and/or use the Internet) and enquire about times and fares of, say, trains from Chesterfield to Chelmsford and back – about 200 miles. I can then travel by car to Chesterfield station, park, and buy a through ticket which relies on and enables me to use two train-operating companies (in addition, the ticket allows me to use the London Underground, and helpfully tells me the likely connections at London's Liverpool Street station). On arrival at Chelmsford, a taxi rank awaits. It takes about 3¾ hours, door to door – less than by car. Not bad, and I'm not sure what more one could want on that front. So, in London and nationally, there's a fair degree of integration already – appropriate for those who have use of a car.

Now take an urban area outside London, and try to travel across town – say 7 miles from one house in the south-west to another in the north-east. How do you get information about which bus to take, departure, travel and arrival times, frequency, changes required, proximity of dropping off point to desired location, fares, options and ticketing arrangements? Much – but not yet all – of that is just beginning to be possible through the Internet (see www.pti.org). To do so by phone – certainly outside 9 to 5 say – is well nigh impossible. Who to ring, opening hours, and reliability of information would, for most people, be unknowns. There is enormous room for improvement but despite little incentive for anyone to do anything, it's beginning to happen.

Let's return to our Chesterfield to Chelmsford trip but this time for someone without a car who has to travel, say, 10 miles to Chesterfield to reach the train station. Now it's a different story, unless a taxi is used – which might well be the proper thing to do. A bus would add between a further 1½ and 2 hours to the single journey time (and the same back again), necessitate two changes, and restrict you to about three of the 15 possible trains. One would find it almost impossible to get to Chelmsford and back home in a day. But that shouldn't be surprising: there isn't the demand to warrant a high-frequency special service to Chesterfield Station, and to provide one would require a level of subsidy which would be a waste of public funds. Integration to that level would be a nonsense and not be in the public interest when set against competing priorities for funding in health and education. There are limits to the levels of public transport provision and integration that should be funded from the public purse.

Yet for commuting to town, business or major shopping centres or for accessing hospitals, buses come into their own: rightly so, for the demand justifies the investment, and services are tailored to meet maximum need. Even here, though, without continuing demand throughout the day on other routes, say, the profitability of – justification for – such services will often be questionable.

There are several other questions about transport which bug people, and several misconceptions, so in these next few pages we attempt to solve some mysteries and correct some myths.

Mysteries

How much is safety a consideration in investing in an integrated transport strategy?

Only indirectly. But there are some interesting facts and figures behind your question. First – look at the number of accidents by mode (Table 13).

***Table 13**. Deaths and serious injuries per annum by mode*

Mode	Deaths	Seriously injured
Road (in 2000)	3409	38,155
Rail (in 2000/2001)	39	263
Buses (drivers and passengers)	15	563
Air (UK aircraft in UK airlines)	32	47
Total	**3061**	**39,028**

Source: *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Tables 1.6, 4.15, 5.28 and 7.8).

In broad terms, insofar as road accidents are concerned, the Government places a value of £1.3 million on a death and £154,000 on a serious injury. These values are used to assess investment in road safety and to prioritise traffic schemes.

In other modes the investment can be considerably higher, and the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system is understood likely to cost about £200 million per life saved. (The Train Protection Warning System (TPWS) – now required by law – costs £30 million per life saved.) On the other hand, more people are killed on the trackside than in trains – through trespass or of maintenance workers – and this does not appear to attract high investment.

The startling difference between the investment in reducing road accidents compared to that in rail or air say (some might say, disparities in the value of a life) probably derive from two factors:

- A sense that on the road we are largely in control whereas when travelling by public transport we are dependent on others whom we have paid to provide a service with an expectation that they will do so safely. Injury caused by our own negligence or partial negligence is one thing; injury caused to us by another's negligence is quite different.
- A public concern – outrage – when a number of people are injured in a single incident.

But an issue remains: almost 33,000 people are seriously injured or killed on our roads every year – 90 every day. Just imagine the outcry if that number were injured on or through some public transport incident. Because they occur haphazardly all over the country they only get reported singly, and too often get forgotten.

Whilst we do have the least road fatalities per million inhabitants of any of the EU countries, we are the worst for pedestrian and cycle accidents. Interestingly, there is some indication that that latter statistic may be related to a lower exposure to and protection from traffic hazards during childhood, so that with growing independence many are unaccustomed to dealing with the risks our roads pose. In any event, the investment in road safety and road safety education is, on almost any basis, frighteningly inadequate.

How effective are light rail systems and can they solve the urban transport problems?

On the face of it expensive compared with buses and thus of limited value save in a few specific densely populated cases. The typical capital cost of light rail is about £10 million/km compared to £200,000/km for buses. But against that is the very subjective image issue. People tend to see buses as, well, buses and light rail as – groovy – a good mode of travel by middle class commuters who wouldn't be seen in a bus! Light rail also has a good safety record, though that for buses is pretty good too.

But the high cost is only partly why the Government's strategy provides for just five new systems to be introduced. Twenty new light rail systems would probably attract 15 million passengers per year, which equates to 300 million journeys – the national total for buses is 4.3 billion journeys.

On the upside they are attractive to passengers, giving safe, reliable and consistent journey times, and are faster and relatively more environmentally friendly than buses. Light rail clearly has a role to play – but in very specific circumstances. The Docklands Light Rail system (DLR) helped spur on the Canary Wharf scheme in East London and regenerate umpteen hectares, and on that basis has been one of the most momentous urban transport projects in the UK since the Second World War.

On the downside they lack flexibility and the easy local accessibility of buses; they are expensive to construct and maintain, and in some cases duplicate and thus compete with bus routes.

Light rail systems will at best contribute to a reduction in congestion at some specific spots through attracting some commuters who would otherwise use their cars. As to whether they provide value for money – the jury's still out (most likely doubtful save in a few very major conurbations). Unimpeded bus systems are less expensive, more flexible and can be as environmentally friendly. Generally, though, public transport improvements will only attract significant numbers of people out of their cars where part of a wider package of measures including traffic restraint (direct charging for example), and land use planning and rationalisation.

What other means might help to solve the urban transport problems?

Park and ride schemes on the periphery of urban areas. They are relatively cheap and effective in reducing road space demand in town/city centres, providing fares are kept low and there's high frequency, security, and easy and convenient accessibility. They are gaining credibility with motorists.

Bus lanes – providing they are well designed, which means reducing delays to buses whilst imposing minimal delays on traffic generally. Too many have been introduced with the apparent aim of reducing road space for general traffic so increasing congestion in the hope that that will cause motorists to change mode. Such schemes have undermined belief in what can be a useful traffic management tool and have created further and deep-seated resentment towards public transport. If they are planned and introduced in a co-ordinated way to give complete routes and in conjunction with traffic signal priorities they could provide a cost-effective alternative to light rail and segregated buses, but care is still needed to avoid them reducing overall road and junction capacities. (See later.) Oh – and requiring all local authorities to allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes: currently and absurdly, some do and some don't.

Segregated buses – i.e. buses running on separate unimpeded routes.

Separate facilities for cyclists – these improve safety but make no significant contribution to reducing congestion. Over 50% of people in a Mori poll (see Table 2) said that whatever was done to improve facilities for cyclists they would not change mode. The cost-effectiveness of current policies is highly questionable, and the piece-meal approach being taken in some towns, with lengths as short as 5 m and no continuity, lack credibility and again undermine confidence in the transport strategy.

Land use planning – dealt with in more detail later but identified here as being able to make a contribution in the very long term.

Traffic management – well, much improved traffic management and a can-do/should-do philosophy to strive to improve capacity – particularly at urban junctions – and to reduce congestion. Currently there often seems to be a sad lack of innovation and desire to reduce congestion through such measures.

A child going to school on a bike is 50 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than a child going to school in the back of a car. Since it's important to encourage children to cycle, the response should be: 'Let's make cycling safer or let's introduce walking or cycling buses' not 'Gracious – in that case we'll drive' or, more likely, 'Let's continue to drive'!

Who owns, runs and regulates the buses?

Outside London, buses are owned and run by a wide range of private companies. They used to be owned and run by local authorities' municipal bus undertakings and the National Bus Company, but following deregulation in the 1980s and 1990s they had to be sold off, and umpteen private companies entered the field. Gradually the big ones have eaten up the small fry, but in many urban areas there may still be 5–10 small companies running services on just a few routes alongside the major providers. Whilst in theory there's competition – in practice most-times its just several companies running the same routes competing for the same passengers at close to identical fares. Who would let one bus go, in the hope that another of better quality would soon turn up?!

If you've ever wondered why you can't get a bus at night:

- It's uneconomic to run buses when relatively few people want to use them.
- The costs would be so high that fares would rise for daytime travel, making that less competitive and less attractive, so further increasing unit costs. A downward spiral.

There are some good all-night services in London and in Manchester but not elsewhere. Many evening services are only provided as a result of subsidies through the related PTAs.

Such bus companies basically only manage and run their fleet. They aren't responsible for bus stops or interchanges, and are broadly free to run whatever services they like, when and where they like.

Alongside the bus-operating companies are the Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) – largely formed of elected members from the district councils within a PTA's region – and the Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs), which are the management/implementation arms of the PTAs.

The PTA determines broad policies and draws up budgets to suit, being funded through a levy on its component district councils, which in turn get financial support from the Government. As an example, the South Yorkshire PTA has an annual budget of about £60 million. That money is used to finance (subsidise) concessionary fares for children, the disabled and the elderly; many evening and weekend services which wouldn't otherwise be provided, being unprofitable for the bus companies, the provision of such services being put out to tender by the PTA; community transport – say mini-buses for the disabled; bus interchanges; park and ride facilities; bus stops; timetables and real-time information; and a few other odds and ends.

PTAs cannot dictate to a bus company what services it provides or the frequency or standard or quality of its vehicles (though of course they must be roadworthy), or the fares it charges. If a company doesn't want to run a bus from A to B then there's nothing the PTA can do about it unless it's prepared to make it a tendered service and subsidise it.

All this is hardly a good arrangement through which to develop and foster integration!

Oh – and then there's the Transport Act 2000, which whilst it regulates the regulators also has several enabling clauses that, if only they were used, or at least used effectively, could bring some benefits. For example, there could be bus quality partnerships and bus quality contracts which would allow local authorities and bus operators to come to an agreement by which each would commit itself to providing certain features to achieve a good-quality bus service. In response the operator would be given exclusive rights on the services in question.

Who owns, runs and regulates the railways and trains?

The structure of the railways was a mess before Railtrack was put into administration, and it's now an even bigger mess. There is:

- The Strategic Rail Authority, responsible for:
  - promoting and developing the rail network
  - encouraging integration
  - providing overall strategic direction
  - consumer protection
  - administering freight grants
  - steering forward investment projects aimed at opening up bottlenecks
  - expanding network capacity
  - letting and managing passenger rail franchises.
- 25 train-operating companies who manage, maintain and run the rolling stock through which they provide the passenger services, each being responsible for:
  - delivering the services to passengers safely, reliably, conveniently frequently
  - investing capital to develop the standards and services
  - improving quality
  - increasing passenger miles to comply with the Government's only target – a 50% increase over the 10 year period of its transport strategy!
  - working within the parameters set by the Office of the Rail Regulator insofar as price increases are concerned
  - satisfying the Rail Regulator on umpteen other issues:
    operating profitably
    paying dividends to shareholders and/or interest to funders
    maintaining the share value to retain the confidence of the market, enabling it to borrow to invest
  - competing with other modes of transport from cars to coaches to buses and increasingly in some cases planes

  - keeping the Secretary of State sweet in the hope that it might be given an extension of its current contract
  - acting confidently to maintain street credibility, even though it knows that its future is uncertain
  - working with Railtrack (and in time, its successor) to help facilitate track improvements for its and the passengers' longer-term good whilst getting much of the blame for every delay meantime
  - trying to make each competing priority, the top priority.

'Day return? Feeling lucky, sir?'

- Separate freight operating companies who operate freight trains with similar conflicting responsibilities to those of the train-operating companies. They are not franchised in the same way as train-operating companies but are commercial companies with no public obligation to provide a given level of service.
- The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), responsible for the Government's policy towards the railways. It sets directions and guidance for the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA).
- The Office of the Rail Regulator to regulate competition and monopoly issues.
- Railtrack PLC (now in the hands of KPMG as administrators) or its successor, which owns and runs the national rail infrastructure, being responsible for:
  - track maintenance
  - track development
  - 14 major stations
  - complying with and working within the demands of the SRA
  - meeting all the demands of the Health and Safety Executive, which aims to avoid any risk to anyone, anywhere at any time, and so cover its own back three times over
  - operate as efficiently and profitably as possible to enable it – assuming it remains a public company – to pay dividends to its shareholders who have lent it their money and thereby help to maintain share price to enable it to borrow at competitive rates on the money markets and invest in the network or – assuming it were to become a 'not for profit company' – still act efficiently and profitably to pay the interest on its loans and maximise the investment in the network
  - keep the Secretary of State happy to help ensure that he continues to fund it.

- The administrators (KPMG), with responsibilities to either:
  - find a successor company to Railtrack (which hasn't gone bust of course – its assets far exceeding its liabilities – but has run out of funds because the Government chose to stop paying it its part of the necessary investment) or
  - to stabilise Railtrack and, once achieved, hand it back to the company and its shareholders.

  In either case the administrators will need to be satisfied that the Secretary of State will restart funding it, so whatever KPMG comes up with the Government will have the last word. The public needs to remember that.
- Railtrack Group PLC, which owns much of the original property portfolio and is still a public company.
- Rolling stock companies, which own rolling stock and lease it to operating companies for passenger services.
- The Rail Passenger Committees, which champion and represent the interests of passengers and monitor standards and performance.
- 7 Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) in the metropolitan areas and umpteen local transport authorities who specify minimum levels of service locally and administer subsidies.
- On top of all that there's the Secretary of State who can do anything he wants!

Simple!

And that's just the structure issues.

You mean there's more? It gets worse?

Yes. There's more that needs sorting out. Far more.

First and crucially, there are far too many competing priorities. The present policy seems to be to:

- increase speed of travel
- increase frequency
- increase comfort
- increase reliability
- increase passenger miles by 50%
- increase freight shifted by rail by 80%
- increase maintenance
- maximise safety at all costs.

No-one will admit that we can't have it all. Yet this is what the Government promised and keeps on promising. It's a nonsense. There was no way Railtrack or any other track could or can deliver all of that over the same time period, and unless or until someone owns up and sets some proper priorities and achievable targets the railways will continue to get a bad press, and the travelling public a poor service, as providers seek to be all things to all people all the time.

Secondly, the Government seems to have too narrow a view of what needs to be done, what some of the underlying problems are. They have led us to believe that it's all down to just

- a lack of past investment
- poor management
- a flawed structure which separates track from operations
- profit motives

whereas the following also have had and continue to have a major contributory effect:

- far too many competing priorities and demands (as we've just seen)
- interference by regulators who have single vision, restricting room for manoeuvre, throttling initiative, stifling investment and ruling out practically any risk taking
- an undermining of public confidence in the whole shebang by Government ministers over several years
- a failure to either understand or accept that money lent has to be paid for either through dividends or interest and thus profits are both moral and necessary and that most-times dividends are a cheaper way to fund investment
- dogma
- impetuousness
- unrealistic promises made and expectations
- lack of opportunity to access the track for maintenance and development work without impacting on train times and timetables.

It's time all this was acknowledged. The sooner, the better for everyone, not least the travelling public.

And thirdly, none of the parties involved in rail has a responsibility – let alone an accountability – to pursue or even foster integration with other modes. Can you believe it!

Is it any wonder that rail is in such a state!

But suppose it was all brought together again?

A la British Rail you mean? Well, there would still need to be separate divisions covering track, operation, freight and so on – and it's wrong to imagine that by making it a single entity all would be well. True, there might be only one person accountable, but below that level there would still be conflicting priorities, still a need for each part to operate efficiently and profitably and work within budgets, still problems about track accessibility, still long time-scales – all of which would then be resolved in private rather than public. So long as there remain such conflicting priorities and demands, interference by those with single vision and no responsibility to take wider perspectives or be part of a committed partnership, nothing much will be gained. It's a partnership between all the parties that's so desperately needed, and that would make a major contribution to a new beginning and a successful future.

Who owns and run the roads?

Outside London

Trunk roads and motorways are owned, managed and maintained by the Government through the Highways Agency – an arm of the DLTR. The Highways Agency advises the Government on all related policy issues and is responsible for maintaining, improving and procuring the building of new strategic roads.

Local roads – basically all other roads (96% of the network) – are owned, managed and maintained by the local highways authorities – broadly the county councils and metropolitan and unitary authorities. Such councils prepare policies and budgets, but since most of the funding comes from central government, their actions are largely under the control of the Government, which approves or disproves their annual local transport plans.

Inside London

Here it's all a bit different. There are the London boroughs – 33 of them – which maintain local roads; then there's Transport for London (TfL) – which has a strategic role and can basically tell the boroughs what to do or what not to do, from congestion charging to 'red routes' to parking policies. London Transport remains, for a while at least, to allow the Underground to be kept separate until the public–private partnership contracts are settled. Once that is done, it will become a subsidiary of Transport for London.

The strategic road network is shorter than the rail strategic network.

Why aren't trains longer?

Because either:

- they'd overrun platforms so making passengers move to other carriages to get off or else having to stop twice – in both cases extending journey times and hazarding safety – or
- a lack of availability of rolling stock.

Why don't buses and trains run to time?

For buses, mainly due to:

- Congestion. Average travel times at different times of day can be anticipated to some extent and built into timetables but exceptional or unexpected hold-ups cause delays. Dedicated, well-designed bus lanes help avoid this and so not only improve journey times but improve reliability.
- Passenger demand. With most buses now 'pay on entry', above-average demand leads to slower journey times. The reintroduction of conductors or much greater availability of pre-travel tickets and automatic machine checks on board so avoiding the need to for passengers to interact with the driver would help minimise delays from this cause. But so far there is little incentive for bus companies to make such investments as they are unlikely to be cost-effective.
- Shortage of bus drivers. This results in part from low wages. In London this is exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing. And if you put the wages up, ticket prices increase, passengers complain, buses become less competitive, and passenger numbers decrease further, thereby increasing unit costs and so on *ad infinitum*.

For trains:

- Track and signalling maintenance.
- Signalling failures.
- Rolling stock breakdowns – indicative of inadequate management and maintenance regimes.
- Driver/guard unavailability
- The unexpected! (Much of which should have been expected.)

What is congestion?

Do you want the good news or the bad news?

The bad news is that there is no widely accepted definition of congestion.

The nearly good news is that the Commission for Integrated Transport has its own, which is:

> 'The difference between the travel times road users would achieve in free-flowing traffic conditions and the travel times they are forecast to encounter at the levels of traffic, road capacity and hence speeds forecast in the model. The measure is expressed in terms of average time lost per kilometre driven'.

but unfortunately that relates to model forecasts, so it's not much good for you and I. (Even so, that is somewhat better than the economist's definition:

> 'When traffic speeds fall below those where any additional vehicles impose costs on the traffic stream that are greater than the benefit the additional vehicles derive from using the road'.)

So we have a national transport strategy, the major aim of which is to reduce congestion, but no accepted definition of what it is – or only one that is practically impossible for the layperson to check – and, would you believe, no targets for its reduction! Not a good confidence builder.

'We should focus targets and policies on the outcomes we want to achieve, rather than on national traffic volume figures. … We think we should aim to develop benchmark profiles and targets for congestion for different types of area and road' (John Prescott, January 2000. Source: *Tackling Congestion and Pollution* (DETR, 2000)). *Two years on and still nothing!*

Now some will jibe at this a bit and say that there are statistics which give the average speed of traffic in towns and on strategic routes measured over several years. True. But it's all too macro – too general. Surely to goodness, it's not much to ask councils to measure the time it takes to travel across their territories from A to B or C to D at different times of the day or the year, and then be given targets for improving on them – both in time and reliability terms. That would force them to look at the bottlenecks, the capacities and do something about them.

Having criticised two would-be definitions, here's ours, based, we admit, on the Commission for Integrated Transport's one:

> 'The difference between the travel times road users would achieve in free-flowing traffic conditions and the travel times they actually experience. The measure is expressed in terms of average time lost per kilometre driven'.

In terms of acceptability, a limit might be:

> 'On an average day (i.e. excluding problems caused by one-off special events), traffic, whilst it may be dense, should flow smoothly over the generality of the network during peak periods. This accepts that there may be a few locations where flow breakdown will occur but that this should not significantly affect the operation of the network as a whole. Thus the difference in travel times should not be significantly different – say up to maxima of +15% inter-urban, +25% conurbations and + 30% larger urban'.

Whereas congestion used to be a morning or evening peak phenomenon, increasingly it's there for much of the day. On the M42 around Birmingham, the evening peak starts at 11:30 a.m. and continues to 10:30 pm!

So far as the public are concerned they just want someone to show some awareness that congestion is occurring, that it matters, that it's being measured, and that those responsible for reducing congestion sort it out and will be held accountable if they don't. Period!

So how can I find out how bad congestion is in my town?

With difficulty. Hardly anyone anywhere measures or monitors it in urban areas. The Highways Agency does on the strategic road network but councils don't and – so far – don't have to.

There's an urgent need for local councils and the Highways Agency to monitor and publish on a regular and frequent basis travel times at different times of the day and night for cars, buses, bikes and lorries between a variety of points in urban areas and on the strategic network. Only in that way can the effectiveness of the integrated transport strategy be monitored and proved and the public be kept in the picture and those responsible for delivering improvements be held accountable. Such an approach would also put pressure on and so lead to more integration between all those involved in managing roads –from highway maintenance to contractors working on water, gas, electricity, telephone and cable systems, the police and traffic engineers responsible for traffic lights and managing traffic flows and road capacities.

What causes congestion?

- Too much traffic – too little road.
- Poorly and inadequately designed junctions.
- Accidents and breakdowns.
- Highway works.
- Traffic signal failures.
- Deliveries.
- Buses stopping to pick up/drop off passengers.
- Concentrations of major traffic 'attractors'. (Just too many people wanting to go to the same place at the same time.)
- Lack of investment.
- Lack of interest and commitment by highway authorities, many having become so accustomed to it that they regard it as the norm.
- Indiscriminate parking.
- Pedestrian activity (though that's not suggesting that there shouldn't be more and better provision for pedestrians).

A significant number of bus passengers pay the drivers for tickets, which increases stopping times, so further interrupting traffic flow. Greater opportunity to buy tickets in advance and/or common ticketing systems would reduce and minimise such disruption.

(Oh – and of course the effects of congestion are ameliorated in part by in-car entertainment and improved comfort – air conditioning say – so that people have become inured to it and inclined to 'grimace and bear it'.)

Why do I never discover why congestion occurs?

- It's become so common that the causes rarely if ever get reported.
- Interruptions to free-flowing traffic – say in the outside lane of a motorway – cause a wave effect that passes through and slows down all following traffic, whilst meantime the car that first caused the delay has long gone on. Often such interruptions are caused by nothing other than someone braking.
- By the time you reach the incident it has been dealt with.
- Lack of real-time detailed information.

What are the possible cures for congestion?

- Improve junctions – which in urban areas are the single biggest cause of congestion.
- Impose on highway authorities through the local transport plans a requirement to monitor and reduce congestion to meet pre-planned performance targets and publish the results on a quarterly basis. If you don't measure and monitor it you can't manage it.
- Reduce taxation in favour of congestion charging.
- Implement park and ride schemes.
- Much improved traffic management techniques.
- Build new roads and widen existing ones to give the required capacity.

What role does parking play in creating congestion?

A lot! And that's not just on-street but off-street too. On-street parking obviously restricts road capacity, and parking movements interrupt traffic flows. Off-street parking attracts more cars – enough said! So, restricting car parking does affect travel demand but it can also have serious knock-on effects on the economic, physical and social life of town centres and shopping and business areas. Provincial local authorities in particular are therefore very cautious about limiting or deterring it.

Why does traffic in the inside lanes often seem to move faster?

Fast-moving traffic with short head-ways (distance between vehicles) is rapidly affected by any interruption to free-flow conditions, which will create a wave effect that bunches up and slows down following vehicles and can travel a long way back and often take a long time to dissipate. On the other hand, in the inside lane, there is slower moving traffic often with longer head-ways, and any similar minor interruption – braking, say – has less effect on the free-flow conditions.

What is congestion charging?

It's but one of several possible ways to influence demand for road space. Increased use of cars puts pressure on the road network and there is a limit to how much extra capacity can be both warranted and afforded. The challenge for the Government is to come up with a method which is effective, efficient and fair.

One option is to limit demand – by the price people pay to use roads. To an extent that already happens through the level of fuel tax (the Government likes to call it fuel duty, but we all know it's a tax!) though that affects people using uncongested roads in the countryside as much as those driving in cities.

In Singapore, a congestion charging scheme only managed to stabilise traffic levels despite being backed up by restrictions on car ownership, rationing of permits to buy cars, high car purchase taxes, high license fees and charges that increase as congestion gets worse! Sounds fun!

A more direct method is to charge for the use of roads when they are most congested. That's what the CfIT came up with in their recent (February 2002) discussion document – *Paying for Road Use*.

Was that the 'spy in the sky' idea – to charge us all for causing congestion?

Yes – you can call it that if you like but my guess is that if it were to be introduced the possible problems of intrusion and privacy would be overcome. It's based on the use of a nationwide Global Positioning System with smart card units located in every vehicle. These would detect where and when a vehicle was entering a busier road subject to part-time charging, and deduct the appropriate fee. The intention would be to shift part of the burden from vehicle taxation to a system of charges. Whilst most roads would have no charges at all, others would generate a fee based on the amount of congestion. It may sound fanciful but shouldn't be dismissed as it's a credible and useful idea. The Government already has a proposal to charge HGVs by distance in return for lower or zero vehicle licence fees which is supported by the freight industry because it will help to level the playing field between UK and continental registered lorries.

The CfIT's proposal is significantly different since it would charge on a congestion basis rather than distance. The word 'congestion' is unfortunate since it gives the impression that the motorist would be clobbered when stuck in a jam. A better phrase would be 'peak charging': the scheme would charge high rates on roads that are normally busy at that time but would not charge more if there was a jam due to an accident. In other words, you would know your charges before setting off on your journey and could alter your departure time if you wanted to reduce your costs.

The hope is that such charging would encourage people to change their journey to less busy times of the day, to use other routes or to switch to other forms of transport, so spreading traffic flows more evenly, thereby reducing congestion and making better use of available capacity. Providing – and it is a big proviso – that the fees were not an extra tax but a replacement one based more on use, that income generated was applied to improve transport infrastructure, that understandable concerns about intrusion of privacy/freedom of movement could be overcome, that charging systems were robust, simple and cheap, public support might just be won. It's only an idea at present – to help fuel the debate – and there's no suggestion that it could be introduced for at least a decade.

And would it work?

Congestion charging can have unexpected and unwanted results from creating alternative 'rat runs' to deterring economic investment to causing unemployment. And in this case I have my doubts about the size of the forecast congestion reduction. The report suggests that, for a typical car, the average fuel cost is about 10p per mile and the average motorway charge would be 3.5p per mile. The CfIT claims a 2.65% reduction in motorway traffic at the same time as travel times would fall by 3% and fuel economy would improve due to lower congestion. It all seems too good to be true, and a key factor may be how visible the charge is. If you have a smart card on the windscreen and the bill appears once a month on your credit card, it may not affect behaviour much. If your smart card unit has a display that shows you the cost per mile it could be different, especially if you had to take your card to a registered office to get it recharged. More work needs to be done. The scheme has a major advantage over Ken Livingstone's scheme for congestion charging in London in that there are no boundaries and thus no consequential problems at the edges.

Of course, local authorities already have powers to introduce some form of congestion charging – London is likely to implement a scheme from January 2003, though there are noises off stage that the Government might yet try and scupper it. A few other authorities have it in mind.

To be effective it might also have to be set at relatively – and thus possibly politically unacceptably – high levels.

But whatever the problems, since

- public transport alone will not entice sufficient people from their cars, and
- increases in road capacity to the scale required would be unacceptable and unaffordable

to reduce congestion to the required acceptable levels, some direct charging in some places will be an appropriate tool in conjunction with a variety of other measures including some capacity improvements and better traffic and road management, with carrots preceding the stick and proof positive that the income will be used to further improve transport infrastructure. The bullet needs to be bitten and the Government needs to lead from the front and not hide behind local councils and leave them to be the target.

Will there be any space left on the roads when my children start driving?

Not very much. The Plan assumes that the other measures to limit traffic demand will cope with the expected increases in car ownership – including your children's I guess.

Often those aspects of traffic growth arising from an increase in car ownership through, for example, population increases or a growing economy and wider wealth distribution are dismissed by critics of investment in roads – yet in a historical context we are where we are precisely because of those related factors. To argue against making future provision for such growth is to either assume that there will be no further increase in the wealth of the country or its people or that a cap will be applied to car ownership roughly equivalent to the current level: neither stances are realistic or credible.

Research has been carried out by the Commission for Integrated Transport into road traffic growth over the next 10 years (from 2000 to 2010) based on a range of assumptions – including adoption of several of the possible choices provided for in the 2010 integrated transport strategy such as congestion charging and tolls for inter-urban travel. (NB. These do not represent Government policy or local authorities' views. They're just options which may or may not be taken up.) Table 14 reflects the outcomes of those studies and indicates that traffic can be expected to grow by a minimum of 12% to a maximum of 22% for 'all areas' with lower growth in London and large urban areas and higher elsewhere.

The table also illustrates how such growth may translate into congestion and the varying impacts that implementation of the transport strategy may have on such delays. It demonstrates vividly both the risks and importance attaching to the various solutions: if the strategies don't work or aren't implemented, then there are likely to very serious social, economic, political and environmental impacts.

Who pays for transport?

Shared between

- the public as taxpayers (although people refer to 'Government funding', in reality that money comes from us as taxpayers – both through direct and indirect taxes) and
- users (whether bus or rail passengers through the fares they pay or as car owners through fuel duty, vehicle licences and parking charges).

Freight
The Government is considering charging freight vehicles by distance travelled – that being likely to be offset against the current vehicle excise duty.

***Table 14**. Comparisons of congestion – will it get worse or better under the 10 Year Plan?*

		Percentage					
Issue	**Assumption**	**All areas**	**London**	**Large urban**	**Other urban**	**Other**	**Inter-urban trunk roads**
Traffic	**Baseline**: Assumes no significant improvement in public transport or change in car ownership costs but completion of 37 trunk road schemes	22	14	16	21	24	29
	Plan: Spending and outputs on local transport, London, rail, and strategic road network as in Transport 2010 plus congestion charging in London and 8 other urban areas and 12 workplace parking levy schemes with all net revenues being recycled into transport plus a reduction of traffic volumes and congestion through land use planning policies, travel plans, sustainable distribution methods and local planning policies. Also assumes 20% reduction in motoring costs over the plan period	17	5	10	17	21	26
	Plan plus constant (in real terms) motoring costs	13	–3	6	14	17	21
	Plan plus wider local congestion charging	17	5	10	17	21	26
	Plan plus inter-urban (tolls) charging	17	5	8	17	21	23
	Plan plus all three illustrative scenarios	12	–3	5	13	16	18
Congestion	Base line	15	13	15	15	36	28
	Plan	–6	–15	–8	7	16	–5
	Plan plus constant monitoring costs	–12	–26	–11	4	9	–11
	Plan plus wider local charging	–7	–15	–8	7	16	–5
	Plan plus inter-urban charging	–9	–15	–12	7	11	–20
	Plan plus all three illustrative scenarios	12	–3	5	13	16	18

Source: *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan. The Background Analysis* (DETR, 2000, Fig. 13).

It can get very complex, so for simplicity we'll split it just into two categories – Government (bearing in mind that's us – the taxpayers) and householders (us again!). It varies according to the mode, as shown in Table 15.

The Government's expenditure of £8 billion or so compares with £28 billion raised in fuel tax and vehicle excise duty – along with VAT on transport, which must raise at least a further £10 billion a year. In addition to household expenditure, there is that by firms – whilst this amount is not known it must be in excess of £50 billion a year, of which the lion's share is on road transport.

***Table 15**. Who pays for transport?*

Mode	Government	Households
Road	£5.5 billion	£66.6 billion
Public transport		
National rail	£1.23 billion	£3.413 billion
London Underground	£315 million	£1.129 billion
Light rail	Not available	£109 million
Local buses and coaches	£1.142 billion	£3.952 billion
Taxis/other	–	£1.9 billion
Total	£2.5 billion	£10.15 billion

Source: *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (DTLR, 2001, Table 1.18).

How and why did we get in this mess?

- Lack of coherent and consistent planning.
- Short termism – 5 year parliaments and big political differences are no use when it comes to transport. The gestation periods are too long; Government's often didn't have the bottle to do things since they knew they'd get all the blame at the conceptual/planning/funding stages but might not live to take the glory once constructed/implemented.
- Inadequate resources.
- Failure to grasp the nettle of increasing car ownership.
- Failure to maintain infrastructure – whether road or rail.
- A botched deregulation of buses.
- A botched privatisation of railways.
- Too ready to react to lobby pressure groups.
- Some legacies from the *laissez faire* attitudes on land use planning in the 1980s.
- An inclination to use global warming fears as an excuse for doing nothing – or nothing very much.
- An unspoken policy that congestion rather than being a problem was the solution.

Why do people choose cars?

- Convenience.
- A sense of being in control.
- Flexibility.
- To save time.
- To travel as a group.
- To carry shopping and luggage.
- Inadequacy of alternatives.
- Pleasure of driving.
- Comfort.
- Privacy.
- Speed.
- In-car entertainment.
- Security.

What's happening to travel patterns?

Table 16 tells all – well almost all!

The important point to note is that whilst the number of journeys hardly grew over the 14 year period, the distance travelled went up by almost 30% – over 1500 miles per year for everyone. It's the distances we now travel that have made the big difference over the last 20 years or so.

***Table 16**. Changes in personal travel 1985/1986 to 1999/2000*

Purpose	Miles per person per year		Percentage change	Miles
	1985/1986	1999/2000		
Commuting	1086	1350	+24	+264
Education	161	198	+23	+37
Education escort	45	96	+113	+51
Shopping	611	898	+47	+287
Other escort	316	413	+31	+97
Business	544	695	+28	+151
Personal business	329	467	+42	+138
Visiting friends	1165	1419	+22	+254
Entertainment	245	293	+20	+48
Sport	111	149	+34	+38
Holidays	338	441	+30	+103
Day trips	307	341	+11	+34
Other	58	51	–12	–7
Total	**5317**	**6843**	**+29**	**+1526**
Overall journeys per person	**1024**	**1030**		

Source: *National Travel Survey: 1998/2000 Update* (DETR, 2000, Table 3.1).

Does climate change matter?

Yes – but only because it will cause change and likely increase the rate of change rather than because it's bound to be a bad thing. Whether it's likely to be a bad thing or a good thing will probably depend who you are, where you are, what your priorities are and umpteen other factors! Oh – and since no one can predict what will actually happen, can only make some rough assumptions – it also depends on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist!

The current best predictions suggest that, in global terms, some areas could benefit from climate change and others lose out, but in both cases the degree and rate of change is what matters most: too rapid and too great and there's insufficient time to prepare and adjust. Thus, it makes sense to at least try and buy time even if we can't stop it in its tracks. (And in any event, the climate has always changed over the millennia – and with it the natural environment, so the idea that it's a new phenomenon or that we can somehow – or should even want to – stabilise it as it is now is a nonsense.)

In broad terms, the current perceived wisdom seems to suggest that changes in climate would more likely adversely affect the poorest countries so increasing rather than reducing the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots'.

There is a real danger is that we will spend the next few decades putting all our efforts into trying to stop climate change to no avail but doing nothing to prepare for it.

Can transport policies make a difference to climate change?

It depends whether climate change is a man-made or a natural phenomenon or a bit of both. The jury's out. And the earth's climate has always changed over the millennia. But assuming – fairly safely – that man-made activities at least contribute to its rate of change, then the answer is yes – in several ways. Since the majority of transport-generated carbon dioxide comes from cars, policies which influence their use or level of emissions can obviously have an impact. Thus, initiatives which encourage the use of non-fossil fuels through, say, the use of electrically driven

engines or, in time, fuel cells based on hydrogen (which are now at an early stage of development) or which lead to improvements in fuel efficiency or lower greenhouse gas emissions from engines and/or reduce use can be helpful. But we must tread carefully as there are areas of concern, two in particular.

First, traffic restraint measures – such as congestion charging or parking restrictions say. These are likely to lead to an actual reduction in the volume of traffic, congestion and a marginal improvement in fuel consumption and could be an effective way of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. If, on the other hand, congestion is used to restrain traffic (by withdrawing road capacity or not increasing it in line with traffic growth say) then it's possible that the increase in stop/go driving will more than outweigh the savings of fewer vehicle miles.

Secondly, improvements in public transport as a means to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from cars. These need to be considered very carefully and cautiously on two grounds:

- Increased bus frequency often leads to fewer passengers/vehicle and thus lower carbon dioxide savings: it may still be worth doing, but not for that one reason.
- Buses – even the latest and most fuel-efficient – use far more fuel than cars, and depending on the take-up could outweigh the savings made through fewer car journeys.

If those problems are to be avoided then public transport service improvements will need to concentrate on attracting car users to current services rather than new ones. Not easy.

That's not to say that volume increases in buses couldn't or wouldn't be beneficial in several other ways even if they do lead to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions or that in some circumstances they could help reduce such emissions.

Why does it take so long to build anything?

The processes and procedures for increasing capacity on road, rail or air are so parochial, problematical and prone to procrastination, political whim and preferment to minority interests to the detriment and disadvantage of the nation as a whole that were it not so serious one might think of it all as a pantomime! Frankly, it is a disgrace, and it's time the public knew what's been happening – or rather what's not been happening. The reality is that the likelihood of a Government being able to initiate and implement any worthwhile improvement in public infrastructure from scratch in the lifetime of two parliaments let alone one is practically impossible.

What do other countries do then to get infrastructure on the ground so much faster?

Not what we do for sure!

In the UK, on average it takes 17 years to get a new bypass constructed from conception to completion. In France it takes 5 years.

Crossrail and across the Channel
The genesis of the current proposed Crossrail scheme for London is to be found in Plan G of the London Transportation Study, which was prepared in 1966. Since then it has been the subject of further study in the London Rail Study (1974) and the Central London Rail Study (1989), and its go-ahead has been confirmed more than once, including by John Major when he was Prime Minister. However, the route is still not finally agreed, powers have yet to be sought, and the chances of it being built before 2010 are slim. In comparison, in the 1960s, French engineers started building their first 'Crossrail' – RER Line A – across Paris, and by 1972 a network of such lines had been agreed. Today, Paris has a network of four RER lines with a route length almost as great as that of the London Underground! (And of course their excellent Metro was originally designed so that no-one in Paris would be more than 500 m from a Metro station!)

There is at present no means – no legislation yet on the Statute Book – to enable national priorities to override local interests, concerns or objections nor the means to buy out interests at anything other than current land use value. Even though the Government is proposing changes in a recently published Consultation Paper (*Planning: Delivering Fundamental Change: New Parliamentary Procedures for Processing Major Infrastructure Projects*) to enable national infrastructure projects (in England) to receive approval in principle via Parliament, leaving the detail to local public inquiries, it's far from certain that much time will be saved. That's because:

- what is currently defined as 'national' is too narrow – for example trunk roads would have to be longer than 30 km, which would cut out practically every by-pass
- there will no doubt be umpteen legal challenges made by various pressure groups out to oppose any new infrastructure project whatever its importance to the nation

whilst the decision-making process will continue to be delayed by successive Governments as they wait for some 'propitious moment': that, we all know, is when it will do least harm or most good to their re-election prospects or they are forced into making a decision come what may.

What a way to run a country! Meanwhile the period will also remain unnecessarily prolonged as a result of the Government having introduced yet another stage – multi-modal studies – great for consultants and those who are opposed to development *per se.* Those involved in such studies spend months and occasionally years researching a whole range of options and factors when most-times all that's needed is a bit of common sense to say what's wanted! Yet the charades continue.

Thus, although the Government's strategy is to construct 80 bypasses within the remaining 8 years of its 10 Year Plan, the likelihood is that it will be lucky to complete half that number. Oh, and of course a pound to a penny, Crossrail still won't have been built. Words fail us: the nation's been held back by bureaucratic bungling, lack of vision and sheer inertia on infrastructure needs over umpteen years. *We desperately need some much improved means to fast track infrastructure of national or regional importance* (*with 'national' being more widely defined than currently proposed*).

Myths

The integrated transport strategy is the answer to all our transport problems

Not so – but that's hardly surprising since with the best will – and plan! – in the world it would be difficult to keep pace with changing and often growing demands. Best perhaps to say what it won't and will do.

Won'ts

- It won't reduce congestion either at a local level or on most inter-urban routes.
- It won't have much impact on choice of travel decisions.
- It won't reduce harmful emissions.
- It won't lead to a major shift from car to public transport.
- It won't deliver all that it promised/assumed it would deliver.
- It won't overcome the overcrowding on London Underground or commuter trains.

Wills

- It will improve information available to travellers.
- It will help through ticketing.
- It will lead to some improvements to buses and bus journeys.
- It will improve the reliability of London Underground.
- It will stop things getting as bad as they might otherwise have become.
- It will offer some improved choices to drivers fed up with congestion.
- It will lead to an increase in congestion in urban areas.

Better public transport will make people leave their cars at home and solve the congestion problem

Not so. (Well, not to any great extent.)

How about the following for part of the answer?

If public transport is to be attractive to car users then it has to deliver similar benefits to the car, including the following as a minimum:

- a package of reliability, frequency, accessibility, speed, comfort, cleanliness, security and price that is not too far from that offered by the car, taking into account the stress (and cost) of driving and parking in today's towns
- minimise the need to change bus or train
- run close to 23 hours a day to appeal to a wide range of groups and needs
- provide a comfortable, safe, secure and high quality environment.

Scheduled public transport takes you from where you don't want to start to where you don't want to end up, at a time you don't want to travel by a route you may not wish to follow, at a fare you would rather not pay, with people who you would not choose as travelling companions on a rather outdated vehicle – if you're lucky! Apart from that, it's fine!

It has a long way to go to reach these criteria, and meanwhile the car is being made ever more attractive with enhanced information and entertainment systems. It is unrealistic to expect public transport to be subsidised to the levels needed to enable it to compete with the car in those terms. From Table 10 it can be seen that:

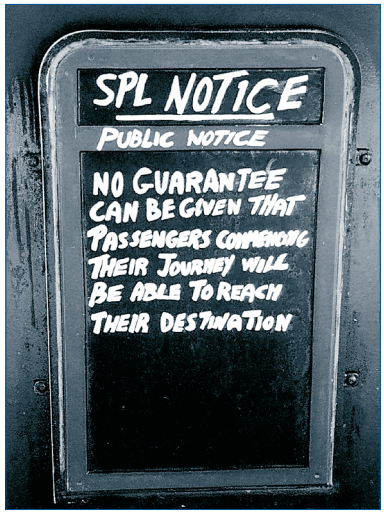
- the average percentage travel by bus in the EU is 8.6% compared with the UK's current 6.2%
- the average percentage travel by rail in the EU is 6.2% compared with the UK's current 5.3%
- the average percentage travel by tram in the EU is 1.1% compared with the UK's current 1.0%.

In London, Transport for London (TfL) is not looking at all the problems and all the solutions. The Mayor's development plans exclude roads and ignore increasing capacity, relying solely on congestion charging and improvements in public transport to resolve the problems. They also rely on the use of private cars in Outer London.

Thus, experience elsewhere demonstrates that the room for a significant shift in modal transfer from the car to public transport is minimal, so improvements to public transport will make no measurable change in the level congestion. That view is further reinforced by the following factors:

- many need their car by day
- travel-to-work trips often incorporate other trips too such as school runs
- normal growth in traffic will take up any slack
- land use diversity
- the continuing trend from urban to suburban and rural living
- travel patterns
- much of the increase in car usage is for journeys that were never made by public transport and never will be – even Colin Buchanan made this point in the late 1950s, and it's as true today as it was then … truer!

All that said, planned improvements in public transport may provide a means for some people in some places to escape congestion, but they won't solve congestion and it's wrong to suggest that they will.



Special Notice circa *1874: Victoria Railway Station – Sheffield. (Great Central Railway Co.)*

Since nothing will really induce people to travel by bus if they've already got a car, there's no need to do anything

Not so! Far from it. Whilst it's very unlikely that public transport will ever be able to win over a significant proportion of car users, unless it strives to improve its services and quality, there will be a further shift in the opposite direction; further, because overall bus patronage has already fallen by a half since 1970 – 56% outside London. (In London, patronage declined until the early 1980s, since when it's remained fairly constant.)

In any event, current users of public transport deserve better – far better.

Typically, for a door-to-door journey by bus, around 20% of the time is spent waiting and a further 25% is spent travelling to/from the departure/arrival points.

So here's a wish list taken from the Commission for Integrated Transport's published reports:

- availability of real-time information before, at the start of and during the journey
- availability of through ticketing (bus add-on tickets being bought for a flat fare as part of rail ticket for example)
- improved marketing by operators
- improved facilities at bus stops – information and shelter
- the naming of bus stops – as happens even in Portugal
- on board announcements of the next stop
- raised zebra crossings adjacent to bus stops
- improved integration between trains and other modes of transport including bike and car hire facilities
- improved frequency, punctuality and reliability (and journey times similar to a car!)
- lower costs
- improved car parking at stations
- park and ride facilities at motorway service areas
- Underground interchanges (being investigated by the Highways Agency).

If bus journeys throughout the UK had held up as in London there'd be 1.5 billion more bus journeys per year. A proportion – say 200 million – would have been fewer car journeys = 2.8 billion km/year.

Expanding roads simply generates more traffic which fills them up again

Yes and no. All new infrastructure tends to create more traffic – whether it's roads, rail, offices, industry, whatever; but generally not more journeys – rather, longer journeys. It's the distance travelled that has increased, not just over the decades but over the centuries – the increases occurring in faster, more attractive modes from walking to cycling to buses to cars. In the UK the increase in urban areas is mainly because of the release of suppressed demand – we are behind the game. And, of course, extra demand also arises from economic growth, and with it increased car ownership.

***Table 17**. Comparison of taxes across the EU in owning and using a car*

	Taxes and rankings for a 1600 cc car (annual £ cost expressed in PPP)						All taxes and ranking based on a 1000 cc car (PPP)		All taxes and ranking based on 2000 cc car (PPP)	
Country[a]	Taxes on owning	Rank	Taxes on use	Rank	Total taxes	Rank	All taxes	Rank	All taxes	Rank
1. Netherlands	621	1	674	4	1295	1	978	1	2096	1
2. Finland	566	4	440	8	1032	2	800	2	1565	3
3. Denmark	526	3	498	11	1024	3	723	6	1551	4
4. Ireland	482	2	550	12	1006	4	652	7	1467	5
5. UK	391	7	432	2	976	5	731	5	1201	9
6. Italy	318	8	588	1	968	6	758	3	1301	6
7. France	282	9	694	3	955	7	756	4	1191	10
8. Belgium	263	6	705	5	906	8	627	9	1233	7
9. Greece	262	5	693	13	823	9	548	12	1581	2
10. Norway	246	10	563	7	809	10	644	8	1217	8
11. Germany	223	13	520	6	747	11	565	11	962	13
12. Sweden	193	11	516	9	743	12	582	10	982	12
13. Spain	180	12	567	10	709	13	546	13	1035	11
14. Luxembourg	145	14	379	14	524	14	392	14	691	14

Source: *European Comparison of Taxes on Car Ownership and Use 2001* (report commissioned by the Commission for Integrated Transport, 2001).

[a] Listed in ranking of all taxes (owning and use) for a 1600 cc car.

Research by the Commission for Integrated Transport concludes that:

> 'Appropriate investment in new and improved roads can deliver economic and safety benefits well in excess of the scheme costs. In addition, many schemes take traffic away from towns and villages, resulting in environmental and accessibility benefits'.

Three cheers for that bit of common sense!

There is a clear and urgent need in many areas to adjust the road system/layout not just to provide bypasses but to increase road capacity – including in urban areas. The current approach of doing nothing – or practically nothing – save on a few strategic routes is wrong. The current guidance by the DTLR on local transport plans that providing extra road capacity is the means of last resort, whilst improving public transport and cycling are the first, is almost the only option being considered. That is taking too narrow and blinkered a view, leading to increases not decreases in congestion. It fails to face facts, and is putting local authorities in straitjackets and undermining local choice and democracy.

Signs of an apparent trend back to some increased capacity may at least suggest a more balanced approach. In recent times Governments seem to have been afraid to do anything – or didn't want to pay up or used any expressed vociferous opposition as an excuse for not spending. Other countries see expenditure on transport – whether road, rail or underground – as an investment for the future which will yield valuable dividends. To date our country hasn't. *There is a clear urgent need to invest in both additional road capacity in key corridors and pinch points in urban areas*.

We pay much more for using our cars in the UK than in other EU countries

Yes and no! It depends what you mean by use and what size car and which country you have in mind! And if you thought comparing traffic and congestion across the EU was complicated, then this really is a can of worms. Fortunately, someone else has done the hard work. Table 17 summarises the results.

To keep it simple, we just provide comparisons of taxes on owning, taxes on use and all taxes for a 1600 cc car, but in the final column show the rankings based on all taxes for 1000 cc and 2000 cc cars. It is based on the £ cost converted to purchasing power parity (PPP). Okay – you're going to ask what on earth they are! Well, just accept that they are an established means to equalise the purchasing power of different countries eliminating the price differences between countries.

Many conclusions can be drawn from this table. The UK is the second most taxed on using a car and the fifth most taxed on owning a car and combined owning and using a car. The EC's recent call on the UK to reduce fuel duty derives in part from these facts – so watch this space!

Retiring all pre-K (1993) registered cars (and pay for this as they do in France) would halve harmful emissions at a stroke.

***Table 18**. Creators/causes of various emissions (indicative figures only)*

Greenhouse gas	Percentage caused by		Percentage absorbed by natural environment	Residual percentage after absorption by natural environment	Percentage of gross human activity emissions caused by transport
	Natural environment	Human activity			
Carbon dioxide (CO_2)	95	5	97	3	26 (of 5%)
Methane (CH_4)	30	70	90– 95	5– 10	Small
Nitrous oxide (N_2O)	60	40	80	20	40–50

Source: Apogee Research, *Transportation and Global Climate Change: A Review and Analysis of the Literature* (US Department of Transportation, 1998, Exhibit 2-1).

The economy will not allow the public sector to invest in and maintain a decent national transport infrastructure but the private sector can solve the problem

Not so. It's more to do with priorities, public pressure (or lack of it) and political realities. Currently, health and education are at the top of the public's (and the Government's) agenda, with transport close behind, whilst increasing direct (or even indirect taxation) to enable the Government to spend more is so sensitive an issue that it's unrealistic to assume that it will happen: thus the options in the 10 Year Plan of congestion charging, tolls, and work place parking charges.

And the private sector can't solve it on it's own. It can help but it will want – need – a return on any investment it's called upon – or chooses – to make, and the rates will reflect the risk.

The PFI (Private Finance Initiative) and PPPs (public–private partnerships) are only shorthand for using the private sector to borrow money (and at higher rates than the Government could itself obtain) to avoid the Government being embarrassed or reprimanded by the EC for upping the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR). It still has to be paid for – just like a credit card – on the never-never – and the sums due become a first call on revenue and/or capital several years down the line, so reducing flexibility.

That said, those higher 'money costs' can often be more than offset by higher efficiency and reduced whole-life costs, so both the PFI and PPPs can be good buys. The choice needs to be selective and objective. But we do need to get away from this growing tendency that only if the private sector can/will invest can we afford any new infrastructure. As a country we must be prepared to invest public – not just private – funds and also be prepared to look at other options, including bonds, as used commonly in the USA. We really have got to get out of this mentality that we can't do anything because it can't be afforded. We're the fourth largest economy in the world dammit! What have we been doing, what are we about!?

Cars are the major cause of climate change

Not so, but that doesn't mean their contribution can be ignored.

Several gases contribute to the 'greenhouse effect', which in turn is believed (but has not yet been conclusively demonstrated) to contribute to climate change. Such gases include water vapour, methane, nitrous oxide, halocarbons (very potent) and carbon dioxide (CO_2) – which is the most significant because it is emitted in the largest quantities. Because transport is a major emitter of CO_2 – not just cars but also lorries, buses and trains – an important objective of the 10 Year Plan is to reduce such CO_2 emissions from transport.

Table 18 gives some figures.

Whilst the residual percentage of CO_2 may look small (3%) it represents 4 billion. tonnes of carbon, of which it will be seen about a quarter (1 billion tonnes) can be attributed to transport. This doesn't absolve transport as it's a growing sector, but the search for solutions needs be wider.

However, newer technologies on the horizon will continue the trend towards major reductions in pollutants across all road vehicles, as the box infers.

Roads are profligate users of land

Not so. Roads use 1.4% of our total land area whilst providing access to property and between properties and also accommodating almost all public utilities and footways. If minor roads providing access to premises are excluded, 'traffic roads' take up less than a third of 1% of the land in Great Britain. It is acknowledged, of course, that actual land-take is rarely the sole or even major issue, but we need to get things in proportion. (Source: *Road Traffic Statistics: 1999* (DETR, 2000).)

Land use planning

Understanding the issues

Right at the start you said that land use planning was tied up with integrated transport. What is land use planning and is it any use?

Land use planning is the means to:

- create a fair and efficient use of land that helps shape and protect the quality of our towns, cities and countryside (in planning speak that's 'best use of land in the public interest')
- facilitate or promote developments which are of a high quality and sustainable.

And how does all that happen?

It's delivered through:

- national policies and guidance
- regional bodies and their strategic plans
- local planning authorities and their development plans and development control policies
- environmental improvement schemes.

Does it work? Does it do any good?

Yes! At it's best it's very good. Good planning can have a huge beneficial effect on the way we live our lives. At it's worst in the past – well, let's not dwell on that – we can all think of examples! But that said, the Government reckons it can and must be done better, and in December 2001 put out for consultation the Planning Green Paper *Delivering a Fundamental Change*, to change it radically, saying that the current approach is are more than 50 years old and showing its age, that the system's too bureaucratic for today's world and that for national projects – as we've already seen – the time taken to get anything major or controversial approved means that by the time we've approved it, let alone built it, it may be out of date and inadequate, whilst the delay might have cost the country dearly.

What's land use planning got to do with integrated transport?

A lot – but not yet enough!

Whilst our quality of life depends on many factors, two are of crucial importance:

- **Land use planning**, which impacts on the nature of our towns and countryside, our standards of housing, and the location of industry, shops, leisure facilities and patterns of settlement.
- **Transport**, which provides the links, enabling ready access to and between homes, jobs, shopping, sport, theatres, hospitals, whatever. And we need a safe, effective, efficient and integrated transport system to support a strong and prosperous economy.

So land use planning and integrated transport are inextricably entwined and impact on each other:

- new developments can alter travel and traffic patterns enormously
- new roads or public transport routes can provide new pressure and opportunities for developments to take place
- changes in the way we choose or are able to travel can impact heavily on both urban and rural areas and cause both enormous damage and great good – economic, environmental and social
- likewise, changes in our lifestyles, technology, free time, wealth, family size, and social structure have knock-on effects on where we want to go, who we want to go with, when we want to go and how we plan to get there.

Thus, integrating land use with transport planning can help ensure that competing factors – say environmental and economic – work together for the public and national good. Councils therefore try to integrate their development plans with their local transport plans (that being in alphabetical order not of importance; they are first among equals!) So we cannot – sorry, should not – look at integrated transport without considering land use planning and vice versa. I could go on – but I'm sure you've got the message!

So, the Government's got a 10 year integrated transport plan but has it also got a 10 year land use planning plan?

No – well not as such. Whilst land use planning should in the main be as 'local' as possible, the Government rightly does intend to have statements of policy about infrastructure – ports, airports, railways and such – plans which set down broad parameters, both protecting and facilitating. What it doesn't have though – and what's really missing – is any nation-wide spatial planning.

Spatial planning? What's that?

Well, it's taking the broader view – looking at things in the round – spatially! Not just land use, but what affects land use. It works at all scales – but it is critical at the macro level. Take the South East of England as a starting point: that's the most densely populated region of the country, and continues to have one of the highest growth rates. London is a major factor in drawing people to that region (from all over the world as well as from other parts of Britain) because of the diversity of jobs and higher earning opportunities. So the pressure on land for housing is very great, scarcity puts up prices, people move further out to where property is cheaper, choosing to travel greater distances in consequence. In turn that puts pressure on the transportation systems.

Meanwhile, up north – or up in parts of the Midlands or wherever – the demise of sunset industries – steel, ship-building, coal and much manufacturing – has led to comparatively higher levels of unemployment, and in turn a drift southwards. Thus, in these regions housing is cheaper and in many – though not all – areas more than enough land is available for development. Whilst there are still serious inadequacies in transport infrastructure in these regions because of the general failure to invest over past years, in broad terms there is opportunity to improve and expand at a lot less cost and harm than 'down south'.

But with the hub of the country and much 'global' activity being London and its environs, the pressure grows to invest in improving links between the regions and London, rather than in the regions themselves. In consequence the capital responds to and reflects the needs, demands, wealth and aspirations of the growing population, its attraction increasing yet further.

Now national spatial planning – if we had any – would be about the Government facing up to those big issues and trying to counteract the downsides through having a framework or master plan which would look at planning nationally. It would seek to encourage for example greater growth outside the South East, through port and airport policy, European links and the transport infrastructure that supports them, to help make better use of land and skills and infrastructure in other regions and at the same time aiding the protection and preservation of parts of the Home Counties. Okay, it's no good imagining in today's society that any Government could resurrect the 'location policies for industry' implemented between the end of the Second World War and the 1980s – but that's not to say that there shouldn't be much greater proactive efforts on the spatial planning fronts.

In some ways that's what the EU has been doing – has done – as it has successfully directed investment into the peripheral parts – in some instances the extremities of the community – Spain, Italy, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland – and in consequence generated and spread economic development and wealth creation, thereby reducing a drift to more prosperous regions.

Is land use planning then part of the 10 Year Plan?

Sort of. There's a reference to it in the 10 Year Plan – but the impression is that it's lip service rather than for real. It says that the Government's transport strategy is based on integration not only within and between different types of transport but also:

- with policies for the environment
- with land use planning and
- with policies for education, health and wealth creation.

To help meet the housing targets, pressure is on to build some 23,000 houses a year in London in 'nooks and crannies' which may – or more likely may not, in the short term – be near enhanced public transport. How does integrating land-use planning with transport fit here?

We think, spatial (alright, we'll call it land use) planning has a key role in helping to deliver the Government's integrated transport strategy, but it needs to be taken far more seriously than at present and be properly integrated. The omens aren't good. In the Government Green Paper on planning, *Delivering a Fundamental Change*, unless we've missed something in the small print there's no reference at all to integrated transport. Not one. And that's very odd seeing as one of the Planning Guidance Notes on Transport makes the connection loud and clear.

There's the odd reference to regional spatial planning, and it taking the load, but nothing to its national partner – and all references to national policies really relate to principles which should be applied locally. So it looks as if there needs to be some integration within the DTLR!

Yet by shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, land use planning can help reduce the need to travel, and above all the dependency on the private car. It can help to reduce the length of journeys, and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling. Consistent application of such planning policies nation-wide would help reduce the need for car journeys (by reducing the physical separation of key land uses) and enable people to make sustainable transport choices. These policies should therefore not just be theoretical but applied as part of the Government's overall approach to addressing the needs of motorists, other road and public transport users, and business as a means to reduce congestion and pollution and achieve better access to development and facilities. They should also help to promote sustainable distribution. In this way planning policies can help minimise the downsides and maximise the upsides of transport in contributing to our quality of life.

But hang on – it takes ages and ages to change land uses. You're not suggesting that the Government should suddenly require some factory or hospital or supermarket to shift from A to B or some residents to move out or ...?

Of course not. You're quite right. To change existing land uses save on the very odd occasion is to all intents impossible in anything but the long term. But new developments are happening – new policies, new demands are evolving each and every day, somewhere, some place. And there is opportunity to influence them to the country's long-term benefit. Just suppose no-one had attempted to designate and protect our national parks, resist ribbon development or impose and protect the green belts around our cities what would Britain look like now? And just suppose someone had sought to and succeeded in limiting out-of-town shopping centres 15 years ago and instead got them located in inner-city areas, or pressed earlier for more cottage hospitals or enhanced GP surgeries in place of some of our regional hospitals (still having regard for the need for centres of excellence and specialisms) – just think how any one of those might have reduced average journey lengths and traffic intrusion and pollution. (And while you're about it think too of the enormous effects that any one let alone all of those non-decisions have had on the urban, suburban and rural landscapes and traffic and travel patterns: examples of how quickly land use policies can impact.) We can't put the clock back, of course, but we can try to ensure it keeps the right time from now on. The attempt must be made. We need to avoid taking short-term decisions which will create long-term problems for all of us.

54% of air travel takes place via London's five airports, which are important because they offer more opportunities for transfer to different planes and routes, which most regional airports don't. There is, though, the trend to low-cost/no frills/no transfer carriers. That may help to create a better spread of demand patterns.

That sounds fine – but be realistic! Market forces – global forces – force decisions these days. You can't be King Canute when it comes to land use planning. Others – big business, MPs wanting to be returned to power – make the waves and you can't stop them

That's defeatist talk! If there was more of a 'can do' attitude, a positive attitude to planning, and a preparedness to identify and sell the benefits of alternative strategies and if those who'll gain were to be encouraged and enabled to speak up, then things could change. The amount the Government can do to counter economic forces may be limited, but it has a duty to do all that it can. Anyway, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and London have spatial planning policies. It's time we had one for England as well as a UK one.

Is it only BIG land use planning issues – spatial planning type things – that impact on integrated transport (and vice versa) or are there some micro matters too?

Little things do matter – and some aren't so little either. Try some of these for size: no particular order:

- The location of Government offices and related agencies. Such dispersal has already had great benefits around the country in helping/sometimes acting as catalysts for regeneration in places such Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Newcastle. But not only that, they've helped take the pressure off the South East and the associated transport infrastructure. It might be overloaded and overcrowded even now, but think how much worse it could be. (On second thoughts – don't. It would be too distressing!)
- The renewal of and re-investment in inner city housing – helpful in reducing journey to work trips and aiding maximum use of public transport as well as improving social inclusion.
- The redevelopment of once-forgotten brownfield sites – again often close to or within existing urban areas – in advance of virgin land on the city and town outskirt – further helping to minimise traffic growth.
- Vast improvements in the standard of design, architecture and layout of higher density developments: it no longer has to be high rise and can help create vibrant communities.
- New housing developments – communities – in rural or semi-suburban areas which have been planned not to be 'self-contained' but to use public transport to link to existing development– helping to minimise traffic generation and journey lengths. That might be better than building on every brown-field site. Urban areas need lungs – more new Greenfield sites! – so developing every bit of land as the Government seem to be saying – will be counter-productive. You can't regenerate cities and make them attractive to live in if you don't create parks and leisure facilities – as well as the necessary integrated transport infrastructure.
- The regeneration of cities to make them safer, more attractive so helping to reduce the drift from town to country.

- 80% of the population live in cities.
- 20% live in the countryside.
- 50% say they want to move out of the cities.

We need to put as much effort into saving our cities as we have done into saving the countryside. But in some regions the countryside also needs revitalising, and there may well be a place for some self-contained sustainable developments with built-in effective public transport links. There's more poverty in the countryside – just because it's less visible doesn't mean it isn't there.

So who's involved in land use (spatial) planning?

- The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions in creating and reviewing the policies and policy framework.
- The Secretary of State for the Environment and his/her ministers, who in certain appeal cases act as the final arbiter.
- The Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency.
- Local and regional planning authorities – formed (mainly) of elected members of local authorities – and their professional officers.
- Local highway authorities.
- The courts with, of course, powers to interpret the law and rule on the fair and proper application of the policies.
- Representatives of and advisers from industry, business, education, housing, leisure, tourism, recreation, health, retail, transport, statutory undertakers (gas, electricity, water, telecommunications, etc.) – and any groups we may have missed!
- A wide range of other interest groups and organisations.
- The public through consultation, inquiry and appeal procedures.
- Professional bodies.
- The Planning Inspectorate – to whom many planning applications are eventually referred by those applicants dissatisfied with the outcome.

Oh, I almost forgot, there's also:

- The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (conservation policies).
- English Heritage.
- The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (environment and rural policies).
- The Countryside Agency.
- The Environment Agency.

You must be joking! With all that lot, surely it should work?

You'd think so! But many planners have lost their confidence or been sapped of their influence in some quarters. Whilst there's an opportunity to be proactive, too often they are just re-active if their authority sees them as just 'regulators'. That's partly due to there being too few high-level professionals left in local government and specious management techniques which have created a belief that everything can best be managed by generalists and that specialist qualified staff should just do the day-to-day stuff. Many authorities now don't have a qualified planner or chartered civil engineer in their management teams. And we know what happened to Railtrack!

What powers are there to make things happen – make things change?

- Several planning, environmental, transport and highway Acts of Parliament introduced over the decades – and most recently the Transport Act 2000, which is the vehicle for implementing much of the Government's 10 Year Plan.
- Planning and policy guidance (PPGs) notes. These provide guidance to planning authorities and developers and reflect Government policy on a range of issues from general policy and principles to transport to sport and leisure to archaeology and … well, there are currently 25 of them: so you name it and there'll probably be one for it! (But don't bet on it!) They lay down the basic principles, their application and interpretation being left largely to local planning authorities and an appeals procedure under the Planning Inspectorate agency of the DTLR.
- Regional planning guidance (i.e. regional plans) and the associated regional transport strategies prepared by regional planning bodies.
- Development plans drawn up by each and every planning authority and regularly reviewed (or should be) and updated to reflect changes in demand and circumstances – national, regional and local.
- Appeal procedures.
- The courts, as they rule on application and interpretation of such policies.

How can transport be matched to land use and vice versa?

With greater commitment is the short answer, whence with good procedures real progress can be achieved. The longer answer is through a combination of actions such as:

- A strategy for the UK (not just England) to think through how the big infrastructure projects relate to each other: Where should new ports and airports go? What are their transport needs? What does that mean for houses and jobs? What are their transport needs? And so on.
- A 'major projects evaluation commission' or some such, an independent body that can look at big infrastructure (particularly transport) projects before they reach Parliament for decision – weigh them up, assess what can or needs to be done to make them acceptable, and give Parliament a considered view to work with.
- Actively managing the patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus major generators of traffic demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges.
- Locating day-to-day facilities which need to be near clients in local centres so that they are accessible by walking and cycling.
- Accommodating housing principally within existing urban areas or on their fringes, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
- Avoiding the 'inefficient use of land' (e.g. avoiding developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net) and seeking greater intensity of development (not necessarily high rise) at places with good public transport accessibility.
- Promoting good urban design – architecture, engineering, landscape – for all development.

- Revising parking standards to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking provision, particularly for developments close to services which are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.
- Creating more 'home zones' so that our children (and us!) are safer from the intrusion of cars where we live.
- Ensuring that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offers a realistic choice of access, recognising that this may be less achievable in rural areas.
- Ensuring that community strategies, development frameworks and local transport plans complement each other and that consideration of development framework allocations and local transport investment and priorities are closely linked.
- Using parking policies and congestion charges, alongside other planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys.
- In town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas with a mixture of land uses, giving priority to people over ease of traffic movement, and plan to provide more road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport whilst seeking to provide alternative routes/capacity for other (say, through) traffic.
- Protecting sites and routes which would be critical in developing infrastructure – including disused railway lines – to widen transport choices for both freight and passenger movements.

Should we design and site hospitals to minimise the need for travel – or to be able to provide most economically and effectively the best patient care?

There is a conflict between local cottage hospitals without sufficient mass/demand to warrant/support specialist units versus regional hospitals, strategically but necessarily sparsely located, leading to considerable traffic generation and inconvenience to users. Whilst the priority may rightly be efficient and effective patient care, are transport considerations integrated into the decision-making process?

We need both.

But be all that as it may! Here's the real world!

Private developers say that they are often in a dilemma when helping to provide travel choice. Local planning authorities often quite properly and legally require developers to contribute something to the community to reflect the additional demands that the new development will put upon the area. It's called planning gain. It may be a new library or a contribution to a school extension or road infrastructure or some public transport-orientated scheme.

You'd think that a local authority might jump at, say, a developer offering to introduce some bus-priority measures – or even a station – but you'd be wrong in many cases. Because of perceived adverse effects to the private motorist and possible associated knock-on effects to the overall commercial viability of a nearby town centre, it could well be turned down.

Similarly, some car-oriented households are not attracted by having bus services introduced in to their communities and therefore will choose some other developer's plan which isn't seen as so restrictive – thus transport and land use integrate!

What's happening now in land use planning?

Most but not all of the above, since much is contained in policy guidance notes, which planning authorities and developers ignore at their peril, plus quite a few other initiatives prompted by the 10 Year Plan, such as:

- Local authorities working in closer partnership with public transport providers and operators and seeking to use their planning and transport powers to improve public transport in ways which will reinforce the effectiveness of location policies in the development plan. In practical terms that means a high-quality network of routes with good interchanges to maximise the potential use of public transport.
- Encouraging and aiding walking to help replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km.
- Encouraging and facilitating cycling again as a substitute for short car trips.
- Considering congestion charging and the workplace parking levy as a means to reduce traffic volumes (demand management!) – but having regard to the danger that such policies could have the reverse effect of leading to dispersal of development away from charged areas, making them more car-dependent.
- New approaches to traffic management to complement wider planning and transport objectives to avoid wasteful competition between centres, based around ease of access by car.
- Promoting park and ride schemes.
- In parking policies, adopting on-street measures to complement land use policies aimed at encouraging the use of other modes through controls and pricing policies.
- Experimenting with 'walking buses' to reduce the number of car journeys escorting children to school.

Not all of what's been discussed is being done, though, as there's still a shortage of funds for delivery, and central government can do a lot more yet to achieve truly 'joined up' thinking!

Land use planning can make a difference in the medium to long term about how people think about the environment, lifestyles, society and community life. It can change behaviour patterns and lead to a desire for future developments that build in a bias towards other modes of transport. Good experiences and good examples raise confidence and interest in new ways of living, but emerging technologies will create currently unimagined opportunities and change – today's average consumer wears more computing power on his or her wrist than existed in the entire world before 1961!

Mysteries and myths

We've all got to live in cities and flats

Not so! But that's not to say we won't be encouraged through a range of planning and transport policies to concentrate in urban areas to help minimise the need for car journeys.

The drift from urban to suburban and rural living – has been substantial and marked in recent decades, and is one of the most major reasons for the increase in traffic. That said, there are a host of other contributory factors, and it would be unrealistic to imagine that the clock can – or should – be put back. But through education, well planned and designed and attractive urban developments – and marketing of a different social culture – it may be possible over time to reduce the current dispersal from town to country. But the impact of changes in technologies, wealth distribution, industry, car ownership, and possible reactions against control and interference in private lives and freedom of movement seems likely to severely limit what such policies might be able to achieve. In any event, growth in the number of households and in the population cannot be contained within existing 'brown field' sites (previously used/developed land within urban areas).

Bad news has a bad effect. False good news has a worse effect.

A lesson for the Government there!

Higher densities do not necessarily mean high rise. Low-rise developments can achieve high densities but with greater privacy and improved communities.

You can achieve what's required just through the present planning system

Not so. On its own its hands are tied. It needs:

- capital investment, backed up by
- political will – to improve the environment and bolster redevelopment
- plus backup by other agencies/services to help create and maintain safe and clean communities.

Safety and cleanliness would work wonders for urban regeneration!

Air quality in London is getting worse because of all the traffic

Not so. The air quality in London is better than it's been for the past 40 years. (A new car pollutes 10 times less than a 10 year old car.)

All our development needs can be accommodated on brown field sites

Not so. They are finite! They are providing some breathing space, but the real problem is that there are not enough, and 'edge of town' and green field sites will continue to be developed. The consequences of this on travel demand are obvious, which is why we are so concerned that land use and transport strategies are integrated and that there is a national spatial planning framework.

Miracles and methods

So, if the current strategies and policies being followed and practised under integrated transport and land use planning

- are unlikely to deliver what is promised let alone what is needed
- will result in improvements which will be unnoticeable to the public against a background of growing demand
- will take so long to deliver anything of significance that we'll all have long given up waiting and lost patience
- are likely to be overtaken by events

what miracles and methods are required to make the difference? How do we escape from this situation?

What really needs to be done to enable this country to have transport systems, infrastructure, land use planning and services that will

- meet the country's needs by and of 2010 – the Government's original target date
- be flexible and dynamic enough to keep pace with demand and change thereafter
- engender both confidence and national pride
- be affordable to both the public and private purses?

Is it possible that while we're seeking or considering such solutions, the problem itself may be changing, redefining itself like some virus or bacterium, through the impact of new technologies and/or new lifestyles, keeping a step ahead of us, so that solutions planned today will at best prove ineffective and at worst irrelevant tomorrow? If so, what changes should we be anticipating, addressing, now?

Indeed, is it possible that the problems – or some of them – will go away?

And how will we know if new strategies – miracles performed – prove effective unless we define the problem and state what the objectives are? Indeed, what should those objectives be? What are the targets and what are acceptable time-scales?

And since there will be those who will argue that some of our suggested solutions are impracticable – how do we help ensure that the 'may be miraculous' become feasible and achievable? What methods should be adopted to deliver such solutions?

These are the issues we address here. Hence our heading: 'Miracles and methods'.

Whilst it may be uncomfortable for the Government and its advisers to admit that the current strategy and policies won't deliver what they claim they will, that will prove to be a minor ache in comparison with the excruciating pain that they and the nation will suffer at the next general election or a few years down the line from having buried heads in the sand, admitted nothing and stuck doggedly to inadequate policies. Congestion will have worsened significantly, except where there have been road improvements to increase capacity – there will have been few marked improvement in public transport, money will have been frittered away with next to nothing to show for it, opportunities will have been lost, confidence undermined, industry and business impaired, and the travelling public will rightly feel let down and very aggrieved.

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
A	Need for change to current strategies/ policies Priority 1	Acknowledgement and acceptance by the Government and its advisers that there really is a serious problem: that the current strategies won't deliver the required improvements – won't deliver the Government's own objectives – that changes are required	Meet with the Construction Industry Council and discuss the issues raised herein Appoint independent consultants to review critically the current strategies/targets/ progress/related issues and report back within 3 months on their findings Ensure the brief for the above commission requires the consultants to tell them what they need to know – not what they want to hear	★★★★★ (Because of likely entrenched views and an unwillingness for those related to the current strategies to admit to its inadequacies)
B	Need to lower expectations of what's possible and practical within the short and medium term Priority 3	Central and local government accepts, owns up and admits that: ❍ there is no quick fix to the country's transport and land use problems – national or local ❍ it's going to take longer than originally forecast ❍ it's going to take more resources and different methods ❍ it'll get worse – probably much worse – before it gets better	Review the issues, progress to date and future programmes Identify and review the current and foreseen constraints and demands Set new measurable and monitorable targets, and associated systems Publish the revised programmes and targets and the ways in which future progress can be monitored and measured	★★★ (Because once a problem has been admitted it should be relatively easy for the Government to set up an independent review and then publish revised programmes and targets, particularly if done in conjunction with some means for future progress to be measured against adopted targets)
C	Need for a long-term cross-party consensus on transport strategy and policy Priority 2	That transport is stopped being used as a political football, and cross-party agreement is reached on a 30 year rolling strategy and associated policies and targets	Gain public and industry support through wide dissemination and sharing of the issues Raise the issues within the appropriate All Party Commons Select Committees	★★★★★ (Regrettably likely to be almost impossibly difficult to achieve due to traditional entrenched political differences and point-scoring mentalities)

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
D	Need for acceptance that improvements in public transport will make no significant difference to reducing congestion and/or reliance on travel by car/road haulage	Acceptance and adoption of the view that planned improvements in public transport and land use planning alone are insufficient and to a varying extent need to be accompanied by increases in road capacity	Commission an independent objective review of the figures/ research/findings Adopt the concept (already imposed on local government) of 'what matters is what works' – and forget the outdated dogma	★★★★ (Because of entrenched views, much outdated dogma and some surreal views in high places that cars and lorries are unnecessary)
E	Need to accept that the required improvements in transport infrastructure and services require much greater investment to remedy decades of neglect and under-funding	Acceptance of the concept by the public and industry as well as the Government that to obtain the standards of transport and infrastructure the nation needs there is a need for substantial and ongoing increased investment Acceptance that such funding will need to come from both the public purse and the users. There's a price to pay and we must stop pretending that it can all come for nothing	Government – both central and local – to proactively share and spell out the options and arguments and the benefits that are there for the taking Demonstrate on a regular basis where the money comes from, how it is invested/spent and what's being achieved and what progress is being made against the published targets/ objectives	★★★★ (Because of a continuing view by the Government that come what may and however bad things get, there is no need to increase spending and because the public and industry feels that they're getting a raw deal from their current funding of transport and are thus unwilling to cough up any more. Result: stalemate!)
F	Need to overhaul planning procedures for nationally important projects – road and rail	Enact legislation to enable major projects of regional or national importance to be dealt with in Parliament, so avoiding the parochial and vested interest approaches that have traditionally dogged such projects over the last century and have cost the country dear in both economic and environmental terms In conjunction with such legislation, provide for: ❍ Consultation on the principles	Introduce appropriate legislation (The recent publication by the DTLR of the Green Paper *Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change* could possibly be a step in the right direction)	★★★★ (Likely to be difficult due to: ❍ Government commitment to meaningful consultation and the understandable outcry if this was withdrawn ❍ lobbying from pressure groups, some of which are implacably opposed to practically any infrastructure/ development, whether in the national interest or not)

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
F		❍ The basic principles (having been amended as necessary following consultation) to be approved by Parliament – alignment/capacity/ junctions/environmental safeguards – leaving only minor matters to be resolved at a local level inquiry whilst detailed design and contract letting proceeds ❍ A ready and willing preparedness to pay not just for the basics – the minimum – but the 'extra-over' costs of minimising their impact on the environment. If that approach was to be seen as the rule rather than the exception, then many traditional objectors' concerns might be overcome, enabling the focus to be on the benefits rather downsides ❍ A more generous approach of compensation to property/land owners to better recompense them for disruption/ displacement and help make it in their interests to co-operate rather than be obstructive. (Such additional costs would be minor within the totality of the scheme and certainly when compared with the whole life costs/ benefits)		

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
F		❍ Decisions to be announced immediately after the proper processes have been completed and not deferred at the whim of the Government		
G	Need to set meaningful, measurable and monitorable targets	Introduce at both the central and local government level meaningful, measurable and monitorable targets for: ❍ Reductions in congestion to be measured by time of travel and reliability of travel times between a range of points in each highway authority's area at different times of day and year and by car, bus and lorry. Such figures to be published at frequent intervals and compared with pre-set performance targets. The aim is to concentrate effort on improving such times/ reliabilities and improve co-operation between all parties involved and encourage innovative, creative and holistic thinking plus much greater accountabilities ❍ Changes in modal split. The aim is to encourage greater use of public transport in place of the car and/or higher passenger occupancy	Through: ❍ requirements in local transport plans ❍ performance targets/standards under the best value regime of local government ❍ monitoring by the Audit Commission's inspectors	★★ (Simple to introduce)

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
H	Need to integrate transport with land use planning	Change the separate aims of integrated transport and land use planning to a single aim of 'integrating co-ordinated transport with land use and social and economic planning'	Obtain much greater co-operation and co-ordination of planning and transport policies Issue a new planning policy guideline to spell out what's required/expected	★★★★ (Because of often difficult competing priorities, e.g. regional hospitals may be right in health efficiency terms but not in transport generation terms)
I	Need to change the culture	Aim to change culture/ views about: ❍ urban living, to help promote better understanding of the potential advantages of compact sustainable cities ❍ public transport, to help promote pressure at a local level for improvements in standards, reliability, frequency and safety, and a greater willingness to use it By acknowledging past mistakes – such as the neglect of inner-city areas and minimal renewal outside the central rings, much of it having been done badly – aim to build up greater confidence in what can now be done through showcase schemes	Showcase developments Publicity in life-style magazines Promotional material	★★★★ (Foreseen to be difficult to change cultures in the short term but should be seen as an ongoing task alongside the transport and planning strategies with long-term monitorable targets)
J	Need to promote a disdain of the 'nothing can be done, second best will do' excuses syndrome and an expectation of action to provide what's really required and high standards of service	Promote a disdain of the 'nothing can be done, second best will do' excuses syndrome, and instil an expectation of action to provide what's really required and high standards of service	Through giving the public and industry a louder and more effective voice and encouraging them to press locally and nationally for much better infrastructure and services and a readiness to complain, rather than leaving it to Parliament	

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
K	Need to place upon train-operating companies a duty to integrate their services	The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) to be mandated to require the train-operating companies to be given a duty to integrate their services with other public transport service undertakings	Through changes to the current contracts when they come up for renewal	★★★ (May not be as simple as it seems due to competing priorities for use of the tracks, differing demands and needs of users, majority concerns versus minority interests and how integration is to be defined. But to have no duty at all as at present is quite unacceptable. Something will be better than nothing)
L	Need to create a partnering philosophy between all parties involved in national rail	The train operating companies and Railtrack enter into a joint Partnering Agreement	By negotiation with/ between current players and by building the requirement into future contracts	★★ (Should be straightforward)
M	Need to require all bus operators to have common transferable ticketing	Require all bus companies operating similar routes to recognise one another's tickets and make allowance for return travel by passengers using another operator Passenger transport authorities (PTAs) and local transport authorities to apply the Transport 2000 Act provisions for quality contracts, vigorously	Likely to require a change in legislation, but PTAs may be able to bring pressure to bear	★★★★ (Difficulty arises from current freedom for anyone to run buses in competition with other operators on any route with different fares, frequencies and timing)
N	Anticipate new technologies	Regularly review current strategies and policies in the light of emerging technologies, taking into account, for example, foreseen developments in power units for cars Work with industry to prepare, plan, and budget for changes to infrastructure to facilitate the introduction of emerging technologies	All Party Select Committee on Transport to review biannually the robustness and appropriateness of the current transport strategy and policies in the light of new technologies and demands	★★ (Straightforward)

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
O	Accept that the car will remain the prime means of transport for families/individuals	Acknowledge that the car will remain the prime means of transport in most areas for families and individuals and that car ownership will continue to grow at a faster rate than demand for public transport, and to take all reasonable steps to accommodate this increase in demand	Just face the facts!	★★★★ (Because of the entrenched views of some, and too great a willingness to be influenced by the anti-car lobbies)
P	Think differently, imaginatively, innovatively, creatively and holistically	Raise sights as to what could and should be achieved through creative, innovative and holistic thinking – particularly in worn-out and tired inner urban areas, which are often ruined by through traffic	Local authorities to be encouraged to: ❍ Think on much bigger scales and to co-operate across their boundaries to help achieve major improvements for their communities ❍ Give further emphasis to the promotion and introduction of home zones and when and where these are extensively adopted, invest in improvements to adjacent primary networks to meet the new demands that will be placed on them ❍ Consider road tunnels and associated grade separation to remove through traffic from local areas, giving a new lease of life to those communities which are currently ravaged by through traffic. We bypass small towns but do nothing for suburbia, whole swathes of which are encumbered by extraneous traffic (e.g. south-east London – say Vauxhall to New Cross)	★★★★

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
P			❍ Identify new ways of funding such regeneration through, say, increases in property values, savings in other budgets as a result of improvements in health and reductions in crime	
Q	Plan for more compact sustainable communities	Encourage and promote the concept of compact sustainable communities	Through: ❍ Advice under the planning guidance notes ❍ Promotional material ❍ Experimental grant-aided schemes	★
R	Refocus investment in light-rail systems to take greater account of guided bus and unimpeded bus options	Take a more selective approach to light-rail schemes, which are wasteful of scarce resources, only rarely providing good value for money and are inflexible compared with much cheaper but more effective guided and unimpeded bus systems	Review pros and cons of light-rail compared with guided bus systems. Review current investment strategies and priorities	★★★ (Mainly because of the current image of buses versus light rail. But once people see that unimpeded buses not only work but are also more readily accessible and cost-effective, attitudes should change)
S	Improve traffic management and innovatively re-engineer many junctions and pinch points in urban areas to increase capacity and reduce congestion	Encourage and promote innovative traffic management schemes to reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic (especially at junctions) whilst also improving facilities for pedestrians	Through: ❍ guidance on local transport plans ❍ setting of targets for improving time of travel and reliability of travel times referred to above ❍ replacing the current complacency that pervades many local authorities with a can-do, must-do spirit, engendering a competitive and innovative spirit to overcome congestion	★

Ref.	Issue to be resolved/priority	Miracle required	Method	Degree of difficulty
T	Reduce investment in cycle tracks	Refocus and redirect investment in cycle tracks due to their current ineffectiveness and low use	Through guidance on local transport plans	★
U	Improve the image of buses	Encourage and promote the worth of bus travel in line with improvements being achieved Improve cleanliness and safety, and impose zero tolerance for bad behaviour	Through the PTAs and the bus-operating companies	★★★
V	Reduce reliance on the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	Be more cautious on the use of the PFI for funding transport projects, demanding clear economic arguments, relying more heavily on public sector borrowing and/or bonds as a cheaper arrangement and in many cases involving less pre-commitment by both central and local government. Note also that Government's recent decision to back employee transfer on same conditions of service will reduce competitivity and likely efficiency savings	Through a change in fiscal policy	★★★★★
W	Reduce the demand for multi-modal studies	Reduce the demand for multi-modal studies and be far more selective as to where they are required. They are costly and time-consuming, and in several cases common sense says they are a nonsense	Through changes in procedures	★★★
X	Take a more positive and pro-active approach to parking policies	Incorporate policies within the integrated transport strategy to deal with the supply, management and pricing of parking		★★★

An overview

Ref.	Finding	Pages
1	The term 'integrated transport' on which the country's transport strategy is based is not defined – not in the Government's White Paper on transport, not in the 10 Year Plan, not even in the Annual Report of the Commission for Integrated Transport. It means different things to different people/groups. Thus, no-one knows for sure what might be expected, what it can achieve. For the country's transport policies to be based on such a loosely based concept is dangerous and wrong	2–5
2	The goal of the current strategy (transforming our transport system by 2010), whilst worthy – higher-quality public transport, social inclusion, more choice, less congestion and less impact on the environment – is not going to be scored without significant changes being made on the field of play	5, 9, 11, 13
3	The strategy is dependent on several partners – the private sector investing, local government assisting, other government agencies delivering for example. If one fails, their part then the whole strategy is jeopardised. That could well happen	5, 22
4	Although the public believes that their local councils are responsible – to blame in most cases – for local transport policies and investment priorities, in reality it's central government which pulls most of the strings. If councils don't do and say in their local transport plans what the DTLR says they should, then they don't get the money. The blame for much urban congestion and public dissatisfaction with local transport policies lies more with central than local government. Central government will argue that it's its money being given to councils and therefore it should have a big say in how it's spent; but the money spent locally originally came from local taxpayers by and large, and they're only being given back that which they've lent. If the Government is in earnest about wanting to strengthen local communities and local democracy it should give local authorities much, much greater freedom to do what people want locally. But both now and in the future the Government must take a positive lead on securing the infrastructure to meet national and regional needs. Councils, however, must be held to account if they fail to invest for the long-term in transport: they have often tended to spend it – fritter it away – on short-term social schemes of little or no lasting value. They also need top-quality planners and engineers – not malleable managers	7, 60

Ref.	Finding	Pages
5	The extra indicators for rail that the Government added to its 10 Year Plan in February 2002 are pretty pointless, with no associated targets and base benchmarks set so low, that it'll be practically impossible not to show some improvement	8
6	The Government's transport strategy target is for a 50% increase in rail passengers over the 10 year period of its transport plan. That, however, is quite meaningless on two counts: ❍ In terms of aiding or judging the integrated transport policies unless the increase arises from modal transfer, i.e. from car to train. Although there have been increases in rail use, a significant proportion of the rise on the strategic routes is the result of 'new journeys' – the filling of spare capacity in off-peak times – and not through the attraction of car users. Rail journeys on the London and South East rail systems have grown by 30% since 1994/1995 whilst Underground traffic has risen by 27% over the same period. Commuting and an increase in off-peak travel lie behind the majority of these increases, and it's not yet possible to say what proportions result from economic growth in and around London or from a transfer from cars ❍ It fails to relate it to any qualitative terms – not comfort, reliability, seating availability, cleanliness, frequency or time/speed. The majority of passengers – certainly commuting passengers – want improvements in quality, not more people being squashed into already overcrowded, grubby carriages with uncertain departure and arrival times	7
7	There are no commonly understood acceptable means to monitor progress or measure the effectiveness of the policies being pursued and so it is impossible for the public, industry or, indeed, the Government to know whether their strategies on transport and land use planning are working, whether the investment is providing value for money or to enable anyone to be held to account. Unless and until meaningful targets are set across the board and progress is monitored and measured the strategy can't be managed. The Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) – appointed by the Government and which is responsible for reporting annually on progress – appears so far to have been insufficiently critical and objective. The Government needs to be told what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear	10–12, 16, 17
8	Several of the expectations are unrealistic, including: ❍ the extent of transfer of car users to public transport ❍ real change for the better is on the horizon ❍ reductions in congestion ❍ greater social inclusion ❍ greater reliability of travel times ❍ improvements in the quality and standards of public transport	13, 14, 18
9	Several assumptions made regarding people's support for public transport and their readiness to give up their cars are wrong, being based in some instances on too rosy interpretations of peoples' views elicited through a poll. That has contributed to an over-reliance on public transport as a means to solve the country's planning and traffic problems	15–17
10	A 50% increase in bus use would only reduce car travel by about 6% if all the additional bus passengers were car drivers. In practice, about a quarter could be expected to be car drivers, so the reduction would be about 1.5%. Thus, even in large cities a significant boost in bus use would have little effect on traffic levels	14

Ref.	Finding	Pages
11	The degree of integration in transport systems in the UK in terms of information/ through ticketing is improving but does not compare well with other European countries. On a like-for-like basis between cities – say Manchester and Stuttgart – we are a long way behind, and as we advance so they are improving further. Road Traffic Advisor, due to come on stream in 2002 and already in experimental form on the M4 and M25 motorways, should improve information on complete through travel – rail and bus routes	27, 30–33
12	Experience elsewhere demonstrates that the planned improvements to public transport will achieve neither: ❍ a significant shift from car to public transport nor ❍ a measurable reduction in congestion There is so much suppressed demand that any cars taken off the road will be replaced by others	30, 58
13	Giving people the expectation of less congestion is a false promise that cannot be fulfilled under the existing policies. It will have grown markedly worse and be more widespread by the end of the current 10 Year Plan save possibly on a very few points on national routes	ix, x, 13, 18, 25
14	Improving public transport is nevertheless a suitable aim even if it doesn't reduce congestion since it will: ❍ increase choice ❍ provide benefits to those who are reliant upon it, so contributing to social inclusion – the old, the young, the disabled and the many who cannot afford a car ❍ provide some limited opportunities for car drivers to avoid congestion by opting for public transport, though probably at the cost of other inconvenience	58
15	Although more money is being invested in transport compared with the last 10 years, prior investment was so little and so inadequate that it's an unfair and unrealistic comparison. Current funding plans are still substantially less in real terms than they were in the mid-1980s. For decades successive Governments have failed to invest adequately, and the National Audit Office and Audit Commission have failed to speak up robustly enough, whilst the general public have just learnt to put up with all the faults and inadequacies. Future funding plans are still quite insufficient to catch up with demand and adapt and develop the road, rail and bus infrastructures for tomorrow's needs	18, 21
16	The Government's heavy reliance on improvements to public transport to solve congestion is unjustified and will lead to increasing problems on that front	18
17	The allocation of resources between modes – rail and road say – indicate that the Government is going to spend 13 times as much on rail as on strategic roads even though there are 30 odd more car journeys for every rail journey and the investment will not change that ratio	19–21
18	The strategy assumes that the private sector will invest heavily in buses to attract car users – such investment being funded by fares, i.e. increased patronage of buses. Yet bus patronage has fallen substantially – and whilst tailing off, continues to fall, save in London. Although investment has increased it is measured against the all-time low of the early 1990s, and there's a big backlog to make up	22, 23

Ref.	Finding	Pages
19	Progress with the Government's transport strategy looks distinctly dodgy – on rail, buses, congestion, the Underground. The jury's out on local roads, but it doesn't look hopeful. Only the Highways Agency on strategic roads appears to be roughly on target, but since the targets are fairly low, we shouldn't expect to see much change anyway. The quicker the Government faces the facts the better	23–26
20	There is already some integration in rail travel, through ticketing and information, and this is improving as more technologies come on stream. Buses have a long way to go to catch up or keep pace. The Transport Act 2000 now makes it clear that joint ticketing can be introduced where it's in the public interest, and this opportunity needs to be pursued vigorously. (The Office of Fair Trading has taken a conflicting stance, arguing that joint ticketing would not be in the public's interest due to reducing competition!) Transport Direct will improve information on complete through travel – including rail and bus routes	27, 28
21	Rail use in the UK is 21% below the EU average as a whole. Setting aside any other factors, the scope for transfer therefore from car to rail in theory appears high, but closer inspection demonstrates there is little opportunity in practice due to insufficient network capacity	29, 30
22	In comparison with our EU partners, we've far less of everything in terms of transport infrastructure, and it doesn't just show, it shouts at us. The citizens of many of the other countries enjoy standards that even to dream about seems wishful thinking. Our commuting time is the highest of any EU country, bus use is lower than in any other country save France, and rail use is lower than any other country save Spain	29–31
23	Road links congested for more than 1 hour/day are significantly higher in the UK than for any other EU country save Portugal, validating the view that it's a major problem here	29, 31
24	Although bus use is lower in the UK than in any other country save France (6% compared with an average of 8.5%) it's apparent that the scope for transfer is limited. And even to reach that average would require a 40% increase in total trips, which is unrealistic	30
25	Putting it all together, public transport and roads, we're in a pretty dire state, and those who say we're the worst in Europe aren't far wrong	31, 57
26	Car mileage in the UK is above the European average, but since car ownership is below it's apparent that that's not the reason for the higher distance travelled. A whole range of factors contribute to the causes, with poor public transport playing only a minor role	29, 30
27	Some 33,000 people are seriously injured or killed on our roads every year – 90 every day. Whilst our safety record insofar as fatalities is concerned is amongst the best in the EU it is still a horrific figure. Although money is being invested in road safety and by manufacturers in cars, there is a need for greater co-operation between the two and for the safety of all road users to be taken far more seriously	33
28	More people are killed/seriously injured each year through trespass on the rail lines than for crashes of or between trains	34

Ref.	Finding	Pages
29	Whilst light rail systems have a role to play, they are not the best buy in many circumstances. Modern buses given unimpeded routes are usually a far better alternative, being more flexible and accessible and much, much cheaper. Current investment plans in light rail need reviewing, and support increased for unimpeded bus systems with an improved image for such travel	34, 35
30	The lack of regulation of buses and associated open competition is not working to the advantage of the user. The latter inhibits integration and through and common ticketing whilst the big companies have generally squeezed out the smaller ones so that there is little competition between operators. Lack of regulation prevents setting minimum standards of service, thereby making it difficult to improve the image of bus travel and so increase patronage. The Transport Act 2000 provides for 'quality contracts', and they should be taken up vigorously by local transport authorities	36
31	The roles of passenger transport authorities (PTAs), passenger transport executives (PTEs) and local transport authorities in promoting technological advances in bus interchanges, public accessibility to information and real-time information for users is beginning to deliver improvements, but it's very slow and patchy	37, 38
32	The investment in separate facilities for cyclists has been badly targeted and has not achieved much. It has made no significant contribution to reducing congestion, nor any noticeable reduction in accidents. Such policies are more political gestures than meaningful measures to respond to or promote demand – which is rarely analysed. The money could be better spent by local authorities in far more effective ways	35
33	The structure of the railways was a mess before Railtrack was put into administration and it's now an even bigger mess. To discover how big, you'll just have to look at the main text – it can't be précised without losing some important issues!	38–40
34	The problems on rail go far beyond structure. Crucially there are far too many competing priorities from speed to frequency, to comfort, to reliability, to increasing passengers and freight carried, to improved maintenance, to safety above everything, and to competitive prices to name but a few. No-one will admit that we can't have it all. Yet this is what the Government promised and keeps on promising. It's a nonsense. There was no way Railtrack or its successor can deliver all of that over the same time period, and unless and until someone owns up and sets some proper priorities and achievable targets the railways will continue to get a bad press, the travelling public a poor service, and the Government its just desserts for misleading the public	40–42
35	None of the parties involved in rail has a responsibility – let alone an accountability – to pursue or even foster integration with other modes of transport	41
36	Bringing the separate parts of the rail network together again wouldn't necessarily resolve many of the problems. What are required are partnering agreements between all the players	41
37	Pay-on-entry to buses slows buses and other traffic down and needs to be sorted once and for all either by bringing back conductors or through a complete overhaul of the ticketing systems and use of automatic machine checks on board. The current systems are antiquated beyond belief but bus deregulation prevents advances being made	43
38	There's no widely accepted definition of congestion!	43, 44

Ref.	Finding	Pages
39	There is no way for the public to know the level of congestion, where congestion is, what it is, whether it's getting worse or better. All that is available are DTLR statistics showing average speeds in London and on urban and non-urban roads. Nothing is published locally nor are councils required to do so. Hence neither central nor local government can be held to account. A recipe for complacency and obfuscation	45
40	There's an urgent need for local authorities and the Highways Agency to introduce and publish at quarterly intervals information on times of travel and reliability of times of travel between a wide range of points in all urban areas and on all strategic routes for various times of day and times of year for cars, buses and HGVs, and for targets to be set. Likewise for modal transfer. In this way the various authorities/ agencies would be encouraged to work together to improve such times and standards, come up with innovations and initiatives, share ideas and be accountable for their actions (or inaction). At the moment there appears to be disinterest and apathy – that nothing can be done, nothing should be done since it will just attract more car users: in effect, using congestion to force people to stop travelling or change modes at considerable inconvenience/cost. If that's the Government's policy then they should say so: if not they should require the figures to be computed and published and targets set	45
41	It is unlikely to be possible to significantly reduce congestion unless one or more of the following actions are taken, each of which has its problems: ❍ Raise the price of car usage through direct charging. (Currently little political will by central government, which has passed the buck to local government, which is equally nervous for fear of being voted out of office) ❍ Subsidise and increase public transport to such a level that it becomes so cheap and available that there is a mass transfer to it. (Impossibly expensive in capital and revenue terms) ❍ Provide the additional road capacity required. (There being support for some growth amongst the public, but not to required the level)	46
42	Direct charging is potentially a valuable tool to control congestion but needs to be designed carefully and the processes used thoughtfully to avoid unfairness on these least able to pay and harm to those in other areas who could suffer from diverted traffic	47, 48
43	It's likely that car ownership in the UK will increase at a greater rate than elsewhere in the EU, and that in turn that is likely to increase overall (not individual) mileage, with further adverse congestion implications	30, 49
44	Planned improvements in public transport will provide a means for people to escape congestion, but won't solve congestion, and it is wrong to suggest that they will	57, 58
45	Currently every effort is being made to avoid drawing the conclusion that additional capacity needs to be provided for road traffic even though it is clear that other options are insufficient and will not resolve the problems	60
46	With exhaust emissions from modern buses now significantly reduced due to much improved engine design and management systems, brake dust and wear from tyres could soon be the main pollutants	55
47	The fuel price through adjustments to the tax charges per litre can reduce travel but it has a uniform effect. Direct charging can be targeted where it would have most beneficial effect	47, 54, 55

Ref.	Finding	Pages
48	Most local authorities cannot act unilaterally to introduce direct (congestion) charging or workplace parking charges for fear of losing business to nearby towns. There are in consequence only a handful of places where it is a practical possibility	48
49	It's not so much the number of journeys we make that have increased but the distance we travel – up by almost 30% in the 14 year period from 1986 to 2000	52
50	The current procedures for gaining approval to build any major new transport infrastructure project are outdated and against the national interest and need amending rapidly. The quicker the Government adopt and apply new arrangements consequent upon the recently published proposals the better for the nation. In the UK it takes 17 years on average to get a new bypass built: in France, 5 years. The introduction of multi-modal studies has further lengthened the process, when in most cases common sense can provide the answer!	55, 56
51	Cars are not the major cause of climate change. However, whilst in burning fossil fuels, transport makes a significant contribution to greenhouse gases, it's the advancing vehicle technologies that will deliver reductions over the next 100 years not the integrated transport polices. It's wrong to suggest that they can and will or to use such arguments as a prop to justify them	53–55
52	The integrated transport strategy is not the answer to all our transport problems	57
53	Better public transport will not make many people leave their cars at home and so solve the congestion problem	57, 58
54	There is a clear and urgent need in many areas to adjust the road system/layout not just to provide bypasses but to increase road capacities – including in urban areas. The current approach of doing nothing – or practically nothing – save on a few strategic routes is wrong	60
55	The current guidance by the DTLR on local transport plans appears to be that providing extra road capacity is the means of last resort, whilst improving public transport and cycling are the first – and almost only – options to be considered. That is taking too narrow and blinkered a view, leading to increases not decreases in congestion. It fails to face facts, and is putting local authorities in a straitjacket and undermining local choice and democracy	60
56	Increasing the capacity of strategic roads will have implications for local (feeder) roads that must be taken into account and improved concurrently	61
57	'Appropriate investment in new and improved roads can deliver economic and safety benefits well in excess of the scheme costs. Many schemes take traffic away from towns and villages, resulting in environmental and accessibility benefits' (Quote from the Commission for Integrated Transport)	61
58	Travelling less would of course reduce emissions, and thus land use planning can assist in helping to minimise need	66
59	The demand for new/additional housing is greatest in the South East region of the UK, where there are least brown-field sites. The converse is true in the North, save for some notable exceptions. The Government could redirect investment to help deter the drift of population and employment opportunities southwards – which is what the EU has sought to do on a more macro scale across Europe	67

Ref.	Finding	Pages
60	Land use planning and integrated transport are inextricably entwined and impact on each other, but that's not to say it's easy to make them work together to a common advantage. There are often many conflicting issues and pressures but, nevertheless, there are big benefits that could be gained in the long term from much closer integration	66
61	There's a need for national spatial planning, and this could give valuable benefits in the long term	67
62	Whilst the UK is the second most taxed on using a car, and the fifth most taxed on owning a car and combined owning and using in the EU, the investment in the UK in infrastructure is the lowest of any EU country. We pay almost the most but get back the least	61
63	The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is not the panacea of all ills – indeed, it might yet make the country ill. Put simply, it is the Government using the private sector to borrow money at higher rates than the Government itself could obtain to invest in public projects and avoid the Government increasing the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR). The theory is that increases in efficiency and whole-life costing approaches to project designs should more than offset the higher borrowing costs. It involves high transaction costs, and still has to be paid for over 20 years plus; and such pre-commitments take away much future flexibility on central and local government funding. The PFI may have a part to play where the sums add up (or, rather, down) but it could be an expensive contrivance giving poor value for money	62
64	It is the macro decisions that really make an impact on traffic generation not the micro ones, which are largely insignificant. Thus, a free choice of school, and the location of regional hospitals and major new shopping developments, business parks, distribution centres, and residential and retail developments are typical of significant changes on which greatest thought should be given. The time and effort spent on minor changes is out of proportion to their impact and diverts energy away from the big issues	70
65	The opportunity to make major reductions in traffic through land use planning measures alone in mature areas is in the short to medium term very limited. In the longer term such decisions can be of great advantage in contributing to changes in outlooks/cultures	69
66	Travel patterns are not static – whether in mature or more recent developments; jobs are what shift people, whilst changes in lifestyle also have major effects. As much as one might like to, it is unrealistic to assume that these influences can be controlled by land use planning measures	69
67	Mixed-use communities minimise demand for travel through the proximity of work/recreation/health/shopping opportunities	72, 73
68	Higher densities do not necessarily mean high-rise buildings. Low-rise developments can achieve high densities but greater privacy and improved communities	75
69	The drift from urban to suburban and rural living has led to major increases in traffic. Whilst the clock cannot be put back there are opportunities to learn from our mistakes and plan for more future developments to be based on the principles of compact sustainable urban areas, minimising the need for travel and maximising the use of public transport	75

Appendix: Yes Minister – a plot summary

'The Bed of Nails' (BBC, 9 December 1982)

Sir Mark, Chief Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, and Sir Arnold, Secretary to the Cabinet, have decided to ask Jim Hacker, the Minister for Administrative Affairs, to formulate and implement an Integrated National Transport Policy. As they do not want Sir Humphrey to interfere, they ask Jim Hacker for immediate acceptance of this task. Jim Hacker is delighted being asked and accepts eagerly. He expects to become very popular with the voters through this policy. When Jim Hacker informs the Permanent Secretary to his Department, Sir Humphrey, of the good news of being promoted to Transport Supremo, Sir Humphrey does not share his enthusiasm. In fact Sir Humphrey tells him that it is the ultimate vote loser, explaining that the policy is in everyone's interest except the one who creates it. Formulating this policy means making choices, infuriating those you do not favour. Jim Hacker is not convinced by Sir Humphrey's arguments, so Sir Humphrey promises to set up a preliminary meeting with three Undersecretaries from the Department of Transport.

The meeting shows Jim Hacker what he is up against as the three Undersecretaries spend the time promoting their own divisions (road, rail and air transport) and sniping at each other. After the meeting, Bernard, the Minister's Principal Private Secretary, explains that each Undersecretary acts as a representative of the industry they make policy for and has no interest in the other transport divisions. Jim Hacker realises that he no longer wants to be Transport Supremo.

Sir Humphrey and Jim Hacker devise up a plan to get rid of the appointment. They draw up a note which informs the Cabinet of the negative implications of the Integrated National Transport Policy, especially for the Prime Minister's constituency. It sketches job losses, commuters paying full economic fares, building a container lorry park and reduction of bus services. Sir Humphrey leaks this note to a reporter from *The Times*.

Jim Hacker leaving Downing Street after the meeting (London Press Association)

Sir Mark summons Jim Hacker to the Prime Minister's office and tells him that the PM is not pleased. He shows Jim Hacker an article in the Prime Minister's local constituency paper that reports on a confidential note from the Prime Minister blocking the transport plans. Sir Mark tells Jim Hacker to rethink the Integrated National Transport Policy.

Sir Humphrey now proposes to submit a high-cost high-staff plan to the Cabinet: a British National Transport Authority with a staff of 80,000 and a budget of £1 billion. Jim Hacker will leak the plan to the press. Bernard wonders whether they will not set up a leak enquiry, but Sir Humphrey and Jim Hacker are not worried about this: no past leak enquiry has ever identified a culprit.

In a meeting between Sir Humphrey, James Hacker, Sir Mark and Sir Arnold the status of the Integrated Transport Policy is discussed. Sir Mark is worried about all these leaks, and suggests that he may be able to find out who leaked the first note to *The Times*. Jim Hacker suggests he may be able to find out who leaked the Prime Minister's confidential note. Everyone in the meeting now gets very nervous. Sir Arnold finally suggests relocating the responsibility for the Transport Policy back to the Department of Transport. Sir Humphrey and Jim Hacker agree that this is the best solution.

An extract from the Minister's Diary – 11 August 1982

> 'During the conversation it gradually became clear what they had in mind. All kinds of idiocies have occurred in the past, due to a lack of a national integrated policy. Roughly summarising now, Sir Mark and Sir Arnold were concerned about: 1 Motorway planning: Our motorways were planned without reference to railways, so that now there are great stretches of motorway running alongside already existing railways. As a result, some parts of the country are not properly served at all. 2 The through-ticket problem: If, for instance, you want to commute from Henley to the City, you have to buy a British Rail ticket to Paddington and then buy an underground ticket to the Bank. 3 Timetables: The complete absence of combined bus and railway timetables. 4 Airport Links: Very few. For instance, there's a British Rail Western Region line that runs less than a mile north of Heath row — but no link line. 5 Connections: Bus and train services don't connect up, all over London.'
>
> 'Sir. A. and Sir M. outlined these problems briefly. They added that there are probably problems outside London too, although understandably they didn't know about them.'

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Many of these publications are available as free downloads from websites:

- DTLR (formerly DETR): www.dtlr.gov.uk
- CfIT: www.cfit.gov.uk
- EC: europa.eu.int
- Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority: www.london.gov.uk

Topic index

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So how will we know when we've got as much as they expect us to get? When we've 'arrived'? When we've got 'integration'?	What do you mean we won't? What's the point of having a transport strategy – a 10 Year Plan – if you don't know whether it's delivering – has delivered – what you wanted it to in the first place? ***Table 1***. *Targets in (or not in!) the 10 Year Plan* That all looks a bit suspect to me: – congestion is expected to get worse and then get better, but only to as bad as it is now – there's to be 50% more rail journeys on the same lines by 2010 even though they're overcrowded now – buses don't seem to have to get any better from now on – there are no targets for actually moving people out of cars and on to buses or trains or for improving the reliability and time of travel for motorists – and the motorist and haulier might have to pay for using some roads on top of what they already pay. Or have I missed something? So how am I – how is the general public – to know whether things have got better or got worse if there are no measurable targets that I – they – can understand or check out and whether all this enormous investment is giving value for money – my money? And why don't they? Or the powers that be saw if that happened the public would know too much – know if things weren't getting better say?	9
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So if the concept makes sense in theory, what's wrong with it in practice?	OK. So how realistic are the objectives and – dare I say it – targets, such as they are? But in practice … I know what you're going to say. In practice … Give me some for instances! Hang on! You're not suggesting that the Government and industry shouldn't invest anything extra in public transport? That can't be right! What facts? How do you know? That's not what the Government seems to be saying … and they should know	13