

United Kingdom Transport Policy: Some Introductory Notes

1) Good Transport Policy

What is good transport policy? Good transport policy must be:

a) Multi-Policy Based

Transport does not stand-alone. A set of policies that deal purely with transport are doomed to fail; they will be irrelevant and technologically inept.

Transport is at the core of the economy, society and environment of any country / region / city / town / village. Transport consequently underpins many other policy areas, from environment and climate change through to industry, economy, trade, health and security. Transport policy is driven by other key areas, such as science, research and innovation.

Transport policy must therefore be linked to, and coherent with most other policy areas.

b) Comprehensive

Transport is:

- multi-modal - road, rail, air, sea, inland waterways, pedestrian, bicycles, horses
- multi-use - commercial, private, public, military
- multi-type - passenger, freight.....

c) Governed Clearly and Simply

Because of the complexity of the policy basis, impact and areas it is key that the governance of transport policy must be clear and simple. Anything else will lead to confusion and mistakes.

Any governance structure therefore has to be seamless, coordinated, with a single, agreed approach.

d) Able to Facilitate a Single Transport Area

Passengers and freight must be able to be transported seamlessly from their point of departure to their destination. Interconnectivity is key.

Technically, legally, socially and financially all parts of the transport system within a given transport area must be interconnected, without hindrance and interruption.

Timetables must be coordinated; buses, trains, ships and planes should interconnect to the benefit of users.

Technology should permit seamless travel.

Public transport should be within the financial reach of all the population.

There should be no legal blocks to any person travelling within a transport area.

e) Sustainable

Transport should not contribute to environmental and climate change issues. It must be resource efficient and emission free.

f) Service driven

Service quality must be a principle driver for all transport systems. Transport is there to serve the people, society and the economy. It is not there as an end in itself; to see it as a means to generate profit is a fundamental mistake (that's not to say that transport shouldn't also be efficient).

Items such as passenger rights, transport schedules and modes to meet peoples' and society's needs, the easy availability of transport information and scheduling and the labelling of the environmental efficiency of different modes of transport are therefore also key elements of transport policy.

g) Safe and Secure

The safety of all modes and forms of transport must be at the heart of all good transport policy.

h) Technologically advanced

To achieve all the other policy objectives, transport must benefit fully from advances in science and technology.

Policy Assessment Template

All the above set the template for assessing the governance and content of Transport Policy within the UK

2) Transport Policy Governance

The governance of policy within the UK is a mess, and is extremely complicated.

a) European Union

Transport is a national policy responsibility, and therefore there is no European Union level transport policy.

However the EU has a Strategy for transport, particularly as transport is a fundamental part of freedom of movement within the EU, a key pillar of the EU.

b) National Governance

The Department of Transport has responsibility for defining and defending the UK's Transport Policy.

The Secretary of State for Transport has overall responsibility for the policies of the Department for Transport.

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP was appointed as Secretary of State for Transport on 14 July 2016. He was elected Conservative MP for Epsom and Ewell in 2001.

The Shadow Secretary of State for Transport is Andy McDonald MP, member for Middlesbrough. He has held the post since June 2016, and has been an MP since November 2012.

c) Regional and Local Governance

Much of the definition and implementation of policy is undertaken locally. This organisation is extremely complicated.

iii) Shires, Counties and Districts: In England (outside the metropolitan areas and London), the Local Transport Authority is either the Unitary Authority or the County Council for that area.

More urban areas tend to have a single ('unitary') authority whilst more rural areas are often two- tier authorities with both a county council and a district council.

In these two- tier areas, the county council is responsible for transport. In either case, as Local Transport Authority, the council is responsible for transport planning, passenger transport and highways. This is the case for Dorset.

iv) Local Enterprise Partnership: A Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a voluntary partnership between local authorities and businesses which were set up after the 2010 election to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation on within its local area.

v) Who is in charge of bus services outside London?: Outside London, buses are a free market meaning that anyone (subject to minimum safety and operating standards) can start up a bus service. In this environment, bus operators are free to run whatever services they like as well as decide the fares they will charge and the vehicles they will use.

Although in theory, it is a competitive market, in reality, most bus services are provided by five large companies who rarely compete against each other (Arriva, First, Go-Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach).

Local transport authorities (LTAs) are only allowed to support bus services where no commercial service has been provided. They do this through tendering those services, with the private sector competing to provide them. About 20% of bus services outside London are provided in this way.

In a limited number of areas (all outside the metropolitan areas) local transport authorities still own bus companies (known as 'municipals'). This includes Reading, Warrington and Nottingham. However these municipal companies still operate in the same deregulated free market as elsewhere outside London.

vi) Rail infrastructure: Rail infrastructure is the responsibility of Network Rail (a not-for-dividend company limited by guarantee). Network Rail owns, operates, maintains and develops tracks, signals, tunnels, level crossings, viaducts and 19 key stations on the network. Network Rail's funding is provided by the Department for Transport and is determined by a complex process based on five year funding and investment cycles. Network Rail is overseen by the Office of Rail and Road, the independent economic and safety regulator for the railways.

vii) Passenger train services: Passenger train services are managed and operated by Train Operating Companies (TOCs), usually under regional franchises awarded by the DfT. The franchises specify which passenger services are to be run, the quality and other conditions such as station facilities, the cleanliness of trains and reliability.

South Western Trains (our train TOC) is owned by FirstGroup (70%) – a British registered company and the MTR Corporation (30%) - the Hong Kong Railway Corporation registered in Hong Kong. New company that recently took over South West any different?

viii) Rail freight: Rail freight is a free market – with the largest operators being EWS (owned by DB, the German state railway) and Freightliner. All are open access operators which means that each can bid to run services on any part of the network.

ix) Rolling stock: By and large franchisees do not own their trains, instead they generally lease or hire their rolling stock from Rolling Stock Companies (ROSCOs). They work with TOCs to determine the sorts of engines and carriages required to deliver the desired customer services. They also have a responsibility to help develop services by phasing out older rolling stock to make way for modern, more convenient and safer trains.

x) Who is in charge of the roads in England? Highways England (a Government Corporation) is the authority for trunk roads and motorways. Local Highway Authorities are responsible for all other roads. In the metropolitan areas the Highway Authorities are the responsibility of district councils although in some areas more responsibilities are now moving up to the Combined Authority level. Outside of the metropolitan areas the Highway Authority is either the unitary authority or the county council (where there is no unitary authority); this is currently the case for Dorset.

There are variations on this for London, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

3) Current and Proposed Transport Policies

a) European Union Strategy

i) European Commission White Paper 2011 – “Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system”

c) Conservative Manifesto 2017

Transport is not mentioned in the 5 main challenges of the Conservative 2017 Manifesto. In fact there are only 4 mentions of ‘transport’ in the manifesto.

Exact words copied here:

- “we will therefore examine ways in which the regulation of utilities and transport interaction can be improved to deliver a better deal and sharper incentives for investment efficiency” (p18).
- “£1.1 billion to improve local transport from the National Productivity Investment Fund” (p22).
- “Investing in transport: £40 billion invested this decade – reduce travel time and cost; strategic national investment including HS2, Northern Powerhouse rail and London Heathrow; strategic road network; electric vehicle technology; zero emission cars by 2050; extra capacity on railways; expand cycle networks and upgrade facilities for cyclists at railway stations” (p24).

- “publish far more information on-line” (p82).

d) Labour Party Manifesto 2017

Exact words copied here:

“We renew our pledge not to extend VAT to food, children’s clothes, books and newspapers, and public transport fares.” (p9)

“Our country and its people have been held back by a lack of investment in the backbone of a modern economy – the infrastructure of transport, communications and energy systems.” (p11)

“Labour will improve mobile internet coverage and expand provision of free public wi- in city centres and on public transport.” (p12)

“This Conservative government has taken rural communities for granted, with chronic underinvestment in transport, broadband and public services, including the closure of local schools, post o ces and libraries.” (p88)

“Labour will invest in a modern, integrated, accessible and sustainable transport system that is reliable and affordable.....

Labour will prioritise public service over private....and we will start by bringing our railways back into public ownership, as franchises expire or, in other cases, with franchise reviews or break clauses. We will introduce a Public Ownership of the Railways Bill to repeal the Railways Act 1993 under which the Conservatives privatised our railways.

In public ownership, we will deliver real improvements for passengers by capping fares, introducing free wi-fi across the network, ensuring safe staffing levels, ending the expansion of driver only operations, and introducing legal duties to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

Across the country we will enable councils to provide first-class bus services by extending the powers to re-regulate local bus services to all areas that want them, and we will support the creation of municipal bus companies that are publicly run for passengers not profit.

.....Labour will introduce regulations to designate and protect routes of critical community value, including those that serve local schools, hospitals and isolated settlements in rural areas.

A publicly owned railway system can be the backbone of our plans for integrated transport. It will be built on the platform of Network Rail, which we will retain whole, working with the devolved administrations. We will ensure new rolling stock is publicly owned and will encourage expansion of public freight services in a publicly owned railway that will leave our roads freer of traffic and our air cleaner. We will facilitate British procurements, including steel, whenever possible.

A Labour government will invest to regenerate the local and regional economies across the whole country, so that every area gets its fair share of transport investment.

A Labour government will complete the HS2 high-speed rail line from London through Birmingham to Leeds and Manchester and then into Scotland, consulting

with communities affected about the optimal route. We will link HS2 with other rail investments, such as Crossrail of the North (tying together our great Northern cities) and on to the Durham Freight Centre. We will build a new Brighton Main Line for the South East.

In London, to ensure our capital continues to prosper, we will build Crossrail 2.

To harness the economic potential of new technologies and science, we will complete the Science Vale transport arc that runs from Oxford to Cambridge through Milton Keynes.

And we will deliver rail electrification and expansion across the whole country, including in Wales and the South West. We will also consult with local communities to re-open branch lines.

To prepare for global new trade arrangements, we will study the feasibility of port development across the UK.

We will invest in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland too, working with devolved administrations through the UK National Infrastructure Commission and its devolved counterparts.

Our plans will encourage and enable people to get out of their cars, for better health and a cleaner environment.

Labour will position the UK at the forefront of the development, manufacture and use of ultra low emission vehicles, supporting the creation of clean modes of transport through investment in low emission vehicles.

We will retro fit thousands of diesel buses in areas with the most severe air quality problems to Euro 6 standards.

We will reform the legislation governing taxi and private hire services, introducing national standards to guarantee safety and accessibility, updating regulations to keep pace with technological change and ensuring a level playing field between operators.

We will invite the National Infrastructure Commission to recommend the next stages for developing and upgrading the National Cycle Network. We will reaffirm the commitments in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

We will continue to upgrade our highways and improve roadworks at known bottlenecks. The A1 North, the Severn Bridge and the A30 provide essential connections and require our urgent consideration. We will work with the Welsh Government to scrap the tolls on the Severn Bridge.

After seven years of stalled progress, Labour will reset the UK's road safety vision and ambitiously strive for a transport network with zero deaths, reintroducing road-safety targets, setting out bold measures that will continuously improve safety standards.

We will refocus the roads building and maintenance programmes, connecting our communities, feeding public transport hubs and realising untapped economic potential.

Labour recognises the need for additional airport capacity in the South East. We welcome the work done by the Airports Commission, and we will guarantee that

any airport expansion adheres to our tests that require noise issues to be addressed, air quality to be protected, the UK's climate change obligations met and growth across the country supported.

We will continue working with our neighbours through the European Union's Highways of the Sea programme and by negotiating to retain membership of the Common Aviation Area and Open Skies arrangements." (p90-92).

e) County Level – Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011 – 2026

The Vision:

“A safe, reliable and accessible low carbon transport system for Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset that assists in the development of a strong low carbon economy, maximises the opportunities for sustainable transport and respect and protects the area's unique environmental assets”.

This will be characterised by:

“Choice – people being able to choose from a range of realistic alternatives to the car, based on the trip they intend to make, and being able to choose freely how, when and whether to travel.

Reliability – people and goods, reliably getting to the places they need to go throughout Dorset, supporting a prosperous economy.

Connectivity – reliable transport links to, and between, strategic destinations such as the ports, Bournemouth Airport, town centres, industrial areas; and beyond to Bristol and the North / Midlands and Hampshire / London.

Efficiency – a transport system that functions efficiently, reduces energy consumption, makes the best use of the network, and is resilient to disruption, supported by new technologies.

Integration – contributing to making Dorset a better place by supporting wider policy areas such as health, climate change and land use planning.

Safety – people travelling safely, by any mode, and with less risk to others.

Inclusiveness – more closely meeting the needs of people in both urban and rural areas, of all ages and abilities, through affordable and accessible transport that helps places to be sustainable and socially connected.

Respect – people enjoying an enhanced quality of life through a transport system which minimises the impact on the special natural environment, creates attractive places, promotes improved health and well-being and provides an enjoyable journey experience.

The LTP3 goals

Supporting economic growth	Support a more productive and prosperous economy, by improving the reliability, efficiency and connectivity of transport networks and communications	VALUE FOR MONEY
Tackling climate change	Reduce the overall level of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from travel and transport and ensure the transport network is	

	resilient	
Better safety, security and health	Reduce the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and promote travel modes that encourage healthy, active lifestyle	
Equality of opportunity	Promote more equal opportunities for everyone, including access to services they need, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society	
Improve quality of life	To protect and enhance the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of Dorset's built and natural environment, and improve individual wellbeing and enjoyment of places	

f) District Level - West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015

There are no motorways within the area but there are rail links to London and Bristol. The ferry terminal in Weymouth Harbour serves the Channel Islands. Transportation can be a problem in the more rural areas where public transport provision is limited: some parts (Halstock, the Frome Valley, and the Cam Vale) are in the top 1% of areas in the country that are most inaccessible to services. This also has an impact on costs (and the carbon footprint) of local service provision, such as those borne by the county council and NHS in transporting people to schools and medical facilities. Movement patterns indicate that

distances travelled to work often exceed 10km, particularly from outlying rural areas. In Weymouth and Portland, many outbound commuters work in Dorchester. Significant seasonal variations in travel demand and movement often lead to further transport problems and congestion, particularly in urban areas. However over £100 million investment in the strategic road network has been made to relieve traffic congestion in Weymouth and improve the travel time within the Weymouth to Portland transport corridor.

Councils and other public bodies are expected to work together across administrative boundaries to plan for the housing, transport and infrastructure that local people need.

Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use; improve safety; ensure convenient and appropriate public transport services; and seek greater network efficiency for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians

Providing a safe transport route network for all types of travel, and providing choices for “greener” travel options where practicable, are also a key part of the strategy.

New developments should make provision for sustainable methods of transport including bus routes, footways, cycle routes and bridleways and proposals should not unduly limit opportunities for future connections and growth. Consideration should be given to how linkages relate to the wider route network in terms of an overall hierarchy, and how key routes and junctions are defined through their scale and enclosure, use of views, spaces and stopping places, and local landmarks. In residential areas or where pedestrian activity is high, the design of new vehicle routes should aim to keep traffic speeds below 20mph. The road layout including any parking provision should be designed so as not to dominate the street scene. ^[1]_[SEP]

It is more difficult to provide cost-effective local services for a more dispersed pattern of development, without putting greater reliance on potentially unworkable public transport solutions. The resulting dependency on cars would inevitably increase carbon emissions and disadvantage those who don't have a car (usually the more vulnerable groups in our society), which is why it makes sense to try to focus development at the towns. And each village will be different in terms of its needs, opportunities and constraints.

Providing a safe transport route network for all types of travel, and providing choices for "greener" travel options where practicable, are also a key part of the strategy.

g) Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan 2005

A joint DCC, WDDC and Dorchester Town Council initiative to consider key transportation and environmental issues that affect the town centre

SOME STATISTICS

Trains:

- In 2010 – 2011 there were 0.83 million passenger entrances and exits in West Dorset station- this rose to 0.89 in 2016 – 2017
- Dorchester South had 459,273 passenger entries and exits in 2016 – 2017; it was the 928 busiest station of 2560 stations in the UK
- In Q1 2011-2012 49,270,600 passengers used South Western trains; in Q2 2017 – 2018 this rose to 51,652,300 passengers
- Compared with the increase in RPI since 1995, rail fares have increased by 21.8% in real terms.
- The total amount of freight lifted in 2016-17 recorded a decrease of 8% since last year and is now at 79.4 million tonnes. This is the lowest value recorded since 1984-85. The fall was largely driven by the decline in coal freight.
- The downward trend in Freight train movements continued with 224,000 in 2016-17, a reduction of 5% on last year. This is the lowest number of movements since the time series began in 2003-04.

Buses:

- From September 2016 – September 2017 the number of bus journeys in England outside London dropped by 2% (total journeys 2.17 billion)
- Bus fares over the same period increased by 4.9%
- Local bus fares increased by 69% March 2005 – September 2017, 25% above the RPI which rose by 44% in the same period
- In 2014/15, nearly 500 bus services were cut, altered or withdrawn, bringing the total to over 2,000 routes since 2010
- The overall cut in support for buses in 2014/15 was £9m. This brings the total reduction since 2010/11 to £44m - a 15 per cent reduction
- Half of English local authorities reduced funding for bus services in 2014/15 with North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Herefordshire, Dorset, Nottinghamshire and Worcestershire among those making the deepest cuts
- Rural areas have been worst hit, seeing average budget reductions of 19 per cent in 2014/15
- Seven Local Authorities now don't spend anything on supported bus services