

Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon

Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen



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- 2.2** Yet there are ways in which sustainable transport modes can enable growth, for instance by improving access to work, to shops and other services, at the same time as cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. Certain interventions can also make a significant contribution to public health and quality of life.
- 2.3** This chapter gives a brief overview of the sustainability challenge facing local transport, setting out the problems and opportunities, as well as the local transport patterns underlying these.

Growth

- 2.4** Economic growth is one of our biggest challenges. Transport's role in this is hugely important – getting people to work and to services such as education and healthcare providers, as well to leisure activities and shops, is crucial to quality of life as well as to enhancing people's spending power. This White Paper sets out examples of how local authorities can make this happen in both urban and rural contexts.
- 2.5** Businesses benefit from more efficient logistics, access to new markets for their goods and services, improved productivity and the ability to draw on a wider pool of labour. Businesses can also benefit from allowing flexible working that reduces employee travel – evidence suggests that home workers take fewer sick days and can be up to 30% more productive (British Telecom and National Business Travel Network, 2006). Transport is also a major employer in its own right – recent figures show that there are some 1.7 million transport related jobs (Department for Transport, 2010b).
- 2.6** Another area where transport can enable growth is to support the tourism industry. Improving the service and integration of our transport networks with tourism in mind will bring added benefits for mainstream travel through better access, connections and convenience.
- 2.7** But while transport's economic benefits are clear, congestion acts as a drag on the economy: a recent study placed the cost of excess delays in urban areas at £10.9 billion per annum (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit et al., 2009). It can also have negative impacts on the amenity and ambience of our town centres, deterring visitors and shoppers who make a vital contribution to the health of our local economies. What is more, research has identified that high street turnover increases by between 5% and 15% following investment in schemes to improve the public realm (London Development Agency, 2010) and that people who travel to the shops on foot, by cycle or by public transport spend as much, if not more than those who travel by car (Transport for London, 2002; Transport for London, 2009; Commission for Integrated Transport, 2006; Geeson and Grohmann, 2002).
- 2.8** Resilience to extreme weather, especially in the face of changing climate patterns, is also important. Sudden and unexpected weather events such as flooding or snow can also have a negative impact on the local economy, especially if there is a lack of contingency planning or if the effects are prolonged. The Winter Resilience Review (Quarmby et al., 2010a and b) found that, even for an average winter in England, the economic and social costs of disruption are of the order of £1 billion over an average winter.

Access to employment and key services

- 2.9** The Government has made a very clear commitment to increasing fairness and social mobility. Access to employment, education and healthcare, as well as ending child poverty, all have a key impact on life chances and social mobility, and ultimately on growth.
- 2.10** Various studies have revealed that:
- 2 out of 5 jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job, and 1 in 4 jobseekers said the cost of transport is a significant issue; (Lucas, 2003);
 - 6% of 16–24 year olds turn down training or further education because of transport problems; young people in rural areas, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are more likely to cite costs of transport as a constraint in pursuing post-16 learning (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002);
 - in 2008, 44% of workless households did not have a car or van (compared with 22% of all households) (Office for National Statistics, 2008).
- 2.11** The Department for Transport is working with other government departments on supporting economic growth and helping tackle worklessness through reviewing the most effective transport interventions to get people back to work.
- 2.12** We will continue to provide data for local authorities to undertake accessibility planning (i.e. identifying and addressing barriers that people may face in getting around, focusing particularly on disadvantaged groups or areas with poor access to key services) as part of the production of their Local Transport Plans.

Reducing carbon emissions

- 2.13** Tackling climate change is one of the greatest challenges the world faces. The Government will continue to work internationally for global action to avoid the risk of dangerous climate change. But we also need to take action to reduce the emissions in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom's Climate Change Act 2008 is the world's first national long-term legally binding framework. It commits the Government to cut emissions by at least 80% by 2050. To ensure the United Kingdom is on a cost-effective trajectory to meet this target, the Act provides for a system of rolling, five-year carbon budgets for the United Kingdom: delivery of the carbon budgets will require action by businesses and individuals as well as Government, and local authorities will have an important role. Later this year, the Government will publish a Carbon Plan to set out, department by department, policies and deadlines to ensure real action on climate change.
- 2.14** We will need to build on current progress in reducing transport emissions to meet the United Kingdom's commitments, and current projections suggest that road transport will need to be largely decarbonised by 2050. As Figure 2.1 shows, domestic transport accounts for 21% of the United Kingdom's total CO₂ emissions, and more than half of these are from the private car (Figure 2.2).