

Transport Planning Society 2010 Transport Planning Manifesto

The TPS

The Transport Planning Society's mission is to develop:

- our members – over 1,000 professional transport planners;
- the transport planning profession;
- leadership on local, regional, national and global transport planning challenges.

Providing an opportunity for our members to engage with the 2010 General Election on transport matters therefore clearly supports these aims.

The 2010 General Election

Our objective for the 2010 General Election is to raise the profile and standard of public debate on transport planning issues during the election campaign. Our vehicle for doing this is to encourage all TPS members and others to participate in the Transport Debate 2010 website (www.transportdebate.co.uk) during the election campaign.

As part of the process of kick-starting that debate, the TPS has prepared this “2010 Transport Planning Manifesto”. This is presented as an “open source” draft document for discussion and debate on Transport Debate 2010. Please react to this draft and add your views on the website at www.transportdebate.co.uk.

The TPS's core position

The Society does not stand for any particular transport planning policy in itself. Our core position is that we champion a common sense approach to transport planning. In particular we stand for the professional duty to provide sound evidence and rational, analysis-based advice to inform decision-making in transport planning, in response to local, regional, national and global transport planning challenges. Our core task as a Society is to continue to make the case for developing and defending the capability of the profession to perform that role.

The Society also aims to provide a forum for the transport planning profession to debate the issues. The rest of this document is an attempt to shake the debate up by presenting a challenging point of view. It is open to discussion, on www.transportdebate.co.uk. Those parts of it that we find crystallise a broad consensus within the Society, we will promote further in the wider public arena.

The key challenges in 2010

Transport planning in the UK began as a professional discipline as a means of mediating a balance between:

- the travel demands of a mass car ownership affluent society;
- the demand for an efficient, growing economy; and
- the demand for high quality town and country living environment.

In 2010 these challenges remain. Meanwhile transport planning faces major new challenges in addition to those traditional tasks:

1. The growth in potential demand for transport stemming from the most rapid **growth in population** and new household formation seen for several decades, on top of that from growth in incomes. If realised, the increased demand will lead to a worsening of many environmental factors and of congestion on road and rail networks.
2. The need to deliver **carbon emissions reductions** to meet commitments under the Climate Change Act 2008, in a public opinion context greatly muddied by global warming scepticism.
3. The possibility of a **global “oil supply crunch”** generating soaring oil prices and/or supply insecurity, which the UK Industry Task Force on Peak Oil and Energy Security warns may occur in the next five years.
4. The need to rebuild and rebalance the British economy after the credit crunch and recession. Irrespective of any potential “oil crunch”, great economic challenges are posed for Britain by **the need to import an ever-increasing share of our oil requirements** again, after having being a net oil exporter for around two decades to 2005. Oil currently supplies 97% of the energy used by the transport sector in Britain.

Finally, there is the challenge of the widespread expectation that public investment in transport will be severely cut following the election, as tough decisions have to be made to address the budget deficit.

Rising to the challenges

These challenges are big and profound, and involve risks not just to our general prosperity and quality of life, but also potentially to our national security.

We must understand them better - including through setting up an independent Royal Commission of Inquiry to examine them carefully.

They will require positive action to address. “Business as usual”, whether in the context of economic recovery or continued economic slump, will not address them on its own. Instead we must rise to the scale of the challenges by putting the creation of **low carbon, sustainable and resilient** cities and lifestyles, production and distribution systems, at the centre of transport planning policy.

The transport planning profession itself needs to act, as well as placing demands on Government. The profession needs to raise its own level of skills. It needs to foster much greater mutual understanding and integration between land use planning and transport planning. It needs to reconceptualise transport demand as part of a wider issue of demand for communications. Increasingly many transport needs will be able to be served by “virtual travel” and Information and Communications Technology, and this should be encouraged.

However, the level of spending on transport investment will remain a question for government. Building low carbon cities and the low carbon transport system can generate the beneficial investment and employment the economy needs. There is no point in cutting back public investment in transport, putting people out of work and driving firms out of business, until the private sector is properly incentivised and regulated to deliver low carbon, and that private investment is ready to come forward. Until that time, wasteful spending can and should be cut, but the savings should be reinvested in productive investment.

A Royal Commission to investigate the “Oil Supply Crunch”

The Government should commission a formal independent examination of the issues raised by the UK Task Force on Peak Oil and Energy Security, amongst others. Society proposes that a Royal Commission of Inquiry be constituted to address the following questions:

- The likelihood and timing of a damaging oil supply crunch, and what the contingency plan for a response needs to contain.
- The compatibility or otherwise of potential oil crunch responses with the ongoing commitment to transport carbon emissions reductions under the Climate Change Act.
- The impact of “business as usual” economic recovery and resumed growth on progress in reducing oil dependency and carbon emissions.
- The level of public investment in transport required to balance economic recovery and quality of life objectives with climate change and transport energy security objectives.

Immediate principles for transport planning policy

Whilst waiting for the above questions to be examined by a Royal Commission, it is proposed that the precautionary principle requires that the following principles for transport planning policy are followed:

1. Ensure that public investment in transport ameliorates not exacerbates oil dependency and carbon emissions, and does not worsen our capability to be resilient in the face of an oil crunch. "Oil crunch solutions" that are not low carbon cannot be encouraged.
2. Ensure that land use planning policy and decisions reflect the need for carbon reduction and an "oil crunch-resilient" transport system.
3. Only cut public investment in transport if it is clear that private investment can pick up the slack, and can be incentivised and regulated to provide the low carbon transport system needed.
4. Continue to implement Low Carbon Transport Strategy policies and meet transport carbon emission reduction targets already committed to. Go further, faster by focusing on the cuts we can achieve in the next five years. This means changing travel behaviour as well as transport technology. A ton of carbon emission saved in 2010 will have saved 40 ton-years of greenhouse impact on the atmosphere by 2050. A ton of carbon emission saved in any future year will always have saved less by 2050.

Policies to make a difference 2010-2020

The following new national transport planning policies, which are proposed to be additional to the existing suite of Low Carbon Transport Strategy policies, are put forward here for debate:

1. Any additional motorway or trunk road capacity must "lock in the benefits" through demand management, including through a national road pricing strategy. This would make any investment in roads self-funding and achieve all the immediate reductions in public capital expenditure required as transport's contribution to cutting the public deficit.
2. Minimise car dependency to new development via a simpler, firmer and more pro-active national planning policy to locate major person-trip generating developments at nodes of high public transport accessibility, based on the Dutch approach. A national programme to co-develop public transport networks and nodes with employment-generating development, which could be funded by a private non-residential parking levy and/or land value tax.

3. Strong national support for local 'smarter choices' programmes to make every town a sustainable transport town, through making national LTP funding contingent on a coherent local smarter choices programme.
4. A push to make "virtual trips" central to the suite of smarter choices options. Home working one day per week reduces each individual's commuter trips by 20%, a significant relief to peak load on the transport network. It also offers social benefits in terms of reducing long commuting times, with benefits to individuals, families and wider communities. But home working requires support, for example through housing design standards that make room for it to happen or through high speed broadband-enabled neighbourhood "local business centres".
5. Investment in high speed rail should occur as part of an overall spatial plan to create a multi-polar network strengthening all the key regional centres of greatest economic potential. High speed rail investment should happen in tandem with investment in regional rail capacity to serve a network of key public transport nodes in each region.
6. Remove the effective subsidy to domestic aviation by introducing a duty on aviation fuel used for UK domestic flights.