

**XXIIInd WORLD ROAD CONGRESS
DURBAN 2003**

UNITED KINGDOM - NATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SESSION ST5
Access to mobility: a basic social service

Summary

The first section of the report concentrates on the position in UK and is limited to those areas believed to be of interest under Theme 5. Responsibility in UK for access and mobility issues lies with the Department of Transport in England with areas of separate responsibility in Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland. In mobility terms the main aim is to achieve policies and provision for public transport users, pedestrians and motorists that are acceptable, accessible, available and affordable. Emphasis is placed on reducing social exclusion and dealing with the needs of the disabled and elderly. Isolation in rural areas is tackled through support for local facilities, special funding for buses and community support to improve accessibility. Strategies have been developed to increase the priority given to pedestrians and cyclists and actions are in place to promote safe, healthy and sustainable travel to school. Schemes are in place to encourage imaginative new partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to develop local solutions to local problems.

UK has a strong interest in supporting international development and the second section of the report describes the UK approach in this area. UK Government responsibility lies with the Department for International Development (DFID). Funding assistance has been used to support the work of individuals and organisations as well as contributing to the work of the major multilateral development agencies. DFID funds a Transport-Links website to serve as an information resource for those involved with transport issues in low income countries. The Rural Transport Policy Toolkit is particularly aimed at the problems of access and mobility in rural areas and guides users through to the formulation and development of action plans. Practical engineering guidelines for the construction and maintenance of lightly trafficked roads is provided with a manual on minimising the cost of sustainable basic rural access. The Rural Transport Knowledge Base provides reference and training material on the latest thinking in rural transport and each issue paper is supported by practical case studies. DFID is also supporting work to encourage the more effective consideration of social and rural transport issues into the new versions of PIARC's HDM-4 investment decision support system.

UK REPORT ON 'ACCESS TO MOBILITY: A BASIC SOCIAL SERVICE' TO XXIInd WORLD ROAD CONGRESS, DURBAN, 19 – 25 OCTOBER 2003

INTRODUCTION

This UK National Report is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with the access to mobility issues as they affect the UK itself. However in view of the known focus of Theme 5 on the issues of lower income countries the report is limited to those issues likely to be of most interest and relevance to those countries. The second section deals with the UK approach to access and mobility issues as applied by the UK in its programme of international co-operation with developing countries. Whilst the underlying principles are essentially the same in each case the priorities and the underlying problems clearly vary from country to country.

SECTION 1 - IN UK

Responsibility for transport policy for England lies with the Department for Transport. The regions of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have local responsibility for their local transport and their roads. Within the Department for Transport, the issues relevant to this paper are dealt with by the Local Transport Directorate, and by the Mobility and Inclusion Unit.

The Mobility and Inclusion Unit's aim is to achieve policies and provision for public transport users, pedestrians and motorists that are acceptable, accessible, available, affordable and safe and to promote diversity in policy development .

The government's aim is to modernise local transport as part of an overall strategy to maintain a safe and reliable transport system, and provide the public with greater travel choice in making their journeys.

Key features within the overall strategy are to:

- Reduce social exclusion by examining the role which transport plays, and work with other government departments and local authorities to promote access to jobs, goods and services. Promote socially inclusive transport by analysing the transport requirements of different social groups.
- Ensure that in future public transport is fully accessible and that the mobility needs of disabled and older people are addressed.
- Recognise the role of voluntary and community transport in meeting the mobility needs of older, disabled and other socially excluded people.

Department for Transport statistics show that about 15% of the UK population (about 8.6 million people) have a disability and 85% of disabled people were not born disabled but became disabled in later life through accident or illness. About 66% of disabled people are older people and in the next 50 years the number of over 60's is expected to double and the number of over 80's will treble.

Transport White Paper (1998)

The White Paper sets out a new approach to transport policy which has relevance throughout the United Kingdom, and it embodies new, modern thinking on integrating transport with other aspects of Government policy. Some of the discussion in the text relates only to England. But the guiding principles apply throughout the UK.

Because access to transport can be a matter of social justice, high quality public transport needs to be designed for everyone to use easily. There is a need to tackle the downward spiral of disadvantage in the most deprived areas in the country, where difficulties in getting to jobs combine with other social and economic problems. Better transport is an essential building block of our New Deal for Communities which will extend economic opportunity, tackle social exclusion and improve neighbourhood management and quality of life in some of the most rundown neighbourhoods in the country.

As well as prosperous towns and cities the UK wants a thriving countryside in which there are real jobs and opportunities for the people who live there. So where there is new development it should be planned in a way which supports existing communities. Transport needs vary widely within and between rural areas. The problems of remote island communities in Scotland are very different from rural villages in the South East of England. So will be the solutions.

The *New Deal for transport* means:

- more local diversity and vitality through better planning;
- opening up job opportunities:
 - o through transport supporting regeneration;
- more and better buses;
- tackling isolation in the countryside through:
 - o support for local facilities;
 - o special funding for buses;
 - o support for community projects to improve accessibility;
- tackling the transport needs of women, disabled and elderly people and people on low incomes;

- reuniting communities cut in half by traffic:
 - o through traffic management, calming and traffic reduction;
- monitoring the impacts of policies on different groups in society

About one third of transport funds will be allocated to local authorities to implement their local transport plans. It will enable authorities, in partnership with local people, transport operators, businesses and others, to deliver real improvements on the ground, helping to achieve the ambitious outcomes and targets set in the 10 Year Plan.

Walking strategy

A consultation paper aimed at improving conditions for walking is being prepared.

The draft document summarises the public policy on walking; the aims of the guidance; how these barriers might be overcome; the key partners with responsibilities for overcoming the barriers; and proposed indicators.

Policies have shifted in recent years to give greater priority to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and other non-motorists. Improvements for pedestrians are largely through the Local Transport Plan funds. Highway authorities are asked to identify gaps in the local infrastructure and to propose improvements to the pedestrian network.

Cycling strategy

The National Cycling Strategy covers the wider promotion and marketing of cycling and has a central target of quadrupling the number of journeys made by bike by 2012 (based on 1996 figures).

As with walking, improved facilities for cyclists are largely funded through Local Transport Plan funds. In addition, the government has introduced measures to promote cycling; a National Cycling Strategy Board for England has been established; there is a Cycling Development Team and a Cycling Projects Fund.

Rural Public Transport strategy

The Government has introduced three schemes to improve rural public transport:

- The Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG) - funding local scheduled services
- Rural Bus Challenge (RBC) - stimulating new ideas
- Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) - primarily funding community-based initiatives

In addition, a Rural Parishes Transport fund has been established by the Countryside Agency, which aims to support small-scale initiatives, including public transport information, new bus shelters and taxi-voucher schemes.

Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG)

RBSG is distributed to local authorities on a formula allocation based on the size of its rural population. The grant is for the provision of new or enhanced local bus services in England. It is for the local authority to decide which services and communities to support. This grant has provided for over 1800 new and enhanced services linking rural areas with market towns, and providing greater access for rural residents. The criteria have been broadened to include services to market towns having a population of up to 25,000 (previously 10,000). Patronage on those services grew from 10m in the first year to some 17m journeys in 2000/01.

After initial experience, it was decided to give more flexibility in the use of the grant, particularly to safeguarding existing bus services as well as supporting entirely new rural bus services.

A recent CPRE/ Transport 2000 report on RBSG commented that the grant "has given new life to bus services in many rural communities" and is clearly a step forward.

Rural Bus Challenge (RBC)

The Rural Bus Challenge is an annual competition, in which local authorities bid for funding for innovative schemes for the provision and promotion of rural public transport, improving quality and choice across the country. In the 1998 competition 46 schemes were given funding totalling £11.4m, a further 58 bids totalling £16.8m were approved in the 1999 competition. Current funding is about £20m per year.

The types of schemes supported by the competition are:

- improvements across an area, based on a core service, feeders and community transport with mutually reinforcing elements of improved information and infrastructure;
- feeder services to core routes;
- demand responsive services;
- community transport support;
- shared taxi service;
- transport integration using a call centre;
- Brokerage of existing vehicles;
- bike/bus schemes;
- real time information development;
- infrastructure upgrading

Rural Transport Partnership (RTP)

The Rural Transport Partnership scheme was introduced as part of the raft of measures to support rural transport following the 1998 Budget. The scheme is administered by the Countryside Agency and is currently around £10m a year. The scheme is aimed at encouraging imaginative new partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to develop local solutions to local needs.

More than partnerships have been established to date. Funding for partnerships works in two stages. The first of these is to establish a partnership officer who, working with key local stakeholders, undertakes an audit of local needs and draw up an action plan to meet them. Partnerships then draw down funding to meet the costs of implementing the action plans.

School travel

This is an example which demonstrates the need for transport issues to be addressed by a wide range of stakeholders. In this case the initiative takes the form of a website supported by the Department of Transport, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

This site aims to provide a way in to the wide range of information available on current action to promote safe, healthy and sustainable travel to school.

Rural White Paper

The rural White Paper 'Our Countryside: the future' published in November 2000 by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs includes a commitment to deliver at least one partnership per county and to deliver up to 500 new partnership sponsored projects over the next three years. In addition the resources available under the scheme will be increased to £32 million over the period 2001/02 to 2003/04.

Transport connections are the lifeline for villages. But public transport is not so readily available in rural areas. And for one in three households, private motoring is not an available option. To be responsive to rural needs, transport needs to be flexible. The white paper proposals will increase the range of options people have for getting about and encourage more locally-based and innovative solutions.

We want to make it easier for people to get to and from their local market town, wherever they live. Over the next three years we will be increasing the subsidy for rural buses by 45 per cent compared with the last three years. We aim to have an hourly or more frequent bus service within ten minutes walk of a third more rural homes.

Some 50 new rural bypasses and schemes to reduce traffic speed through villages will improve road safety for people living in the country.

We want to give rural people a strong voice on delivery of services. There will also be regional rural sounding boards to monitor the regional and local delivery of policy in rural areas. Government departments will have to consider and report on how their policy decisions will impact on rural communities. The sounding board will see the Countryside Agency's formal annual assessments of progress.

The results on monitoring policies and progress will be published each year in the Countryside Agency's State of the Countryside Report.

Transport Act 2000

The Transport Act 2000 introduced new measures which help elderly and disabled persons to use public transport and community transport. A new measure is that local authorities must now ensure that all people aged 60 and above can have travel passes enabling them to use local bus services for half-fare or less.

Another recent change has been the offer to Community Transport providers the same amounts of fuel tax rebates which previously were offered to scheduled bus operators.

Social Inclusion

A recent government report 'Making the Connections: Transport and Social Exclusion' www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk sets out a range of measures to improve life chances and opportunities for people on low incomes by improving transport links and making changes to the way services are delivered. The cornerstone of the report is a new commitment to Accessibility Planning to provide local solutions to local problems. For the first time it will be someone's job in every local area to work with a range of partners to make sure local people can get where they need to go.

The Social Exclusion Unit report builds on existing Government initiatives to help improve access to opportunity such as Department for Transport's 10-Year Plan and the £5million of further funding announced in the Budget for Action Teams for Jobs to pay for transport projects to help people in areas of low employment secure jobs.

Low-income families also tend to be living in areas where they experience poorer living surroundings, with greater noise from road traffic and worse air quality than average. Children living in the poorer neighbourhoods are also likely to have a higher risk of death or injury from road accidents.

The Government is already doing a lot to reduce the impacts of traffic on deprived communities under the National Road Safety Strategy and Air Quality Strategy.

- setting a new objective to tackle the concentrations of road casualties in disadvantaged areas. This is backed up with an initial budget of £17.6 million for local highway authorities with the worst rates of child pedestrian casualties.
- Each local authority area must reach a minimum standard for air quality. One way of meeting this is by introducing emissions standards where cars or lorries can be fined for emitting polluting gases above a set level.

SECTION 2 - IN LOWER INCOME COUNTRIES

This part of the UK National Report is based on the work carried out by various individuals and organisations with funding assistance from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) on behalf of low income countries. Many of the topics discussed below are the product of partnerships with a variety of players but in all cases DFID has been a significant contributor.

The overarching goal of UK policy towards developing countries is the elimination of poverty and in the context of the transport sector it is recognised that an efficient and equitable transport sector contributes to the elimination of poverty both directly and indirectly. Indirectly poverty elimination requires pro-poor economic growth if a country is to be able to support poverty focussed activities. Thus an efficient transport system contributes to economic growth and needs a network with an effective balance between primary, secondary and feeder roads. More directly poverty is often related to isolation and remoteness and it is in these areas that accessibility and mobility are important criteria.

Much of the direct funding of capital projects in lower income countries is financed through the loans provided by the international development banks such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank etc. As a member of these multilateral organisations the UK thus contributes in varying proportions to the transport projects so funded.

Direct UK bilateral funding is entirely on a grant basis and in relation to the main road infrastructure has tended to concentrate on technical assistance projects which focus on institutional development and capacity building with relatively minor contributions to direct construction or maintenance costs. However substantial UK funds have contributed to the direct construction and maintenance of secondary and feeder roads alongside investments into institutional capacity building in local administrations. The UK is also one of the very few development agencies which funds knowledge and research activities for the transport sector in low income countries.

Making connections

In 2002 DFID published the document 'Making Connections – Infrastructure for poverty reduction'. This document is clearly not just about roads and road transport but nevertheless reflects the DFID approach to infrastructure across the board.

The paper recognises the potential of infrastructure services to contribute to pro-poor growth and that this requires a joined up approach linking national and local governments. Support to infrastructure also offers some of the best opportunities to bring about systemic pro-poor change and economic growth by facilitating the development of accountability, transparency and social mobilisation.

At the country level UK expects to make sure that infrastructure constraints on sustainable development are given appropriate weight in national poverty reduction strategies.

At the international level UK has been prominent in trying to improve the financial instruments available to overcome the constraints to the use of private sector funds for infrastructure. Support has been given to the 'Public-Private Infrastructure Facility' (PPIAF) to help countries improve the quality of their infrastructure the use of private resources. Also the Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund has been supported to provide medium and long term loans to private investors for infrastructure initiatives.

Transport – Links Website

The UK/DFID transport website “ www.transport-links.org “ is designed as a service to all those concerned with transport in lower income countries. It was first piloted in 2001 and has been the subject of continuous improvement since then. Most of the activities described in this part of the report are covered in greater depth on the website. It is expected that this website will be an important information resource for PIARC Technology Transfer Centres in lower income countries. It is also useful to point out that the products and guidelines for practitioners are increasingly being prepared in a format suitable for electronic dissemination so that users need only download the information that is relevant at any particular time. This also means that documents can be regularly upgraded to match recent developments.

Rural Transport Policy Toolkit

This is a Policy Toolkit for Increased Rural Mobility. The Toolkit has been designed as a one-stop shop to support policy makers and practitioners in making decisions on appropriate interventions to support rural development through efficient, user and poverty focussed rural transport systems.

The toolkit is designed so that people can 'dip' into without having to read the whole document - only the appropriate tools need be used at the appropriate time. It does not provide all the answers, but it does map out the key issues and where to find more detailed information.

The Toolkit is aimed at national and local level policy makers. However, an effective rural transport policy cannot be formulated without first having consulted a wide range of stakeholders. As a result the toolkit will also be useful to a wide range of other organisations with an interest in rural accessibility and mobility.

Consultation is required throughout the policy development and implementation process and the Toolkit begins with advice on the consultation of key stakeholders. At the outset stakeholders must have agreement that transport is a priority for intervention, followed by consensus on appropriate interventions that fulfil the access needs.

Perhaps the most critical stage of the policy development process is identification of need for rural transport policy. This section recommends ways in which information gathering, using a variety of quantitative and participatory approaches and methodologies helps, to identify the transport-related problems and issues, for which policy is needed.

A section on policy formulation and development of action plans describes the components required for the development of rural transport policies with specific reference to the provision of road infrastructure and rural transport means. It also provides guidance on the legal, financial and management issues.

Another section shows how a selection of tools can be used for implementation of transport policy. It explains the need for consideration of vulnerable groups, and provides specific advice on the provision and management of infrastructure and means of transport.

The final section examines approaches for policy monitoring following implementation. These include social and environmental impact analysis, and livelihoods analysis, with an emphasis on the use of measurable indicators to evaluate the impact of policy on the rural poor.

Minimising the Costs of Basic Rural Access

It is widely recognised that many transport investment decisions in the past have concentrated on the funding of specific projects at the expense of the road network as a whole. Concentration of donor funds on specific projects has also tended to focus local resources on the same projects and resulted in a neglect of the rest of the network. Thus a reduction in asset value on the rest of the network has not been offset by the increased asset value on the donor funded projects. Hopefully in the future, with greater emphasis being placed on asset management, and with the continued development of comprehensive decision support systems such as HDM-4, the situation will improve.

In most, if not all, countries the amount of money available to construct and maintain a balanced network is insufficient. Pressure to build and maintain roads, often at an inappropriate standard, results in the neglect of much of the network with the result that the overall value of the asset is reduced. In remote rural areas there is a strong argument for access and mobility but little economic justification for roads built to high standards.

Basic rural road access is highly valued by remote communities but there is little economic case for raising the standard above that which is necessary to ensure all-year passability. DFID funded research projects are in hand to study the construction and maintenance methodologies available to provide this minimum standard at minimum overall cost. The results will be available shortly in the form of a manual in electronic format on 'Minimising the cost of sustainable basic rural access' which gives particular attention to the use of spot improvements.

The rural transport knowledge base

The rural Transport knowledge base is a set of reference and training material of the latest thinking and practice in the field of rural transport. The emphasis is on experience and practice and each key issue is supplemented with a case study.

Traditional transport planning does not meet the needs of all social groups. The relationship between transport and development is neither obvious nor simple. Simply building a road does not guarantee that development will take place. Also, studies show that provision of a transport facility does not bring benefit to all social groups equally. The main beneficiaries of a new road, for example, are usually traders and middle-income groups, who have the capacity to take advantage of an expanded network to increase their livelihood. The rural poor (the largest social group in developing countries) usually derive very little benefit from traditional transport systems, and in many cases their livelihood suffers because of them.

Transport systems in practice clearly perform more than just an economic function, they provide an important social function, too. People use roads (and, much more widely, tracks and footpaths) to fetch water, move animals, bring in firewood, visit their relatives, go to school, travel to a health centre or visit the weekly market. Also, people with little money travel in vehicles other than cars. They travel on foot, by bicycle, in carts, on a cycle rickshaw or riding a horse, donkey or buffalo.

In developing countries, therefore, the provision of mobility goes far beyond providing a smooth, wide carriageway for transit of goods and people over long distances in order to increase trade. Transport routes are the arteries of life, but for most people in developing countries, 'life' refers to the life of the rural poor. The concepts involved in providing transport for these people differ in many respects from traditional concepts in transport planning.

The rural transport knowledge base is divided into 5 main modules.

1. Policies and strategies
2. Planning, Design, Appraisal and Implementation
3. Management and Financing
4. Rural Transport Services and Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT)
5. Social and Environmental Issues

Economist Guide

In addition to providing an overview of the key factors involved in economic appraisal, the extracts on the website give specific details relating to the appraisal issues related to access and mobility. Mini guides are provided on issues including:

- Effect of passability on traffic demand
- Operating costs of non-motorised traffic
- Valuation of multi-task trips
- Cost of walking and headloading
- Thresholds of economic viability
- Distribution analysis and impact on poverty
- HIV / AIDS considerations
- Environmental considerations and
- Livelihoods and transport

Decision Support Systems – Prioritisation

Social and environmental aspects of access and mobility are parameters not normally taken into account in the traditional appraisal systems used for investment decision making support in the transport sector. However it is increasingly recognised that they are important parameters when transport decisions are being made and particularly in relation to lightly trafficked routes in remote areas. Examples of UK work on this issue are in the development of the World Road Association HDM-4 system.

Highway Development and Management – 4 (HDM-4) is the latest product of a long term programme of research and development to improve decision making for investments in the transport sector. It is essentially owned by the World Road Association (PIARC) on behalf of its national members. One of the aims of the latest version is to strengthen the decision support system to permit improved consideration of economic, social and environmental issues.

Lack of accessibility is known to be a critical factor that inhibits economic and social development in rural areas of developing countries. Accessibility determines the opportunity that an individual has to participate in beneficial activities thus social benefits are linked to the level of accessibility provided by the road infrastructure. Values of these benefits may be included in the HDM-4 economic analysis framework.

Mobility may also be largely dependent on non-motorised vehicles and these vehicles have often been ignored in traditional appraisal systems. HDM-4 makes provision for the benefits of such vehicles to be incorporated in the analysis framework.

Knowledge and Research

The UK has for many years supported a programme of transport sector research looking particularly at the needs of lower income countries. This has resulted in the publication of a wide range of practical guidelines. Current research programmes relevant to accessibility and mobility include further work on the assessment of social benefits, the use of non-motorised vehicles and reducing the costs of lightly trafficked roads.

International Focus Group

The International Focus Group on Rural Road Engineering (IFG) is a partnership of countries, institutions and practitioners committed to the provision of sustainable transport for the poor. The IFG grew from a UK funded initiative to involve low income countries more actively in the management and direction of a group of research projects looking at low cost rural road engineering. It proved very effective and popular with stakeholders and has grown to involve 16 countries with a range of financial supporters. The full scale experiments are carried out in member countries and the results shared amongst the group in order to develop mutually acceptable practical guidelines for implementation. Although initial work was limited to rural road engineering, discussions are in hand to expand the concept to the whole range of transport sector interests.

UK support to World Road Association (PIARC)

As a result of its worldwide involvement in transport sector programmes in developing countries and its unique programme of Knowledge and Research the UK has always had a keen interest in fostering the effective dissemination of the guidelines based on its research programmes and its practical experience. However it has long recognised that it was having difficulty in transferring the recommendations on good practice into actual implementation on the ground.

Developments in the strategic direction of PIARC over the last ten years have emphasised the need for PIARC to provide a better service to all its members. This recognises that over 60% of its member countries (currently 57 out of 104) are classified as having low or lower middle incomes with a GNP of less than \$2,975 per capita. Since the PIARC vision is to be 'the world leader in providing information on roads and road transport policy and practices within an integrated sustainable context' it was clear that PIARC and UK had many interests in common.

Over the last 4 years this UK partnership with PIARC has permitted:

- DFID membership of the PIARC British National Committee
- DFID support for UK delegates with specialist developing country experience to 3 Technical Committees
- Support to developing country delegates to 2 Technical Committees
- Assistance with the co-ordination of the PIARC International Seminar Programme
- Assistance with the co-ordination of the PIARC TTC Programme
- Contributions to the development of HDM-4

All of these UK activities contribute to various degrees to the promotion of accessibility and mobility in lower income countries.