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Do institutional arrangements make a difference to transport policy and implementation? Lessons for Britain

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Abstract

This paper describes local government decision-making in transport in three areas of the UK, London, West Yorkshire and Edinburgh, in which major changes in local government decision-making structures have taken place over the last decade, and between which arrangements are now very different. The research discusses whether institutional change has had a beneficial or adverse effect, and whether any of the current structures provides a more effective framework for policy development and implementation. The results show that although the sites share a broadly common set of objectives there are differences in devolved responsibilities and in the extent to which various policy options are within the control of the bodies charged with transport policy delivery. The existence of several tiers of government, coupled with the many interactions required between these public sector bodies and the predominantly private sector public transport operators appears to create extra transactional barriers and impedes the implementation of the most effective measures for cutting congestion. There is, however, a compelling argument for the presence of an overarching tier of government to organise travel over a spatial scale compatible with that of major commuter patterns. The extent to which such arrangements currently appear to

work is a function of the range of powers and the funding levels afforded to the co-ordinating organisation.

1. Introduction

Transport policies are developed to manage the social, environmental and economic impacts that the increased desire for mobility of society brings (Banister, 2000). A number of research studies have attempted to investigate the best theoretical combinations of transport policies to meet social, environmental and economic objectives (e.g. May et al, 2000; May et al., 2004a). However, the application of such policies in real situations remains inconsistent between cities and, from a theoretical perspective, sub-optimal.

A number of studies in the field of transport at a national and European level have examined organisational issues within transport and barriers to progress (Stough and Rietveld, 1997; Docherty, 2000; Pemberton, 2000; and Schade and Schlag, 2003). The study reported in this paper builds on this work and was part of a wider European Union project (TIPP – Transport Institutions in the Policy Process) examining why the transport policies we know to be more effective are not being implemented (Niskanen et al, 2003, Peter et al, 2005).

The roles of the public and private sector in the UK transportation sector have changed substantially over the last 50 years from central government control to a system almost exclusively run by the private sector within a framework established by central government. The new role of government, combined with a growing acceptance of the strong connections between land-use and transport

have led to five changes in central government responsibilities for transport since 1970 (May, 2003). In the same way that central government organisation of transport has altered significantly since the 1970s, changes to regional and local government structures have also occurred in the UK since the mid 1960s in a way unseen in the previous 100 years (*Ibid.*). The main changes to the central, local and regional government that have impacted on transport are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Transport governance timeline

Year	Level	Change
1965	Regional	Greater London Council established covering a population of almost 8 million with 33 London Boroughs pursuing local responsibilities
1969	Regional	Creation of the first four Passenger Transport Executives in provincial conurbations
1970	National	Department of Environment created from merger of Ministries of Transport, Housing and Local Government and Public Buildings and Works
1974	Local	Local government restructured to include six metropolitan county councils and mergers of smaller rural authorities.
1975	Regional	Regional councils were formed in Scotland with lower tier authorities.
1976	National	Department of Transport separated out from Department of Environment
1986	Regional and Local	Greater London Council and Metropolitan County Councils abolished and seven Passenger Transport Authorities/Executives recreated in provincial conurbations
1986	National (local)	Deregulation of local bus services in the UK outside of London
1994	National	Rail privatisation began
1996	Regional and Local	Regional councils abolished in Scotland with responsibilities devolved to unitary authorities
1997	National	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions created by merger of Departments of Environment and Transport with added responsibility for regional policy
1999	National and Regional	Devolution of primary legislative power to Scotland and Northern Ireland and secondary legislative powers to Wales
1999	Regional	Regional assemblies established
2000	Regional	Greater London Authority formed with a directly elected Mayor for London
2001	National	Department of Transport Local Government and the

		Regions formed with Environment going to a new Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2002	National	Department for Transport formed with Local Government, Regional affairs and planning all moving to the newly created 'Office of the Deputy Prime Minister'
2004	Regional	Scottish Executive publishes White Paper on reforming regional transport structures

The increased complexity of the decision-making environment raises the question about the extent to which organisational and institutional reform improves decision-making. Research into the effectiveness of changes to organisational frameworks in the field of economic development, for example, has questioned the effectiveness of new multilevel governance arrangements (Fuller et al., 2004). Richards et al. (1999) suggest that "many policy problems will be found not within the boundaries of single organisations but on the interface between them" (p10). This suggests that more complex organisational arrangements might be less effective if the ability to achieve change is dependent on the alignment of several common agendas (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994)

This paper presents an analysis of case studies in the three conurbations of London, West Yorkshire and Edinburgh in the UK that have undergone significant change over this time period and which now have quite different organisational structures, powers and responsibilities for transport. It begins with a description of the methodology. The three case study conurbations, their organisation and objectives are described. A comparison is then made between the transport policy tools available at each site and the implementation of these policies. This evidence is drawn together to answer a series of research hypotheses before conclusions are drawn.

2. Methodology

The approach within this paper is a positivist examination of the current workings of the transport arrangements for a given case study. The methodology adopted was therefore a mixture of desktop review and interviews with decision makers including those outside of local government. The data collected was used to answer a number of research hypotheses, established at the outset of the project and discussed in Section 7.

The resources available in the study limited the investigation to three cities. It was decided to focus on cities and conurbations which were of at least regional significance, since they would be more likely to wish to employ the full range of policy interventions. Since the focus was on the impact of institutional structure and process on the development of transport strategy, it was essential to select cities which differed in this regard. The diversity of institutional structures in the UK facilitated this, offering seven different structures for the governance of transport in regional cities (May, 2003). We selected London, West Yorkshire as an example of an English Passenger Transport Executive (PTE), and Edinburgh as an example of a city in a devolved government, because they offered a range of conditions and had all been subject to considerable change. The sites also offer several important commonalities. Stoker and Mossberger's expanded categorisation of urban regime theory shows the sites to each broadly share *purpose*, *motivation of participants* and *sense of common purpose* and to differ most strongly in the *quality of coalition* and *relationship with the wider political environment* (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994). The rationale for site selection is further discussed in the following section on institutional structure. Despite our

careful selection of sites for robust comparison, it is inappropriate to suggest that these three sites are representative either of the other types of institutional structure or of other cities within their structure. Any attempt to conduct a representative sample survey would have required far more resources than were available.

The interviewees were selected through a three stage process. First, a thorough review of the literature and policy documents produced for each of the three study cities was undertaken (e.g. Greater London Authority, 2001; TfL, 2003; METRO, 2000; METRO, 2003; City of Edinburgh Council 2000, 2003 and 2004). This highlighted a series of important facts and issues and confirmed the key organisations and actors to be interviewed in order to cut across the institutional layers of interest (May et al, 2004b). Second, relevant individuals were targeted and approached for interviews. Those approached were senior enough in the organisation to give a rounded perspective of the views of the organisation although, by their nature, the outcomes of such interviews can only ever represent that individual's interpretation of those views.

Semi-structured interviews were set up with those organisations willing to participate as a third stage[1]. Semi-structured interviews enabled a series of key themes to be explored without restricting the respondents to subject matter defined solely by the research team. Interviews were recorded where allowed and, when this was not the case, a record of the meeting notes was passed to the

[1] The Scottish Executive, at the time, was consulting on changes to organisational structures for transport and preferred to use the published consultation documents and consultation responses as the evidence base for the project to use. The Scottish Executive was the only organisation that refused to be interviewed and this was not therefore felt likely to prejudice the results as the rationale for proposed organisational changes had been set out in the consultation documents.

participant and agreed as a good reflection of the interview. The use of an initial stage of desk-top research allowed the interviews to be more productive and also offered an opportunity to triangulate the arguments of the interviewees with official documentation (Docherty, 2000). This process was also used to provide some validation of the representative nature of the interviews.

Eleven interviews were held, one with national government (Regional Transport Directorate), four with representatives of London (Transport for London, Board Member Transport for London, London Transport Users Committee and a former member of the Greater London Authority) and West Yorkshire (Passenger Transport Executive, A Metropolitan District Council, Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber and the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly) and two from Edinburgh (City of Edinburgh Council and Transport Initiatives Edinburgh). A previous round of interviews for an earlier stage in the project also included key stakeholders from the transport sector that interact with each of the three conurbations (a national bus operator covering all three cities, the Strategic Rail Authority, a national rail company serving all three cities, the Highways Agency and an independent consultant with an extensive London government track record) (Zografos et al, 2004).

3. Institutional Structure

In this section we describe the three cities briefly through a comparison of key facts and a comparative analysis of institutional structure using Williamson's classification of institutional dimensions:

- Informal institutions (values, norms, practices, customs, traditions);

- Governance institutions (rules on how government operates);
- Formal institutions (statutes, constitutional provisions, laws, regulations); and
- Actions of actors in the decision environment (management behaviour, voting, lobbying). (Williamson, 1985)

We then compare the cities in terms of the desiderata, as indicated in the European Commission's guidance on sustainable urban transport plans, for horizontal, spatial and vertical integration (Wolfram, 2004).

Key Facts

London has a population of over 7 million with a travel to work area including another 5 million approximately. London is the capital of England and located in the South East of England. Just over a third of London households do not own a car (Greater London Authority, 2005). West Yorkshire has a population of 2.1 million and is located around 180 miles north of London. 31% of households do not have access to a car (National Statistics, 2005). The City of Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland and has a population of 450,000. It forms part of a larger conurbation of some 700,000, including areas of Fife north of the Forth road and rail bridges. 40% of households do not have access to a car (*Ibid*).

Informal Institutions

There are undoubtedly differences between the cultural identities and social attitudes of residents at each of the three sites (as monitored, for example, through the British Social Attitudes Survey). Of principal interest to this study is whether these differences will influence the likely success of transport policy

interventions. There is little evidence upon which to make such an assessment (Hendriks, 1999 and Kallionen et al., 2005). In the absence of a robust evidence base, our starting point assumption in selecting sites was that cultural differences will have only a second order influence on the extent to which different policies are implemented at different sites.

Governance Institutions

In London, the Greater London Authority (GLA) was established in 2000 as a result of the 1999 Greater London Authority Act. It is headed by a Mayor and has 25 politicians, all directly elected (see Rydin et al, 2004 for more details on the operation of the GLA). Transport for London was established as an executive body of the Mayor alongside the creation of the GLA. Its main functions include managing the bus, underground, tram and river service, 580km network of main roads, all of London's 4,600 traffic lights and regulation of the taxi and private hire trade. Much of the implementation of transport policy still rests at a Borough level as the highway authorities with responsibility for around 95% of London's roads by length. The Mayor also has responsibility for planning, economic development and the environment.

Since 1986 when the Metropolitan Counties were abolished, West Yorkshire comprises five District Authorities, each of which has directly elected local authority politicians. Although there is integration across a number of different policy areas, the authorities act and are treated as independent for matters such as social services, education and leisure. The Metropolitan District Councils are the highways authorities for their areas, having direct responsibility for the

maintenance of roads and supporting infrastructure including bus lanes, cycle paths and footways. A Passenger Transport Authority and Executive exist to develop and co-ordinate the provision of public transport services across the Districts. The West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) is known as METRO. Its activities are funded by the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority. The main regional actor is the Regional Assembly, which is currently an unelected chamber that develops the statutory regional spatial strategy and regional transport strategy. Regional Assemblies are increasingly being given responsibility for co-ordinating the direction of funds for major infrastructure projects of regional importance (HM Treasury et al, 2005).

In Edinburgh, following the abolition of regional councils in 1996, the City of Edinburgh and its neighbouring authorities became unitary district councils with sole responsibility for transport and land use planning. Strategic roads are the responsibility of the Scottish Executive, and rail and bus operation are as in West Yorkshire, with the exception that the City Council retains part ownership of one of the major bus operators, Lothian Buses. The City of Edinburgh Council has established an arms-length company (or Special Purpose Body) to oversee the delivery of major transport schemes (Transport Initiatives Edinburgh). A voluntary regional partnership (South East Scotland Transport Partnership) exists and produces a Regional Transport Strategy. The partnership is eligible to submit bids to the Scottish Executive for funding with the implementation being conducted by individual local authorities. The recent Scottish White Paper has proposed to make these partnerships statutory (Scottish Executive, 2004).

Table 2 provides a comparative analysis of the current position in each of the case study sites.

Table 2: Tiers of responsibility for transport governance

Administrative Level	London	West Yorkshire	Edinburgh
UK Government	Transport, planning and funding	Transport, planning and funding	Funding and devolution of powers[2]
Devolved National Government	-	-	Scottish Parliament and Executive
Regional Body	Mayor and Greater London Authority	Unelected Regional Assembly	Voluntary regional partnership
Sub-Regional Body	-	Passenger Transport Authority/Executive	-
Local Government	London Boroughs	Metropolitan District Councils	City of Edinburgh Council

Formal Institutions

Many of the laws and regulations for road and public transport are consistent across the UK, partly driven by the need for interoperability of vehicles and systems across a range of administrative boundaries. One key difference between the sites is the extent to which transport strategy needs to be formalised. In London, the Mayor has to produce a Transport Strategy (GLA, 2001). Outside of London, within England, authorities have to produce Local Transport Plans. These are statutory documents, for all local authorities in England outside London, setting out policies on all aspects of local transport policy and capital expenditure[3] (Wootton and Marsden, 2001).[4] In West Yorkshire METRO's

[2] The UK Government retains certain rights (through the Strategic Rail Authority) on rail matters but most transport and planning responsibilities have been devolved.
[3] Capital expenditure is expenditure on new assets (which can include computerised timetabling as well as a bypass)
[4] The local transport plans replace the previous Transport Policies and Programmes submissions which were annual bids for funds to implement a package of transport measures (May, 2003).

principal policy role is to act as a co-ordinating body with the local highways authorities in the metropolitan areas and to jointly prepare, on behalf of their constituent unitary authorities the Local Transport Plan (METRO, 2000). In Scotland, there is no formal requirement for all authorities to produce a Local Transport Strategy. However, as an authority promoting congestion charging at the time of the research, Edinburgh was obliged to produce a strategy (CEC, 2004). Other differences exist in the administrative layer responsible for implementing transport measures as well as the organisational framework within which the policies are implemented (e.g. the nature of bus regulation) but these are discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Actions of actors in the decision-making environments

The behaviour of decision-makers within the decision-making environments was explored through the interviews described in Section 2 to understand the extent to which the behaviour of actors influenced the policy development and implementation process. Relevant outcomes are reported throughout the paper as appropriate.

Integration

Table 3 assesses the extent to which each current institutional structure meets the needs, as highlighted by the European Commission, for horizontal, spatial and vertical integration.

Table 3: Degree of integration of institutional structure at each site

	London	West Yorkshire	Edinburgh
Horizontal integration	****	**	***
Spatial integration	****	***	*
Vertical integration	****	***	**

***** = strong
* = weak

Horizontal integration involves the coverage, within a given authority, of all the policies relevant to sustainable transport plans. This is addressed further in Section 5. London comes closest to this requirement, since Transport for London only lacks direct responsibility for surface rail and for local parking policy and local roads. Edinburgh covers these latter two, but lacks direct responsibility for any public transport. West Yorkshire is weakest, since the transport (and land use) responsibilities are split between the two local tiers of government and the private sector.

Spatial integration involves the coverage of all responsibilities within a conurbation or travel to work area. Again, London performs best, although it has never proved possible to introduce an administration able to cover the whole of its extensive travel to work area (May, 1982). West Yorkshire also performs well, in that the PTE coordinates conurbation-wide planning, and the travel to work area is predominantly within its jurisdiction. Edinburgh has the weakest structure, with only informal means of negotiating with neighbouring authorities within the travel to work area, and very limited interaction with those in Fife.

Vertical integration encompasses the links between tiers of government, and the complexity of those tiers. The emphasis here is not on unitary responsibilities, but on consistent requirements and understanding between the tiers. In all cases there are strong ties between the national and local levels. The weaknesses arise at the

regional level, where responsibilities in West Yorkshire, and even more so in Edinburgh, are ill-defined.

This analysis demonstrates that the sites were selected primarily for differences in levels of integration and governance structure. These institutional elements are strongly linked to the complexity of the decision-making environment which was identified in Section 1 as being important to effective decision-making. The extent to which these and other institutional factors might explain variation in the success of different policy interventions is explored in the subsequent sections which examine the objectives which each of these cities has adopted, the policy instruments which they use and their freedom to use them, and the financing streams available to support them.

4. Objectives

The UK Government's Integrated Transport White Paper specified the following set of objectives for the pursuit of its integrated transport policy, and the appraisal of local authorities' plans (DETR, 1998):

- to protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- to improve safety for all travellers;
- to contribute to an efficient economy, and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations;
- to promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car; and
- to promote the integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system

There is little to choose between the overarching objectives of the three conurbations. They are all consistent with the national objectives. Each seeks to promote economic growth, improve the environment and safety, reduce social exclusion and increase network efficiency. There are some differences in emphasis and some other sub-objectives not included above, with Edinburgh focusing more clearly on health and the role of streets in improving communities, whilst the London objectives appear to be influenced more widely by other policy areas such as planning, waste and energy use, areas for which the Mayor also has responsibility.

5. Policy responsibilities

As each of the three conurbations has gone through a different cycle of organisational change it would be natural to expect there to be a divergence of policy responsibilities at each site. These differences potentially impact on the ease of implementation of a range of transport policies. A comparison across a large range of transport policy tools is shown in Table 4 with the most important aspects reviewed below.

Roads

In England and Scotland, the Highways Agency and Scottish Executive respectively are responsible for routes of strategic national importance. In England the Highways Agency has devolved responsibility for many strategic routes to the local authorities which provides a more complete control of the network by the district councils in West Yorkshire than appears the case in

Edinburgh. In London, Transport for London manages the locally important strategic routes. 95% of the road network in London therefore remains the responsibility of the Borough Councils over which the Mayor is only able to exert influence rather than executive powers.

Rail

The rail system in the UK has, since the early 1990s, undergone more organisational change than that in any other country. The rail network was privatised between 1994 and 1997 leading to a separation of track provision and service provision. Smith et al. (2005) provide a review of the pros and cons of the privatisation of the rail industry. On rail, the main decisions have been taken by the Strategic Rail Authority in England and, for the local Scottish franchise by the Scottish Executive (although negotiations were still conducted by the Strategic Rail Authority). In London, the Mayor issues 'directions and guidance' to the Authority about services but there has been no obligation on the Strategic Rail Authority to meet these aspirations. Docherty (2000) provides a thorough description of the institutional arrangements and changes to rail organisation in the main metropolitan areas outside London in England and Scotland from 1986 to privatisation.

After privatisation METRO, like all PTEs, was a co-signatory to the local franchise agreement and also a co-funder. Subject to its own budgetary constraints, METRO therefore exerts greater influence on the rail specification than currently occurs in London or Edinburgh. Knowles (1998) notes that, for

PTEs and local government, negotiation for changes in service provision became increasingly complex following privatisation.[5]

Bus

The largest contrast exists between responsibilities for the bus networks. In London, services are run according to contracts specifying routes, timetables and fares as set out by Transport for London. The private sector bids competitively for the rights to run the services. This flexibility has been applied by London for social policy purposes:

"Fares have been kept below inflation to stimulate bus use and for wider social objectives" (Transport for London, officer)

In West Yorkshire and Edinburgh the bus services are run by private sector companies that have the powers to decide on routes, timetables and fares.[6] The role of METRO and the City of Edinburgh Council is therefore more related to the provision of non-commercial, socially necessary bus services.

Local authorities in England and Scotland can apply to the Department for Transport and Scottish Executive (respectively) for a 'quality contract' to provide

[5] The Railway Act 2005 has subsequently introduced a number of further changes to responsibilities for rail. In particular, PTEs are no longer co-signatories to franchise agreements but have greater freedoms to use subsidy for rail for bus substitution (McNulty, 2005). Service levels for the Scotrail franchise are enhanced by subsidy from the Scottish Executive. The Strategic Rail Authority is being wound up with the majority of its powers and responsibilities transferring to the Department for Transport. None of this latest round of changes has influenced the research reported on here.

[6] One difference between West Yorkshire and Edinburgh is that the City of Edinburgh Council holds "91 per cent of the issued share capital" of Lothian buses (OfT, 2004, p3). Lothian buses runs as an arms length company and is the dominant provider of services in Edinburgh operating more than 70% of registered miles within the principal commuting area around Edinburgh (*Ibid*., p12).

bus services on a franchised basis (similar to that in operation in London). Section 124 (1) of the Transport Act 2000 sets out however that for a contracts scheme to be acceptable it must be "the only practicable way of implementing the policies set out in their bus strategy or strategies in the area to which the proposed scheme relates" (TSO, 2000, 124(1)). The conditions imposed for quality contracts have been criticised by Parliamentary bodies in both England and Scotland as being so restrictive as to make their establishment unlikely (LGTC, 2005, HoC, 2002).

An alternative model for providing better bus services is the quality partnership where local authorities make agreements with the bus operators to jointly improve the infrastructure and bus fleet. In Leeds, West Yorkshire, the dominant bus operator First invested £3.7 million in the infrastructure for two bus priority corridors with guided busways in addition to investing in new vehicles. In Edinburgh, the Greenways quality bus partnership achieved an estimated 7% growth in patronage on the A8 corridor with 10% improvements in reliability (TAS, 2002).[7]

Demand management

In London, responsibilities for demand management are split between the Mayor and the Boroughs. Whilst the Mayor can introduce congestion charging schemes without a public inquiry, he has no control over parking policy within the area concerned, suggesting possible losses of synergy between the two policies. Transport for London can only reallocate roadspace (for example to bus services

[7] Those partnerships introduced to date are voluntary in nature with no sanctions against any party failing to deliver their part of the proposals. Powers exist for statutory partnerships to be established through the Transport Act 2000 and Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. The first statutory partnership is expected to begin in Scotland in April 2006 (National Express Group, 2005).

and cycle ways) on the strategic network. Boroughs decide on their own policies and priorities for management of their road networks and public parking and may choose to reflect local rather than strategic priorities.

In West Yorkshire, responsibility for demand management rests almost entirely with the lower tier metropolitan district authorities. Work on bus quality corridor measures occurs in partnership between METRO, the district authorities and the bus operators. Implementation issues include local political difficulties with the reallocation of road space and concerns over the negative image to business and developers of road pricing and parking strategies. Authorities do not have complete control over all parking in city centres which further compounds the difficulty of developing a coherent demand management strategy. In Leeds for example, almost one half of all parking spaces are private non-residential parking spaces and the City Council only has control over 17% of all city centre parking spaces. One option open to authorities in England but not Scotland is to introduce a workplace parking levy where businesses over a certain size are charged a fee for each parking space they have.

The City of Edinburgh has control over all aspects of demand management policies including parking controls and pricing, congestion charging and road space reallocation. Of these options, it is only obliged to submit congestion charging to a public inquiry. Despite getting its proposed congestion charging scheme through a public inquiry, a recent referendum on the scheme found 74% opposition to the scheme on a very high (62%) turnout and the proposed scheme has been abandoned (Gaunt et al, 2006).

Table 3: Responsibility for Policy Instruments

Policy Instrument	London	London Borough	West Yorkshire PTE	District Council	Edinburgh
National roads	×	×	×	×	×
Non-national strategic roads	✓	×	×	✓	×
Local roads	×	✓	×	✓	✓
Strategic Direction on rail	✓	×	×	×	×
Surface rail service specification	×	×	✓	×	×
Surface rail fares	×	×	✓[a]	×	×
Bus service levels	✓	×	×[b]	×	×[b]
Bus fares	✓	×	×[b]	×	×[b]
Light rail service levels	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Light rail fares[c]	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Supporting socially necessary bus services	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Infrastructure provision	✓	✓	×[d]	✓	✓
Congestion charging	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Workplace parking levy	✓	×	×	✓	×
Parking pricing	×	✓	×	✓	✓
Reallocation of roadspace	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Parking enforcement[e]	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Planning for major developments	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Information provision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Awareness campaigns	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

a The PTE has influence over fares in the area but not total control
b Powers are available but not deemed practicable or affordable for influencing commercial services. Powers are used for non-commercial 'socially necessary' service provision
c In practice the specification of fares is unlikely to be included in a contract but that right exists.
d METRO supports the introduction of new infrastructure and is responsible for bus shelters. However, implementation of new tram/bus schemes is the responsibility of the MDC as highway authority.
e This refers to control over public spaces. Not all public parking spaces are owned by Boroughs or local authorities and this does not include private, non-residential spaces. Powers do exist to license non-authority owned public car parks.

Infrastructure

Implementation in London is through Transport for London (on the strategic road network and on bespoke systems such as trams and the underground) and the London Boroughs (on local roads). In West Yorkshire infrastructure is largely the

responsibility of the Metropolitan District Councils. Detailed approval is required from central government for schemes over £5 million in value. Exceptions to this include bus and tram transport projects which are jointly promoted by METRO and Metropolitan Districts. Projects within the City of Edinburgh boundaries are promoted by the City Council. Increasingly, delivery of major schemes is carried out by Transport Initiatives Edinburgh as described earlier. Parliamentary approval is also required from the Scottish Parliament for major schemes.

The main exceptions to this are enhancements to the rail network that have been mostly led by the Strategic Rail Authority and Network Rail across the case study sites. In West Yorkshire however, METRO has led investment on the rail network for services of sub-regional importance such as the electrification of the Wharfedale/Airedale lines where rail mode share has risen (JMP, 2004). An example of difficulties in negotiating across organisations was given by METRO:

"It took 9 years to agree to the £2.5 million scheme to put a bus station outside the front of Leeds Bus Station. It took 6 months to build" (METRO officer)

6. Funding

There are many sources of funding available to the different conurbations. It is not possible to review them all here (see Pedler et al, 2004 for a complete review). This section discusses the principal sources of funding currently available in each of the three conurbations.

Transport for London receives a block capital grant from central government that is renewed on a three yearly basis. It receives revenue from public transport

receipts, the congestion charge and a precept on the council tax charged by London Boroughs to their residents. A key issue raised particularly by Transport for London and the Mayor relates to the provision of funding to take forward major schemes. The schemes are of such a size (e.g. estimates of the cost of a cross-London East-West rail line are around £10 billion) that central government support is necessary. Transport for London has recently proposed, with Treasury backing, a bond issue with investment institutions and pension funds for around £200 million to take forward other major infrastructure investments as part of a plan to raise £3 billion through long-term debt.

In West Yorkshire, the Passenger Transport Authority receives the capital grant from central government to distribute to the metropolitan districts and METRO in line with the local transport plan (in 2004 this was almost £54 million). Each district receives revenue grant funding direct from central government and levies a council tax on its residents. There is a precept agreed by the districts with the Passenger Transport Authority to fund the activities of METRO. METRO also receives some revenue funding direct from central government for rail services. The districts also receive income from parking charges and enforcement.

The City of Edinburgh relies to a great extent on grant funding provided by the Scottish Executive with funding in 2003-04 at £33 million. The revenue budget available for maintenance and support of public transport services is around £5 million per year. Had the congestion charging scheme been taken forward it would have generated over £45 million per year in net income for expenditure on either capital or revenue support (City of Edinburgh Council, 2004).

7. Synthesis of results

This section presents the conclusions on the hypotheses that were set out at the beginning of the project in the light of the evidence presented above and the responses to the interviews.

Institutional change is more likely to disrupt effective policy implementation than to facilitate it

The evidence to support this hypothesis is mixed. In London, for example, the creation of a Mayor with significant executive powers for transport has brought about substantial changes to transport policy. In particular, there has been the introduction of congestion charging, policies to freeze bus fares and to expand provision of services across the network. The creation of the Mayor and a transport body responsible for bus, underground and with significant road traffic responsibilities has allowed the development of a radical new policy (congestion charging) that had not been implemented through the previous administrative arrangements despite many years of discussion.

By contrast, the City of Edinburgh, in response to the Scottish Executive's consultation on changes to the organisation of transport in Scotland stated "There is no acknowledgement within the consultation paper of the considerable disruption that any reorganisation of transport delivery services will cause or how this will slow up the rate of project delivery and implementation of the Local Transport Strategy…. Local government reorganisation in 1996 was a prime

example of how progress is affected before, during and for a considerable time after, any large scale reorganisation…" (City of Edinburgh Council, 2003, p5).

All of the respondents indicated that any major institutional reorganisation took around two or three years to settle down. New cultures have to be developed and there is a significant risk of a loss of accrued knowledge and strategic thinking as new contacts and relationships are developed. The benefits of any organisational change should therefore be shown to outweigh these costs.

A single conurbation authority, with lower tier authorities responsible for detailed implementation, is more effective than separate, potentially competing single tier authorities

On balance, the evidence suggests that this hypothesis is supported. Where there are two or more administrative boundaries within a significant travel to work area, there is potential for unfavourable policy outcomes as a result of local political differences. Respondents in West Yorkshire were keen to stress the necessity of co-ordinated public transport across the conurbation and the greater difficulties that would be encountered were this to be left to five individual District Councils. In Edinburgh, the congestion charging proposals split adjacent authorities within the Edinburgh travel to work area because of proposed exemptions for Edinburgh residents which were not going to be made available to residents of neighbouring authorities.

Although the hypothesis is broadly supported it is important to highlight that the existence of a conurbation authority also has some limitations. Local political

pressures relating particularly to economic development make the application of measures to limit road traffic difficult to apply uniformly. Where joint budgetary agreement is required there is scope for lowest common denominator outcomes to occur as appears to have been the case with the budget setting of the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority.

One interviewee with experience of working under a variety of institutional settings outside and, over the past two decades, within London suggested that:

"The most important aspects are for organisations to have clear objectives and a clear remit – executive powers are essential – standards and strategy are not enough" (Independent consultant)

The split between local government and private sector operators is a significant barrier to the implementation of public transport improvements

This discussion focuses on the split between local government and the private sector with regard to bus use. In most cities, the bus is the main alternative to the private car for most journeys.

Concerns were expressed in West Yorkshire about the lack of influence over bus services. This is perhaps natural where an organisation exists whose remit is to co-ordinate public transport services but whose powers are limited to concessionary fare arrangements, co-ordinating information and some ticketing and providing socially necessary services. Despite substantial successes in the development of bus quality partnerships across the area, METRO felt that the current network

remained unsatisfactory. In particular, there is a tension between the sort of bus network that would be run to maximise profits and that which would provide a network of 'socially desirable' services. These tensions are further highlighted by the requirements for local authorities in England to develop an accessibility plan from early 2006. These plans are intended to focus attention on improving access to key services and facilities (such as supermarkets, education sites and hospitals) to those least well served by car and existing public transport (DfT, 2004).

"There are 45 operators in the West Yorkshire area and there is a need to co-ordinate amongst these. METRO sponsors 20% of the mileage run but is financially constrained and has very limited scope for bringing in new services" (METRO officer)

The situation in a de-regulated environment can be contrasted to London where Transport for London is able to co-ordinate bus services by franchising services to private sector operators. It provided 10,000 extra seats in the morning peak prior to the introduction of congestion charging and can remove bus services that are directly competing with light rail schemes to maximise their effectiveness. The Mayor also has had a strong policy to freeze fares for buses in London – an approach that would not be adopted by the private sector. The Mayor therefore has powers to influence fares to achieve wider social objectives that cannot be met through a commercial approach. However, the current increase in the provision of services and the freeze on fares has not proved sustainable and the Mayor has recently announced a bus fare increase of 20% to reduce the shortfall in finances

from the bus network and to contribute to the funding of a £3bn spending plan over the five years to 2010 (Livingstone, 2004).

It is not the split of responsibility between the public sector and the private sector operators that is the barrier to the improvement of bus services. The main differences occur as a result of the split between a franchised and de-regulated market. In both cases provision is by the private sector. There are significant differences in the extent to which the co-ordinating transport authority can influence the services on offer, their quality and price. A franchise system offers all of these possibilities whereas a deregulated environment is limited in the extent to which it can influence services and there is no influence on price. Several studies have shown these two elements to be central to the development of sustainable strategies (e.g. May et al, 2005 and Lautso, 2004). In a deregulated environment, improvements to the most important bus routes in cities have been made through partnership between local authorities and bus companies with some impressive results along particular corridors. The improvements are however narrow in focus and restricted to routes with high rates of return, thus falling some way short of the policy flexibility available in London.

More generally, institutional barriers are more severe for some types of policy instrument than others

The generality of this hypothesis means that, by definition, this statement has to be true. This section therefore identifies those instruments that appear to be most strongly affected by institutional barriers. Four key areas are listed (and bus service operation is discussed above).

New infrastructure

Glaister et al (2004) conducted a comparison of funding mechanisms for infrastructure in major cities across the world. They identified the strong degree of central government control over spending in the UK as a major barrier to progress in the UK with any project over £5 million subject to detailed centralised scrutiny. This view was shared by many of the interviewees.

Road space reallocation

Road space reallocation involves handing over some road space that was previously used by all road users to specific groups (bus users, pedestrians or cyclists). The negative impacts of such measures fall to a small group of easily identified individuals (typically shop keepers that lose parking outside their businesses). By contrast, the benefits of bus lanes fall to a group of people that are widely dispersed. The benefits may also be small (perhaps one minute per journey) and therefore insufficient to attract support.

Pricing measures

Concerns exist over parking pricing policies in towns and cities and the extent to which increases in one area will lead to reductions in trade and loss of business to adjacent competing centres. The potential for the use of parking pricing as a policy instrument is further weakened by the presence of substantial amounts of private non-residential parking and authorities' control of a limited proportion of the public parking places.

The difficulties of parking policy appear small when compared with the challenges of introducing congestion charging. There are a number of barriers including developing a political will, perception of the problem amongst the business and residents of the city, availability of high quality public transport alternatives and high scheme operating costs that need to be overcome before cities such as Leeds in West Yorkshire are likely to pursue such an option seriously (Mackie and Marsden, 2005). As described earlier, the City of Edinburgh Council has recently abandoned a proposed double cordon scheme for the city. This leaves the scheme in central London as the only major implementation of the congestion charging powers. Central London is unlike any other city centre in the UK with unique attractions, public transport accessibility and work opportunities.

Instruments requiring revenue funding support

The availability of revenue support for the design, maintenance and promotion of the transport system is perceived to be a significant barrier at all of the three sites. Problems brought about as a result of a lack of revenue include unaffordable on-going maintenance costs and cuts to socially necessary bus services. Spending on behaviour change and educational campaigns also comes from this income stream. Evidence suggests that to be effective, such initiatives require intensive application (Cairns et al, 2004). The lack of revenue funding therefore appears to act as a barrier to the adoption of policies that will, in the longer term, act to reduce dependence on the private car.

As a result, institutional barriers are most severe in their impact on integrated strategies

Extensive investigation into the development of optimal transport strategies carried out through the OPTIMA and FATIMA EU research projects found that the following three elements were typical of those found in the optimal strategies for the nine cities tested:

- "improvements in public transport frequencies and/or fares;
- increases in the cost of car use; and
- low cost improvements in road capacity." (May et al, 2000)

In each of the institutional settings reviewed in this paper no one body has the power to influence each of these elements across the whole area of administrative responsibilities. As the review demonstrates, London has the greatest powers of influence over these matters and is perceived to have developed the most integrated approach to demand management and improving public transport conditions. Edinburgh and West Yorkshire appear to be making more limited and incremental progress towards integrated demand management strategies. This hypothesis is almost certainly true.

While it is possible to develop integrated strategies which can be implemented within the context of split institutional responsibilities, they are likely to be less effective

This hypothesis has been supported by the evidence from these case studies. The presence of a clear process and mandate for change in London appears, alongside strong political leadership, to have acted as a catalyst for change in the way that

transport policy is being delivered in London. The City of Edinburgh Council believes that its position as a unitary authority has made it more effective as a transport delivery unit than under the previous regional arrangements. As the focus of regional strategy, Edinburgh can negotiate with regional partners from a position of strength.

West Yorkshire highlights some of the difficulties of split responsibilities across several organisations and the complex institutional arrangements that exist to achieve change. There are many stakeholders to influence including transport providers but few strong levers to do so. There are substantial differences between the objectives of the different organisations and this creates tensions in the policy development and implementation process. The large shared travel to work area multiplies the complexity of the interactions and can lead to lowest common denominator approaches to funding and policy making.

These findings appear to mirror those of Docherty's comparison of rail policy in Merseytravel and Strathclyde. There, a single local authority organisation with responsibility for transport delivery across the whole of Strathclyde bypassed some of the more technocratic negotiation procedures required for investment at Merseytravel where agreements were required across multiple district councils (Docherty, 2000).

Where there are split responsibilities between local authorities it is more difficult to resolve the conflicts between environmental and economic development objectives

The evidence to support this hypothesis is weak. There is integration of economic development, regional spatial strategy and transport strategy and delivery in London. Respondents were generally highly critical of the extent to which the strategies were integrated or indeed capable of resolving the problems that exist. One respondent noted that these were hugely complex issues that were not really understood, concluding that perhaps this was "all just too difficult" (TfL Board Member). Rydin et al (2004) provide further evidence of conflicts between the environment and planning domains of the Greater London Authority.

Outside of London, cities and local authorities compete not just with their immediate neighbours but also with other city regions in the same country and, particularly in the case of London, internationally. The respondents all indicated that economic development concerns appear to be strongly driving regional and local strategies and this is a context within which transport and environmental issues need to be resolved.

"There is no political support for parking charging to extend beyond the main towns. Other towns are struggling economically and tend to have time-limited free parking" (Metropolitan District Council)

8. Conclusion

This paper has reported the results of an investigation of the effects of institutional structure on transport policy making in three UK cities with very different current institutional arrangements and past experience. It is important to stress that these cities are not necessarily representative, and that there are other institutional

structures in the UK which were not examined. A series of hypotheses was tested, adopting a positivist approach, based on desk studies and interviews. The conclusions and policy implications from these hypothesis tests are set out below. Given the limited coverage of the case studies, these conclusions may merit further testing.

The organisation of local government has changed several times in the UK over recent decades. The nature of responsibilities and geographical coverage in transport is now quite different from that three decades ago. There is evidence to support the idea that changes in organisation and responsibilities do negatively affect the ability to deliver policy as new relationships are formed and new powers taken up. The costs of such disruption need to be fully justified by the benefits of the institutional changes proposed.

The evidence generally supports the case for a conurbation-wide authority, and horizontal integration, as advocated by the European Commission. London's ability to develop a coherent strategy contrasts with the tensions which arose in pursuing the failed congestion charging scheme in Edinburgh. West Yorkshire's experience with the development of a single Local Transport Plan also indicates the benefits of conurbation-wide authorities, as well as the weaknesses of having second tier authorities each of which needs to be satisfied by the resulting pattern of investment. On balance it is probably more appropriate to invest all strategic transport and land use responsibilities in the higher tier authority.

The involvement of the private sector in service provision is not a barrier to strategy delivery in itself. Indeed, there is ample evidence that the business acumen of the private sector can deliver much more efficient services. The distinction drawn, instead, is between the franchising model operating successfully in London, and the deregulated environment in West Yorkshire and Edinburgh. Both the latter cities find it difficult to influence bus service levels, and almost impossible to determine fare levels. By contrast, London has been able to maintain and enhance the bus network, and to introduce lower and simpler fare structures. There is a strong case for introducing the franchising model elsewhere in the UK.

Almost inevitably, institutional barriers impact more severely on some policy instruments than others. The research identified two types of barrier: those related to finance and those concerning public acceptability. There is no clear justification for some types of policy instrument being more difficult to fund than others, always provided that they are shown to represent good value for money. Since revenue projects are usually less expensive, there is a danger that they will be overlooked in favour of more expensive and less cost-effective alternatives. Acceptability barriers particularly limited the take-up of road space reallocation and pricing measures. It is debatable whether simpler institutional structures would overcome these problems, except to the extent that there are fewer opportunities for disagreement between government bodies.

Since the most important instruments in an integrated strategy are likely to be public transport service levels and fares, controls on car use and land use policies,

and the implementation of the first and second of these are made more difficult by the barriers identified, at least outside London, it is inevitable that the resulting strategies will be less effective.

In summary, despite several attempts at local government reorganisation in the UK, this study has highlighted continuing institutional barriers to the pursuit of sustainable urban transport strategies, and a particular need to develop conurbation-wide authorities, to introduce franchise-based management of public transport services and fares, and to avoid inconsistencies in the allocation of finance to larger capital schemes and to revenue-funded projects. However, the experience from London suggests that a combination of the right powers and institutional structure, flexible funding and a strong political champion can achieve significant improvements in a short period of time. This alone may justify the disruption from a further set of institutional changes.

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