

Government Policy on Transport Infrastructure

Transport Policy

The Government's long term strategy for the transport network is set out in the July 2004 White Paper, 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030' (Cm 6234). The strategy charts a course over the next 30 years for improving the transport system by sustained investment, improvements in the management of the transport network and planning ahead to address projected pressures on the transport system over the longer term. The White Paper identifies the following policy measures, which will provide the basis for delivering enhancements to the road network:

- new capacity where it is needed, assuming that any environmental and social costs are justified;
- locking-in the benefits of new capacity through various measures including some tolling and carpool lanes where appropriate;
- Government leading the debate on road pricing and its capacity to lead to better choices for motorists;
- better management exploiting the potential of new technology to avoid problems and deal with them rapidly if they occur; and
- using new technology to keep people informed both before and during their journey.

The programme of trunk road improvements being taken forward by the Highways Agency contributes to the first of the policy measures listed above - providing new capacity where it is needed, subject to such schemes being justified, taking account of social and environmental costs as well as their economic costs and benefits. The trunk road programme has been developed within the policy framework set out in the July 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' (Cm 3950). This introduced a new integrated transport policy which aims to achieve:

- integration **within and between different types of transport** – so that each contributes its full potential and people can move easily between them;
- integration **with the environment** – so that transport choices support a better environment;
- integration **with land use planning** – at national, regional and local level, so that transport and planning work together to support more sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel;
- integration **with policies for education, health and wealth creation** – so that transport helps to make a fairer, more inclusive society.

The White Paper identified the following key functions for trunk roads:

- linking main centres of population
- access to major ports, airports and rail termini
- access to peripheral regions
- providing key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales
- classification as part of the Trans-European Road Network.

On the basis of these criteria the White Paper established a core trunk road network for England of nationally important routes. After consultation it was confirmed in April 1999 that responsibility for the remaining non-core trunk roads (approximately 3200km, accounting for about 30% of the trunk road network) would be transferred to local highway authorities. The 'detrunking' programme is now complete.

'A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England', a daughter document to the Transport White Paper also published in July 1998, set out Government Policy specifically in relation to trunk roads. This established the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI), replacing the National Trunk Road Improvement Programme, as a carefully targeted programme to address the most serious and pressing problems on the strategic road network.

'A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England' included the results of a Strategic Review of all the trunk road schemes which were then in the National Programme. Each scheme was assessed against the Government's objectives for the environment, safety, economy, accessibility and integration. The Review identified thirty-seven schemes, which were carried forward under the Targeted Programme. Some schemes were dropped from the programme altogether and a number of other schemes were remitted for further consideration through a series of Multi-Modal and Road-Based Studies. Such schemes were to be re-considered for entry into the TPI following completion of the studies.

'Transport 2010 – The 10 Year Plan' published in July 2000 set out the resources to be committed up to 2010 to deliver the Government's priority for improved road, rail and other public transport. A Progress Report on the 10 Year Plan was issued in December 2001 and the July 2004 White Paper 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030' sets out revised spending figures for the Department for Transport up to 2007/08 and longer term funding guidelines up to 2014/15.

'Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report', a progress report on the 10 Year Plan, was issued in December 2002 and set out revised spending figures for the DfT up to 2005/06 and longer term funding guidelines up to 2010/11.

'Roads – Delivering Choice and Reliability' was published in July 2008 following the publication of the 'Review of Highways Agency's Major Roads Programme' (the Nichols Report) in March 2007. 'Roads – Delivering Choice and Reliability' sets out to promote and inform the debate about how the road capacity should be delivered in the most sustainable, reliable way to support the trips people and businesses need to make. It sets out the Government's implementation of the Nichols review of the Highways Agency's approach to cost estimation and project management. This includes the replacement of the TPI with the National Roads Programme, and lists the projects to be brought forward over the period to 2014.

'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' published in November 2008 provides an explanation of the actions needed to both tackle immediate problems and shapes the UK transport system to meet the longer-term challenges. It outlines five goals for transport focusing on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

'Britain's Transport Infrastructure: Motorways and Major Trunk Roads' published in January 2009 concentrates mainly on Managed Motorway proposals but includes further details of the National Roads Programme and the prioritisation of the schemes within it.

Government response to the Multi-Modal and Road Based Studies

The programme of Multi-Modal and Road Based Studies commissioned by Government in 1999 and 2000 is now complete and Government has responded to the study recommendations in a number of separate announcements. These include, in particular, major transport announcements in December 2002 and July 2003, which together gave the Secretary of State's response to 16 Multi-Modal Studies. A Department for Transport discussion paper, 'Managing our Roads' was issued in parallel with the July 2003 response to the Multi-Modal Studies. This reviewed some of the longer-term challenges to be faced in addressing future travel demands. The way in which the Government proposes to respond to these challenges is set out in the July 2004 White Paper.

The Secretary of State's responses to the Multi-Modal and Road Based Studies has, in effect, largely identified the programme of major road schemes that the Government has asked the Highways Agency to prioritise for delivery over the next decade. Some schemes recommended by the studies were put into the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) immediately. In other cases the Secretary of State indicated that he was minded to support a scheme but asked the Agency to carry out further detailed appraisal work before making a final decision on TPI entry. The delivery of all schemes agreed for TPI entry is, of course, subject to the completion of all necessary statutory procedures.

Planning Arrangements for schemes added to the Targeted Programme of Improvements

The 1998 White Paper, 'A New Deal for Transport' recognised the importance of ensuring that transport policy, and decisions on individual schemes, are fully integrated with land use planning at a national, regional and local level. In particular, the White Paper set out proposals for the preparation of Regional Transport Strategies (RTS) as part of the regional planning process. The Regional Planning Body (RPB) in each region was given responsibility for producing a RTS as an integral and clearly identifiable part of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). Following implementation of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Regional Planning Guidance has become Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) incorporating the RTS. In support of this change to RSS, a Planning Policy Statement on Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS 11) was published in September 2004, replacing Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 on Regional Planning (PPG11). That policy statement sets out the procedural policy in preparing revisions to RSS. The RPBs are required to produce and revise their RSS, which has a greater focus on sub-regional strategies and a closer integration of transport, housing and land use policies than RPG. The RSS is subject to Examination in Public before being issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It sets the framework for the preparation of plans and for individual planning decisions within a region for the next 10 to 15 years.

The programme of Multi-Modal and Road Based Studies described earlier in this paper were taken forward in partnership with Regional Planning Bodies and other regional stakeholders prior to the finalisation of Regional Planning Guidance and RTS. Ministers' responded to the study recommendations after receiving advice on them from the relevant Regional Planning Bodies provided in the light of the RPG and RTS. The study recommendations and Ministers' responses have helped to inform the subsequent development of RTS. The programme of Government-funded studies set up in 1999 and 2000 is now complete. For future schemes the RPB will take greater responsibility for initiating studies into strategic transport issues.

Appraisal

As part of the 1998 Roads Review a New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) was introduced to provide a clear and open framework to appraise and inform the prioritisation of trunk road investment proposals. Under NATA trunk road schemes are assessed against the Government's overarching objectives for transport:

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

The New Approach to Appraisal, which applies to all transport projects including rail and local transport schemes, is available on the Department's Transport Analysis Guidance website, www.WebTAG.org.uk. In April 2004 this website replaced and updated earlier guidance provided in 'Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies', issued in March 2000 and in 'Applying the Multi-Modal Approach to Appraisal to Highway Schemes' (March 2001). These earlier documents have been superseded and are no longer used for appraisal.

The New Approach to Appraisal provided the appraisal framework for the Multi-Modal and Road Based studies. The trunk road improvement schemes recommended by these studies were generally part of wider, broad-based strategies looking ahead 20 to 30 years and including a range of other measures, such as improvements to public transport, and policies to encourage more sustainable travel choices. Ministers' views on these wider measures, and the extent to which they wished the relevant delivery agencies to pursue them in more detail, are set out in their responses on each study.

One policy measure recommended by a number of studies was road user charging. In response, Ministers announced in July 2003 a comprehensive study to examine possible options for charging and their implications. The study reported to Ministers in summer 2004. It concluded that a national road pricing scheme is becoming technically feasible and will certainly be feasible in the medium term (10 to 15 years). In response the Government stated in the July 2004 White Paper 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030' that it intended to lead a debate on what would make road pricing acceptable to motorists and seek to build a consensus around the objectives of road pricing. This reflects the fact that further analysis and public debate will be necessary before Government takes a decision on whether or not to introduce road user pricing at some future date.

Trunk road schemes recommended by the Multi-Modal and Road Based studies have been subject to further detailed scheme level appraisal by the Agency. The Agency has agreed with the Department for Transport that these appraisals should be based on Ministers' existing policies. Ministers have announced that the Government has no plans for national road pricing, but is giving priority to measures that can be implemented in the shorter term to relieve pressure on the most overcrowded routes, to give road users greater choice over the journeys they take, and to recognise the premium they put on the reliability and predictability of journey times.

This remains the position as set out in the Command Paper, "*Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future*" published on 15 July 2009.

It has not therefore been assumed in the Agency's scheme appraisals that road user charging will be introduced at some future date, even where this was recommended by the relevant Multi-Modal Study. In addition, where other complementary transport improvements were recommended by a study but do not yet form part of a committed funding programme, the Agency has based its appraisal on an assessment of the schemes 'most likely' to have been implemented over the appraisal period.

Section giving scheme specific information

The A14 is an important and busy dual carriageway, running the 210 Km (130 miles) from the M1/M6 motorway junction near Rugby to Felixstowe Docks. As part of the main east-west strategic route between the Midlands and the Port of Felixstowe it has Trans European Route Network status. Between Cambridge and Alconbury it also connects traffic using the M11 to the south and the A1(M) to the north. Along the Cambridge to Huntingdon corridor it is particularly busy, carrying local and regional traffic as well as long distance through traffic, with a proportion of heavy goods vehicles.

The A14 influences the local economy, since it is the only high quality route for local traffic between Alconbury, Huntingdon, Godmanchester, St Ives, Bar Hill, Cambridge and other settlements along the corridor. The A14 Cambridge Northern Bypass acts as a distributor for traffic to the 'northern fringe' of Cambridge, including the Science Park, which has international as well as national and regional importance.

Between 41,000 to 98,000 vehicles use the route every day – a large number for a two-lane dual carriageway. Between 17% and 26% of this traffic consists of heavy goods vehicles which is well above the national average of about 10%. Consequently, the A14 experiences severe congestion, particularly during peak hours, which results in unreliable journey times.

'A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England' (July 1998) recognised that congestion on the A14 in Cambridgeshire was a problem and recommended a study to consider solutions to congestion and safety problems in the Cambridge to Huntingdon corridor. The document noted that the previous A14 M11 J14 to M1/A1 Link Improvement Scheme should be further considered as part of this study.

In 2001, the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS) recommended a strategy of trunk road and local high highway improvements combined with the provision of a high quality public transport system.

The trunk road improvement element of the CHUMMS Preferred Plan was developed further in 2002 and 2003 to assist the Highways Agency in recommending the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme for entry into the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) in April 2003.

The A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme has been included in subsequent DfT publications including "Britain's Transport Infrastructure: Motorways and Major Trunk Roads" in January 2009, which listed the scheme for start of works in the 2010/11 – 2011/12 periods.

The objectives of the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme are:

- To maintain the ability of the A14 to perform its strategic national and Trans-European Network role by the delivery of the trunk road improvements accepted by the Secretary of State for Transport to meet the recommendations of the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS); and
- To provide improved network capacity able to support the economic/housing growth strategy for Cambridgeshire and development in the wider London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area and in particular the proposed Northstowe development of up to 10,000 houses on the former Oakington Barracks site.

The proposed scheme to improve the A14 comprises:

- A new route to the south of Huntingdon between Ellington and Fen Drayton, 11.8 miles (19km) in length. This comprises a dual two lane carriageway of between Ellington and the A1 at Brampton and a dual three lane carriageway between the A1 and Fen Drayton;
- On-line widening to three lane dual carriageway between Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton, 10.5 miles (17km) in length with four lanes being provided in each direction between Girton and Histon;
- Major interchanges with A1 at Brampton and with the existing A14 at Fen Drayton and remodelling of M11 Junction 14 at Girton;
- Local Access Roads alongside the on-line widening between Fen Drayton and Girton; and
- Removal of the A14 Huntingdon Viaduct to and replacement with a series of junctions with the local road network.

The scheme has been developed to minimise its effects on the environment and a range of measures have been designed to reduce environmental effects, including extensive planting of woodland, copses and hedgerows, creation of wildlife ponds and other habitats, noise screen mounds and fences.