



Government Office for Science

Foresight Future of Mobility project

Planning and Place Roundtable

5 September, 15:00 to 16:30, 1 Victoria Street

Chaired by Chris Witty (Deputy Government Chief Scientific Adviser)

This is an abridged summary of the roundtable, and in the spirit of free and open discussion, comments have not been attributed to specific attendees.

The roundtable was structured around three main questions regarding Planning and Place:

- What are the opportunities provided by integrating transport and land use planning?
- What are the barriers to implementation of these opportunities?
- What are the actions that can be taken to overcome these barriers?

Key points

- Ubiquitous connectivity will be seen as a utility, and will act as a facilitator (for MaaS) and an enabler (for remote working), though rural areas will need particular attention in order to achieve nationwide connectivity.
- Local authorities are key in delivering transport, but few are prepared for the challenges that will affect integrated planning.
- The planning system lacks ways to favour more sustainable solutions, and monitoring and enforcement with regards to transport provision are lacking.
- The relationships between spatial configuration, population and employment opportunities should be explored, and mapped with economic activities and character spaces within cities, to illuminate mobility opportunities.

Many of the issues surrounding planning and transport are not new. More than ever, there is a need to integrate transport and land use planning so that we are not presented with transport planning when housing developments come forwards. Connectivity will be pervasive and this will change the way we travel, but future-proofing transport and planning decisions remains a challenge.

More widely, there is an inescapable need to forge a vision for future society – of which there is an absence of – and to understand what we want from our cities and rural areas. Healthy places, data and connectivity are all driving forces that can enhance our wellbeing and bring access to goods and services but sustainable choices must be made and informed by joined-up decision making.

We are on the brink of a technological paradigm shift, a tipping point with computing power and communications becoming ubiquitous, and where mobile and broadband is viewed as a utility.

- Good digital access is crucial, acting as a facilitator (e.g. for CAVs, Mobility-as-a-Service) and as an enabler (e.g. remote working).
- Connectivity requirements for working and for entertainment are different, however they are often considered as one. There needs to be a distinction between what connectivity is necessary for the economy and what is desirable for high personal performance (e.g. streaming videos)
- Opening up data will provide opportunities for the public sector and enable new services but there needs to be a better structure to access this with more free use of resources [or 'use of free resources' – which is correct?].
- Diverse sources of data can inform better planning. Aggregated and anonymised data circumvents privacy issues and may come from customers, mobile phones, rail patronage data and regional transport bodies.
- Transport for London has lots of data but opportunities are being lost to collect and understand data because local authorities are not joined up.

Local authorities are critical in delivering transport but few are prepared for the challenges associated with new technologies that will affect integrated planning.

- Government and transport providers must work with local authorities to determine the extent to which issues are known and empower those delivering technology, housing and communications with the right tools.
- There needs to be flexibility in the system to support whatever new technologies come through, so we are not facing a cliff edge.
- Agreement needs to be forged between what infrastructure is needed and how it can be implemented, and a proactive approach to building partnerships ought to be taken.
- Transport for the North (TfN) analysis suggests an increase in rail use of 500% and in road use of 50%, out to 2050. What infrastructure is needed for this and how can we create the right environment for investment?
- Long-term planning between local authorities and housing developers would ensure a joined-up approach and guaranteed investment in infrastructure for local areas.
- Land use developers are largely excluded from transport planning, and would make positive contributions to connecting major infrastructure if permitted.

Rural communities are often isolated and the vulnerable must not be excluded.

- There are requirements on transport providers to open data but the wider issue is the need for rural connectivity and broadband. We are on the right trajectory in addressing this, but work remains.

- Measures may include putting requirements on developers to provide connectivity to communities and involve them in the planning process.
- It's also important to recognise that segments of society may not want to be connected and do not embrace new technologies, and that these people must not be excluded.
- CAVs may bring other opportunities and benefits including education and social care, but will rely upon robust digital infrastructure.

Understanding the constraints of a city, its spatial configuration and the interaction of people is necessary to provide smart mobility solutions.

- Using the right model at the right time is critical to successful planning which reflects unique urban and rural environments. Cities are already established systems and urban development is slow; once infrastructure is in place, it's difficult to change and new mobility models will do little to change this.
- Historically – in terms of spatial planning – the interaction of public transport and land use can lead to car dependency and lock-in.
- There is an opportunity with demographic data to better understand where there exists a high need for special access. Opportunity is also not equally distributed between car owners and public transport users. Data can be exploited by transport providers for demand-responsive transport.
- Relationships between spatial configuration, population and employment ought to be explored and mapped with economic activities and character spaces within cities. This would illuminate mobility opportunities.
- As connectivity becomes ubiquitous, heterogeneity between cities will be marked by spatial characteristics, or Place.
- Better understanding what drives millennials in their choice of where to live and the contrast with other generations would provide useful insight.
- Urban form and Place visualised within and between cities and across scales will enhance any integrated planning approach.
- In terms of future-proofing decisions in cities, there is not a single solution, so we must make use of what we already have.

We must prioritise mobility over travel and build in non-technological solutions from the start. In addressing public health issues, we need to get people moving.

- Further emphasis needs to be placed on active travel and related infrastructure, enabling mobility of people of all ages.
- One in six deaths are related to physical inactivity. We must build public health issues into the design of the future transport system.
- Technology and data can prevent unnecessary travel but how do we mitigate future technologies from impinging on the opportunity for active travel?
- The design of transport around deprived areas can contribute poorer public health and there is an issue in the valuing of health in the appraisal of projects. We are sending out mixed messages in active travel.

- The need to travel may fundamentally change in the future and this should be looked at more closely. For instance, will we travel more for social purposes in the future?

New partnerships

- Identifying where investments are being made could facilitate successful planning and innovation for mobility solutions. For instance, venture capitalist financing schemes are becoming more prevalent such as the Manchester Mo-Bike project.
- Local communities are willing to invest time and money in return for open and honest consultation by government, and with public recognition.
- Partnerships between the cities and the private sector are emerging and catalysing new and interesting business models, i.e. Zipcar.

Summary

The future transport system presents vast opportunities but also critical uncertainties in its evolution. It is important to analyse the past as well as foresight to the future. A unified Government vision for transport and mobility is imperative. We are at a tipping point – potentially a convergence of megatrends – and there is a strong requirement to plan for alternative future scenarios. Data and connectivity are key enablers but cooperation and collaboration between planners at all levels is needed to integrate transport and land use planning. It is necessary to better understand human and spatial characteristics, including demographics, and their interactions in living and working environment to enhance planning strategies. Furthermore, local and regional authorities must be equipped and empowered to deliver within cities and across rural communities. They must also be cognisant of the potential impacts of their decisions and technological trends on people's health and lifestyle choices.

We would like to thank the following organisations for participating:

Action with Communities in Rural England, Blackpool Transport Services, Community Transport Association, Department for Transport, First Group, London Borough of Bexley Council, Mobox, Public Health England, Space Syntax, Taylor Wimpey, Transport for the North, WSP, York City Council

The views and opinions expressed during this meeting do not reflect official or company policy, or the position of Government.