



Greener Journeys Submission to the Communities and Local Government  
Select Committee Inquiry in to the  
National Planning Policy Framework

September 2011

About Greener Journeys

- Launched in 2009, Greener Journeys came into being as a response to the UK's imperative to reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- Greener Journeys is a coalition of Britain's leading bus companies (Arriva, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach) and other supporters committed to encouraging people to travel more sustainably. It aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport by encouraging people to switch some of their car journeys to bus or coach instead. Its key objective is to take one billion car journeys off the UK's roads by 2014. Switching from car to bus for just one journey in 25 could save 2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, and would deliver 50% more CO<sub>2</sub> savings from transport than planned by Government over the same period.
- Major stakeholders are represented on the Greener Journeys Advisory Board including: Transport for London, RAC Foundation, Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG), and Campaign for Better Transport. Greener Journeys is also a member of the Climate Clinic along with organisations demanding political action on climate change including WWF, Greenpeace and Green Alliance.

The Draft NPPF and Sustainable Transport Patterns

- Greener Journeys would like to submit to the Committee a brief statement on the draft National Planning Policy Framework. It welcomes the opportunity to do so given the NPPF's potential to shape the fabric of our communities for many years to come.
- The draft NPPF is clearly aimed at boosting economic growth by encouraging new development. Greener Journeys acknowledges the NPPF's need to adopt a pro-growth agenda at this time of economic challenge. However, Greener Journeys believes this growth should be more closely aligned to sustainable patterns of transport than is currently envisaged in by the Government. Indeed, the most successful city

economies in the world are those with the highest percentage of public transport users. In order for any economy to grow it needs a large and skilled labour market. It naturally follows that cities with transport capacity constraints and high levels of car dependency lack access to this vital resource, which in turn acts as a constraint on growth.

### The dominance of the car

- Previous land-use planning policies have helped to cement the dominance of the car as the default mode of choice through its delivery of car-based developments. Such developments have been located in areas that have either been unsuitable for access by sustainable transport, or that there has been a failure to plan for the inclusion of sustainable transport infrastructure as part of the development. Both access and infrastructure is almost impossible to deliver retrospectively.
- Modal choice is also currently skewed by pro-car measures offered at these car-based developments, particularly by the provision of “free” parking to car drivers, which effectively becomes a subsidy from non-car drivers to car drivers. This “free” parking does not take account of the opportunity cost of the land nor the maintenance costs of car parks and skews modal choice towards solo car. Free parking is in fact a cost paid by those who do not drive, and this is economically inefficient and inequitable<sup>1</sup>. The incentive of free-parking for car drivers is not currently matched by any similar incentive for public transport users, for example, tax incentives for travelling by bus (bus season tickets / salary sacrifice schemes etc.).
- As a result of the lack of integration between land use and transport planning, the UK uses cars for a far higher percentage of journeys than most other European countries. This dependence on the private car has also unsurprisingly led to the UK also being one of the most congested countries in Europe.
- The economic consequences of congestion well documented accounting for a third of the measurable costs of transport in urban areas<sup>2</sup>. Not only is excess delay costing our urban economies £11 billion per annum but carbon emissions impose a cost to society equivalent of up to £4 billion a year.

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Transport Analysis, Cabinet Office, DfT et al 2009

<sup>2</sup> Urban Transport Analysis, Cabinet Office, DfT et al 2009

## Modal shift

- Modal shift from car to sustainable transport modes is the key to reducing these wasteful costs to the economy. A shift would provide quantifiable benefits in terms of reduction in car use, congestion and CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Diverting a single five mile journey from car to bus will deliver average decongestion benefits of £5.50 in urban areas<sup>3</sup>, which is equivalent to benefits of around £2,350 per annum if this represents a commuting trip.
- Around 40% of all transport carbon emissions is generated by trips under ten miles, with trips in the 2 to 5 mile category contributing 40% of these emissions. Key opportunities lie in making alternative modes more attractive when it comes to these shorter trips<sup>4</sup>.
- Research shows that consumers place journey times and reliability high up on their agenda when considering whether to convert a car journey to one by public transport. Evidence clearly shows the speed and reliability of bus services, for example, can be improved through bus priority measures<sup>5</sup> and that bus use can dramatically increase when bus priority measures as part of a package of measures is implemented<sup>6</sup>. This allocation of road space is something that must be considered in the planning of new developments or the extension of major developments.
- Integrated land-use and transport planning is the key to this shift. Well planned developments in themselves reduce the demand for travel and encourage a high mode share of sustainable modes.

## Recommendations

- Greener Journeys would like to see transport impacts to be fully accounted for in all land-use planning decisions and that patterns of development should always facilitate the use of sustainable transport, rather than 'where practical, or 'where reasonable to do so' as the draft NPPF currently suggests.
- All new development and expanded major developments should be based around existing transport hubs and around networks of small, local retail and leisure facilities linked to centralised services.
- Any new developments on green field sites should be matched by the provision of comprehensive public transport services and infrastructure

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<sup>3</sup> SU Analysis of WebTAG 3.9.5 - 2010 prices and values

<sup>4</sup> Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen, 2011 Department for Transport

<sup>5</sup> Bus Priority: The Way Ahead, DfT 2004

<sup>6</sup> On the Move: Passengers, partnerships and growth, CPT 2006

which themselves must be underpinned by green travel planning to promote public transport use. Travel plans should include targets for mode share.

- These planning conditions should be made a specific requirement of the Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Greener Journeys believes if these recommendations are properly incorporated in to the draft NPPF then the planning system can play its full part in helping to create a growing, sustainable, low carbon economy.