Policy Guidance Notes
Transport

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has established policy stances on many aspects of transport. This policy paper summarises these and should be read in conjunction with '*Policy Guidance Notes: Transport Principles'*.

ROADS

We need to manage our existing road network better, rather than expanding it. Car use is essential to many people living in rural areas but we should aim to reduce the need to travel by car, prioritise sustainable travel choices and promote more efficient use of cars, particularly higher occupancy levels.

Great Britain has experienced an increase of over 350% in traffic since 1960, bringing with it growing congestion and delay as well as severe environmental problems. Trying to tackle congestion by providing more road space - whether in the form of building new roads or widening existing ones - generates up to 10% extra traffic every year.[1]

Road building can be a particular threat to rural England. New roads through the countryside have destroyed irreplaceable landscapes, ancient woodland and wildlife habitats. Increased traffic damages tranquillity over a wide area while longer trips encourage sprawl across green field sites and the closure of local shops and services.

Extra traffic adds to already high levels of carbon dioxide, air pollution and noise. Research shows that to meet binding carbon reduction targets, national traffic levels need to stop growing and then to fall.[2]

CPRE supports the following specific measures:

- 'Road capacity' should be redefined to cover people and goods, not just numbers of vehicles;

- Spending on increasing road capacity should not be at the expense of funding for transport schemes better suited to reducing carbon emissions and giving people and freight more options;

- Road schemes, whether bypasses, road widening or Active Traffic Management, should be tested more rigorously against key policy criteria such as those above. Road building should be an option of last resort;

- Existing roads should be effectively maintained in environmentally sensitive ways, in preference to expenditure on new road capacity;

- More stringent environmental standards should apply to any new or improved roads. Examples include full cut-off lighting and quiet road surfaces. Environmental limits should be respected: for example sign gantries should not detract from designated landscapes.

[1] 'Roads - Delivering Choice and Reliability', para.5.27, p.61, Department for Transport, 16 July 2008.

[2] 'Meeting Carbon Budgets - The Need for a Step Change' - First Report of the Committee on Climate Change, October 2009.

ROAD DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Demand for road-based transport should be reduced where possible. A range of measures is needed to manage traffic levels, reduce car dependency and improve sustainable travel options. A combination of better planning and infrastructure, promotion and rebalancing of travel costs will be the most effective.

Rising levels of affluence have been closely linked to increasing demand for personal travel and consumer goods. Traffic levels have grown fastest on rural roads and some smaller country towns and honeypot tourist destinations are suffering significant congestion. While reducing carbon emissions and oil dependency is important, solutions like electric and more fuel efficient cars do not tackle all transport problems. By making driving cheaper, they may lead to the 'rebound effect' of increased traffic.

Public transport fares have generally risen faster than the cost of motoring over the past twenty years.[1] Given that and the convenience of the car, it is no wonder that so many people choose to use their cars in preference to public transport, even where such alternatives exist. A relative reduction in public transport fares will be needed to tackle over-dependence on the private car.

Physical or 'hard' measures work best when combined with 'soft' measures, often known as 'Smarter Choices', which have been shown to reduce motor traffic by 10% in some towns.[2] But without measures to 'lock in' reductions in emissions and traffic, the benefits will be short-lived.

In general, CPRE supports measures to manage:
- Access, including lorry control zones, bus gates and cycle gaps, which help prevent rat-running through residential areas;

- Speeds (see under 'Road Safety' below), including quiet lanes and home zones;

- Road space, including wider pavements and high occupancy vehicle lanes;

- Costs, including parking charges, road pricing and encouraging a shift from car ownership to car use, such as car clubs, including through taxation.

To be effective, these should be combined with **Smarter Choices measures** including:

- Travel plans for workplaces, schools and other places that generate many trips, such as tourist attractions.

- Car clubs and more informal car sharing, to give people the opportunity to use cars more selectively, without having to pay for a car all the time. Intelligent transport systems to match people offering and wanting a lift should be promoted;

- Greater encouragement for the use of video conferencing and IT as alternatives to face-to-face meetings, and for home working;

We will judge all future **road pricing** proposals, whether national or local, against their ability to meet the following criteria:

- The countryside is protected and traffic is not dispersed into rural areas;

- Those living or working in rural areas are not disadvantaged;

- A substantial proportion of the money raised is used for public transport, accessibility improvements and improving conditions for walking and cycling, especially in rural areas;

- HGVs pay proportionately more to reflect their greater social and environmental impacts.

[1]'Transport Trends: 2009 Edition', 2.6 (p.35) Changes in Relative Costs of Transport, Department for Transport, 25 February 2010.

[2]Lynn Sloman, Sally Cairns, Carey Newson, Jillian Anable, Alison Pridmore and Phil Goodwin, 'The Effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns: Summary Report', Report to the Department for Transport, February 2010.

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ROAD SAFETY

We need to reduce not only deaths and injuries on our roads but also the 'traffic intimidation' that leads to very low rates of walking and cycling. This will require reductions in motor vehicle speeds and safer routes for vulnerable road users - pedestrians, walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

During the period 1926-2008, nearly 500,000 people were killed on Great Britain's roads.[1] Although road casualties have fallen substantially since 1966, this does not mean that roads have become safe. Walking and cycling rates have plummeted as people feel increasingly threatened by traffic, particularly in rural areas where speeds are generally greater. Road safety is not a priority and is assigned limited resources.

Fatal collisions on rural roads have fallen less rapidly than in urban areas and the ratio of fatal to all severities has remained higher.[2]

A holistic approach combining education, enforcement and engineering, joined up with tackling other transport issues, is required. Reducing road danger, for example through better speed management, can produce other benefits, eg less noise, lower carbon emissions and more attractive streets and lanes.

While engineering has an important part to play, there is a danger of 'over engineering' in some rural areas, associated for example with sign clutter and over-use of pinch-points and speed humps. Measures adopted should therefore be sensitive to the environment and character of the area.

CPRE supports the following road safety measures:

- A simpler and more systematic approach to speed limits. They should be set in relation to the functions and characteristics of each road, based on a clearer road hierarchy. 20mph should become the norm on roads in towns and villages, with 40mph on minor rural roads and 50mph on most other rural single carriageway roads;

- Much more effective enforcement of speed limits and other regulations, with heavier, more consistently applied penalties for those convicted of dangerous, careless and inconsiderate driving;

- Continuation of challenging, nationally set casualty reduction targets, with local authorities held to account for the contribution they make towards meeting them;

- Greater attention to the safety of non-motorised users of roads with higher speeds and/or traffic levels;

- Better monitoring of safety risks and fear of traffic, with targets to help reduce them;

- Development of a culture of 'sharing the road' (found for example in northern Europe), involving much greater consideration of other road users. This may require reform of civil and criminal liability [3].

[1] 'Reported Road Casualties GB:2008', Department for Transport, 24 September 2009.

[2] 'Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010' - House of Commons Transport Committee, 29 October 2008.

[3] 'Policy Briefing - Road Safety Performance Beyond 2010', Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, 15 July 2010.

AVIATION

CPRE believes that the recent rapid expansion of aviation exceeds environmental limits, not only for global issues such as climate change and the use of finite oil resources, but also for impacts on air quality, landscape and tranquillity. Continued expansion is unsustainable even if there are technological improvements.

Air traffic in the UK has trebled over the past 20 years. The former government's Air Transport White Paper (ATWP) of 2003 proposed to cater for an increase in passengers from 228 million in 2005 to 465 million by 2030. Such an expansion would significantly increase aircraft noise and climate change emissions, with no limits before 2050, increasing the reductions required from other sectors. Aviation is largely responsible for an annual tourism deficit which has averaged £18bn over the past ten years, and which damages the tourist economy of many rural areas.

The March 2010 High Court ruling on Heathrow's third runway makes clear that the ATWP has been made obsolete by the Climate Change Act 2008. A new policy is urgently needed to fill the resulting vacuum.

Aircraft noise has already blighted substantial areas and further growth could jeopardise the few remaining tranquil areas in England as government guidelines encourage the routing of flight paths away from densely populated areas. Light aircraft, including business jets and helicopters, can be as intrusive as large planes.

CPRE's policy on aviation is:

- There should be a moratorium on aviation expansion pending a new National Policy Statement, which should keep aviation within environmental limits;

- The UK contribution to international aviation emissions should be included in domestic carbon budgets as proposed in the Climate Change Act 2008. Reducing these uniquely damaging emissions needs to be a priority now;

- Limits on aircraft noise should be consistent with World Health Organisation noise standards and related to the frequency of aircraft movements as well as plane size and type. New independent research on the impact of noise is needed;

- Given the recent substantial growth in airport capacity there should be no need to add to it. However, any further proposals for airport development should avoid demand for new roads, sprawl on greenfield sites and noise and light pollution;

- Better planning controls and regulation are needed, including a tightening of the relaxed approach to 'permitted development' and improved monitoring and control of flights;

- Any economic benefits of aviation growth should be weighed against its environmental, health and social impacts, including the tourism deficit;

- Duty should be levied on all aircraft movements, including business jets and freight, rather than just commercial passengers. This should reflect the cost of air and noise pollution as well as the impacts on climate change;

- VAT should be charged on domestic airline tickets and related goods and services;

- Slots at major airports should be auctioned and there should be higher charges for use of airspace;

- Realistic and practical alternatives to flying such as teleconferencing, travel by rail and holidays within the UK should be promoted.

BUSES AND COACHES

Rural buses, including mini and taxi buses, have a key role to play in dealing with the problems of social exclusion. Coaches can make a valuable contribution on strategic routes. Yet rural public transport could decline as a result of government cuts.

We estimate that about 50% of rural residents do not have access to a car during the day.

Two thirds of public transport journeys are made by bus and 4.8bn journeys were made by bus and light rail in 2008/ 2009.[1] The figures could be much more impressive if the offer were better, but the recession means many services are becoming less commercially viable. Flexible, demand-responsive services are more often the key in rural areas than scheduled services: they only run when booked in advance so empty vehicles do not clutter up country lanes.

Coaches are an environmentally-friendly form of motor transport with typically only a third the emissions of buses.

Rural bus passengers are less likely to be content with bus stop location and the level of information on services than their urban counterparts.[2] Poorer services in rural areas

mean there is a lower percentage uptake of concessionary fares than in urban areas despite there being a higher proportion of older residents.

CPRE proposes:

- More innovative and demand-responsive bus, mini-bus and taxi-bus solutions in rural areas, with fully accessible vehicles appropriate to the task. Parish councils should have a stronger role in promoting and publicising services;

- Safeguarding funding for rural services in the review of the Bus Service Operators' Grant;

- Integrated ticketing in rural as well as urban areas. Bus timetables and a phone number for information at all bus stops;

- Reliable services, including in evenings and at weekends, with fares offering good value for money. Better quality school bus services to reduce school traffic.

[1] Public Transport Statistics Bulletin, 2009.

[2] Passenger Focus, Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvement, 2010.

RAIL

Rail is undergoing a period of rapid and sustained growth with many services regularly overcrowded, even though ticket prices have increased above the cost of motoring and are the most expensive in Europe.[1] Much rolling stock remains of poor quality.

A renaissance of the rail system is urgently needed, including new and re-opened stations and lines, making rail an attractive alternative to road for passengers and freight - offering a much-needed lifeline to rural communities.

We support rail as an alternative to damaging road and air travel. However, proposals for completely new high speed lines, put forward as a means of relieving pressures on the existing system, tend to be in new transport corridors and present many challenges for the countryside and rural communities.

We welcome initiatives that will improve rail services and unlock bottlenecks. Likewise, we support Community Rail Partnerships and local groups working to improve station facilities. We want to see priority for rail investment and better integration with other modes (along with active travel) to support sustainable development. We support improvements for rail freight, including upgrading to continental gauge.

Rail capacity can be increased at minimal cost to the countryside. We believe that rail development should take place according to the following **sequential approach:**

1. Lengthening of trains and platforms, electrification, signalling and junction improvements, loading gauge improvements and more loops for freight and local passenger trains;

2. Restoring double track lines, reopening disused lines and opening new stations;

3. New rail alignments within existing transport corridors;

4. As a last resort, building new railways outside existing corridors.

New **High Speed Rail** lines could free capacity on the most congested parts of the existing network and achieve a significant modal shift from air and road to rail. However they could also cause serious damage to the countryside. We will want to be satisfied that they provide value for money. In addition to the sequential approach above, we will apply the following tests to specific proposals. Do they:

- Protect the local environment, especially landscape, tranquillity, heritage and habitats?

- Help to tackle climate change and minimise energy needs?

- Achieve modal shift rather than generating new journeys?

- Integrate with and improve existing services?

- Support planning and regional regeneration?

[1]Campaign for Better Transport, 2010.

PARKING POLICY, INCLUDING PARK & RIDE

Managing the supply and cost of car parking is a very effective means of managing the demand for road travel. We should make it easier for people to complete entire journeys by sustainable modes. In our view, park and ride has only a limited role to play.

While parking can make a useful contribution to the viability of small towns in particular, excessive parking at modest prices will increase traffic levels and often defeat efforts to bring about a more sustainable pattern of travel. Strategic planning is needed to develop and implement a coordinated strategy.

Bus-based park and ride schemes were devised to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in towns, to make bus travel more attractive to motorists, to create space in town centres, to improve accessibility and to bolster economic development. However, schemes have been shown to generate new car trips, increase car mileage, abstract passengers from existing bus services (often rendering them unviable, to the detriment of those without cars) and increase overall car parking capacity. They may improve the appeal of the target town centre at the expense of other places. When sites become full there is a demand for more.[1]

On parking, CPRE calls for:

- better use of existing parking in preference to an overall increase in capacity;

- parking charges at out-of-town superstores, with the money raised used to improve non-car access, local delivery schemes and initiatives to revive failing shops in towns and villages;

- incentives to employers to control parking through workplace travel plans;

- significantly increased cycle parking provision in secure, visible places;

- integration of park and ride with existing bus and rail services, including ticketing, to provide better use of these services ('link and ride');

- a presumption against 'strategic park and ride' using large green field sites outside towns and cities;

- pricing systems that favour bus or rail use for the whole journey rather than car for the majority and bus or rail at the end;

- investigation of different approaches in other countries eg. park & cycle, park & hire an electric cycle and park & car share.

[1] Park and Ride - its Role in Local Transport Policy - Graham Parkhurst, CPRE Campaign Briefing, 1998.

FREIGHT

There is great potential to reduce freight miles and shift freight from road to more sustainable forms of transport. We especially want to see fewer heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable country lanes.

We question what proportion of current freight movements are really necessary- particularly food movements that contribute hugely to HGV miles. Home grown fruit and vegetables often travel long distances (sometimes overseas) to be sorted, cleaned and packed before being dispatched to supermarkets, perhaps to be eaten close to where they were grown. Efforts to reduce empty running of HGVs have had some success, but there is scope for more to be done.

A different approach which recognises environmental limits is needed. We will continue to oppose larger and heavier lorries because of the damage they do to minor roads and the way they detract from rail freight. While we want to see expanded use of the latter, we are not in favour of massive multi modal freight interchanges with substantial adverse impacts on the countryside. The rail freight elements have often been tokenistic and used as stalking horses for out-of-town developments.

CPRE proposes:

- A much stronger government freight policy which:
  (i) prioritises local sourcing, especially of food, in support of CPRE's initiatives in this area, with more local sourcing by public bodies and businesses;
  (ii) promotes transport of goods by sustainable modes, including moving non-perishable products by water, either inland waterways or short sea shipping;
  (iii) restricts HGVs to major routes except for access;
  (iv) requires freight consolidation for delivery to rural areas;

- Lorry Road User Charging – which would encourage the freight industry to improve its logistics and reduce empty running;

- Lorry Management Zones to deal with, amongst other things, the problems of HGVs using unsuitable lanes;

- Freight Quality Partnerships that comply with DfT guidance and include sustainable transport and environmental bodies, as recommended by the DfT[1], and which will set SMART objectives and draw up sustainable distribution strategies;

- Stronger tests for multi-modal freight interchanges, focusing on their environmental credentials and impacts on the countryside. These would include: access restrictions and the availability of rail; congestion on surrounding roads; land take and land designations; the capacity for future expansion; and effects on tranquillity, the historic environment, local character, flooding and light and noise pollution;

- Restoration of subsidies for rail freight services.

[1] DfT Good Practice Guide 335, How to set up and run FQPs.

NON-MOTORISED (ACTIVE) TRAVEL

CPRE believes in promoting a built and natural environment in rural areas that encourages walking, cycling, riding and other forms of active travel. A key aim is to enable people to be less car-dependent and more selective in their car use.

A quarter of all car journeys in the UK are under two miles and over half are less than five miles[1]: many of these could be walked or cycled. But traffic speed and intensity has made walking and cycling in many rural areas an unpleasant and unsafe experience. Our vision is for more people walking and cycling in the countryside, not just to reduce the negative effects of increased motor traffic but also to bring people closer to the countryside.

The aim should be to slow traffic and give an advantage to more vulnerable road users. In addition, off-road routes could be created. These changes would bring several substantial benefits:

- an improvement in health and wellbeing through physical exercise;

- a reduction in CO_2 emissions;

- greater safety and less fear of speeding traffic; and

- better access to facilities and services for those without the use of a car.

CPRE would like the UK to:
- Stop treating cycling and walking as after-thoughts, once motor traffic has been catered for;

- Develop car-free areas wherever possible;

- Reduce traffic speeds and flows to make roads safer for cyclists, walkers and other non-motorised road users;

- Commit a greater share of local authority transport budgets to value for money cycling and walking initiatives, including cycle parking, cycle hire schemes and better public space;

- Rationalise the present complicated legislation relating to Rights of Way, creating a new category with sensitively designed surfaces suitable for walkers, cyclists, riders and the disabled;

- Aspire to at least Dutch levels of physically active travel (40%) by 2026.[2]

[1] Department for Transport national statistics.

[2] CPRE's 2026 Vision for the Countryside, 2009.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FACILITIES

We need to retain and reopen local facilities in villages and smaller market towns to ensure the vibrancy of rural and semi-rural communities and to reduce the need to travel to larger centres.

It has become increasingly difficult for rural residents to access essential services and facilities without the use of a private car. Shops, post offices, health care and banks used to be more widely available in rural areas, providing important social hubs as well as meeting every-day needs. With many of these now closed, journeys into bigger centres or to edge-of-town units are necessary. Problems are particularly severe for the elderly, young and disabled.

Colleges and hospitals that used to be in the centre of larger towns close to public transport have relocated and are less accessible. Meanwhile, many rural railway stations have closed or lost stopping services and bus services have disappeared - all creating ever more dependence on the car. Similarly, trips into the countryside for urban dwellers are often not possible by public transport and even where it does exist, services and publicity for them are often poor.

The private car will continue to have a key role in enabling rural residents to access facilities, but it is important that car dependence is reduced by improving rural transport and local facilities. Of particular importance is the role of IT in reducing the need to travel, and, where travel is essential, accessing up-to-date information on travel options.

Rural residents currently get a particularly poor deal. **CPRE proposes:**

- Better access to services by a range of transport modes, as well as bringing services closer to people;

- New means of keeping services open and bringing them closer to people, such as multi-purpose service outlets, mobile and outreach services;

- Well advertised, reliable bus or taxi-bus services geared to fit the needs of the local community (see above);

- Initiatives (eg cooperatives) to help re-invigorate local businesses and bring services back to rural areas;

- The provision of high-speed broadband services in all rural areas;

- Sustainable tourism strategies to make the countryside more accessible without use of a car;

Better integration of land use and transport planning. In particular the planning system should consider impacts of development on those using modes of travel other than the private car.

CPRE, 28 January 2011