

# **Expert Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future of Travel Plans in the UK**

**Research Report to the Department for Transport and the  
National Business Travel Network**

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# Expert Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future of Travel Plans in the UK

## 1. Introduction

A workplace travel plan (also known as 'Employer Transport Plan', 'Green Travel Plan', 'Site-Based Mobility Management', 'Green Commuter Plan' and Site Based Transportation Demand Management') is "a *general term for a package of measures tailored to meet the needs of individual sites and aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing reliance on the car. It involves the development of a set of mechanisms, initiatives and targets that together can enable an organisation to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment, whilst also bringing a number of other benefits to the organisation as an employer and to staff*" (EEBPP, 2001).

From a public policy perspective, travel plans are attractive to regional and local government since they are relatively cheap and quick to introduce and are normally politically acceptable. Meanwhile from a company perspective there are usually circumstances where an issue such as: access, a shortage of parking, a lack of space or finance, issues with neighbouring organisations, a need for planning permission or to enhance the organisation's image – means there are potentially significant benefits from adopting a travel plan. In the absence of such motivations the majority of organisations have simply not participated in helping to solve something that is not legally or institutionally 'their problem'.

As such, a number of studies (see Rye, 2002; Bradshaw, 1997; Coleman, 2000) have stated that less than ten percent of large private businesses (of over 100 employees) have adopted travel plans while small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have taken even less of an interest. This lack of engagement can be attributed to a number of reasons. In particular, Rye (2002) identifies key barriers to wider travel plan implementation, namely:

- Companies' self interest and internal organisational barriers;
- Lack of regulatory requirements for travel plans;
- Personal taxation and commuting issues;
- The poor quality of alternatives (particularly public transport);
- Lack of examples due to novelty of the concept.

In addition, while the UK Government has formally recognised the travel plan since its inclusion in the 1998 White Paper *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* (DETR, 1998), and has provided a whole series of support measures, these have tended to have been rather small scale, incremental and randomly applied. Travel plan policy meanwhile has largely been reactive and somewhat lacking in an overall strategic direction. Despite these barriers, travel plans are still in evidence and in fact are increasingly making an impression on the formulation of transport policy and practice and travel behaviour.

The purpose of this Report is to 'take stock' in terms of what has occurred in terms of Travel Plans, to assess the current situation with respect to Travel Plans and then to predict how travel plan policy will develop in the future.

For a more detailed literature review see Enoch M P and Zhang L (2008) *Travel Plans and their Implementation* (ed. Ison S G and Rye T) *The Implementation and Effectiveness of Transport Demand Management Measures An International Perspective*, Chapter 12, Ashgate, Aldershot, Hampshire, pp.233-256 (<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754649533>).

## **2. Aim of the Research**

The aim of this research is to assess the development of travel plans in the UK thus far and to try and suggest how policy needs to change if they are to become a mainstream policy instrument in the future. This report presents the findings of interviews with ten key travel plan 'experts', primarily consultants, academics and local authority transport officials, so as to ascertain their opinions with respect to travel plans and how they envisage them developing.

## **3. Method**

Face-to-face in-depth interviews were undertaken with ten travel plan experts. Those chosen were selected based on careful study of the literature in the area, the researchers detailed knowledge of transport policy and travel plans and input from the UK Department for Transport and the National Business Travel Network (NBTN). All interviews followed a standardised model, the template of which is included in Appendix A of this Report.

It is important to state that the responses in this report all derive from the ten interviewees and are not necessarily common perceptions, or form any sort of commitment by Government.

The potential value of the research is in assisting the DfT, NBTN, organisational travel planners, local authorities and consultants in their decision-making process. Specifically it seeks to address the question as to why progress in the area of travel plan implementation has been slower than expected.

## **4. Expert Interview Findings**

### ***Experience of those Interviewed***

All ten interviewees have known of travel plans for at least eight years and a number for substantially longer, having been introduced to them in a variety of ways – such as the introduction of similar measures in California and the early experiences of travel plan measures in Nottingham. In terms of being introduced to travel plans respondents had been asked to take up employment as travel planners, taking travel plans forward within a local authority context, as an environmental campaigner, as consultants or as an academic. In a number of cases, a new job or role had led to involvement with travel plans.

A number of respondents had experience of being a travel planner, had worked in local authorities and all had been (and are currently) travel plan consultants. A number currently undertake travel plan research.

One consultant has written 50 travel plans for the workplace, hospitals, schools or residential whilst another commented that he had been involved in well over 100 travel plans ranging from major businesses to SME's, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, local authorities and leisure sites.

Appendix B presents details of the interviewees in terms of their experience and length of time they have been involved with travel plans.

### ***Travel Plans in the Past***

This section of the Report seeks to detail the past experience of the interviewees in relation to travel plans. As such, it covers what are perceived to be the major milestones in the development of UK travel plans, the core motivations for organisations adopting them, the barriers to preventing take up and the role of central and local government in overcoming these barriers and travel plan performance.

## 1. Major milestones in the development of UK travel plans.

The major milestones could be categorised under a number of heading as follows:

### **National Government Policy**

The 1998 White Paper – *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* (DETR, 1998) was seen as significant by a number of the respondents as was *Planning Policy Guidance Notes 13: Transport* (DoE and DoT, 1994). It was stated that:

*“The White Paper was obviously an important shift in strategic policy terms and set a benchmark for local authorities. Sitting along side that, PPG13 and the redraft of PPG13 and the move from minimum to maximum parking standards were important”.*

PPG 13 was seen to provide travel plans with *“a legitimate existence within the planning system”*. In addition, it:

*“gave local offices and local members the ability to implement more progressive transport policy and also the credibility and security that this was happening at the national level”.*

Also mentioned were the 1996 Traffic Reduction Act and the *“various manifestations of DfT funding”* e.g. school and workplace travel plan bursary posts and Site Specific Advice programmes. In the wake of the White Paper it was also stated that:

*“the setting up of the Sustainable Transport Division within the Department for Transport gave an organisational focus within the Department for Transport”.*

Mention was also made of the 'King Review of low-carbon cars' - [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/king](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/king) and its recommendation that "All local authorities should ensure that smarter choices are a priority in their local transport strategy" and that all "All large public sector bodies should have a workplace travel plan in place by 2010". The interviewee also highlighted that more recently, the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy, out as a draft for consultation, see [www.sdu.nhs.uk](http://www.sdu.nhs.uk) wanting all NHS organisations to have a Board-approved Travel Plan by 2009. it was stated that this is quite a breakthrough since they are the largest employer in Europe and contribute 3% of England's CO2 emissions.

### **Travel Plan Guidance and Bursary Schemes**

The publication of guidance notes for Travel Plans at various times is also seen as providing milestones. Guidance such as Smarter Choices (Cairns et al, 2004) was seen as being *“really critical”* by one respondent but *“the tip of the iceberg really of the information needed”* by another.

It was also stated that the research undertaken by the DfT *“Making Travel Plans Work”* was:

*“a useful first sign of evidence coming out of the travel plan process and the supporting toolkit that was produced as a useful manual for practitioners – giving some credibility to the process because it looked and felt quite good and sat on Estate Managers desks”.*

In addition: *“The Local Transport Plan 2 guidance was also important because it had strong recognition of smarter choices and travel plans and it gave local offices some greater weight in the messages they were giving to their members and the importance of doing this”.*

In saying this there was a concern that some of the guidance given had not been acted upon, in that:

*“a potential concern, in some of the messages that have gone out is that guidance still isn't being adopted locally, despite being very well written and very informative and setting out clear processes by which local authorities can adopt travel plans”.*

Other important advice was seen to have been provided by various reports from Transport 2000 (now the Campaign for Better Transport).

In terms of other support, the funding of the Transport Energy Best Practice Site Specific Advice scheme launched in 2001, was seen as a *“good scheme except not many private sector companies took it up, just councils, who should have known better, and hospitals and the public sector”*.

### ***The emergence of leading organisations in terms of Travel Plans***

The emergence of leading organisations was seen as a key milestone. Thus in the private sector pharmaceutical companies such as Boots and Pfizer, and communications firm Orange adopting plans was crucial [especially] *“in the early stages”*, while organisations such as TravelWise, UK LAST and the Association of Commuter Transport *“have helped things along”*.

The perceived lead taken by the school sector was seen as being important:

*“the travel planning in schools was a big thing with the finance that was won. That started coming together around 2002-2003, and the school thing started taking off”*.

More lately, [Transport for] *“London has been the catalyst for a lot of things that have happened around the country”*. More specifically, *“the setting up of the Transport Demand Management department, the injection of cash, and the belief from [Mayor] Ken Livingstone that by 2025, the only congestion reduction measures that will enable London to function as a city, are going to come through demand management and sustainable travel planning”* have been important. Statements were made such as:

*“I think a major milestone links in to Transport for London in 2004 when Livingstone was elected and London saw itself as being the beacon for transport policy development and travel plans. That’s because they’ve got the resources and they choose to use them. That links in to the training side but also that they’re doing the work through the Borough Advisors and really putting travel plans on the map in London, whereas until then London was almost a travel plan free zone. Nobody thought there was a need in London because there was a decent public transport system. London is probably driving travel planning more than the Department for Transport now”*.

### ***Policy Context***

Finally, the change in policy context whereby climate change is moving up company agendas was seen as a potential milestone, as is the *“cultural shift in the younger parts of the profession in terms of what tools are available to them”*.

### ***Summary of Views***

**Travel plan milestones included the launch of Government policy documents, guidance and other support measures; the emergence of travel plans at particular organisations; and the emergence of Transport for London as a major catalyst for change in terms of travel plans.**

## **2. Motivations for organisations adopting Travel Plans**

A number of motivations were put forward as the reasons for adopting travel plans in the past. The views expressed were fairly common in terms of those interviewed.

### ***Compulsion***

There was a feeling that most have been introduced through compulsion – particularly through the planning process. Thus, *“I think that the legal obligation to put the travel plan in*

place as part of the planning process has been the core motivation for adopting travel plans. There are very few philanthropic, or altruistic companies, who in the past, would have perhaps adopted one, because they were so forward thinking they could see the benefits to the company itself. I don't think that's the case now." Similarly, "when you dig, it is hard to find an organisation where Section 106 agreements, parking restrictions, planning requirements, or whatever haven't featured. Whether the chicken came first, or the egg is harder to sort out." Another form of compulsion was applied to schools and hospitals, whereby local authorities and the NHS "told" their organisations to set up travel plans.

### **Voluntary adoption**

Voluntary plans were motivated by environmental issues, or "dealing with a particular problem". Statements such as the following were voiced in this respect:

*"In the past I think the pioneers of the planning world were very much driven by environmental ideals and corporate social responsibility. Even if it wasn't called that at that time, I think you look at the likes of Boots and Vodafone. They were big corporate organisations who were trying to do their bit for their employees, protecting them and offering them a better package, and also at the same time using it as a platform for promoting their environmental credentials".*

Solving congestion was only seen as a reason in a small number of areas, while "the financial benefits [to organisations] were down the pecking order somewhat". That said, "the practicality of getting your staff, all your staff, if they have a car or not, to work, is important. It also widens your labour pool, so it makes very sound business sense. It can save time, saves potential injuries and accidents. I think [organisations] need to remember this, or be reminded of those business advantages." Other factors mentioned included "neighbourhood responsibilities", "the health and safety side of things" and CSR; Corporate Social Responsibility, which is seen as "having brought some of the previously mentioned elements together."

One observation in terms of adoption is that school travel plans in particular are "completely different to those secured through the planning system, compared to residential development, and for businesses. In theory it [travel planning] might be a common process, but in reality it is very different for schools; it's funded and supported differently by the government, it is treated differently by local authorities; and specialists deal differently with one lot to another lot."

An interesting line of reasoning was put forward in terms of the adoption of travel plans essentially relating to time scales and mass take up:

*"Amongst the pioneers; you know in marketing, when they launch a new product there is a growth curve, at one end you have the pioneers they will buy the new TV, even if it doesn't work very well, just to say they have one, usually about 10%, then there is another 10% who say yes there is something in this, we will give it a go, then there is a big chunk of people when they see the mature technology they go for it and then the prices come down, and then you have the people at this end between 10-30% who under no circumstances want it. So I think at the moment we are in these first two sections, we haven't reached this mass take-up, predominantly in businesses".*

### **Summary of Views**

**Up to now most travel plans have been introduced because organisations have been required to introduce them, either through the planning system or by dictat.**

**Where voluntary travel plans have emerged, motivations ranged from sites dealing with a specific problem to environmental and Corporate Social Responsibility issues.**

**There was recognition that different organisations responded to different motivations in different circumstances.**

### 3. Key barriers to the take up of travel plans

Several interrelated barriers to the take up of travel plans were identified by interviewees. These included barriers related to travel planners themselves and leadership, national and local government leadership, the transport profession, and issues to do with organisational resistance.

#### **Travel Plan Leadership**

Interviewees commented that lack of leadership with respect to travel plans took a number of different forms. At the most basic level they referred to either leadership within the organisation or from travel planning coordinators within local authorities, while more strategically it related to the role of National Government.

This can manifest itself in terms of communication. *“I think travel plans have never been communicated effectively” – they have never been about the benefits. “The image we [travel planners] presented of ourselves was so poor; it was such a non-specific area of work, such a finger in the wind, black art, that no-one could answer any [practical] questions. We didn’t approach it correctly; we gave ourselves concrete shoes for moving forward, we were always struggling against an image we had made for ourselves.”*

Influence and expertise are important in terms of leadership. *“One of the problems you have got is that most travel planners, and it is quite often a single person, are at a very low level within the organisation, without a lot of influence, and unless that is backed up by more people and someone that owns the agenda at managerial level and political level, you have got a problem.”*

In terms of local authority travel planning co-ordinators one argument put forward is a lack of longevity in the post in that *“many of those officers have either moved on in terms of taking different roles because they haven’t had a travel planning career path to work to so they’ve moved to different fields”*. A related issue is remuneration in that *“the qualities that the travel plan co-ordinator holds – the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication are very, very difficult to encapsulate in guidance and very, very difficult to keep hold of unless you’re prepared to pay them a significant sum of money, because those skills are wanted throughout the whole of the organisation”* – whether it be at a local authority or private organisational level.

At the local level leading by example was raised by one interviewee as a barrier to travel plan take up in that:

*“I think there’s been a concern historically about whether local government has really taken it seriously in terms of the public sector having good quality evidence to their own travel plans. Local authorities, hospitals, universities, whilst they’ve been ‘talking the talk’ and doing some good things in some areas, very few have really tackled the sensitive issue of car parking, many of them still have out of town, ample car parking on site, so it’s difficult to relay that back to the private sector”*.

One respondent commented that:

*“There is an immensely fast turnover, people are travel planners for a year or they stick it at most for 18 months then they go off to somewhere that pays decently for the sheer flak that you get. Other organisations link in to professional organisations that can actually support the travel planners and give them a career structure that isn’t there at the moment”*.

Regarding the role of the Government, interviewees suggested that there has seen to be a lack of leadership and belief in travel planning. Thus, *“from a national perspective there was no strength of conviction; funding streams etc.”*, while local authorities have shown *“a lack of entrenched belief or awareness amongst officers, and certainly politicians, about their potential role, so in that respect there is no kind of recognised, credible, push for this sort of activity.”* Moreover developers *“are still just going through the motions... There still isn’t that*

*faith, [and so] people will undermine the [travel plan] research that is around rather than try and do [travel planning and] make it better”.*

In this respect it was noted that:

*“Political support outside of the South East has been an issue, where pressures for economic development have generally taken precedence over any constraint or perceived constraint upon accessibility”.*

Another interviewee commented that Government leadership barrier relates to the tax system. While *“there are slight benefits for buses or bicycles, they are very small beer and administratively quite complex. Meanwhile the big tax break is for parking spaces. Why isn’t [the greener alternative] tax free? Why is a parking space tax free?”*

### **Opposition from the transport profession**

Interviewees also commented that *“There are still a lot of ‘traditional’ civil engineers who don’t see [the potential of travel plans]”.* There is still *“a battle we haven’t won, with politicians, transport operators, local authority offices, [as well as] engineers”.*

Interviewees advised that *“there has been massive under-resourcing within local authorities”,* particularly revenue funding. *“It’s [not] having the resources, actual staff resources, right number of people skills, and managerial commitment.”*

### **Organisational resistance and a lack of evidence as to travel plan success**

Interviewees felt that businesses are either unconvinced of the need for travel plans, or else are ignorant of what they are. More specifically, organisations have issues relating to what is a non-core business activity *“like the cost of implementation and all the administrative time and effort that they may need.”* Coupled with this, are comments about travel plans being risky in some way and that there is a shortage of evidence as to their success. Thus, *“there is always a barrier in terms of establishing the concept in the company and convincing senior management that it is something worthwhile doing, and that these sorts of softer things could actually achieve something. This is probably quite difficult for those leading the field, because they have to have something to point at when they are talking to their boss.”*

Organisational resistance also relates to the role of senior management and a *“recognition from the top that travel to work is relevant to the functioning of the organisation, getting the managing/regional director to think outside what just happens in 9 to 5 within their premises”.*

There is also a feeling that, *“non-travel plan type perks like free cars and generous mileage allowance, are very important recruitment incentives and organisations won’t be able to recruit people if they get rid of those, and replace them with another form of travel.”* There are also arguments relating to the ‘free rider problem’ – i.e. *“if one company does something towards travel planning and another company doesn’t; the first one might reduce its own traffic, but the other one then actually expands its traffic, and then fill up the available space”.* So why should the first organisation bother?

Ignorance of travel plan benefits was also cited as a barrier. *“Bikes and buses and so on are not second nature to those people in the organisation in senior positions. They are seeing it through their own view; where they are getting car and mileage allowance; for example in a London authority that despite the fact 70% of staff arrive by public transport, the personnel don’t dare touch the car perks. It is very difficult to do.”*

Two comments sum this up in terms of organisations in that:

*“What’s in it for them and why should they want to do it? We can keep telling them that there are lots of good reasons, but until they see the evidence that the outcome from that investment is working then they’re unlikely to really take off”.*

And “the biggest barrier is real hard evidence on how effective these tools are. I just think that the whole industry will really fail to maximise its opportunity unless we get better quality, convincing evidence that this works in the long term and that we don’t just keep having the same organisations telling us the same old stories because it can have a feel of an ‘old boys club’, thinking that Boots and Vodafone will always keep this up, they’re making great strides, but what about the rest of the market out there.”

Finally in this section a line of argument relating to the barriers to successful travel plans relates to the ‘tick-box’ approach which has been adopted. The following two responses discuss this point:

*“I think historically it was the right thing to have some guidance based on a tick-box approach, saying ‘these are the processes that we’ve gone through, these are the measures that are in place’ but looking back over the last five years, it’s probably also been a significant barrier. There’s been a tendency for organisations to say ‘we’ve done a travel plan because we’ve got an introduction, we’ve got a description, we’ve got a sample survey, we’ve got these measures in place.’ There’s not really the understanding of the dynamics of what makes the travel plan really work”.*

In addition:

*“I still think we lack true innovation. Travel planners tend to go for the obvious, which tends to be the tools you can pull off the shelf and often overlook some of the really clever ways we could deal with travel demand. That relates a lot to funding”.*

*“There’s been a lack of personal involvement and one-to-one dialogue with staff to really understand what motivates them and convinces them to travel in different ways. Funding for the right travel plans often means the first person willing to take it, or the cheapest person rather than the right person for the job. There’s also been a failure to make it any kind of mainstream business activity; it’s just one of those bolt-on tasks where somebody in the HR or Estates Department is told they’re going to be the travel plan co-ordinator. This is still happening and people only do it because they’ve been told to do it and unless they’re bought in to it, they’re not going to be able to sell it to their staff”.*

## **Summary of Views**

**Barriers to travel plans included lack of leadership from national and local government and from within organisations; opposition from within the transport profession; resistance from within organisations to travel plans; and perhaps tying all these threads together – a lack of evidence as to the effectiveness of travel plans in meeting their objectives.**

**There is a need to communicate travel plans effectively.**

**There is an overall lack of travel planning expertise. With the majority of travel planners, quite often a single person at a low level within the organisation.**

**There is a need within the organisation to convince senior management of the merits of travel plans.**

**There would appear to be an ignorance of the benefits of travel plans which acts as a barrier to their take up.**

**The tick box approach to travel plans within organisations can often give the impression that a travel plan has been successfully enacted.**

**A travel plan can often be seen as a ‘bolt-on’ task co-ordinated by someone in the HR or Estates Department.**

#### **4. The role of central and local government in overcoming the barriers to the take up of travel plans**

Reactions to the role of national and local Government in overcoming barriers was mixed. On the one hand, the role of central Government was described as being crucial in terms of 'persuading' local authorities that travel plans are a good thing through:

*"policy and the direction it gives, and the way it reinforces it, through different messages, whether its guidance, or through performance measurement, or through its Local Transport Plans".*

In particular:

*"National Government has been fairly good at providing guidance and working towards best practice in this sort of area", while the "bursary posts for schools for funding, sent out a really good message", as were other schemes to finance "more officer time to assist with giving grants; capital investment very clearly for schools; and Safe Routes to School."*

PPG13 was seen as *"the strongest anchor"* to connect the idea of mandatory travel plans within the planning system. Similarly, *"the attitude of local government is crucial, as to whether [travel plans] are delivered or not, within the local area."*

On the other hand, a degree of frustration was expressed that problems remain. The general view is summarised thus:

*"I have always felt that [the DfT's] efforts to take [travel plans] forward were half cocked, because it was just something they felt they should do. It wasn't something that they fundamentally believed in and the people making the policy decisions couldn't understand the practitioners on the ground. I don't think that there was a mix of people up top making these decisions, or thinking about how to transfer this across an organisation to the public. No-one saw how this was going to happen on the ground."* Such ad hoc decisions are also problematic at the local level.

Thus, *"it was all well and good PPG13 coming out, but unless there was training for Development Control planners to tell them where to integrate travel plans into their overall processes, or within teams such as sustainable, environment, recycling, and procurement, there wasn't any understanding apart from, oh, we'll put a green travel plan on it."*

Interviewees commented that travel plans have been seen as being a *"bolt-on"*, or *"something you had the ability to put in through planning permission, but apart from that?"* On the same lines, the view was expressed that local authorities have addressed some (but not nearly enough) of the barriers, but *"travel plans are still not part of the overall transport culture"* and so *"why should companies have to do anything about it?"*

One respondent voiced concern that *"there are some District Councils who are planning authorities and who therefore secure travel plans in the planning process who don't have their own travel plans. This is very hypocritical and sets a bad example"*.

#### **Summary of Views**

**The performance of national and local government in overcoming these travel plan barriers has been mixed. On the one hand Government is praised for the planning powers, policy documents, guidance, research and provision of bursary posts. On the other it is criticised for the ad hoc way in which policy has developed and the lack of integration between travel plans and the rest of transport and planning policy.**

**Some District Councils do not appear to have their own travel plans.**

## 5. The performance of travel plans to date

In terms of meeting various policy goals, the general view was that travel plans can potentially deliver significant benefits. *"I think there is quite a lot of evidence by now that travel plans can deliver mode shift to the tune of 15%, 10-25% reduction in car trips to work, they can deliver that. In terms of relieving parking issues and in terms of less congestion at site, there is evidence that you can 'nobble' business mileage and you can find a few examples that you find where staff has cut down on their business travel because of particular policies."*

Regarding more specific objectives, such as improving access to work, it was stated by one respondent that *"the [travel plans] that I have actually worked on that have been site specific, tailored to the needs of the organisation, provided real positive and 100% usable, car alternatives, like a pick-up from the local station; and good cycle facilities."* The respondent continued by stating that, *"I [also] think they have achieved social goals, as much as, or more than improving access to work."* Similar confidence was expressed in travel plans being appropriate for mitigating congestion – *"on reducing congestion, a small reduction in traffic, normally has a very big reduction in congestion; at peak times, with a workplace travel plan; for example; a road even 99% full-flows, a road 101% full-log jam"* – and for meeting environmental goals. *"Where you have got a reduction in traffic, you have got a contribution to the local environment, many travel plans falter having got to that position, and they even go and rent extra spaces elsewhere and everything else."*

However, the underlying view expressed is that travel plans have not achieved anywhere near their full potential beyond a few exemplary cases. This is characterised by the following responses:

*"I think to be honest [the performance of travel plans] has been poor overall. There are certain cases that stand out; some good examples, but in terms of their potential; basically very poor."*

*"I don't think they have delivered what they could. I think some have performed a lot better than others, some are paying lip service to performing and have got lots of things, but not really material things that are going to make a difference; I think that has been evident."*

*"if bus lanes and cycle tracks, shared spaces, and better pedestrian footpaths have come as a result of a travel plan then wonderful, but to be honest it is often unclear how much these would have occurred even without a travel plan"*.

When quizzed as to why this was the case, the interviewees suggested:

*"there hasn't been a very big take up, apart from schools which have had to adopt travel plans and the perception is that travel plans are merely green wash and there is not really the belief that travel plans can help make a real difference to the network"*.

*"I think though that they can, and there are some that have; in terms of local government, environmental goals, congestion, all of those things can be achieved, and some have but relatively few."*

Concern was expressed about the longevity or sustainability of travel plans:

*"The thing that I feel rather perturbed about is that some of the plans that are out there, are clearly not as secure as we would like them to be. There are a disconcerting number of [organisations that were previously best practice examples] that say; 'we have had restructuring', 'we have had a change of management'; 'we haven't got a budget for a travel plan'. To me that brings to the fore the issue of centralisation; to me the delivery of travel plans should be dynamic; not just a reaction, which if you let go, can go backwards if you are not careful."*

Another line of response was that:

*"I think uptake levels are as good as they could have been .... Generally as an LTP indicator, local authorities focus on the number of travel plans that have been secured and they don't focus on the modal shift that has been achieved as a result of that investment. I guess that also relates to the fact that it is quite a new area of work and inevitably output indicators were more prevalent when travel plans were being formed rather than outcome indicators. I do think that's a real challenge for local authorities: moving away from output indicators and getting a better sense of what the investment has actually achieved on the ground."*

In addition it was stated that travel plans can only perform well if there are complementary measures in place:

*"Their performance depends on other things. With the best will in the world if there isn't a decent bus transport service in the area, the impact will be limited. Some travel plans are better than others in the way they're implemented or resourced"*.

To summarise, there is a feeling that things are now being "retrofitted", after ten years of "firing ahead with our heads down" to do all of these things that we've wanted to do. Only now are we "starting to ask the questions that we should have asked at the beginning". "Nine years ago, I wish someone had said stop! Let's get the battle plan ready, let's fortify ourselves, let's get the most solid foundation, let's approach this correctly. Instead, there was been a haphazard approach".

*"If you think about the individuals who are taking this particular area of work forward; their energy, ebullience, their almost evangelical approach, it has not been targeted 100% towards a particular goal. Travel plans have never had a particular goal, because they just cover a million different things. Because no-one's ever really understood what the outcome of a travel plan is supposed to be, I don't think anyone has ever understood what they are working towards. We have been haphazard from the very beginning, we have wasted so much energy."*

A view which would appear to sum up travel plans in the opinion of the interviewees is that:

*"There is enough experience to show that travel plans can perform well and can address all those goals, but in most situations they don't. So it's a measure with great potential and little actual achievement"*.

### **Summary of Views**

**Travel plans have so far not achieved anywhere near their full potential beyond a few exemplary cases. There are particular concerns over the low level of take up, the development of ineffective travel plans designed only to satisfy planning requirements and over the long term sustainability of those effective plans that do exist.**

**A challenge for local authorities is to move away from output indicators and to get a better understanding as to what is being actually achieved.**

### ***Travel Plans Currently***

This section of the Report seeks to ascertain from the interviewees the perceived current state of travel plans, the current motivations and barriers to implementation, and the role of central and local government.

## **6. The current state of travel plans**

In terms of travel plans and the current state of play the response was mixed.

### ***Positive***

One interviewee was “excited”, feeling they were “at the birth of something” and was “optimistic” as stakeholders [ACT and the profession] were finally “getting our act together”. It was also felt that “the conditions are right to nurture everything that travel planning is trying to achieve”, and that there are “more and more companies who want to take up a travel plan [in order to deliver] tangible real benefits”.

A second view was still broadly positive, but with wariness that things could go in one of two directions:

*“I think the sheer number [of travel plans] is the driver, and it’s more than we think by now. But the thing is; how many of those plans are still on the shelf, and how many have been actually implemented, how many will we be pointing at in a few months time; or a few years? So I think travel plans are coming into the mainstream, but that we are reaching a stage where travel plans can [either] be devalued, or used to their full potential. I think there are two trajectories they could take.”*

It is suggested that for travel plans to reach their full potential, then expectations among the very best need to be raised far higher, so that the 15% reduction in car use figure does not become a maximum that suggests a reasonable travel plan can “dribble along at 5%”. For this to occur, the respondent re-emphasises the importance of lock-in mechanisms, and adds that perhaps “a travel plan super-league” be established where members have achieved cuts in car use of say double the median 15% to give “companies something to go for”.

One respondent stated that “strategically I would say I think they’re holding their own. There are questions being asked about how effective they are, and from within there are people fighting the cause and saying yes they are having an effect”.

### **Mixed**

One other respondent was neither positive about travel plans currently, nor negative:

*“I suppose I classify [travel planning] in my mind as reaching adolescence. I’m not being either pessimistic or optimistic, but I’m acknowledging that something new like this has a path of evolution to go through. It is progressing through some stages, but not as quickly as some of us in the industry would like.”*

Getting the message across was perceived to be taking some time “I think they are still quite specialist in terms of what they are. There are a lot of questions and there is still a misunderstanding as to what they are. I keep having to explain them, I don’t mind that, but its taking a long time to get that message over. But I think its getting better and clearer, more people are getting to know about them”.

### **Negative**

One interviewee was firstly concerned that “too many [travel plans] are formulaic, because they’re ticking off lists now rather than seeing what each individual one can contribute”. Second, “local authorities still have not developed effective travel plans in most cases, [yet have] still got a load of perverse subsidies; free parking, or their equivalent benefit, and that is the same with a lot of company travel plans”.

A more pessimistic view outlines that the situation is:

*“Very patchy in a whole series of ways”, such that “lots of authorities aren’t really doing very much, while those that are doing work are doing it to varying degrees of effectiveness. Very few [authorities] are really starting to motor with [travel plans]. These include Birmingham, Surrey, Poole, Sheffield, and Hampshire. Hampshire was starting to really move forward, but then the [key] person has moved on. One of the things about travel plans, is it depends on the person, a manager; if that person leaves, who is key; it becomes very vulnerable, it moves down the agenda, it is not mainstream by and large, it is very personality and interest based.”*

One reason expressed for such a wide range of perceptions was the lack of monitoring data being collected on travel plans. Although there was a view that this is now starting to change as consultants begin to recognise that organisations need convincing evidence to adopt a travel plan, this is not yet widespread.

*"I think what's lacking is a real sort of co-ordinated collection of evidence as to how well individual travel plans are performing and how well local authorities are doing in that area."*

*"My view is that what local authorities said they were going to do, is not the same as what they are actually doing."* Supporting this take:

*"We have struggled to get good cases. In theory lots of authorities are doing lots of travel plans, but when you ask them for information very few have actually got a monitoring system, they don't know how many travel plans they have got, how many Section 106's they have set up or are being implemented. They have no recording system, or any aspects of it. Virtually all the authorities have no consistent benchmarking information about their travel plans. Depressing, even with those that are furthest ahead."*

One response was to say that now is the time to do something more radical *"after all this investment, to tackle this properly and tie it into some bigger picture"*.

Another response was that travel plans have lost their way with *"travel plans remaining in a facilities/estates ghetto and while they are there, they don't link to how a travel plan can help marketing and how it can help human resources, in terms of reduced absenteeism and in terms of staff recruitment. It remains in the ghetto because travel plans don't make an organisational link. That is the key barrier, that they aren't embedded within organisations"*.

### **Summary of Views**

**Overall, there are grounds for optimism but also serious reservations about how travel plans are progressing. Travel plans appear to be at something of a watershed in need of new impetus and strategic direction.**

**The conditions would appear to be right for the nurturing of travel plans.**

**Travel plans would appear to be formulaic to often relying on ticking off lists.**

**There appears to be a lack of monitoring data collected on travel plans.**

**There is a perception that travel plans remain in an estates department 'ghetto'.**

## **7. The current motivations for travel plans**

Regarding core motivations for undertaking travel plans currently, the feeling from the interviewees is that *"It's still the planning thing, but now corporate and social motivations are coming into it as well"*.

*"It is fair to say that for certain segments of companies the broader corporate social responsibility agenda of climate change has provided a driver which does impact at board level, which changes the nature of discussions that you can have."*

*"I think over the last couple of years; there was a very clear shift towards potential efficiency savings and the financial benefits of travel plans but in the last six months it is now back to the environmental motivations. The whole carbon planning agenda now has a national profile linked to a whole range of things... Certainly the projects I've been involved in are more responsive to travel planning because that carbon footprint reduction to an organisation is now important. Lights are going on about it in businesses minds."*

*"I suppose it's the carbon footprint angle."*

In saying this there is still the view that *"I don't think people have really cottoned on to dealing with pollution."* There was a view that new drivers for travel plans have arisen in specific locations. For example, in Sheffield travel plans can be seen as a means of addressing social exclusion while Islington is using them to mitigate overloading on the public transport network.

On the role of Government in motivating organisations, this is felt to have *"increased marginally, and while it's still not strong enough to make [travel plans] work, it is still stronger than when we first started"*. One change that was considered helpful would be to raise the profile of travel plans within the Local Transport Plan system *"like it has done with School Travel Plans, whereby every school by 'x' year has to have a travel plan"*. Perceived more positively has been the role of the Highways Agency in refusing to increase capacity on the highway network, instead *"pushing travel plans in a way they have never done before"*.

*"That is a real shift, and what we now need is not for just the Agency to do that, but for all the Highway Authorities, who still have not made that shift. Until the local highway/transport authorities [i.e. county and unitary councils], as well as the Highways Agency, make that shift, you won't get the local authorities making that shift. I think you are going to go through an uncomfortable time while they make that change."*

An angle expressed in terms of core motivation relates to the recruitment and retention of staff and the role that a travel plan can play. One respondent stated that:

*"With competition out there for jobs and recruiting people, a lot of companies are in a competitive labour market, flexible working, home working and work/life balance are one element of [the motivation for] travel plans, because flexible working reduces peak hour travel and working at home reduces overall travel. So I think more and more organisations are doing flexible working and home working maybe not realising the travel effects, certainly not doing it within a travel plan, but they're doing those practices in order to attract people and recruit them, and keep them and that's definitely been proved, you get more productive staff, better people and a better image. So I think the cost of recruiting and retaining staff, is an important motivation for at least adopting flexible working and home working which can be part of travel plans"*.

*"We just need to go one stage further and say; look travel plans can help you attract more staff as a whole, offering more travel choices, and widening your catchment area. Some are motivated by that, but I don't think many companies realise that, some are just fixed on the flexible working motivation"*.

### **Summary of Views**

**Securing planning permission is still the dominant reason for travel plans being drawn up. As to voluntary motivations, these have focused on improving economic competitiveness, enhancing CSR profiles and most recently on minimising carbon footprints.**

**Recruitment and retention of staff is another major business concern at present, although at the moment the link to travel plans is often not being made within organisations.**

**New drivers for travel plans are appearing such as for dealing with social exclusion and to mitigate overloading of public transport.**

## **8. Current barriers to implementation**

The interviewees highlighted a number of barriers to the take up of travel plans currently.

### **Lack of strategic thinking**

It was stated that *“there is a lack of strategic thinking as to where travel planning fits in to a local authorities planning tools that they are using. To be honest I think it is just giving lip service in the main.”* Instead, *“activity is very ad hoc, and insufficient basically for what’s required.”*

### **Lack of leadership**

Interviewees comments suggest that there is perceived to be a lack of leadership in terms of travel plans. *“The advocacy role that you would expect from DfT has not really been as strong as it could be. Despite all the best practice guidance and documentation that has been produced there is no real engagement between national and local government to help make this more of a mainstream activity. It feels like there is more scope to provide national credibility.”*

*“I always find that when I go and talk to a Travel Plan Co-ordinator, you can tell almost as soon as you walk in the door whether their site is going to be successful or not because they’re really dynamic people. You go to other sites and sit in a planning committee or planning room and get bogged down in the dullness of it all. Others just spark immediately. Trying to encapsulate that in guidance is very, very difficult but it’s certainly a barrier... We went to xxxx and looked at their car sharing scheme and the people who were running the scheme weren’t technical people, they didn’t have travel plan training but the stuff they were doing was fantastic. They were brainstorming, going out talking to staff, dropping on desks with a cup of coffee asking how people travel to work and if they’d thought about car sharing, talking about financial savings and helping people to make those important choices”.*

In terms of the experience of travel plan co-ordinators it was stated that:

*“Travel plan co-ordinators are quite junior positions; they’re fresh out of university without any grounding in transport planning or environmental management, doing it because they saw an advert that appealed. They do it for one or two years and then move on. So the more that we can do in terms of career programmes the better”.*

It was also stated that:

*“We wouldn’t find, for example, a Road Safety Officer with a part-time or junior role and I think there’s a need to somehow change that culture in travel planning up to the same standard”.*

### **Lack of resources**

Lack of resources was commented on as being a barrier that *“comes up time and time again”* The view was also expressed that *“unless it is as part of some assessment process; [travel planning] will go on the back burner because local authorities deal with what is on their radar”* and allocate resources accordingly. *“This is why school travel plans have gone up and are really motoring, [although] whether they are effective is another matter, whereas other [travel plans] aren’t. There is still this issue about that.”*

*“Capital and revenue funding is a barrier. Whether that comes through local authority support or internal pots within businesses I think is uncertain but either way, you can’t do travel plans unless you invest in them properly. Trying to do them on the cheap, through a tick-box approach or whatever, means its almost worse than not doing them at all in some respects. You sap a lot of energy and resource without really achieving anything. You’re paying lip service to it”.*

### **Lack of evidence**

A recurring theme amongst the interviewees is the lack of evidence:

*"It all comes back to the evidence because if you have the evidence that these things work, you can start to argue the case. At the moment it's difficult because you're arguing on the basis of "this seems to be a good idea... even though we've got 1000's of travel plans that have gone through the process".*

### ***Inadequate monitoring and enforcement***

The view was expressed that little monitoring or enforcement occurs. *"No-one takes you seriously through planning process to develop travel plans, because at the end of the day, they know there is no-one there to actually enforce this."* And, *"there is still this lack of monitoring of impact,"* which is not helped by a perceived lack of examples, a *"lack of progress from all authorities, at all levels,"* and consequently *"still this lack of consistent evidence."*

*"Another barrier is local authority resources, particularly Enforcement Officers. I feel that we're in a bit of a mess really, we've had all of this activity and travel plans have been secured, but I can't put my hands on any enforcement actions against businesses when they've had a condition of the planning application".*

### ***The travel plan product***

The travel plan 'product' itself was perceived to be a problem. It was considered that to be attractive, travel plans need to offer a practical alternative to the car and yet this is often difficult for local authorities to guarantee because they must rely on public transport operators which may not be *"on board"*. One interviewee expressed this problem as follows: :

*"We are dealing with a really shoddy tool. We are trying to sell a package of measures based on second rate ingredients. [We] are trying to sell a product, but it is like trying to sell a Mr Kipling cake next to a lovely organic fruit cake or something. We're using hydrogenated fats, we're using poorly refined sugars, we are not producing the quality products to work with, our public transport system is not viewed as great, (although to be honest I think we have come on in leaps and bounds in terms of quality). Yet people's perceptions are changeable. That misconception about public transport is such a barrier.*

### **Summary of Views**

**A range of barriers still remain, all of them strongly interrelated.**

**There is perceived to be a lack of strategic direction and a lack of leadership in taking travel plans forward.**

**There is insufficient monitoring and enforcement, a reluctance by organisations to commit to travel plans and finally a feeling that the travel plan product is often not fit for purpose.**

**Travel plan co-ordinators are often junior positions without grounding in transport planning issues.**

**There would appear to be a lack of evidence as to the success of travel plans. This makes it difficult to convince senior management.**

## **9. The current role of government in overcoming the barriers to travel plan take up**

Interviewees' opinions are mixed with respect to the current role of Government in removing the barriers to travel plan take up.

### ***Optimistic view***

From the optimist was the view that national and local government is *“being more proactive, the benefits over the last eight years, have been realised, and it is now seeing [travel plans] as a cure-all to the problems it is facing - congestion, social exclusion overdevelopment, under provision of parking spaces, climate change and hitting air quality targets”*. In addition:

*“Travel plans transcend so many different agendas. As a travel planner I could sit on about twelve different boards, and still represent my agenda because it covers so many huge politically significant areas: ‘oh, I get stuck in traffic, the bus is late, I’ve been knocked off my bike, I can never find a parking space, I can’t develop anywhere!’. So, travel plan, travel plan, travel plan, there you go.”*

### **Pessimistic view**

On a more pessimistic note there was a view that some resources have been applied to travel plans, such that in *“most [local authority] offices now you can find somebody who is at least covering that brief”*. The degree of travel plan activity however, is only seen to be moderate. *“There is still this mandatory role in development control of travel plans associated with planning applications for local authorities now, but there is a difference of opinion as to the extent that local authorities believe it’s their role to promote and support voluntary travel plans as a tool. Hampshire County Council is the only one that I have seen preparing a strategic document on Smarter Choices; a statement of intent about what they would like to happen, regarding whether it is actually happening, is another matter, as part of their local transport plan.”*

For the next step, leadership by the DfT is seen as being key. *“I think the role that both central and local government can take is by mainstreaming [travel plans] now, and taking them seriously. I want to be able to say to organisations ‘well, oh sorry, but the DfT is pushing this forward, and they have committed themselves to travel plans and it’s not a flash in the pan, they firmly believe in this. [At the moment] I sometimes feel I am standing behind some very shaky people who at the first thing will bolt.”* In concurrence, *“leadership is key, and leadership from the top, and not just lip service. It has got to come from politicians, from central government, down through local government. There is a very effective lady in the Department for Transport, but it has got to come from the Secretary-of-State as well.”*

One respondent stated that: *“Its rather a feeble role at the moment, it just needs a high profile, travel plans have been around for nearly 12 years now, but I’m not convinced that everyone understands them or knows about them”*. An point of view expressed was that travel plans are still seen as an appendage to the main body of activity of a company such that:

*“Local and central governments still assume that travel plans are a facilities function and they relate to it all in terms of that. That means that you’re burying more and more in the ghetto. I think they need to see travel plans as linking in to economic development, getting Economic Development Officers on board in terms of implementing travel plans, but I’ve never seen an Economic Development Officer even mention travel plans. That’s the side of firms you need to build with. That problem has been overcome with schools and that’s probably why schools are a big area of travel plans, and that’s the way that resources have been released, because it all links in to the health agenda and the responsibilities that have been core responsibilities of schools all the way along. Schools have always had a safety responsibility for pupils, providing safety training, bike training and all that. Transport has been there as a core responsibility for schools – transport for their pupils. It’s never been a core responsibility for firms, employers apart from providing car parks. Organisationally it relates much more closely to schools, plus the money being thrown in because of the “Jamie Oliver effect,” links in to the health side and in to the curriculum, which is their core activity. So there’s so many links to core activities for schools and so few links to core activities for employers so I think it’s organisational barriers and that central and local governments haven’t actually twigged that and for employees they’re burying deeper in to the facilities ghetto whereas with schools there never was this thing. If you look at the travel advice for schools they just mention “oh and by the way you might involve your estates manager as well” but all of it is about how you build it in to the curriculum and how you make links to parents and teachers and governors. That’s all*

*taken for granted, but that side of things is hardly there for the employers, and I think that relates to how central and local government works”.*

## **Summary of Views**

**Travel plans continue to move forward with many local authorities now employing some form of travel plan officer. Progress though is slow.**

**There is now a need for travel plans to become more mainstream – for them to be integrated across not only transport and planning departments, but beyond.**

## **10. The current perception of the working of travel plans**

Overall there would appear to be a level of uncertainty amongst interviewees as to how travel plans are currently working – *“there probably is a shift in effectiveness, but it’s difficult to really get a handle on it”.*

As to the ‘direction of travel’, the theme seemed to be that things are slowly improving but there is a risk of ‘slippage’. One interviewee noted that things are *“getting better”*, but *“it is still a long way from where it needs to be, at all levels, in terms of its effectiveness”*. Although *“a lot of the words are there, and the aspirations of most organisations that are doing these things are certainly worthy, it’s not being achieved on the ground. The activities aren’t matching the aspirations, consequently the objectives aren’t being achieved as they should be”*.

Meanwhile a second respondent had concerns that even where companies were doing well before that *“you find that if you phone them up now, they say; ‘travel planning-what is that’, which I find quite sad, because other companies which you ask have been sustaining these for ten years.”* Equally, it was stated that:

*“From my perspective it seems to me that we are going backwards”*. That said, *“there is now a degree of maturity as a discipline”*. He asks *“where are we going to end up? Is it where all companies are sustainable, and [travel plans are] taken for granted and rolled on, or will they just come to the end of a Section 106 agreement and then shut the plan down, and build more car parks and what have you?”*. One other expert shares these concerns, and worries that travel plans still are not working very well because of the barriers mentioned previously.

One view was that the current working of travel plans is mixed, being good at the school level but ‘iffy’ elsewhere.

*“It’s working reasonably well in schools, probably there’s still more depth to go into but it’s on a school’s agenda whereas it’s not on an employers agenda. Certainly only right on the edge of leisure and leisure travel plans. I think we’re getting travel plans rolling out to different areas: workplace, school, leisure – personalised travel planning is now very much coming on the agenda. So there seems to be this thing of increasing the number of travel plans but perhaps without increasing the quality, schools have got quite good quality but all the others are hesitating and that links it to these goals”*.

The *“tip of the iceberg”* was one point of view put forward.

*“There are more and more travel plans as time goes on, compared with the past it’s an improving situation, but I still think it’s only the tip of the iceberg, we haven’t got enough that have been going for long enough, because they are a long term process, because you’re trying to change people’s behaviour, I haven’t heard lately of any travel plans doing wonderful things, I hear of more people doing them, but doing them, agreeing them, implementing and monitoring them is another thing and that’s years away, there’s been a bit of a change from the past but I don’t think that it’s been significant, there’s still a very low base number, so I don’t think there’s been much effect”*.

However, there are also some positives identified. Thus, there are a growing number of organisations such as charities and trade unions now thinking about how travel plans could improve conditions for their beneficiaries/ members, while new approaches to changing people's attitudes to the travel plan message are being tested. Travel plans are "a *project management strategy*", which aim to persuade the target people of the personal benefits to them of reducing car use.

In saying this, a view held was that there needs to be a systematic approach to categorising best practice in terms of travel plans:

*"It might be that you can categorise them in to broad types of industry and we just haven't done that today, we tend to lump them all in to a best practice guise. If you have a call centre for example, their travel plan will be very different to another business in the same way that financial services tend to have stricter working hours, they'll be regulated 9.00-5.30 whereas the manufacturing world might be very different. I have a sense that having an understanding of the discrete, different business sectors and the tools that are effective in each of those would be quite helpful, but I don't underestimate the task of achieving it because it's very, very difficult to get hold of even a small amount of evidence in any one of those sectors. So by disaggregating them, you're losing the ability to pool the level of achievement".*

### **Summary of Views**

**There is a feeling of slow progress being made, but also that any gains made are vulnerable to being reversed.**

## **11. Have travel plans reached their full potential?**

On the question of travel plans having met their full potential, the representative answer is "no, not at all; anything but, but there is a lot more potential out there."

One statement sums this up:

*"I would say no because they haven't been applied everywhere that they could be, and again that comes down to awareness of the issue, understanding what it is, what the impact could be, how it can be applied, understanding how the finances can be applied, what the structure is, there's still a lot of work to be done in all those areas to boost their spread/effectiveness of them".*

In addition:

*"We haven't reached our European neighbours yet, not to their higher figures, for cycle use, and so on." Breaking this down, there was a feeling that "the number of travel plans out there has massively increased, certainly in the ten years that I have been involved in it", but that "there has not been the proportionate increase in quality and the extent to the objectives being met". On similar lines, "there is a lot of scope for better travel plans, there is a lot of scope for more travel plans to be done; there is the scope for actually making them increasingly effective over time; and for reviewing them (which is not really done) to make them continually fit for purpose." There are also probably benefits in "making them more integrated".*

*"No, not by a long way ... I would still say we have a long way to go".*

*"Definitely not! I do think there are some fantastic progressive sites out there that have achieved a great deal, but it is very much the minority. I do think that those that have been successful haven't articulated their outcomes in a way that is compelling enough to others, and that isn't a criticism of those sites, it's just a matter of fact that they're dealing with their on site, that's what's of interest to them, they're dealing with their problem and almost think "well why should we necessarily sell that to others?" If you work for xxxx where your job is to*

*overcome a significant parking issue and you're successful in it then where's the motivation for going out and joining ACT or going to the DfT seminars and telling everybody about it? It's just another burden that you might consider placed on your job role. Whilst some individuals are happy to do that and go out and look for that opportunity, others aren't driven in that way, they're driven by their achievements on the ground. This probably means we need to be bolder and stronger in getting hold of these people and what they've achieved and almost selling it on their behalf, so that we can understand collectively how they've done it and what they've achieved".*

As to the reasons why travel plans have not yet met their potential, the lack of monitoring (much less systematic), the lack of enforcement, the increased number (and variable quality) of consultants adopting a standardised "sausage machine" approach to travel planning were seen by the interviewees as being especially problematic.

One respondent stated that the reason related to bringing all the actors together' in that "because you haven't actually got a process of implementing travel plans that brings all the actors on board. You're trying to implement travel plans with a rather traditional transport planning process, which links to this being a dispersed measure that requires the voluntary buy-in to work and what you're getting is a lot of stick for the involuntary buy-in and probably putting back some more in that".

Accreditation was put forward as a means of achieving travel plan potential in that, "It needs much wider coverage, you need good quality ones, that raises the question of do you need some sort of accreditation scheme? You do in other areas of activity, you do in investment in people, and you have ISO 14001 for environmental management. What do you have for travel plans? ... You want some sort of national award scheme if you like, to measure the quality of them, and you just need more of them, they do have potential".

One other fear expressed is of "nominal travel plans which just sit on the shelf and are not doing anything". The same interviewee definitely "does not subscribe to the view that some people would very dearly like to have, which is that a sort of corporate government 'lovey' will deliver the benefits that we want to get from travel planning". Instead, he suspects that there is a correlation between well enforced travel plans, with well performing travel plans and strong relationships between local authorities and organisations with travel plans. That said, he emphasises that developing travel plans should be "an assisted and cooperative process".

Looking to the future, one view was that the ideal was a situation where the transport system became so good that travel plans will become "obsolete" and so "cease to exist".

### **Summary of Views**

**Travel plans are still far from reaching their full potential. Much more could be done in terms of increasing the effectiveness of travel plans by raising awareness among organisations, enhancing their attractiveness to organisations, and by improving their outcomes through better design, monitoring and enforcement.**

### ***Travel Plans in the Future***

This section seeks to examine how travel plans are likely to develop in general over the next five to ten years. It also explores what are likely to be the future barriers to take up, what support local and national government should give in encouraging organisations to develop travel plans, the role of other organisations and finally, whether the concept of travel plans is in fact a useful one.

## **12. The development of travel plans over the next five/ten years**

Looking to the future, a number of views were expressed as to how the travel plan idea might develop over the next five to ten years.

### **More travel plans but less effective**

There was generally a fear expressed by interviewees that while there may be more travel plans being written, these may not actually be very effective. *“There are going to be heaps more [travel plans required through the planning process] coming through because of the general number of developments; but I suppose it doesn’t necessarily mean the quality of all those travel plans will get better unless there is some kind of monitoring.”* It was added *“I suppose my biggest concern is that the delivery and implementation will become very ad hoc and messy. On the face of it an awful lot of travel plan activity will be happening, but the benefits that are actually being made by those organisations will not be as great as the quantity of activity would suggest.”*

This is supported by another expert. *“I’m not confident that [the move towards adding] travel plans to a common database of tricks/ standards is helpful in all cases, because it can then become a tick off list for getting planning permission. It [just] makes it simpler to process, rather than more effective”.*

Development was also seen to be a function of national support in that: *“I can’t see that the future will be any different to the current unless there’s a significant change in, probably, national support. I think at the local authority level; certainly my experience of working with lots of local authorities is that they are driven by what’s happening nationally, generally in policy terms”.*

On the voluntary side of things, while *“travel planning could be seen more as a carbon reduction tool”* and so *“will continue to increase”* (in terms of the number implemented), *“I don’t think the massive increase in voluntary plans as expected over the next 3-5 years will necessarily materialise.”*

The environmental aspect was put forward by another respondent in that: *“I think people are starting to recognise their value, and with people thinking about health as more important”.*

One respondent was of the opinion that road pricing is still ten years away and as such travel plans still had an important role to play:

*“I still think road pricing is ten years away, I think its still inducement, spreading best practice and persuading other people to adopt them, and the planning regulations”.*

### **Policy champions**

The role of a political champion was put forward as significant in terms of how travel plans would develop.

*“At the moment, London’s been successful because it has a very unique characteristic in that it has an elected mayor who has the powers and the right to do it, and the resources and a mandate. And he’s politically bold enough to take on the challenge of some of the most difficult issues. That’s very similar to our European partners where similar situations arise. The tram in Strasbourg would not have been delivered unless they had a very pioneering mayor who said “I know this is contentious, but we have four lanes of traffic on every arterial in to this historic city and we have to do something about it.” Doing something about it means being quite bold and challenging, and delivering something that does limit car use in a city centre”.*

### **Travel plans should be compulsory**

One view expressed was that travel plans should become compulsory.

*“I’d like to see them making them compulsory, employers with over 100 employees to have a travel plan by a certain date, to get serious you could provide a tax incentive, improve the tax regime, you know the 20p mileage allowance for cycles, its been stuck at that for years, why*

*not just put that up every year with inflation, that's not going to break the bank, and there are other things I'm sure you could do to encourage travel planning".*

### **More resources needed**

Coupled to that is seen to be the need to increase local authority staffing in the area of travel plans. *"Local authority staffing, I would like to see that dramatically increased, local authorities struggle with planners, transport planners, all sorts of people, lots of professions, you know we're short of architects, we've got a good economy, we're importing people, doctors, we're a healthy nation, but we haven't got all the people we need and I think local authorities do struggle because the private sector can pay more".*

One hope was that travel plans as currently thought of *"will become almost obsolete"* and be transformed rather into *"accessibility strategies"* whereby people will be provided with the mechanisms necessary to travel *"in a way that they would like to"* and in a way that sees non-car modes being more prominent. *"I think the travel plan mechanism as a sales document will become not as fundamentally important. It will just be about sites having accessibility for all and [the process] will be more about [influencing] behaviour and attitude."*

### **Summary of Views**

**The general view is that without significant intervention by National Government, while the number of travel plans will probably steadily increase, their effectiveness may well diminish due to increased standardisation.**

**Local authorities are driven by what is happening nationally in terms of policy.**

**A political champion would seem to be significant in terms of the development of travel plans.**

**Making travel plans compulsory for certain company size was a view expressed.**

**There appears to be a need for an increase in local authority staffing in the area of travel plans.**

## **13. The future barriers to the take up of travel plans**

Regarding future barriers to travel plans take-up, several of the points mentioned previously are also mentioned with the future in mind. In particular, the lack of clear direction and leadership; and various organisational issues.

### **Direction and leadership**

*"If there are clear messages coming out [from Government] about funding, policy, wanting to achieve a certain standard of service provision if you like, in travel planning, the rate of change would be much better if the message was much clearer."*

*"There is a cultural barrier and local authorities are focusing on other things on the agenda at the moment. That is because they will focus on where the government tells them to focus. Unless this sort of issue gets involved into mainstream activity in terms of transport and planning it won't happen or there will be a lot of what I call green wash. That is, [local councils] might carry on ticking boxes, but it might not make any real difference."*

Related to these points, *"another future barrier, not that I like to think it, is that local or central government will renege on their original commitments to this [travel planning] and [will say that travel planning] doesn't work, that we're not getting results"* and hence drop the travel plan concept. *"Just because [Government] hasn't given it its full attention or correct funding."*

In addition there was seen to be a need to get *“away from that black box, or tick box approach to something where you have skilled experts who can go in to a business, work within that business and help to make sure that the travel plan delivers what it’s trying to achieve”*. This could be addressed by improved training and staff retention of travel plan coordinators, which was also seen as a potential barrier. *“The work in promoting travel planning in any way, whether it’s dedicated courses or fitting in travel planning in broader transport planning qualification has got to be good news in terms of growing the understanding and the subtleties and complexities of the process”*.

One potential threat mentioned is *“a danger that there could be too many organisations involved in taking the agenda forward.”* This *“could lead to confusion”* in terms of where organisations could go for advice on adopting a travel plan. Furthermore, *“I don’t see there being any desire from DfT to avoid this messy industry from actually transpiring”*.

### **Organisational issues**

Organisation-focused issues were also mentioned. For example, the culture for some companies still to reward employees with company cars, and the success if the motorist lobby in somehow persuading people and Government not to take any measures that would discriminate against car users. This is despite the facts that *“from a psychology point of view, half of the motorists would rather not be driving”* and that *“nobody is a motorist all the time”*.

Lack of senior management level support is also mentioned as a barrier and has in fact been a recurring theme. *“You don’t find many businesses where the Chief Executive or a key Director will stand up and say; ‘yeah I’m doing this as well and I’m travelling sustainably or I’m cycling to work.’ The ones that I’ve worked with where they have done that, there’s clearly been a greater degree of success, but they’re very few and far between”*.

Moreover, there is also the ‘tragedy of the commons’ and ‘free rider’ problem. This means that the view from some people that *“I would do this [not use the car so much] if I was just given a kick up the bum”*, feel that *“if this is so important, why isn’t the government forcing us to do this?”* In other words, individuals (as well as businesses) are aware that if they cut their car use, then without the existence of lock in mechanisms *“others who are not so socially conscious will fill up the available space. They are thinking, if I have to change my behaviour, then everyone else in this group ought to have to as well.”*

### **Summary of Views**

**Travel plan policy is unclear, lacks direction and is not seen by local authorities as a Government priority.**

**There is a fear that Government will abandon travel plans if they are not seen to work.**

**The travel plan industry is seen as being ‘messy’.**

**Senior managers favour car based benefit packages for staff over travel plan measures.**

## **14. The future role of local government in encouraging organisations in their development of travel plans**

As to the future role of local government in supporting travel plans, the following aspects were identified, namely leader/coordinator, regulator/enforcer, supporter/advisor, promoter and provider.

### **Leadership and coordination**

Leadership and coordination were seen as being most important. *“I think their role is crucial. In terms of providing the policy framework and making sure that goes right through all the from regional to local levels at the planning stage, and right down to site level, in term of determining a planning application.”*

*“This role, it’s a positive one, absolutely, a role model. A recent policy critique exercise has really opened my eyes as to just what a fundamental part someone who is co-ordinating this in the local authority could take with the right holistic overview. The cumulative effect could be phenomenal”.*

*“Number one, leadership”* was stated. This is needed *“for monitoring travel plans; expected targets; information for companies as to what travel options are available”*. They could *“act as a catalyst for promotion of cycle schemes, pedestrian paths, bus routes, trains and train stations. Local authorities could do a lot to provide some joined-up thinking for these things.”*

*“The appropriate body to deal with local companies would be the local authority. We know that the role of local authorities should be both supporting and cajoling, and we need to equip them with the powers that they need to achieve that.”*

*“There needs to be a more strategic view taken by local authorities as to how they plan their travel planning activities, which parts of an authority do you target, how do you segment the market; how many bodies do you need to do it, etc, etc.”*

*“I think they [local authorities] have got a key role, without which the private sector is not going to do anything about it [travel planning]. The local authorities have got a key role in supporting networks, one of the things that lead off this, is once you get it through the planning system it needs to move on, it’s not going to be part of the planning system forever, it needs to be supported by a bunch of networks; providing those ongoing support mechanisms, and advice must be on an ongoing basis, at the moment seems to be incredibly peripheral and low key, and it needs to become a mainstream activity of the local authorities.”*

A mentoring role was mentioned by one interviewee in that:

*“I think London started to work on this with the Travel Plan Advisors, actually having a new profession whose role is midway between the development control and the users themselves, so it’s almost a mentor role, and developing a mentor role is something that local authorities find quite difficult because they don’t generally have a mentor role for transport, but you do have a mentor role for other things. You have it for your schools, you have mentor roles for health and other aspects of education so I think that resourcing your mentor role appropriately might be the role for local authorities. I think the mentor role, which can actually make the link and show how travel plans contribute to an organisation rather than just how you can fulfil local authority requirements and tick the boxes, that’s the difference. I think that is possibly the role for local authorities”.*

### **Regulation and enforcement**

The local authority was seen as being a regulator and enforcer of travel plans. Firstly, the planning legislation and guidance allowing local authorities to require developers to introduce travel plans was unanimously seen as being extremely important – despite the feeling that this *“has not really been implemented consistently”*.

*“Long may this mandatory role continue with development related activity and requirements for planning applications in relation to travel planning”.*

Secondly though, was a thought that perhaps existing organisations might be targeted too. This would not be possible through planning law – *“planning law never applies retrospectively to people”* – but perhaps could be introduced as *“a piece of outright environmental legislation”*.

### **Support and advice**

Also key is that *“local authorities, need to give help, support, and advice to local organisations, provide some sort of funding stream for measures and they must want to help organisations to deal with their transport problems. I think that it [travel planning] needs to be considered more as a customer service activity but at the moment it is not seen that way at all.”*

*“If the worst comes to the worst, it is actually about support mechanisms.*

There was a view that we need to think more carefully about the support that is offered:

*“Keep that grant support going if we can, but offer them the expertise along the way in a no holds barred way, so the person offering the expertise can just go in and work seamlessly within that organisation. Not on a 2 or 3 day a week appointments only basis, where they go in, have a meeting, draw up a travel plan then go away for two months. They’ve got to be seen to be part of it and be prepared to take the highs and the lows and not just do the nice bits, sign off the consultancy agreement and then walk away. But arranging those kinds of flexible contracts is tricky and I don’t think we’ve seen a lot of it historically. Most of it is driven by the number of days a consultant or local authority officer is allowed to work within the business. If we really want to get businesses on board, maybe we’ve got to do more than this and offer to have people in their organisation working with them”.*

### **Promotion**

It was also noted that promotion is a role that could be performed, although *“whether it is a role for local government or not, I am not sure”* notes one expert. The provider role too was suggested, yet also questioned. *“The private sector has no control or power over their local transport and it isn’t their mainstream activity, but nor does the local authority and that’s one of the problems with travel plans. While they can build walkways and cycleways – the hard infrastructure – nobody controls the public transport, one of the core elements. So the local authority only has a negotiation role which depends on getting the public transport operators to the table and to sticking to what they say (and that’s if they say anything useful because in front of their competitors they usually don’t say much).”*

Image was seen as an issue in that *“its seen as being a bit of a green evangelist or a crazy on cycling or organic eating, have they got anything sensible thing to say? I think that’s the problem, its becoming less now, but it was in the past”.*

### **Summary of Views**

**Local authorities should lead and coordinate, regulate and enforce, provide support and advice, and promote travel plans within their areas.**

**There needs to be a more strategic view as to how local authorities plan their travel planning activities.**

**A mentoring role could contribute to the success of travel plans.**

## **15. The future role of national government in encouraging organisations in their development of travel plans**

### **Leadership and coordination**

Leadership and coordination are also seen by the interviewees as being the key role for National Government. Specifically, *“there needs to be more direct engagement with local authorities”*, either targeting the *“bad performers with more help”* or else *“asking the good performers”* how to persuade other authorities to improve.

*“I know from my own experience and from lots of others in the profession, that there is a definite desire within most local authorities for this sort of stuff [travel planning], but they often*

*feel very isolated and that they are banging their head against a brick wall, and are having to justify their existence. Some sort of selling job is needed within authorities for this, and at a fairly high level. As much as TravelWise, Transport 2000 and the ACT are trying to do it, part of me thinks that it would be received better if it came directly from the DfT.*

A related point expressed was that travel planning needs to have *“a higher prestige placed upon it, and recognition of its importance by Government”*.

On coordination, it was considered that more could be done to ensure that the policy messages are consistent. *“It’s getting better but there is still a way to go.”* Specifically, *“it has got to be explicit, rather than implicit”* as at the moment. In addition, Government must *“think about how it interrelates the performance framework for local authorities, and how it sees travel planning within that performance framework”*.

Moreover, *“if it wants to really speed it up, it is going to have to have some performance measures.”* The view was expressed that this could be linked to the idea of defining accreditation or standardisation of travel plans. *“It was disappointing when it ended but I was a great supporter of the Site Specific Advice scheme. That was a good model, almost an accreditation of providers of advice.”* *“I think the principal of a national standard is fine. I think it might help, particularly if it comes through the British Standards Association.”*

### **Promotion**

Promotion too is seen by the interviewees as being an important role. *“I think a National Government encouragement campaign is needed, by giving this [travel plans] a UK wide profile”*. This should emphasise that *“it isn’t something that green old hippies do, this is everybody’s responsibility”*. It should also appeal to people’s economic and health thinking. *“If you cycle into work you can save yourself £5000 on an Oyster card. Instead of going three miles on the tube, you can get fit and save on your gym membership”*.

*“The other thing that has gone; the Doing Your Bit campaign, had a very clear message and it’s a great shame that it died. It undid several years work when that went.”* *“I just get frustrated that there is no sort of national campaign; well perhaps that is not the right word; but marketing or promotion of sustainable transport more generally, there is no real drive for it, it seems; they played around with it for the Doing Your Bit campaign, and they seemed to feel that it cost them a lot of money, but what did they achieve with it, so they don’t want to do it again. I think the concept of the campaign was right, just put across in the wrong way.”*

In addition there is a feeling that Government *“needs to maintain its role in terms of guidance and best practice.”*

### **Financial support**

Another suggestion is that Government should *“provide some financial support in the short term”* in order to allow some authorities *“to get over the hump of just doing bits”* of travel planning. Further, *“there has got to be preparedness to put in resource to help the small scale measures that could make travel planning work more easily, e.g. convert small junctions”*.

*“There has to be a willingness to change the balance of expenditure [from large scale to small scale projects], and that’s just a rather broad ask really”*. Interviewees expressed the view that at the moment the imbalance in spending on road transport compared to the alternatives is significant.

### **Fiscal policy change**

It was stated by one respondent that there was a need for change in fiscal policy which would encourage organisations in their development of travel plans.

In this respect it was stated that there should be *“proper fiscal and tax incentives for travel plans rather than merely taking away the disincentives, that will get your accountants on*

*board and will make it so much easier to get the attention of senior management whereas at the moment it's thumping on senior management doors and they remain firmly shut. If there's actually something to gain from travel plans for the core functions - R and D got on to the agenda far more when you had R and D credits made available, so you got special tax credits - if you had special travel plan tax credits, if you had a higher tax allowance for developers for putting in travel plan facilities to new sites; they themselves may not be particularly large but it's opening organisational doors that local authority mentors and travel plan advisors can then exploit and that people within the organisations can exploit. So I think it's that side of things that National Government can help".*

*As an overall view of the form national government support should be it was stated that "I think I'd like to see some legislation compelling companies to do travel plans, you then need some sort of accreditation system, you know, what is a travel plan? You have to have some sort of standard, you could have financial incentives, more tax incentives, and more in the way of this site specific advice, my understanding was that it worked very well, what it didn't do was attract private sector companies. Well TfL has found a way of doing that, giving free advice, offering bite backs, all sorts of things, you know, big business will bite if they're encouraged to, its very simple. You've got the bandwagon now of carbon footprints, companies that require environmental reports, so leap in there central government and gets lots of promotion going".*

### **Summary of Views**

**National Government ought to lead, coordinate and promote travel planning. In addition, it should provide financial support and look towards reforming the fiscal system to better support organisations developing travel plans.**

**Travel plans need to be given a higher profile by national government.**

## **16. Other organisations which could support the development of travel plans**

When asked about what other bodies should be involved in delivering or supporting travel plans, the experts mentioned public transport operators, other Government departments, campaign groups, professional associations, business groups and trade unions.

### ***Public transport operators***

With the public transport operators several issues were raised, the main one being that many public transport operators do not see sufficient commercial benefits to participate. *"There is a problematic mindset amongst public transport operators that they are working against each other and also that they want to ring the maximum out of the few users they have got left, in the short term, whereas in the longer term they could build usership by an approach to local firms."* For example, while nationally Arriva is willing to engage with travel plans, the situation with one local subsidiary was not a positive one. Conversely with xxxx, one expert reports that while a local operator was willing to provide material for a good practice guide a senior manager vetoed it (ostensibly for commercial reasons). *"It was the only refusal I got to use material in the whole of the production of the guide, so is there is nothing that shows information about engaging with public transport operators".*

### ***Branches of government***

In addition to the Department for Transport, there are several other branches of Government that are already involved, and some that could do more. *"Certainly the Highways Agency is engaging travel plans in quite a major way" and "I have heard some good things".*

*"Focusing on plans that come through the planning system; PIN, the Planning Inspectorate needs to take a more active role, and that needs to happen when they are assessing with*

*regional strategies, right down to dealing with Section 78 appeals; i.e. planning applications.” Currently, it is “not doing it very well in terms of making sure travel plans are pulled into that”.*

And, *“when the Audit Commission goes out and does any assessment of local authorities in terms of transport or terms of local planning they [travel plans] should be being looking at”, while when the local authorities do their comprehensive performance assessment, one “good indicator” of sustainable development “should be around travel plans”.*

### **Campaign groups**

Campaign groups are one sector where lots of work was considered to be occurring to pass on the message of travel plans. *“I definitely feel there is a role for a non-governmental organisation to be the voice of the travel plan industry, to lobby although I don’t like that word, to work with national and local government to try and mainstream this activity”.* There are organisations that are doing it: ACT, Travel Wise, UK Last, Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust, Campaign for Better Transport, *“some more than others”.* However, concern was also expressed that such a myriad of organisations pushing travel plans might *“dilute the message”* and the product as a whole. What may be needed then, is some form of *“umbrella organisation”* to provide the support and encouragement, intellectual guidance, maybe standardisation, and to collate the (slowly) growing body of evidence. There is also the resourcing activity that needs the same.

### **Professional bodies and academic institutions**

The professional bodies meanwhile, both on the transport and the planning side, are identified by interviewees as *“needing to do more”* to push travel planning.

In terms of universities it was stated that *“I think that from the training side the universities and the travel plan networks can certainly help. There does need to be a lot of education and training going on because we’ve got a new profession with very little back up for it. It’s also in general a rather poorly paid profession certainly compared to other transport professionals, I think that Travel Planners are probably the worst paid transport professionals and they are actually tackling the most difficult jobs. So I think there is a big career structure issue there for Travel Planners”.*

### **Business Groups and Unions**

With respect to business groups and trade unions it was stated that *“there are a lot of organisations that need to include travel planning within their remit but it isn’t at their core. The CBI [Confederation of British Industry] and other employer organisations are ones that might be an example. The unions are other examples but you need to actually get them on board and this is the thing about linking it in to the core motivations of those organisations. At the moment they don’t see travel planning as being central whereas they see the traditional agenda for the unions or the CBI – railways, road building, logistics – are absolutely in the core, but travel planning is not there at the moment”.*

In this respect it was stated *“I think from the business side of things, businesses sometimes listen to other organisations and give them more credence than the public sector. Now whether that means that you can then get support from the Chamber of Commerce, or equivalent, the BRC, British Retail Consortium, as an example, those sorts of bodies, the British Council for Shopping Centres, they do studies on Transport Sustainability work for their members, it’s the possibility of working through that type of organisation as well”.*

Lastly, larger multinationals are also identified by interviewees as being *“profit rich organisations; the bigger offenders”, e.g. the NHS group, blue-chip, petrochemicals, big car producers. “Perhaps instead of sponsoring The Tate, UniLever should look at putting its money developing a cycling strategy to narrow its carbon footprint”.*

### **Summary of Views**

**More needs to be done to involve public transport operators, other Government departments (e.g. Planning Inspectorate and the Audit Commission), campaign groups, professional associations, business groups and trade unions in supporting travel plans.**

## **17. What may organisations do in order to make travel plans more attractive to them?**

In answer to a question on how organisations might in future make better use of travel plans, the responses were as follows:

- travel plans needed to be more fully understood if they were to be used to their “full potential”, especially in terms of the “benefits they can bring to staff”.
- interviewees advised that organisations should stop trying to cut corners and be prepared to see the wider benefits of properly implementing a plan.
- “the organisations themselves need to monitor the steps and their own activity” so as to quantify the benefits as far as possible.
- travel plans needed to be integrated within existing management systems. “I think there is still a tendency for organisations to look at [travel plans] in terms of a one off hit” and this is a mistake.
- it was considered that organisations needed to have “a better understanding of the costs of car parking; I just don’t think that businesses understand how much their car parks are costing them, and whenever we produce a statement, based on actual cost, people don’t believe us, whether that’s in London or beyond, if we tell them its costing them £800 a year, to maintain their carpark they just don’t believe us, because they don’t know themselves, and it just seems too high. So when you say you can take away ten car parking spaces and that will save you £8000 a year, they say well it won’t really will it?”
- was to obtain a better understanding between health, morale and efficiency and transport.
- “travel plans are isolated, they’re just not on the agenda. They’re not managing travel. Travel is a dispersed activity within organisations and it’s one which is managed at quite a low sub-unit level. Whereas marketing, branding, all those sort of things are managed to the “nth” degree but you don’t have that pull together for transport. When you do start to pull it together you realise that it’s actually quite a major expenditure, particularly the business travel side, it has big impacts on staff behaviour, morale and productivity but it’s not pulled together, so I think organisations are not managing transport”.

### **Summary of Views**

**Travel plans need to be more effectively ‘sold’ to organisations by placing more emphasis on the wider benefits enjoyed by integrating them more effectively within existing management systems.**

## **18. Is the concept of travel plans a useful one?**

The section probes responses as to whether the travel plan concept is a useful one, or whether we are wasting our energy trying to make them work when we should be doing other things? The reply is that they are useful.

*“I think of course, that the concept is a useful one.”*

*"I suppose I'm quite lucky because I get paid to do it! I sleep, breathe and eat this stuff, so I genuinely think it is the right thing to be doing."*

This may be for several reasons based on responses, one being as a means of changing how people think about and actually travel by drawing on the authority of the workplace rather than the influence of the (often distant or even discredited) local authority. *"I think they are a useful lever. Whenever you are trying to get to groups of people, you have to deal with them in lumps and if you can where there are lumps of people who have authority over them you get better results. So, you find that people are more likely to cooperate by being told what to do by their employer, rather than by the government."* Moreover, given that *"travel to work and travel in the course of work is a significant area, then working with companies becomes a sensible option"*.

*"I don't think we're wasting our energy trying to make it work, I don't know whether there are other tools out there that are better placed, or that offer better value for money, is a more tricky question, but travel planning as a tool in its own right, I don't think it differs from just good site management practices, its trying to make the best use of what you have, and doing it as efficiently as possible, and a good travel planner should do that, staff should feel they are travelling by the most efficient way; saving themselves a bit of cash; doing things that make them feel good, there's a lot of positives to it, sometimes you're going to get a formal travel planner, enforcing on a site requirements to write a document, and go out to these formal processes and it can distract a little bit from just good site management. In terms of doing other things; I don't know, I really find it quite difficult to think what other tools might be available"*.

*"I think they are a useful concept. I think we're at a very early stage and they could be the key to a lot of other things. If you can get organisations managing transport through the travel plan experience then that would have a good feed-on effect to a lot of other transport policy areas and a lot of demand management areas. If we can crack travel plans, I think we can probably crack a lot of others. If we can get users on board for travel plans then I think you could put in place the sort of ways of working that are necessary to get users on board say for road user charging which are perhaps much more substantial policy measures. You might get them on board for accepting the sort of transport and land use designs that are occurring long term. If you can get people to understand and buy-in to travel plans then I think you can get them to understand and buy in to a lot of other things. So although travel plans might not be vastly important in their own right, if you can crack this, I think you can crack a lot more"*.

However, it is also recognised that they need to be modified, supported more effectively and integrated with other measures if they are to reach their potential. Typical responses here are:

*"No, we are not wasting our energy, we should be making them work; but they should be very much part of the overall package of measures. They should be part of the holistic approach to travel and transport, and you can extend it to communications, a lot of things such as the phone, a phone is quite a good communication tool you know."*

*"I think that the focus needs to perhaps to change a little bit, to make [travel plans] more of an integral operational function of an organisation, not just a bolt-on. It's very hard this one because there is a lot of value in continuing to promote it as a stand alone activity because it still needs the credibility. People recognise that looking at the way that you operate your business from a travel perspective is fundamental"*.

To sum up this section, two observations from the interviewees. It was considered that first, travel planners and travel plan co-ordinators cannot take criticism because *"we have to spend our whole lives being so positive so that the moment someone puts us down, it's like we've been smacked on the head ten times over."* *"You have got to have such a staggering level of personal commitment, and unshaken belief that they are unadulterated goodness. If I started to believe that travel plans are not, and that they are just going to fade away, then and I would have to go away and have a few quiet days away somewhere."*

And second, “yes, yes! the concept is a useful one, and while it is not fully exploited I have absolutely no doubt it is the right way to go. Yet they could be a lot more useful, and that’s why I think the Government has got to up the ante.”

### **Summary of Views**

**The travel plan concept is a useful one due to it influencing transport decisions through organisations other than local authorities. In addition, travel plans typically target transport use at the most congested places and at peak times potentially increasing their effectiveness vis a vis other transport policy measures.**

## **5. Conclusions**

The findings from the research undertaken highlight that whilst travel plans are being implemented with varying degrees of success by many local authorities, NHS trusts and academic institutions and, to a lesser extent, by businesses they are far from ‘mainstream’ in the UK.

High profile successes aside, this research indicates that travel plans are often developed on an ad hoc basis without strategic direction and suggests they exist in a policy vacuum, are marginalised, lacking in resources and monitoring and hence are not as effective as they could be.

To move towards the mainstreaming of travel plans Government, Local Authorities, organisations, transport suppliers and the travel planning profession all have important roles to play. Key areas for further consideration by relevant stakeholders are summarised below.

### **Government**

There is a perceived lack of leadership, commitment, strategy, vision and financial resources to travel plans at a national level which leads to the impression that the Government is not committed to travel plans. To reverse this perception, Government should afford a higher profile to travel plans and this should be supported by policy champions.

There is a perceived lack of integration with other policies such as obesity and carbon reduction and it is considered that such integration would strengthen the value of travel plans.

Government’s role is seen by experts as leading, coordinating and promoting the development of travel plans. Consideration should be given as to how to do this more effectively – this might include financial support and reforming the fiscal system to better support organisations developing travel plans as well as the introduction of legislation and regulation requiring their adoption.

### **Local Authorities**

As with Government, a lack of leadership, commitment, strategy, vision and financial resources at Local Authority level is perceived to be repeated. Some local authorities do not have their own travel plans in place.

Local authorities’ role is seen as leading, coordinating, regulating, enforcing, providing support and advice and promoting travel plans within their areas. Consideration should be given as to how local authorities could do this more effectively.

### **Organisations**

There is a perceived lack of integration of travel plans with organisational management systems often rendering them as marginal activities. Many organisations resist travel plans as they are seen as non-core and they are perceived to incur additional costs. Lack of

business case evidence does little to enhance the reputation of travel plans. Consideration should be given to overcoming these issues and resistances.

### **Transport Suppliers and other agencies**

There is a perceived reluctance or inability of transport suppliers and other relevant agencies to become involved in supporting travel plans. Consideration should be given to overcoming this.

### **Travel Planning Profession**

There is a lack of skilled travel plan coordinators and travel planners – in particular in positions of responsibility. Consideration should be given to overcoming this.

**Overall, the full research findings have been used to construct the following Table. Specifically, the findings provided the 'issue' and/or the 'comment' and recommendations derived.**

Issue	Source (Section)	Summary of Views
The value of travel plans.	1, 7, 18	The travel plan concept is a useful one influencing transport decisions through organisations other than local authorities. Travel plans typically target transport use at the most congested places and at peak times potentially increasing their effectiveness <i>vis a vis</i> other transport policy measures. They can also be used to address an increasing number of policy goals.
Lack of impetus and strategic direction in travel planning	4, 6, 8, 13	Travel plans are currently being developed on an ad hoc basis without strategic direction in terms of what they are, what they are for, or what they could become. Meanwhile policy support – both within the transport and planning sector and beyond requires enhancement. Travel plans would appear to exist in a policy vacuum. Consequently, travel plans are marginalised in terms of resources and are not as effective as they could potentially be – especially given the wide range of policy goals to which they can potentially contribute.
Ad hoc approach to travel plan development	4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15	
Lack of integration of travel plans within transport, planning and wider policy sectors	4, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16	
Lack of leadership at National Government level regarding travel plans.	3, 8, 13, 15	Local authorities typically respond in their activities according to the 'steer' given by Government. Currently, there is a perceived lack of leadership at a national level to travel plans, such that local authorities do not see travel plans being a key Government priority. Consequently, with a few exceptions minimal effort is applied to them. If travel plans are to become more effective as a policy instrument, then Government must reverse this perception. Specifically, travel plans should be afforded a higher profile and be supported by policy champions.
Travel plans not seen by local authorities as being a Government priority.	12, 13	
Lack of commitment by Government to travel plans.	8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15	The perceived lack of integration with other policies such as the obesity and carbon reduction agendas and the issue of poor leadership lead to concern that Government is not committed to travel plans such that the concept may be abandoned if it is not seen to deliver results. This fear is compounded due to the lack of evidence of travel plan effectiveness (see below).

Risk travel plans being abandoned if not seen to work.	10, 13, 15	
Lack of financial resources for travel plans.	8, 12, 14, 15	The lack of commitment is perceived to be reflected in the lack of financial resources afforded to making travel plans work effectively.
Lack of travel planners with necessary skills and 'low level' of most travel plans posts.	3, 8	And the lack of skilled travel plan coordinators and travel planners – in particular in positions of responsibility.
Lack of a strategic view by local authorities.	14	The problems with a lack of strategy and vision are also often repeated at the local level.
Lack of leadership at Local Government level regarding travel plans.	3, 4, 8, 14	The problems with leadership too are often repeated at the local level. Some local authorities still do not have travel plans in place for their own organisations.
Insufficient enforcement of travel plans.	11, 14	When combined with insufficient resources, the lack of leadership has meant that existing travel plans implemented through the planning process are not being properly enforced – almost certainly reducing the effectiveness of the plans introduced. Moreover, plans are not being properly monitored which means that evidence on the effectiveness of travel plans is not being collected. It is thus extremely difficult to know how effective they are at meeting their objectives. Finally, there is a problem that the output indicators currently used are not sufficient to understand what is actually being achieved on the ground.
Insufficient monitoring of travel plans.	3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14	
Insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of travel plans.	3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14	
Full range of travel plan benefits not understood by organisations.	3, 7, 9, 17	In practical terms, this lack of evidence also means that it is very difficult to establish a business case that is sufficiently attractive to encourage organisations to adopt a travel plan.

Resistance from within organisations (particularly senior management) to adopting travel plans.	3, 7, 8	Many organisations are resistant to adopting a travel plan. Travel plans are seen as being a non-core activity and hence an additional cost. Organisations need convincing reason to participate. Travel plans also need to be seen to be as straightforward as possible to implement.
Reluctance of organisations to engage in travel planning.	8, 13	
Travel plans seen as being a 'bolt on' task for Estates or Facilities Departments.	3, 6, 8	Travel plans work best when integrated within the management systems of an organisation. This does not often happen.
Free rider problem – benefits of travel plans also accrue to non participants. This can be seen as unfair.	13	Organisations are also concerned about fairness. Why should we adopt a travel plan when another organisation did not? Indeed the other organisation may well benefit from 'our' investment and/or levels of behaviour change without contributing itself.
Car based benefits still favoured packages by organisations.	13	Instead, organisations still favour car based benefits packages.
Travel plan product often 'not fit for purpose'.	8, 12	Travel plans only work in situations where there are viable alternative transport options to use. In too many cases there are not alternative options.
Lack of involvement by other agencies (e.g. public transport operators, council departments, neighbouring organisations) in supporting travel plans.	16	One reason for this lack of options, is the reluctance or inability of transport suppliers to be involved in providing them.
Different organisations in different circumstances have different motivations relating	2	Travel plans are more appropriate for organisations in some sectors and in some areas than others.

to travel plans.		
Most organisations adopt travel plans because they are required to do so.	2, 4, 7, 12	Probably the most effective way to increase the number of travel plans is to require that they be adopted. This can be done through the planning system and through organisations requiring their lower levels to introduce them. Potentially, it could also be done through other forms of legislation or regulation.
Many travel plans are designed only to meet planning requirements	5, 12	Many travel plans currently are designed primarily to secure planning permission and/or to 'tick boxes'. There is also an expectation that they will 'sit on the shelf' rather than be implemented. This has limited their effectiveness.
Risk of travel plan effectiveness decreasing as degree of standardisation increases.	3, 6, 12	
Long term sustainability /viability of travel plans often in doubt.	5	Even well managed travel plan sites can lose momentum unless they are rejuvenated at regular intervals.
Role of National Government in travel plan development.	15	National Government ought to lead, coordinate and promote the development of travel plans. In addition, it should provide financial support and look towards reforming the fiscal system to better support organisations developing travel plans.
Role of Local Government in travel plan development.	14	Local authorities should lead and coordinate, regulate and enforce, provide support and advice, and promote travel plans within their areas. Those local authorities that do this well should be rewarded with more resources and an enhanced status.

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# Appendix A – Expert Interview Schedule

## *Blueprint for Travel Plans Interview Schedule*

We are interested in the perceptions of travel plan experts as to how travel plans have developed, how they perform currently and how they should develop in the future.

### **Personal experience**

1. When and how did you first hear about the travel plan concept?
2. What led to your involvement in travel plans?
3. What is your experience relating to travel plans?
4. What is your current role with respect to travel plans?

### **Travel plans in the past**

5. What do you see as being the major 'milestones' in the development of UK travel plans, and why?
6. What do you feel were the core motivations for organisations adopting travel plans in the past?
7. What have been the key barriers preventing the take up of travel plans?
8. What has been the role of central and local government in overcoming the barriers to the take up of travel plans?
9. How do you feel travel plans have performed historically in?
  - a. improving access to work
  - b. improving the local environment
  - c. in achieving social goals
  - d. reducing congestion
  - e. meeting their objective/s generally

### **Travel plans now**

10. What do you think is the current 'state of play' with respect to travel plans?
11. What do you feel are the core motivations for organisations adopting travel plans now?
12. What are the key barriers preventing travel plan take up currently?
13. What is the current role of central and local government in overcoming the barriers to the take up of travel plans?
14. How do you perceive travel plans (and travel plan 'policy') to be working at the moment?
  - a. in improving access to work
  - b. improving the local environment
  - c. in achieving social goals
  - d. in reducing congestion
  - e. in meeting their objective/s generally
15. Have travel plans achieved their full potential? If not, why not?

### **Travel plans in the future**

16. How do you see travel plans developing over the next five years/ten years?
17. What do you see as being the future barriers to the take up of travel plans?
18. What do you think local government should do to help support/ encourage organisations developing travel plans – i.e. what role should local authorities have?
19. What do you think National Government should do to help support/ encourage organisations developing travel plans – i.e. what role should National Government have?

20. Are there any other organisations you feel could support/encourage the development of travel plans, and if so which and how?
21. What are organisations not currently doing that might make travel plans more attractive/beneficial to them?
22. Do you think that the concept of travel plans is a useful one, or are we wasting our energy trying to make them work when we should be doing other things?

## Appendix B – Interviewee Experience

Interviewee	Involvement in travel plans	Experience
Consultant	1990 -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visited US in early 1990's over a 2-3 year period to learn more about TDM processes;</li> <li>• Former employee of a large UK organisation, with responsibility for developing their travel plan.</li> </ul>
Academic	1995 -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervised doctoral students in area of travel plans;</li> <li>• Fiscal barriers to travel plans – tax reforms and travel plans;</li> <li>• Evaluation of travel plans;</li> <li>• Site specific advice;</li> <li>• Business case;</li> <li>• Training materials.</li> </ul>
Independent Consultant	Late 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant solely involved with travel plans;</li> <li>• Part-time employee of a Local Authority;</li> <li>• Written, or advised on 50 travel plans for workplaces, hospitals, schools and residential.</li> </ul>
Consultant	Mid 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable transport;</li> <li>• Local Authority and School travel plans;</li> <li>• Involved in 100 travel plans with major businesses, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, local authorities and leisure sites.</li> <li>• DfT panel offering business advice.</li> <li>• Best Practice Guides</li> </ul>
Consultant	Mid 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing travel plans for a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sector;</li> <li>• European benchmarking.</li> </ul>
Independent Consultant	Early 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Director of Planning/Transport Local Authority;</li> <li>• Sustainable transport;</li> <li>• National guidance on travel plans.</li> </ul>
Consultant	1996 -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority travel planning;</li> <li>• School travel planning;</li> <li>• Consultancy;</li> <li>• Strategic advice and specific site advice.</li> </ul>
Independent Consultant	Mid 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously travel plan coordinator for a large organisation;</li> <li>• Advice to Local Authorities and London Boroughs;</li> <li>• Aided in writing travel plans for Local Authorities and Universities.</li> </ul>
Independent Consultant	Early noughties -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigner perspective;</li> <li>• Now independent consultant;</li> <li>• Formerly worked for environmental campaign group;</li> <li>• Written travel plans for various companies;</li> <li>• Recently completed major survey of UK travel plans.</li> </ul>
Consultant	Late 1990s -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formerly worked for a large public sector organisation as a travel planner;</li> <li>• Previously worked for a local authority, well regarded in travel planning;</li> <li>• Currently heads travel plan unit for a major consultant.</li> </ul>