

TRANSPORT POLICY UNDER THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper considers how transport policy in Scotland may evolve under the Scottish Parliament and Executive. Constitutional change has occurred at a time when transport has assumed increasing importance in the political arena across the whole of the UK. However, the direction of transport policy under the Scottish Executive is still in its formative stage. There are several factors that may influence transport policy-making in the new Scottish Executive, and a number of commentators have questioned whether a radical transport agenda which puts the emphasis on sustainability will be delivered in Scotland. It is possible that transport policy will shadow that in England. However, transport reform may fall foul of public opinion and institutional constraints at both national and local level, and the Parliament's strategy may diverge from that implemented south of the Border.

The paper concentrates on roads, congestion and car use policy. Briefly outlining the recent history of policy-making in the UK, the paper sets out the transport debate in the UK, highlighting the factors underpinning current concerns with car dependence. The perception of transport in England and Scotland will then be discussed, specifically the degree to which congestion is less of a concern north of the Border. The paper will then assess whether transport policy north of the border will diverge from that in England, specifically considering the influence of (i) ministerial authority, (ii) political and institutional relationships, (iii) funding constraints and (iv) the ability of local authorities to deliver transport initiatives on the ground.

BACKGROUND: CAR DEPENDENCE

The formulation and implementation of transport policy is of particular interest at this juncture. With all of the UK's political parties occupying the middle ground, transport has emerged as one of the few really contentious issues, and the transport question is set to become one of the key political battlegrounds in the years to come. This conflict can be traced to the stated determination of the UK Labour Government to reduce dependence on the car. Following a relentless growth in the rise of the motor car at the expense of alternative modes of transport, the Labour government published a White Paper, **A New Deal for Transport, Better For Everyone** (1998), which outlined a series of measures aimed at reducing car dependence, including the highly contentious issue of road pricing. As a consequence, transport and transport planning have become a key political issue with the car-lobby protesting that transport policies, which prioritise public transport and look to limit the rise of car growth, are undermining the rights of the vast majority of car users.

Buchanan and Urquhart (1997) note that in 1979 the average person in the UK travelled about 23 kilometres per day, 83% by car. By 1997, the average person travelled 31 km, 89% of which was accounted for by the car. However, as Buchanan and Urquhart suggest, the social changes underlying this increase in car-based mobility would have happened anyway. Policies introduced by the Conservatives merely hastened a trend towards growing dependence on the car at the expense of public transport and - increasingly - walking. With the car assuming great social and cultural importance, and as people have become more dependent on it for travelling, these factors have contributed towards, and have been facilitated by, an ideology of car dependence that has become increasingly institutionalised. By promoting the car over public transport in an era of free enterprise, car dependence has been facilitated by bankers and credit companies, encouraged by advertisers and market makers, and legislated for by fiscal and planning policy at local and national level. Building roads, loosening planning restrictions, and encouraging out-of-town development have changed the way towns and cities function, making it awkward to reach shops and employment by any other mode than the car. As a result, we now live in a car-dependent society, and our relationship with the car underpins much of the way life is conceptualised, organised, structured and lived. The strength of this obsession with the car makes life difficult for those who wish to reduce gridlock and pollution on our motorways and in our cities. Despite worsening congestion, environmental arguments are also unlikely to hold much sway with drivers, as individual motorists rarely see themselves as contributing to the problem.

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When confronted with the contradiction between stated environmental responsibility and car use, Tertoolen et al (1998) revealed that Dutch drivers found it easier to adopt a different position on the environment than to reduce their dependence on the car.

As a result of this unique relationship that society has with the car, a consensual will to reduce car dependence among politicians at local or national level is largely absent. Ironically, policies which actually delivered a world class public transport system, which provide people genuine alternatives to the car, which cut congestion, which change attitudes, and which improve the quality of life in Britain's towns and cities are likely to be an enduring vote winner. However, in the short-to-medium term before any of these benefits can be appreciated, measures required to fund improvements in the infrastructure - such as congestion charging and taxing work-place car parking - are likely to be unpopular. It can therefore be suggested that in transport policy-making - more than any other policy field - the delivery of a radical agenda is reliant on the existence of key individuals, at both national and local level, who are willing to court political unpopularity and overcome institutional resistance in order to deliver long term improvements in quality of life.

In terms of UK national policy, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to solving the UK's transport problems. With such a key actor in the Government mobilising the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) to overhaul transport policy, there is little doubt that as long as Prescott remains in post, significant transport reform will become a prospect in England. However, the situation is much less clear in Scotland. As will be discussed below, it is possible that the new parliament may actually deliver a truly radical agenda. Alternatively, transport may ultimately be afforded a much lower priority. There must be concern whether Sarah Boyack, the transport minister, will command enough support among her colleagues to win battles on policy and legislation in the Executive in order to push forward radical measures.

Whereas national government passes enabling legislation and controls national policy in sectors such as trunk roads and rail, local authorities implement a significant amount of transport policy. However, the funding relationship between national and local government also differs significantly between Scotland and England. As a result, policy-makers at national level in Scotland may have less influence in determining transport policy than their counterparts south of the border.

TRANSPORT POLICY: RECENT TRENDS

The Conservative's initial approach to tackling increasing congestion was to create additional road space through an ambitious road building programme. In 1989, the Government's **Roads to Prosperity** White Paper allocated £1.5 billion a year for new and improved road schemes. Paul Channon proclaimed this to be 'the largest road building programme since the Romans' (Department of Transport 1989). In the late 1980s and 1990s, however, mounting environmental awareness among the public was increasingly impacting on Government thinking. By 1996 successive cuts to the roads programme were being announced following pressure from the Treasury as well as environmentalists. In terms of road building, the Conservatives performed a policy U-turn and were actually considering road charging by the end of the administration.

Concerns about the environment - specifically targets aimed at improving air quality - were also reflected in the introduction of the Fuel Duty Escalator (FDE), which was established by Chancellor Norman Lamont in his 1992 budget statement. In a bid to limit the growth of vehicle emissions, an annual increase in fuel duty was introduced, initially at 3%. It was expected that environmental targets would be reached as people switched to more fuel efficient cars, but the measure has also been widely interpreted as a crude method of lowering demand for private car use. In 1995 Kenneth Clark raised the annual increase to 5%, and defended it in the budget debate, proclaiming that 'anyone who is opposed to the Fuel Duty Escalator and is pro-environment is guilty of gross hypocrisy'. Gordon Brown controversially increased that rate by an additional 1% in 1997, and currently 82% of the cost of a litre of petrol is accounted by tax.

Until the Chancellor's pre-budget statement of November 1999, the revenue from the FDE was viewed by the Exchequer as general taxation, which was not hypothecated for reinvestment in the transport sector. However, as well as announcing the abolition of the FDE, Gordon Brown stated that any further increases in fuel duty above the rate of inflation were to be ring-fenced for roads and public transport improvements. As will be discussed below, the situation in Scotland, however, is currently far from certain.

Although considering road pricing towards the end of their term, the Conservative administrations failed to tackle increasing congestion on Britain's roads. In 1979 there were 70 cars per mile of road in Britain; by 1997 that figure had increased to 100 (Hansard 1999). This highlighted that even a relatively ambitious roads programme could not keep pace with the

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growth in demand for car use at a time of rising economic prosperity. As Buchanan and Urquhart note,

At the end of 18 years the Tories had neither overhauled the road user charging system nor significantly involved the private sector in the planning and provision of roads. Cutting the roads programme without putting in place the means of controlling demand would worsen the system and lead to even greater unsustainability.
(Buchanan and Urquhart 1997, para 5.12, p. 17)

After being elected in May 1997, Labour came to power promising to tackle increasing dependence on the car and pledging to build a world class transport network. The Deputy Prime Minister has been particularly insistent that the Government's long term aim would be an integrated and sustainable transport policy. In practice this would mean a move away from road building and a greater emphasis on providing more environmentally friendly modes, which are modern and efficient, offering motorists a genuine alternative.

The Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR), however, acknowledging that spending on transport will always be constrained, has also indicated that additional income for transport improvements might have to be secured from transport itself. The Chancellor's decision in November 1999 to ring-fence any further increases in fuel duty will provide one revenue stream. In addition, the Transport White Paper proposed the idea of road pricing, indicating that the costs of congestion should be more closely linked to those who cause transport problems, namely road users in urban areas. Mechanisms that may be implemented include urban congestion charging and workplace car parking charges:

Urban congestion charging would enable local authorities to control traffic using a pricing mechanism, providing a revenue stream for reinvestment in transport infrastructure. There are questions over the most suitable method of implementation - tolling, electronic charging or a paper based system.

Workplace car parking charges may be more suitable than road pricing for some areas, particularly smaller towns and in large conurbations. One concern about this approach is that it will prove unpopular with the business community. It may also have little impact on reducing car use, as the costs are unlikely to be borne by individual motorists.

Although there is considerable support for road pricing in theory, convincing motorists of the merits of road pricing and implementing a workable system

on the ground is an altogether different matter. When fuel duty was rising annually (in addition to increases caused by a rising world oil price in 1998-99), car owners believed that they were already paying too much. Although the abolition of the FDE will defuse some public hostility towards additional charges on road users, successfully implementing such a controversial initiative will still require considerable political will, co-operation across a number of institutions, and enthusiasm and ambition from local authorities. Also the perception that congestion is necessarily a problem that requires tackling is not one which is shared throughout the whole of the UK.

Motorway tolling could provide another revenue stream although more research is needed on the diversion effect of road tolls and the impact this could have on the neighbourhoods and communities that are less suited to traffic. There is also some debate over how the revenue is spent.

CAR USE: TRENDS AND PERCEPTIONS IN SCOTLAND

Although tackling congestion has dominated transport thinking in the South East of England, the experience in Scotland has been different. As a result of differing geographical and cultural conditions in Scotland, there may be significantly less support for radical transport policies north of the border.

Table 1 illustrates that car ownership is actually significantly lower in the north of Britain, and Scotland has the highest proportion of non-car owning households (38%). Low car ownership rates are also found in the North East of England, the North West and Merseyside and Yorkshire and Humber. In contrast, high car ownership is found in the south of the country. Over a third of households in the South East actually have two or more cars, while only 1 in 5 households do not own a car, and high car ownership is also found in the South West and Eastern England. The exception to this north-south divide is London, which is served by an extensive public transport network and where congestion is at its worst.

The figures indicate that Scottish levels are at least 10 years behind the Great Britain average in terms of car ownership¹. Increasing car ownership is related to economic growth and Scotland's economy grew slower than other parts of the UK in the 1990s. Although dependence has increased, Scotland has lagged behind the rest of the UK, not only in terms of car ownership, but also in terms of the experience of congestion as a problem. For example,

¹ In 1988, average figures for the UK reveal that 35% of households had no car, 44% owned one, and 19% two or more.

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some 56% of journeys during the rush hour in Aberdeen can be completed in less than 15 minutes (Oscar Faber 1998).

Scotland is also a relatively small country with only two large cities, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Although congestion is an increasing concern for those living or working in cities such as Aberdeen and Glasgow, Scotland lacks the collective perception that something needs to be done about car dependence, and the 'transport problem' is not as powerful a political lever as it is in England. However, it would be wrong to suggest that the Scottish Executive should be complacent about the need to limit the growth of car dependence. Statistics suggest that Scotland is now catching up. The Scottish Transport Statistics demonstrate that in 1997, 2 million motor vehicle were licensed in Scotland, a 3% rise on the previous year, and it is estimated that this is 32% more than the number in 1987 (The Scottish Office 1998). However, traffic in Aberdeen is growing faster than the UK average. In twenty years time it is predicted that only 28% of the same peak hour journeys in Aberdeen will be completed in the same time (Oscar Faber 1998). Therefore, within the medium-to-long term, Scotland may have to deal with many of the congestion problems currently being experienced in other parts of the UK.

Table 1
Household Car Ownership By area of Britain (1998)

	No car	One car	Two or more cars
Scotland	38	41	19
England	27	45	28
North East	35	46	19
North West and Merseyside	32	44	25
Yorkshire and Humber	31	45	24
East Midlands	24	48	27
West midlands	28	41	30
Eastern	21	46	33
London	36	46	19
South East	19	44	36
South West	21	43	35
Wales	30	43	27

Sources: Family Expenditure Survey, General Household Survey, National Travel Survey

In Scotland, however, Edinburgh is an exception to the rule. Scotland's capital is more similar to the south east of England than other parts of Scotland, with a heavy reliance on the service sector and an economy that is showing signs of overheating. GNP per capita is one third higher in Edinburgh than Glasgow, and this affluence is reflected in a growth in car ownership that is almost twice the UK average. Between 1981 and 1991, car ownership in Edinburgh grew at 47%, compared to 28% in the UK as a whole (Begg and Forster, submitted). As a result, Edinburgh has a much more active history of introducing radical local transport initiatives than Aberdeen or Glasgow, where there is more concern over finishing local trunk road networks.

Although the impact of the FDE in rural areas has been a major concern, disquiet over the lack of road building is also on the political agenda in Scotland. This was highlighted by the criticism that Sarah Boyack received for excluding a number of roads when the Scottish roads programme was announced in October 1999. In contrast, Gavin Strang, when he was Minister of Transport at Whitehall, received criticism from the environmental lobby for what was a comparatively modest programme. Whereas the experiences of the Newbury Bypass and the M25 have convinced many people in the south that road building merely generates more traffic, this perception is not shared in the north of the UK, where there are lower car ownership levels and less traffic. In Scotland there is a significant body of opinion - including the business community - who believes that the motorway network is incomplete. In November 1999, the Scottish Executive's trunk road review, involving a £140 million plan to upgrade the A77, A1, and A830 and the building of two new by-passes, was denounced by opposition parties and motoring organisations as not going far enough.

Of greatest recent concern in Scotland was the impact of the FDE, particularly in rural areas where car ownership is the highest in the UK, and where there is a perception that high fuel prices are impacting unfairly (Farrington et al 1998). In contrast to the population concentration in the central belt, Scotland also has large areas of sparsely populated rural areas in the Highlands and Islands, the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. The communities on the periphery of Scotland are the most isolated in the UK, and rural transport is a salient concern, which commands considerable

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attention in the media. Although the actual numbers living in peripheral areas are small in relation to the overall population of Scotland, their concerns are certainly taken seriously.

Therefore differing conditions in Scotland have led to different experience of transport in Scotland. As will be discussed below, the lack of perception of congestion as a key problem area appears to have led to the transport brief being afforded less priority north of the border than in England.

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Included in the Scotland Act of 1998 was the devolution of power to legislate on most aspects of transport policy. In terms of governmental responsibilities, the Scottish Parliament and Executive will guide the overall national policy approach, manage the trunk road network, specify the supported rail network outside Strathclyde and provide financial support to local authorities. The 32 local authorities undertake transport planning, manage the local road network, provide support to the bus network and specify the supported rail network in Strathclyde. Some macro activities such as safety, cross-border travel, air and ports are handled outside Scotland at UK or EU level.

The devolution of transport policy-making is significant because, in the long term - and against a background of a lower perception of transport as a problem area - there are a number of factors which may impact on transport decision-making north of the Border, causing divergence from that implemented in England. These can be summarised into four main areas; (i) ministerial influence, (ii) the institutional structure of transport policy-making, (iii) transport funding at local authority level, and (iv) the practical implementation of transport policy.

Ministerial influence

It was suggested above that the existence of key actors is crucial to the implementation of potentially contentious transport policy. In England, transport enjoys unprecedented priority within the Westminster Government because of the personal commitment of the Deputy Prime Minister. The more salient congestion and rail problems in England, and around London and the Southeast in particular, mean that John Prescott and the transport agenda enjoy a high media profile. By contrast, early indications suggest that although the Scottish Transport Minister, Sarah Boyack, appears genuinely committed to the transport brief, the public and politicians are less concerned about the issues and the brief has been afforded lower status in the Scottish

Executive. Furthermore, a transport minister without the influence of the Prescott will undoubtedly find him or herself much lower down the ministerial pecking order, and may struggle to win cabinet tussles, particularly over resources.

Despite public support for tackling congestion, John Prescott has endured intense personal criticism in pursuit of his transport vision. However, with transport appearing to be less of a public concern in Scotland, and with the resulting absence of a consensus over need for a radical agenda, Sarah Boyack - like Prescott - has already suffered intense criticism over road tolling, both when a trial scheme for the M8 was announced, and then later when the option to introduce tolls on existing roads was abandoned. Within the Executive, there are indications that transport enjoys less precedence than it does at Westminster. In an answer to a parliamentary question in November 1999, First Minister Donald Dewar suggested that additional fuel duty increases would not necessarily be ring-fenced for transport in Scotland - as they would in England - and this statement has caused concern among some transport commentators.

In terms of voting on transport legislation, it is also unlikely that MSPs within a coalition government would be willing to court political unpopularity to pursue a far-reaching transport agenda. It may therefore fall to local authorities to grasp the transport nettle. In a worst case scenario, this could result in a patchwork of disparate transport policy policies, making it very difficult to integrate transport within Scotland as a whole.

The institutional structure of transport policy-making

If a vision does exist among politicians to follow a radical transport agenda, it is also possible that competing interests could disrupt policy delivery. Because transport cuts across almost every aspect of life, a number of different protagonists are trying to influence legislation. Environmentalists, engineers, economists, planners and pro-car pressure groups all have a vested interest in shaping transport policy. However, each area has its own unique perspective on transport matters. These different specialists each conceptualise transport issues within their own paradigms, structuring the debate with different language and jargon, often to the exclusion of other disciplines. Each of these paradigms has a different approach to tackling transport issues, each is structured by a different *modus operandi*, and in terms of access to power and the ability to shape policy, the interests of each group are advanced by different Ministers and civil servants of varying influence.

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However, in an effort to integrate these disparate areas, the 1997 Labour Government precipitated a departmental re-organisation, with transport being incorporated into a new 'superministry', the Department of Environment, Planning and the Regions (DETR), overseen by John Prescott himself. DETR covers transport, planning, the environment, local government, housing and regional development. In Scotland, these functions were initially split into three briefs, Transport, the Environment, Housing and Economic Development, and Lifelong Learning, which were in effect competing for resources. The Transport Minister was not allocated a deputy for a wide-ranging brief, confirming transport's diminished priority in Scotland, before the Transport and Environment briefs were eventually split up in 2000. Furthermore, the three transport divisions within the Scottish Executive do not have the level of resources, expertise or the research budget that can be brought to bear by DETR.

Great strides have also been made at DETR to dovetail policy-making across all areas, with integration and sustainability being bywords. The Commission for Integrated Transport has been created, and one of its objectives is to hold the government to account over delivering the transport objectives outlined in the Government White Paper. In Scotland the Transport Minister did chair the National Transport Forum. However, it had no powers to hold the Government to account or to advise on specific transport issues. It was much more of a forum for discussion, and a large and unfocused one at that. As yet, a decision still has to be made over what replaces it.

Institutional re-organisation in England has already had a significant effect on the ethos of transport policy-making. One example of this change of emphasis is the revised role of the Highways Agency. Rather than an element of the civil service which was competing for resources and influence, the relationship between the DETR and the Agency is now one of client/contractor, with the overall aim being to work towards the DETR goal of sustainable transport. As a result, the Highways Agency's function has changed from having a vested interest in encouraging major road building schemes to managing the trunk road network for the government. By contrast, within the Scottish Executive the roads division (part of Transport Division 1) is an important player within the Civil Service. Although the recent Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) report concluded that there were no conclusive evidence that road building generates economic growth (1999), there are senior officials involved in drafting transport legislation in Scotland who still favour this approach. Within the current institutional structure of the Executive, such a view might carry considerable weight. This potential bias towards road building in Scotland was illustrated in **Travel Choices for Scotland: Strategic Roads**

Review (1999), which demonstrated a very narrow view of transport integration resulting in all twenty schemes scoring positively against this criterion.

Transport funding

Although Governments set the legislative tone for transport policy, it falls to local authorities to deliver initiatives on the ground. The funding mechanism between national and local government is crucial in this relationship. However, there are significant differences between England and Scotland in funding transport, and this could result in a lack of innovative and integrated transport initiatives being introduced in Scotland.

Local authorities north and south of the border have had to submit documents outlining their future approach to transport. The Scottish Executive has requested that local authorities produce local transport strategies, an interim one in 1999, and a full one in 2000. These should outline transport plans over a three-year period set within a 10-20 year vision. The LTS is similar to the Local Transport Plan regime in England except for one crucial distinction – the relationship with funding. The English system acts as a bidding process for capital transport allocations that are ring-fenced by central government. DETR are planning to reward local authorities who produce radical transport plans, and this is the key to implementing the national government's vision of policy on the ground. It is the most powerful tool the government has to ensure that its transport policy objectives will be implemented, and the Scottish Executive has no such lever to pull.

In Scotland there is also no ring-fencing of capital transport except for the £90m three-year public transport fund. In fact, in terms of finance, transport spending in Scotland is increasingly under pressure because of the way that resources are allocated. Capital expenditure on motorways and trunk roads by the Scottish Office fell from £208m in 1994-95 to £104m in 1998-99, a fall of 50%. In terms of local authorities, transport expenditure fell from £174m in 1995/96 to £102m in 1996/97 – a 41% decline (Scottish Transport Statistics 1999). Although part of this decrease in spending corresponded to a period of transition in local government in Scotland with the creation of unitary authorities, a significant proportion of the decline in spend is attributable to the ending of ring-fencing in the local authority annual allowance from central government. Previously, the level of resources targeted at transport was dictated by central government, but this arrangement was abolished after pressure from local authorities. As a result, transport officers in many areas found that their allocation from a central capital pot has suffered, as councils have diverted a greater share of their resources into health, education and

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social services. Therefore, there is no mechanism in place in Scotland to persuade local authorities to allocate a greater share of a diminishing pot on initiatives such as bus priority and Park-and-Ride that provide alternatives to the car.

In terms of future transport spending in Scotland, the Government has announced an additional £35 million for road building. Additional hypothecated resources can be wrought for transport through tax increases. However, this also looks unlikely in the immediate future. Raising income tax could also have an adverse impact on the Scottish economy, particularly if the rate was lower in England, and the UK Government has indicated that income taxes will not be increased in the first five years of the UK Parliament (i.e. the first three years of the Scottish Parliament). Furthermore, in the unlikely event of taxes being raised, it is questionable how much of the additional revenue would be available to the Transport Minister. More likely, the Scottish Executive could use the additional revenue generated by the Fuel Duty Escalator in Scotland. However, there are already question marks over whether any additional resources will be ring-fenced for transport, as will be the case in England.

Congestion charging and work-place car parking are also options open to Scottish local authorities. However, road pricing will only be implemented if there is political will at local as well as national level, and John Prescott suggested in November 1999 that local referendums may be necessary before road pricing is given the go ahead. As will be discussed below, this may also be difficult to implement without the creation of statutory regional bodies. With congestion perceived as less of a problem, and considerable publicity being given to the anger felt in rural areas over high fuel prices, sufficient public support may be difficult to obtain in Scotland for further charges.

Policy implementation

As was noted above, local authorities are responsible for implementing much of the transport policy on the ground. However, since local government re-organisation abolished the regional councils in Scotland, many commentators feel that Scottish local authorities are too small to deliver transport policies on the ground efficiently. Any policy involving local roads and providing alternatives to the car has to involve local authorities. However as Scotney (1999) observes, mobility does not stop at administrative boundaries.

Similarly, if some form of road pricing were to be adopted, the result would be widely diverging revenue streams for different local authorities. Cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen could receive substantial additional resources by introducing road pricing or work-place car parking,

while small rural local authorities would have little potential to generate extra revenue. One way round this would be to divide any revenue raised and re-distribute the additional money around local authorities in the area.

In order to co-ordinate transport, the Scottish Executive is currently advocating a regional approach based on partnerships (Scottish Office Development Department, 1999). In late 1999, voluntary partnerships covered Edinburgh and the South East (SESTP), Strathclyde and West of Scotland (The West of Scotland Transport Partnership), the North East and the Highland and Islands. The only areas not covered by such an agreement are Tayside and Dumfries and Galloway.

It is questionable, however, whether voluntary partnerships will be able to implement policy effectively. With a larger number of interested groups holding stakes in the introduction of policy it is unlikely that radical transport policy will be delivered. With more competing interests to accommodate, voluntary partnerships will be more efficient at delivering the status quo. However, members are still unlikely to risk political unpopularity, while overall transport funding remains at the mercy of local authority cuts. It can be argued that statutory regional bodies with separate budgets are a prerequisite for the delivery of comprehensive transport policies.

The geography of Scotland could also undermine the ability to introduce radical transport initiatives. Scotland is a small country of 5 million, and the vast majority live in the central belt encompassing Edinburgh, Glasgow and their hinterlands. It could be suggested that Edinburgh and Strathclyde are so dominant that the policies they introduce may be more influential than those introduced by the Scottish Parliament. Currently, the two cities have differing outlooks on transport policy. Edinburgh, for example, is currently considering introducing road pricing while Glasgow will not entertain the idea. Whether a large proportion pay for motoring looks more likely to depend on which city they live or work in rather than whether road pricing is endorsed by the Scottish Parliament.

CONCLUSION

Most parts of Scotland still enjoy the positive aspects of car dependence such as freedom, independence and flexibility of movement, while the negative side is experienced mainly in cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow at certain times of the day. The ruling coalition in the Scottish Parliament cannot therefore be criticised for failing to afford transport the same priority as it enjoys in England. Although disappointing many commentators, the £140m

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allocated to new roads is a reflection of a more insular perspective on the roads issue, reflecting that the transport question is very different in Scotland. MSPs also gave more priority to opposing the fuel tax escalator, an issue that is much more salient in Scotland, particularly in rural areas.

However, particularly rising car ownership and car use indicates that congestion is likely to be an increasing problem in Scotland. If prevention is better than the frustrating search for a cure that is currently being endured in the Southeast of England, it is advisable to start implementing legislation now, rather than waiting ten years until the situation starts becoming problematic.

There is also no reason why key institutions should not be reformed to make the formulation of integrated and sustainable transport policy more straightforward for the Scottish Minister of Transport.

Specific policy recommendations include:

- ◀ Transport Divisions 1, 2, and 3 at the Scottish Executive could be re-structured and rationalised so that competing interests are relegated in favour of an integrated approach to transport. Certain functions such as research are already dealt with in distinct units, and other activities such as road engineering could be reorganised in order to achieve the client/contractor relationship which has modernised decision making at the DETR
- ◀ There is a need for a transport advisory body at Scottish level, to perform a similar function to the Commission for Integrated Transport (CFIT). This could include key public transport operators, the chiefs of the regional (or statutory bodies), COSLA and the CBI; and would provide support and advice for the transport minister as well as a practical interface with those who will be charged with implementing policy. It would also be beneficial if such a body had the powers to hold the Scottish Parliament and Executive to account over stated transport objectives.
- ◀ From a purely transport perspective, and given that transport spending is being increasingly squeezed, transport allocations could be removed from the single capital pot for local authorities. Funding would be linked to local transport strategies to allow the Scottish Executive more control over transport policy at local level.

- ◀ Although partnerships are the right way forward, voluntary bodies can only do so much in the long term, as they tend to shy away from difficult decisions. Statutory bodies with discrete budgets could provide a more effective means to deliver potentially difficult transport policy initiatives in the future.

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