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## **“THE REVISION OF PPG13”**

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### ***Context***

Planning has been reformed in the 1990s, in some ways introducing new concepts and ideas, but in other ways undoing damage done during the 1980s. Three points are highlighted:

- A new faith in planning intervention, including the so-called “plan-led” planning system;
- Wider objectives for planning work, with environmental and social as well as economic criteria;
- A return to integrated transport and land use planning.

The 1994 version of PPG13 was a landmark document which aimed to completely alter the direction of urban change and growth in terms of transport impacts. It stated that in carrying out their planning responsibilities local authorities should aim to:

- Reduce the growth of motorised traffic;
- Encourage the use of modes with less environmental impact;
- Reduce reliance on the private car.

Implementation of PPG13 has been patchy, but the main policy remains strong. Since 1994 there has been very little wavering from the main principles, which command wide professional support. These principles have found expression in other actions. Since 1994 we have seen, for example:

- A change of Government!
- Revised PPGs which embrace or develop PPG13, including PPG6 for town centres and retailing (1995), and Housing (1999);
- Road Traffic Reduction Acts;
- The first Integrated Transport White Paper for 20 years;
- Targets for increased cycling and perhaps soon for walking;
- Local Transport Plans;
- Green Travel Plans within the planning framework;
- More flexible use of developer contributions.

### ***The new PPG13 Transport (consultation draft Oct 1999)***

The recently issued PPG13 may be characterised by a shift from land use and transport being “complementary” to being “integrated”. At least, this is the aim,

and the new document stresses four aspects where integration should take place:

1. *Within and between different types of transport;*
2. *With the environment;*
3. *With land use planning;*
4. *With policies for education, health and wealth creation.*

(paragraph 2)

I wish to highlight the following points:

- The guidance re-affirms the importance of planning to reduce the need to travel, especially by car;
- A new emphasis is that of “extending choice” in transport, but this is really the reverse of reducing reliance on the car;
- Accessibility is now clearly at the heart of planning, and planners will have to become much more actively involved in access and transport issues than they have previously been content with;
- The most important element of this, and indeed of the new guidance is the specification of “National Parking Maxima”;
- But the requirement for Transport Assessments to replace the old “voluntary” Traffic Impact Assessments (TIAs) is also a major step;
- Local Transport Plans are not just re-badged TPPs. They are a major part of the integrated approach, and must be developed alongside Development Plans.

### ***What’s still missing?***

There are still important pieces of the jigsaw missing. The following are needed:

- A policy to reduce traffic;
- A strong social basis for traffic reduction and improved alternatives;
- A proper mechanism for planning public transport;
- Increased transport investment and public transport subsidy;
- A charging regime that reflects costs, especially for private vehicle use (people and goods);
- Skills and competence in the new ways of transport planning;
- Public acceptance of and engagement in the new policy objectives.

### ***Conclusion***

The new PPG13 deserves a warm welcome. It provides broad guidance on how local authorities should conduct their planning duties and responsibilities in order to push forward the sustainable transport and development agendas.

The land use policy framework is now stronger and than we have seen for many years, perhaps ever.

Transport planning, the other half of the integration equation, however, is woefully inadequate to deliver the necessary quality. The profit-driven privatised and largely deregulated public transport system in particular is at odds with the concept of integrated transport and planning. All forms of transport remain under-funded, and there is a lack of vision to drive significant improvements.

Finally, do we now have the best policies and the worst practice in northern Europe?