

## Personal Travel Planning must focus on all household travel

Personal Travel Planning (PTP) is a potentially valuable tool for achieving mode shift away from the car driving, but are current projects cutting car use? The approach described by consultant WSP ('Is a hi-tech future the way ahead for personal travel planning' *LTT* 15 Nov), appears to be too limited in scope to draw any conclusions about the impact on driving.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund-delivered PTP projects apparently are "primarily focused on the journey to work". But if a car commuter switches to another mode, that leaves a car at home available for use by other household members during the daytime. Therefore unless the evaluation includes *all* household travel, the net effect on driving cannot be established.

So why target only work trips? The early soft measures were 'green commuter plans' and the focus on work journeys has persisted into 'Smarter Choices' practice, no doubt because work trips account for a high proportion of peak-hour traffic, and congestion is often the main concern. But work trips now account for only 26% of all distance driven, and so PTP that is limited to work trips leaves the rump of traffic untouched. Moreover, if mode switch is achieved only for peak hour work trips, this may further exacerbate the "peakiness" of public transport demand, which is bad for viability, which in turn leads to worse off-peak services and a higher car mode share for non-work trips.

In order to embrace environmental and social inclusion objectives as well as traffic congestion, the target must be total driving, and PTP should therefore address all household travel, not just that by individuals who drive to work. If the scope of PTP projects is being constrained by lack of resources, wouldn't it be better to target and monitor a smaller number of households properly? Once the benefits of particular actions in particular circumstances have been clearly demonstrated, it may then be reasonable to relax a bit on the evaluation of projects involving larger numbers.

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