

## **Transport Theme**

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### **A. Background, Summary of Research**

West London has been the subject of a number of reports and studies in recent years tackling the issue of transport and accessibility. This study has paid particular attention to the following:

- “A transport manifesto for West London”, West London Transport Forum, 2003
- West London Transport Strategy – Borough Spending Plan 2004/05 – 2006/07
- “Sub Regional Development Frameworks: West Sub-Region – problems and opportunities”, Llewelyn Davies for Transport for London, 2003.
- “Delivering Integrated Transport in West London”, West London Leadership, 1997.
- “Green Areas Plan”, MTRU, 1997.
- The Mayor’s Plan for London (2004) and Transport Strategy for London (2002)

### **B. Strategic Context**

The London Plan produced by the GLA for the Mayor (2004) emphasises a sub-regional approach to development and transport. The Transport Strategy may also be revised to reflect this approach. The economic development strategy for London being pursued by the LDA is also understood to be following a sub regional approach. In addition to these London focussed processes and plans there is a range of guidance at the regional and national levels that will have a bearing on what is produced at the West London Level, including guidance produced for the South East region beyond the West London boundary.

This represents the strategic framework (or set of frameworks) within which the West London Economic Development Strategy sits. It is therefore appropriate to build on what has already evolved.

The London Plan 2004 sets out a policy to ensure the integration of transport and development by:

- Encouraging patterns and forms of development that reduce the need to travel especially by car;

- Seeking to improve public transport capacity and accessibility where it is needed, for areas of greatest demand and areas designated for development and regeneration, including the Thames Gateway, Central Activities Zone, Opportunity Areas, Areas for Intensification and town centres;
- In general, supporting high trip generating development only at locations with both high levels of public transport accessibility and capacity, sufficient to meet the transport requirements of the development. Parking provision should reflect levels of public transport accessibility.

In addition, the Transport Strategy includes a set of schemes and policies that are designed to tackle existing problems, not just those arising from employment and housing growth. In outer London, the Strategy aims to promote the transfer from cars to public transport, walking and cycling. A range of public transport, interchange and other measures are planned to help bring this about. These are listed in the second part of this paper. It is recognised that local transport improvements will be important, both as a complement to strategic rail schemes and as a means of delivering results in the shorter term.

Particular emphasis is given in the London planning documents to exploiting the growth potential of Heathrow, to focusing retail, leisure and other trip generating activities in the town centres, and to regenerating or intensifying key areas within west London such as Hayes, Park Royal and Wembley. This is picked up in the objectives set out below.

### **C. Broad Data Position**

#### *Population and jobs*

West London's population was in decline until the 1990s, but by 2001 was back to a level higher than in 1961 (1.4 million in 2001). Population is forecast to continue to increase, by 139,000 (an increase of 10%) between 2001 and 2016. Jobs are expected to grow by 86,000 over the same period, a growth of 11%.

#### *Total journeys*

Altogether about 4 million journeys a day start in the West sub region, and a similar number of return trips are made, altogether over 8 million daily trips, not including those that pass through the sub region. Of these trips, 29% are journeys to work, with about half of these being made in the peak period (7-10am and 4-7pm).

Trips by car account for about 55% of all daily journeys within west London, although the percentage will be higher in the outer boroughs, and lower in the inner boroughs. The car also accounts for the majority of travel between the west sub region and adjacent sub regions. For travel outside London the car accounts for 86% of trips. Travel to the central sub region (wider than just central London) public transport accounts for the majority of trips (56%).

The majority (71%) of private motorised trips starting in west London also finish in West London. 8% are to the Central sub-region and 13% are to places outside London (probably mostly the Thames Valley).

For public transport trips the pattern is different. Central sub region is the focus for a much higher proportion (31%) of public transport trips starting in West London. Internal public transport trips are a correspondingly smaller proportion (54%).

For the 71% of trips wholly within the west sub region, the mode split is as follows:

Car and other private motor vehicle	55%
Public transport	16%
Non motorised travel	29%

#### *Journey lengths*

Most trips are short. In London, about 1 in 5 trips are less than 1 kilometre, and 2 out of 3 are less than 5 kilometres (about 3 miles). Car driver trips vary greatly in length, with 13% under 1 km, and 5% over 50kms.

#### *Journeys to work*

Travel to work probably is the trip purpose of most interest to the business community. Some basic facts (2001) regarding the journey to work by employed residents of west London are:

- 40% of employed residents drive to work
- 26% travel by rail (mostly out of the sub region)
- 10% go by bus (probably mostly within the sub region)
- Of the remainder, 7% walk, 2% cycle, and 9% work at home

Hillingdon has the highest proportion in London (60%) of employed residents travelling to work by car. Moreover, two thirds of Hillingdon's jobs are filled by non-residents, most of whom travel to work by car. However, employment densities are higher in the other west London boroughs (except Harrow).

#### *Length of journeys*

Data not (readily) available for west London sub region.

#### *Rail overcrowding*

Overcrowding on the national rail commuter lines in the morning peak will be more severe in 2016 than now, even with Crossrail 1 (assuming it served Hayes, Heathrow and Harrow lines). Overcrowding on the Underground network in West London is expected to be similar to today, again assuming Crossrail 1 is built.

### *Access to centres*

Accessibility to major or metropolitan centres by public transport is poor in much of the outer part of West London. The eastern part of the sub region is within 30 minutes journey time by public transport to one or more centres. But large areas of the sub region have no centre accessible within 30 minutes by public transport, especially Hillingdon, and parts of Hounslow and Harrow.

### *Access to public transport*

Accessibility to public transport services is relatively poor for the outer parts of the sub region, particularly much of Harrow and Hillingdon, south west Hounslow, and the Ealing-Hounslow borders. There are even inner parts of the sub region poorly served, such as the Chiswick peninsular, south Fulham, and the Brent-Barnet borders.

### *Road congestion*

Although road congestion is widely believed to a constraint on economic growth, the West sub region does have the fastest journey speeds by road of the five sub regions. However, the prospects for the future are of steady deterioration. A 19% increase in vehicle travel time is forecast for 2016, only part of which explained by the expected increase in vehicle distance travelled of 11%. Speeds are expected to drop by 7% over the period, compared to -4% for London as a whole. Delays in vehicle hours are expected to increase by almost a third. All of these projections assume the full implementation of the public transport and other transport measures in the London Transport strategy.

### *Pollution*

Air pollution is poor, although with the exception of Carbon Dioxide it was expected to improve between 2001 and 2005, due mainly to improved engine efficiency. Noise is a significant problem

Huge increases in public transport use are forecast. Passenger kms on national rail are expected to increase by two thirds (mainly due to Crossrail), although kms travelled in crowded conditions are expected to increase by 18%. Passenger kms on the Underground are expected to increase by a quarter, although the number of passenger hours spent in crowded conditions is expected to fall by 10% (mostly due to transfer to Crossrail). Passenger kms by bus are expected to rise by almost a third.

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## D. HEADLINE PROPOSITIONS AND OBJECTIVES

### ***Headline propositions***

The objectives for west London follow on from three headline propositions.

1. Improving urban quality by reducing the negative impacts of traffic is an important means of fostering and sustaining economic growth;
2. Travel generated by population and employment growth will lead to a deterioration of urban quality unless there is a proportionate shift away from car travel, to travel by other means;
3. Both the business and social environment will benefit from better accessibility between homes, jobs and facilities.

### ***Strategic objectives (and related topics)***

Strategic objectives are set out, against which actions and projects specific to West London can be tested and evaluated. They include objectives in the form of personal and corporate aspirations and choices. The topic headings for related actions are given in brackets.

#### Priority objectives for business

1. Reduce congestion, pollution and community severance so that neither businesses nor residents in West London feel compelled to locate or relocate outside London to avoid poor environmental conditions.  
(Traffic and demand management)
2. Plan transport and development together so that people employed in West London can live within 30 minutes public transport (or walk) travel time of their workplace, and so that businesses can to recruit staff from within a 30 minutes public transport catchment.  
(Accessibility planning and Public transport planning))
3. Protect buses (and trams) from delays caused by other traffic as of right, in compensation for the economic and commercial handicap imposed on them by current methods of paying for the use of private cars. Road user charging throughout West London could be an alternative to this objective.  
(Traffic planning and management)
4. Increase the reliability and convenience of freight and deliveries. Remove from residential and town centre areas activities that generate large volumes of heavy goods vehicle traffic, and rationalise the movement of other goods traffic including delivery systems.  
(Accessibility planning and logistics)

5. Ensure that parking is always available at a price, subject to time limits in town centres and around railway stations.  
(Parking management)

#### Other Objectives

6. No one in West London with normal travel requirements should feel dependent on the car for journeys within the main built-up area of London. Alternatives should be improved accordingly.  
(Transport and accessibility planning)
7. Travel to Central London should be enhanced. People should be able to reach central London quickly and reliably and in uncrowded conditions.
8. To provide high quality access by non-car means to all town centres and main employment concentrations.
9. As a specific objective, people and businesses should be able to reach Heathrow easily and directly.
10. To direct the management and development of the road network within West London towards the requirements of short-distance traffic, with the exception of a limited network of routes connecting to the national Trunk and Motorway network.  
(Traffic planning and management)
11. To invest heavily in the quality as well as the capacity of public transport serving west London destinations, as a means of attracting car users.  
(Public transport planning)
12. People should find public transport easy and good to use, without incurring severe time or cost penalties for interchanging between services.
13. To continue to improve the quality of residential and other areas by extending speed management and street design measures.  
(Road and traffic planning and management)
14. To employ parking control and other measures of traffic limitation that, as far as possible, are not favourable to long distance journeys by car.  
(Traffic and parking management)
15. TRANSPORT SYSTEM OBJECTIVES

*These are fairly generic objectives, but local authority plans should address them. The relative priority attached to meeting these objectives will be a major issue, especially in deciding investment priorities.*

- Better rail reliability (currently not within control of WL authorities)
- Reduced rail overcrowding (ditto)
- Better air quality (currently the worst in London)
- Better integration of public transport services, fares and information
- Better bus reliability
- Protection of buses from delays caused by other road users, especially on the inner borough road networks (Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham) where reliability is poorer.
- Better quality bus services: waiting facilities, vehicles, information etc.
- Better walking conditions according to the “Five Cs” criteria, not just safety
- Better provision for and encouragement of cycling

## ***Objectives and their rationale***

The above objectives are repeated in the accompanying table with the rationale behind them and further explanation.

## ***Strategic choices***

We set out below, in no particular order, a number of issues that have been raised concerning strategic choices and programmes. They will need to be clarified and debated, so that the necessary strategic choices can be made. The case for transport resources will be weakened if there is disagreement about the strategy within the Partnership.

- Increasing provision for private cars (roads and parking) is inconsistent with a policy of promoting the use of public transport. *A choice has to be made.*
- Advocating expensive strategic rail schemes such as Crossrail could result in fewer resources (planning and construction as well as financial) being available for other schemes serving west London such as West London Tram, Heathrow Express local services, bus and interchange development. *A choice has to be made.*
- Actions to alleviate problems arising from present activity may not be the same as those to serve extra jobs and homes. For example, West London Tram will serve mostly existing activity rather than the major areas of intensification and regeneration identified in the London Plan. *A choice has to be made.*
- Major schemes involving significant infrastructure will inevitably take time to implement, and will absorb resources that could be deployed on a larger number of smaller scale measures, and over a wider area. *A choice has to be made.*
- Priorities between schemes for investment; short, medium and long term. Transport strategy will not consist only of “investment” projects. Management of roads and parking, and pricing and fares may have equal importance. *A choice needs to be made as to the balance between these different approaches.*
- A specific problem is Crossrail. Because of uncertainties, we need a “Plan B”. But if our objectives can be met with Plan B, then the case for Plan A is diminished. *Has anyone demonstrated the value-added to business in West London?*
- Which trips are to be restrained (and by implication which trips to be switched to public transport, walking and cycling), or what traffic to be restrained. Journey to work by car in West London is a clear target, but the rationale needs to be developed. Our preference is to target long distance car journeys (because they generate most traffic) and very short car journeys (because

they are relatively easy to replace, and because they cause disruption out of proportion to their utility. *Choices will need to be made.*

- Development density and quality of life: this is a very broad debate that affects the entire country. We would be content to follow the general policy thrust of the Urban Task Force, CABE, and the Communities Plan that higher density can bring many benefits providing that it is implemented with high quality design and integration with local services, including transport services.
- Air quality is a critical issue for Heathrow expansion, linked to quality of life objectives. It underpins the need for traffic limitation.
- Distinction can be made between objectives (or at least schemes) for handling travel growth and solving existing travel problems. To some extent the two are linked. Town centre actions will have the twin purpose of solving present problems while creating the right conditions of accessibility and environmental quality to underpin the expansion of business and employment in the town centres rather than in less accessible locations. However, the restructuring of business space (existing and new) according to accessibility criteria does not seem to have been understood as an objective. *The choices must be clarified at the local planning level, and choices made.*
- Disagreements are emerging (inevitably). There is resistance to traffic limitation, for example through parking policy. There is also pressure for increased road capacity. These are fundamentally at odds with the transport strategy as it is emerging. *A clear choice will be needed.*
- Parking in new developments is subject to maximum limits in the London Plan and national planning guidance. There are concerns, however, that local authorities outside London could, by allowing higher levels of parking, gain competitive advantage in attracting inward investment. On the other hand, if higher levels of parking are allowed in West London to counter this threat, the strategy to improve overall living and travel conditions will be seriously threatened. *A choice must be made.*

### ***Priorities between the transport objectives***

The five objectives regarded as most important from a business perspective are separated in the list of objectives. These could be promoted as having top priority for investment and action.

The objectives listed in almost every case satisfy the following criteria:

- Feasible, and can be influenced by business
- Can be achieved in the next 10 years
- Can have an affect in the short to medium term
- Important for supporting economic growth
- Important for solving present problems



## ***Delivery***

The influence of west London authorities and partnerships varies between different types of action. On some issues, such as rail investment, they will be lobbying Government and transport providers (e.g. SRA, TfL). On other issues they will have greater power to act, for example on bus priority, parking standards and management, cycle provision, walking networks and public realm improvements.

The relative influence on delivery could be an important factor in drawing up the EDS. For example, it might be risky to adopt a strategy that relies too heavily on measures over which West London bodies have no decision making power.

The key issue, however, is for the strategy to command widespread support and acceptance across the business community, and amongst the local authorities and other partners. Without this, the sub-region runs the risk of being sidelined when resource decisions are being made.