

Moving towards smarter travel?

LTP3 and Smarter Travel Choice assessment study


The Government and Local Councils in England are failing to roll out value for money measures proven to cut traffic and carbon emissions, despite the advice of their expert adviser the Committee on Climate Change.

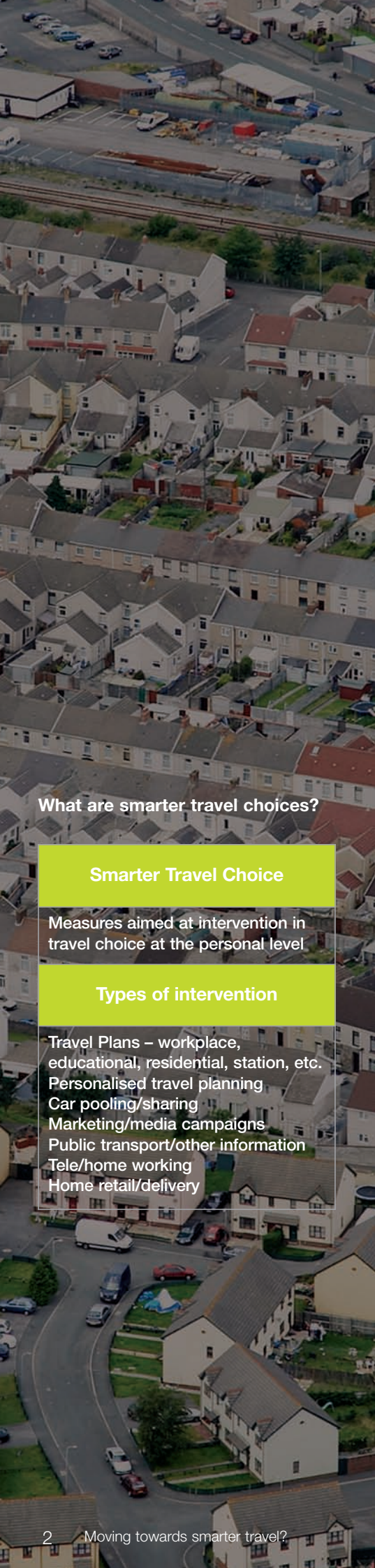
This is an executive summary of a report produced for Sustrans and Friends of the Earth that provides an objective, quantitative assessment of the latest Local Transport Plans. It reveals how much Central Government funding is being invested by English Local Authorities in proven and effective ways of achieving more sustainable travel.

The full report, prepared by Robin Hickman (Halcrow Group and Transport Studies Unit) and Tim Pharoah (Independent), can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk and www.foe.co.uk



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Introduction

The transition towards sustainable travel is proving difficult, with a growing gap between actual CO₂ emissions from transport and the reductions necessary to meet carbon targets in the near and long-term. It is recognised that meeting these targets relies on making significant changes to people's travel behaviour.

Smarter Travel Choice (STC) programmes encourage and enable people to plan their journeys better and increase the number of journeys made by foot, bike and public transport. These programmes were successfully trialled (between 2004-2009) by the Department for Transport in the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns of Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester and achieved significant reductions in CO₂ emissions through reductions in car journey distance of 5-7% and increases in trips by foot, bike and public transport.

The third round of Local Transport Plan (LTP3) submissions are the primary tool for local authorities to implement the kinds of steps necessary to achieve a shift to more sustainable travel. Central Government funding is available to invest in increasing the uptake of STCs to reduce carbon emissions and congestion and improve sustainable access to everyday destinations such as workplaces and schools.

Analysis of LTP3 submissions reveals whether Government ambitions to achieve a shift away from car use is actually being delivered at the local level through investment in proven and effective measures like STCs. The report is based on analysis of 27 out of a total of 80 LTP's including a representative sample of metropolitan, joint, unitary and county authorities.

LTP3 funding is made available from 2011-15 and comprises four grant streams totalling funding of more than £6.3 billion. Of this, more than £4.5 billion is available for spending on STC and infrastructure via the Integrated Transport

Block, Highways Maintenance Block and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

The reduction in funding for LTP3 (2011-15) relative to the previous funding period LTP2 (2008-11) is marked. Comparing LTP3 average allocation **total LTP funding has reduced by an average of 29%.**

Data from the research reveals that the levels of STC funding within LTP3* are extremely low at around £0.70 per head compared to £5.65 per head invested in the successful English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town pilots.

The reasons why the Government's commitment to sustainable travel is not being realised through local transport plans are varied, but include:

- **Non ring-fencing of funds** enabling local authorities to spend funding on their chosen priorities rather than national strategic targets. In 2010-11 Kent transferred about a third (£5.35 million) of their Integrated Transport Block allocation (which is where funding for STC would normally come from) to its Highway Maintenance budget to fund road improvements and repairs; Buckinghamshire and other authorities have followed a similar approach.

- **Investment in road-building** can be high. Kent has identified investment in major highway schemes worth at least £210 million, the equivalent of 40 years of their current Integrated Transport Block spending.

- **Reduction in funding from other Government sources for bus services** is resulting in funding from local transport funds being used to keep bus services in operation. In Merseyside the expenditure on subsidised bus services (not including concessionary fares subsidy) is equivalent to 80% of the total LTP3 expenditure.

What are smarter travel choices?

Smarter Travel Choice

Measures aimed at intervention in travel choice at the personal level

Types of intervention

- Travel Plans – workplace, educational, residential, station, etc.
- Personalised travel planning
- Car pooling/sharing
- Marketing/media campaigns
- Public transport/other information
- Tele/home working
- Home retail/delivery

- **The Local Sustainable Transport Fund will go only some way towards filling the funding gap left by cuts.**

Whilst very welcome, this ring-fenced funding stream is not embedded within a wider strategic process for improving sustainable travel for local journeys. Even added to what is on average being spent on STCs it is not enough, to match the level of spend on STCs in the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns, estimated at £5.65 per capita per year. The LSTF, if distributed by population rather than the bidding process, would provide £2.08 per capita per year for STC's. With most LTPs having no or low levels of spending on these measures, total spending on STCs will fall a long way short of what's necessary.

Findings

- **Despite the strong recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), delivering sustainable transport is a low priority for local authorities, with spending on STCs a mere fraction of that in the successful English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town pilots.**

Significant reductions in CO₂ emissions from transport are needed if the national target of a reduction of at least 34% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 is to be achieved. The advantage of STCs in helping to deliver these reductions is that they can be implemented now, require low investment in additional infrastructure, and deliver sustained and growing change

over time. Despite the CCC recommendation to roll-out STCs to cities and towns across the UK analysis of LTP3 reveals that just 12% per capita of the level of investment that made such measures successful in the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town pilots is identified.

- **Despite Central Government's stated commitment to sustainable travel, delivery at a local level is patchy at best - 'hands off' localism isn't delivering sustainable transport.**

The proposed expenditure on STCs is likely to be at very low levels in the next two to three years, typically at the level of 1-10% of total funding of the LTP3 process. While most LTP3 strategies acknowledge the importance and potential of STC measures, there are few significant committed programmes in place, and there is heavy reliance upon measures being financed through LSTF bids and/or from other non-LTP funding sources.

- **Research, monitoring and evaluation are often absent for the spending of more than £4.5 billion of Government money.** Monitoring of the impacts of the policies and programmes contained in LTPs is fairly rudimentary, and none of those assessed include comprehensive mode split data that would allow overall trends in travel behaviour to be followed. This means, amongst other things, that measuring the impact of STC funding or other contributions to CO₂ reduction targets can only be approximate. The lack

Nick Clegg at a Friends of the Earth public meeting in Sheffield ***"We are way behind, particularly compared to other European Countries in trying to provide incentives and infrastructure to encourage people out of their cars and onto sustainable public transport"*** (May 2011)

David Kennedy, Chief Executive of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), to Friends of the Earth ***"The Government should implement a phased national roll out of Smarter Travel Choices schemes across the UK"*** (Jan 2010)

Professor Julia King (CCC) at 'The Castle Debates 2011 – Sustainable Transport' ***"progress has been disappointing on the behaviour change front", "We're moving backwards." and "On behaviour change, it's not yet happening – it's a really challenging area for our politicians."*** (May 2011)

Summary of LTP3 funding analysed in the research (Excluding LSTF funding and other sources of funding outside of Integrated Transport Block and Maintenance Block LTP funding)

	Average LTP3 allocation, 2011/12-2014/15 (000s)	Average LTP3 allocation per capita (£)	Average Cut from LTP2	Average LTP2 allocation, 2008/09-2010/11 (000s)
*Average LTP3	16,560	21.1	-29%	23,238
Average Maintenance Block	9,008	12.6	-14%	10,445
Average Integrated Transport Block	7,342	8.4	-43%	12,793
Average STC Funding Per Capita	-	0.7	-	-
Average STC Per Capita Relative to STT	-	12%	-	-

*Averages relate to 16 authorities where direct comparisons are possible - comparisons between the remaining authorities was not possible because of the inconsistency of data.



of comprehensive travel data at the user level means that at best trends can only be reported by proxy. Government bodies have a duty of care to ensure that public money is well used, yet at the technical level the monitoring of impacts is less than robust.

- **Transport emissions vary considerably across local areas and local authorities are falling short on delivering their share of the CO₂ reductions needed from transport.** Significant reductions in CO₂ emissions need to be made from transport if the transport sector is to contribute a ‘fair share’ of national targets. Local authorities are able to contribute to reductions in emissions by delivering STCs, that can deliver reductions quickly and cost-effectively, with support and incentives from central Government. If this is to be achieved on an equitable basis, then some areas have a very long way to go, needing a reduction in transport emissions of up to 90%.

Key Recommendations

- **Government at all levels must ensure that funding levels for Smarter Travel Choices are at least those in the English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns pilots of £5.65 per capita per year, in order to deliver the repeated recommendation for a national roll out by the Committee on Climate Change.**
- **Local authorities should produce climate change strategies for their local area to ensure that Government targets for cutting carbon emissions from transport are met and the commitment to sustainable transport realised.**
- **Central Government should provide incentives for local authorities to improve local transport by evaluating outcomes delivered from past Local Transport Plans. This would both inform cost-effective use of future funding and maximise accountability to local communities.**