

Future of Mobility in Counties

Smart Mobility Roundtables 16 June 2020

Placemaking

This report documents the ninth in a series of roundtable discussions organised by the Smart Mobility Unit at the University of Hertfordshire and sponsored by Department for Transport and others. The format was a 120 minute virtual meeting via WebEx due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

1.0 Participants

There were 29 participants in total. Sectors represented were: national, sub-regional and local government, innovation, mobility provider, transport consultancy, academic research, and non-governmental organisations. Stephen Joseph chaired the discussion.

2.0 Aim

Many counties are facing pressure for new housing. Hertfordshire for example is looking at nearly 100,000 homes planned across the county in the next 20 years. In this context the roundtable examined the following questions:

- How can these developments be made sustainable in transport, environmental, economic and social terms and avoid building in dependence on cars?
- What is needed to join up planning and housing in areas outside the cities?
- And what does this mean for the future of transport in these areas?

3.0 Papers and links circulated in advance

Presentations

Lynda Addison, FCIHT MTPS	Improving what we do. Better planning, better transport, better places.
Jenny Raggett	Visions and Reality, Garden Villages and Garden Towns: which will we actually build?

Papers

Anthony Downs	Placemaking and Transport at Gascoyne Estates
Guidance from CIHT, TPS, RTPI	https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4_updated_linked_.pdf
Robin Pointon, Go Travel Solutions	Is DRT the answer for new housing schemes? (Roundtable presentation 11 June 2020)
Transport for New Homes	Visions and Reality, Garden Villages and Garden Towns: which will we actually build? (2020) Foundation for Integrated Transport https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/garden-village-visions.pdf

4.0 Presentations

4.1 Lynda Addison

The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) decided a few years ago to coordinate with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Transport Planning Society (TPS) to fill a gap in existing guidance on how to integrate planning and transport¹. This sits within the current National Planning Policy Framework

¹ https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4_updated_linked_.pdf

(NPPF) and regulations. Rather than aim to change planning policy or planning law, the purpose was to help people work within these more effectively. The guidance was produced by a diverse group of people and is designed to meet the needs of professionals and communities. The guidance was launched in August 2019 to very positive feedback.

The guidance exploits the local plan and strategic policies framework in the NPPF. The focus for all local authorities should be for the local plan to drive the right decisions on transport and planning integration. The local plan should express a vision for place within a 15-20 year framework, rather than express the future in terms of housing allocations or individual land use decisions. The local plan needs to establish policies, measures and indicators and use a clear evidence base to address and integrate transport into the vision and all aspects of the local plan in an interactive way.

The vision must relate to a geographical area that makes sense and may therefore cross the boundaries of the local authority. The vision should be aligned with the local investment strategy and include integrated transport from the outset. The strategy should reflect the issues and concerns of the local community depending on local demographics such as health, jobs and the environment.

The key recommendation is that the local plans should establish locations which are either accessible already or can be made so and set out the mode shares and accessibility levels required as part of the planning process for delivery. The evidence base is multi-criteria and looks at whole aspects of place and society for the next 15-20 years.

It is important the local plan contains a clear integrated network of routes for walking, cycling and public transport for the life of the plan. This should then be delivered over the life of the plan as early as possible.

We can't continue with a predict and provide approach because so much less is predictable now. A small team has looked at how to get transport appraisal and assessment to change away from predict and provide and be more flexible.

The local plan is not just a document for local planning decisions but also for what the local authority wants to deliver in terms of a vision. So actions should be integrated into the infrastructure delivery plan, kept up to date and integrated into the local development partnership. The local plan should therefore be a living document.

We need elements of the NPPF, such as 'severe' and 'significant' impacts, to be defined properly for the local geographical area covered by the plan so ensuring a clear link to outcomes in terms of health and economic viability and transport accessibility to services.

Following publication, the CIHT, TPS and RTPI are now looking at education and capacity building so that it can become the norm that planning and transport are developed in an integrated way in all local authorities. Pre-Covid there were discussions underway with DfT and MHCLG about the need for a capacity building programme. Work is underway to further the impact of guidance. This includes: developing the consortium, producing a visual toolkit for communities with the Royal College of Art, developing sustainability indicators and assessment methodologies and looking at how to fit into the decarbonisation agenda. At present the DfT paper on decarbonisation does not refer to planning which is a key omission that must be addressed.

4.2 Jenny Raggett

New research into twenty garden towns and villages² published by Transport for New Homes (TfNH) addresses the separation of planning and transport in the UK. The report is based on site visits rather than using purely desk-based research, following the approach adopted in the first Transport for New Homes report in 2018³ which examined twenty new housing estates.

² <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/garden-village-visions.pdf>

³ <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/transport-for-new-homes-summary-web.pdf>

The 2018 Prospectus for Garden Communities looked very good when published, especially in terms of integrating transport. Cars were only mentioned in relation to autonomous vehicles and there was no mention of road building. TfNH examined the visions submitted for the garden communities and visited places which have been built or where work is underway. Mostly these were garden towns but there were also some garden villages. We also looked at the funding bids.

We found some very good visions, exactly on target for the kinds of places TfNH would like to see. But the actual bids and planning documents paint a very different picture. We found lots of bypasses, link roads and enlarged road systems to cope with the anticipated increase in demand for thousands of car trips by new residents. We also found new and expanded motorway junctions. So there is a mismatch between vision and delivery. These garden communities are being marketed on the basis of location on the Strategic Road Network for commuting. The designs anticipate a high demand for car parking and provide layouts oriented around car use. We found severance in some places, where in order to walk or cycle out of the developments people would need to go over motorway junctions or under main roads in tunnels. No conventional public transport will be delivered either because it is unfunded or the developments are in the wrong places to serve by public transport. The basic problem of how to serve dispersed settlement patterns with public transport has not been attended to.

The report recommends that the primary remedy is choosing the right location, followed by very tight project management that is accountable to the public and a funding model that can realise the visions set out in the original documents. If outline planning permission leaves all the details to reserved matters then a large portion of the vision, particularly sustainable transport, evaporates at the development stage.

The report concludes with an ask - now is the time for government to look again at Garden Villages and see how to make them so that people can live day to day without relying on a car for everything. We also need a legal duty to deliver Net Zero and active lifestyles. This is essential otherwise we are simply building in car dependency for the next 20 to 30 years.

4.3 Anthony Downs

Gascoyne Estates began 15-20 years ago with Herts CC facing pressure to build 100,000s new homes and they could see that to do this sensitively would need more than just delivering on housing numbers. Debates followed. Collaboration is very important. We need to collaborate with ICE, DfT, RTP1 and UoH and consultancies like CoMoUK, other professional bodies and WSP.

We recognise that a housing crisis exists and ask ourselves how as a landowner we can best respond. We decided to take an active role and lead the debate for a more aspirational vision.

Now we are promoting developments on sites in Welwyn Hatfield District Council with 4000 homes including public realm, schools and public spaces. We want to apply technical rigour and follow best practice. We have led charrettes to facilitate discussion with local and national government at UoH and with the local community. We welcome debate and discussion. Our key message is this is not just about housing. Desirable places clearly have facilities, sports clubs, public parks and access to the countryside. How can we do this with new places and create some good exemplars? We need these in order to learn. We need to look beyond the red line of the site boundary. The problem with the planning system at present is that it does not do this.

We have a good relationship with the District and County Councils but we sympathise with criticisms of the costs and delays inherent in the existing system. Gascoyne Estates is fortunate in not having to assemble multiple parcels of land with multiple owners. It is very hard to get agreement on a single vision. There are resource problems in local government meaning that there is a lack of passion, low expectations and shortage of time at officer level. The planning system needs to be properly resourced. There is a separate debate about how and where the system should be resourced, whether from national government or developer contributions.

We need a 15-20 year vision but these timescales rarely fit the conventional housebuilders' models. The preference is to play safe with a "quick in quick out" approach. They have a duty to serve their shareholders. Local government is the same, with councillors focussed on the next election. This means that looking at parking standards can be very controversial and there is not much local commitment for improvements. But if we need attractive neighbourhoods it needs to be addressed.

We need to work together in order to:

- overturn the sense that everything is too hard and can't be done
- look to European examples
- Explore opportunities and work with new individuals to embed good practice.

The village model isn't necessarily broken but villages grew up historically because of a good resources in a particular location (rivers for example). Access is clearly still key and we should be choosing locations carefully.

Gascoyne Estates is still two to three years away from breaking ground on new build but we are very committed, as we know we will be judged by future generations and we want to deliver at the highest quality for the future. We are not simply a vanity project. We want to raise the bar on quality of new settlements and provide a commercially viable model that will be relevant for other developers to follow.

5.0 Overview of discussion

Detailed comments from the spoken dialogue and the live chat are recorded in section 6.

5.1 Geographical Definitions

The French concepts of agglomeration and peri-urban were suggested for some of the geographies under discussion, to distinguish them from rural areas. Largely peri-urban counties like Hertfordshire have much scope for walking and cycling between settlements, particularly with wider adoption of e-bikes, if suitable routes can be developed. Transport policy in cities determines a great deal of travel behaviour from and through non-urban areas.

5.2 Case Studies

Participants shared relevant case study experience, including an ecotown that has developed into a garden town, a new housing development with a travel plan and demand responsive transport and a county council implementing bold measures in high streets for Covid-19 social distancing.

5.3 Garden Villages

There was a short exchange contrasting a 'garden' veneer approach with the value of a longer term design process involving the local community. There was support for the assertion that bold strategic visions are often rejected by decision makers and officers at the planning stage.

5.4 Rail and Light Rail

Tracked public transport has a strong appeal to car drivers who would never consider using a bus. Garden villages and towns provide opportunities for transit oriented development where there is scope for rail reopening on existing alignments or potential for new routes.

5.5 New Developments

Differing views on layouts and designs for car parking in new developments were expressed. Consideration needs to be given to designing suitable parking for e-bikes. There need to be different ways to plan walking and cycling in new developments to give access to networks of local routes rather than stopping at the site boundary.

5.6 Covid-19

In common with other roundtables in the series, the impact of coronavirus was discussed. Emerging evidence suggests a desire to move out of big cities and flight away from public transport which would imply longer commuting distances and increased car dependency. There is expected to be a sustained increase in home

working for some, making community hubs in smaller settlements more viable. There was strong agreement that the public's new found appreciation of walking and cycling in quieter streets during lockdown, combined with recent measures to allow social distancing in high streets, provide an unparalleled opportunity to make rapid strides with active travel.

5.7 Transport Assessments including a quick win

There was agreement that these are no longer fit for purpose for a wide range of reasons: trip rates and cycle data are out of date; wider context is ignored; prioritises motorised traffic flow; no severe category for walking and cycling. Mobility documents are more flexible, user-centric and can specify longer term measures for modal shift. Adopting Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans as Supplementary Planning Guidance will help, but to get things moving in the immediate short term there was a suggestion to prepare some examples which transport planners could start to 'crib' from straight away. It was recommended that these examples should start with different assumptions and use available tools for walking and cycling infrastructure.

5.8 Planning System and Delivery models

There was a mix of views as to whether the planning system can bring about meaningful change. Some felt that changing planning practice and working more closely with communities could deliver on decarbonisation and liveability but were concerned that pressure to deliver housebuilding volume could undermine progress. Another view was that the current approach to planning is incapable of delivering the step change in mobility required to reach Net Zero by 2050.

There was an extensive discussion of different delivery models for new development. Suggestions ranged from strengthening the planning system and using the local plan to integrate all public service delivery, to different models to forward fund infrastructure: development corporations (new towns) vs the stewardship or mutual model (garden cities) via ground rent. Where there is a large private landowner with a long term vision, masterplanning can work very well indeed. The need for quick returns undermines quality.

5.9 Embedded Patterns and Solutions

There was an impassioned plea not to focus solely on new developments, given the enormous challenge of achieving Net Zero. There was a thoughtful and honest discussion of embedded behaviours and institutional processes which reinforce dispersed patterns of living and high car dependency. This elicited a rich set of suggestions for achieving better placemaking including some visionary and aspirational recommendations.

6.0 Detailed notes of Discussion by Roundtable Participants

The following abbreviations indicate the sector making comments:

ACAD	Academic
CC	County council
CONS	Consultant
DEV	Developer
GOV	National government.
INNOV	Innovation sector
LEP	Local Economic Partnership
MOB	Mobility services
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PRO	Professional institution
REGG	Regional transport body

[CHAT] denotes written contributions made in real time during the spoken dialogue.

6.1 Geographical definitions

Counties or rural and peri-urban places

CONS1:[CHAT] I question whether we are really covering rural areas. Hertfordshire to me is widely spread urban; as the French would say 'agglomeration' or 'peri-urbain'. This needs a different understanding of how we should treat it in terms of further development and especially on transport.

ACAD4:[CHAT] Much of England is like Hertfordshire, mix of market towns, villages and rural areas in between. Herts is different with new towns and edge of city, but see Cheshire/N Warwickshire etc. Risk of "rural" is people jump to Norfolk or Cornwall.

GOV3:[CHAT] I think French would say "peri-urbain" rather than agglomeration for Hertfordshire. Transport in French peri-urbain is indeed complicated issue from planner to users as often thought following city approach in a context that does not meet all the dense urban criteria.

DEV:[CHAT] We often fall into the trap of describing Hertfordshire as 'rural' when in reality the distances between settlements are small. A good example is the distances between Hertford, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and St Albans - the distances between each are small and end to end you are talking perhaps eight miles - not a huge distance if one is trying to hook up towns and villages with a viable public transport service. It isn't the Highlands! Many other areas of the UK are similar.

6.2 Case studies

Eco-Town example

CONS5: Worked on a garden town on the edge of Bicester and faced significant problems and on the eco-towns challenge panel. The local council persisted and got the vision for the eco-town into the local plan to enable placemaking and sustainable development. The developer and local authority did all they could to ensure that the eco-towns planning policy statement was included in the local plan (even though that PPS was later ditched by national government).

The site was chosen at the intersection of two railway lines and allocated 40% of the site as space for nature. The approach was very holistic. The masterplan is for 6000 homes but ten years on and only 400 homes have been built (by Dominion and Crest Nicholson) to the NW of the town. Lots of infrastructure is needed: office hub, cycle links, bus services. These need to be paid for up front which makes it hard for developers. Not all the costs should be put on developers some must come from government. We have no modal shift data yet but there are people using the cycle route and the bus to access the station but there are still lots of cars. EV charging points were an optional add on for the purchaser.

Buses are too rambling locally to provide a viable return service into Oxford or other employment centres (the latter are too dispersed and not near public transport). So it is very hard to access jobs from the eco-town without a car. Bicester has had the most construction of anywhere in Europe.

CONS4:[CHAT] I see Jenny visited Bicester. We have worked on the Bicester eco-town NW Bicester, Elmsbrook which became a garden town. We chose the location for good rail transport, but buses are not great. So we put in an e-bus to station & high street and cycle route in to station and high street with bromptons available. And e car charging available. Even with all that it is still difficult for a developer and a local authority as the buses are not great to Oxford and employment centres are also quite spread out. It's a cultural, habit issue. We also used the charrette and action plan agreed with stakeholders approach using one planet living framework to ensure a joined up approach to enabling sustainable living, local economy and community.

CONS5:[CHAT] And here is the Eco Towns work which informed the ecotowns PPS, which was scrapped in summer 2015 but now included in Cherwell DC local planning policy for the NW Bicester site.⁴

New development with travel plan and DRT

CONS2: New Lubbethorpe is 4150 homes, with occupation from 18months ago, 400 homes built. The scheme includes a travel plan coordinator for the development. The local landowner wants a legacy - like Gascoyne Estates. They have paid for a community pioneer worker with Churches Together programme from the beginning. There has been good collaboration with partners willing to be flexible. Public transport is currently DRT with ArrivaClick, whereas it had originally been planned to be fixed route bus. E-bike scheme is on the way. So the transport systems have evolved. With Covid-19 there is a desire to increase walking.

Making high streets Covid-19 safe

CC2:[CHAT] High Street social distancing measures have been met with a mixed response in Hertfordshire. We have been quite ambitious in what we have done and taken advantage of the public health guidance to avoid drawn out consultation in the first instance. Goes back to what has been said about needing politicians with longer than 4 year vision.

CC2: Because we know some people want to be able to socially distance on the high street, we took a bold decision to impose changes using public health as a justification. We didn't consult. We introduced measures and then asked for feedback and introduced tweaks. After the initial shock (people were affronted by the process) there were different outcomes in different places. In Knebworth which is a large village with a busy main road with not much in the way of shops to bring people in, people gave the county council lots of grief and the restrictions will probably be removed. In Hertford, the county town, on the first day people tried to remove cones but there is now general acceptance of the changes and there is are good grounds for hope that it will stay long enough for people to adapt and get use to it. We need to be bold and have broad shoulders and take flack from councillors. We are now in discussion with UoH to measure people's responses with behavioural science methods and learn lessons and apply that elsewhere. We will not be able to get away from all consultation processes but we might be able to let people "touch and feel" a new layout rather than get their views by presenting an abstract map or plan. Most people don't relate to changes in their day to day lives via unrelatable abstract plans.

PRO:[CHAT] Well done. Hope it works

DEV:[CHAT] The initiative described and the decision to take action and aim for aspirational change should be commended.

ACAD2:[CHAT]yes agree

6.3 Why garden villages are falling short

DEV:[CHAT] I think the term 'garden' village is a misnomer. Sadly it is probably an attempt to sum up bucolic images of Edwardian developments, Letchworth, Bournville etc. As you (TfNH) have identified, the majority of developments fall far short of the original visions. That said, the 'village' if sensibly located can still offer a model for mixed use settlements. There are ample examples in Europe of villages which are all connected to an integrated public transport system. Is the problem perhaps not with villages per se but the lack of linkages between transport and planning as well as an unduly short term approach to delivery?

ACAD2:[CHAT] Often developments dressed up as having 'garden' characteristics but this a veneer without really engaging with garden city principles. Work on charrettes, research and teaching really helps show how design for new place development and place retrofitting can and should be done in placemaking terms to much more fully develop sustainable urbanism based placemaking. Great to hear about how this was approached at Bicester eco-town.

CONS4:[CHAT] Currently working on a few garden town schemes to deliver on zero-carbon lifestyles. Agree with the disconnect between low-car Visions (D&A documents) and road-building (Transport Assessment

⁴ <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/what-makes-an-eco-town.pdf>

mitigation). Echoing speaker's point on some highway officers and/or local members pushing back on parking provision (not being enough) despite the sustainable visions agreed at more strategic level.

6.4 Rail and light rail

NGO3:[CHAT] Development along tram routes and light rail would be very useful. However it needs control over where one builds and coordination across boundaries. Trams and light rail, metros are very popular even with those who have cars because they are comfortable and beat the traffic plus no parking issues.

ACAD2:[CHAT] I hope we will explore more about the interplay between movement and place including transit oriented developments (TODs). NIC should look at garden villages and towns as opportunities related to reopening Beeching lines work.

CONS1:[CHAT] Re-opening Beeching is a perhaps misleading strap line. Tracked public transport has considerable potential for changing behaviour patterns, could be tramways very local rail, etc. and should use new routes as well as existing closed alignments. We want to look forward rather than back to 1960s history! And the French, whose speed of change in some areas has been spectacular, especially tramways and walking linked to development and regeneration of cities!

ACAD2:[CHAT] (Beeching reopening) can be part of the approach though. Can see that when walk in those areas up the East Coast. Terribly cut off and deprived. The lines are mostly still there so it's not going back to the 60s but recognising we still have infrastructure possibilities from that.

6.5 What do we build in new developments?

Parking

NGO2:[CHAT] I have a particular hang-up about residential parking - if the car parking isn't convenient to the household then the car will end up either parked on street and at worst parked on the footway. We probably also need to think about where we'll be happy parking our e-bikes - if someone nicks my old Raleigh that's £30 gone, I would feel very different about a £2200 e-bike

NGO4:[CHAT] There is a MasterPlan for an active travel village in Edinburgh - aim is to have secure cycle storage at every dwelling instead of drives and garages.

CONS3:[CHAT] On residential parking, can't we design human scale streets that designs out parking (other than the resulting revenue stream for sustainable travel

ACAD2:[CHAT] On parking front, another area where unexamined assumptions streets should be placed for car storage needs challenging.

NGO2:[CHAT] Returning to a world where 3 and 4 bed houses routinely had front gardens might help, as would building garages with doorways wide enough to get a modern car through.

NGO1:[CHAT] Garage doors - developer friends tell me that they ARE building bigger garages. This is having an effect on density in some contexts. And appears to be largely about accommodating SUV-type massive fuel consumption vehicles (maybe a few big electrics too...)

EV charging

LEP: Re EVs for new housing and whether we should build this in as standard is a good question. If you live rurally you need sustainable links to town centres not just for commuting. Access to jobs for young people in rural areas is a big issue.

CONS1:[CHAT] Technical solutions are a part of the mix but we need to make them widely accepted and common practice. I have a batch of solar panels on my roof and they actually give / save me cash - but none of my neighbours will have them as 'they make the house look different' [they don't in my view]. New developments could install them universally.

Walking, cycling and local services

NGO1: Data on walking and cycling in new developments is very scant. We are worried about the viability of some new developments. There are also nagging questions about new versus existing places. The 20 minute neighbourhood approach⁵ defines what should be provided in order that you can walk to everything you need within 20 minutes. With existing developments we tend to find facilities, whereas new developments fail on this test at the moment.

ACAD2:[CHAT] I note the Transport for New Homes Garden Villages and Garden Towns report does mention shops and cafes and the need to avoid out of town exit ramp superstores. We could well focus more on these problematic peri-urban aspects of the placemaking failure here both in relation to food and, of course, distribution landscape more broadly. So the transport focus should be in part about how to make localised mixed use, cyclable and walkable foodscapes as part of this whole garden city principles influenced approach to placemaking.

6.6 Implications of Covid-19

NGO1: Covid-19 how will it change the perceived attractiveness of places? Will people want to live in less dense places or in towns and cities with more facilities and more resilience? There is no evidence yet on these emerging trends and patterns.

INNOV1: We need to rethink how we will live. 67% of the UK population are in denial that they will be affected by Covid-19 and so they will want to keep working in the same old way in urban centres because it is where the work is.

LEP:[CHAT] There is a current issue as we come out of the Covid situation as people are discouraged from using public transport and feel that cars are the safer option in terms of social distancing.

LEP: Very interesting trends already emerging around public transport and discovering that the government advice against using public transport is leading more people to look for cars. Second hand car sales have risen. And location preferences are changing. Commercial developers are concerned that many firms want to move offices out of London. Feel people won't want to commute to London any more. So there is evidence already for post Covid-19 trends. There are tensions - we want people to go into town centres for reviving the economy but are people reluctant because of social distancing problems? Covid-19 puts lots of new issues on top of all of the old problems in land use planning and transport.

DEV:[CHAT] The anecdote about companies relocating from London is certainly reflected in our direct experience - lots of enquiries about central Hertfordshire locations.

NGO2:[CHAT] I think we need to re-think what used to be called 'the commuter belt' - particularly the London commuter belt. I can foresee many London commuters who've aimed for a 40-45 minute rail commute deciding that they can live with an even longer travel time if they're only going to an office once or twice a week. Meantime, people who've been laid off may well be willing to buy an old car and drive for an hour or more to get a job if that means not defaulting on the mortgage.

ACAD3:[CHAT] Re the commuter belt. A new working week of (say) 3 days at home and 2 days at the office will tend to promote longer commutes and a London commuter belt extending to much of England. But people are also asking if coronavirus has killed off the city centre altogether. Are all the things people believed about agglomeration economics and the necessity of a big city base a victim of the virus?

ACAD2:[CHAT] We very much need to avoid confusing density and vulnerability to COVID. There is quite a bit of work out already showing that placemaking density per se is not the issue. It is how it is done. Low density design can be (will be) extremely problematic as a widespread model of development and retrofitting in future.

⁵ <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/features/small-is-beautiful-planning-for-a-post-covid-world>

INNOV1: We can't work in silos any more. Must look in a multigenerational frame. High streets will need landlords to support their tenants. Already 20% of shops are closed and commercial buildings have lost 30% of their value. Mixed use doesn't stack up in the same way it did before.

CC2: Debate in Harlow and Gilston⁶ on whether 60% modal shift targets are undeliverable and therefore we shouldn't hope to deliver and therefore stop having these debates. Very concerned about regression to dominance of the car.

REGG2: Our land use planning system has been based on a level of mobility preceding Covid 19. And we have seen substantial behavioural changes over the 12 weeks of Covid-19 restrictions. So to realise the opportunities for change which the virus has opened up we should ask if our land use planning system is still fit for purpose in the context of our other needs?

CONS2: Did research on UK commuting behaviour (n=800) and concluded that community hubs, while maybe not commercial, are a bigger opportunity now. Survey asked people for pre and post lockdown travel behaviour intentions. Eight percent thought they would work entirely from home and more again for at least part of the week. This is a sea change and we need to be mindful how we design houses to embrace this change.

CONS3:[CHAT] What local shops and services do rural areas need post-COVID? How to then plan development to support those needs by providing enough customers?

6.7 Transport assessments

The problem

CONS4: Transport Assessments currently are not fit for purpose. Trip rates used are 10 years old. We need a new flexible, agile approach to be progressive in the short term. Currently doing a mobility document which involves four elements: User Centric Vision; Validate; Manage; Monitor. The development industry don't like a flexible approach because they want long term certainty. But we need more granular scale evaluation systems for the 'manage' and 'monitor' steps in the process. So that we can push different provision in a settlement at a later date when the demand is there and trigger points are crossed, so the developer will go back in and install more infrastructure for modal shift. We need a user-centric level focussed on people's needs with lots of sociodemographic analysis to survey mobility accessibility, needs and available services. This should feed into placemaking design process including mobility/accessibility and parking provision. We won't get car-free developments but we need to be bolder about where we put parking. EV charging for every driveway will just lock in car dependency for the future.

CONS4:[CHAT] There is a lot of potential in the vision+validate approach (it needs to be agile) and underpinned by a user-centric methodology (who might live there and what mobility needs do they have).

CONS5:[CHAT] So agree.

CC1: I do transport assessments for Local Authorities. The criteria in the transport assessments works against getting sustainable measures adopted. There is no "severe" category for walking and cycling, so in the absence of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (which are not yet adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents) there is nothing to force a local authority to include measures for walking and cycling. What little there is tends to be completely within the site boundary's red line. Local Authority officers can have passion for change but without something to hold the Local Authority to account in the planning process, all we can do is contribute to junction improvement schemes. We must have changes in the methodology on how to assess walking and cycling. London has assessment tools but they are not used elsewhere.

REGG1:[CHAT] The EEH First Mile Last Mile modal shift online tool will be ready to share from Monday next week.

⁶ <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/harlow-and-gilston-garden-town>

PRO:[CHAT] LOTAG, CIHT, RTPi and TPS have written to the DfT requesting a change in this process urgently.

ACAD2:[CHAT] Interesting that transport assessment for junction 'improvements' framed as about increasing vehicle capacity - suggests fundamental need to review basic assumptions about what constitutes improvements to place.

CONS1:[CHAT] The transport assessment usually addresses and reflects only the immediate area. If the wider context doesn't fit, there's no use in e.g. emphasizing cycling. At present Buntingford is expanding seriously, residential site assessments have shown that the impact on the A10 locally is small, fine - but commuters from up the A10, assumed to be mainly Buntingford, are jamming up some streets around Cheshunt station. How many more such effects are happening?

NGO1:[CHAT] What happens if we link developer payments to e.g. carbon performance? Too simplistic? Any precedents?

CONS3:[CHAT] Existing transport forecasts are based on DfT Road Traffic Forecasts 2018. These were out of date within months due to Net Zero legislation. What to use as evidence base to plan in interim without knowing when DfT will publish Net Zero compliant figures?

A quick fix

CC1 Eager for immediate change. Working with local authorities MHCLG and DfT for new transport assessment methodology. Basically we need some good examples of transport assessments for walking and cycling which other people can copy. Because let's face it we all know that that's how Transport Assessments are done. They are copy and paste jobs from existing assessments. Let's do some with different assumptions and then people can then pick them up and use them.

CC1: There is a forthcoming update to the DfT Local Transport Note on cycling 2/08⁷. We could use a range of existing tools for walking and cycling infrastructure so that less weight is given to the Ratio to Flow Capacity (RFC) and saturation level metrics. We could revise walking and cycling from Propensity to Cycle tool to get a "decide and provide" appraisal rather than use census data, which we know is wrong because it is out of date and the demographics are too sparse.

CC1:[CHAT] Adopting LCWIPs as SPDs I think would help, and having a walking and cycling assessment as a counter to junction capacity assessments being mandated could be great. There are existing assessments that could be used such as PERS (Pedestrian Environment Review System)⁸, CLoS (Cycling Level of Service Tool) from Transport for London⁹ and the Junction Assessment Tool in the London Cycling Design Standards¹⁰ etc but they need to be mandated and given a higher priority in the Transport Assessment compared to traditional Ratio to Flow Capacities (RFCs). Propensity to Cycle Tool¹¹ scenarios could be used to replace the census data inputs for cycling at least so we have a "decide and provide" rather than using the 1-2% from the Census.

6.8 Planning system and delivery models

Planning reform underway

GOV2: working for DfT with MHCLG and other stakeholders to improve ways to deploy the planning system to deliver better. There is lots of work in hand. Still waiting for the revised planning practice guidance, delayed by Covid-19. This will be very helpful. DfT is committed to deliver sustainable development and wants feedback from stakeholders on how to improve systems.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-208>

⁸ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/pedestrian-environment-review-system-factsheet.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/dictionary/cycling-level-of-service>

¹⁰ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lcds-chapter2-toolsandtechniques.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.pct.bike/>

INNOV1: There are ideas on how to look at planning: need a more agile system; centralise for digital infrastructure not for other things; UK wants managed information framework across boundaries; skills shortage; need to share money, skills, workforce.

Scepticism about planning system

NGO2: Have we not been here before with good aims from government but then a planning minister destroys planning regulations and pushes to build as much housing as possible as quickly as possible? Concern that planning system can't necessarily achieve major change when we know the Secretary of State can change everything at a stroke.

PRO: Yes we have met the same brick wall before and I have no faith it won't recur. Last year I thought maybe we had broken the cycle but now I am very concerned that the planning system will go into reverse and revert to build more badly designed housing estates exactly as found in the TfNH 2018 report. The pressure is all on the speed not delivering infrastructure and getting all systems reinforcing a better agenda.

CONS1: I am having deja vu and others seem to be having this too. TfNH and Lynda's work are very valuable for reviving a clear focus on where things are going wrong. Agree with TfNH work and agree that details in the planning system can be changed.

REGG2:[CHAT] There is a body of evidence that shows that our current approach to planning for and delivering sustainable growth is in fact not sustainable - i.e. we will not meet the requirement to achieve net zero no later than 2050.

PRO:[CHAT] I take your point REGG2 but I think we do need to work with communities to highlight the consequences of their choices and support them to look at what can hopefully make their life "better".

DEV:[CHAT] One danger is that there are many studies and ideas swirling around. Many of the larger developments are 'coming soon' and volume housebuilders may not wait for policy considerations or regulations to catch up. The danger is that many of the homes which are to be built in the coming years will largely be built to a 1990's blueprint rather than signalling a step change in our approach to mobility.

Delivery models for new developments

ACAD3: I am not sure that we can use planning to regulate and change delivery of communities with green sustainable transport. We need a model that works like Letchworth Garden City or Welwyn Garden City or state owned Milton Keynes or Stevenage. These did after all produce new communities and we shouldn't allow the design mistakes of the 60s and 70s to discredit the model for delivery. Gascoyne Cecil as a landowner is under no pressure for quick financial return. TfNH is good because it is looking at the actual communities that are being delivered. It is depressing that there is so little new development that is admirable. We can see good example in the Netherlands and Sweden. We need to look at money and how funding is structured for development rather than concentrate on planning design process.

LEP:[CHAT] I agree with ACAD3. We know what the challenges are, but seem unable to learn from the mistakes of the past and adapt to new situations. Planning can stop things happen but can not deliver. Forward funding of infrastructure is essential.

PRO: Many years ago the planning advisory service looked at these issues and said local authorities need to use local plan as a comprehensive plan to integrate education and health and local authorities would then deliver outcomes working collaboratively with other relevant delivery partners. Delivery should be a joint responsibility and a collaborative process across all services. Communities need to have different lifestyle choices.

DEV:[CHAT] There is most definitely a role for a strong planning system. People may find the original Herts Guide to Growth¹² interesting.

¹² <http://www.gascoynececil.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/herts-charrette-guide-to-growth.pdf>

ACAD2:[CHAT] Where the private sector masterplanner is exemplary it works as per Gascoyne. The new towns were very top down public development corporation model which imposed a very ideologically driven perspective on design to make modernist places with exclusionary zoning, superblocks, spatial priority to car-based movement systems, some problematic housing typologies, tabula rasa about existing development etc...so I think we should approach this carefully.

ACAD3:[CHAT] Agree with ACAD2 about new town development corporation design mistakes, but that doesn't necessarily invalidate the organisational model, as Denmark etc proves. I would of course also be very happy with mutually-owned garden city companies on the Letchworth model!

ACAD2:[CHAT] Yes I agree - we should be open about possibilities of different delivery models

ACAD3:[CHAT] The problem we have is with the delivery model. The concept of private sector masterplanner/developer regulated by a planning authority has failed for 30 years and will always continue to do so. The public Development Corporation model does work; this is the lesson to take away from Holland, Denmark, etc. The funny thing is we taught them that model, and then forgot it ourselves. The Milton Keynes Development Corporation and the 1980s/90s UDCs made things happen (some of which we may regret a bit now) but it was able to deliver. The housebuilders just need to be contractors to build out the masterplan. Aristocratic estates with a long view & 'patient capital' may be an exception to this...

NGO3:[CHAT] In Holland it seems that housebuilders do simply build out the masterplan which is such a different model.

CONS[CHAT] There are rumours of July's emergency budget enables Development Consent Orders for Dev Corp led housing developments. What national policy might we want, to discourage the car-dominated housing that MHCLG's Building Beautiful commission was so damning of?

DEV:[CHAT] Nobody has mentioned stewardship models yet. What if residents pay an annual service charge? Ordinarily, these go towards landscape maintenance and community facilities. Why not include an ongoing sustainable transport contributions? This could for example subsidise buses or e-bikes, electric car clubs. A new development has an opportunity to embed new lifestyle choices. Provision for car parking could be reduced and leave residents / businesses safe in the knowledge that viable alternatives exist.

ACAD3:[CHAT] Letchworth has a very nice stewardship model - the ground rent paid is recycled into community facilities and services.

ACAD2:[CHAT] Agree re stewardship. This long term aspect is critical.

GOV1: Want cities to be more autonomous. Made recommendations¹³ on devolving funding and now working on a place project in infrastructure for quality of life. Six transport case studies will be included. Not looked at garden villages. Did a housing study on wider infrastructure provision a few months ago which looked at upskilling Local Authorities to be able to coordinate a leadership role on electricity generation and sustainable provision of water. This considered the use of development corporations. This could be relevant to LA provision of transport.

DEV:[CHAT] On delivery models, what is an acceptable margin for developers and over what timeframe might this be earned? How often are sustainability requirements, higher quality architecture and mix argued away on viability grounds? Clearly developers must be allowed to make a profit but how much? Clearly there are examples where present profitability appears to be excessive - often there are linkages between high margin and low quality. How might this be regulated?

ACAD2:[CHAT] It was suggested the aristocratic landowners did not need to make a short term profit. In fact other developers do not need to make such a large short term profit either. We need to challenge assumptions

¹³ <https://www.nic.org.uk/infrastructure-and-the-efficient-delivery-of-new-housing/>

must make large, quick returns and walk away. The long term legacy model is needed for more sustainable urbanism outcomes. See entry for the Wolfson Prize¹⁴ a few years ago.

6.9 How to tackle embedded patterns of behaviour and development

The scale of the problem

REGG2: In EEH we have many challenges, more rural than average, people travel further than average and more of this is by car. We have higher carbon emissions than average in the UK and a higher growth rate of emissions. So the Bicester eco-town story is not unexpected, depending on a few key dispersed employment sites. Concerned that the development system cannot change all of these problems. All today's behaviours are the consequence of a series of long term individual conscious choices based on preferences to suit certain lifestyles (work, family, shopping, leisure). So these are embedded behaviours which are reinforced by our land use and planning approach. When proposing alternatives we should ask ourselves, "Would we personally change our behaviours in this way, as an individual?"

REGG2: The "right homes in the right places" a TfNH strapline - but who makes these decisions? If digital communications are excellent then who says why we need to change locations and the definition of "the right place" for homes changes dramatically.

REGG2: Liked the chair's challenge [*is anyone optimistic that the planning system can achieve change?*]. We do need to change the nature of how we make individual choices and how we decide what we really value as a society. We need to look at the big picture. If we as a society want sustainable development to live within our means and achieve Net Zero and if we think or believe that there is a mandate for change (is there?) we must give more weight to this in each of our personal choices. If we put 50% of carbon credits on one scheme this will have implications.

CONS1: Culture in UK is a key problem. For example individual choice of schools leads to queues of cars because people drive miles to use a new sought after school.

NGO2:[CHAT] world where our kids are routinely allocated or sent to a school that is unwalkable or cyclable from home is a world where sustainable lifestyles are a long way away. But that's the world I feel I'm stuck in.

REGG2: Parental choice on schools means that we have a service that is effectively privatised. This poses a big challenge because we know the linkages are important but our education system now means people make these individual choices on location in a very deregulated way.

NGO2: Copenhagen model takes a very different approach to here. There is an agenda from pre-school and early years education where people absorb acceptance of cycling to school which sets behaviours for life. How can we create communities in UK where it is natural and acceptable for people to use bikes and buses throughout life?

NGO2:[CHAT] I absolutely agree that there are lessons to be learned from overseas, but it is important to clock that there are cultural differences as well as institutional and physical. The middle-class residents of Munich own cars but are perfectly willing to hop on a bus or a bicycle. To understand cycling culture in Denmark we need to start with early years education, not jump to having cycle lanes and assume they'll do the trick.

NGO4:[CHAT] Totally agree. It feels we are so far behind the likes of Germany and Denmark. Raising awareness and giving people transport choices is key - and the quality of sustainable transport needs to be high quality to get to the level of use of for eg by opera goers in Vienna using the tram...

CONS1: Looking at Europe in detail, not suggesting that we can transpose models wholesale here to the UK, but we can learn from or pick the most applicable aspects.

DEV:[CHAT] Absolutely agree about Central European culture. People grow up with affordable, reliable and generally pleasant public transport. It is accepted and embedded. In Britain public transport, certainly buses,

¹⁴ https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/159797/Parham_et_al_Wolfson_Prize_2014_submission.pdf

are invariably regarded as second class. This isn't necessarily accurate but it is a view which needs to be realigned if people are to change their habits. Similarly, if people are to cycle they must feel safe, be able to store bikes at each end of their journey and potentially carry their bikes on buses or trains. To achieve this will require investment but this must be undertaken in a coherent fashion to a consistent standard.

ACAD2:[CHAT] The Dutch bike preference doesn't come from culture so much as infrastructure. They consciously changed their placemaking design in the 1970s. This didn't come out of some pre-existing cultural preference ... it was a highly political and contested choice that then helped change culture. Here I fear car based urbanism is going to be used as culture wars device

Focus on the user and involve communities

REGG2: EEH transport strategy tries to focus on the user in terms of existing people in the region not just new housing. In rural communities this may be less about meeting old transport patterns and more about offering services locally, to provide more options. TfNH work is helpful but we can't overlook the needs of the population as a whole.

PRO:[CHAT] The work with the Royal College of Art (RCA) is focused on the sort of issues mentioned above [*the big picture, individual choices and achieving Net Zero*] - changing behaviour is part of that.

NGO4:[CHAT] RCA seem to have an exciting vision. Talking at their symposium on Friday which then follows up with workshops to build collaboration to take away rather than just sharing like minded views and not knowing how to move forward. Hopeful:)

CONS4:[CHAT] So agree, our mantra is make it easy for people to live a sustainable lifestyle, and we do an exercise of thinking about a day in the life from the perspective of a few different types of residents, which always flushes out better ideas for sustainable mobility which could be eg locate a school next to a transport hub to then go on to get to work.

ACAD1:[CHAT] Without the communities involved and feeding in, projects fail. Understanding need/want will enhance success.

CONS4:[CHAT] Agree that understanding need / want is key to success. Local collaboration / design thinking should be employed. Particularly find that many decision makers don't understand the attractiveness of e-bikes or (soon to be legal?) e-scooters

Develop new cost/benefit measures

LEP:[CHAT] Retro-fitting older developments to encourage more walking and cycling requires funding and therefore assessments that would demonstrate value for money to enable such projects to be prioritised.

ACAD2:[CHAT] Yes so those viability assessments need to be based on real costs so bringing in ecosystem services, foodshed, footprinting and other tools.

Build on 'Covid Safe' street initiatives

ACAD2:[CHAT] The current pandemic is bringing very widespread desire for street filtering and proper space for walking and cycling to be put in place in both urban and rural locations. Lots of bottom up pressure on that. People don't need so much to be encouraged to walk and cycle but enabled to do so by the introduction of people focussed street design.

CONS4:[CHAT] With Covid there is a new public support and funding for getting on our bikes, appreciation of peace and nature and reducing air polluting noisy cars. I am sure there are some surveys¹⁵ on that? And the new reopening high streets safely funding and other forthcoming infrastructure funding could support making

¹⁵ <https://www.thersa.org/about-us/media/2019/brits-see-cleaner-air-stronger-social-bonds-and-changing-food-habits-amid-lockdown>

it easy for people to get to their local centres in a sustainable way. So we should all get involved in this practical and funded activity!

ACAD2:[CHAT] There are some good design guides out there now on retrofitting such as the Waltham Forest Mini Hollands Scheme¹⁶. I know this is urban and from London but some principles here relevant to more peri-urban and rural locations to support walking and cycling.

ACAD2:[CHAT] Commonplace¹⁷ are doing interesting (rapid) engagement based work online to help articulate where and how to do social distancing infrastructure retrofits in a very fine grained and localised way using mapping based approaches.

Invest in safe routes between settlements

CONS4: We are talking to local authorities to restore the high street safely after Covid-19 and the new funding is welcome. But we need to make safe surfaces on country roads where potholes are a problem for cycling. I just bought an e-bike for longer distances (8-10 mile commute). It handles the hills well and is low carbon but I fear the road danger. E-bikes are a key part of the solution if the roads can be made safer for cycling.

ACAD2:[CHAT] So much scope for walking and cycling routes between hamlets, villages, towns and cities - especially as more electric bikes start being used. Key is dedicated, separate, wide enough tracks as in the Netherlands.

CONS4:[CHAT] Hear hear. How much will it cost? Propose to govt as part of build back better big infrastructure budget.

ACAD2:[CHAT] currently the budget for new roads is incredibly asymmetrical (huge) compared with relatively tiny amount on cycling and walking. We need to challenge that basic assumption that car movement is what really matters.

Don't overlook cities

NGO1:[CHAT] Many of the mobility problems in cities stem from car journeys originating outside of those cities. To what extent do the answers to challenges of travel patterns in rural/peri-urban areas lie within cities?

ACAD2:[CHAT] On through traffic point, needs to be dealt with - traffic filtering, congestion charging, walking/cycling space and infrastructure, place/people based engineering assumptions...all needed.

Devolve powers and resources

CONS1: Need for devolution of powers and resources. Many problems are at local level but powers and resources are centralised¹⁸. Too often we look at processes but in public transport and walking if we look at producing networks, there is little happening at the detailed local level because there is a shortage of professionals in local authorities and those remaining are tied up in operational roles. We should scrap the 1985 Transport Act and re-regulate buses and link services with the local plan and local area management.

More aspiration and agility from professionals, permission to fail

DEV:[CHAT] Do we have an adequate pipeline of projects or sufficiently agile professions to make it happen? How many times do we hear government saying they are seeking 'shovel ready' projects'? All too often such projects are conventional car-based infrastructure not the kind of forward thinking, aspirational schemes we arguably need.

CONS1: Professional training is still all in silos. We need collaboration. Guidance isn't everything.

¹⁶ <https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Waltham-Forest-Mini-Holland-Design-Guide.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://islingtonpeoplefriendlystreets.commonplace.is/>

¹⁸ <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2018.1478499>

ACAD2:[CHAT] As educators we need to ensure our engineering courses as well as planners are aware of the kind of thinking we are exploring in this roundtable so don't see their work as objective and technical when in fact is predicated on privileging car movement in all these settings.

CONS1:[CHAT] A very important point that seems to be generally ignored - the bodies involved should be free to try and sometimes fail - otherwise we never move forward. One reason the French have been so successful in e.g. tramways and in moving towards far better walking and local access is that French cities and agglomerations have been free to try things out, sometimes at quite a cost, but overall have moved forward. Sharing how things have gone is vital.

ACAD 2:[CHAT] It was noted before that we could not develop car-free garden villages. I'm wondering why that can't be an aspiration? I also think we need to get away from this idea of residential development when we need to be developing holistic places.

CONS4:[CHAT] As part of the eco towns body of work PRP, URBED did a study¹⁹ on a more proactive approach to placemaking by local government.

CONS4:[CHAT] Not a live development or necessarily a garden town but an interesting vision in the US (in Arizona of all places!) for car-free development²⁰ potentially validates demand for a new housing product that is emerging to meet the needs of maturing millennials. More of a sidewalk labs (tech product spin-off) type offering than a traditional house builder approach.

CONS4:[CHAT] The Home Builders Federation²¹ are working on a process for zero carbon homes, delayed now until the autumn, but great to see the industry taking a lead and they should consider transport as part of this. It's not just the buildings as we know.

INNOV1: Most houses built now will last 50 years. Need to adapt them for elders and for Generation X. Providing services for more sustainable mobility is a problem in terms of cost and accessibility and people love the private space of their cars. Applying the circular economy approach, Rachel Armstrong at Newcastle University²² and the Gates Foundation are aiming to produce buildings which generate power from waste water using biomimicry including a brick that can generate 12W power from waste water. This could allow older communities and assisted communities to be self-sustaining. But how to access the high street? If the housing development creates electricity, then new builds could be escrowed to pay for mobility services. The funding would grow as the development grows and include the needs of elders.

INNOV1: Recommend Green Swan²³ by John Elikington on a new economic model for regeneration, using the UN Sustainable Development Goals across the four sectors Cities, Energy, Materials and Health and Wellbeing.

6.10 Other

CONS5: Question for Lynda is if you miss the Local Plan does it become very hard to develop a project?

PRO:[CHAT] I would suggest that possibly the best way forward would be a review of the local plan and an update. This is possible with the current system and could be done relatively quickly and cheaply if focused on key aspects.

NGO4:[CHAT] Very interested in Jenny's (TfNH) work. A lot of similar housing estates like islands with no sustainable transport links here in Scotland. Does TfNH cover Scotland as well? Would be keen to chat with

¹⁹ <http://urbed.coop/sites/default/files/Beyond%20Ecotowns.pdf> and <http://urbed.coop/projects/beyond-eco-towns>

²⁰ <https://culdesac.com/>

²¹ No weblinks available on zero carbon homes project at <https://www.hbf.co.uk/> asat 8 July 2020

²² <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/impact/casestudies/smartfuture/> and https://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?artid=52605

²³ <https://volans.com/project/green-swans/>

you. We are trying to raise awareness of the role of shared bikes and car clubs to create more space for greening etc and to reduce disconnectedness.

7.0 References

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<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/what-makes-an-eco-town.pdf>

Bolden, T. & Harman, R (2018) New development: Decentralizing governance in England—transport's key role Public Money and Management, Volume 38, 2018 - Issue 5, Pages 403-406

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POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO INCLUDE

Toby from WSP mentioned using a mobility plan as an alternative to a Transport Assessment. I think this might be based on this approach from Eltis, the European Urban Mobility Observatory:

<https://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/11-what-sustainable-urban-mobility-plan>