

Social exclusion and transport policy

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a review of social inclusion in the specification by central government of policy instruments for local government. It forms part of the scoping study on Accessibility and User Needs in Transport (AUNT) funded by the EPSRC Sustainable Urban Environment programme. The aim of the study is *to produce rigorous methodologies to develop and test sustainable policies and practices that will deliver effective socially inclusive design and operation in urban transport and the public realm from the macro down to the micro level*. In particular, this paper forms part of a work package to develop a tool and modelling techniques that can be used to identify the areas and sectors that have high levels of social exclusion, and then facilitate the testing of policy options to assess the extent to which they meet user needs and increase social inclusion.

The paper begins with a review of key government documents regarding social exclusion and transport, before going on to discuss how social inclusion is incorporated into local government transport policy.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND UK GOVERNMENT NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY

There are two key documents relating transport and social exclusion; these are the DETR/TRaC (2000) report on Social Exclusion and the Provision and Availability of Public Transport; and the Social Exclusion Unit (2003) report – Making the Connections: Transport and Social Exclusion.

DETR/TRaC (2000) refer to four ways in which people can be socially excluded by transport from the activities they wish to undertake:

Spatially – they cannot get there at all;

Temporally – they cannot get there at the appropriate time;

Financially – they cannot afford to get there;

Personally – they lack the mental or physical capabilities to use the available means of mobility

DETR/TRaC (2000) also identify four attributes of what they refer to as adequate public transport. These are affordability, availability, accessibility and acceptability. These mirror (to some extent) the four ways in which people can be socially excluded by transport.

Affordability – refers to the financial cost of journeys. Journeys can be considered unaffordable if the financial costs are such that the journey cannot

be made or undue sacrifices have to be made in other areas of expenditure in order for the journey to be completed. The extent to which people can take advantage of available reduced fares by making use of concessionary fares, travelling off-peak, booking in advance and by purchasing season tickets are important considerations. For example, concessionary fare schemes may not cover travel during peak hours or trips outside of the local authority area. Those on low incomes, particularly those paid weekly or with uncertain incomes, may not be able to afford upfront the cost of a season ticket.

Availability – at the most basic level this refers to whether or not a person has access to a bus stop (usually measured as within 400m distance of their home). However route possibilities, timings and frequencies are also important aspects of availability, i.e. can an individual travel where they want to go, when they want to go. These also affect how long will a journey take to make and how often can it be repeated.

Accessibility – “the ease with which all categories of passenger can use public transport”. This includes provision of low floor buses, provision of information about bus times, routes and ticketing, facilities on board for carrying luggage, shopping, pushchairs and safety both at the bus stop/station. The route from the home to the stop will also affect its accessibility i.e. safety on route, need to cross a major road, climb steps etc.

Acceptability – comfortable, clean vehicles and facilities, driving style, friendliness of staff, provision of waiting facilities etc.

What constitutes “adequate” transport provision has not been defined. See Solomon (2004) for a discussion on the need for benchmarking in accessibility planning.

The SEU (2003) report suggests that transport contributes to social inclusion by providing access to work, education, healthcare, foodshops, social, cultural and sporting activities. It also highlights the impact of traffic on deprived communities, particularly on the numbers of road traffic accidents and child pedestrian casualties.

The SEU (2003) report concentrates on the accessibility of services and activities. They talk about a service or activity as being accessible if it can be accessed “*at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease*” (p2). They suggest that accessibility depends on whether transport exists between the people and the activities in which they wish to partake; on perceptions of reliability and safety of the transport; whether people are physically and financially able to use the transport available; and the distance that they are required to travel to reach services and activities, which is a product of both a person’s time horizons and the location of services.

A final aspect, which did not get a great deal of mention in the DETR/TRaC (2000) report, is that people need to know about the transport. Suggested solutions include timetable/route information telephone and internet services, as well as individualised marketing. However, people do not just need to know that a service exists and timetable information but also how to use the service. This is particularly important

with respect to new types of service such as demand responsive transport (DRT). A mention is made of travel training for people with learning disabilities.

Whilst the SEU (2003) report is not only about the role of public transport in reducing social exclusion, problems using public transport and solutions relating to public transport, and in particular buses – both conventional fixed route and DRT – dominate it. Overall the report emphasises difficult journeys as a result of the isolated or remote nature of communities, high transport costs, dispersed activities, and infrequent and/or unreliable bus services. Walk trips are mentioned in relation to crime around transport hubs and child pedestrian casualties.

Of particular importance to work package 2 of the AUNT project are the SEU recommendations with regards to accessibility planning. The report states that a new framework of accessibility planning will be built into the next round of Local Transport Plans. This will be led by the local transport authorities, enabling them (and other agencies) to systematically assess whether people can get to key activities, and to work more effectively together on solving accessibility problems. The process for achieving this will involve Local transport authorities carrying out an audit identifying disadvantaged groups and areas with poor access to key services. A resources audit assessing what potential or existing resources are available for tackling accessibility problems will also be produced.

From these two audits, the Local Authorities will be able to develop action plans to tackle these problems. Examples of the types of practical solutions that could be incorporated into the action plan are given in box 5.1 reproduced below (Table 1).

Other agencies that are likely to be involved in the process include land-use planners, Jobcentre Plus, Primary Care Trusts, local social services, local education authorities, the Learning and Skills Councils, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships, where they exist, will be expected to work together in developing accessibility planning.

Box 5.1: Potential menu of solutions for accessibility planning

Barriers to accessibility	Solutions
Physical access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessible vehicles and stations ● Driver training ● Improvement to pedestrian environment
Transport availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Denser network and direct routes ● Bus priority measures and enforcement ● Early morning and evening services ● Shared taxis and demand-responsive services ● Car clubs ● Wheels to Work schemes ● Community transport schemes
Punctuality and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus priority measures ● Performance incentives relating to punctuality
Cost	Promote awareness and use of schemes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● concessionary fares or travel vouchers ● help with travel-to-interview costs ● help with first month of travel-to-work costs ● grants or loans for driving lessons or road tax
Information and travel horizons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Simpler travel maps ● <i>Traveline</i> and <i>Transport Direct</i> ● Neighbourhood transport co-ordinators ● <i>Travelsmart</i> – individualised marketing ● Audio-visual information
Crime and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better lighting or CCTV cameras ● Graffiti removal ● Improving the security of connecting walkways to transport facilities ● Neighbourhood wardens ● Travel wardens or police presence on buses or at transport hubs ● Safe pedestrian routes
Safety from traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traffic calming ● Safe play areas ● Improved pedestrian crossings
Location and scheduling of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More accessible location of new services ● Scheduling of health appointments to coincide with transport network ● Staggered school start times ● Use of information and communication technology and home delivery ● Outreach to remote communities

Source: SEU (2003).

Table 1: Examples of the types of practical solutions that could be incorporated into an accessibility action plan.

Suggested methods for conducting the accessibility audit include:

- “GIS-based (Geographic Information System) mapping of socio-demographic information and data on deprivation and car availability in relation to public transport routes and the location of services; and

- Consultation with local communities, liaison with frontline professionals and providers of services, as well as using the skills and knowledge of the community transport sector and other existing community networks.”

Table 2: Accessibility Indicators recommended by SEU (2003)

An important element of successful accessibility planning is monitoring post implementation. A number of potential indicators have been developed by SEU (2003) for monitoring improvements in accessibility (Table 2). These are in the process of being developed and refined through consultation with reference to data availability and the costs of data collection. The SEU envisage that all local authorities will produce data for a set of core indicators to allow comparison between areas. These would be accompanied by additional locally defined indicators and locally defined targets for both the core and local indicators.

National transport policies

There are several key themes within the 1998 White Paper – “A New Deal for Transport, Better for Everyone” – which relate to social inclusion (or the reduction of

- Trips per person by mode of transport or journey purpose;
- Proportion of transport staff trained in customer care and disability awareness;
- Overall customer satisfaction with public transport services;
- Number of child pedestrian casualties per 1,000 children in population;
- Levels of air pollution;
- Proportion of households with access to cars;
- Average local bus fare per mile;
- Average bus fare;
- Proportion of people saying they find access to specific services (for example, hospital, GP, school, college, etc) difficult;
- Proportion of people within [500 metres] walk of a food shop.

social exclusion) these include the reduction of rural isolation, tackling deprivation in disadvantaged communities, and ease of access to the public transport system for elderly and disabled people and people with young children.

“Better transport is an essential building block of our New Deal for Communities which will extend economic opportunity, tackle social exclusion and improve neighbourhood management and quality of life in some of the most rundown neighbourhoods in the country.”

The White Paper also mentions the importance of providing “effective local bus services” as a mechanisms for reducing social exclusion in both urban and rural areas. This would be achieved locally through funding mechanisms such as *Quality*

Bus Partnerships. Another bus based policy for reducing social exclusion included in the New Deal document is the provision of a national minimum standard for concessionary fares to elderly people. Local Authorities are encouraged to consider offering concessionary fares to other socially excluded groups such as young, unemployed people.

Other mechanisms (non-transport) for tackling social exclusion and ensuring access to basic services and facilities are also discussed – such as provision by the Government of rate relief for post offices to prevent closure of rural sub-post offices, a “presumption against closure” of village schools, and inclusion of social exclusion as an objective in the appraisal of development plans.

Finally, the New Deal document talks about the creation of a new Rural Transport Partnership scheme. The aim of this initiative would be to support transport schemes which reduce rural isolation and social exclusion through enhanced access to jobs and services. by enabling parish councils and voluntary groups to work in partnership with local authorities. These schemes would be based on local needs and, therefore, the local community would participate in their development.

The UK Government strategy for tackling social exclusion issues related to transport are outlined in SEU (2003). The strategy has two main thrusts: the new framework for accessibility planning as mentioned in the preceding section and a mixture of national policy changes aimed at improving accessibility and reducing the impacts of traffic on poorer neighbourhoods. This policies include:

- Improve mainstream public transport.
- Accessibility will be given greater weight in land-use planning decisions.
- Tackling the concentrations of road casualties in disadvantaged neighbourhoods,
- Encourage those developing local crime reduction strategies to tackle crime and fear of crime around transport routes and hubs.
- Increasing the help it offers to jobless people to enable them to get to work opportunities.
- To assess the accessibility of all further education institutions.
- Changes will be made to specialist travel to healthcare services so that it is organized around the patient.
- The new Directors of Public Health within each Primary Care Trust will be asked to play a leading role in improving access to food and nutrition. (SEU, 2003 p5/6).

Policy appraisal for social inclusion

UK Government departments are provided with guidelines as to when to carry out impact assessment and appraisal of proposed policies and what types of

assessment are required, through *the impact assessment and appraisal guidance checklist for policy makers* (www.policyhub.gov.uk).

The type of appraisal to be conducted is sector based, i.e. it depends on who is likely to be affected by the policy. For example *regulatory impact assessment* is required if the proposed policy is likely to have an impact on businesses, charities or the voluntary sector; whilst the *policy effects framework* is recommended for assessing proposals which are likely to impact on the public sector.

There is no specific appraisal method directly associated with social exclusion but several assessment tools cover social exclusion issues including – *rural proofing, regulatory impact assessment, sustainable development, risk, public health and safety, consumer impact assessment and policy appraisal for equal treatment*.

Policy appraisal for equal treatment is perhaps the assessment method most obviously relevant to social exclusion/inclusion. The guidance refers to several documents under this heading: *Gender Impact Assessment, Better Government for Older People Programme, Core Principles of the involvement of children and Young People*; and the *Race Relations Amendment Act 2000*.

Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) have been carried out on policy proposals since 2000. Of the RIAs published on the DfT web-site (www.dft.gov.uk), only a small minority include a section on social exclusion. All of these RIAs were carried out on transport policies that directly affect the cost of motoring. In all cases, the assessment found that the increase in motoring costs resulting from the policy were at such a level as to have no significant impact on the affordability of transport. The only quantitative data presented was the additional burden to the motorist, with no reference to disposable income. Consideration to different social groups was not given.

The *New Approach to Appraisal* (NATA) (DETR, 1998), which was adapted and improved for the appraisal of the multi-modal studies (see the Guidance on the methodology for multi-modal studies, DETR 2000a), uses a combined cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and environmental impact assessment (EIA) approach. Where costs and benefits are not known, standard values should be used if available. Where monetary values are not available the impacts should be quantified as much as possible. Impacts that cannot be quantified should be assessed on a point scale. Impacts are entered into an appraisal summary table (AST). The AST provides a framework for assessing the impact of a proposal on social inclusion objectives. More detailed analysis is undertaken to show the equity and distributional effects of the proposal through an accessibility appraisal.

The accessibility objective is sub-divided into three sub-objectives: option values i.e. the value of having the option of using an alternative mode or route; severance; and access to the transport system, which are evaluated separately. The option value can be expressed in terms of the numbers of people who will benefit from a new service or be affected by the withdrawal of a service. Severance is the amount of pedestrian movement that will be hindered if a scheme is implemented. Severance is classified from none (little or no hindrance) to severe (people are likely to be deterred from making pedestrian journeys to the extent that they reorganise their

activities, either changing mode, activity location or forgo an activity altogether). The access to the transport system index is measured as the percentage of the population who have access to a car or live within 250m of a daytime hourly public transport service.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LOCAL TRANSPORT POLICY AND PLANS

The 1998 White Paper on Integrated Transport sets out the requirements for Local Transport Plans. The document states that Local Transport Plans “will:

- cover all forms of transport;
- co-ordinate and improve local transport;
- set out strategies for promoting more walking and cycling;
- promote green transport plans for journeys to work, school and other places;
- include measures to reduce social exclusion and address the needs of different groups in society;
- set out proposals for implementation, including Bus Quality Partnerships, traffic management and traffic calming, proposals for road user charging and PNR parking charges and Freight Quality Partnerships.”

Local Transport Plan objectives are required to be consistent with the Government’s integrated transport policy and the transport objectives underlying the New approach to appraisal (NATA) (DETR, 2000b). The most relevant of these objectives to this work package promotes accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car.

Coverage of the local transport plan includes:

- *“Widening travel choices”*; this section includes policies related to the quality of provision for the car, bus, community and voluntary transport, rail, cycling, walking, mopeds and motorcycles.
- *Traffic management and demand restraint*
- *Integrated transport*;
- *Planning and managing the highway network*;
- *Rural transport*;
- *Sustainable distribution*;
- *Integration with wider policies*; this includes the promotion of social inclusion and action on climate change, local air quality management and noise.

Of these sections widening travel choices and integration with wider policies are the most obvious areas that are relevant to urban transport related social exclusion.

Additional guidance is provided women's transport needs, e transport needs of older people, people from different religious and ethnic minority communities and people living in areas of social exclusion.

Annex D of the guidance for producing local transport plans (DETR, 2000b) sets out the criteria for assessing the quality of local transport plans. Disability issues are listed separately from the section on measures to promote social inclusion.

The minimum requirements of a Local Transport Plan is that it must show evidence of a commitment to meeting the transport needs to all different social groups; that these social groups must be involved in the plan process; that it describes initiatives to improve personal security across the whole journey; that the community transport sector is actively involved in meeting transport needs. In addition, the guidance (DETR, 2000b p108) suggests that a good Local Transport Plan will give clear evidence of effective dialogue and partnerships will all social groups; clear evidence of partnerships with transport operators and other organisations to promote personal security and evidence that policies have been reviewed in the light of the above.

The requirements regarding disability issues are more advanced. The minimum requirements are a clear commitment to meeting the needs of disabled people; evidence of consultation with organisations representing disabled people; evidence of cooperation between local authorities and transport operators to improve mobility opportunities for disabled people; and an indication of how proposals and initiatives will impact on the mobility of disabled people. In addition, a good local transport plan will show evidence that those involved in the process have had disability-awareness training; will include targets for achieving improved access; record achievements in relation to facility provision; evidence of partnerships between local authority and transport operators which reflect mobility needs; and evidence that measures to reduce car dependency are not disadvantaging disabled motorists.

Appraisal of local transport plans should follow the new approach to appraisal (NATA) as developed for multimodal applications in the Guidance on Methodology for Multi-modal Studies (GOMMS, DETR 2000a) (see section on National Policy Appraisal). The Central Government's Appraisal Summary Table for Local Transport Plans is the same as that used for the multimodal studies. However, Local Authorities are not required to use the same methodologies to fill in the table details as was required for the multimodal studies.

Accessibility planning will be built into the next round of Local Transport Plans (SEU, 2003). The approach aims to "ensure that:

- there is a clear process and responsibility for identifying groups or areas with accessibility problems;
- in developing and delivering their LTPs, authorities have improved information on barriers to accessibility and the areas where accessibility is poorest; and

- local authorities work with other agencies to consider a wider range of solutions to accessibility problems including changes to the location and delivery of services and measures against crime around transport, as well as improved mainstream and specialist transport.”

As yet detail information on the approach is unavailable but the SEU (2003) suggest that the process will include an accessibility audit (can jobs and key services be reached in reasonable time and cost, safely and with reliability), a resources audit, an action plan and an implementation and monitoring strategy.

The accessibility audit would assess whether people can get to centres of employment, healthcare, educational facilities and shops. Other key destinations such as sports facilities and pharmacies may also be included. Consideration would be given to journey times, cost, safety and reliability and would consider all modes. Journeys across the local authority boundary will also be taken into account. The assessment would focus primarily on disadvantaged groups and deprived areas. GIS-based mapping of data on socio-demographics, deprivation and car availability in relation to transport routes and facility locations will form an essential part of the assessment. SEU (op. cit.) does not seem to require accessibility modelling but an example of modelling and mapping of accessibility using GIS by Surrey County Council is highlighted as good practice and DfT have commissioned MVA to develop an accessibility modelling tool (Accession). Consultation with local communities will be another essential element of the accessibility audit.

CONCLUSIONS

Tackling social exclusion has moved up the agenda of National Government and steps are being taken to ensure that this is also given due attention at the local level, namely through the requirement for accessibility planning to be incorporated into the next round of Local Transport Plans. Details of the requirements are not yet available but are likely to include audits, an action plan and an implementation and monitoring strategy. There are a number of tools available to aid the auditing process (Mackett and Titheridge, 2004) in identifying locations which are not well served by public transport.

What is less clear is the extent to which the accessibility planning approach will provide a technique for systematically appraising the effectiveness of proposed transport policies with regard to tackling social exclusion, allowing Local Authorities to make best use of limited resources.

The current method used to assess Local Transport Plans, based on the NATA methodology, has three very simple measures of accessibility namely option-value, severance and an index of access to the public transport system. SEU (2003) suggests the use of indicators to monitor progress but a comprehensive set of indicators needs to be developed locally.

Clear, comprehensive and robust methods of social exclusion appraisal and monitoring are needed but are currently missing from the LTP system.

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