



Research Reports

CfIT's initial assessment report on the 10 Year Transport Plan

4: Monitoring

The Plan itself acknowledges the role of **monitoring**, and stresses the importance of monitoring investment by major transport organisations. It also indicates that the Government will review the Plan from time to time. Indeed the present report is part of this process, since CfIT were charged to provide independent scrutiny by reporting regularly on progress, and identifying further policy measures to help secure the Plan's objectives.

As part of this exercise, we have reviewed the data, plans, and research efforts available from key players in the transport sector, including DTLR, the Cabinet Office, the Strategic Rail Authority, the Association of Train Operating Companies, Railtrack, the Highways Agency, Transport for London, the Confederation of Passenger Transport, Local Government Association, the Freight Transport Association. We have determined that for some inputs, outputs or outcomes there will be widely-accepted indicators that give a clear picture of progress. But for others, standard indicators either do not exist or may not give a clear enough picture of progress.

DTLR has a number of established monitoring activities provided by its Transport Statistics Division^[16] and is also engaged in several streams of activity more directly related to the 10YP. The Department has recently made available its plans for monitoring the 10YP, which has two streams of activity: the first consists of a framework that will be used internally to monitor progress on a quarterly basis; the other is an external progress report, published on an annual or biennial basis, the first expected in July 2002. We understand that the contents of this external progress report have not been finalised, but it is expected to provide a comprehensive report on progress in the first year of operation of the Plan.

The internal monitoring arrangements are based on a management framework of key indicators. It is recognised that outcomes are difficult to assess in the short-term, and it therefore concentrates on inputs and outputs, with the expectation that outcomes will be measured in the later years. The framework also contains proposals for milestones, but is cautious about attaching targets to those milestones. We can understand this reticence, given the difficulties of forecasting outcomes and their timing, and the greater the disaggregation the greater will be the error associated with the forecast. However, in our view, if the 10YP outcomes are to be achieved, there will be a need to ensure that certain actions have been implemented by specific points in the period, and these should be identified. To take a

particularly pertinent example, if only one or two urban congestion charging schemes were to be implemented by 2005, it would be unlikely that the remaining 6 or 7 assumed in the Plan could be implemented by 2010.

Specific issues which we believe would add to the DTLR framework are:

- the need for more geographical disaggregation (e.g. London, Mets and Shires), such as we have referred to earlier in relation to the differential performance in relation to bus patronage;
- the need for supplementary monitoring on a number of issues, such as congestion, to better illustrate the effects on the travelling public and the contribution to policy outcomes^[17]. Particular measures^[18] might include a basket of trips or a league table of worst congestion spots, both of which could be monitored on a regular basis;
- additional indicators to cover issues such as social exclusion, disabled access, health implications of changing transport use, urban renaissance, integrated transport information.

The impact of transport on social exclusion is currently^[19] being addressed in a study undertaken for the Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet Office, through a series of five case studies of how access can be improved in particular areas. Once that study has been completed, DTLR should build on the evidence to define suitable measures of social exclusion that can be monitored on a regular basis. This will be reviewed as part of CfIT's monitoring programme.

More general observations from our investigation of monitoring activities are:

- indicators are assuming a more prominent role in the management of many of the organisations involved with implementing the 10YP. For example, indicators are central to APRs produced by Local Authorities, much of the work of the SRA and are shaping approaches in parts of TfL^[20]. The better use of indicators is being studied by ATOC to increase its effectiveness;
- there is a common recognition of the positive and negative impacts of the use of indicators. The growth targets of the Directions and Guidance for SRA have stimulated activities, although their narrowness has been noted by a number of commentators. For example, policies aimed at increases in off-peak travel on the South East commuter rail network would be one means of achieving SRA and 10YP passenger targets, but only matching SRA and not necessarily wider 10YP objectives. The SRA Strategic Plan does, in fact, indicate a concentration on the main Inter-City routes, and the relief of congestion on London commuter routes.
- the impacts on different social groups are an important aspect of TfL's presentation of the effects of the Mayor's Transport Policy to Londoners, that go some way to incorporating social exclusion effects.
- indicators have a significant part to play not just in monitoring the 10YP, but as a diagnostic tool to identify where additional action is needed. For example, the SRA uses but does not publish, indicators of constraints on implementation and action, and TfL has indicators of ? causal chains?;
- the Highways Agency Business Plan^[21] sets out both indicators and targets for how it will deliver reductions in congestion and improvements in safety over the next three years, within the context of the 10YP;
- there is a general interest in the establishment of monitoring systems which can help overcome some of the information boundaries within and between organisations, even though commercial sensitivities must

be respected. For example, the Road Liaison Group, which brings together local authorities, HA, and DTRL representatives is taking responsibility for the set of Road Performance Indicators that have recently been discussed and agreed. The different elements of the rail industry (SRA, Railtrack, and ATOC) were each aware of the need for better information across the industry although negotiating positions often worked against this.

European experience in respect to monitoring can be drawn from the Ministry of Transport in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has one of the most advanced national planning systems and has accumulated valuable experience in the monitoring of plans, which has highlighted the need for policy makers to understand and appreciate indicators and their uses. The most recent publication draws back from the extensive use of targets and concentrates more on indicators of progress^[22]. The remaining targets are on safety and the environment linked to congestion. Whilst the report calls for greater use of outcomes rather than outputs, the actual indicators suggested concentrate on immediate transport outputs.

We conclude from our review on current UK work and overseas experience that there is a need for greater cross-modal and cross-organisational perspective in reviewing progress with the 10YP and encouraging integrated transport. CfIT can add value through encouraging the development of a monitoring framework that:

- ensures consistency between transport modes in the indicators that are used, for example, journey-based and quality of service indicators;
- presents attitudinal and subjective indicators in association with directly observed, quantitative indicators. For example, indicators of driver and passenger attitudes towards congestion and overcrowding set alongside recorded levels of these parameters. Similarly, attitudes towards locational characteristics set beside figures on accessibility changes for urban regeneration areas;
- ensures the indicators that are used are the ones that can aid policy decisions, for example, indicators of constrained key resources.

We believe that the general level of support that exists for the 10YP provides a basis on which to make progress in making information more accessible. However, additional work will be needed in the following areas of monitoring:

- lead, lag, and constraint indicators that aid policy decisions, and have relevance to topic areas of urban renaissance, environment, and freight traffic intensity. Typical such indicators include, planning approvals (lead), land use and economic changes (lag), availability of skilled staff (constraints). For example changes in land-use patterns will take longer to materialise because there are many historic permissions that have still to work their way through the system;
- indicators that can monitor light rail, bus, and slow travel modes in a coherent way. The monitoring of light rail and bus is fragmented. The new work of TfL on monitoring walk and cycle modes should be noted and its potential assessed;
- indicators that provide strong links with modelling as a means of obtaining mutual benefits^[23]. Monitoring offers data inputs for exploitation by modelling, while the modelling can calculate estimates of indicators, for example whole journeys, which may be difficult to measure. The time-varying information from the monitoring over time is relevant to enhancing the dynamic aspects of modelling, which is a current general weakness.

We endorse the current research work on monitoring congestion by DTLR, HA, and TfL and on social exclusion by the Cabinet Office and will continue to monitor progress in these areas. There is not agreement on specific indicators for these areas, but reliance on one indicator is generally seen as insufficient.

The ideas advanced by the Motorists? Forum to improve the measurement of congestion are supported, and we consider that measurement and monitoring of congestion should be based on a range of measures. We will be bringing forward specific proposals in the near future.

Our further work on monitoring will concentrate on the following areas:

- further scrutiny of DTLR?s monitoring framework and associated indicators and milestones, as well as the results of any modelling sensitivity tests which can be made available;
- progress of schemes: local charging initiatives, trends in local transport plans and progress on their delivery as reported in Annual Progress Reports, progress in the development of strategic infrastructure projects; these will be related to assumptions given in the Plan and established milestones where these are available;
- levels of finance allocated to different areas of transport relative to projections given in the Plan, and changes in overall cost estimates;
- initiatives to reduce established barriers: of particular interest will be developments in rail restructuring; other areas to consider are developments in the bus industry structure; initiatives to improve the planning process; and resource constraints;
- transport indicators of outcomes relative to the aims of the Plan; a range of indicators will provide a more complete picture than that provided by headline indicators alone.

16: See for example Transport Trends DTLR March 2001.

17: The Motorists? Forum report highlights findings from DTLR research of public scepticism about the use of measurement (of congestion) as a substitute for action.

18: CfIT is reviewing suitable measures with a view to producing regular reports.

19: The results of this study have just been published, but we have not had opportunity to assimilate those results fully at this stage.

20: For example, Best Value Performance Plan TfL March 2001.

21: Business Plan 2002/03. Highways Agency.

22: "To Measure = To Know" Transport Policy Monitoring in the Netherlands internal paper from AVV Research Division, Dutch Ministry of Transport (Rijkswaterstaat) October 2001. Reflects ?Signals Report 2000? published in Dutch by AVV February 2001.

23: This is particularly relevant for the post implementation evaluation of road, rail and LRT schemes, both to understand the impacts of the scheme and to improve modelling techniques for subsequent scheme appraisal.

[[Previous](#)] [[Contents](#)] [[Next](#)]

Published 22 May 2002

Go to [CfIT index](#) | Go to [CfIT Research Reports Index](#) | Go to [DfT website](#) | Go to [DfT transport strategy index](#) | © Crown copyright 2002

Contact: [Website manager](#)