



# **Access West**

**Findings from the West of England  
Sustainable Mobility Project**

**Summary Report**



**Forum for the Future**

## The West of England transport challenge

The West of England has a transport challenge. It is estimated that congestion costs the area's economy £350m a year<sup>1</sup>. Poor air quality affects people's health – particularly in parts of Bristol and Bath. Over a third (and growing) of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the sub-region are caused by transport. Nationally, emissions need to be cut by at least 60 per cent (from 1990 levels) by 2050 to help avert the global threat of catastrophic climate change. And some studies show that we have reached, or are very close to, a peak in the maximum rate of global oil production.

Ambitious regional growth plans and a legacy of under-investment in transport infrastructure of around £300m suggests a need for some fresh thinking. Transport is in danger of constricting, rather than contributing to, quality of life.

The sub-region has made good progress through the Joint Local Transport Plan and the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study. However, the combination of growth and climate change will seriously test the appropriateness of the area's transport infrastructure.

That is why this study has looked at transport challenges through a sustainability lens and makes that case for a new, system-wide strategy for sustainable mobility across the sub-region.

### The project

Between September 2005 and July 2006 we used a wide-ranging stakeholder consultation process to capture the views of decision-makers and opinion-formers in government (central, regional and local), business, statutory bodies and NGOs. This involved extensive research of sustainable mobility best practice, a series of in-depth interviews, and two stakeholder roundtables.

This document summarises our main findings and lists some of the key measures that were prioritised during our discussions at the second roundtable on June 30. The full report and recommendations can be found at [www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/accesswest](http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/accesswest).

### Sustainable mobility – a systems approach

Sustainable mobility is a much broader concept than transport alone. It provides a different way of looking at transport that ensures people have access to goods and services, which may or may not involve the need to travel. A core principle is that when travel is required it should happen in a sustainable way, reflecting environmental limits, quality of life and economic success.

For the purposes of this study we defined sustainable mobility as:

*The ability to meet the needs of society to move, gain access, communicate, trade and establish relationships without compromising human and ecosystem health, now or in the future. These needs must be met in an affordable, equitable and efficient manner while supporting a competitive economy and balanced regional development.*

<sup>1</sup> See Final Joint Local Transport Plan 2006/2007 – 2010/2011

Considering transport – mobility and accessibility – in this holistic way is critical for the region moving forward. By looking at land use in conjunction with accessibility requirements, new technologies and behaviour change, the region can ensure that its future policies are fit for purpose.

## Using the whole tool kit

Delivering transport and quality of life improvements will require an integrated sustainable mobility strategy. People will enjoy improvements in their mobility through an approach that combines technological solutions with demand management. Significant economic reform will provide the funding and incentives leading to widespread alternative modes, such as innovative public transport. Land use planning will improve access to goods and services where people need them. If these five elements are taken forward together they offer the sub-region the prospect of a successful mobility strategy.

Integrated approaches need to be implemented using principles of delivery:

- **Commitment** from all stakeholders
- **Consistency** across activities
- Effective **co-ordination** between stakeholders/measures
- Appropriate **timescales** for implementation
- Appropriate **sequencing** over time

## Scaling up

The West of England has many innovative pilot schemes that reflect elements of sustainability mobility – for example, the clean fuels initiative or the Broadmead Freight Consolidation scheme, both funded under the EU VIVALDI initiative. But these are still embryonic and need to be scaled up to apply across the region. In order to effectively shape the area's growth, pilot schemes like these have to be delivered at a scale that makes a real difference to the lives of the sub-region's inhabitants and visitors.

## Making it happen

We propose seven steps towards sustainable mobility. These draw on discussions and interviews with stakeholders, our own experience in sustainable development and best practice examples from the UK and beyond. The first recommendation for an integrated delivery agency received very strong support at the stakeholder roundtable on June 30, with the Local Authorities, Government Office, SWRDA and Business West all expressing a willingness to help take this forward. For the other recommendations we list the top two measures that were prioritised by attendees at the meeting.

Whilst many of the actions depend on fundamental changes in legislation and changes of policy at a national government level, there is much that the sub-region can do now to influence mobility patterns, particularly in light of the Department for Transport's Transport Innovation Fund. Demonstrating positive change quickly is pivotal to gaining public support for the bold solutions needed.

Many of these recommendations are necessarily process-focused because many of the good ideas are already out there. What is holding stakeholders back from moving beyond small-scale success is frequently governance, funding, leadership and legislative arrangements. It is these that have to be changed (or managed more boldly and effectively) to free up local authorities, regional bodies and other delivery agents to move forward.

Further discussion and recommendations for each theme below can be found in the main report.

## Seven steps to sustainable mobility in the West of England

**1 Joined up governance** The sub-region needs a powerful Agency – ‘West of England Access’ – to drive forward the implementation of a sustainable mobility strategy. This approach has been shown to deliver change elsewhere, not least in London. Such an agency would promote all aspects of accessibility, co-ordinate marketing mobility, take control of transport franchises and broker long term funding settlements with central government.

**2 Focus on carbon reduction** Carbon reduction needs to be a central part of the spatial, economic and transport strategies for the sub-region. Instigating stretching carbon reduction targets will drive transport decision-making harder and provide a clear mobility hierarchy.

- Conduct an inventory of carbon emissions from transport in the sub-region to provide an appropriate evidence base and benchmark for target setting and future monitoring
- Pilot a shadow ‘tradable carbon quota’ system within a defined community or large organisation, monitoring travel behaviour and carbon usage from all residents/employees.

**3 Sell the approach** In parallel with improving public transport, the sub-region needs to dramatically improve the marketing of sustainable mobility and show how it will improve people’s quality of life. Ultimately the best form of marketing is to experience an implemented policy that is working effectively.

- Establish and widely advertise a central multi-modal ‘journey planning portal’ serving the whole sub-region, incorporating real-time information, and building on [travelbristol.org](http://travelbristol.org).
- Introduce high profile, sustained, and innovative ‘saturation’ campaigns across different media (TV, radio, web, poster, mobile phone, press), to raise awareness of the ‘smarter choices’ mobility agenda.

**4 Make it pay and incentivise behaviour** The sub-region needs innovative financial mechanisms and incentives to fund sustainable mobility and support its uptake. At a basic level, transport funding needs to refocus on sustainable mobility. We also favour road user charging to generate income and encourage the use of the new clean, safe and efficient public transport.

- Use the successful West of England bid for Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) 'pump priming' funding to explore a broad range of economic instruments (e.g. workplace parking levies and bus fare incentives, as well as road user charging) to promote sustainable mobility
- Introduce innovative finance models, such as 'roof taxes', targeted infrastructure funds, or public bonds, to release sufficient funds for investing in premium-priced sustainable mobility measures that may have payback periods beyond conventional business horizons (or in conflict with central government funding constraints).

**5 Prioritise public transport** Clearly, public transport is going to be a key component of any sustainable transport strategy. There needs to be a shift to consistently high quality, affordable and reliable provision, driving a change in both perception and behaviour.

- Introduce multi-modal ticketing and smart card technologies that link all transport options including car share, bike hire and even (over time) road charging
- Ensure that any new transport Agency has the powers to manage bus and rail services across the whole sub-region, with responsibility for planning routes, specifying service levels, setting fare caps and monitoring service quality.

**6 Build it in** A crucial opportunity for influencing patterns of mobility lies in how communities are planned and built. Sustainable development should be the guiding framework for all new developments, including the initial investment decisions. Key goods and services ought to be readily accessible on foot, by bike, by public transport or using information and communication technologies. High profile and high quality public spaces need to be built into new developments to improve local 'liveability'.

- Through training and knowledge exchange, build the capacity of key professionals to apply sustainable development and mobility principles to transport and planning decision-making
- Apply sustainable development as the guiding framework for all new developments (using sustainable mobility principles to 'future proof' policies and masterplans) to deliver exemplar regeneration sites.

**7 Sustainable aviation** For true sustainable mobility, the social, environmental and economic impacts of aviation growth must be considered at a national level, with the growth projections for airports re-assessed in light of future carbon constraints and oil price scenarios. There also needs to be a more informed debate about how Bristol International Airport can contribute to local social, environmental and economic objectives.

- Focus short term efforts on putting in place much more effective surface access routes to BIA and Heathrow that ensure that alternatives to the car, (for example the Flyer service) are of sufficient quality and frequency to capture a large percentage of the market.
- Work directly with Bristol International Airport and the airlines on taking forward the commitments they have signed up to in 'A strategy towards sustainable development of UK aviation'.

### Making it live

To maintain momentum and move the recommendations forward, we recommend that an ongoing consultative body, potentially modelled on this project's stakeholder roundtable and housed within the West of England Partnership, is established to refine the recommendations, identify appropriate lead owners, develop targets and monitor implementation.

This group will need to make a sustained effort to promote the integrated thinking and practice that sustainable mobility solutions require.

### Making life better

We believe that this approach will make life better for people. Inaction (or action which is insufficient in its extent and impact) is not an option, and would lead to the negative impacts of transport increasingly undermining the success of the sub-region.

Achieving sustainable mobility will support social cohesion and liveable neighbourhoods, ensure that access to key goods and services is readily available to all social groups, empower individuals to meet their mobility needs, minimise negative impacts on health and promote high levels of safety and personal security. At the same time it will be low carbon, cost-effective and drive a vibrant economy.

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**Stephanie Draper** Deputy Director, Forum Business Programme  
s.draper@forumforthefuture.org.uk

**Nicky Conway** Senior Strategic Adviser, Local and Regional Programme  
n.conway@forumforthefuture.org.uk

**Jamie Wallace** Principal Sustainability Adviser, Forum Business Programme  
j.wallace@forumforthefuture.org.uk

**Ved Walia** Sustainability Advisor, Forum Business Programme  
v.walia@forumforthefuture.org.uk

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