House of Commons
Transport Committee

JAM TOMORROW?: THE MULTI MODAL STUDY INVESTMENT PLANS

Third Report of Session 2002–03

Volume I

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House of Commons
Transport Committee

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Third Report of Session 2002–03

Volume I: Report and Proceedings of the Committee

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TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

The Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Transport and its associated public bodies.

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Footnotes
In the footnotes of this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by ‘Q’ followed by the question number. References to written evidence are indicated by the page number as in ‘MMS 12’.

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1 Chris Grayling MP (Conservative, Epsom and Ewell), was appointed on 23 July 2002 and discharged on 2 December 2002; Helen Jackson MP (Labour, Sheffield Hillsborough) was appointed on 23 July 2002 and discharged on 13 January 2003; Mr Robert Syms MP (Conservative, Poole), was appointed on 23 July 2002 and discharged on 25 March 2003
2 Appointed on 13 January 2003
3 Appointed on 2 December 2002
4 Appointed on 25 March 2003
FOURTH REPORT

The Transport Committee has agreed to the following Report:

JAM TOMORROW?: THE MULTI MODAL STUDY INVESTMENT PLANS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Traditionally, the approach to accommodating the growth in our desire to travel by car has been to build more and expand existing roads. In 1989, the then Conservative Government published its White Paper, Roads to Prosperity, setting out a £17 billion trunk road expansion programme comprising 500 separate schemes. However, during the early 1990s it was realised that expansion of the road network could never keep pace with traffic growth and was becoming increasingly environmentally unacceptable. By the change of Government in 1997, the roads programme had been cut back from 500 schemes to 147 schemes at a capital cost of £6 billion.¹

2. In 1998 the Labour administration published its White Paper A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone.² It promised a balanced approach of improving public transport and car travel and encouraging people to travel less or more locally to reduce the negative impacts of traffic. The White Paper stated:

“People know we cannot build our way out of congestion with new roads”³

3. How would the balance between road improvements, public transport and other measures required to cut congestion and pollution in a growing economy be struck? To answer this question, the Government established a new way of studying transport problems. Instead of looking at road improvements as the main solution, the Department set up a series of studies (known as Multi-Modal Studies) to examine the contribution that all modes – road, rail, bus etc. – and policies could make to solving congestion and pollution problems. 22 such studies were set up, largely based on the congestion hot spots on the trunk road network identified in the previous administration’s road programme.

4. By autumn 2002, the majority of the Multi-Modal Studies had concluded and were being considered by Regional Planning Bodies and the Secretary of State. The Committee decided in July 2002 to undertake an inquiry to examine whether the Studies were producing a coherent and effective long-term policy for the UK’s road, rail and local transport networks. In particular, the Committee examines:

(a) Was the approach to selecting the areas and scale of the studies appropriate and consistent, and how far have the studies looked ahead?
(b) How much have the studies cost and are they good value for money?
(c) What is the expected cost and how affordable are the schemes that are being recommended?
(d) Have the studies been based on realistic forecasts of growth in traffic and how effective are measures intended to reduce the need to travel?
(e) Has a consistent approach been taken over the need for and benefits of new ways of charging for transport?
(f) How different are the recommendations these studies are bringing forward compared with previous transport policy? Have the studies taken a balanced approach to all modes?
(g) Are the studies producing recommendations that are consistent with Government policy, particularly the 10 Year Plan and the SRA Strategic Plan?
(h) How effective will the schemes proposed by the studies be in promoting regeneration?

¹ The Conservative administration revised its road programme twice in the intervening period. In 1994, it revised the cost of the schemes proposed upwards and set out a programme of just over 400 schemes at an estimated cost of £24 billion. This was cut further to 300 schemes at a cost of £16 billion in 1995 (New Deal for Trunk Roads in England, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, July 1998).
³ Ibid., p12
(i) How can all of the different agencies responsible for achieving the different recommendations from the studies be co-ordinated to ensure a balanced set of projects are completed?

(j) What are the main political, institutional, financial and planning barriers to implementing the studies?

(k) How can the multi-modal study process be improved?

5. Good transport planning is not an abstract concept, it is absolutely fundamental to our economy and our way of life. We therefore strongly support the idea of studies that would consider the role of all forms of transport and new policies in solving the severe problems travellers face today and could face in the future. It would be easy to say that commissioning a series of studies delays decisions and delivery. However, the investment decisions taken now will be with us for many decades. It was therefore essential to look again at ways to tackle congestion, pollution and safety problems. The Government has been innovative in developing the Multi-Modal Studies. It is however inevitable that new processes will be imperfect. Where we have encountered problems we identify them. We do not seek to apportion blame but instead to present our understanding of what the Multi-Modal Studies have produced and how this contributes to UK transport policy.

6. The studies have produced a wealth of understanding on the magnitude of the transport problems facing the country over the coming decades. The problems present a challenge to politicians, transport professionals but more essentially the population as a whole. We must each recognise that our decisions about where to live, where to work and how to travel will affect the transport system of the country as a whole. There are some difficult choices to be made if transport is to improve and these must be presented clearly and debated honestly if a realistic consensus is to be achieved. We set out our understanding of these in this report, based on the evidence received and suggest a way forward.

7. Section 2 of the report describes the policy background against which the studies were undertaken, reviewing the aims and objectives of the 1998 Transport White Paper, the 10 Year Plan and the Department’s recent progress report on the Plan, published during this inquiry. Section 3 provides a brief description of the Studies and their purpose. Section 4 presents a summary of the findings of the studies and answers the question - If the studies were implemented in full, would they fulfil Government policy? Section 5 looks at the current situation. Funding limitations, an inconsistent approach by the Highways Agency and Strategic Rail Authority and different assumptions by the studies mean that not all the schemes will be introduced. This section asks the question - On current trends, what will be the impacts of the studies? Section 6 draws together the study findings and identifies those policies that will enable the Government to meet its targets. The Committee’s conclusions are presented in Section 7.

8. The inquiry was carried out between November 2002 and January 2003. The Committee received over 55 memoranda and took oral evidence at four meetings from 12 organisations, 5 of the study teams and the Secretary of State for Transport. The Committee is grateful to all those who assisted in our inquiry and particularly to our specialist adviser, Professor Phil Goodwin.
2. BACKGROUND

Policy Context

9. In April 1996, the Conservative administration published a Green Paper on transport which acknowledged that building more roads would not solve the problem of congestion. Road building could never keep pace with traffic growth, encouraged more people to travel longer distances and could be environmentally damaging. The Green Paper provided a good review of the problems even though there was no likelihood of an alternative transport strategy until after the General Election of 1997.

10. In July 1998, the new administration published its Integrated Transport White Paper. It contained a series of strategies to reduce dependence on the car for some journeys, to promote public transport alternatives to the car and to improve roads only where appropriate. In July 2000, to assist in the implementation of the White Paper, the Government published a 10 Year Plan for Transport. It set out the objectives and funding framework to 2010 for all modes of transport. Our predecessor Committee reported on the 10 Year Plan in May 2002. The Department issued a Progress Report on the 10 Year Plan in December 2002. This section reviews the objectives and key findings from these Government documents. It is important to understand the context in which the Multi-Modal Studies were undertaken and sets out the goals they were intended to achieve.

11. In addition to the changes in policy since 1998, there have been a number of other significant changes in transport which have affected the Multi-Modal Studies since their inception. Many of the first wave of studies were over half way through when the Government’s 10 Year Plan for Transport was issued. The majority were complete or at final review stage before guidance was issued on how they should treat the 10 Year Plan targets. Since the studies were launched the rail industry has gone through both planned and unplanned change. Both have affected the ability of the studies to take a measured view on rail. The Strategic Rail Authority was not established until February 2001. Its Strategic Plan of January 2002 determined that the findings of the Multi-Modal Studies were for consideration beyond 2010. Since the studies began, Railtrack has gone in to and emerged from administration (as Network Rail), and maintenance costs have spiralled to the extent that the SRA is cutting existing grants and services to keep the network running. These changes are summarised in Table 1.

12. Against such a turbulent background it is not surprising that the Studies have produced recommendations that are, at times, inconsistent and unaffordable as Sections 4 and 5 of the report demonstrate. It is the job of the Department to provide stability, continuity and consistent strategic guidance throughout periods of change. In this respect, there have been a number of shortcomings. Indeed, the Secretary of State told the Committee “If we were to start over again, which obviously we are not going to do, there are a number of things that I think we would have done differently”. Equally, some of the changes could not have been predicted at the start of the process and were beyond the Department’s control. We have taken account, where possible, of changes in policy in when examining the studies. We note that the Department has already commissioned a

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4 Transport, The Way Forward, Cm 3234, April 1996
5 New Deal for Transport
8 Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report, Department for Transport, December 2002
9 It ran as the shadow Strategic Rail Authority from July 1999
10 The Strategic Plan, Strategic Rail Authority, January 2002
11 The Strategic Plan 2003 A Platform for Progress, Strategic Rail Authority, January 2003
12 Q885
review of the effectiveness of the studies.  

We welcome the Secretary of State's acceptance of the need for a critical evaluation of the manner in which the studies were conducted and managed.

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<thead>
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<td>July 1997</td>
<td>New Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions formed</td>
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<td>July 1997</td>
<td>Roads programme placed under review</td>
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<td>July 1998</td>
<td>Transport White Paper published</td>
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<td>July 1998</td>
<td>New Deal for Trunk Roads - Multi-Modal Studies listed</td>
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<td>July 1999</td>
<td>Shadow Strategic Rail Authority formed</td>
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<td>September 1999</td>
<td>First Multi-Modal Study begins</td>
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<td>March 2000</td>
<td>Guidance on Multi-Modal Studies issued</td>
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<td>July 2000</td>
<td>10 Year Plan for Transport</td>
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<td>October 2000</td>
<td>Hatfield Rail Crash</td>
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<td>November 2000</td>
<td><em>Access to Hastings</em> Multi-Modal Study reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2001</td>
<td>Strategic Rail Authority formed</td>
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<td>July 2001</td>
<td>Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions formed</td>
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<td>August 2001</td>
<td>Secretary of State announces decision on <em>Access to Hastings</em> study</td>
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<td>Autumn 2001</td>
<td>Other first wave Multi-Modal Studies begin to report</td>
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<td>October 2001</td>
<td>Railtrack goes into administration</td>
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<td>December 2001</td>
<td>Secretary of State announces decision on <em>Cambridge to Huntingdon</em> study</td>
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<td>January 2002</td>
<td>Strategic Rail Authority Strategic Plan launched</td>
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<td>March 2002</td>
<td>Secretary of State announces decision on <em>South East Manchester</em> study</td>
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<td>April 2002</td>
<td>Guidance issued to Multi-Modal Studies on how to treat 10 Year Plan targets</td>
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<td>May 2002</td>
<td>Guidance issued to Multi-Modal Studies on road-user charging</td>
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<td>July 2002</td>
<td>Department for Transport formed</td>
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<td>December 2002</td>
<td>Decision by Secretary of State on 5 Multi-Modal Studies (<em>M1 in the East Midlands, London to South West and South Wales, A1 North of Newcastle, West Midlands to North West (M6) and A453 M1 to Nottingham</em>)</td>
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\(^{13}\) QS85
Transport White Paper

13. The 1998 Integrated Transport White Paper began “There is now a consensus for radical change in transport policy”.\(^{14}\) It continued “In its Green Paper, the previous Government recognised that we could not go on as before, building more and more new roads to accommodate the growth in car traffic. With our new obligations to meet targets on climate change, the need for a new approach is urgent”.\(^{15}\)

14. The White Paper acknowledged that good transport is essential to the economy, allowing goods and people to move around. However, congestion was estimated to be costing the nation billions of pounds a year and rush-hours in cities were becoming unacceptably long and inefficient.\(^{16}\) The White Paper proposed to improve public transport, increase cycling and walking and encourage the public to make more efficient use of the transport networks we already have. The White Paper also proposed powers to allow local authorities to introduce congestion charging or workplace parking levy schemes.\(^{17}\) All these measures would reduce the need to use the car which, combined with cleaner vehicle technology, would also help to reduce pollution.

15. The White Paper recognised the importance of efficient trunk roads for business and freight transport. However, it proposed a change in emphasis for the future planning of the road network to a three part strategy:

(i) improve road maintenance and reduce delays resulting from it;
(ii) provide a more intelligent control system for major routes, allowing diversion away from incidents and improving selected pinch points; and
(iii) “promote carefully targeted capacity improvements to address existing congestion on the network, where they support our integrated transport policy”\(^{18}\).

However, the Department was clear that:

“Since new roads can lead to more traffic, adding to the problem not reducing it, all plausible options need to be considered before a new road is built.”\(^{19}\)

16. In short, the Integrated Transport White Paper set out a need to reduce the rate of traffic growth and the negative impacts resulting from it including pollution, congestion, land-take, noise, poor safety and social exclusion.\(^{20}\) The White Paper acknowledged that a growing economy would lead to more travel but concluded that measures were needed to ensure that this growth in travel was not just a growth in car travel. Better public transport, better information and integration and measures to restrain travel demand were all to be considered before new roads were built. This was the radical new approach to transport.

Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998

17. The Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998 required local authorities to set and monitor progress towards targets for reducing traffic growth. Nationally, the Act allowed the Government to set targets to reduce the adverse impacts of traffic, rather than reducing traffic levels themselves if this is more appropriate. In its First Report on the Act, the Government found that a national target for reducing traffic growth was not appropriate and that it should instead concentrate on the two adverse impacts of congestion and

\(^{14}\) *New Deal for Transport*, Foreword
\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{16}\) *Ibid., p24*
\(^{17}\) First report of the Transport Committee, *Urban Charging Schemes*, HC(2002-03) 390-1
\(^{18}\) *New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*, p64
\(^{19}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{20}\) *Ibid., p25*
pollution. This Report was reflected in the development of the Government’s investment plan, described below.

10 Year Plan

18. In July 2000, the Government published a 10 Year Plan for Transport, setting out expenditure commitments for the next decade to improve the transport system. The Plan was welcomed as providing for a sustained increase in investment. The move away from a short-term funding cycle should provide greater confidence for local authorities, Government agencies and companies to invest in the skills and equipment needed to make the most of the money provided. It is the implementation plan for the White Paper.

10 Year Plan Targets

19. The key targets set out in the 10 Year Plan are:

(a) To reduce congestion on the inter-urban road network and in large urban areas compared to year 2000 levels
(b) To improve air quality
(c) To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent from 1990 levels
(d) To increase rail use by 50 per cent (measured in passenger kilometres)
(e) To increase rail freight use by 80% (measured in tonne-kilometres)
(f) To increase bus use in England from 2000 levels by 10 per cent by 2010, while improving punctuality and reliability
(g) To double light rail use in England by 2010 from 2000 levels
(h) Triple cycle use by 2010 compared to 2000 levels
(i) Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by 40 per cent overall and 50 per cent for children
(j) Cut journey times on London Underground services by increasing capacity and reducing delays

The overall strategy is “to tackle congestion and pollution by improving all types of transport - rail and road, public and private - in ways that increase choice”. Whilst the targets for the 10 Year Plan represent a welcome step in the right direction, reversing trends in declining bus use and cycling and supporting the renaissance of rail, the forecast increase in car use means that it will become an increasingly dominant mode of travel. Our predecessor Committee concluded that the Plan would fail to tackle congestion as it continued to promote cheaper motoring costs whilst the cost of public transport would rise. In addition, the assumptions made about the introduction of restraint measures, such as local charging, had not been backed up by positive support by the Government. The Government disagreed at the time.

Why is congestion important?

20. Technically, congestion is the term used by traffic engineers to describe the build up of queues and delays that occur generally whenever the volume of traffic trying to use a road approaches or exceeds its effective capacity, and specifically that may result from interruptions in traffic flow due to incidents. It is normally the case that when congestion

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22 Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan
23 Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan, p.9.
is severe, not only are travel times longer but they are also more uncertain. In very congested conditions minor incidents, that would otherwise be insignificant, can cause widespread and prolonged disruption. Similar considerations apply to rail, air and other transport networks. Congestion is not a new phenomenon - it was described in the cities of the Roman empire - but in recent years the size and severity of the problem of congestion has grown to levels unknown since modern transport began.

21. As well as wasting a lot of people's personal time, it is established that there are serious economic impacts of congestion. It increases the costs of many companies by requiring them to pay for longer driving hours and higher fuel expenditure for transporting goods, makes it difficult to operate efficient 'just-in-time' delivery systems, reduces employment options and adds to labour costs indirectly as a result of unreliable timekeeping and stress. Estimates have been made by the CBI of costs to the economy of approximately £20 billion per year, or roughly about £1,000 per household. However, Professor Begg, Chairman of the Commission for Integrated Transport, acknowledged that our understanding of the true cost of congestion to the economy is poor. The Government has identified reducing congestion as the single most important objective of its transport strategy, and given it higher priority than other important objectives such as reducing pollution and combatting social exclusion. Our predecessor Committee was critical of the extent to which the congestion indicator dominated the 10 Year Plan.

22. We were disappointed to find that there are still no official estimates of the cost of congestion nor its impact on economic growth. It seems bizarre to plan a strategy around the principle of congestion reduction without having a good understanding of its true costs or long-term impacts. We recommend that the Department sponsor a study to determine the impact of congestion on the UK economy.

23. Despite the uncertainty over the true cost of congestion, we accept that it is a problem that must be tackled. The Secretary of State reinforced this, telling us "it is not the Government's objective to stop traffic growth" but that "What the Government's objective is to reduce congestion".

10 Year Plan Congestion Forecasts

24. The volume of congestion estimated by the Government is not expressed as a value of so many billion pounds, but as a percentage change in the number of hours spent in congestion. This is calculated by comparing the amount of time spent in vehicles with the amount of time which in principle would have to be spent if everybody travelled in completely free traffic flow. It is not clear that drivers actually think of congestion against such an unrealistic base, and our predecessor committee criticised the use of this measure. The Secretary of State also accepted that the current measure of congestion was imperfect and not "the best way of measuring congestion". Annex 1 contains a brief discussion of the problems with the current measure of congestion. However, the general picture of results shown in the following section would be broadly the same even if other measures were chosen. We therefore accept, for the purposes of this report, the Government's chosen measure, in spite of our reservations.

26 See Transport and the Economy, The Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, August 1999 for more details
27 Q459
28 Eight Report of the Transport Local Government and the Regions Committee, 10 Year Plan for Transport, HC(2001-02) 558-1
29 Q595
30 the sort of conditions one only ever sees in the deep countryside or in the early hours of the morning
32 Q591
25. The 10 Year Plan estimated that without the extra investment provided by the Plan, road traffic on the inter-urban trunk road network would increase by 29 per cent and congestion by 28 per cent. In large urban areas traffic would increase by 16 per cent and congestion by 15 per cent. With the Plan congestion is expected to fall by 5 per cent on inter-urban roads and by 8 per cent in large urban areas. The 10 Year Plan projections are shown below in Table 2.

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<td>2010 TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION IN ENGLAND: BASELINE AND ORIGINAL 10 YEAR PLAN</td>
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<th>Traffic Congestion</th>
<th>All Roads</th>
<th>Inter-urban Trunk Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transport 2010: The Background Analysis, p27

10 Year Plan Pollution Forecasts

26. The Government is also committed to reducing pollution, and the 10 Year Plan also estimated the changes to levels of carbon dioxide emissions and emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter (PM_{10}). The baseline results include the reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (4MtC) expected from improvements to fuel efficiency agreed with car manufacturers. The baseline emissions for nitrogen oxides and particulate matter also include substantial reductions brought about by new exhaust emission standards. Table 3 shows the 10 Year Plan analysis results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 POLLUTION CHANGES: BASELINE AND ORIGINAL 10 YEAR PLAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pollutant</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Year 2000 Level</th>
<th>2010 with Baseline</th>
<th>Change with Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon dioxide</td>
<td>MtC²⁴</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen oxides</td>
<td>Kt²³</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>213.0</td>
<td>-293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particulates</td>
<td>Kt</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>-9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transport 2010: The Background Analysis, p27.

²³ Transport 2010: The Background Analysis, p29.
²⁴ Greenhouse gas emissions are expressed as million tonnes of carbon equivalent (MtC). One tonne of carbon is equivalent to 3.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide which is the weight of the molecular weight of carbon dioxide to the atomic weight of carbon.
²⁵ KT stands for kilotonnes and 1KT therefore equals 1000 tonnes
The reductions in Nitrogen oxides and particulates are very significant and should enable most local authorities to achieve the existing air quality standards by 2010.\textsuperscript{36} The reduction in carbon dioxide emissions is important but not sufficient to meet the transport sector's share of the 12.5 per cent reduction compared to 1990 levels (this would require an overall reduction to 29.1 MtC) required by the Kyoto treaty or the more ambitious domestic goal of a 20 per cent reduction (which would require a reduction to 26.6 MtC).\textsuperscript{37}

10 Year Plan Progress Report

27. In December 2002, the Department published a progress report on the 10 Year Plan.\textsuperscript{38} The report set out in some detail what schemes had already been completed and what were now planned as well as a number of small changes to the expenditure plans for the next 8 years.

28. In its response to our predecessor Committee's report on the 10 Year Plan the Government told us that it was too early to assess whether it was going to meet its targets.\textsuperscript{39} However, only 5 months later, the Progress Report contained significantly revised figures for the traffic, congestion and pollution forecasts to 2010.\textsuperscript{40} In January 2003, one month later, the Strategic Rail Authority also revised (downwards) its forecast of rail passenger growth.\textsuperscript{41}

Revised Congestion Forecasts

29. Table 4 shows the new forecast changes in traffic and congestion. Across the whole of the UK road network, congestion is now forecast to increase by between 11 and 20 per cent even if all the measures in the 10 Year Plan are put in place. On the inter-urban trunk road network congestion is forecast to increase by between 1 and 15 per cent, whilst this figure is between 11 and 21 per cent for large towns and cities. The range of forecasts represents two different sets of assumptions relating to growth in GDP and how income affects people's desire to travel and their sensitivity to travel cost.

\textsuperscript{36} UK National Air Quality Strategy, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
\textsuperscript{37} Estimates calculated from UK Climate Change Strategy data. 1990 levels of carbon dioxide emissions from road transport as end users were 33.3 MtC. There is no Government commitment to reducing emissions from each sector by 12.5%, the figures are illustrative.  
\textsuperscript{38} Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report, Department for Transport, December 2002  
\textsuperscript{39} The Government's Response to the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Select Committee Report 10 Year Plan for Transport, Cm 5569  
\textsuperscript{40} Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report  
\textsuperscript{41} The Strategic Plan 2003: Platform for Progress, Strategic Rail Authority, January 2003.
Table 4
2010 Traffic and Congestion in England: Baseline and Revised 10 Year Plan (% change on 2000 levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>All Roads</th>
<th>All Areas</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Conurbation s and Large Urban</th>
<th>Other Urban</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Inter-urban Trunk Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td></td>
<td>+23 to +26</td>
<td>+19 to +22</td>
<td>+20 to +23</td>
<td>+19 to +22</td>
<td>+26 to +30</td>
<td>+30 to +35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+21</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>+20 to +25</td>
<td>+11 to +18</td>
<td>+15 to +21</td>
<td>+16 to +20</td>
<td>+24 to +29</td>
<td>+29 to +34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td></td>
<td>+27 to +32</td>
<td>+26 to +30</td>
<td>+26 to +30</td>
<td>+29 to +33</td>
<td>+44 to +52</td>
<td>+52 to +67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+16</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>+11 to +20</td>
<td>+10 to +20</td>
<td>+11 to +21</td>
<td>+20 to +26</td>
<td>+21 to +30</td>
<td>+1 to +15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MMS 42B

30. The Secretary of State set out in a statement to Parliament the reasons for the extra forecast congestion: "the latest analysis shows that there was more traffic in 2000 than had been thought. That, coupled with the fact that economic growth over the next 10 years is forecast to be higher than anticipated, means that the forecasts made two years ago almost certainly underestimate the amount of congestion we face" but that the Plan will "deliver considerable reductions in the congestion we would otherwise have seen". 43 He told us that "the Ten Year Plan will make a significant impact, it will make a difference but we will have to try an awful lot harder if we want to reduce congestion below the level to which it was in 2000". 44

31. The Department's forecasts show congestion is likely to be worse than previously thought by 2010. Paradoxically, congestion in 2000 was better than the Department had previously estimated, despite the small increase in traffic found by the Department. Economic growth is forecast to grow by between 28 and 32 per cent in the review of the Plan. To date, economic growth has been below these rates, growing at 2 per cent in 2001 and 1.6 per cent in 2002. Whilst the Department has taken a view of economic growth consistent with the Treasury's forecasts, we note that the Treasury Select Committee believes these to be optimistic. 45 However, we concur with our predecessor Committee's view that congestion will not be cut with the current range of policies put forward in the 10 Year Plan. The Government's recently revised forecasts now agree with this view.

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42 MMS 42B
43 HC Deb, 17 December 2002, col 710
44 Q592
Revised Pollution Forecasts

32. The changes to the levels of traffic and congestion have a knock on impact to estimates of changes to vehicle emissions. The results are presented below in Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pollutant</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Year 2000 Level</th>
<th>2010 Baseline</th>
<th>2010 with Plan</th>
<th>Change with Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon dioxide</td>
<td>MtC</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>31.9 to 32.4</td>
<td>30.4 to 31.3</td>
<td>-0.6 to +0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen oxides</td>
<td>Kt</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>373 to 378</td>
<td>370 to 378</td>
<td>-335 to -343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particulates</td>
<td>Kt</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>15.4 to 15.6</td>
<td>15.5 to 15.7</td>
<td>-10.5 to -10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. The revised forecasts show that carbon dioxide emissions will certainly fall by less than previously expected and may even rise. This will lead to a shortfall of between 1 and 1.9 MtC in reductions of carbon dioxide emissions compared with the assumptions of the UK Climate Change Strategy. The Department for Transport has recently released a new strategy to improve vehicle fuel efficiency still further which we welcome. However, it is clear that relying on technology alone may only be able to hold carbon dioxide emissions constant. The recent Energy White Paper suggests that “increased use of biofuels and other initiatives could improve the carbon efficiency of transport by a further 10 per cent by 2020”, improvements of 10 per cent, if achieved, would be more than offset by a continued increase in vehicle use. We remain extremely concerned that current policies will fail to provide sufficient cuts in climate change emissions.

34. The Plan will still deliver significant reductions in nitrogen oxides and particulate emissions. However, these are smaller than previously thought, largely because the year 2000 estimates of levels of these pollutants have been revised upwards. Almost all the reductions in these pollutants come from improvements in technology rather than the Plan itself.

Summary

35. The Government has rightly decided to develop a sustainable transport system. It laid down the objectives designed to achieve this in the White Paper. It set out how it would achieve this through a reduction in congestion and pollution levels in the 10 Year Plan. However, the stark conclusion facing the Government today is that even with the significant investment originally envisaged in the 10 Year Plan, with current policies, congestion will worsen. In addition, the 10 Year Plan no longer offers the carbon dioxide reductions expected in the UK Climate Change Strategy.

36. The 10 Year Plan set targets to reduce congestion. The Department however appears to have accepted that congestion in 2010 will be significantly greater than congestion today. Indeed, increases in congestion are now being presented as reductions compared to what would otherwise have happened. We believe that this

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46 Transport 2010: The Background Analysis, p27.
47 Climate Change: The UK Programme, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Scottish Executive, The National Assembly for Wales, Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), Cm 493, November 2000
49 Energy White Paper: Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy, Department of Trade and Industry, Cm 5761, February 2003
approach is flawed and will lead to accusations of manipulation of figures. It is self evident that doing something will be more effective than doing nothing.

37. The Government has an obligation to reduce the adverse environmental, social and economic effects of road traffic. The Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act sets this as an aim. Levels of congestion are a serious problem today. The travelling public and business want improvement, not managed decline. The Government should be courageous in seeking such improvements rather than simply waiting for something to turn up.

38. The Department will review the 10 Year Plan again in time for the Spending Review in 2004-05. It has an opportunity to propose a new set of policies that will enable the Government to meet its objectives of tackling congestion and pollution. We use the analysis provided by the Multi-Modal Studies to suggest, in Section 6, a number of changes to UK transport policy that may enable it to achieve these aims.
3. MULTI-MODAL STUDIES

39. The Multi-Modal Studies resulted from the review of the 1997 roads programme. In the review, 51 of the 147 inherited road schemes were confirmed. The remainder were to be decided on by one of two new processes. Most schemes were referred to the Multi-Modal Studies. However, a number of Roads-Based Studies were also commissioned where it was deemed that a multi-modal approach would not be appropriate. This report concentrates on the Multi-Modal Studies. The origin of the studies means that they were concentrated on the most severe congestion problems on the UK trunk road network. This represented a stern test of the new integrated transport policy. As the White Paper set out, the construction of new roads was only to be considered after all other plausible options had been examined.

40. The Department for Transport told us the overarching objectives for the Multi-Modal Studies: “The Government’s objective is to build a reliable and safe transport network. In that context the Multi-Modal Studies were established to examine some of the most difficult and intractable congestion and safety problems on the strategic road network. Their recommendations will play an important role in informing the future development of transport policy”.

41. 22 studies were proposed to be undertaken in three tranches. The first tranche of 11 studies began in late 1999 concluding between late 2000 and late 2002. The second tranche of 8 studies began in late 2000, concluding in 2002 to 2003. The final tranche of three studies are now underway. The studies are set out below in Table 6 and shown on the map in Figure 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Tranche 1 Cost (£m)</th>
<th>Tranche 2 Cost (£m)</th>
<th>Tranche 3 Cost (£m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Hastings</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Norwich to Peterborough 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge to Huntingdon</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Thames Valley 1.2</td>
<td>A34 North from Southampton n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Manchester</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>M60 Junction 12-18 1.4</td>
<td>A52 Corridor 0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands Area</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>A1 North of Newcastle 0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands to North West (M6)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Hull East/West Corridor 0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London to South West &amp; South Wales</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>London to Ipswich (A12) 1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneside Area</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>London to South Midlands 3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Yorkshire</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>West Midlands to East Midlands 1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorway Box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A453</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North South Movements in the</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands (M1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Solutions Around</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London (M25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[^{51} MMS 42\]
Source: Department for Transport

Figure 1: Multi-Modal Study Areas
How did the studies work?

Management

42. The studies were managed by the Government Offices for the Regions. Consultants were appointed to conduct the studies through a competitive tendering process. Each study set up a steering group comprising members of local authorities, the Strategic Rail Authority and Highways Agency, local businesses, statutory environmental bodies and other interest groups. The steering groups discussed the various project options put forward by the consultants as they progressed. The Government Offices for the Regions liaised with a small team of officials at the Department for Transport.

Objectives

43. The Department for Transport told us that the 10 Year Plan set out the objectives for the Multi-Modal Studies. The multi-modal process:
   (a) "addresses the most severe problems in specific transport corridors or areas"
   (b) it is driven by regional and integrated transport objectives
   (c) it aims to deliver long-term and sustainable solutions
   (d) it provides an open process with the opportunity to build consensus
   (e) it considers ways to minimise environmental impacts". 52

The Department was keen to ensure that local and regional objectives formed a strong part of the problem definition. Indeed, this enabled studies such as the London to South West and South Wales study to consider measures to reduce the impact of tourism traffic53 and the Access to Hastings studies to consider how transport should contribute to regeneration.54 Such objectives would not be applicable to all the studies. The objectives were strongly coloured by existing local plans and aspirations. In addition to local objectives, each study was asked to make recommendations on those elements of the road review that fell within the study area.

Studying Options

44. Each of the studies carried out a preliminary analysis of three or more transport scenarios. Such scenarios typically included, at one end of the spectrum, a strategy with very high public transport investment, a large degree of travel restraint and minimum highway capacity increases. At the other end of the scale, another scenario would include only moderate public transport improvement, limited travel restraint and maximum highway improvement.55 Other scenarios would fall between these extremes. From this initial analysis, the consultants and the steering groups produced a smaller number of more realistic strategies (leaving out schemes that showed little benefit) which were taken forward for final analysis. Public consultation was undertaken throughout the process to assist with problem identification and preferred strategies.

Recommending Strategies

45. The final strategies were worked up in more detail by the consultants. The strategies set out a programme of possible capital and revenue spending for the next 10 to 30 years.56 However, the scheme designs and the costings are only approximate.57 Each element of the

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52 MMS 42
53 MMS 48
55 MMS 52, MMS 53
56 The duration of the capital spend forecast varied between studies
57 Q8
recommendations will have to go through a further round of assessment and approval by either the Highways Agency, the Strategic Rail Authority or Local Authorities and Central Government before it can be approved and built. However, the Department’s guidance stated that the analysis of options should be “sufficiently detailed to ensure that robust decisions are made”.

46. The final strategy, developed by the project consultants, has to be considered by the Regional Planning Body as part of its development of regional transport and planning policy. The Regional Planning Body then puts forward its recommendations to the Secretary of State. The Regional Planning Bodies have added a number of schemes to the recommendations of the consultants, including schemes which have been shown to offer poor value for money. For example, the A1MMS ruled out dualling of the A1 from North of Newcastle to Berwick as it offered worse value for money than selective widening of the A1 and extra safety schemes. However, the North East Regional Assembly supported the full dualling option.\(^{59}\) Two options were proposed by the South West Regional Assembly for routes in to Devon when the London to South West and South Wales had recommended one route on environmental grounds.\(^{60}\)

**The role of the Secretary of State**

47. The Secretary of State has currently announced decisions on 8 multi-modal studies. Annex 2 shows the current position of all the studies. At this stage, the Secretary of State and his predecessor have refused recommendations relating to three proposed road schemes.\(^{61}\) Some rail improvements have also been deferred at this stage.\(^{62}\) The other road and rail schemes have been referred to the Highways Agency and Strategic Rail Authority respectively. Local public transport and road schemes given initial approval are to be worked up by the relevant local authorities and submitted as part of the local transport plan process. Final approval will only be given where the detailed schemes can be shown to be value for money.\(^{63}\)

**Issues raised**

48. This part of the report briefly reviews a number of issues raised about the studies, including their geographical coverage, objectives and cost.

**Size of studies**

49. The study areas were chosen to reflect the key congestion points on the road network. However, the studies vary considerably in size and scope. For example, the London to South West and South Wales study runs from the west of the M25 to Lands End, whilst the Cambridge to Huntingdon study covers a length of around 30 kilometres. It is not clear why one study should cover almost all the West Midlands conurbation and another only one quarter of Manchester, nor why the latter should be more expensive to conduct than the former.

50. Two principal concerns were raised about the size of the study areas. English Nature

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\(^{58}\) Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, Volume 1, Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, March 2000

\(^{59}\) HC Deb, 10 December 2002, col 157

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

\(^{61}\) A259 Hastings Western and Eastern Bypasses, full dualling of the A1 North of Newcastle to Berwick and the construction of 2 strategic routes into Devon.

\(^{62}\) For example, the Minister for Transport instructed the Strategic Rail Authority to consider the Stafford cut-off and re-opening of the Sandbach to Northwich line as measures not to be prioritised at this stage (Letter to the Chair of the Regeneration Conference, West Midlands Local Government Association, 10 December 2002)

\(^{63}\) Q15
believe that very large study areas do not allow sufficiently detailed analysis of environmental problems.\textsuperscript{64} By contrast, the Strategic Rail Authority and the Rail Freight Group noted that small study areas were often badly suited to studying rail improvements. Mr Steer, Director of Planning at the Strategic Rail Authority told us: “the rail network is a very inter-connected thing and to look at a particular geographic slice of part of a long-distance rail network and try to come to a conclusion on how it should be developed and services over it should be developed, separate from considering the whole of the route, is unlikely in our view to be the right basis for planning the rail network”.\textsuperscript{65} Freight often travels over long distances with origins and destinations outside of the study area. The study areas were selected based on road problems and may not have encompassed the competing rail freight routes, marginalising the potential for rail freight to contribute to the solutions.\textsuperscript{66} We return to interaction between the studies and the Strategic Rail Authority in Section 5.

51. The study areas only cover a small portion of the country. Whilst they encompass the urban centres of Birmingham, Tyneside and South East Manchester, they do not cover Leeds, Sheffield or Liverpool for example. The County Surveyor’s Society and the CBI expressed concern that there are significant gaps in the study areas that require transport expenditure.\textsuperscript{67} The West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (METRO) expressed concern that no public transport schemes were recommended alongside the trunk road strategy for its area.\textsuperscript{68} The Department for Transport told the Committee that in taking decisions, Ministers “will want to weigh the priorities emerging there [from the Studies] with other activities in other parts of the transport network”.\textsuperscript{69}

52. It is inevitable that not all parties will agree on the number, size and scope of such studies. There are pros and cons to both large and small studies. It was not possible for the studies to cover all areas of the country. However, areas which were not covered by the studies have not necessarily been seriously disadvantaged. It is important to remember that the studies were set up to consider solutions in areas where there were significant congestion problems on the strategic road network. Outside these areas, the Government has established a statutory process for local authorities to prepare Local Transport Plans to make the case for capital funding for transport projects.\textsuperscript{70} Ministers must continue to give priority to those projects that will contribute most to the achievement of the 10 Year Plan objectives whether they come from local authority planning or from a Multi-Modal Study.

Objectives

53. As noted earlier, the Department set out one of the five objectives of the studies as “to deliver long-term and sustainable solutions”.\textsuperscript{71} Environmental concerns are central to the issue of long-term sustainability. Solving congestion in the long-term is also an important sustainability issue. The Department told us that the Multi-Modal Studies should consider ways to minimise the environmental impacts of their solutions.\textsuperscript{72} The National Trust pointed out that there are a number of targets, outside the direct remit of transport but which will be strongly affected by the Multi-Modal Studies including climate change, biodiversity, re-use of brownfield sites and protection of landscape.\textsuperscript{73} It was stressed that

\textsuperscript{64} MMS 29
\textsuperscript{65} Q77
\textsuperscript{66} Q221
\textsuperscript{67} MMS 01, MMS 31
\textsuperscript{68} MMS 30
\textsuperscript{69} Q66
\textsuperscript{70} Although more recently it has been announced that local authorities classed as “excellent” in Audit Commission Comprehensive Performance Assessments will be exempt from producing these plans (“ODPM snubs DfT by dismantling TP regime for top-rated councils”, Local Transport Today, 20 February 2003)
\textsuperscript{71} Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan, p29
\textsuperscript{72} MMS 42
\textsuperscript{73} MMS 12
the Multi-Modal Studies should not just concentrate on minimising environmental damage but should consider meeting these objectives as part of their remit.\textsuperscript{74}

54. The Department’s approach was criticised by English Nature and the Countryside Agency.\textsuperscript{75} Shaun Thomas, General Manager of English Nature told the Committee “I do not think many of the Multi-Modal Studies have environmental gain as one of their objectives. They might have congestion, economy, accessibility but we have not seen many that have delivered any environmental gain, if any. We have seen some which have delivered limited environmental damage in that it has not been as bad as it could have been, so on that score they have done okay, but in terms of positively benefiting the environment, poor score”.\textsuperscript{76}

55. In recent years, there have been significant improvements in the understanding and consideration of environmental impacts in transport planning. The Department told us that “One of the key things which the assessment of plans and schemes does is to look very carefully at the environmental impacts of major schemes and other developments. That looks at biodiversity, it looks at air quality, it looks at a whole range of things. At the end of the process Ministers will have the ability to make informed decisions about what impact these proposed schemes will have on biodiversity and other factors”.\textsuperscript{77} However, whilst all aspects of the environment are considered in looking at transport plans, little emphasis appears to be given to the need to contribute to meeting the UK’s key environmental targets. \textit{Transport policy still appears to concentrate on reducing environmental damage rather than positively promoting the protection of environmental resources. Greater consideration must be given to meeting environmental targets at the start of the planning process.}

\textit{Cost of the Studies}

56. The studies represent the largest ever investment in integrated transport planning in the UK. The level of understanding of travel patterns and the potential impacts of different transport policies has been greatly enhanced.\textsuperscript{78} However, as the figures in Table 6 show, the process has been extremely expensive. The initial estimate of the study costs was around £24 million. This has since increased to £32.5 million.\textsuperscript{79} The Secretary of State told us that the increase in costs was “frankly unacceptable”.\textsuperscript{80} We agree. The extent to which this expenditure can be shown to be value for money will be determined by the usefulness of the recommendations. We review this in Sections 4 and 5. The large expenditure and cost overrun on consultants for these studies is not an isolated event. We note the rising trend in payments for consultants on rail and to support projects such as the development of the NATS Public-Private Partnership. The quality of the advice does not always appear to justify the cost. \textit{The Department and its Agencies continue to spend very large amounts of money on consultancy services. It should ask itself whether this money could not be better used on improving the transport infrastructure.}

\textsuperscript{74} MMS 29
\textsuperscript{75} MMS 29, MMS 44
\textsuperscript{76} Q575
\textsuperscript{77} Q49
\textsuperscript{78} Q19
\textsuperscript{79} Q585. However, the current cost of the studies is actually slightly lower at £32.2 million as shown in Table 6. The £8.2 million overspend would fund around twenty local authority cycling or pedestrian capital programmes for one year. The average expenditure across England for cycling facilities for the first 5 years of the 10 Year Plan is estimated to be £36.9 million per year and for pedestrian facilities £34.6 million. It could also replace up to 13,500 street lighting columns (all data from the Committee's current inquiry into Road and Pathway Maintenance)
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
What the studies should achieve

57. The studies were set up to tackle the most pressing congestion problems encountered on the trunk road network. The Highways Agency is making a number of smaller alterations to junction layout to help smooth traffic flow.\textsuperscript{81} However, it was intended that the Multi-Modal Studies will identify the policy changes and infrastructure development needed to reduce congestion. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that the studies will contain measures that make a major contribution to the Government target of reducing congestion on trunk roads. The studies should also contribute to the growth in public transport use and reduction in environmental impacts set out in the 10 Year Plan and the White Paper.

58. The 10 Year Plan states that it “provides the resources to implement decisions arising from the Multi-Modal Studies,”\textsuperscript{82} although many of the studies set out programmes of expenditure that go beyond the 10 Year Period. We take this to mean that, if a multi-modal study suggests a scheme that offers value for money, and which requires funding before 2010, it will be funded. The Department for Transport agrees with this interpretation.\textsuperscript{83} The intention was clearly that the studies will provide a series of road, rail, local public transport schemes and other policy measures that will form a significant part of the 10 Year Plan spending profile. Section 4 reviews the outcomes of the studies.

\textsuperscript{82} Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan
\textsuperscript{83} MMS 42A
4. FINDINGS OF STUDIES

59. This section reviews the findings from the Multi-Modal Studies. It assumes that all the schemes recommended could be afforded and implemented as planned. We begin by examining the common underlying trends that have led to the congestion and pollution problem. The changes to congestion and carbon dioxide levels forecast by the studies are then described together with estimates of the costs of the schemes proposed. The section concludes by examining the detail of some of the studies to determine which elements of the proposals are most important to their success.

Key Problems

60. Congestion is largely a peak period phenomenon.\(^{84}\) This is not surprising and was confirmed by the Studies.\(^{85}\) However, the Studies have carried out detailed investigation into the travel patterns that make up the congestion. Although the findings differed between motorway-based studies and city-based studies, there were some common themes. Dr Denvil Coombe told us of the studies on the South West Yorkshire Motorway Box and the M25 that:

“You have to go back and look at what is causing the congestion on the motorways and trunk roads. We have analysed in the two studies which I have been involved in in England the traffic on the congested sections. Between a half and two thirds of it are car commuters, single occupant vehicles. There were no surprises there but when we looked at it in more detail it was quite evident that many of these were travelling very long distances. Their pattern of travel was very dispersed. You would expect their origins to be dispersed because the houses are spread but typically you think of people going to work in traditional towns and city centres, less than ten per cent of the traffic on the motorways - the car commuters - were heading for the traditional city centres, the other 90 per cent were going to destinations spread across the whole area, particularly the edges of the urban areas where you have got the new business parks set up. That dispersed pattern of movement is extraordinarily difficult to cater for by public transport.”\(^{86}\)

The South East Manchester study found that although the majority of traffic in its area was local, rather than long-distance, traffic “The way land-uses have developed has created a dispersed orbital trip making pattern, which uses unsuitable road network. By its nature, it is also challenging to cater for by public transport”\(^{87}\)

61. Congestion is a serious problem for freight and business travel.\(^{88}\) However, even on the motorways and major trunk roads, it is largely caused by commuter traffic, although some parts of the network remain congested throughout the day. The wide range of start and end points of journeys makes carrying out many of these trips by public transport very difficult and time consuming, even if possible.\(^{89}\) Over recent decades commuter traffic has been increasing as people have chosen or been obliged to live further from work. The factors behind these trends are varied and complex but include increasing car ownership, good roads, personal choice for home environments, less secure jobs, and a decentralisation of business and shops to out of town developments.\(^{90}\) British workers now spend more time commuting each day than their European counterparts with the average British worker
spending 46 minutes each day commuting. The findings of the studies must address the causes of congestion if they are not simply to perpetuate previous unsustainable trends. The Secretary of State told us that “Of all of the things I have done since I became Secretary of State I have concentrated on what I can see are the causes of congestion on the roads and the railways”.

**Congestion and the Multi-Modal Studies**

62. The Multi-Modal Studies were established to tackle “some of the most difficult and intractable congestion and safety problems on the strategic road network”. It is reasonable to expect each of the studies to cut congestion from current levels. Tables 7 and 8 show the congestion results produced by the Study teams. Table 7 presents results in the same format as the Government’s congestion measure. Table 8 presents data from the studies where this was not possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Congestion in 2010 (% change from 2000 levels)</th>
<th>Congestion in 2021 (% change from 2000 levels)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North South Movements on M1 in East Midlands</td>
<td>-1.2 %</td>
<td>+ 5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6 Midlands to Manchester</td>
<td>+ 33 %</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneside Area Study</td>
<td>+ 18 %</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneside Area Study (inter-urban roads)</td>
<td>+ 2 %</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>+ 27 %</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M25</td>
<td>+ 3 %</td>
<td>+ 21.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London to Ipswich</td>
<td>+ 28 %</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Yorkshire</td>
<td>+ 20 %</td>
<td>+ 48 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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91 European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport, Commission for Integrated Transport, November 2001
92 Q596
93 MMS 42
94 The congestion changes have been calculated from the data supplied in MMS 42B
95 The raw data is contained in MMS 42B
Table 8
CONGESTION RESULTS FROM MULTI-MODAL STUDIES (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Road Type</th>
<th>Year 2000</th>
<th>Year 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London to South West and South Wales</td>
<td>Motorways</td>
<td>2980</td>
<td>5301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trunk Roads</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast Study</td>
<td>Motorways</td>
<td>81972</td>
<td>112250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trunk Roads</td>
<td>139709</td>
<td>204951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Road Type</td>
<td>Year 2000</td>
<td>Year 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands Area</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>219000</td>
<td>216000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We were not provided with the 1999 baseline data for the South East Manchester Study and so have not presented these results. The Cambridge to Huntingdon study showed an increase in average speeds.96

63. The congestion figures point to increases in congestion, as defined by the Department,97 for all but three of the studies. The M1 East Midlands Study shows a reduction in congestion by 2010. However, the benefits are not sustained by 2021 when increased traffic levels lead to increases in congestion. The Cambridge to Huntingdon Study shows an increase in average speed. However, the total journey time rises as the study forecasts an increase in average distances travelled. Only the West Midlands Area study appears to show a sustained reduction in congestion.

64. The definition of congestion masks a number of impacts. For example, the South and West Yorkshire study assessed three scenarios:

(a) Without charging;
(b) With charging only on widened sections; and
(c) With area-wide charging.

Congestion, as defined by the Department, increased in all three scenarios compared to 2000 levels as shown in Table 9. The increases are largest with area-wide charging, which is counter-intuitive. We have already noted the problems with the Department’s definition of congestion. Area-wide charging is forecast to encourage significant changes in behaviour. Instead of perpetuating the trend for increased journey lengths, it is expected to reduce average journey lengths (and therefore non congested journey times) with only a small (9 per cent) increase in delays incurred on the journey. Without charging, journey lengths are forecast to increase by 21 per cent and delays incurred on the journey increase by 72 percent by 2021. Area-wide charging would therefore encourage shorter trips with less delay and less variability in daily travel times than continuing without charging.

96 MMS 42B
97 See Section 2 and Annex 1
Table 9
TRAVEL IMPACTS OF SOUTH AND WEST YORKSHIRE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Without charging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion</td>
<td>s/veh-km</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average trip length</td>
<td>km</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost time per trip</td>
<td>secs</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65. The Government’s evidence shows that even if it could afford all the recommendations from the Multi-Modal Studies, congestion will continue to rise with the policies put forward. The Secretary of State told us that the announcement on 5 Multi-Modal Studies made in December would “make a significant difference to the amount of congestion”. The evidence provided by the Department confirms that congestion levels will certainly be lower than if no investment was put in place. Even so, the reality is that the vast majority of drivers will experience longer delays. Dr Denvil Coombe, who co-authored the Department’s guidance on the Studies and led the South West Yorkshire study told us “In my view, a considerable shift in the policies in the 10 Year Plan is required if the problems of congestion on the motorway and trunk road system are not to remain chronic”. The evidence presented can only lead us to agree.

Carbon Dioxide and the Multi-Modal Studies

66. The Government has a commitment to reducing carbon dioxide emissions nationally. The 10 Year Plan promised a 1.6 MtC reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, on top of a 4 MtC reduction that will be achieved by new, more fuel efficient, engine technology. However, it acknowledged that, on the trunk road network, there would be an increase of 0.1 MtC due to the rise in traffic levels and the extra traffic that would be encouraged to use the improved road network. Section 2 set out the recent lowering of expectations in reductions of carbon dioxide emissions in the 10 Year Plan progress review. Table 10 shows the results from studies reported by November 2002.

98 MMS 05B
99 HC Deb, 10 December 2002, col 155
100 Q592
101 MMS 05
102 MtC stands for Million tonnes of carbon equivalent; see footnote 28 for full explanation
103 Transport 2010: Background Analysis
Table 10
CARBON DIOXIDE RESULTS FROM MULTI-MODAL STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Base Year</th>
<th>CO₂ emissions (MtC)</th>
<th>Forecast Year</th>
<th>CO₂ emissions (MtC)</th>
<th>Change in CO₂ emissions (MtC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 North of Newcastle</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>+0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6 West Midlands to North West</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13.47</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>15.26</td>
<td>+1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneside Area</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>+0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast Corridor</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; West Yorkshire Motorway Box</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull (East-West) Corridor</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands Area</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORBIT (M25)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London to Ipswich</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>+0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67. The analysis of carbon dioxide levels shows some disturbing trends. The analysis carried out by the study teams took into account the expected improvements in fuel efficiency over the next 10 years. By 2016, if all policies and projects are implemented, there will be a net increase in carbon dioxide emissions of 2.05 MtC from the 9 studies shown.

68. A number of studies have managed to hold carbon dioxide levels more or less constant over the next 10 years. The South West Yorkshire Motorway Box study and the West Midlands Area study hold emissions steady whilst the ORBIT (M25) study could achieve a significant cut. These studies have all proposed significant traffic restraint measures. The West Midlands Area Study assumes the introduction of local charging schemes in 5 urban centres by 2010 and area-wide charging by 2020. The results presented for the ORBIT and South West Yorkshire Studies assume the introduction of area-wide road user charging by 2011. The ORBIT study found that if charging was not introduced, carbon dioxide levels would rise by 2.4 MtC by 2011 rather than falling by 1.4MtC. The South and West Yorkshire study found a similar trend where, if area-wide charging was not introduced, carbon dioxide emissions would increase by 1.3 MtC by 2011. The implications of not introducing area-wide charging as proposed would therefore be an increase in carbon dioxide emissions of 7.2 MtC for the 9 study areas.

69. The largest increase in emissions from the studies not including charging came on the M6. Mr Good, the Project Director for the M6 study told us “The only way to reduce greenhouse gases is to reduce the amount of traffic that there is. I do not think any of

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104 MMS 50
105 MMS 05, MMS 51
106 ORBIT Final Report, KBR Halliburton, October 2002
107 MMS 05H
strategies we have does reduce the volume of traffic and hence reduce CO$_2$".\textsuperscript{108} We note that the transport strategy for the M6 was largely approved by the Secretary of State.\textsuperscript{109}

70. Even allowing for technological improvements, carbon dioxide emissions are set to rise. The combined impact of the nine studies that had reported by November 2002 was for an increase of 2.05 MtC compared to 2000 levels. This is more than the savings expected from the entire 10 Year Plan. Of even greater concern is that this level of increase relies on the introduction of area-wide road user charging in two study areas and significant restraint on car-use elsewhere. If these were not introduced, carbon dioxide emissions would rise by at least 7.2 MtC. The Department for Transport expected the 10 Year Plan to reduce overall carbon dioxide emissions by 1.6 MtC. It is clear that it has vastly underestimated the challenge it faces to achieve this.

71. The Government has set out a Climate Change strategy and recently published a new Energy White Paper setting further challenging targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. It is clear from the detailed modelling results in the Multi-Modal Studies that technology alone will not solve transport’s contribution to climate change. The Department has already taken decisions on the outcomes of the first eight studies yet the impact on climate change has not been mentioned. We are astounded that strategies that manifestly work against the UK’s climate change commitments are being approved.

Cost of the Study Recommendations

72. This section summarises the capital and revenue requirements for the studies that had reported by November 2002. The study teams were not given any limitations on the total cost of their strategies. The West Midlands Area Study asked the Government Office if there was a budgetary limit. Mr Darrell, Project Director told us that the response was “No, we want you to develop the plan and tell us how much it is going to cost. We do not want to give you a budget at the start.”\textsuperscript{110}

Capital Funding

73. 15 studies had reported to their Regional Planning Bodies at the time of the inquiry, of which eight have been through the Secretary of State for approval. The Studies present a long-term strategy with funding requirements spread over the next thirty years. The total capital requirement from the first 12 studies is estimated to be £18.6 billion.\textsuperscript{111} This is split £4.8 billion for Highways Agency projects, £7.1 billion for the Strategic Rail Authority and £6.7 billion projects to be brought forward through Local Transport Plans.\textsuperscript{112} The split of funding is shown in Figure 2. An analysis of the first nine studies showed 40 per cent of the total expenditure to be in the period to 2010, 48 per cent between 2010 and 2020 and the remaining 12 per cent in the period to 2030.\textsuperscript{113} Over £2 billion pounds worth of rail recommendations were proposed for the period to 2010.\textsuperscript{114}

74. Professor Begg told us that “if all of the recommendations were funded then we do have a balanced allocation of funds between different modes with rail being a particular winner”.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{108} Q354
\textsuperscript{109} HC Deb, 16 December 2002, col 155
\textsuperscript{110} Q279
\textsuperscript{111} MMS 42
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} The Multi-Modal Studies: How they all add up, G. Marsden, September 2002, www.tps.org.uk
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Q427
**Figure 2: Split of expenditure between road, rail and local transport**

**Revenue Funding**

75. All the studies recommend a range of activities that will need considerable extra revenue support. These include new rail services, commuter travel plans\(^{117}\), new bus services, safety measures and measures to promote alternatives to car use. Figure 3 below shows the revenue budget for local transport and rail over the course of the 10 Year Plan. Revenue support for local transport increases from £2.8 billion a year to £3.7 billion a year in 2010. Revenue support for rail was forecast to increase by £0.1 billion to £1.5 billion in 2010. However, since the Secretary of State announced a cut of £312 million to the Strategic Rail Authority for the period to 2005 it is not clear whether this forecast remains robust.\(^{118}\)

76. Data supplied by the Department for Transport shows that the additional revenue requirements for 10 of the 22 studies total around £265 million per year for local measures (including bus and light rail support) and £240 million per year to support rail measures.\(^{119}\) It is clear, even before the recent financial difficulties in the railway industry, improvements for rail have been recommended that are not affordable within the original 10 Year Plan budget. The revenue requirements for other measures fall within the increases budgeted for in the 10 Year Plan.

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\(^{116}\) MMS 42, data represents findings from the first 12 studies to report

\(^{117}\) Commuter travel plans are plans, organised by business, to encourage people to travel to work by means other than as a lone car driver. They include initiatives such as improving cycling facilities, special rate bus passes and lift share schemes.

\(^{118}\) HC Deb, 17 December 2002, col 711

\(^{119}\) MMS 42A
Strategies Proposed

77. It was not possible to take evidence from all the study teams. However, we received written and oral evidence on 7 studies and discussed aspects of a number of the other studies that had completed. We present a summary of the findings below. The Department stated that "The studies have started from the presumption that solutions based on extra road capacity should only be recommended after considering the contribution that non-car based modes and measures to reduce the demand for travel can make to providing sustainable long-term strategies for the study areas". We accordingly look at the role of non road expansion measures first.

Public Transport Improvements

78. Improvements in public transport would enable some trips that are currently made by car to switch to bus, rail and light rail. In addition, some new journeys, resulting from economic growth, will also be made by public transport. If the new trips are not made by public transport, they are likely to be made by car. This sub-section reviews the evidence set out by the studies on the need for and potential impacts of public transport investment.

79. The role of walking and cycling is not discussed in detail in this report. WSA Atkins believed that the role of walking and cycling had not been addressed in detail in the studies due to a lack of data and knowledge. Transport 2000 were also critical of this shortcoming. We support investment that can take those shorter car journeys that can be made on foot or by bike off the network. However, most of the studies were carried out over large areas and inevitably concentrated on more strategic longer-distance issues.

120 Transport 2010. The 10 Year Plan
121 MMS 42
122 MMS 43
123 MMS 22
We expect local authorities to take forward their cycling and walking strategies alongside any recommendations coming out of the multi-modal studies.

80. There was a split of opinion over how effective public transport could be in replacing car trips. The South East England Regional Assembly believe that the role of buses has not been given enough emphasis in the studies they have been involved in, a view shared by Transport 2000. The RAC Foundation told us that public transport alternatives could be effective in some areas but “the impact of such measures on the overall demand for road use will be small”. It was concerned that “overstating the potential diversion to public transport will lead to understating the growing pressure on the road network”.  

Smaller Studies

81. The consultants responsible for the South East Manchester study noted that, in contrast to many of the large areas in the road corridor studies, 90 per cent of the traffic in the study area was local in nature. This made public transport solutions viable for many trips. However, the current network of services was found to be badly organised and too thin to provide quality travel options. It recommended the introduction of a number of bus lanes and quality bus partnerships along these corridors. In addition, an increase in frequency of bus services in the surrounding area was also suggested. However, Dr Brett told us however that “within the South East Manchester Study the critical thing there was really the capacity of rail infrastructure”. The study recommended the move towards a clock face timetable for rail services but acknowledged that this would have to be undertaken as part of the Strategic Rail Authority’s upgrade of the Manchester Hub. Three Metrolink extensions were also recommended including connections to the airport. £735 million of the £1.1 billion package was for public transport improvements. All three of the road schemes remitted to the study formed part of the recommended package but in a scaled down form. When the new roads were opened, the study recommended that road space freed up in the communities that they were designed to relieve should be reallocated to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport so that the problems did not reappear in the future.

82. The Cambridge to Huntingdon study examined improvements to strategic transport options between the two urban areas. The options were to improve the A14 and to examine the case for reopening the disused rail line between the two cities. The study proposed a guided bus scheme rather than a rail or light rail alternative. Considerable road expansion on the A14 and a new bypass south of Huntingdon was also proposed. However, these improvements free space on existing routes into Huntingdon for priority lanes for the guided bus service. Mr McMillan, Director of the Transport Strategy Directorate at the Department, told us that in this case, the public transport and road schemes were tied together. £56 million of the £261 million strategy is estimated to be required for the guided busway, the balance largely going on road improvements. However, the study was criticised by Transport 2000 for failing to cover rail routes that might compete with the A14 for long distance traffic.

125 MMS 19, MMS 22
126 MMS 18
127 *ibid.*
128 Q244
129 MMS 49
130 Q245
131 Where trains have a standard pattern of departures at particular times every hour such as 10 past and 20 to the hour
132 MMS 49
133 *ibid.*
134 Q282
135 Q14
136 MMS 22
Larger Studies

83. The larger multi-modal studies had a much more mixed approach to the role of public transport in solving the problems of the studies. The London to South West and South Wales study noted that “Enhanced rail infrastructure and services provide another cornerstone of the strategy. However, significant spend is required in this area if the rail service is to be improved”. This expenditure would allow use of the rail network to grow by almost 70% by 2016 compared to present day levels. This however represents a very low proportion of the expected increase in all journeys. The study team notes that even with the investment proposed “Local transport improvements on their own, although of considerable value in their own right, had little effect on strategic road traffic”. 128

84. This view was shared by the South West Yorkshire Motorway Box study and the M25 study. Dr Coombe told us

“We have tested huge programmes of investment in public transport, every conceivable improvement we can think of, and the result has been a tiny reduction in the amount of traffic using the motorway”. 139

He believed this to be “at most, of the order of a year or two’s traffic growth”. 140

Mr Hardcastle, Director of the M25 study told us that “public transport is unlikely to assist with current movements on the M25” as many of the journeys on the M25 are orbital in nature and not easy to carry out by public transport. 141 However, the study did propose that if the recommendation to adopt area-wide road user charging is accepted, an orbital coach system be established to provide an alternative to tolled road travel. 142 Whilst not making further public transport recommendations itself, the study does assume that significant rail investment takes place in central London including Cross Rail 1 and 2 and Thameslink 2000. 143 If this investment does not take place, Mr Hardcastle believed that up to 50,000 jobs that the schemes were supposed to support in central London will relocate near to the M25. 144 This would have a negative impact on congestion on the M25.

85. The M1 and the M6 corridor studies proposed 60 per cent and 39 per cent of capital expenditure be spent on public transport improvements. 145 However, this is in addition to those schemes already anticipated in the SRA Strategic Plan and local authorities’ Local Transport Plans. In the case of the M6 corridor, it was assumed that Passenger Upgrade 1 and 2 of the West Coast Mainline upgrade would be complete in addition to improvements to the capacity constraints in Manchester and the West Midlands. 146 Overall, the balance of investment is heavily weighted to public transport. A further assessment of an option with no road expansion and even greater public transport investment was unable to solve the forecast problems of unreliability on the M6. 147

86. The M1 study proposed significant investment in light rail and bus schemes in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester and on rail schemes within the region and to surrounding

128 MMS 48
129 Ibid.
130 Q392
131 MMS 05
132 Q535, 40 per cent of all journeys use the M25 for only 1 or 2 journeys
133 Q535
134 Q520
135 Ibid.
136 The M6 study has £0.45 billion set aside for further rail improvements and £0.25 billion for local transport
137 MMS 53, Q307
138 MMS 53
cities. However, the M1 study showed that even with "a very high level of public transport investment and strong travel restraint measures including motorway tolling and urban road pricing, overall only 7% of the road traffic predicted for 2021 would switch to using public transport." and that "without the inclusion of motorway tolling, the shift from road to rail had no material effect upon motorway traffic volumes or congestion levels".\textsuperscript{148} Mr Malik, the study Director told us that "a lot of our public transport schemes are heavy rail schemes,... and many were shown to be, in terms of appraisal, not good value for money". However, he told us that the strategy was for the long-term and that "you have to build the schemes today for land use development to follow in the years to come and for behaviour changes to take place. If you do not have the schemes in place the rest will not follow".\textsuperscript{149}

\textbf{87. The West Midlands Area study took a very ambitious view of the potential for public transport in the conurbation. The strategy begins with significant investment in bus corridors over the short-term. This is then added to by a network of up to 10 light rail lines and very significant improvements to rail services, creating a Regional Express Network.\textsuperscript{150} Over 30 years, £6.1 billion of the £7.7 billion is for investment in public transport.\textsuperscript{151} The study estimates that in the peak hour the mode share of public transport could increase from 29 per cent to 40 per cent by 2031.\textsuperscript{152} The improvements to public transport were seen as an essential prerequisite to the introduction of any congestion charging schemes in the West Midlands area.\textsuperscript{153}

\textit{Summary of public transport improvements}

\textbf{88. Most studies have proposed very significant investment in public transport schemes (bus lanes, guided bus schemes and new light rail systems) over and above that already expected from local transport plans and the SRA Strategic Plan. Improvements in public transport are likely to be most effective in urban areas where they serve more concentrated journey patterns. The evidence presented to the Committee shows that even the very substantial investment sought in public transport is only likely to absorb a very small amount of the forecast growth in traffic on the strategic road network.}

\textbf{Freight Improvements}

\textbf{89. One of the key objectives of the Multi-Modal Studies is to reduce congestion and thereby improve business efficiency. The Freight Transport Association has developed a list of key road and rail trade routes which are currently suffering from high delays and unreliability.\textsuperscript{154} Unsurprisingly, many of these bottlenecks are contained within the study areas. Mr Hookham of the Freight Transport Association told us that the problems were already well understood and "required significant and urgent investments".\textsuperscript{155} Mr Hookham told us as a result "I do not think we should be surprised that the outcomes are suggesting that these are very heavily dependent on improvements to the existing road infrastructure on those corridors".\textsuperscript{156}}
Freight on Rail

90. Moving more freight by rail is a key Government objective. This will reduce pressure on the strategic road network. However, both the Freight Transport Association and Rail Freight Group were strongly critical of the way rail freight had been addressed.\(^{157}\) Lord Berkeley, Chairman of the Rail Freight Group told us that many of the studies "showed a severe lack of knowledge about the rail freight industry and business"\(^ {158}\) and that the Strategic Rail Authority had "distanced itself from these studies".\(^ {159}\) He added that the studies were often not designed to allow proper consideration of rail freight alternatives.\(^ {160}\) However, the Rail Freight Group believed that the Strategic Rail Authority was committed to providing £3.4 billion public funding for rail freight.\(^ {161}\) The Strategic Rail Authority Strategic Plan has more recently confirmed that there is no ring-fenced freight budget and has suspended new Rail Freight Grants, at least in the short-term.\(^ {162}\)

Understanding Freight Needs

91. The Freight Transport Association also believed that a lack of knowledge about freight movements and requirements had undermined some of the study strategies; it labelled the mix of freight solutions as "contradictory and often unachievable".\(^ {163}\) Adjacent study areas were proposing different solutions. Freight priority lanes were recommended for the M1 in South West Yorkshire whilst it was proposed to restrict freight to two lanes on the M1 in the East Midlands. In addition, road tolling was not recommended on the M1 in the East Midlands but was recommended further north.\(^ {164}\) The Highways Agency told us that a study on priority lanes for goods vehicles had "serious reservations about the benefits and operational safety of dedicated HGV lanes" and that "there is very little hard evidence to suggest that HGV priority lanes work".\(^ {165}\)

92. We are very concerned that the freight industry should be so disappointed with the quality of the recommendations from the studies. The target for increases in rail freight, if achieved, would provide welcome relief to some road routes. However, it appears that this is unlikely to prevent the need for road investment to improve goods vehicle reliability. New measures, such as freight priority lanes, do not appear viable and goods vehicles will continue to compete with all other traffic. Whilst the proposed improvements to the road network were welcomed by the industry, it will be disappointed that overall, congestion will continue to rise. The studies do not offer any evidence to suggest that the reliability of freight will improve from current levels.

Reducing the Need to Travel

93. Research has shown that around 20 per cent of journeys currently made by car are both essential and unavoidably have to be made by car.\(^ {166}\) At the other extreme, about 20 per cent could very easily be transferred to another method of transport, or in some cases hardly need to be made at all. In the middle, there are around 60 per cent of car trips for which a variable proportion could be made by another form of transport, if improved, or to alternative destinations.\(^ {167}\) One element of the Government's transport strategy is

\(^{157}\) MMS 25, MMS 28
\(^{158}\) Q206
\(^{159}\) Q204
\(^{160}\) Q221
\(^{161}\) Q224
\(^{162}\) The Strategic Plan 2003: Platform for Progress, p10
\(^{163}\) MMS 28
\(^{164}\) South and West Yorkshire Multi-Model Study Final Report, September 2002, MVA and MMS 52
\(^{165}\) Car Dependence, RAC Foundation for Motoring and the Environment, November 1995
\(^{166}\) Ibid.
therefore to encourage people to use their cars only where it is the best option by providing more local options and better alternatives to the car.

94. All the studies therefore considered the extent to which the forecast growth in car travel could be reduced. This includes measures such as school and workplace travel plans, public transport marketing, use of electronic communication and land-use measures. These measures, also known as ‘soft measures’, are relatively new in the UK and evidence on their effectiveness and long-term impacts is limited. The Department issued guidance to the study teams on how to estimate the impacts of such measures in December 2001. Mr MacMillan told us that the Department thought it reasonable “to assume that soft measures could get you into a position where you had reduced traffic overall by some five per cent”. The Department is currently reconsidering this question, as some commentators suggest that the effect could be considerably greater, and more recent research, for example on workplace travel plans, has found that substantial proportions of car commuting can be reduced with a well organised plan. At the time the Multi-Modal Studies were carried out, the guidance did not anticipate that these factors would be very large considerations in the studies.

Significant Benefits

95. The studies took different approaches to the degree to which soft factors could reduce the need to travel. The London to South West and South Wales Study believed that a combination of soft measures would slow travel demand growth across the whole area by 5 per cent by 2016. These measures had the most marked effects on travel conditions of all the schemes recommended. The South East Manchester Study believed that such measures can “potentially result in net study area wide benefits greater than all the infrastructure measures combined”. The West Midlands Area study took an even more optimistic view believing that these measures could reduce car trips by 5 per cent by 2011 and 10 per cent by 2031. Spending to support these measures would have to increase from £1 million to £5 million per annum. The M1 in the East Midlands Study recommended expenditure of £30 million over the next 5 years to promote its travel reduction measures.

Lesser Impacts

96. The M6 Midlands to Manchester Study believed that teleworking, video conferencing, company travel plans and bus improvements could reduce traffic on the M6 by 1 per cent, with reductions of up to 4 per cent in the peak periods. The M25 ORBIT study found that these measures would be beneficial but were unlikely to reduce demand for travel on the M25 to any material extent. Mr Hardcastle told us that the study had examined a case where one in 10 people worked from home and that this “had less than one per cent impact on the M25”. Dr Coombes told us that soft measures would have bigger impacts in urban areas but that “their impacts on the motorway system will be pretty marginal”.

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168 MMS 42
169 ibid
170 ibid
171 Q48
172 Making travel plans work: Lessons from UK case studies, Department for Transport, July 2002
173 MMS 48
174 MMS 49
175 MMS 50
176 ibid
177 MMS 53
178 MMS 51
179 Q225
180 Q403
97. Measures to promote alternatives to the car for some journeys are expected to be the most significant elements of some of the studies. In other areas, less is expected. Some of the differences arise from the different characteristics of the areas, some because the long-term impacts are, as yet, unknown. However, making better use of the systems we already have is a sensible strategy and can be undertaken in the significant periods before new projects are built and opened. Significant revenue support will be required to allow the more ambitious expectations to be tested. However, the cost of supporting these strategies is small compared to the costs of many of the infrastructure schemes proposed. **The Government should provide extra resource funding to support a more ambitious programme of travel education and travel reduction.** The costs are small compared to infrastructure improvements and the environmental and economic benefits may be bigger.

**Land Use**

98. Improved land-use planning can help reduce congestion in the longer term by ensuring that development is mixed to provide local options for typical daily activities. This is enshrined in the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance notes.\(^{181}\) We received a number of submissions suggesting that improving the trunk-road network and building a number of by-passes would itself create pressure for increased urban sprawl and decentralisation, working against the aims of the planning system.\(^{182}\) Indeed, these possibilities were highlighted by the Studies themselves. The South East Manchester Study found that “inappropriate land use developments have the potential to undermine some, or all, of the Recommended Strategy and erode the benefits it brings”.\(^{183}\) The M6 Midlands to Manchester study stated that it:

> “proposes a substantial increase in road capacity through motorway widening, which at face value conflicts with the objectives of land use planning policy as set out in PPG 1 to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys and to encourage alternative means of travel that have less environmental impact. It could also be contended that the provision of motorways could encourage dispersed patterns of development against planning policy objectives - although the latter could be addressed by strict application of existing or amended planning policy...there would be a need to review much of the existing current planning policy in the corridor to ensure that the pressures for dispersed out of existing urban area development that could follow would be effectively resisted.”\(^{184}\)

Mr Sinden, Policy Director of the Council for the Protection of Rural England told us “I think it is clear that the decisions that have been taken recently on some of the studies do not give adequate attention to the important land use planning authorities that exist both at a national level in terms of urban renewal and the work of the ODPM on that agenda”.\(^{185}\)

99. There is plenty of visual evidence to demonstrate that the development of out-of-town commercial and retail centres has increased pressure on the road network as these locations are generally less accessible by public transport than town centres.\(^{186}\) The

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\(^{181}\) PPG1 for example states “In order to achieve sustainable patterns of development and to help reduce the environmental impacts of transport, local authorities should integrate their transport programmes and land-use policies in ways which help to: reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys; encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and hence reduce reliance on the private car.”

\(^{182}\) MMS 29, MMS 35, MMS 36

\(^{183}\) MMS 49

\(^{184}\) MIDMAN Scenario Testing and Appraisal Stage 3: Report on Combination Scenarios, Dec 2001, Paragraph 9.3.8, page 95

\(^{185}\) Q563

\(^{186}\) We note that more shop floor space in town centres is now being opened than in out of town centres as a result of long-term application of planning policies. Delivering Better Transport: A Progress Report
Department’s own surveys show that our time spent commuting to work is also continuing to increase. The Commission for Integrated Transport found that we have the longest travel to work times in Europe. If land-use and travel patterns become more dispersed, more journeys will be made by car, fuelling congestion. The Department for Transport commissioned a report from land-use planners to examine how best to resolve these tensions. It concluded “If one really wanted to reverse the self-reinforcing trends towards decentralised residential and employment locations, the most effective means of doing so, perhaps the only effective means of doing so would be to substantially curtail the use of the car”. The South and West Yorkshire study demonstrated this, in that journey lengths would be expected to reduce by 12 per cent if charging were introduced but rise by 22 per cent if it were not.

100. The ODPM Committee has recently expressed concern that the separation of the former Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions into the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport will mean that transport and planning are no longer considered as a coherent whole. The Department for Transport must ensure that its strategies and land-use plans work together to reduce the need to travel and the length of journeys. We note the concerns by the study teams that there is the potential for some of the strategies to work against this. Land-use and transport policies must be complementary. This requires the Department for Transport and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to work closely together to resolve the current tensions. The Government should make clear the mechanism by which these difficult issues are resolved.

Charging Measures

Guidance

101. The Guidance to the study teams, issued in March 2000, noted that there are two aspects of road charging: local and inter-urban. The Transport Act 2000 has given powers to local authorities to introduce road user charging and workplace parking levy schemes. We have recently reported on the slow progress to date with the introduction of such schemes. Study teams were to consider the potential for local schemes as part of the studies. A decision on the introduction of inter-urban road charging has not been taken. However, as the studies are developing strategies for up to 30 years from now, the Department’s guidance states “It would therefore be appropriate for the studies to examine the contribution that charging on selected corridors and sections of the trunk road network might make to the delivery of the Government’s transport objectives”.

102. The 10 Year Plan stated that any decision on the future of inter-urban charging would “take account of the conclusions of the Multi-Modal Studies”. It also noted that it would take a number of years to introduce and would therefore not be possible before 2010. The Secretary of State confirmed to us in January 2003 that the introduction of inter-urban charging was still at least a decade away. In May 2002, the previous Secretary of

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187 Focus on Personal Travel, Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, December 2001
188 European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport, Commission for Integrated Transport, November 2001
189 People: Where will they work?, Town and Country Planning Association, 1999
190 MMS 05B
191 ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee
193 First Report of the Transport Committee, Urban Charging Schemes, HC (2002-03) 390-1
194 MMS 42
195 Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, Volume 1, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, March 2000
196 Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan, p88
197 Q638
State issued further guidance clarifying the Department’s position on inter-urban road charging. It stated that “the study recommendations should build in flexibility as to what should be done now, given that we do not believe that a system of road user charging could be introduced this decade and that no decisions have been made about the longer term introduction of charging”.198 The Department instructed the studies that recommended inter-urban charging to come up with two strategies; one with charging and one without charging. We note that this guidance was issued after many of the first round of studies had concluded or past the point where this guidance could be usefully incorporated.

103. Dr Coombe, who assisted the Department in preparing its guidance, believed that the May 2002 guidance shifted the grounds on which the studies were undertaken as it required studies to recommend a strategy without charging after 2011 even if this was not the preferred strategy.199 Professor Begg, Chair of the Commission for Integrated Transport told us that there had been “a lack of clear guidance and leadership on the charging issue”.200 This was epitomised in the decision by the M1 East Midlands study to recommend a strategy without charging “Due to there being no indication from Government that legislation to enable charging would be introduced in the foreseeable future”.201

**Impacts on design**

104. The introduction of any form of inter-urban charging will reduce traffic levels on these routes and will change the demand for public transport. Mr McMillan of the Department for Transport agreed, noting that “Charging on the inter-urban network would have an impact on traffic levels on the network; that must be so”.202 We were therefore unclear how a plan for road expansion over the next thirty years could be put in place before a decision was taken on the introduction of charging. In many instances, the level of road expansion required would vary dependent on whether or not charging was included. Indeed, the M1 study in the East Midlands noted that “the full level of motorway widening would not be needed if road charging were to be introduced in the medium term”.203 The Department was unable to provide a clear and coherent response to this issue.204

105. The Highways Agency accepted that in some cases, the decision on whether to charge or not would affect the design of the road. Mr Matthews, the Chief Executive, told us that although charging schemes could have a significant impact on traffic volumes, any impacts would be weighed up by Ministers in their decisions.205 Dr Coombe told us that the South West Yorkshire Motorway Box study had determined the amount of road expansion that would be required if the best road pricing strategy was introduced and recommended this amount of widening even if pricing was not introduced.206 However, this approach had only been adopted on the two studies he had been involved in. In addition, Dr Coombe feared that his approach would be over ridden by the Highways Agency when they worked up the scheme for detailed design.207

106. We note that the Secretary of State gave outline approval to the M1 East Midlands road widening plans, which contained no road pricing, in his statement to Parliament on

\[198\] MMS 42
\[199\] Q388
\[200\] Q429
\[201\] MMS 52
\[202\] Q31
\[203\] Q328
\[204\] Q18 to Q34
\[205\] Q154
\[206\] Q424
\[207\] Q378
10 December 2002. It is difficult to understand how this will connect to the M1 in South Yorkshire which is recommending a lower level of road widening consistent with road user charging.

107. The guidance from the Department and Ministers on inter-urban road charging has been inadequate and inconsistent. The guidance that eventually came from the Secretary of State in May 2002 was sound but too late. One study dismissed the prospect of road charging largely because of this hiatus in policy. The decisions announced in December 2002 suggest that the Secretary of State will approve road schemes under the assumption that there is to be no inter-urban charging. Extra road building will occur as a result of the lack of decision in this key policy area. This runs contrary to the intentions of the Integrated Transport White Paper.

Study Recommendations

108. The studies have all taken a different approach to charging, both at a local and inter-urban level. The Department believes that it was inevitable that the studies came to different conclusions due to the different problems they face. Mr Good, Director of the M6 Midlands to Manchester Study, told us that it would have been difficult for the Government to decide on the need for charging before the studies were undertaken.

**South East Manchester**

109. The South East Manchester Study did not recommend local or inter-urban charging. However, it did assess whether the schemes would still be justified were Manchester City Centre to introduce a congestion charging scheme and concluded that they would. However, Dr Brett, the study project manager told us that there had been no assessment carried out of a national road charging scheme as there was “no suggestion of a national scheme at that time”.

**London to South West and South Wales**

110. The London to South West and South Wales study supported the introduction of congestion charging in the Bristol area. However, it noted that urban schemes would have little impact on strategic road traffic. Charging for entry to or exit from motorways and major trunk roads was ruled out due the impacts such a measure would have on diversion to other, less suitable routes. The study considered the prospect of an area-wide national scheme of road-user charging and concluded it could be implemented in the study area but would not adversely affect the case for the schemes proposed.

**West Midlands Area**

111. The West Midlands Area study proposed a number of charging schemes to go alongside the considerable investment in public transport. In particular, the strategy proposed was intended to reduce the differential between car and public transport costs by 2011 and equalise them by 2031. Our predecessor Committee highlighted the widening

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208 HC Deb, 10 December, col 155
209 Q17
210 Q306
211 Q289
212 Q290
213 MMS 48
214 Ibid
215 MMS 50
gap between public transport use and car use as a significant problem. However, the Government did not accept our recommendation to reduce this differential. The West Midlands schemes would therefore be seen as acting against current Government policy.

112. The charging schemes are recommended to be introduced in two main phases. Between 2005 and 2015 Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres, Solihull and Walsall town centres and the Merry Hill shopping centre may have congestion charging schemes (charging £2.50). In the longer-term, a full electronic road pricing scheme operating across all roads was recommended with charges varying according to time of day and congestion levels. A typical journey from the suburbs to the city centre would cost between £0.50 in the off-peak to £3.00 in the peak. Overall this was forecast to cut traffic by 10 per cent in the more congested areas and 2 per cent overall.

M25 ORBIT

113. "Widening the M25 has been likened to digging a ditch in a bog - it fills up as fast as you dig". Mr Hardcastle, Project Director of the ORBIT study illustrated this to us:

"between Leatherhead and the A3 junctions 9 and 10 where it was widened recently from three lanes to four, which represents a 33 per cent increase in capacity, and the traffic flows in the first year after opening increased also by 33 per cent, so all that extra capacity was effectively taken up in the first year after opening, and that pattern has been repeated through many of the sections of the M25 which have been widened".

114. The ORBIT study therefore recommended that the M25 widening be accompanied by area-wide road user charging in 2011 as part of a national scheme. If this were not technically feasible, the study recommends that separate tolling be introduced of those sections that are widened. This option would be less effective and gives a worse economic performance. Failing that, controls on the entry and flow of traffic on the widened roads should be introduced. However, Mr Hardcastle told us that the latter option "would have a limited effect and is really only a short term measure". To illustrate this, the study team found that by 2011, the average time taken to drive the whole way round the M25 was forecast to increase by 8.2 minutes with the latter option but would fall by 16.9 minutes if area-wide charging was introduced.

M6 Midlands to Manchester

115. The M6 Midlands to Manchester study supported the introduction of workplace parking charges and/or congestion charging for Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Midlands (all at £5 per day) and Stoke/Newcastle (at £2.50 per day). If use of the motorway continued to grow to the extent where reliability was again a problem, the M6 study proposed a £2.50 entry charge for after 2020. The Project Director, Mr Good, told us that the idea was to deter people from making short journeys on the motorway rather

\[\text{References:}\]
\[\text{216} \text{ Eight Report of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee, 10 Year Plan for Transport, HC(2001-02) 558-1}\]
\[\text{217} \text{ The Government's Response to the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Select Committee Report: 10 Year Plan for Transport, Cm 5569}\]
\[\text{218} \text{ MMS 05}\]
\[\text{219} \text{ Ibid.}\]
\[\text{220} \text{ MMS 05}\]
\[\text{221} \text{ Q546}\]
\[\text{222} \text{ Ibid.}\]
\[\text{223} \text{ ORBIT Final Report, KBR Halliburton, October 2002}\]
\[\text{224} \text{ MMS 53. We note that these assumptions are different from those in the West Midlands Area study and the South East Manchester study}\]
\[\text{225} \text{ MMS 53, Q315}\]
than strategic traffic.\textsuperscript{226} This appeared to contradict the concerns of other studies that charging to enter motorways alone would create diversion to other, less suitable and less safe parts of the network. However, Mr Good told us that the M6 study considered the congestion implications of the surrounding road network but did not feel that the impacts were significant.\textsuperscript{227}

\textit{South West Yorkshire Motorway Box}

116. Dr Coombe told us that one objective of the study was to achieve an average speed on the strategic road network of 55 miles per hour or above. The Highways Agency and Department were unable to provide advice on whether this was the right level of performance to aim for.\textsuperscript{228} The study recommended that area-wide road user charging be introduced as soon as possible and by 2011 at the latest to prevent the benefits of the new roads being removed by too much extra traffic.\textsuperscript{229} If charging could not be introduced, other measures of restraining motorway use such as traffic lights on motorway slip roads were recommended.\textsuperscript{230} However, this strategy was very much second best as shown earlier in Table 9. Dr Coombe told us that “The combination of road user charging and widening will give you a higher economic return than widening alone. The net present value is orders of magnitude higher than the same widening without charging”.\textsuperscript{221}

\textit{Alternatives to charging}

117. The Secretary of State’s guidance states that studies should produce a strategy of how to proceed without charging. Many of the studies have suggested that if charging is not introduced then intelligent motorway control systems could reduce congestion.\textsuperscript{232} Such systems include Variable Speed Limits such as those on the M25 north of Heathrow Airport and ‘ramp metering’ where traffic lights on the slip roads control entry to the motorway.

118. The Highways Agency told us that ramp metering had shown benefits in the US. Trials on the M6 and the M27/M3 have been undertaken. However it told us that “it is not yet possible to conclude whether ramp metering is providing benefits”.\textsuperscript{233} Ramp metering may also cause problems for the surrounding network if queues on the slip road reach back to the roundabout. This limits the scheme’s effectiveness. The Variable Speed Limits in operation near Heathrow has received significant driver support. However, the Highways Agency note that “detailed monitoring and analysis of traffic flows, speeds and accidents has so far not demonstrated overall benefits relative to costs”.\textsuperscript{234}

119. It would be nice if technology were to provide the answer to our congestion problem. However, the conclusions of the studies show that whilst these new systems may show some benefits, they are relatively small and will only have an impact over the short-term. Technology will make a significant but small contribution to reducing the daily congestion on our motorways. It should not be relied on as an effective alternative to inter-urban charging.
Summary

120. In some areas, road user charging will not be desirable or necessary. However, on the busiest sections of our motorway networks and in many town centres it appears that the combination of road user charging and improvements to public transport and roads is the only way congestion can be cut, particularly in the long-term. Dr Coombe questioned the wisdom of proceeding down a route of expansion of roads without charging stating “If we are not careful if we do not apply some controls we shall be back in five years’ time looking at ways of providing yet more capacity”.235 Professor Begg was clear that road user charging was the only way to provide a long-term reduction in congestion on the inter-urban road network. He told us:

“If there is a road building, road expansion, motorway widening programme without inter-urban charging and area wide charging, we believe that the service improvements will not be sustained. By service improvements I mean reduction in congestion, improvements in journey time. We believe that the road space will quickly fill up especially in areas where the economy is more prosperous, there are more dispersed movements and the service improvements will evaporate quickly.”236

121. Despite the inconsistent approach to charging, the main Studies have reached a common conclusion. Widening motorways and trunk roads without charging for their use will only reduce congestion from current levels for a limited time and in some cases, by the time the extra capacity is opened, not at all. If charging is not introduced, further road expansion will be required in 10 to 15 years time, almost as soon as the current programme of expansion is complete. Whilst much of the current expansion can be completed within the existing highway alignment, any future expansion will require new route alignments and construction on a scale unlikely to be environmentally acceptable even were it to be affordable. Expanding roads without charging also offers a worse rate of return on Government investment. Such a policy would also fail to have learnt the lessons of the past; road expansion cannot keep pace with traffic growth and without some restraint on car use it promotes longer commuting distances and urban sprawl. That is not the policy of the White Paper.

122. The advice from the studies and the Government’s independent transport advisor is clear. Without some form of road user charging on inter-urban roads there will be no sustained reduction in congestion. No other alternatives have been shown to be technically possible that will give priority to business and freight travel. If congestion does cost many billions of pounds a year to the economy, any Government policy that allowed this to deteriorate would appear flawed from the outset.

123. Congestion is the price paid for giving drivers the freedom to use their cars wherever and whenever they wish without any consideration of how busy their route is. It is perfectly possible to value that freedom sufficiently highly to accept a growth in congestion, with all its economic disincentives, is a price worth paying. However, it is equally, if not more reasonable, to consider variable pricing access to the roads in the same way that we accept variable pricing for use of the phone, gas and electricity. Variably pricing access to the roads would spread demand, deterring those who did not have compelling reasons to travel by car during busy periods. Unlike other utilities there are, for the majority of travellers, alternatives to the car although these must be improved.

124. The balance of evidence and the experience of the studies leads us to conclude that road user charging on the inter-urban road network is the most important way to stop congestion growing. However, charging for use of motorways alone could lead

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235 Q432
236 Q435
to unacceptable levels of diversion onto already congested, smaller, less safe roads. Any such scheme would therefore have to form part of a wider national charging scheme which radically changes the way we pay for travelling by car.

125. The introduction of a national road user charging scheme is not synonymous with extra taxation on the motorist. The Commission for Integrated Transport set out how it believes a revenue neutral system could cut congestion by 44 per cent. The increased charges for driving in congested conditions would be partly offset by reductions in Vehicle Excise Duty and Fuel Duty. Those people who drove in less congested periods and areas would be better off whilst those who drove at the most congested times would be worse off. However, those who paid to travel would experience quicker and more reliable journeys. If the principle of charging is accepted then it is the role of Government to ensure that adequate protection is in place to ensure that the measure is not socially divisive. Providing high quality alternatives to the car will be essential to this. It will be at least ten years before any scheme could be introduced. However, a decision is required sooner, rather than later, on whether this policy will be pursued so that the alternatives can be put in place and the public can plan adequately for the change. It is essential that the Government leads the debate on the benefits and difficulties of wide spread road user charging. It must also set out the consequences of not introducing charging to enable the public to take part in a fully informed debate.

Road Expansion Plans

126. The studies were to develop integrated transport strategies where improvements were made to all modes. The studies were based around existing congestion problems on the strategic road network and the solutions were likely therefore to involve road expansion. The use of a multi-modal approach however should have reduced the size and potentially the necessity for some of the schemes. The Department noted that “Where the studies recommend additional road capacity, they do so in the context of proposals to reduce the overall demand for travel and to encourage people to switch to more sustainable modes of travel, such as bus and rail, where that is possible and appropriate”.  

Impacts on the road schemes remitted

127. Each of the studies included a number of schemes from the previous Government’s road programme. The studies were to make specific recommendations about the future of these schemes. The Freight Transport Association told us that the congestion problems were well known and that “Additional road capacity is vital in the short-term to meet industry needs”. The RAC Foundation agreed noting that “Most, if not all of these schemes have long been needed, and the case for them will not be materially affected by public transport improvements”.

128. There is evidence from some studies that the schemes being proposed are smaller in nature than those that would have been the case under the previous less integrated approach. Mrs Bowdler, Director of the Government Office for the East of England, told us that in the Cambridge to Huntingdon study “The recommendations actually assumed a different standard for the trunk road because the bus system would be in place to take a substantial amount of the traffic”. The Secretary of State told us that this was also true of the South East Manchester study. As set out above, the M25 and South West

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237 Paying for Road Use, Commission for Integrated Transport, February 2002
238 MMS 42
239 MMS 28
240 MMS 18
241 Q14
242 Q585
Yorkshire Motorway Box studies have suggested reduced road building programmes, consistent with the introduction of road user charging. The Highways Agency told us that from its perspective “there have been quite significant changes” in the schemes proposed.

129. In other studies, the picture is less clear. The M1 study has proposed some expansion that might not be necessary were charging to be introduced. The M6 study only examined three options: no expansion, dualling to 4 lanes all the way and dualling to 5 lanes all the way. The second option was closest to meeting the strategy’s aims and was the same as the scheme remitted to the study. Mouchel consulting engineers noted that “It seems likely, however, with the probable exception of ORBIT, that the recommended level of investment in strategic highway infrastructure will not be very different from what would have resulted from a similar programme of studies undertaken 10 years earlier.”

Too many roads?

130. The Council for the Protection of Rural England believe that the road building plans are a return to the previous discredited policy of predicting future levels of traffic growth and then providing for them. It was also concerned that the indicative list of 100 new bypasses and widening of 360 miles of the strategic road network had now become targets. However, Professor Begg told us that the Commission for Integrated Transport did not find the studies were too ‘pro-roads’.

131. Nonetheless, we were concerned by the evidence we received from Dr Denvil Coombe. He told us that the studies promoted schemes that did not ‘predict and provide’ but that the Highways Agency was still using outdated guidance that did adopt this approach. Dr Coombe believed that the Highways Agency was not considering ways in which traffic reduction could reduce the design requirements of a road. All the trunk road schemes approved through the studies subsequently go through more detailed design by the Highways Agency. If the Highways Agency subsequently applies old and inconsistent methods of design then reductions in road expansion proposed by the studies may be redesigned out, defeating one of the their objectives.

132. It is also clear that the Highways Agency has been instructed by Ministers to design roads in the absence of any decision on inter-urban charging. This will inevitably lead to some extra road being constructed that may not be necessary or constructed to the wrong standard. The Department told us that inter-urban charging would be one of the factors that Ministers would “weigh” as part of any decisions taken. Tim Matthews, Chief Executive of the Highways Agency told us that charging would only be important in some instances: “Our assessment at the moment is that on most of the recommendations which are coming forward for widening, that is not an immediate issue which will undermine judgements about how you widen the motorways”. Professor Begg told us that “The guidance of
the Highways Agency is flawed. I would not blame the Highways Agency, they do as they are told.\textsuperscript{258} but that “You have not had this clear leadership from government on this issue of inter-urban charging”.\textsuperscript{259}

133. A number of new road schemes have also been proposed, largely on regeneration grounds. Whilst improved transport links can bring benefits to a region, the relationship between new transport infrastructure and regeneration is not a simple one. In 1999 the Department’s Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment concluded that whilst there was a strong theoretical expectation that improvements in transport should lead to economic benefits “empirical evidence of the scale and significance of such linkages is, however, weak and disputed” and “subject to strong dependence on specific local circumstances”.\textsuperscript{260} The National Trust was critical of the regeneration benefits of the schemes proposed and suggested that solutions to regeneration issues were still dominated by roads.\textsuperscript{261} In particular, it was critical of the Hastings bypasses which were rejected by the previous Secretary of State\textsuperscript{262} and the dual route expansion into Devon proposed by the South West Regional Assembly.\textsuperscript{263} The Secretary of State announced in December 2002 however, that only one strategic route to Devon would be upgraded and asked the Highways Agency to consider this further.\textsuperscript{264} The Council for Protection of Rural England was critical of the case for regeneration to be brought about by the Stourbridge and Wolverhampton western bypasses.\textsuperscript{265} No decision has yet been taken on these schemes. Whilst the link between new roads and regeneration remains uncertain, there will inevitably be conflicts over new road proposals.\textsuperscript{266} However, we believe that the Secretary of State and his predecessor have, to date, taken a reasonable and balanced view of environmental concerns and regeneration in taking decisions.

\textbf{Summary}

134. The studies have recommended significant new road building or expansion. However, the expansion appears, for the most part, to be on a slightly smaller scale than would otherwise have been the case. We therefore conclude that, were all the study findings to be implemented, the road schemes proposed would provide an important part of a new and better balanced approach. However, these findings are tempered by the following caveats:

(i) We do not believe that it is possible to properly design the road expansion schemes without a decision on the future of inter-urban charging. It is wrong of the Department to suggest otherwise.

(ii) The Department should review the design guidance to the Highways Agency to ensure that it is consistent with that of the Multi-Modal Studies. It must take account of reduced levels of traffic resulting from the strategies.

(iii) The Secretary of State should continue to ensure that the regeneration case for new roads is robust and does not conflict with his environmental obligations.

\textsuperscript{258} Q436
\textsuperscript{259} Q437
\textsuperscript{260} Transport and the Economy, The Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, August 1999
\textsuperscript{261} MMS 12
\textsuperscript{262} The previous Secretary of State rejected the road findings of the Access to Hastings study as the regeneration benefits offered by the road schemes were not clearly demonstrated and did not outweigh the damage that would be caused to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Letter from Stephen Byers MP to Councillor David Shakespeare of the South East of England Regional Assembly, July 2001, DEP 01/1111)
\textsuperscript{263} MMS 12
\textsuperscript{264} Letter from John Spellar MP to Councillor Malcolm Humey, Chair, South West Regional Assembly in response to London and South West and South Wales MMS, Department for Transport, 10 December 2002, DEP 02/2449
\textsuperscript{265} Q556
\textsuperscript{266} MMS 42
Balanced Packages

135. The studies have developed integrated transport strategies. To what extent do all parts of the strategy have to be implemented for it to work? The Department told us that this varied and that “Some elements of the package have to hang together, others are valid in their own right and independent”.267 The Secretary of State told us that he did not “accept the proposition that I as the Minister would have to accept everything or nothing”.268 Ms Chipping, Director of Network Strategy at the Highways Agency told us that it would be possible to carry out work as part of a co-ordinated package in some instances but not others.269 She warned us however that “if you waited for any single element of the package, whether it be road public transport or rail, you are in danger of not delivering the multi-modal package which Ministers envisaged when they set up the study and when they made recommendations”.270

136. The study teams believed that if the strategies were not implemented in a balanced way, the benefit of the integrated strategies would be lost. The South East Manchester study noted that “The benefits of the strategy will not be realised by picking and choosing, say, easy to implement elements or those which are low cost, while more complex and/or expensive elements of the strategy are set aside. The benefits of the strategy will only be seen if it is implemented as a whole”.271 The London to South West and South Wales study expressed similar concerns.272

137. Mr Darrall, Director of the West Midlands Area study told us that the West Midlands strategy depended on 3 key elements: new infrastructure schemes, behaviour change and road charging.273 He told us that “They are all essential, all three components are necessary...only with all three in place do you get, for instance in terms of congestion, a reduction in the number of hours lost in the study area”.274 The impact of a failure to include any of these elements is shown in Figure 4.

![Figure 4: Congestion changes in West Midlands Area study under different scenarios](image)

267 Q13
268 Q600
269 Q176
270 Q177
271 MMS 49
272 MMS 48
273 Q238
274 Q239
138. The strategies have been developed as integrated transport solutions. It is entirely legitimate for the Government to choose what aspects of the schemes should be taken forward. However, those choices must be made in the knowledge that implementing schemes partially is likely to reduce their benefits. The strategies were developed as integrated solutions; where schemes or policies are discarded, there must be a clear understanding of the impact of this on the remainder of the strategy.

139. As we have set out in this section, even if all the study recommendations are implemented, congestion and pollution targets will not be met except in a few areas. Only those areas proposing significant traffic restraint, including charging, can achieve and sustain in the long-term the required congestion and pollution reductions. However, there is evidence that constraints on affordability and reluctance to impose measures such as inter-urban charging will mean that not all the integrated strategies will proceed. This is likely to have a strongly detrimental impact on the congestion and pollution forecasts. The current progress on implementing the study findings is discussed in the next section along with an analysis of the implications of failing to implement the strategies as an integrated package.
5. IMPLEMENTATION

140. Section 4 set out the findings from the studies assuming that all the schemes proposed were built to schedule. We note that, despite considerable investment, it was still not possible to reduce congestion and carbon dioxide emissions in almost all the studies. The most successful studies proposed a balance of investment in new infrastructure, changing traveller behaviour and demand restraint measures such as charging. The availability of alternatives to the car are essential if travellers are to stick with, or switch to public transport. However, the Government has indicated that it cannot afford all the schemes proposed. This section reviews the implications for the Government’s transport strategy of only partial implementation of the recommendations. It is clear that lower investment in alternatives to the car will lead more people to drive and will contribute to higher congestion levels.

Affordability

“Looked at on the downside, one of the things that concerns me is that, firstly, the studies did not have at the front of their mind the question of affordability and deliverability.” 275 (Secretary of State)

141. The Secretary of State accepted that affordability had not been a criteria for the study teams and told us “I think if we were doing this again it most certainly would be because it is relatively easy to get a group of people to come up with a set of propositions where there is no budgetary limit because the way in which you resolve conflicts is simply to take on board everybody’s points of view and pile them all up”. 276 He added “had I accepted everything in every single Multi-Modal Study that came my way already I would probably have spent more than I would get for 20 years never mind 10 years”. 277 The Freight Transport Association stated that “In reality these recommendations are no more than unrealistic shopping lists with high price tags”. 278

Capital Funding

142. The West Midlands Area study illustrated how the lack of guidance had led to significant requirements for new infrastructure. It was specifically told not to consider resource constraints. 279 The resulting strategy proposes significant investment in road, rail and other public transport measures, totalling £7.7 billion, in addition to the £2 billion already committed in the area. 280 The West Midlands Local Government Association told us that the West Midlands Area would be “proposing an increase in annual capital investment through the Local Transport Plan process from £88 million in 2002/03 to £350 million in 2007/08, largely to fund improvements in local transport recommended by the West Midlands Area Multi-Modal Study”. 281 This represents a rise of 300 per cent. Such increases could clearly not be afforded nationally. The 10 Year Plan capital fund allocation for local transport increases from £1.5 to £2.2 billion over the same period, a rise of 47 per cent.

143. The availability of capital funding on the railways causes even more concern. The Strategic Rail Authority told us that “No rail funding was provided within the Ten Year Plan to pay for rail outputs from the studies”. 282 Most of the rail recommendations from

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275 Q583
276 Q584
277 Q600
278 MMS 28
279 Q279
280 MMS 50
281 MMS 21
282 MMS 45
the strategies have been scheduled for the period from 2010 to 2020, but even so, over £2 billion of rail recommendations have been suggested for the period to 2010 from the studies that have reported to date. The 2003 Strategic Rail Authority Plan has already postponed a number of major infrastructure upgrades that were anticipated to occur before 2010. Nor are there any guarantees that funding will be available for the rail schemes recommended beyond 2010. We can only conclude that the timings of the implementation of any of the findings of the multi-modal studies will also be pushed back yet further.

144. The Department for Transport and the Strategic Rail Authority acknowledge that there is not enough money to fund the capital projects put forward by the studies. This is particularly true for rail and local public transport improvements.

Revenue Support

145. Section 4 reviewed the revenue provision for the 10 Year Plan and the emerging requirements from the Multi-Modal Studies. The increases in revenue support for local transport look set to swallow most, if not all the increase in local authority revenue allowance provided by the 10 Year Plan. However, this does not take account of general increases in revenue support requirements for existing services, the remaining studies, nor all those areas outside of the study process. Derbyshire County Council summarised its dilemma “Although, like other authorities, Derbyshire is keen to play its part in this essential work, its revenue funding is fully committed and it could only give priority to Multi-Modal Study outcomes at the expense of existing projects”. The South East England Regional Assembly believe that “throughout the MMS programme the issue of revenue investment has been largely ignored”.

146. The revenue requirements to support rail services proposed by the first 10 studies already exceeded the increase in rail revenue support provided by the Plan. This was the case prior to the recent £312 million cut in revenue support announced by the Secretary of State. Other studies that have since reported, such as the Thames Valley study, have also requested further revenue support for rail beginning from 2003. If the revenue support is not available, the service improvements proposed will not be possible.

147. The Department for Transport told us that it recognised that many of the studies had brought forward recommendations that require revenue support and it was looking at whether this could be funded through the Local Transport Plan process or whether new ways to fund the revenue requirement would need to be found. The Department cannot afford the revenue support requirements for the Multi-Modal Studies. This is particularly true of the revenue support required for rail services. Fewer public transport improvements will be possible as a result. This will have a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the plans.

Summary

148. The lack of budgetary guidance from the Department to the studies has undoubtedly led to the studies avoiding difficult decisions on prioritising their solutions to the main transport problems. Very significant, but ultimately unaffordable, improvements in public transport are clearly more acceptable to the public and regional bodies than measures such as congestion charging. Without a

263 Q658
264 The Strategic Plan 2003. A Platform for Progress
265 MMS 03
266 MMS 19
267 HC Deb, 17 December 2002, col 711
268 Thames Valley Multi-Modal Study, Executive Summary, Atkins, January 2003
269 MMS 42, Q45
budget, such choices did not have to be confronted. The decisions on what schemes can be afforded now have to be taken by Ministers. This is a problem of the Department's own making.

149. It is clear from the Secretary of State's statement that a number of schemes put forward cannot be afforded within the 10 Year Plan budget, despite this being the intention of the Plan. This raises questions over whether the integrated transport strategies proposed will remain integrated when the financial axe is wielded. As the full strategies were unable to offer the reductions in levels of congestion and carbon dioxide emissions required, reduced strategies will risk missing these targets still further.

Rail, Road and Local Transport Budgets

150. After the initial decision on the outline case for the schemes in a study is taken by the Secretary of State, the schemes are referred to the delivery agencies for more detailed design and assessment.290 In the case of strategic road network schemes this is the Highways Agency. For rail it is the Strategic Rail Authority and for other schemes, local authorities.

151. Mr McMillan from the Department for Transport told us that the 10 Year Plan provided resources for road, rail and local transport in roughly equal proportions. He added “In the case of the railways it is true that a good deal of that money is already committed. In the case of road development and of local transport schemes, the money is earmarked but needs to be allocated against specific schemes as they materialise”.291 The Strategic Rail Authority confirmed that “No rail funding was provided within the Ten Year Plan to pay for rail outputs from the studies”.292 Mr Steer confirmed that even if there was capacity and trains to provide new services there would probably not be any revenue support available to subsidise them.293 The Secretary of State pointed out that although some of the rail schemes proposed by the studies might not be affordable this did not mean that significant expenditure was not going into the railways.294

152. The 10 Year Plan for Transport set out indicative numbers of schemes and financial allocations. It also stated that it “provides the resources to implement decisions arising from the Multi-Modal Studies”295 and that “If the studies recommend a pattern of spending that is different from our assumptions, we will shift resources accordingly”.296 Mr McMillan told us that “It is probably true to say that money is earmarked on a modal basis but that is not to say that there cannot be co-ordination and collaboration about the way in which money is spent going forward”.297

153. The position of the Government and the Strategic Rail Authority with respect to rail schemes proposed by the multi-modal studies does not make sense. The multi-modal studies were proposing solutions for all modes of transport. The studies began in 1999, before the Strategic Rail Authority was established and before the 10 Year Plan was published. When the 10 Year Plan was published it promised flexibility between budgets to pay for the study findings. However, in January 2002, the first Strategic Plan of the Strategic Rail Authority announced that there was no funding for the outcomes of the studies prior to 2010. This contradicts the intentions of the 10 Year Plan and appears...
to be a decision taken by the Strategic Rail Authority in isolation. The decision comes long after the studies have started and after some of them had finished. We are not sure on what grounds the Strategic Rail Authority believes the schemes it promotes to be of higher priority than the multi-modal study findings. There is no evidence of a cost-benefit analysis of many of the schemes in its Plan that would enable it to make this decision.

154. The only budget over which there appears to be no uncertainty is that of the Highways Agency. The 10 Year Plan estimates that it could provide funding for 100 new bypasses and widening of 360 miles of the strategic road network. Mr McMillan told us that “it is still very much the government’s intention to deliver the capacity which the plan [10 Year Plan] recommends”.299

155. It is not possible to have a multi-modal programme of improvements if there is no money for rail investment. The Government must fulfil its commitment in the 10 Year Plan to exercise flexibility between budget areas where this supports integrated packages and represents value for money.

Rail Improvements

156. Whilst it acknowledges the financial constraints under which it is operating, the Strategic Rail Authority has also been strongly critical of the schemes proposed by the multi-modal studies. It notes that “Much road traffic is local in nature and involves dispersed flows that cannot effectively be served by public transport. It is therefore evident that in many areas the contribution rail can make to solving road congestion problems will be limited”.300 In the light of recent experiences of cost rises for major infrastructure developments on the railways, Mr Steer also told us that the schemes proposed by the studies are only preliminary designs and that “When you get into the detail, you sometimes discover that it will actually cost a great deal more than you first thought to implement them”.301 The Strategic Rail Authority summarised its view of the multi-modal studies with a damming statement:

“The SRA is of the view that the studies are not a good starting point for the planning and development of the rail network. The studies areas that have been defined are drawn largely to fit unresolved issues on the highway network and highway congestion points.....Many studies miss out the operational impacts of their proposals on key parts of the network that lie outside the study area and thus make no attempt to assess the costs and benefits of mitigating these impacts”.302

Mr Steer added that “the divorce between responsibility for conclusions and responsibility for funding” was a significant problem with respect to rail.303

Rail Assessment

157. The Strategic Rail Authority was concerned that the small study areas were not suitable for planning rail freight improvements and could contradict the 10 Year Plan passenger targets by promoting stopping services on high speed lines.304 It also raised concerns that as the multi-modal studies assessed the benefits of the overall strategy, rather than individual schemes, many of the rail elements do not have a good case when assessed

299 Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan, p10
299 MMS 42A, Q42
300 MMS 45
301 Q97
302 MMS 45
303 Q128, Q129
304 Ibid.
under the SRA's own criteria. Mr Malik, Project manager of the M1 in the East Midlands study, did indeed tell us that the study proposed some heavy rail schemes which were unlikely to meet the Strategic Rail Authority's own value for money criteria. However, he told us that this could be justified as part of a longer-term strategy and that "there are other wider benefits about regeneration, etc, which are not incorporated within the economic assessment process". Mr Bowker, Chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority accepted that regeneration was not a factor currently considered by the Strategic Rail Authority.

Rail Targets

158. Professor Begg was critical of the way in which the Strategic Rail Authority concentrates on growth in passenger kilometres. He told us that the Authority "focuses very myopically on increasing rail and freight patronage and on reducing overcrowding and it does seem to us that there is a disconnect between the direction and guidance to the SRA and the outcomes the government has set in the Ten Year Plan to reduce congestion, less social exclusion and an improved environment". Councillor Stacey, Chair of the West Midlands Local Government Association's Regeneration Conference told us that heavy rail was a key element of the package for the West Midlands but that it was unlikely to fit with the Strategic Rail Authority's current objectives:

"it seems quite clear to me that the SRA are working to a different agenda and the agenda they are working to is meeting the government's targets on increases in passenger kilometrage and you do not do that by funding rail schemes in dense urban areas that carry a relatively high number of people short distances, you do that by funding long distance schemes that carry quite large numbers of people long distances or you do that by funding schemes, such as in London, shall I say, where the commuting distance is longer. If you are only looking at passenger kilometrage you fund a totally different package of investment to if you are looking at funding the outcome of multi-modal studies."

159. Professor Begg noted that although his view was that if all the schemes proposed by the studies were funded that the programme was balanced, the current lack of funding for the railways as likely to lead to a programme that was "very seriously unbalanced".

Opportunities

160. Mr Steer of the Strategic Rail Authority told us that the problem was largely that the studies had often concluded that "they want an additional service but clearly there is no room for it so new infrastructure will be needed". In 2002, the Strategic Rail Authority launched a new policy to re-examine usage of rail lines to provide extra capacity by co-ordinating services better. This may mean that some extra services can be provided without significant expenditure. Mr Steer told us that "in many cases it will be possible to deliver a great deal of what the multi-modal studies wanted to see, but it may well not be through the particular schemes which were put forward". Indeed, the 2003 Strategic Plan lists

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305 Ibid.  
306 MMS 52  
307 Q337  
308 HIC(2002-03) 125-1, Q122  
309 Q429  
310 Q346  
311 Q434  
312 Q82  
313 Ibid.  
314 Ibid.
a small number of multi-modal study schemes that are currently being assessed or implemented.\textsuperscript{315}

\textbf{Current Progress}

161. Whilst Mr Steer remained up-beat about the contribution rail could make to the multi-modal studies, the financial position of the Strategic Rail Authority has brought about further cuts. The Strategic Plan of January 2003 announced the suspension of further Rail Freight Grants, Rail Passenger Partnership Grants and Rail Performance Fund Grants.\textsuperscript{316} All had been promoted as possible sources of funding for the studies’ recommendations. The Plan followed a small number of cuts in services confirmed in January 2003. It announced the potential for future “thinning of services”\textsuperscript{317} Some further reductions in services were announced in February.\textsuperscript{318} Given there is not enough money available to maintain support at current levels it is self-evident that there is no money for extra services that require subsidy, at least in the short-term.

162. The nature of the cuts announced to date concerns us. These include services between Southampton and Bournemouth along the South Coast, services between Derby and Birmingham, services between Oxford and Bristol and services from the East Midlands to Manchester Airport between Crewe and Manchester airport. The M1 in the East Midlands study recommended an increase in services between the East Midlands and Manchester airport to be introduced by 2006 and further East Midlands to West Midlands rail services by the same date; instead existing services have been cut. The South East Manchester study promotes increased rail access to Manchester Airport, the Crewe service reduction appears to work against this.\textsuperscript{319} Whilst the Strategic Rail Authority maintains that the cuts will lead to reliability improvements on the network, the conclusion must be that the Authority and the studies are pulling in two different directions.

\textbf{Summary}

163. The Strategic Rail Authority has only recently begun to provide a clear direction for improving the rail network. However, it is clear that the Multi-Modal Studies take a very low profile in this process, since the SRA believes them “flawed”. However, the strategic problems with the studies are dwarfed by the current funding shortages. The SRA does not have the funding to construct the schemes proposed even if they were shown to be value for money. Even if it did, it is not clear whether they would be shown any degree of priority. We are extremely concerned that rather than promoting the findings of the studies, recent service cuts may actually undermine the strategies. As one of the main public transport alternatives to long-distance driving, the lack of rail improvements seriously undermines the idea that these studies would produce integrated transport solutions. Whilst it is clear that improvements to rail services alone will not prevent the need for road expansion, if the rail improvements proposed by the studies are not introduced, more people will travel by car and congestion will rise.

164. The Strategic Rail Authority can only work to the strategic priorities it is set and within the budget it is given by the Government. The multi-modal studies are supposed to be setting out a vision and a programme for transport improvements for the next two or more decades. The current focus on cost control and making better use of the network is essential. However, incremental tinkering will not be sufficient

\textsuperscript{315} SRA Strategic Plan 2003, A Platform for Progress, p104
\textsuperscript{316} SRA Strategic Plan 2003, A Platform for Progress
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{318} Press Notices, Strategic Rail Authority, February 24 2003
\textsuperscript{319} The Strategic Rail Authority note that the use of this service is currently very low
to make rail an attractive alternative to the car. The Department needs to take a decision on the role of rail in solving our future transport problems. It is a cross-modal decision which should not be left to the Strategic Rail Authority alone. It must take account of all the potential impacts of rail, including regeneration and congestion reduction. Many of the improvements needed will require considerable on-going subsidy to support them. However, this is not unusual in other European countries. If a strong and robust case for rail is not made in the 2004 spending review we see little hope of major changes to the network before 2020.

Local Transport Improvements

165. Many improvements put forward by the studies will have to be designed and brought forward for approval by local authorities. There are two concerns relating to the eventual implementation of these schemes. The first is affordability. As noted in Section 4, the West Midlands Authorities are proposing a 300 per cent increase in funding for their local transport plan to fund the multi-modal study outcomes. Such a level of funding could not be sustained across all the study areas, nor across the many areas not covered by studies. In addition, the Commission noted that whilst behavioural change measures formed a key part of many strategies, there was no specific revenue set aside to support these measures.320 The County Surveyors Society also noted that “The promotion of public transport depends to a significant extent on the future availability of revenue funding about which there is uncertainty”.321 As noted previously, Derbyshire County Council could only support findings from the multi-modal studies at the expense of existing services.322

166. The Commission for Integrated Transport also raised concern about the institutional capacity of local authorities to develop and deliver major public transport schemes which often cross boundaries.333 Mr Mulroy told us that following the West Midlands study “there was almost a vacuum. Because we have several districts, all of whom are highway authorities in their own right, because we have not got a county council for the West Midlands any more, there is no single authority which can take this forward”.324 The Department told us that it was establishing implementation teams to maintain the coherence of the strategies.325

167. The local transport improvements require further justification before they can be approved. However, even if all the local transport schemes offered value for money they could not be afforded. There is also insufficient revenue support available to support the new services. It is inevitable therefore that fewer public transport schemes than proposed will be implemented. This means more journeys will be made by car and congestion will rise, particularly in the city areas where these schemes would be most effective.

Road Improvements

168. In contrast to the lack of progress on the public transport components of the studies, the Highways Agency has the funding required to implement improvements. Indeed, we note that one recent proposed junction upgrade at the intersection of the M1/M6/A14 is estimated to cost an amazing £100 million.326 It has also put in place a number of initiatives to speed up the implementation of road schemes. It believes that it can reduce the time it takes to implement a non-controversial major scheme from 12 and a half years

320 Ibid.
321 MMS 01
322 MMS 03
323 MMS 30
324 Q268
325 Q13
326 Infrastructure Update, Local Transport Today, 20 February 2003
to 7 years. Mr Matthews told us that one scheme in Lincoln would proceed from design to beginning of construction in about 4 years. In addition, the Agency has worked alongside some of the studies, carrying out further feasibility of the most likely schemes.  

169. These improvements mean that Mr Matthews was confident that the bulk of the schemes would be delivered within 10 years. However, no such improvements are likely for local transport projects or rail projects. It therefore seems likely that the improvements to trunk-road capacity will precede many of the public transport improvements suggested by the studies. The Commission for Integrated Transport warned against this approach “Extra inter-urban capacity ahead of improvements in local transport and without recognising the need for demand restraint will simply add to the existing problems in our cities”.  

170. We concluded earlier that the plans for expansion of the road network were not disproportionate as part of a balanced package of measures. However, it is clear that the road schemes are likely to be implemented relatively quickly whilst the public transport schemes progress more slowly and at a lower level. We conclude that the integrated planning process is now facing a ‘disintegrated’ implementation process whereby road solutions will dominate because they have committed funding and an effective champion and implementation agency. The full benefits of preparing integrated packages will therefore not be seen. The inevitable outcome of this will be an encouragement to use cars, not public transport. This will lead to further dispersion of living patterns and contribute to more severe congestion in the long-term.

Inter-Urban Charging

171. When the 10 Year Plan was published in July 2000, the introduction of inter-urban charging was believed to be a decade away for technological reasons. The previous Secretary of State wrote to the study teams telling them to assume that there could be no charging before 2010. Three years later, the current Secretary of State told us that he still considered the introduction of charging to be at least a decade away and that “I say to people who think that road user charging is the thing that is going to sort out all the problems, even if you accepted it was a good thing, in technical terms and in practical terms it is a long, long way off”. He observed that although there would be a similar scheme for charging lorries introduced by the middle of the decade the prospect of introducing such a scheme for 25 million cars was very different and fraught with potential IT problems. He concluded “I have to reach a judgment, my ministerial colleagues have to reach a judgment, on the technological advantages, whether or not it is something that is doable, whether or not it is something that people would accept. I cannot give you an undertaking and I am not going to give you an undertaking to put it in the 2004 Review [of the 10 Year Plan]”.

327 MMS 54  
328 Q159  
329 Ibid.  
330 MMS 54  
331 Q164  
332 MMS 30  
333 Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan, p88  
334 Q639  
335 Q642  
336 Q647
172. Some of the studies have recommended the introduction of area wide charging as soon as is technically possible. We agree with the Secretary of State that even if it was decided that such a scheme should be developed, it would take many years to perfect the technology and install it. However, without a decision from the Government about its view on inter-urban charging, the technological capabilities and institutional hurdles that would need to be overcome to ensure that such a system worked are unlikely to be tackled. It would be regrettable if we were still 10 years away from the development of such a system in 2005, 5 years on from the 10 Year Plan. As the Department is currently developing a system of charging automatically for lorries, and any such system for cars would have to be compatible, there is an opportunity to develop the technical capability for car charging. We also note the work the Department is carrying out under the DIRECTS charging technology trial in Leeds.\footnote{http://www.dft.gov.uk/trwp/directs/index.htm} We recommend that the Department continues to develop the technological capability that would enable inter-urban road-user charging to be introduced regardless of the current Government policy.

Summary

173. The intention of the Multi-Modal Studies was to consider all other alternatives before deciding on the need for new road infrastructure. This approach will be undermined if the Department continues to guarantee funding for the road schemes proposed but not for public transport improvements. Whilst the paper studies may have produced well-balanced strategies, the implementation seems likely to be very seriously imbalanced. If road improvements do dominate, and the costs of driving continue to fall relative to public transport costs then the car will become the mode of choice for more, not less journeys. It is clear that without a major shift in policy, congestion on the network will worsen over the next two decades along with the negative environmental and social consequences this will bring.
6. THE WAY FORWARD

174. The multi-modal studies are to be welcomed as one of the largest transport data collection and modelling exercises undertaken in the UK. It is only by looking ahead over the next 10 to 20 years that this Government has been able to determine the size of the challenge facing it in transport. The Department for Transport asked difficult questions about transport policy and it has received difficult answers. However, it is only by asking these questions that the Government can now put itself on the right path to improving our transport system. Better information should lead to better planning. We support the Government in its commitment to developing a long-term integrated transport strategy.

175. The Multi-Modal Studies have provided a detailed understanding of the magnitude of the challenges facing the Government in improving our transport systems. As we have highlighted in this report, inconsistent approaches and guidance together with an inadequate consideration of resource constraints means that coherent and consistent solutions have not always been developed. However, we draw together our understanding of the common messages emerging from the studies.

176. One of the main strands of Government policy is the need to reduce congestion. It has taken this decision because it believes that congested roads lead to an inefficient economy. Whilst the actual costs of congestion and its potential future impact on economic growth are not sufficiently well understood, the premise that congestion is undesirable and inefficient is reasonable. If congestion does damage the economy and the environment then policies must be put in place to tackle it.

177. Congestion cannot be tackled simply by investment in more infrastructure. Even the substantial increases in funding provided for by the 10 Year Plan will not be able to reduce congestion and pollution by 2010 or even in the longer-term. Nor will an even more ambitious programme of expenditure on infrastructure by itself, as proposed by some of the studies, achieve this. This is a reality facing all future Governments and the travelling public.

178. Without wide-area road user charging, reductions in congestion are only possible in the short-term. The charging may not be required on all roads or at all times of the day. Without it, it appears that the Government will not be able to escape the self-defeating cycle of building more roads, encouraging more car use, producing more congestion, leading to more roads. It has clearly stated that it does not see continued road building as the solution. Whilst we do not rule out the existence of an alternative policy to reduce congestion, none of our expert witnesses nor the Department for Transport were able to suggest what such a policy would be.

179. Without a decision on a national road-user charging scheme the design and viability of a range of road and public transport schemes is unclear. The Department does not appear to accept this.

180. If road-user charging is ever to be an acceptable proposition, alternatives to travel by car must be provided. This will require greater levels of funding and significant forward planning. We have seen little evidence that the Strategic Rail Authority and the rail industry can play its part or that the Government is yet ready to fund the extra public transport systems required despite the recent increases in funding.

181. The alternative to the radical change in policy put forward by some of the studies is rising congestion and a failure to meet carbon dioxide reduction targets. The Government cannot continue to pretend that investing in infrastructure alone, even at levels far above those currently seen, whilst allowing car use to rise unchecked
can reduce congestion. This Government and future Governments face a stark choice:

(a) change the way we pay for travel and introduce widespread road-user charging; or
(b) accept that congestion will rise and persuade the travelling public and business to accept this.

182. Either of these options will require the Government to engage with the public in a clear and consistent way. The perception has been that under-investment has led to our transport problems. This Committee has on several occasions highlighted shortcomings in investment which have indeed contributed to the difficulties faced by travellers today. However, the evidence from this inquiry shows that the continued desire to travel brought about by a growing economy and new, more dispersed living patterns, could not be accommodated by building more and more infrastructure even if it were affordable and environmentally acceptable. More infrastructure is indeed required but it will have to be accompanied by strong measures to manage demand if our networks are to offer reliable journeys. The alternative future of increased congestion, pollution and unreliability is not an attractive one.

183. The Government must lead the debate on the consequences of inaction as well as the need for action; it cannot pretend that congestion problems can be solved without radical action. That action may prove to be politically unacceptable even when the alternatives are made clear. However, it will be rejected out of hand unless there is an honest discussion of the problems which face us all and to which we all contribute.
7. CONCLUSIONS

184. The Multi-Modal Studies were set up to develop integrated transport solutions to our worst congestion problems. They have considered the contribution that public transport improvements, better information, land-use planning, measures to restrain the demand for travel and road building should make over the coming decades. Together, they represent the largest ever attempt to develop sustainable transport strategies across England. The principle of long-term integrated transport planning is the right one and one which we support. It must be continued. It is only by looking ahead over the next 10 to 20 years that this Government has been able to determine the size of the challenge facing it in transport.

185. The Multi-Modal Studies were a new process and, as with any new process, were not perfect. The studies varied in quality and detail. However, the study teams have made a serious attempt to fulfil their brief. Without endorsing specific recommendations in detail the Committee acknowledges the professionalism and seriousness of the technical work and recommendations. We are however concerned that the studies should be completed £8.2 million over budget and often behind schedule.

186. We were disappointed to find however, that the usefulness of the studies had been undermined by inconsistent or ill thought out Government guidance on a number of key issues. Different assumptions have been made in different parts of the country on a range of crucial issues such as road pricing. Not surprisingly, Regional Planning Bodies have been reluctant to take a lead in this area. The studies were also told not to consider funding restraints and have therefore produced lists of transport schemes which the Secretary of State accepts are unaffordable. The difficult decisions that the Department now faces over what can be afforded are problems its own making.

187. The escalation of costs on the rail network has compounded the problems of the over ambitious plans proposed. Even the schemes in the Strategic Rail Authority’s own plan have been pushed back beyond 2010. The extra improvements proposed on top of these schemes appear to have a low priority and little realistic chance of being funded. The Strategic Rail Authority has been clear that it does not see the studies as the best way to plan the rail network. As the main long distance alternative to the car, the absence of planned rail improvements undermines the prospect of achieving “multi-modal” solutions.

188. The parlous state of the rail improvements mean that the Government must push for other local public transport schemes to be brought forward, approved and funded if there is to be an integrated transport policy in the UK. However, it is clear that there are neither the capital resource to fund all the improvements nor the revenue required to support many of the schemes if they were to be built. Fewer new alternatives to car travel will be available than anticipated by the studies. There is however committed funding set aside for road improvements through the Highways Agency. All the evidence suggests that the expensive integrated paper strategies will not be achieved in practice.

189. Significant widening of stretches of our motorway and trunk road network has been recommended. However, the message from the studies is clear. This policy will only reduce congestion if it is accompanied by measures to control the use of such roads. It is not physically possible, nor environmentally desirable for road space to keep pace with traffic growth. The Government explicitly rejected this policy in 1998.

190. The errors in the management and direction of the studies should not undermine the valuable conclusions that they arrived at. The studies generally found that, even with a significant increase in expenditure on infrastructure schemes, congestion would continue to rise from today’s levels after a short period of time. Whilst expenditure on public transport alternatives to the car remain desirable, these alone will only reduce traffic on the strategic road network by a few years growth. More radical action is required if a sustained
reduction in congestion is to be achieved. Without more radical action the Department will also very significantly fail to meet its aims to reducing climate change emissions from transport.

191. Improvements in technology and public transport alone will not solve our congestion and pollution problems. The only effective way of achieving a sustained cut in congestion appears to be to introduce some road user charging on our busiest roads during peak periods. Introducing inter-urban charging will be a difficult decision to take, and the assumption has been that it would be unpopular. But the alternative is increasing congestion and pollution, a proposition which we find unacceptable and potentially more unpopular.

192. The Government has evidence from its own calculations, its independent transport advisor, the RAC Foundation for Motoring and now from a series of independent studies pointing to the need for inter-urban charging. We understand that not everyone agrees with this, and that some argue that there are other solutions. However, we have not seen any evidence that alternative solutions would work. It does not inevitably follow that the Government must commit itself to inter-urban road charging. However, it must commit itself either to this or some equally effective alternative if congestion and pollution targets are to be met. The Government's own calculations show that a continuation of indecision and a reliance on incremental improvements is a policy destined for failure.

193. We therefore recommend that the Government sets out its intentions on the future of inter-urban charging in the 2004 review of the 10 Year Plan. The Secretary of State told us that road charging "is something we need to consider, we need to debate". But that is more or less the same words that many Secretaries of State have said since the 1960s. The Government needs to lead this debate rather than listening to it and it needs to present a credible plan to cut congestion and pollution.

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338 Motoring Towards 2050, RAC Foundation, May 2002
329 Q651
LIST OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The investment decisions taken now will be with us for many decades. It was therefore essential to look again at ways to tackle congestion, pollution and safety problems. The Government has been innovative in developing the Multi-Modal Studies (paragraph 5).

(b) We welcome the Secretary of State’s acceptance of the need for a critical evaluation of the manner in which the studies were conducted and managed (paragraph 12).

(c) We were disappointed to find that there are still no official estimates of the cost of congestion nor its impact on economic growth. It seems bizarre to plan a strategy around the principle of congestion reduction without having a good understanding of its true costs or long-term impacts. We recommend that the Department sponsor a study to determine the impact of congestion on the UK economy (paragraph 22).

(d) The Department’s forecasts show congestion is likely to be worse than previously thought by 2010 (paragraph 31).

(e) We concur with our predecessor Committee’s view that congestion will not be cut with the current range of policies put forward in the 10 Year Plan. The Government’s recently revised forecasts now agree with this view (paragraph 31).

(f) We remain extremely concerned that current policies will fail to provide sufficient cuts in climate change emissions (paragraph 33).

(g) The 10 Year Plan sets targets to reduce congestion. The Department, however, appears to have accepted that congestion in 2010 will be significantly greater than congestion today. Indeed, increases in congestion are now being presented as reductions compared to what would otherwise have happened. We believe that this approach is flawed and will lead to accusations of manipulation of figures. It is self evident that doing something will be more effective than doing nothing (paragraph 36).

(h) The Government has an obligation to reduce the adverse environmental, social and economic effects of road traffic. The Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act sets this as an aim. Levels of congestion are a serious problem today. The travelling public and business want improvement, not managed decline. The Government should be courageous in seeking such improvements rather than simply waiting for something to turn up (paragraph 37).

(i) Transport policy still appears to concentrate on reducing environmental damage rather than positively promoting the protection of environmental resources. Greater consideration must be given to meeting environmental targets at the start of the planning process (paragraph 55).

(j) The Department and its Agencies continue to spend very large amounts of money on consultancy services. It should ask itself whether this money could not be better used on improving the transport infrastructure. (Paragraph 56).

(k) The findings of the studies must address the causes of congestion if they are not simply to perpetuate previous unsustainable trends (paragraph 61).
(l) The Government’s evidence shows that even if it could afford all the recommendations from the Multi-Modal Studies, congestion will continue to rise with the policies put forward (paragraph 65).

(m) Even allowing for technological improvements, carbon dioxide emissions are set to rise. The combined impact of the nine studies that had reported by November 2002 was for an increase of 2.05 MtC compared to 2000 levels. This is more than the savings expected from the entire 10 Year Plan. Of even greater concern is that this level of increase relies on the introduction of area-wide road user charging in two study areas and significant restraint on car-use elsewhere. If these were not introduced, carbon dioxide emissions would rise by at least 7.2 MtC. The Department for Transport expected the 10 Year Plan to reduce overall carbon dioxide emissions by 1.6 MtC. It is clear that it has vastly underestimated the challenge it faces to achieve this (paragraph 70).

(n) The Government has set out a Climate Change strategy and recently published a new Energy White Paper setting further challenging targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. It is clear from the detailed modelling results in the Multi-Modal Studies that technology alone will not solve transport’s contribution to climate change. The Department has already taken decisions on the outcomes of the first eight studies yet the impact on climate change has not been mentioned. We are astounded that strategies that manifestly work against the UK’s climate change commitments are being approved (paragraph 71).

(o) Improvements in public transport are likely to be most effective in urban areas where they serve more concentrated journey patterns. The evidence presented to the Committee shows that even the very substantial investment sought in public transport is only likely to absorb a very small amount of the forecast growth in traffic on the strategic road network (paragraph 88).

(p) The studies do not offer any evidence to suggest that the reliability of freight will improve from current levels (paragraph 92).

(q) The Government should provide extra resource funding to support a more ambitious programme of travel education and travel reduction. The costs are small compared to infrastructure improvements and the environmental and economic benefits may be bigger (paragraph 97).

(r) Land-use and transport policies must be complementary. This requires the Department for Transport and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to work closely together to resolve the current tensions. The Government should make clear the mechanism by which these difficult issues are resolved (paragraph 100).

(s) The guidance from the Department and Ministers on inter-urban road charging has been inadequate and inconsistent. The guidance that eventually came from the Secretary of State in May 2002 was sound but too late. One study dismissed the prospect of road charging largely because of this hiatus in policy. The decisions announced in December 2002 suggest that the Secretary of State will approve road schemes under the assumption that there is to be no inter-urban charging. Extra road building will occur as a result of the lack of decision in this key policy area. This runs contrary to the intentions of the Integrated Transport White Paper (paragraph 107).
The conclusions of the studies show that whilst these new systems may show some benefits, they are relatively small and will only have an impact over the short-term. Technology will make a significant but small contribution to reducing the daily congestion on our motorways. It should not be relied on as an effective alternative to inter-urban charging (paragraph 119).

The advice from the studies and the Government's independent transport advisor is clear. Without some form of road user charging on inter-urban roads there will be no sustained reduction in congestion. No other alternatives have been shown to be technically possible that will give priority to business and freight travel. If congestion does cost many billions of pounds a year to the economy, any Government policy that allowed this to deteriorate would appear flawed from the outset (paragraph 122).

The balance of evidence and the experience of the studies leads us to conclude that road user charging on the inter-urban road network is the most important way to stop congestion growing. However, charging for use of motorways alone could lead to unacceptable levels of diversion onto already congested, smaller, less safe roads. Any such scheme would therefore have to form part of a wider national charging scheme which radically changes the way we pay for travelling by car (paragraph 124).

It is essential that the Government leads the debate on the benefits and difficulties of wide spread road user charging. It must also set out the consequences of not introducing charging to enable the public to take part in a fully informed debate (paragraph 125).

Were all the study findings to be implemented, the road schemes proposed would provide an important part of a new and better balanced approach. However, these findings are tempered by the following caveats:

(i) We do not believe that it is possible to properly design the road expansion schemes without a decision on the future of inter-urban charging. It is wrong of the Department to suggest otherwise.

(ii) The Department should review the design guidance to the Highways Agency to ensure that it is consistent with that of the Multi-Modal Studies. It must take account of reduced levels of traffic resulting from the strategies.

(iii) The Secretary of State should continue to ensure that the regeneration case for new roads is robust and does not conflict with his environmental obligations (paragraph 134).

The Department for Transport and the Strategic Rail Authority acknowledge that there is not enough money to fund the capital projects put forward by the studies. This is particularly true for rail and local public transport improvements (paragraph 144).

The Department cannot afford the revenue support requirements for the Multi-Modal Studies. This is particularly true of the revenue support required for rail services. Fewer public transport improvements will be possible as a result. This will have a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the plans (paragraph 147).

The lack of budgetary guidance from the Department to the studies has undoubtedly led to the studies avoiding difficult decisions on prioritising their solutions to the main transport problems. Very significant, but ultimately unaffordable, improvements in public transport are clearly more acceptable
to the public and regional bodies than measures such as congestion charging. Without a budget, such choices did not have to be confronted. The decisions on what schemes can be afforded now have to be taken by Ministers. This is a problem of the Department's own making (paragraph 148).

(bb) It is clear from the Secretary of State’s statement that a number of schemes put forward cannot be afforded within the 10 Year Plan budget, despite this being the intention of the Plan. This raises questions over whether the integrated transport strategies proposed will remain integrated when the financial axe is wielded. As the full strategies were unable to offer the reductions in levels of congestion and carbon dioxide emissions required, reduced strategies will risk missing these targets still further (paragraph 149).

(cc) The position of the Government and the Strategic Rail Authority with respect to rail schemes proposed by the multi-modal studies does not make sense. The first Strategic Plan of the Strategic Rail Authority announced that there was no funding for the outcomes of the studies prior to 2010. This contradicts the intentions of the 10 Year Plan and appears to be a decision taken by the Strategic Rail Authority in isolation. The decision comes long after the studies have started and after some of them had finished. We are not sure on what grounds the Strategic Rail Authority believes the schemes it promotes to be of higher priority than the multi-modal study findings. There is no evidence of a cost-benefit analysis of many of the schemes in its Plan that would enable it to make this decision (paragraph 153).

(dd) It is not possible to have a multi-modal programme of improvements if there is no money for rail investment. The Government must fulfill its commitment in the 10 Year Plan to exercise flexibility between budget areas where this supports integrated packages and represents value for money (paragraph 155).

(ee) The SRA does not have the funding to construct the schemes proposed even if they were shown to be value for money. Even if it did, it is not clear whether they would be shown any degree of priority. We are extremely concerned that rather than promoting the findings of the studies, recent service cuts may actually undermine the strategies. As one of the main public transport alternatives to long-distance driving, the lack of rail improvements seriously undermines the idea that these studies would produce integrated transport solutions. Whilst it is clear that improvements to rail services alone will not prevent the need for road expansion, if the rail improvements proposed by the studies are not introduced, more people will travel by car and congestion will rise (paragraph 163).

(ff) The Strategic Rail Authority can only work to the strategic priorities it is set and within the budget it is given by the Government. The multi-modal studies are supposed to be setting out a vision and a programme for transport improvements for the next two or more decades. The current focus on cost control and making better use of the network is essential. However, incremental tinkering will not be sufficient to make rail an attractive alternative to the car. The Department needs to take a decision on the role of rail in solving our future transport problems. It is a cross-modal decision which should not be left to the Strategic Rail Authority alone. It must take account of all the potential impacts of rail, including regeneration and congestion reduction. Many of the improvements needed will require considerable on-going subsidy to support them. However, this is not unusual in other European countries. If a strong and robust case for rail is not made
in the 2004 spending review we see little hope of major changes to the network before 2020 (paragraph 164).

Even if all the local transport schemes offered value for money they could not be afforded. There is also insufficient revenue support available to support the new services. It is inevitable therefore that fewer public transport schemes than proposed will be implemented. This means more journeys will be made by car and congestion will rise, particularly in the city areas where these schemes would be most effective (paragraph 167).

We conclude that the integrated planning process is now facing a ‘disintegrated’ implementation process whereby road solutions will dominate because they have committed funding and an effective champion and implementation agency. The full benefits of preparing integrated packages will therefore not be seen. The inevitable outcome of this will be an encouragement to use cars, not public transport. This will lead to further dispersion of living patterns and contribute to more severe congestion in the long-term (paragraph 170).

We recommend that the Department continues to develop the technological capability that would enable inter-urban road-user charging to be introduced regardless of the current Government policy (paragraph 172).

The intention of the Multi-Modal Studies was to consider all other alternatives before deciding on the need for new road infrastructure. This approach will be undermined if the Department continues to guarantee funding for the road schemes proposed but not for public transport improvements. Whilst the paper studies may have produced well-balanced strategies, the implementation seems likely to be very seriously imbalanced. If road improvements do dominate, and the costs of driving continue to fall relative to public transport costs then the car will become the mode of choice for more, not less journeys. It is clear that without a major shift in policy, congestion on the network will worsen over the next two decades along with the negative environmental and social consequences this will bring (paragraph 173).

The multi-modal studies are to be welcomed as one of the largest transport data collection and modelling exercises undertaken in the UK. It is only by looking ahead over the next 10 to 20 years that this Government has been able to determine the size of the challenge facing it in transport. The Department for Transport asked difficult questions about transport policy and it has received difficult answers. However, it is only by asking these questions that the Government can now put itself on the right path to improving our transport system. Better information should lead to better planning. We support the Government in its commitment to developing a long-term integrated transport strategy (paragraph 174).

Congestion cannot be tackled simply by investment in more infrastructure. Even the substantial increases in funding provided for by the 10 Year Plan will not be able to reduce congestion and pollution by 2010 or even in the longer-term. Nor will an even more ambitious programme of expenditure on infrastructure by itself, as proposed by some of the studies, achieve this. This is a reality facing all future Governments and the travelling public (paragraph 177).
(mm) **Without wide-area road user charging, reductions in congestion are only possible in the short-term.** The charging may not be required on all roads or at all times of the day (paragraph 178).

(nn) **Without a decision on a national road-user charging scheme the design and viability of a range of road and public transport schemes is unclear** (paragraph 179).

(oo) **If road-user charging is ever to be an acceptable proposition, alternatives to travel by car must be provided.** This will require greater levels of funding and significant forward planning (paragraph 180).

(pp) **The alternative to the radical change in policy put forward by some of the studies is rising congestion and a failure to meet carbon dioxide reduction targets.** The Government cannot continue to pretend that investing in infrastructure alone, even at levels far above those currently seen, whilst allowing car use to rise unchecked can reduce congestion. This Government and future Governments face a stark choice:

(i) change the way we pay for travel and introduce widespread road-user charging; or

(ii) accept that congestion will rise and persuade the travelling public and business to accept this (paragraph 181).
ANNEX 1: CONGESTION

1. The Department measures congestion by the difference between the travel times given by comparing 'actual' travel times with 'free-flow' travel times. The 'actual' time is given by the speed either observed on the road network in surveys, or by the forecasts of the traffic model for future years, bearing in mind that the more traffic there is, the slower it will go. The 'free flow' travel times are those which would be given if all traffic travelled at or close to the maximum design speed of the road, unimpeded by any other vehicle, but subject to the speed limit. Thus the free flow speeds may be thought of as the travel conditions that would be enjoyed by a law-abiding citizen driving at 4 in the morning when there are no other vehicles around. If all vehicles were able to travel at this speed, there would be no congestion.

2. Thus the Department calculates congestion as:

\[
[(\text{Free flow travel time}) - (\text{Actual travel time})] \times (\text{Number of vehicles})
\]

These are then expressed as a percentage change from the base level of congestion in, for example, the year 2000.

3. The calculations produce a total amount of congestion (usually expressed a millions of seconds or hours), and its percentage change. The original forecasts in 2000 said the 10 Year Plan would bring congestion down by 6% from 2000 to 2010, and the 2002 Progress Report says that congestion will increase by 11% to 20%. These percentage changes look of appreciable size, both up and down. They reflect billions of seconds spent in congested conditions each year, in the country as a whole. However, to put the figures in context, they are mostly in the form of very small amounts of time for each separate journey. Thus the reduction of congestion of 6% really only represented an average improvement of around 2 seconds per mile travelled, and similarly the new forecasts of an 11% to 20% growth in congestion only represent an average worsening of around 4 to 8 seconds per mile, though more so in urban areas. The day-to-day variation in travel time due to random incidents, weather and general uncertainty is much greater than these changes in the average.

4. Therefore the question arises - what does it mean to say 'congestion will increase' in these calculations? Using the Department's method, this will happen in three different conditions:

(i) if the free flow travel time increases - for example if speed limits were raised, or if more travel takes place on motorways, the standard expectation of travel without congestion would go up, and the shortfall in the real world would seem worse by comparison;

(ii) if the actual travel time goes down - for example if traffic volume increases more than the capacity of the network, and all journeys are slower; or

(iii) if the number of vehicles goes up - for example, if traffic growth continues, even if speeds are maintained there are more people being delayed by the same amount, and the calculated total congestion would increase.

Following widespread criticism of this way of measuring congestion, the Department now seems to be moving towards our predecessor committee's view that it would be better to develop ways of measuring congestion which relate more closely to travellers' experience of delays.

5. Meanwhile, inspection of the figures shows that the reason why congestion is expected to increase in the coming decade (and thereafter) is because the Department expects to see more vehicles, each travelling more slowly. This simple conclusion is surely robust - it will not be altered by different methods of measurement. The key problem is one of policy: it
would need an unrealistically huge road building programme to be big enough to increase speeds at the same time as accommodating all the expected increase in traffic (including the further increases in traffic that would be generated by the speed increases themselves). We note that none of the evidence submitted to us by any agency suggests that it would be feasible, or worthwhile, to do this. In addition, in any foreseeable pattern of land use and settlements, it is manifestly unrealistic that present and expected future volumes of traffic could ever all travel in such free flow conditions at all times of the day, so there is a certain irreducible quantity of congestion, defined in this way, that no conceivable policy could eradicate. It follows that it would not be a sensible use of resources to try to achieve zero congestion: rather, the important issue is whether it would be possible to reduce congestion by a useful and valuable amount, by investment or other policies whose cost is less than the value of the congestion saving.
## ANNEX 2: CURRENT POSITION OF THE MULTI-MODAL STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Study Report to Regional Planning Body</th>
<th>Report Received by Secretary of State</th>
<th>Decision By Secretary of State</th>
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<tr>
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<td>December 2001</td>
<td>March 2002</td>
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<td>West Midlands Area (M5/M6 &amp; M42 between M40 &amp; M6)</td>
<td>October 2001</td>
<td>Autumn 2002</td>
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO THE REPORT

At the meetings of the Committee on 6, 20 and 27 November 2002 and 15 January 2003 the following Declarations of Interest were made:

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, Member, Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers’ Union.

Mr Brian H Donohoe, Clive Efford, Mrs Louise Ellman and Mr George Stevenson, Members of Transport and General Workers’ Union.

Mr Graham Stringer, Member, Amicus-MSF.

Mr Robert Syms, holder of shares in Marden Holdings Ltd, a family business with interests in road haulage.

WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2003

Members Present:

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, in the Chair

Tom Brake
Mr Brian H Donohoe
Clive Efford
Mrs Louise Ellman
Mr George Osborne
Mr George Stevenson

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report [Jam Tomorrow?: The Multi Modal Study Investment Plans], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 193 read and agreed to.

Annexes 1 and 2 agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select committee (reports)) be applied to the Report.

Ordered, That the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee be reported to the House. —(The Chairman.)
LIST OF WITNESSES

Wednesday 6 November 2002
HC (2001-02) 1306-i

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
Mr David McMillan, Ms Caroline Bowdler and Mr Philip Mills

STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY
Mr Jim Steer

HIGHWAYS AGENCY
Mr Tim Matthews and Mrs Hilary Chipping

Wednesday 20 November 2002
HC (2002-03) 38-i

FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION
Mr James Hookham, Ms Heather Crocker and Mr Chris Welsh

RAIL FREIGHT GROUP
Lord Berkeley

SOUTH EAST MANCHESTER STUDY
Dr Alan Brett

WEST MIDLANDS AREA STUDY
Mr Les Darrall

M1 (EAST MIDLANDS) STUDY
Mr Nasar Malik

M6 MIDLANDS TO MANCHESTER STUDY
Mr Graham Good

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Mr Mike Gwilliam and Mr Martin Tugwell

WEST MIDLANDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
Cllr. Stewart Stacey and Mr Peter Davenport

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SOUTH WEST YORKSHIRE STUDY
Dr Denvil Coombe

COMMISSION FOR INTEGRATED TRANSPORT
Professor David Begg

RAC FOUNDATION
Mr Edmund King, Mr Bill Billington and Mr David Leibling
M25 Study

Mr David Hardcastle

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English Nature
Sir Martin Doughty and Mr Shaun Thomas

Council for the Protection of Rural England
Mr Neil Sinden, Director and Mr Paul Hamblin

Department for Transport
Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP
LIST OF APPENDICES TO THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

MMS:

1. County Surveyors’ Society
2. Gloucestershire County Council
3. Derbyshire County Council
5. Denvil Coombe Practice Ltd
5A. Supplementary Memorandum
5B. Supplementary Memorandum
5C. Supplementary Memorandum
6. Sustainable Transport and Environment for the Eastern Region (STEER)
7. Association of Consulting Engineers
8. Mr Mike Birkin
9. Cllr Nigel D Rose
10. Mr A Brooks
11. Freight on Rail
12. The National Trust
13. Warwickshire County Council
14. Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Unit
15. Gateshead Council
16. Woodland Trust
17. Mouchel Consulting Ltd
18. RAC Foundation
19. South East England Regional Assembly
19A. Supplementary Memorandum
20. The A36/A350 Corridor Alliance
21. West Midlands LGA
22. Transport 2000
23. Transport 2000, SW Network
24. Somerset County Council
25. Rail Freight Group
26. NECTAR
27. IHT
28. FTA
29. English Nature
30. Commission for Integrated Transport
31. CBI
32. Friends of the Earth
33. Associated British Ports Southampton
34. North West Transport Activists’ Roundtable
35. Yorkshire & Humber Transport Activists Roundtable
36. Council for the Protection of Rural England
37. Sandra Dutson
38. Local Government Association
39. METRO
40. EWS
41. Transport 2000, West Sussex
42. Department for Transport
42A. Supplementary Memorandum
42B. Supplementary Memorandum
42C. Supplementary Memorandum
43. Atkins Transport Planning
44. The Countryside Agency
45 Strategic Rail Authority
46 Terry Kirby
47 British Horse Society (Cambridgeshire)
48 South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS)
49 South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS)
50 West Midlands Area Multi Modal Study (WMAMMS)
51 Orbit Multi Modal Study
52 M1 Multi Modal Study
53 West Midlands to North West Multi Modal Study
54 Highways Agency
54A Supplementary Memorandum
55 Aston Business School, Aston University
56 Railfuture
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Third Report: Jam Tomorrow?: The Multi Modal Study Investment Plans (HC 38-I)