Transport policy for London in 2001
The case for an integrated approach

A. D. MAY1 & K. E. GARDNER2
1 Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, and The MVA Consultancy, MVA House, Victoria Way, Woking GU21 1DD, UK
2 London Planning Advisory Council, Eastern House, 8–10 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3PN, UK

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Abstract. The paper reports the results of a series of studies conducted to enable the London Planning Advisory Committee to provide advice on strategic transport policy for London. The analytical approach combined the use of an area-based, multi-modal strategic model (LAM) and professional judgment. The performance of LAM as a basis for providing rapid advice on complex issues in transport policy is assessed.

The resulting policy advice advocated a coherent approach, involving new infrastructure, particularly for rail; improved management of the road and public transport networks; the use of subsidy to enhance public transport service levels; and road user charges to reduce the impact of private vehicles on congestion and the environment. Road user charges emerged as the pivotal issue in the policy; the paper discusses their role, and the questions which still need to be resolved before they can be implemented.

The main message of the study is that no one element of transport policy can tackle London’s problems alone; an integrated policy in which infrastructure provision, management and pricing are used to complement one another is shown to be far more effective.

1. Study background

The need for the study

The London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) is a statutory committee of all the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London established by the 1985 Local Government Act which abolished the Greater London Council (GLC). Its remit is to consider, advise and inform on matters relating to the planning and development of Greater London.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC).
As part of these responsibilities LPAC was asked by the Secretary of State for the Environment to prepare Strategic Planning Advice covering strategic planning policies in the fields of housing, economic development, retailing, tourism, transportation and ‘green’ issues and the urban environment (LPAC 1988a). The Government have since issued Strategic Guidance to the London Boroughs and the City of London as the basis for their land use and transport planning into the 21st Century.

To assist with the preparation of the transportation element of the advice, in Autumn 1987, LPAC commissioned The MVA Consultancy in association with Colin Buchanan and Partners and the Transport and Road Research Laboratory (TRRL) to conduct a Scenario Testing Exercise (LPAC 1988b). The main analytic tool used in the evaluation of the scenarios was the TRRL's London Area Model (LAM).

Following on from the scenario testing exercise, LPAC commissioned a number of desk research studies, together with sensitivity testing of the LAM results, covering road user charges, investment in rail, subsidy for public transport, the potential for park and ride, and investment in roads in South West London (LPAC 1989).

The timescale set for the study was very tight. The initial stage of the scenario testing exercise was carried out between August 1987 and March 1988 and the desk research studies and sensitivity testing were carried out between March 1988 and September 1988. LPAC’s Strategic Planning Advice was published in October 1988.

This tight timescale was exacerbated by the strength of the differences in policy which had emerged since the formulation of the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP). The GLDP’s major road plans were abandoned in the early 1970s, and subsequent attempts to introduce policies of traffic restraint, rail infrastructure investment and low fares have all foundered. Instead, progress has been piecemeal and Government Ministers have been reluctant to take major initiatives on what has been seen as a ‘difficult’ subject with major differences of direction and suspicions separating the Boroughs, the Department of Transport (DTp), the operators and community groups.

**LPAC's objectives**

The formulation, and evaluation, of the scenarios gave particular regard to the objectives which LPAC had established in consultation with the Boroughs. They were as follows: