

South East Regional Meeting Notes - 18 June 2015

Q & A after the updates	<p>Ben Stephens from Bromley wanted to know what the BPA had learnt from lobbying the De-regulation Bill.</p> <p>Response was that Eric Pickles had a personal agenda and that we tried to influence him, other MPs and even Lords in order to put the views of members across. Details of the debate could be read in Hansard. As we have a new Secretary of State in Greg Clark, explained that we will be having conversations with new civil servants and that they might be more open to ideas and solutions. At the moment the situation is unknown.</p>
Parking - what next?	
Data	Data is captured but is kept locally. Some LAs were not averse to sharing their data but at the moment there wasn't an incentive to do so.
Electric charging points	Demand is increasing for electric charging points in some areas. It seems LAs have pool cars that are electric and some people have investigated purchasing electric vehicles. At the moment the battery will only last c200 miles, so when improvements are made to battery life demand will probably increase.
Car sharing/clubs	It appeared that in general there is no demand outside London for car sharing clubs and those LAs that had been approached about initiatives would have preferred a wider catchment area. The cost was prohibitive however and therefore initiatives have not progressed.
Common themes	Rail passenger numbers up Car ownership numbers up Car sharing numbers up
Behaviour patterns	Public reluctant to change short time/distance travel modes.
Incentives	These are provided for certain groups such as public sector employees however, this is the only sphere of influence the government has directly.
Conflicts	Policy conflicts such as incentives of £1,000 to trade in an old car (reduce carbon emissions policy) offered to motorists, but this can only be exercised if the motorist has sufficient funds to purchase a new car. No other incentives are currently provided to shift behaviour.
Central government conflicts	The government has changed the nature of its funding for local authorities, to provide incentives for local growth. This has created

financial opportunities for local authorities, but also increased financial risks and uncertainty¹. Car parking may be a part of a LA strategy to improve economic conditions; i.e. encouraging people to their high streets or hosting special events, which mean an increase in visitors (possibly from a wider catchment area) who will likely travel by car and require parking.

Connectivity

The biggest obstacle to providing real time data is that there isn't the infrastructure in place to do so. Only Westminster has installed the sensors required and with demand outstripping supply, the costs of installation can be covered. This will not be applicable across the country.

The future

Unlikely to have a seamlessly connected journey throughout the UK, but it may be possible on a regional basis. As most people won't require connected journeys very often outside their usual routine this may not present a huge problem.

Choice will be more important as time progresses. Trying to influence behaviour to favour one mode of transport over another will place strain on specific transport areas, which will then require another behaviour shift in order to combat it. Best policy is to keep a balance and allow people the option to choose the best mode for their journey.

Cities tend to dominate transport policy and require significant funding leaving rural communities without sufficient public transport of any kind. Therefore choice is limited and car ownership most likely in these areas.

Cost and convenience were identified as the main factors in choosing transport and journey planning.

Summary

Public transport numbers and car ownership are on the increase, suggesting that car ownership is still a preferred choice even if public transport is the best option for commuting. As a result, car park provision is unchanged if demand is constant.

¹Source: Comptroller and Auditor General, 2014, The impact of funding reductions on local authorities, National Audit Office