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# **Lessons from travel planning and road user charging for policy-making: through imperfection to implementation**

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## Abstract

In 1978 Gunn published a seminal paper which explained why implementation of policy is so difficult. The paper set out ten preconditions, *which should be satisfied if perfect implementation is to be achieved*. Whilst it is clear that perfect implementation is not possible in the real world, and Gunn has subsequently been criticised for his ‘top-down’ approach to decision-making, these preconditions do, nonetheless act as an effective framework through which to evaluate good practice in the implementation of urban transport policy instruments. Two urban transport policy instruments, which form an increasingly important element of the Government’s strategy in the UK for reducing the demand for private transport as set out in a New Deal for Transport (1998), are *travel plans* and *road user charging*. Travel plans are a relatively recent policy instrument in the UK and seek to reduce trips to work by car by providing, through individual employers, a targeted, integrated package of incentives and disincentives to influence commuters’ choice of mode of travel to and from the workplace. Road user charging, whereby motorists are charged for the road space they use in urban areas, seeks to reduce the congestion problem via the price mechanism, and has a longer history in the UK. To date the implementation of travel plans in the UK has been more widespread than that of road user charging: there are no road user charging schemes as yet in place, but there are some Travel Plans (see DTLR, 2001 for an estimate of the take-up of the latter in England). It is fair to say, however, that the widespread implementation of both urban transport policy instruments is a complex and sensitive area for decision-makers.

The aim of this paper is firstly, to critically assess travel plans and road user charging in the UK with respect to the preconditions for perfect implementation put forward by Gunn and secondly, to use theory to pinpoint why some road user charging schemes have been considered – but have failed to progress beyond the proposal stage. Finally, the paper aims to highlight the elements of good practice, pertinent to the implementation of road user charging, in the process of the implementation of travel plans. Overall, the paper uses Gunn’s theoretical framework as a basis for recommendations for better decision-making that will aid the wider implementation of both travel plans and road user charging.

## 1. Introduction

In 1978 Gunn published a seminal paper entitled ‘Why is implementation so difficult?’ The article set out ten preconditions or what can be called ‘desiderata’, which would need to be satisfied if perfect implementation were to be achieved. It is important to state at the outset that *perfect implementation* is virtually impossible in the real world, it does however act as a concept or *idea* rather than an *ideal* and as such it is a useful straw man (or woman) through which to evaluate travel plans and road user charging.

The aims of this paper are: firstly, to critically assess travel plans and road user charging in the UK with respect to the preconditions for perfect implementation put forward by Gunn. Secondly, to summarise the lessons that can be learnt from schemes that have been considered but have failed to progress beyond the proposal stage. Finally, to highlight the elements of good practice in the process of implementation of travel plans, which may be pertinent to the implementation of road user charging. Overall, the paper will use Gunn’s theoretical framework (summarised in the following section) to make recommendations for better decision-making to aid the wider implementation of both travel plans and road user charging.

A travel plan is normally implemented by an employer, who puts in place a number of measures at the workplace to encourage employees to use modes of transport other than the single occupant car to travel to, from and at work. There are also now attempts to extend travel planning to other types of land use, such as leisure and retail but, for the purposes of this paper, we restrict the discussion to travel plans covering employment sites, where there is more experience of actual implementation, and where particular circumstances apply in terms of the relationship between the employer and the travellers to the site. Clearly, then, the travel plan is principally a form of organisational change; nonetheless, since travel extends off site, then there is a need to involve actors outwith the organisation who do or who are able to provide travel and other related services off site.

The term ‘road user charging’ is well established in the field of transport economics where it usually refers to setting the price equal to the social marginal cost of a trip. Whilst the theoretical basis for road user charging has been clearly enunciated, sound economic rationale does not guarantee in itself political acceptability (Orski 1992).

Road user charging appears to be economically beneficial and technically feasible and in fact most researchers have focussed primarily on the analytical soundness of road user charging proposals (Rom 1994). It would ostensibly appear that issues need to be resolved in the political arena if road user charging schemes are to be widely adopted in the UK, and in fact in other areas throughout the world. The Government’s White Paper on the Future of Transport (1998) placed renewed emphasis on road user charging in the UK. It was seen as a key ingredient in a package of measures designed to deal with the issue of congestion and traffic related pollution, promoting transport choice and reducing car

dependency. Local Authorities, via the Transport Bill, have been given power to charge for the use of congested roads.

The nature of travel plans and road user charging are fundamentally different. Road user charging invariably provokes major hostility, tends to be higher profile and requires introduction on an area wide basis. Travel plans on the other hand are generally less contentious and are introduced on an individual employer basis. Even though these differences exist there are important lessons, which can be learnt in terms of each policy instrument and implementation.

There are of course other policy options whose implementation could be analysed using the framework set out by Gunn. In a paper of this length, there is not space to do this; however, the authors' intention is to apply Gunn's *desiderata* to the analysis of other policy options - in the first instance, charges for employees to park at the workplace - in future.

## **2. Perfect implementation**

The ten preconditions detailed by Gunn are as follows:

**2.1 *The circumstances external to the implementing agency do not impose crippling constraints.*** For example, the policy may be unacceptable to various interests, which have the power to veto them.

**2.2 *That adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme.*** This could also be viewed as an external constraint. For example, too much could be expected too soon, especially if it involves the need to change attitudes. Politicians *may* also will the policy 'end' but not the 'means' and as such restrictions in terms of expenditure may starve the project of adequate resources.

**2.3 *That the required combination of resources is actually available.*** This follows on from the previous point in that at each stage in the implementation process the appropriate combination of resources are actually available. This can mean money, manpower, land, equipment and so on.

**2.4 *That the policy to be implemented is based upon a valid theory of cause and effect.*** This means that policies are sometimes ineffective not because they are badly implemented but because they are bad policies. The policy may be formulated on an inadequate understanding of the problem at hand, its causes and cures. The failure of implementation could be a failure of policy-making. The 'problem of implementation which can only be tackled by better analysis at the issue definition and options analysis stages of the policy-making process' (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). There are limits in terms of the policy-makers ability to understand and deal with complex economic problems particularly as governments invariably pick up the most difficult problem areas with complex solutions (Bardach 1977).

**2.5 *That the relationship between cause and effect is direct and that there are few, if any, intervening links.*** In other words, the more links in the chain, the greater the risk that some of them will prove to be poorly conceived or badly executed.

**2.6 *That there is a single implementing agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success or, if other agencies must be involved, that the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.*** Thus 'where

implementation requires not only a complex series of events and linkages but also agreement at each event among a large number of participants, then the probability of a successful or even a predictable outcome must be further reduced' (Hogwood and Gunn 1984).

**2.7 *That there is complete understanding of, and agreement upon, the objectives to be achieved; and that these conditions persist throughout the implementation process.*** In real life however, the objectives of programmes are often difficult to identify or are couched in vague or evasive terms. Gunn (1978) goes on to state that 'even *official* objectives, where they exist, may not be compatible with one another, and the possibility of conflict or confusion is increased when professional or other groups proliferate their own *unofficial* goals within a programme'. Official objectives can often be poorly understood and even if they are understood and agreed on in the first instance this may not persist throughout the lifetime of the programme, since goals may be succeeded, multiplied, expanded upon or in fact displaced. Hence implementation failure may stem from the decision-making stage of the policy process.

**2.8 *That tasks are fully specified in correct sequence.*** As such, when moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.

**2.9 *That there is perfect communication and co-ordination,*** between the various elements or agencies involved in the programme. Overall, communication has an important contribution to make to co-ordination and implementation.

**2.10 *That those in authority can demand and obtain perfect compliance.*** In other words, those in authority should also be those in power, with the ability to secure total and immediate compliance from others whose consent and co-operation is required for the programmes success.

What the preconditions reveal is why 'perfect implementation' is almost unattainable. Gunn's theoretical framework does not attempt however to determine which of the preconditions should be undertaken first neither is it a prescriptive model. It does however provide an ideal against which real world areas of policy implementation can be analysed, assisting in thinking systematically about the reasons for implementation failure and approaches to improving the implementation process. In terms of urban transport policy instruments the two measures of travel plans and road user charging are now analysed in terms of 'perfect implementation', and this raises important lessons for the wider transport debate.

### **3. Travel Plans and perfect implementation**

This section of the paper now considers travel plans in detail, and the relevance of each of the ten preconditions to them.

While there is a recognition that travel plans should be developed to suit the site in question, there is also no doubt that there is a generic process that should generally be followed to bring a travel plan into being. Such a process is at the centre of the new evaluation methodology for travel plans, launched by the DTLR in 2002 (see [http://www.wsatkins-external.com/travel\\_pet.asp](http://www.wsatkins-external.com/travel_pet.asp)). This evaluation methodology appraises travel plans not only on the measures that they

contain to influence employee mode share, but also on the management process that has been adopted to implement these measures. Particularly important elements include:

- Relating the measures proposed to current staff travel habits and to site characteristics, measured by travel surveys and site audits, respectively.
- Setting targets for change, both measures implemented, and change in travel behaviour.
- Identifying key personnel to manage the travel plan and often a steering group to support them.
- Setting out a timescale and identifying resources sufficient to implement the measures.

When considering the relevance of Gunn's framework, it is useful to bear in mind these elements of "ideal" travel plan implementation processes. The UK Department for Transport website contains 21 examples of best practice in travel planning from a study carried out in 2001; interested readers are referred to this site, to see how the case study organisations that implemented travel plans addressed many of Gunn's *desiderata* in the implementation process.

The idea of travel planning originated in the USA, arguably as early as WW2, when Boeing in the Seattle area implemented shared travel arrangements to save fuel. During the 1970s fuel crisis, other organisations such as 3M in St. Paul, and Aerospace Corporation in southern California, introduced measures to encourage their staff to travel to work by means other than the private car, variously as a recruitment/retention measure; to save parking costs; and to help ameliorate the effects of the fuel crisis. During the late 1980s, legislation requiring companies to implement travel plans was passed in Southern California and later (1991) in other major US metropolitan areas, mainly for air quality reasons. These laws have now been repealed (due to lobbying from business), and only Washington State retains a regional travel plan requirement.

The idea of travel plans spread from the USA to Europe: first to the Netherlands, where they became a part of the 1988 National Transport Structure Plan; and then to the UK, where they gained favour as a national transport policy tool in the 1998 Government Transport White Paper - although some local authorities had been pursuing them prior to this time. To a greater or lesser extent, the idea of the site based mobility management plan has now spread through much of the EU, with plans now required by law for some major Italian employers, for example.

After this brief history, the paper now turns to the main task of relating actual travel plan implementation experience to Gunn's ten *desiderata*.

**3.1 External circumstances.** These are fundamental to whether or not a travel plan is implemented. It is clear from the literature (e.g. Schreffler and Organisational Coaching, 1996; Rye, 2002) that travel plans are most frequently implemented by organisations that have a problem with transport to the site, limited parking on the site, recruitment, or with a planning agreement that requires them to develop a plan. These circumstances are frequently the product

of external pressures and it is the authors' contention – founded largely on their own experience of requests from organisations to develop travel plans – that planning pressures in the UK are currently the most important motivating factor.

A good travel plan should, as noted above, take into account external circumstances: at the most elementary level, there is little point in setting high targets for mode shift from car to bus at a deep rural site with little bus service. Unfortunately, some travel plans that are written in the context of planning applications often fail to make such elementary connections. *Changes* in external circumstances are perhaps more important: a travel plan will take into account those public transport services that run close to its site but, of course, the employer has little direct control over these and they may change during the course of the plan, rendering its targets more difficult – or in some cases, easier – to achieve.

**3.2 *Making adequate time and resources available.*** As with all management processes, there is little hope that a travel plan will achieve change if there is no one to implement it. Work for the DTLR to evaluate travel plans implemented by Government Departments (DTLR, 2001b) found that it was rare that plans had a member of staff responsible for their implementation who was able to spend more than one day a month on the task: not enough.

**3.3 *Actual availability of resources.*** In the experience of the authors, one of whom is employed by the DTLR as an advisor to organisations that are trying to develop travel plans, persuading senior management that resources are required can be extremely difficult. This can be the case even for what appear to be relatively small sums, for example, £5,000 to install secure cycle parking and showers, or £1,500 to buy car-sharing software. Indeed, where it is difficult to prove cause and effect (see below) then, in private sector organisations it would be irrational for management to approve such expenditure because there would be no clear business case for them to do so.

**3.4 *Valid theory of cause and effect.*** This point is fundamental to a principal difficulty with the implementation of travel plans: that of convincing managers that it is worth spending money. In spite of travel plans having been, ostensibly, a key part of the English transport agenda for at least 5 years, few organisations have implemented plans and fewer still have measured their effects, or released details of their costs (see DTLR 2002, forthcoming; DTLR 2001a). It is also unclear to many organisations that their own efforts will have the desired effects on staff travel, given dependence on so many outside variables such as, for example, reliance on bus operators or local councils for transport services and infrastructure.

**3.5 *Cause and effect linkages.*** Whilst the cause and effect linkages within a travel plan may not always be obvious or clear, once identified, they are normally relatively simple: there is no great complex chain of causality. However, as noted in 3.4, above, it is also the case that organisations must be reliant on some other party to implement changes that are intended to bring about effects; these are obviously difficult for them to control.

**3.6 *Single implementing agency.*** Whilst a “good” travel plan should have one person charged with its implementation and supported by a steering group that includes senior managers, this travel co-ordinator is dependent on many other organisations as well as sub-departments in their own organisation for the implementation of the travel plan. For example, the implementation of a season ticket discount whereby employees can obtain discounted tickets via payroll deduction will require input from the bus operator, personnel, marketing and payroll departments. There is obviously a huge potential here for poor communication, procrastination and non-implementation.

**3.7 *Understanding and agreement on objectives.*** At the broad level, organisations are generally able to specify the objectives of a travel plan: that it should reduce car use, congestion at the site, and increase travel choices for staff. However, targets for behaviour change are more difficult to set, due to the difficulty of knowing what travel plans have achieved at other locations (see above). The most difficult element for organisations developing a travel plan is to reach agreement on how to achieve objectives, since this has resource implications. The most contentious measures within travel planning are those with the greatest resource implications, be this in money terms or in terms of perceived perturbation to the organisations functioning: thus large scale investment by the organisation in works’ bus services may in some circumstances be more acceptable than permitting compressed working hours (70 hours in 9 days, for example), large scale working from home or (especially) parking charges.

**3.8 *Proper specification of tasks.*** The review of government department travel plans cited above also revealed that the nature of the travel plan process is not always clearly appreciated by organisations, partly because travel plans are a novel concept. This leads to non-specification of tasks, or incorrect specification of tasks, within the travel plan process: an example is the way in which Boots (of Nottingham) specified its works’ bus contracts without penalty clauses, such that the operator withdrew the services during the autumn 2001 fuel crisis (see Potter, Rye Black and Enoch, 2001).

**3.9 *Demanding compliance.*** Travel plans by their nature are dependent on voluntary changes in behaviour; it is impossible for the employer to actually require employees to commute in a particular way. Some employers have attempted to change elements of policy for staff travel on works’ business, as these often act as a major incentive to drive *to* work. Particularly in the public sector, unions can mount significant opposition to such changes, as they are perceived as an attack on conditions of employment. Staff opposition is also often perceived as a barrier to the introduction of parking charges at the workplace and may lead to “perverse” or unintended consequences, such as the displacement of parking activity onto nearby streets, unless this too is controlled. However, as Van der Maas (1998) revealed in her study of the introduction of car parking charges at sites in the Netherlands, opposition to such measures normally reduces to virtually nil immediately after their introduction, and their implementation can be smoothed through adequate consultation, by making charges income related, and by ensuring the “hypothecation” of charging

revenues to transport improvements – including improvements that benefit those staff who continue to drive to work.

#### **4. Road user charging and perfect implementation**

**4.1 External circumstances** are certainly important since one of the main difficulties with a market-based approach such as road user charging is public acceptance (Ison 2000). While it is highly unlikely that the concerns of the various interest groups can ever be totally mollified it is essential that acceptance is borne in mind during the policy-making stage. This means that issues such as, the level of public transport provision, the type of technology to be used, how the revenue raised from the charge is to be utilised, the need for clearly stated objectives and detailed costing with respect to implementation are all given careful consideration. Failure to do so will make the chances of a successful outcome in terms of implementation more unlikely (Ison 1998a). Gray and Begg (2001) raise the issue of public transport provision as being all important, stating that ‘congestion charging will only be deliverable in areas where high quality public transport *already* exists – either pre-existing or delivered in advance as part of a charging package’. It is certainly the case that in Trondheim and Bergen public support was based on improvements in transport infrastructure in advance of the charges.

Equally, in terms of external circumstance the severity of congestion is a major issue (Higgins 1994). As regards the severity of congestion, then with respect to Electronic Road Pricing in Hong Kong the position of the Automobile Association was that the problem had been exaggerated (Borins 1988). This is a view supported by the authors through face-to-face interviews with Councillors and Officials who had first hand experience of congestion metering, as trialled in the city of Cambridge in 1993. The view was expressed that congestion was not severe enough for a policy such as congestion metering to be acceptable (Ison 1998b) On the other hand, in terms of Bergen excessive congestion was in fact perceived as a major reason for toll cordons (Larsen 1995).

**4.2 Making adequate time and resources available.** A potential hindrance to the implementation of road user charging is the resource intensive nature particularly in the initial stages. It is quite clear that that adequate time and resources need to be devoted to the implementation of a road user charging scheme. Estimates put the set up costs of congestion charging in Central London at £172m and operating costs at £378m for the first six years, although these are subject to change (Local Transport Today 2001a). In Edinburgh there is a team of four full-time staff that have been employed since 1999 and are likely to continue to be employed until 2005, planning the implementation of road user charging there.

For a policy instrument as complex and contentious as road user charging objectors often question whether sufficient information is available in order to arrive at an informed and reasoned opinion as to whether to progress with a particular scheme. This is a resource issue. In terms of congestion charging in Central London Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, has commented ‘with a scheme like this, there will never be a time when the information available is

wholly complete, because the immediate effects may differ from the longer-term effects, since traffic patterns will adjust and re-adjust, and nothing is wholly predictable. I do not consider that the outstanding uncertainties would to any substantial extent be removed as a result of holding a public inquiry or commissioning further studies or consulting further on the scheme' ([www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)).

One of the difficulties is that there are very few schemes in existence from which to assess the relative costs and benefits of a proposed scheme. In terms of congestion metering considered in the city of Cambridge it was stated by one local councillor that 'there was no proven scheme anywhere for anyone to look at so you were really in the hands of people telling you well it will do this and it will do that but no real basic background at all'.

As for time, there is a need for flexibility. At the time of writing there is awareness of this issue in terms of congestion charging in Central London – 'because of concerns that improvements in public transport may not continue over the next six months in the way presently anticipated, I shall review the scheme 'go-live' date this Autumn' ([www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)).

**4.3 Actual availability of resources.** As stated above, adequate resources are required. In terms of available resources in the context of Cambridge congestion metering one Councillor put it thus - 'What were the costs of installation going to be because as the technological side of this particular scheme became clear it became more and more obvious that it was a very expensive thing to implement unlike supplementary licensing or unlike a toll system, even electronic tolls are not as expensive as the congestion metering system and as time went on it became more and more clear that nobody knew the answer to that question, nobody knew even the answer to the technology question itself as to how it was going to work because the technology hadn't been developed. If the technology hasn't been developed then you can't say how much it is going to cost and therefore the whole thing started to become more and more implausible'.

**4.4 Valid theory of cause and effect.** In terms of urban transport policy instruments decision-makers may need convincing that road user charging is worth pursuing as an effective option for dealing with the demand for private transport. There is a need to understand the nature of the problem of traffic congestion, what are its causes and how effective is road user charging likely to be as a policy option? In fact road user charging may not be universally perceived as the panacea for dealing with all situations of traffic congestion. In a survey undertaken by the authors' (Ison 2000) in terms of the effectiveness of urban transport policy instruments, while as might be expected there was strong support by academic economists for road user charging as a means of dealing with traffic congestion (92% viewed road user charging as totally or fairly effective) local councillors appeared to be somewhat less convinced. In fact County, Metropolitan Borough and London Borough Councillors all viewed the implementation of road user charging as less effective than other measures, most notably an improvement in the frequency and reliability of public transport, cheaper public transport fares and the banning/restricting of vehicles in central areas. Clearly Councillors are working to a different agenda when compared to

Transport Academics, not least in terms of the desire to be re-elected and as such this will cloud the issue with relation to a policy instrument such as road user charging.

**4.5 Cause and effect linkages.** Failure to implement a road user charging scheme may rest with the difficulty experienced in the work of implementation itself. This is particularly the case with ambitious schemes where the relationship between cause and effect is not immediately clear. The difficulty of implementation rests on the amount of co-operation, which is required between the various implementing groups and also by the amount of resources required in terms of money, personnel, equipment and administrative capacity. The probability of implementation declines as the need for resources increases (Howitt 1980). As such, this should be a major consideration when making decisions with respect to road user charging. Issues such as cost, reliability and accuracy, the level of sophistication and who should be exempt are all important in terms of the decision-making process with respect to road user charging.

Given the complexity of road user charging there is perhaps a case that a cruder but also more direct approach to reducing the demand for private transport might have greater success.

**4.6 Single implementing agency.** While the Transport Bill (House of Commons 1999) has given local authorities in England and Wales the power to charge for the use of road space with the proviso that the revenue stream from such charges be ring-fenced and ploughed back into transport improvements, the process of scheme implementation is still a complex one. In the UK a scheme is likely to be implemented across local authority boundaries involving councils of differing political complexion. For example, in terms of Cambridge, which is a small free standing city (see Ison 1996) County, City and District Councils had an interest in congestion metering even though the County Council was advancing the initiative. Equally, whereas Transport Officials were responsible for implementation and were in fact the driving force it was Councillors who had the ultimate authority.

**4.7 Understanding and agreement on objectives.** As with travel plans, at the broad level authorities are generally able to articulate objectives as with the DETR White Paper (1998) in that we will 'introduce legislation to allow local authorities to charge road users so as to reduce congestion, as part of a package of measures in a *local transport plan* that would include improving public transport'. It is not however possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence the tasks to be performed by each participant involved in implementation. How should the objectives be achieved - for example what should the charge be? A dilemma in achieving public acceptance of road user charging may require, at least in the first instance, a level of motorist charge which does not change travel behaviour, and as such does not substantially reduce the level of congestion (Grieco and Jones 1994).

Linked to the notion of clear objectives and successful implementation are issues such as which groups of motorists, if any, should be exempt from the charge. Equally how should the revenue raised from the charge be utilised? In fact the

issue of the clarity of objectives with respect to road user charging can be viewed as an area of major concern to transport decision-makers. In a survey undertaken of key decision-makers 92% responded that they were very or fairly concerned with respect to the need for clearly stated objectives (see Ison 2000). This was also an issue raised in terms of congestion metering in the city of Cambridge. One Councillor stated that the 'lack of clearly stated objectives was a real problem' and one interesting response to the question of objectives was to suggest that 'the whole thing was product led and that they wanted to get this system in and therefore had to find reasons to justify it, so they say right, this system would regulate the traffic and then they'd say well its got environmental benefits and you'd start to examine that and then they'd say well OK it does give a problem but the revenue it raises give us money to produce public transport so they were not thought out, they weren't clear in what they were trying to do'.

**4.8 That tasks are fully specified in correct sequence.** It is difficult for a policy instrument as complex as road user charging to specify the tasks to be undertaken in correct sequence. Certainly there needs to be flexibility and adaptation even in the most carefully planned programme. What this pre-condition highlights is that the specification of tasks needs to be communicable, acceptable, feasible and above all credible. As stated above, one of the difficulties with the implementation of road user charging is that there are limited schemes elsewhere which can be studied.

**4.9 Perfect communication and co-ordination,** between the various elements or agencies involved in the programme. Overall, communication has an important contribution to make to co-ordination and implementation. In addition to perfect communication and co-ordination between the agencies involved in implementation there is also a need for authorities to clearly explain to the public and other interest groups the reasons behind the decision-making with respect to road user charging and the benefits (direct and indirect) they are likely to derive (Grieco and Jones 1994). This is a line taken by MC-ICAM (2002) and is worth quoting at length :

- i. "Start with **problem discussion** and aims to be reached in traffic for cities: In each city/region different problems may be perceived. It is important to raise local problems which people experience. Avoid the impression of already decided solutions.
- ii. **Consultation:** It is critical that a visible consultation is conducted, to show that the scheme will have been designed taking into account the views of all stakeholders and that there is broad support in principle.
- iii. **Stakeholder and media involvement:** Implementation programmes are far more than simple media and public relations— important though this is. But is necessary to consider the complex interplay of other stakeholder groups and individuals who can exercise important influence over the way that a scheme is received. Thus, the identification and analysis of all stakeholder audiences likely to have an impact on the ultimate success or failure of the project is very important ..... No implementation programme relating to a road user charging scheme can be complete without strategies for 'winning hearts and minds' by communicating direct to the different groups.

- iv. **Solution Forming / Presentation:** Make comprehensive assessment studies that generate alternative solutions, assess the different alternatives, identify potential winners and losers. Communicate conclusive results as comprehensible as possible and try to reach consensus. Start with positive results (benefits), then it comes to the costs of such desired solutions and who – the user - should pay.
- v. **Implementation:** People will only accept road pricing if they get something for their money. Thus agreed investments and improvements (carrots) ideally should be provided simultaneously or even first followed by pricing (sticks) and other restraints.
- vi. **Follow-up assessment:** There is nothing more unstable than acceptability. Trust in institutions and revenue use can be destroyed by one incident (e.g. misuse of revenues). Thus a continuous monitoring of the conditions for stakeholder support has to be established covering both sides: scheme management and operation as its public perception”.

**4.10 Demanding compliance.** This can be taken to mean ‘no resistance to commands at any point in the administrative system’ either internal or external from those whose consent and co-operation is required for the success of the programme. This is not possible however in a democratic society and one could say not desirable. A policy such as road user charging is likely to raise suspicion, recalcitrance or major resistance and this is particularly the case if insufficient time has been allowed for the scheme to be fully explained or for consultation.

In terms of congestion charging in Central London the Corporation of London has objected in principle on the grounds that Tower Bridge will not be able to deal with the extra traffic generated by motorist wishing to avoid the eastern section of the charging boundary. The London Borough of Lambeth has raised issues with respect to the schemes boundary and the City of Westminster has called for a Public Inquiry (Local Transport Today 2001b) as well as questioning its financial viability (Local Transport Today 2002).

While it is not possible to be free from resistance it is important that agencies involved in implementation are aware of the nature of the resistance and the most appropriate responses available.

## **5. Beyond the desiderata: other important elements in travel plan and road user charging implementation**

Whilst Gunn’s typology is a useful way to categorise and view the various requirements for “good” travel plan and road user charging implementation, it does not cover all pre-requisites and, perhaps most importantly, it does not help those who might be developing a travel plan or road user charging scheme to decide which elements of the process should be prioritised.

The two most important elements of travel plan implementation not covered by Gunn’s preconditions are monitoring, and the necessity of a person dedicated for at least some of their time to implementing and promoting the travel plan. Both of these points relate to items within the desiderata, but are important enough to be separate, additional requirements on their own. Monitoring will feed into the

requirement to show cause and effect linkages, and helps to refine the plan to make it as effective as possible within the given resources. A person dedicated to the task of plan implementation is of course part of making resources available, but it has been shown that plans need, specifically, a dedicated member of staff to maximise their likelihood of success (Department for Transport (DfT), 2002).

It could be argued that a person dedicated to the task of implementation is also important in terms of road user charging. In other words a *policy champion* or a protagonist is a vital ingredient. The implementation of road user charging will involve a diverse range of stakeholders in a fragile alliance and as such a policy champion able to provide leadership and direction is all important. This is certainly the situation with respect to the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone and congestion charging in Central London. The role of the Director of Transport within Cambridgeshire County Council has been recognised as a major factor in terms of congestion metering considered in the city of Cambridge in the early 1990's. Equally, his retirement was perceived as an important reason for the schemes lack of continuation beyond the field trials (Ison 1998b).

As well as a policy champion there is need for political stability. Certain road user charging schemes may have failed to advance beyond the drawing board because of local authority elections and the resulting change in political complexion (Ison 1998a). Gray and Begg (2001) reinforce the idea of political stability, which can be viewed as an integral part of perfect implementation.

*Trust* is an essential element in the introduction of any new policy with the whole process above reproach. For example, public objection to ERP in Hong Kong was based on the fact that the use of patented technology was viewed as a means of exporting employment to the UK (Hau 1992).

Given the fact that many objections will surface it is important that an ongoing public relations system be designed not to sell a fixed concept but to help decision-makers respond to concerns and objections (Higgins 1994). Higgins argues that "The staff and leadership of the organisation should exhibit a flexible and open attitude toward public and community reaction, and be prepared to alter proposals and eventual operations accordingly". This type of personnel was not readily recognised in the Hong Kong situation since "The Government did not seem to have very much credibility; the reports, presentations at board meetings and promises to reduce licence fees commensurate with tolls and to keep the road usage data confidential did not seem to convince many of the district board members" (Borins 1988).

In addition to adequate *time* being made available to the programme *timing* is also an important factor. Timing was touched on only indirectly in terms of external circumstances (see section 4.1) – timing in terms of congestion being severe enough for a policy initiative such as road user charging to find favour.

## **6. Elements of good practice in travel plan implementation**

From the experience of travel plans that have been successful in influencing the way in which employees travel to work, there are some lessons for good practice in travel behaviour change more generally. These include the following:

- Developing the plan in close consultation with employees, and making clear its benefits.
- Offering a mixture of "push" and "pull" measures (incentives and disincentives).
- Promoting and gaining acceptability of behavioural change in transport. This has links to work that has been carried out on individualised marketing in transport; when carried out effectively and judiciously, the travel plan can be a vehicle to offer such individualised marketing packages to employees for their trips to and at work.
- Parking charge implementation. Few travel plans have featured the implementation of parking charges and/or controls, due to the perception that this would be too contentious. However, organisations that have done so – such as Sheffield University and Pfizer in Kent – have found that acceptability can be increased by careful design of the parking charge measure.
- Partnership working. In some cases, such as Buckinghamshire County Council's travel plan, significant benefits have been achieved for both employer and other partners – in this case, the local rail operator (see Rye, 2002b). Delivery of effective behavioural change in transport is increasingly dependent on partnership and the lessons of travel plans are therefore instructive in this regard.

## **7 Lessons from travel plans pertinent to road user charging**

Table 1 lists the ten pre-conditions illustrating a qualitative expression of the relative importance of each to travel plans and road user charging. As such it is rather subjective. Relative importance is measured on an ordinal scale from \* to \*\*\* with \*\*\* being the most important. If nothing else the table reveals why we have more examples of travel plans in the UK than road user charging – why is this so? The table suggests that the most important aspects of the implementation of road user charging and Travel Plans that should be addressed by policy makers if they are to achieve success are as follows:

- Only try to adopt these measures in a situation where external circumstances can be demonstrated to merit them;
- Demonstrate a clear link between cause and effect, to demonstrate to others that the policy will have the intended effect;
- Ensuring that a single implementing agency is responsible for all implementation (although in practice this would be difficult to achieve!); and
- Allocate resources to programme implementation.

**Table 1**  
**Relative importance of the pre-conditions for travel plans and road user charging**

Pre-conditions	Travel plan	Road user charging	Good practice in the process of travel plans pertinent to road user charging
1. External circumstances	***	***	Most easily implemented where there is a perception of a serious problem
2. Time and resources	**	**	An area where both can learn from each other
3. Combination of resources	*	**	Effective travel plans make resources available for project implementation
4. Cause and effect theory	***	***	Effective travel plans are most often implemented in organisations where staff travel is clearly causing problems for the organisation's operation.
5. Cause and effect direct relationship	*	**	-
6. Single implementing agency	***	***	Travel plans suffer from a dependence on many external bodies. The most successful are often those that try to overcome this by dedicating a member of staff to co-ordinate activities.
7. Understand and agree objectives	*	***	-
8. Specify tasks	**	**	Effective travel plans are normally based on a clear written plan of action
9. Perfect communication	***	***	Marketing
10. Compliance	Important but impossible to deliver		Parking charging implementation

## 8. Conclusions

This paper has tested the utility of a model of implementation first proposed by Gunn against the empirical experience of attempts to implement travel plans and road user charging. It has demonstrated that Gunn's model is of use insofar as it permits a systematic categorisation of many of the processes that are necessary for implementation of these measures – in spite of the considerable differences between the two. As noted in the previous section, it has thus highlighted the most important aspects of the implementation process of both.

The paper has also shown however that Gunn's desiderata do not cover all the essentials of implementation where travel plans and road use charging are concerned. In particular there is a need for an eleventh pre-condition, pointing out the importance of a policy 'champion' who can dedicate themselves to its implementation.

Finally, the paper has highlighted several lessons from the implementation of travel plans that are of relevance more generally to travel behaviour change, including in the context of road user charging. Travel plans that include

disincentives to car use have shown how crucial is the careful packaging of such measures and their use in the context of a package, where benefits are clearly identified.

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