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An evaluation of integrated planning around the
privatised rail network in Britain.

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Abstract

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In 1994 significant changes were introduced in British land-use and transport planning policy which resulted from growing concerns about the negative impacts of rising volumes of road traffic. One aspect of the resultant set of demand management policies focused around promoting modal shift to the national railway system for passenger and freight traffic. It was expected that land-use planning would be used to support this by promoting development in rail accessible locations. However, the national railway network was privatised between 1994-97 and this has made it much more difficult to co-ordinate local authority land-use and transport planning with management and development of the railway network.

This paper reviews the impacts of railway privatisation and changing structures, policies and processes in land-use planning, on the capacity to deliver integrated rail planning in Britain. It begins by reviewing changes in institutional structures for the rail sector and land-use planning and evaluating their impacts on the relationships between agencies in the two sectors. It then moves on to review policy developments in the two sectors and evaluates the extent to which they are focused on relationships between them, as opposed to other sector specific matters. Finally the outcomes, in terms of rail traffic volumes, rail network development and the delivery of development in rail accessible locations, are then reviewed and evaluated.

The paper draws from secondary data in terms of published reports, policy documents and rail traffic data as well as drawing from empirical work carried out by the author.

Key words: rail planning, integration, public transport, land-use, sustainable development, integrated planning.

Introduction

It is a central tenet of contemporary land-use and transport planning that the use of cars for inter-urban and intra-urban transport should be restrained in order to minimise road traffic congestion and the negative environmental impacts of car use. A complex bundle of demand management measures has been developed from which a policy package can be tailored for areas at various geographical levels. These measures include so-called 'hard' policies such as road pricing and the restriction of the availability of car parking, and 'soft' measures which include promoting mixed use developments and making the public transport 'offer' more attractive. In Britain planning policies to promote the use of public transport through concentrating trip generators into locations accessible by public transport have been in place since 1994, and the promotion of integrated public transport (with an explicit commitment to integration with land-use) has been in place since 1998. However, the increased use of the rail network which is an explicit element of these policies, has had to be delivered in a context wherein there has been very significant institutional change owing to the privatisation of the national rail network. This process was completed between 1994-97 but has continued to impact on the operation of the network right up to the present. So the implementation of more prescriptive planning policies to promote modal shift has taken place during a period when railway management has become more fragmented through the application of economic policy inspired by Thatcherite liberalism¹. But the implementation of planning has also been affected by the 'Blairite' policy agenda which has prioritised economic growth and the 'modernisation' of local government over environmental concerns. So, overall, despite a broadly favourable policy context, there has been much change in institutional structures for integrated planning around rail and doubts over the level of Government commitment to securing modal shift.

The aim of this paper is to summarise the changes in institutional structures and policy developments with regard to integrated planning around rail over the past 10 years or so and to review the outcomes in terms of rail ridership and the degree to which broad patterns of development have been skewed towards rail nodes.

Privatisation and institutional arrangements for railway management

It is generally accepted that the motivations behind the privatisation of British Rail (BR) were the desire of John Major's Government to be perceived as continuing the Thatcherite agenda of the successful disposal of state utilities and the medium term goal of reducing the financial

¹ Although Mrs Thatcher herself was not enthusiastic about railway privatisation during her period in office, preferring to sell off profit making enterprises.

burden on the Treasury. There were at least three alternative models for railway privatisation. The whole industry could have been sold off as a single entity (BR plc), or the network could have been broken down into a number of regional chunks on the Big Four² model. These approaches would have preserved the historic, vertically integrated structure of common ownership of track and trains. However the Government wanted to promote internal competition whereby more than one operator could run trains on the same route and therefore opted to separate track and train ownership: the 'track authority' model. In this structure management of the fixed infrastructure is in the hands of a quite separate organisation to those which run the trains and interface with the industry's customers. This is a major break with traditional railway practice and the intention was that internal competition would unleash private sector initiative and thereby improve services, raise revenue, drive down costs and reduce the need for public subsidy.

Privatisation on this basis produced a complex institutional structure with over 100 hundred separate railway organisations of one kind or another, a relaxation of centralised management and no single 'controlling mind', as embodied previously by the Chairman of BR (see figure 1). The fixed infrastructure was sold off, in 1996, to a track authority (originally a private limited company called Railtrack, subsequently replaced by a 'not-for-dividend' trust called Network Rail – see below). Train operating companies (TOCs) secured the right to operate trains through a competitive bidding process for 25 time-limited franchises³ from the Office for Passenger Rail Franchising⁴ (OPRAF) (Harris and Godward, 1997; Freeman and Shaw, 2000). Most of these franchises have been won by the small group of large companies which have come to dominate the bus market following its deregulation (outside London) and privatisation from 1985 onwards. These companies include Stagecoach, National Express, First Group, Arriva and Go-Ahead. Other TOCs have been controlled by Virgin Group and Sea Containers (the now defunct Great North Eastern Railway).

² In 1923 120 private railway companies were grouped into four regional, vertically integrated companies known as the Big Four. These were nationalised in 1947.

³ EU Directive 91/440 requires separate accounting systems for the fixed infrastructure and train operation; British railway privatisation can be seen as a very literal interpretation of this and is in stark contrast to the approach in other EU countries where national railways currently remain as publicly owned, vertically integrated industries, with accounting procedures adapted to meet EU requirements. In Japan where the state railways were privatised in the 1980s, this was as vertically integrated companies and in the USA where most railways are privately owned, they are vertically integrated too.

⁴ This reflects the fact that, although the railway network itself and the rolling stock were privatised, the right to run passenger trains on it was not, it is merely franchised off for specific periods of time.

There is further complexity as locomotives and passenger rolling stock were sold off to leasing companies, now all owned by banks, and the maintenance and renewal of the track and signalling was initially outsourced by Railtrack to private contractors.

There are particular problems with regard to planning at and around stations as although all stations are now owned by Network Rail, it only manages 17 of these itself, the major stations, 10 of them in London. Day-by-day management of the majority of stations is taken on by TOCs as part of their franchises. Although several TOCs may use a station only one takes on the management role, becoming the 'station facility operator' (SFO).

The overall thrust of these changes was to replace the monolithic command relationships which existed between the various parts of BR with contractual relationships between a large number of autonomous bodies (Tyrrall, 2006). To ensure transparency and fairness in these relationships the industry is overseen by the Office of Rail Regulation (this role was initially carried out by the Rail Regulator), as shown in figure 1 and one of its main duties is to set the level of track access charges paid by TOCs to the track authority. A strange product of the whole process is that the TOCs, which actually run the passenger trains, own very little: their operational staff is their major asset.

Concerned about the shortcomings of Railtrack with regard to long term planning, the New Labour Government elected in 1997 created the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) under the Transport Act 2000 to develop a strategic vision for the network, promote integration and interchange and take over management of the franchising operation to more effectively secure public benefits. However, unintended effects of privatisation then caused operational problems which turned the industry's gaze inwards and led to the whole rationale for privatisation being seriously questioned (Wolmar, 2001). These included a series of fatal accidents between 1997-2002 which attracted hostile media attention and led to an erosion of public confidence in railway safety, despite an underlying improvement. The crash at Hatfield in 2001, caused by the catastrophic failure of a broken rail, highlighted fundamental flaws in the institutional structure whereby management of the fixed infrastructure had broken down. Subsequent imposition of speed restrictions by Railtrack⁵ to prevent similar accidents led to the collapse of the network timetable, something unthinkable in BR days. In addition there has been an escalation in the costs of maintenance and renewals and this became

⁵ The general response of rail companies to accidents has been to deny responsibility in order to limit the financial consequences. Railtrack protected itself post-Hatfield by the widespread imposition of 20mph speed restrictions wherever cracked rails were detected. This transferred the risk to rail passengers who, because of the consequent service collapse, transferred to other modes, especially cars, with higher accident risks than rail.

critical on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) upgrade. This project, initially heralded as a success for privatisation, will have outturn costs of around £8bn, as against an original projected cost of £2.2bn, will be several years late and to a lower specification than planned. Railtrack's bankruptcy was precipitated by the Government in October 2001 and it was replaced by Network Rail, a 'not for dividend' trust, with a focus on engineering matters and the SRA took control of planning and financing network enhancements. Many commentators saw the creation of Network Rail, on the back of the creation of the SRA, as tantamount to re-nationalisation, although the government denied this, not wishing to be associated with 'Old Labour' ideology. This is despite the strong opposition by the Labour Party to privatisation at the time that it was taking place.

There have been difficulties too with franchising as a pattern developed wherein TOCs were given higher subsidies in loss making situations, provoking debate about who is taking the risk and what franchises are for. This led to the approach to franchising being changed, with an emphasis on shorter time scales tied to more rigorous service delivery targets, with minimal TOC investment in the fixed infrastructure. With most franchises now running for 7 years, a relatively short period in planning terms, there are very real problems with regard to how much priority TOCs can give to long term matters such as engaging with local planning and transport authorities to develop rail-oriented policy in station catchment areas. Also the number of TOCs has been reduced, with, for example, all services in some London termini being controlled by one operator⁶. This is evidence that one of the central goals of privatisation, securing on line competition, has been dropped, although this does have the positive effect of reducing the number of players involved in external liaison around such matters as station planning.

Creation of the SRA meant that it became even more unclear as to who was 'running the railway' as power was spread between the Secretary of State for Transport, the SRA, the Rail Regulator and Network Rail, with the daily operation of passenger services in the hands of private company managing directors. Concern over the Government's inability to control the flow of taxpayers' money into the industry, led to a further review in 2004 to reinforce Governmental control through a less complex regulatory regime. As there would be a continuing need for regulation of the relationships between the various players because the Government had no intention of re-integrating the railway (into public or private hands), the

⁶ In addition management of the largely self-contained Merseyrail network was handed over to the local PTA in 2003, with Network Rail responsible for maintenance and with train services being provided through a new franchise.

SRA became the sacrificial victim. Its abolition after so short a life illustrated the continuing institutional instability and the absence of a shared, long term view within Government as to how the railway should be managed. The passenger franchising and strategic planning functions were absorbed into a new Railway Directorate within the Department for Transport (DfT), with Network Rail as the lead operational body. The latter was rather perverse, given New Labour's market oriented ideology, as Network Rail has no direct contact with the industry's customers, this being handled by the TOCs. With the strategic management of the industry largely in the hands of civil servants and a company with no shareholders and its debts underwritten by the Government, this is a rather grotesque outcome to the privatisation process, given the initial aims. There is a much higher level of Government involvement than in BR days which leaves little room for the much vaunted private sector initiative.

Institutional arrangements: national and local government

On its election the New Labour Government combined the former Departments of the Environment (DOE) and Transport (DoT) into a new Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR), reflecting a high priority for integrated transport. However 'environment' was moved to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs in 2001 which suggested a reduced emphasis on environmental matters. The deconstruction of DETR continued in 2002, when a perceived failure to make progress on the transport agenda led to it being moved back into a separate Department for Transport. This left local government, planning, urban regeneration and regional planning policy in a new and rather pompous sounding Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). With the withdrawal of the Deputy Prime Minister from Governmental activity following a scandal about his private life in 2006, the ODPM became the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This further name change reflected the continuing down-playing of environmental concerns by the Blair government (despite rhetoric to the contrary), and the emphasis on the 'modernising' agenda for local government. These changes have been seen as resulting from a desire to emphasise the benefits of bringing private sector attributes into public services rather than emphasising the need for more effective market intervention to secure the environmental elements of the 'sustainable development' agenda (Batchelor and Patterson, 2007),

A further complication in public governance which impacts on rail planning has arisen from devolution: the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly Government had their first meetings in 1999 and subsequently gained statutory transport planning powers. ScotRail was one of the original franchises and, subsequently, a redrawing of the franchise map by the SRA

in 2003 created a Welsh franchise which produced a very clear relationship between the devolved bodies and the rail passenger businesses⁷. So devolution has led to marked differences between Scotland and Wales on the one hand, and the English regions on the other, where there have been many changes but with rather different outcomes vis-à-vis railway planning. The 1998 Regional Development Agency Act created statutory Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in the 8 English standard regions with duties and powers to promote economic development, regeneration and sustainable development which include the capacity to invest in regional transport networks. RDA members are appointed by Government and they reported to the Department of Trade and Industry (not the ODPM) now replaced, in yet another renaming, by the snappily titled Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. At the same time that the RDAs were created, the ODPM encouraged the creation of 8 non-statutory regional assemblies to scrutinise their work and produce regional land-use and transport planning strategies. The previous Conservative government had combined the regional offices of key government departments into integrated and spatial planning oriented Government Offices (GOs) in 1994, and these were retained by New Labour to complete this rather complex structure of regional governance⁸ (see figure 2). The regional dimension is of significance to the relationship between the planning and railway sectors because of the strategic nature of rail infrastructure and the regional, as opposed to national, benefits of network development, so its reinforcement was, potentially, a good thing for rail-oriented planning. However, the crucial difference between England and the Welsh and Scottish devolved bodies⁹, is that the English regional planning bodies are non-statutory, with no powers and no budgets.

Following changes in the structure of English local government (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002, 57-58) there are complexities on that level too, with some parts of England administered by a two tier structure of county and district councils and others administered by a single tier of unitary authorities. In addition to the 36 unitaries created in 1986 when the former metropolitan county councils were abolished by Mrs Thatcher, a further 46 have been created subsequently in the 'shire' counties. This has meant that the areas administered by the counties, some of which have been very active in rail promotion, have been significantly

⁷ Most of Scotland's rail services run internally within Scotland but that is not the case in Wales with the main routes in South and North Wales being at the end of east-west routes originating in England. The case for a Welsh franchise is therefore, arguably, more political than operational.

⁸ There was an aspiration for the creation of elected regional bodies in England to complement those created in Wales and Scotland. However the process came to an abrupt halt when the first referendum, in the North East, an area with a very strong regional identity, very firmly rejected the proposal in November 2004.

⁹ and regional bodies in many other European countries - see Haywood, 1998.

reduced in size, and some of the new unitaries have struggled with their new transport portfolios. There is welcome continuity in the former metropolitan counties where the Passenger Transport Authorities and their Executives (the PTA/PTEs) continue to play a crucial role in planning and funding local rail services. However, despite the continued growth of other conurbations such as Bristol-Bath, Portsmouth-Southampton or greater Cardiff, no new PTA/PTEs have been created.

Developments in London have produced more positive outcomes. In 1998 a public referendum voted in favour of the creation of an elected strategic authority (the former Greater London Council was abolished in 1986) and this led to the creation in 2000 of the Greater London Authority (GLA) with a directly elected mayor with executive power on the French and American models. The GLA has a duty to produce an integrated transport strategy and a new executive agency, Transport for London (TfL), was created to deliver it. TfL has responsibility for the Underground, light rail and bus service planning and, in 2007, became responsible for the administration of certain main line commuter rail franchises, these being part of a developing 'Overground' brand. The mayor has a duty to develop strategic planning policy in the form of a Spatial Development Strategy which embraces economic development, regeneration, transport and land-use. Notwithstanding the general complexity of the railway industry, this combining of power to strategically plan rail and land development activities in a single agency is a significant change and stands in stark contrast to the situation in other major British cities.

Institutional arrangements: statutory planning processes

During the Thatcher era planning was under threat and there was retrenchment by local planning authorities into the basic statutory requirements of producing development plans and development control. Owing to the lengthy nature of the plan making process, development plans had great difficulty in keeping in step with the politically important and fast moving world of urban regeneration and they came to be seen as, at best, out of date and, at worst, barriers to regeneration. It was therefore development control which tended to become the more visible part of planning and, as this can be a re-active and merely regulatory process, this also called into question the relevance of planning. However, the New Labour Government re-affirmed its commitment to planning but was concerned about the suitability of the extant development plan schema, as well as other aspects of the statutory system and its delivery. It therefore initiated a debate about 'Modernising Planning' with a Green Paper in 2001 (Byers,

2001). Eventually and controversially, this led to significant changes in the English¹⁰ statutory development plan system under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This now comprises an upper tier of Regional Spatial Strategies, which incorporate Regional Transport Strategies and replace county level structure plans (ODPM, 2004a). Lower tier Local Plans are being replaced by Local Development Frameworks (LDFs).

Statutory Local Transport Plans (LTPs) were introduced under the Transport Act 2000 as part of the thrust for integration, but their relationship with the new statutory planning system is rather mixed. This is because it is the county councils and *unitary* districts which produce LTPs. It is only in the case of the unitary districts where LTPs and LDFs are produced by the same authority. In non-unitary districts the LTP is produced by the county council, so a cooperative spirit is necessary to make the relationship between transport and land-use work. The removal of the duty on county councils to produce structure plans threatens the relationship between strategic land-use and rail planning at that level, which many county councils had co-ordinated with some success.

Overall the combination of the complexity in structure of the railway industry, the changes in English governance, and the new statutory planning processes, mean that the interface between railway interests and local authorities for integrating rail planning with local land-use and transport planning is complex, ill-defined and has been subject to a great deal of churn (figure 3). This creates difficulties in securing mutual understanding and confidence, and in aligning policy and, especially, funding between the organisations concerned. The many interfaces between the various internal and external players create 'friction' in decision making processes and confusion as to who is doing what and who should lead, with the net result that innovation is held back. The complexity also raises transaction costs when any initiative is mooted and the viability threshold is raised.

Policy: Rail

In 1994, after prolonged dithering over route options and funding issues, John Major's Conservative Government opted for a relatively high cost high speed rail route from the Channel Tunnel to London which involved tunnelling to gain access to east London and the terminus at St Pancras station (Gourvish, 2006). This decision was heavily influenced by a desire to use the investment to promote the regeneration of the Thames Gateway. In 1996 London and Continental railways was selected to undertake construction but financial

¹⁰ There have been changes in Wales and Scotland too: see Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006.

problems arose in 1998 and 2002 and it was only as a result of firm support by the New Labour Government that commitment to construction of the north Thameside part of the route continued.

With regard to transport policy in general, after a consultation exercise in 1997 (DETR, 1997), the Government published a transport White Paper 'New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' (DETR, 1998¹¹) with a focus on 'integration', the first time this had featured so centrally in transport policy since the late 1960s .

Box 1

A New Deal for Transport, 1998

Integration of Transport policy

An integrated transport policy means:

- integration within and between different types of transport - so that each contributes its full potential and people can move easily between them
- integration with the environment - so that our transport choices support a better environment
- integration with land use planning- at national, regional and local level, so that transport and planning work together to support more sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel
- integration with our policies for education, health and wealth creation - so that transport helps to make a fairer, more inclusive society

It contained an ambitious strategy which sought to reduce road traffic congestion through a combination of policies which included 'hard' and 'soft' options, including providing 'more and better...trains', promoting modal shift to public transport and securing integration between land-use and transport strategies to achieve that goal. These goals were related to global environmental goals requiring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, as agreed under the Kyoto Agreement of 1997.

Next an ambitious Ten Year Plan (DETR, 2000) was produced which was an attempt to overcome the short termism which had been seen to dog transport investment: this envisaged a 50 per cent growth in rail passenger traffic. There was a package of improvements to be

¹¹ This is the first transport White Paper since 1977 and contains some interesting parallels with the content of that document which also expressed concern over continuing increases in road traffic and the impact of land use change in stimulating demand for transport.

delivered by 2010 which included: modernisation and increased capacity on the WCML and East Coast Main Line (ECML), completion of the high speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link and improved commuter services into London and other cities. For London a new east-west link was promised along with Thameslink 2000 and the East London Line. There was also an expectation of up to 25 new light rail schemes in major cities, holding out the promise of integration with main line services on the European model. These high level plans were developed during the Railtrack era when the company produced annual Network Management Statements, although these were mainly just wish lists and Railtrack tended to look to other organisations, such as the TOCs or local authorities, to actually do the investing. This lack of commitment to strategic investment was part of the rationale for the creation of the SRA.

However, as outlined above, things soon began to go wrong with the expansionist strategy. Post-Hatfield the SRA began managing the network on the less optimistic assumptions of a 20-30% growth in passenger kilometres and 25-30% growth in freight tonne kilometres between 2001/2 and 2010/11. Accidents, cost overruns and falling reliability were the background to the SRA taking control of the strategic management of the network through a sequence of 'Route Utilisation Strategies': the network was firmly under public sector control. The SRA prioritised early completion of the WCML project and supporting Network Rail in containing costs and taking a firmer lead on operational matters. The policies on route utilisation were concerned with resolving conflicts between various kinds of traffic so that existing capacity could be fully utilised with no major investment, as this was unlikely to be forthcoming. This led, in particular, to conflict between local and long distance passenger services. The positive side of the financial crisis was that it highlighted the benefits of small scale capacity improvements. This was a sort of mirror image of the long sequence of minor capacity rationalisations forced on BR under the iron grip of Treasury control, following on from the initial post-Beeching closures in the 1965-75 period (Gourvish, 1986).

More optimistically, the SRA developed a wider urban and regional planning capacity which could interface with the devolved governments, regional and, to a degree, local planning bodies with regard to strategic land-use, transport and economic policy. It had also begun to produce Regional Planning Assessments (SRA, 2003) to engage with regional spatial policy making, and issued specific guidance re station development (SRA, 2004). But these positive developments were largely cut short by abolition of the SRA. However subsequently Network Rail has begun to issue Route Utilisation Strategies and, although still heavily constrained financially, these have been seen as more focused on increasing capacity and facilitating

growth in rail traffic through small scale enhancements, than their counterparts in the Railtrack era.

In 2004 the Government produced another transport White Paper, 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030' (DfT, 2004a). Despite its title, this did not contain a vision as to what the railway network might look like much beyond 2012 and was primarily concerned with getting rid of the SRA, emphasising the importance of financial realism and cost control in developing projects, and quietly burying many of the ambitious targets from the 10 year Plan. At the same time a rail specific White Paper, 'The Future of Rail' (DfT, 2004b) and the subsequent Railways Act 2005, introduced a new mechanism to ensure that the DfT and ORR keep in step with regard to rail funding. This involves the government producing a 'High Level Output Specification' (HLOS) of what it wants Network Rail to deliver and a 'Statement of Funds Available' (SoFA) to finance it. Network Rail is required to respond by stating whether these funds are adequate to meet the Government's requirements, with the ORR acting as referee when the two are not in balance. This is a very complex and, like much in the privatised rail industry, labour intensive process and stands in sharp contrast to the way in which these things were done in BR days. However, it is transparent and makes clear what kind of railway the Government wants and how much taxpayers' money it is prepared to commit to pay for it.

The Treasury's Comprehensive Spending review in 2007, along with requirements to produce the HLOS and SoFA, led to another White Paper, 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' (DfT 2007a). The context for this had been influenced by production, in late 2006, of two reports sponsored by the Treasury (Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer since 1997, had been flexing his political muscles prior to becoming prime minister in mid-2007, when Tony Blair eventually stepped down). These were the Stern report (Stern, 2006) on the economics of climate change and the Eddington report (Eddington, 2006) on the links between transport and economic productivity. The key implications for transport of the former were recognition that it accounts for 14% of global green house gas emissions but that deep cuts in the sector were seen as unlikely before 2050, because the costs of securing cuts are higher than in other sectors. Nevertheless, the climate change problem was seen as an urgent international priority and countries were seen as able to take action to reduce the impacts with three policy priorities: carbon pricing and trading, support for low carbon technologies, and action to promote behavioural change. The key points of the Eddington report were that, overall the UK's transport system is quite good but there is a need to relieve congestion in priority areas. These are growing urban areas, airports and ports, and some inter-urban corridors; the priority

is to make existing networks work more efficiently. The report endorsed road pricing as an alternative to building more road capacity and, recognising the emissions problem, stated that all modes should pay for their external costs. It highlighted the economic benefits of targeted, small scale projects and came out against 'large projects with speculative benefits and relying on untested technologies' which, in the rail industry, was interpreted as discouraging new routes using magnetic levitation or MAGLEV. Subsequently Eddington said he thought high speed rail using established technology had a key role to play. There was particular concern expressed about the time scales involved in delivering major transport projects and the complex problem of overlapping consent regimes: 'the Thameslink 2000 scheme required over 30 consents under four different Acts and took over eight years' ¹²(p7). There was therefore a call to speed up the planning process with the creation of an Independent Planning Commission to take decisions on projects of strategic importance.

In some respects the 2007 White Paper was the most optimistic and broad ranging view of rail development for decades, with a planned increase of 22.5 per cent in passenger demand by 2014 and a long-term goal of doubling the level of demand that rail can accommodate. It sought to take policy beyond the internal concerns of recent years:

For too much of the past decade, policy on rail has been about repairing the problems of a flawed privatisation. The Government rightly focused on reversing decades of under-investment and putting the industry on a stable footing (p5).

£15bn of investment was committed over next 7 years with £5.5bn for Thameslink, funding for Birmingham New Street and Reading station upgrades, more rolling stock and minor upgrades. The White Paper also envisaged no closures but, on the other hand there was a distinct lack of a long term view beyond 2014 with no main line upgrades, no electrification programme (seen as essential by critics if rail is going to be able to draw from non-carbon producing energy sources), no route re-openings (in England), no firm commitment to London Crossrail, and no commitment to extending the Channel Tunnel high speed railway north of London¹³. On the financial side concern was expressed at the growing burden of cost to the taxpayer with the pattern of 25-35 per cent subsidy in the late 1990s increasing to 40-50 per cent since 2000 and 51 per cent in 2005-6: this amounted to some £4.5bn, or four times the amount of subsidy typically received by BR. An intention was therefore expressed to move the figure back towards what was vaguely termed as 'historic levels', with farebox

¹² And even then at the time of the publication of Eddington, no funding was committed for Thameslink and commentators have seen the reluctance of Government to fund major rail projects as the bigger factor leading to delay.

¹³ An industry based lobby group, Greengauge 21, had been formed in 2006 to campaign for government commitment to new high speed rail links between London and major provincial cities.

income rising from £5bn to £9bn by 2014, with the inevitable result that, despite more passengers, rail fares would increase above the rate of inflation. Critics saw this as the Government continuing to send out the wrong price signals if it was serious about promoting modal shift.

Yet another transport White Paper was published in October 2007, 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World' (DfT, 2007b). This was the Government's response to Stern and Eddington and set out 5 policy goals: maximising the overall competitiveness and productivity of the economy; reducing transport greenhouse emissions; contributing to better health; improving quality of life; and equality of transport opportunity. In what is a discussion document, there is a strong commitment to promoting economic growth whilst reducing CO2 emissions (the smart growth agenda), re-affirmation of the rail proposals in the earlier White Paper, commitment to working with DCLG to deliver the housing target in a sustainable way (see later re the Sustainable Communities Strategy) and to encouraging modal shift in urban areas through land-use planning. In addition there is specific reference to conclusion of the deal to fund the £16bn London Crossrail project and to transforming the rail network around Manchester (see later re the Northern Way Initiative).

Policy: town planning

Internationally in the 1990s there was growing emphasis on the importance of rail-oriented planning as part of the debate around sustainable development and compact cities. In North America Calthorpe's (1993) work on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has become broadly embedded into much main stream planning (Dittmar and Ohland, 2004) and in continental Europe theoretical perspectives have been developed to underpin a wide ranging review of European station projects by Bertolini and Spit (1998). This conceptualised the roles of stations as 'nodes', points of interchange between various transport modes, and as 'places', specific localities within the urban realm which act as a gateway between transport systems and the wider city. British authors have contributed to this growing literature too: Edwards (1997) developed a typology of stations and explored the principles of station architecture and this was followed with a more detailed architectural approach by Ross (2000).

In Britain these developments in the academic literature were paralleled by policy changes embodied in revisions to the official guidance on planning and transport, Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) (DOE, DoT, 1994). This was followed up by 'PPG13: A Guide

to Better Practice (DOE, DoT, 1995), a 'practical users' manual' which set out planning principles with regard to relationships between public transport and settlement size, using concepts such as corridors, nodes, catchment areas and the 'walk radius'. The Major Government also produced a revision to the policy guidance (PPG 6) on 'Town centres and retail developments' (DOE, 1996). This recognised that city and town centres were in bad shape and it was time to call a halt to the decentralisation of retail, leisure and employment generating activities to out-of-centre sites. Subsequently there was to be a sequential approach to site selection with priority for town centre and then edge-of-town centre locations. Local planning authorities were also called upon to plan 'positively' to promote town centres in local plans and other documents in ways consistent with the policies set out in PPG13. There was encouragement for mixed use developments, coherent parking strategies, and the use of good urban design. As travel to city and town centres is so significant to rail utilisation, this commitment to steering trip generating developments to town centres was a welcome development. Subsequently New Labour set up an Urban Task Force to establish a vision for the cities founded on the principles of design excellence, social wellbeing and environmental responsibility. In articulating a vision for compact urban areas, its Final Report contained perhaps the most thorough reworking of the principles of planning around urban public transport corridors in an official document for several decades (Urban Task Force, 1999). The 'Core Cities Group' embracing Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield was created in 1995 to promote economic growth and regeneration in the cities and their surrounding regions and this group has flourished under New Labour to pursue the Urban Task Force's vision.

The continuing economic boom of the late 1990s fuelled demand for housing but the Government came under the same pressure as its predecessor to restrict the consumption of greenfield sites. This resulted in a commitment to ensure that at least 60 per cent of new housing should be built on previously developed land (brownfield sites) and revisions to the relevant planning policy guidance (PPG3) extended the use of sequential testing into the housing arena. The guidance required local planning authorities to:

seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity, and by planning for mixed use (DETR, 2000a, 6).

PPG 13 was further amended and the current version (DETR, 2001) continues with the broad thrust of its predecessor, but with a sharper focus around the drive to promote integrated transport. It continued to have a generic focus on public transport and 'interchanges' rather than railway stations per se, although it is supportive of rail in the most general sense (see

box 2). The Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans (DETR, 2000b) had limited commentary on station policy and this also tended to be fairly generalised, focusing on ‘interchange facilities’ rather than specifically ‘railway stations’. However, making interchange more convenient was encouraged as was, specifically, promoting access to stations by foot. The Guidance reiterated the land-use planning policies relevant to public transport interchanges set out in PPG 13, further illustrating the attempt at integrating land-use and transport policy. It is notable that subsequent LTP guidance refocused the priorities around greater realism on costs and securing value for money in the planning process and new policy priorities such as the promotion of social inclusion (DfT, 2004).

Box 2: sample of pro-rail policies in PPG 13 (2001)

Local authorities should:

- focus land uses which are major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges. City, town and district centres should generally be preferred over out of centre transport interchanges.....
- actively manage the pattern of urban growth and the location of major travel generating developments to make the fullest use of public transport.....
- allocate or re-allocate sites which are (or will be) highly accessible by public transport for travel intensive uses.....
- ensure that interchange points are well related to travel generating uses, and that the design, layout and access arrangements of surrounding development and interchanges are safe and convenient so as to maximise the walking and cycling catchment population for public transport services
- identify interchange improvement that need to be made, and seek funding through local transport plans, public-private partnerships and planning agreements
- consider the case for parking facilities at urban and suburban rail stations, and the treatment of on-street parking near to stations within the context of their local transport plan

Given their role with regard to the promotion of public transport and their lead role in co-ordinating the production of LTPs in metropolitan areas, PTA/PTEs were able to take a strong lead in promoting integration between land-use and transport planning. The Planning Green Paper (Byers, 2001) had encouraged the production of 'standing guidance' by non-statutory consultees which, surprisingly, is what PTEs are. An example of what can be done is Greater Manchester PTE's Land Use Planning Guide which sets out principles with regard to the location, type and design of development which will promote the use of public transport, as shown in appendix one. This Guide specifically develops the concept of designating 'station development zones',

..... where authorities will develop coordinated proposals to better link stations and the areas they serve, identifying improvements to local roads (including pedestrian crossings), walking routes, cycling, car parking, local signage, information boards and landscaping (GMPTE, 2006).

The ODPM pursued a number of broad strategies focused on securing economic growth and regeneration, whilst promoting more environmentally sustainable development forms, and rail transport was crucial to these. But an overarching aspect of Blairite regional policy has been the abandonment of any attempt to restrict growth in the buoyant south east in the hope that it will be deflected to more needy regions, as the view has been that this will not happen and investment will be lost to other countries. The resultant growth has had major impacts on job growth, particularly in London, and on demand for housing, especially affordable housing, as the overheating regional economy has led to house price inflation. Strategically, to provide for this huge housing demand the Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM, 2003) identified growth zones in the Milton Keynes/South Midlands corridor, the Harlow-Cambridge corridor, and the areas north and south of the Thames in the Thames Gateway. As outlined above, a sub-text of this strategy and one which has been applied generally to the supply of housing land, has been to prioritise the re-use of brownfield sites over the use of greenfield sites.

Awareness of the housing supply problem increased so, in 2006, Government ratcheted up the pressure on the planning system with the creation of 29 Housing Growth Zones to raise the number of new houses built in England each year from 160,000 to 200,000 by 2016. Finally in 2007 and with a boost resulting from a personal endorsement by new Prime Minister Gordon Brown, an eco-towns initiative was launched for the creation of a number of new settlements with between 5,000 and 20,000 new homes each, this initiative being squarely placed in the 'new towns' tradition and wherein the securing of reduced car dependency is seen as one of a whole raft of environmental requirements (DCLG, 2007). Nationally the housing agenda is challenging and planning around rail is just one of the transport elements to be considered in fixing the location of large areas of new housing. But, even in the broad south east, the various proposals have seemed to develop piecemeal and there has not been production of a detailed, integrated regional plan along the lines of the 1960s Strategic Plan for the South East (South East Joint Planning Team, 1970) which sought to steer development into main rail corridors which received significant investment. In the contemporary period it has not even been an explicit requirement that the so-called 'eco-towns' should be located on a rail corridor.

Concern for the weaker economies of other regions led to publication of a 'Northern Way' strategy (ODPM, 2004b) covering eight city regions wherein the three northern RDAs were invited to show how they could unlock the potential for faster economic growth. The improvement of connectivity is an important element of the emerging response. Manchester

and Leeds are perceived as the two city regions with the potential to become competitive at the European level and evolving projects include the development of a Manchester rail hub and the improvement of east-west trans-Pennine rail links (Northern Way Steering Group, 2004, 2005).

Along with the changes in the statutory development plan process which reinforce the importance of the regional tier, these various policies comprise a complex and developing strategic policy making and delivery agenda where there is a need for close integration between railway planning and other planning activities if the railway is to be fit for purpose. The paper will now go on to appraise the outcomes from the interplay of the institutional changes and policy initiatives.

Outcomes

Introduction

Notwithstanding the operational problems, rail passenger traffic grew considerably in the late 1990s, levelled off post-Hatfield and then continued to grow. This seems to be the product of continuous economic growth, growing congestion on the road network and some successful marketing and customer service work by TOCs¹⁴. Total passenger journeys post-privatisation have increased by approximately 25% and, by 2004 were already higher than in 1950. Similarly, passenger kilometres moved ahead of the 1950 figure¹⁵ too. However, it has been pointed out that 70% of rail trips begin or end in London and 68% of all rail trips are on London and south east commuter services (SRA, 2004), so there is a regional bias to the pattern of rail utilisation. In addition, despite the growth, since privatisation rail's market share of passenger transport (using passenger kilometres) has remained steady at around 6 per cent because of the continued increase in road traffic, so overall there has been no modal shift. This has major implications with regard to what would need to be done to enhance rail capacity if significant modal shift were to be energetically pursued.

With regard to the fixed infrastructure there have been only minimal closures since privatisation, the length of the electrified network has hardly grown and the number of stations has increased, despite some losses to light rail conversions: there have been few outright station closures (see tables 1,2 and 3).

¹⁴ The internet has, of course, made the provision of timetable information, the promotion of deals and sale of tickets much easier and TOCs have made good use of it, although there is a lack of overall coherency and consistency owing to the franchising process.

¹⁵ Changes in data recording methods by the industry make comparable measurements over time difficult, but there is general acceptance of the underlying growth trends.

Table 1: passenger journeys by sector 1999-00 to 2006-07: Great Britain (millions)

	Long distance operators	London and SE operators	Regional operators	Total passenger journeys
1999-00	72	639	220	931
2000-01	70	664	223	957
2001-02	74	663	222	960
2002-03	77	679	219	976
2003-04	81	690	240	1012
2004-05	84	704	256	1045
2005-06	89	720	273	1082
2006-07	98	773	292	1164

Source: ORR National Rail Trends Yearbook April 06-March 07

Table 2: passenger kilometres by sector 1999-00 to 2006-07: Great Britain (billions)

	Long distance operators	London and SE operators	Regional operators	Total passenger kilometres
1999-00	13.2	18.4	6.9	38.5
2000-01	12.1	19.2	6.9	38.2
2001-02	12.9	19.3	7.0	39.1
2002-03	12.9	19.8	6.9	39.7
2003-04	13.3	20.1	7.5	40.9
2004-05	13.4	20.5	7.9	41.8
2005-06	14.2	20.7	8.3	43.2
2006-07	15.5	22.4	8.6	46.5

Source: ORR National Rail Trends Yearbook April 06-March 07

Table 3: Railway infrastructure

Great Britain 1999-00 to 2006-7 (route kilometres and number of stations)

	Route open for traffic	Of which electrified	Route open for passenger and freight traffic	Route open for freight traffic only	Passenger stations
1999-00	16,649	5,167	15,038	1,610	2,503
2000-01	16,652	5,167	15,042	1,610	2,508
2001-02	16,652	5,167	15,042	1,610	2,508
2002-03	16,670	5,167	15,042	1,610	2,508
2003-04	16,493	5,200	14,883	1,610	2,507
2004-05	16,116	5,200	14,328	1,788	2,508

2005-06	15,810	5,205	14,356	1,454	2,510
2006-07	15,795	5,250	14,353	1,442	2,520

Source: ORR National Rail Trends Yearbook April 06-March07

Outcomes: the long distance passenger network focused on London

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) is a branch of the French TGV system, so French model of running a railway along an existing motorway corridor has been applied, in this case the M2¹⁶. Phase one opened in 2003 and Phase 2 in 2007, the whole project being on time and on budget. The total length is 109km (68 miles) and journey times have been reduced significantly to give an air competitive 2hrs London-Brussels and 2hrs 20 minutes London-Paris¹⁷. The former service from Waterloo station was unattractive to travellers from north of London and diverting the service to St Pancras offers a significant improvement. The line is also to have, from 2009, a high speed service for Kent commuters without which it would be significantly underused (Glover, 2005; Abbott, 2008). When the economically depressed north Kent towns get this service it could stimulate their regeneration too, although there are doubts as to the attractiveness of St Pancras for a daily commute to jobs in the City and West End. In addition to the international station at the growth centre of Ashford in southern Kent, there are international stations at Ebbsfleet in north Kent and at the major rail hub of Stratford in East London (Perren, 2005). Owing to its easy access from the M25 motorway, Ebbsfleet is a major park and ride station with 6000 parking spaces but with no development within a walkable radius. This could be seen as perhaps undermining use of existing local rail services although, on the other hand, the park and ride could attract people from rural Kent currently not using rail for London commuting because of the difficulties in accessing historic town centre stations. Ebbsfleet has a high frequency bus service, Fastrack, linking it to adjoining towns experiencing growth as part of the Thames Gateway strategy, as well as the nearby out-of-town Bluewater shopping mall, so there is evidence of integration here. At Stratford International there is to be a major commercial development on adjoining former railway land and this, along with the existing station's excellent onward rail links, were crucial elements of the successful London bid for the 2012 Olympics which are a key driver in the regeneration of this area. One of the links from Stratford is to Canary Wharf via the Docklands Light Railway which has continued to expand, with more capacity, new stations adjoining regeneration sites and route extensions including links across the Thames (Sully,

¹⁶ This is quite different to the WCML where part of the cost escalation resulted from the abandonment of Railtrack's attempt to utilise revolutionary signalling technologies.

¹⁷ Onward travel in Belgium and France for British passengers usually necessitates a change to host country services, so even London is not hooked directly into European rail services in the way that continental cities are.

2007). Stratford is also the terminus of the Jubilee Line Extension of the Underground network opened in 1999 and provides a link to major Docklands regeneration sites north and south of the Thames. There has been a planned association between station and property development on these networks and overall the Dockland regeneration has become a model of integrated land-use transport planning, despite its inauspicious beginnings (Brownhill, 1990). The area around St Pancras and the adjoining King's Cross station is very run down and the high speed rail project is closely associated with other rail developments which will further enhance its accessibility and this is facilitating major private sector led regeneration in the wider locality. Overall the new railway, and particularly the high speed commuter service, is well integrated with other public transport initiatives and strategic planning developments.

Commentators have noted the financial efficacy of the CTRL as compared with the difficulties encountered on the WCML and suggested that there are important lessons here for the future. The point has also been made that the investment in the CTRL is currently of no benefit to city regions outside the south east. However there is currently no firm proposal for a new high speed railway to the north from London and the immediate prospects are poor for the upgrading of the rest of the existing main line network. The WCML project has caused almost ten years of service disruptions during its implementation and, as currently specified, will only be a 125 mph railway. Although the 2 hour 10 minute journey time between London and Manchester is competitive with air, London-Glasgow journey times will still be around 4hrs 30 minutes, so low cost air services will continue to offer very competitive journey times. It is also indicative of the traditional British approach that the high cost WCML upgrade has not had an accompanying station upgrade strategy, let alone one for local transport and land-use planning *around* key stations in this strategic corridor.

Other projects which were mooted by Railtrack and/or various groupings of local authorities, such as electrification of the Great Western and Midland Main Lines are currently off the agenda. The re-franchising process for the ECML completed in 2007 envisages no acceleration of services and proposed works to remove bottlenecks have been dropped. However, investment by Chiltern Trains in increasing route capacity between London Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill shows what can be achieved with modest investment by a TOC with in-house civil engineering capacity and finance (the company was a subsidiary of Laings although it has recently been acquired by the German state railway operator, Deutsche Bahn). Chiltern Trains has reinstated sections of double track, increased capacity at Marylebone and opened a new station at Warwick Parkway which was exceptionally granted planning permission despite its green belt location. Whilst this was a welcome recognition of

the difficulties associated in a finding parkway sites, it did of course preclude any housing development within a walkable radius of the station. This has taken place elsewhere in Warwick in locations not within walking distance of either of the town's two stations (see Batty and Haywood, 2002). If privatisation had been successful, then this kind of private sector led strategy would have occurred in many other parts of the network but, unfortunately, Chiltern is a unique company which is operating with a 20 year franchise in a particularly favourable corridor, so this has not happened. Corridors where single tracking took place post-Beeching and now need this kind of upgrade include Salisbury-Exeter and Oxford-Worcester.

The most notable planning and urban policy success of the past decade has been the regeneration of provincial city centres. Given the importance of major CBDs to the rail mode this has positive implications for rail ridership. City planning authorities and regeneration agencies have worked successfully with the property market to deliver significant increases in housing units (mainly apartments), growth in commercial floorspace and major improvements in the quality of the public domain so that residents and visitors alike can enjoy the delights of attractive public spaces and European-style cafe society, away from the roar of traffic. Some schemes such as Spinningfields in Manchester and Brindley Place in Birmingham have been unusually large for provincial cities. City centre residential populations have grown significantly with, for example, Manchester's being over 15,000 and even that of Sheffield (a comparatively weak CBD historically) increasing to over 5,000.

Use of rail has been further encouraged by investment from Railtrack, and subsequently Network Rail, in station developments on the intercity network with notable examples such as the Leeds station rebuilding and track remodelling, the renovation and partial rebuilding of Manchester Piccadilly, renovation of Glasgow Central, and renovation and capacity enhancement of Edinburgh Waverley. These activities have been reinforced by recognition of the need to improve things actually at and around stations. So, for example, the restrictions on the location of retail development have forced the major supermarket chains to develop a city centre or 'metro' model for a smaller unit and these have been permitted by local planning authorities at railway stations. This was often resisted previously as undermining retail location policy. This means that rail users can 'multi-task' during their journeys in the way that is generally so much easier by car. In addition large trip generating developments have been steered towards stations, often in association with urban design initiatives to improve the public domain outside the station, making rail a more convenient and enjoyable mode choice:

the work outside Sheffield station¹⁸ is a good example of the effort being put in. These sorts of outcomes are a step change in scale and quality above what was achieved during previous high points in the policy cycle in the 1960s and late 1980s. However, despite the policy changes of the mid-1990s and this positive outcome in the CBDs, very large out-of-town retail centres have continued to be built in locations not accessible by rail in many city regions: in most but not all cases this is because their origins predate the policy changes, highlighting the importance of long term consistency in planning policies.

Outcomes: London commuter and airport services

The Central London Rail Study (DoT et al, 1989) envisaged improvements to the capacity of the central London sections of the Thameslink service so that new routes, such as to Cambridge and Lings Lynn, could be hooked in, a project which became known as Thameslink 2000. It is indicative of the slow progress in Britain that this scheme only came to receive funding in 2007, despite it being a cost effective scheme which exploits existing cross-London infrastructure: completion is envisaged by 2015. Another example is the East London Line Extension Project to provide links between localities in north and south London and the job opportunities in the City and Docklands. This was identified by New Labour as a 'quick win' in 1997, but only had funding committed in 2004 and has a 2010 completion target. However there is evidence of integrated land-use planning around the new stations (Haywood, forthcoming). This project is now being driven through by Transport for London (TfL) which illustrates the continuing importance of well resourced local authorities to the development of local networks and the impact which a high profile political leader like former mayor Ken Livingstone can make.

Another major project from the Central London Rail Study which now has government support is Crossrail. The central element is an east-west tunnel under central London linking commuter services which currently terminate at Liverpool Street and Paddington. As originally envisaged, the services which would link to this tunnel would be long distance originating 30 or more miles outside London. However, under the influence of TfL there has developed an intra-London focus which, as currently envisaged, will terminate at Maidenhead in the west and in the east at Shenfield (on the Liverpool Street-Ipswich main line) and, south of the Thames, at Abbey Wood (with a change of trains to access the new station at Ebbsfleet on the CTRL). On completion in 2017, Crossrail will serve Canary Wharf

¹⁸ The development of the 'station gateway' and the associated 'gold route' pedestrian link to the core of the city centre were significant elements of the Sheffield City Centre Master Plan produced by Sheffield One regeneration company in partnership with the City Council and others.

as well as the City and West End which have all seen continuing property investment through the long boom from the mid-1990s. It is seen by the business community as essential to the continued success of London as a world city, a role based fundamentally on a high concentration of global financial and business services which need to draw on a high quality but far flung labour force. However Crossrail as planned is not linked to existing outer metropolitan growth corridors focused on towns like Basingstoke and Reading or the Communities Strategy growth corridors in Milton Keynes-Northampton, Harlow-Stansted-Cambridge and the Thames Gateway where people moving into new houses will need easy access to a wide job market.

Within Greater London there have been significant rail-oriented developments. Central Croydon has experienced further commercial development and the Croydon Tramlink light rail system opened in 2000. This has a stop at East Croydon station as well as at six other stations, thereby enhancing rail accessibility to a wide catchment area. In east London the large scale housing development in Chafford Hundred (Thurrock) was accompanied by the opening of a new station in 1993 (which also serves the adjoining Lakeside shopping centre): however as often occurs in Britain this was ‘underscoped’ and the station has been expanded twice subsequently although the route it serves continues to be single track (Batty and Haywood, 2002). Further afield, Corby new town still has no rail service, despite it being part of the Milton Keynes/South Midlands growth corridor, although funding has been committed as part of the franchising of train services on the Midland Main Line in 2007. Extensive works are underway to expand capacity at Milton Keynes station as part of the WCML upgrade but there is currently no funding allocated for a long standing local authority backed plan to re-open the Oxford-Bletchley/Milton Keynes-Bedford-Cambridge orbital route, despite this linking areas designated for growth in the Communities Plan and providing excellent onward travel opportunities through interchange with services on the trunk routes which it crosses. With regard to planning at and around stations more generally, the swing towards rail oriented planning is having a strong impact with station focused master plans and urban design schemes in hand at locations right across the broad south east including Hastings, Portsmouth, Haywards Heath, Peterborough and Bath.

With regard to airports, the opening of the electrically powered Heathrow Express service between Heathrow and Paddington in 1998 was a product of pre-privatisation planning by BR and the British Airports Authority. However the fast link to Heathrow has served subsequently as the basis for the regeneration of the Paddington Canal Basin area promoted by Westminster City Council as a high density commercial and residential node. But there is a

need for more rail access to Heathrow as construction of Terminal Five is now complete and passenger numbers continue to rise. An Air Track Forum, led by Surrey County Council, has been developing a scheme since 2000 to help the British Airports Authority achieve its target of 50% surface access by public transport. This involves a new rail line to Staines to the south west of Heathrow to connect with routes from Windsor, Woking and London Waterloo, and a new link to the Great Western main line to connect with services from the Reading direction. These would access the new tunnel already built under T5 and connect with the existing Heathrow Express route from Paddington. The estimated cost is £425m but the project is at an early stage with no statutory approval and no funding.

Gatwick airport has had a dedicated train service from London Victoria for twenty years. But, as evidence of the depth of the funding crisis facing Britain's railways, the SRA (2004) proposed ending this so as to free off capacity for through trains to Brighton which having trains terminate at Gatwick restricted. This curtailing of a model service because of a prior failure to invest, met with excoriating criticism in the railway press (Modern Railways, 2005) and the branded service is now to be retained, although peak hour airport trains will be used by Brighton line commuters, to the detriment of both groups of passengers. On a more positive note Luton Airport Parkway station was opened in 1999 with a good rail catchment along the Midland Main Line and Thameslink routes. But overall, given the Government's commitment to growth in air transport and its desire to see a curb on associated growth in airport road traffic, there is a clear fault line across transport policy on the issue of surface access to London's airports. Also the lack of commitment to new high speed lines will not curb demand for internal flights between London and provincial cities, particularly those to Newcastle and Scottish cities. Overall across London and the south east, despite the many positive outcomes commentators still see a lack of ambition and genuine integration between land-use planning and rail development, given the scale of new development envisaged over the next twenty years (see Bolden and Harman, forthcoming).

Outcomes: Provincial cities

Given that the priorities for the network are the London-focused long distance and commuter services, it is with regard to inter-regional and, especially, intra-urban services in provincial city regions that the shortcomings with regard to integration between the network and patterns of urban development are most obvious. One of the (partial) successes of privatisation has been the improvement of the Cross Country network operated by Virgin (until refranchising in 2007 when Arriva took over). In 2002 Virgin introduced a higher frequency timetable with

a fleet of four and five car 'Voyager'¹⁹ trains with a 125 mph capability and there was an accompanying £200m track upgrade by Railtrack to facilitate higher speeds. This initiative was branded as 'Operation Princess' and it linked 115 regional cities and towns with Birmingham New Street as the hub of a NE-SW and NW-SE network. But the launch was marred by poor time keeping and some severe overcrowding and the scope of the new service was quickly trimmed back to restore reliability²⁰. Nevertheless, Cross Country services will have broadly doubled in frequency post-1997. But despite this service improvement, once again there has been no accompanying national strategy for planning around the relevant stations. Such has been the increase in services that the capacity of Birmingham New Street has become a major constraint: it was rebuilt in the 1960s to handle 640 trains per day and in 2003 it handled 1350. However there is now a locally led commitment to rebuild New Street and, as identified earlier, the Government has committed itself to contribute towards this.

Typically services between provincial cities not on the Cross Country network are of poorer quality. Nevertheless the city centre renaissance has triggered increased demand for rail: for example, the Association of Train Operating Companies claims 1994-2004 growth of 75% between Manchester-York. There have been proposals over the years to increase capacity on these inter-regional routes through junction improvements or even electrification (see Haywood & Richardson, 1996 for example). However nothing substantial has been done and there are currently no committed major projects (outside Scotland), despite the importance of improved rail links for the Northern Way initiative.

Experience shows that it is the development of local networks around provincial cities that is most crucially dependent on co-operation between railway management and local authority transport and land-use planning as property markets here are very road oriented: these services account for 20% of network ridership. Recently, a good deal of effort in England has gone into developing light rail as a cheaper alternative to heavy rail in metropolitan areas such as Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle, Birmingham and Nottingham (Steer Davies Gleave, 2005). These services can integrate well with heavy rail services to improve the overall rail 'offer', particularly if they are integrated with major regeneration initiatives too, as is often the case, as shown by extensions to the existing networks in Manchester and Tyne and Wear. But clearly the aspiration in the Ten Year Plan to open 25 light rail systems between 2000-10 has not been realised and light rail schemes in cities such as Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol and Portsmouth were abandoned in 2004. Research in Sheffield also identified some significant

¹⁹ These are shorter and have fewer seats than the 1970s High Speed Trains which they replaced

²⁰ Liverpool for example currently has no Cross Country services

weaknesses in the local planning regime which didn't capitalise on the light rail investment (Haywood, 1999).

Even in provincial city centres where investment has flowed into stations on intercity routes to London, secondary stations and their services have, typically, not received similar treatment. For example, despite partial redevelopment²¹ and an increasingly favourable location vis-a-vis the retail core²², Manchester Victoria which once rivalled Piccadilly is now rather depressing aesthetically and, apart from the Metrolink light rail service, has a poor quality rail service utilising diesel multiple units (DMUs) and rail buses (Batty and Haywood, 2002). The Merseyside PTE, however, has invested significantly in its local electric network, for which it uniquely has direct responsibility for managing the franchise, and this has included new stations and station rebuilding, including the Liverpool South Parkway bus-rail interchange at Garston opened in 2006. But the fact that parts of metropolitan city regions may actually lie outside PTE operational boundaries, means that local networks may not in fact link core cities to their natural hinterlands. Merseyside and Greater Manchester are good examples with neither city having its local electric services linked to Preston, Wigan, Widnes or Warrington which are all roughly equidistant from the two core cities. The overall result is that journeys between the core cities and their satellites tend to take longer than those between London and its satellites as the routes typically lack investment (Lucci and Hildreth, 2008): Electrification of the Leeds-Bradford/Skipton route completed in 1995 is an exception and it is notable that a local project on this scale hasn't been repeated post-privatisation. However, the RDA for Yorkshire and Humberside, Yorkshire Forward, has subsequently part-funded (£8m) extra trains on other local services into Leeds to facilitate access to its job market, an interesting development (Clinnick, 2008).

Whereas the city centre renaissance has been associated with city centre station developments of various kinds, it is very difficult to identify any high density suburban nodes in areas outside the south east region which have been focused around stations, as opposed to major roads. In the Dearne Valley area in South Yorkshire, for example, there was a local rail service prior to any regeneration activity. Although supported by South Yorkshire PTE, there has been limited investment and no electrification and, as around many northern cities, services are largely provided by rail buses. With the collapse of the local coal mining industry there has been massive de-industrialisation and, subsequently, widespread land

²¹ This includes an airspace development completed in 1995 which comprises a 21,000 seat arena.

²² This follows considerable rebuilding of parts of the central retail area, which lies closer to Victoria than Piccadilly, following the IRA bomb outrage in 1996.

reclamation and regeneration activity, although this has been associated with the Enterprise Zone approach with limited evidence of town planning or urban design. The emphasis has been on linking employment sites to the motorway network by new roads and laying out sites in a car-friendly manner: the archetypal ‘edge city’ of the 1980s (Sudjic, 1992), built in the late 1990s. The result is that access to new jobs even by bus is extremely difficult, if not impossible, and the presence of railway stations has had no bearing at all on the location and design of developments (Batty et al, 2002). In a situation where a new station has been provided as part of a new edge of town commercial development, as at Horwich Parkway on the Manchester-Preston route, the associated development is car-oriented in its design with the station obviously added as something on an afterthought after intervention by GMPTE (Batty and Haywood, 2002).

Nevertheless, owing to continuing population dispersal and growing road traffic volumes, demand for rail services has grown significantly in many areas and various capacity problems (often arising from earlier cost cutting rationalisations) and gaps in the electrified network have become increasingly apparent. Good examples of the latter would be the routes between Manchester and Liverpool, the Manchester-Preston-Blackpool corridor, and Manchester-Leeds-York. English local authorities have been encouraged by national government to develop transport and land-use policies to promote greater environmental sustainability through modal shift and various junction improvements, electrification schemes, new stations and route re-openings have been mooted in local planning documents, but few have received funding and the immediate prospects are poor

However, since the creation of devolved bodies in Scotland and Wales, a significant difference has opened up between rail investment there and in England with several re-openings already completed. However even there experience with integrating land development with rail has been mixed. For example there has been development in central Glasgow with construction of the Buchanan Galleries retail centre and a wider renaissance in the city centre too. But major out-of-town shopping centres have been built at Paisley and Pollock which are not rail accessible.

By comparison re-openings and the development of inter-regional and local networks have largely come to a halt in provincial England. There are well known problems in the networks around provincial cities and successful implementation of the Northern Way depends upon development of the rail mode, if development is to be environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. However, it is not just that large scale projects such as cross-city tunnels

are not planned, there is currently no commitment by Government to modest infrastructure works even where these involve strategically important projects such as increasing capacity around central Manchester or on important cross-country routes linking provincial core cities and their city regions.

Conclusions

Despite being completed more than ten years ago, railway privatisation continues to be an issue and there is no consensus that it has been a success. This is not the place to explore the various views, but it has been shown that its negative impacts still seem to dominate the industry in all too many ways. Even the Conservative Party Shadow Transport spokesman Chris Grayling said, in 2006:

We think, with hindsight, that the complete separation of track and train into separate businesses at the time of privatisation was not right for our railways.

Privatisation and its aftermath created a significant hiatus in the development of the positive relationships between the railway and planning sectors that had developed towards the end of the BR era. It took several years for the industry to begin to consider its external relationships and, just when that was beginning to happen, came the Hatfield crash, the collapse of Railtrack and the industry experiencing what has been called a 'collective nervous breakdown'. The underlying issue is not privatisation itself, but the form it took. The main problems are the separation of track ownership from train operation and the overall level of churn and complexity arising from the number of companies involved in what is really only a medium sized industry. The important point for this paper is that privatisation has created such a complex structure that the relationship between the railway and planning sectors has become too complicated. The separation of infrastructure from train operation has created a problem in the rail industry as to where the locus of interest lies with regard to land development and its impacts on railway utilisation. Is this a matter for the track authority (currently Network Rail) as monopoly owner of the fixed infrastructure, or for the train operating companies who actually manage most of the stations, face the customers and have the prime interest in promoting growth? The problem is that integration with land development can involve works to fixed infrastructure *and* the enhancement of railway services on that infrastructure so, given the current institutional structure, no single organisation can speak for the railway as a whole. There are doubts too as to whether the industry is actually incentivised to go for growth on a scale which would achieve measurable modal shift: critics have seen the Government's wish to drive up fares as a continuation of the

Treasury's role in BR days of choking off peak demand to minimise expenditure. The short term of most passenger franchises is a disincentive for TOCs to get involved anyway and the overall complexity makes getting things done time consuming and costly. The scope for developing close relationships with land development processes is clearly not there in this model of private ownership.

Matters have been further complicated as the post-privatisation period has seen a good deal of institutional change with regard to land-use planning too which has also impacted on general local transport planning. More unitary authorities have been created, counties have had their administrative areas reduced in size and county level structure planning is being abandoned. Whereas Regional Spatial Plans and Regional Transport Plans are now statutory documents, the attempt to create statutory regional bodies in England to produce them failed, creating problems over implementation. By comparison, Welsh and Scottish devolution seems to have been more successful in facilitating integration between railway development and broader development strategies, although the experience with Glasgow's out of town shopping centres shows that even in Scotland, not all is well.

Notwithstanding the problems with institutional structures, the underlying ideologies in transport planning and town planning have been strongly focused on integration between land-use and railway planning. This has been reinforced by the reinvigoration of urban design as a tool to craft the detailed integration of land development with station access and development. As a result the policy process has moved beyond the priorities of the 1970s and 1980s, the emphasis on trackbed protection and re-opening closed stations and routes, towards the active promotion of development forms which support use of the rail mode. This can now be seen as the norm to expect in any statutory planning document although, there are exceptions as has been shown. The problem in many cases has been in co-ordinating these land side developments with a timely commitment to a commensurate improvement in railway capacity and facilities.

Although there has been a plethora of rail policy documents coming out of central government, the vast majority of these have been primarily concerned with matters internal to the railway industry which can be traced back to the poorly conceived privatisation. There are now a number of major rail projects going forward serving London but, as compared with, say Paris, these can be seen as just a catching up operation. Other much needed enhancements on parts of the south east's network are not funded, there is as yet no commitment to extension of the high speed network northwards, and few if any of the myriad improvements

cited in planning documents elsewhere in provincial England will be funded in the short term. Despite the huge growth in rail traffic and the many positive outcomes in terms of integration with land development, there is the feeling that much of this has come about despite Government rail policy and not because of it and, if there is a genuine desire for modal shift, much more will be required.

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Appendix One

Extract from GMPTE Land Use Planning Guide (section 3)

GMPTE is not a statutory consultee, but offers advice to District Councils on policy documents and any planning applications that appear to be significant in terms of their trip generation or impact on the existing or proposed public transport network. The type of advice given relates to the accessibility and availability of public transport; how layout and design, including the pedestrian environment can improve that accessibility; the need for developer contributions and travel plans; the mitigation of any adverse impacts on public transport services and infrastructure and the protection of routes for future public transport schemes

The advice offered is based on Government guidance and the Local Transport Plan strategy and can be summarised by the following six key principles, which are amplified in later sections of the document:

- **Accessibility of new development:** All significant new development should be accessible by public transport. This will ensure equality of opportunity for people who do not have access to a car, and will also provide a basis for transport policies to encourage people to use their cars less.
- **Type of development:** Sites with the best public transport accessibility should, wherever possible, be reserved for uses (or densities) that generate a high level of trips. This will support the LTP strategy by encouraging modal shift and will make the best use of investment in public transport infrastructure, such as stations.
- **Impact on public transport network:** New development should not have an adverse impact on existing or future public transport operations. Where the extra traffic generated by a development would cause delays or otherwise hinder the operation of existing services, mitigation measures will be required. Routes with potential for future public transport use should not be severed.
- **Developer contributions:** Developers should fund any necessary enhancements to the public transport network. PPG 13 states that developer contributions should be encouraged to secure improved accessibility to sites by public transport, walking and cycling where such measures may ‘influence travel patterns to the site’.
- **Promotion of sustainable travel:** Significant development should be accompanied by a travel plan. In line with PPG13 GMPTE recommend that travel plans should be submitted alongside applications that are likely to have significant transport implications, including those which involve significant expansion of on site parking.
- **Design and layout:** The design and layout of a development should maximise the potential for public transport use and should give non-car modes priority over the car. The aim should be to ensure that buses can, where appropriate, penetrate developments, and that there is convenient pedestrian access to stops and stations.

Figure 1: Simplified Institutional Structure of the Privatised Railway Industry: 2008

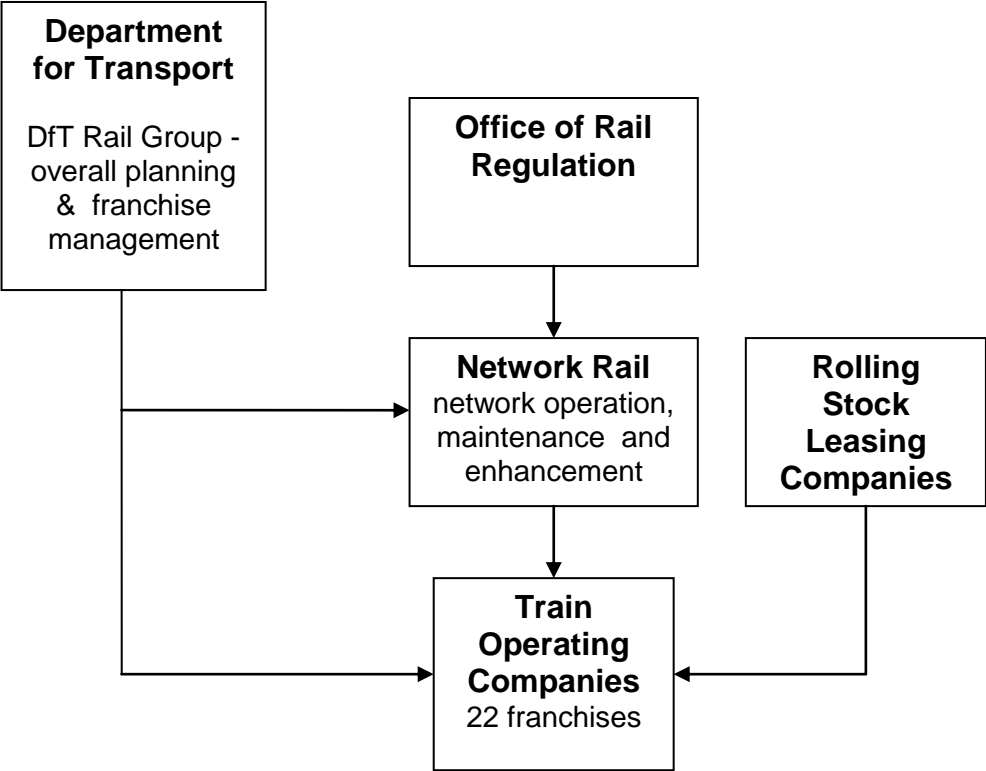


Figure 2: The Institutional Framework for Integrated Planning Around Rail (2002-05)

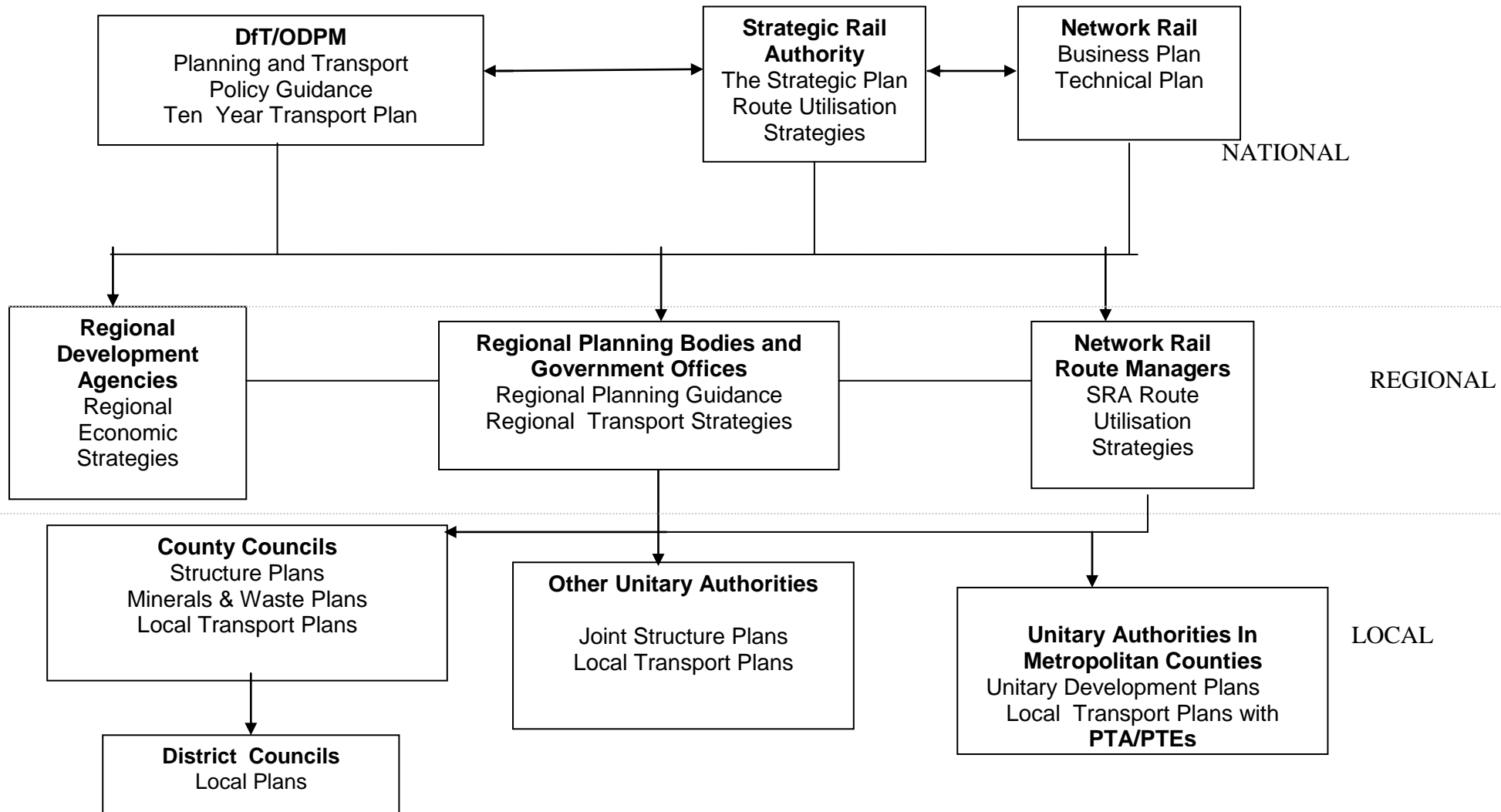
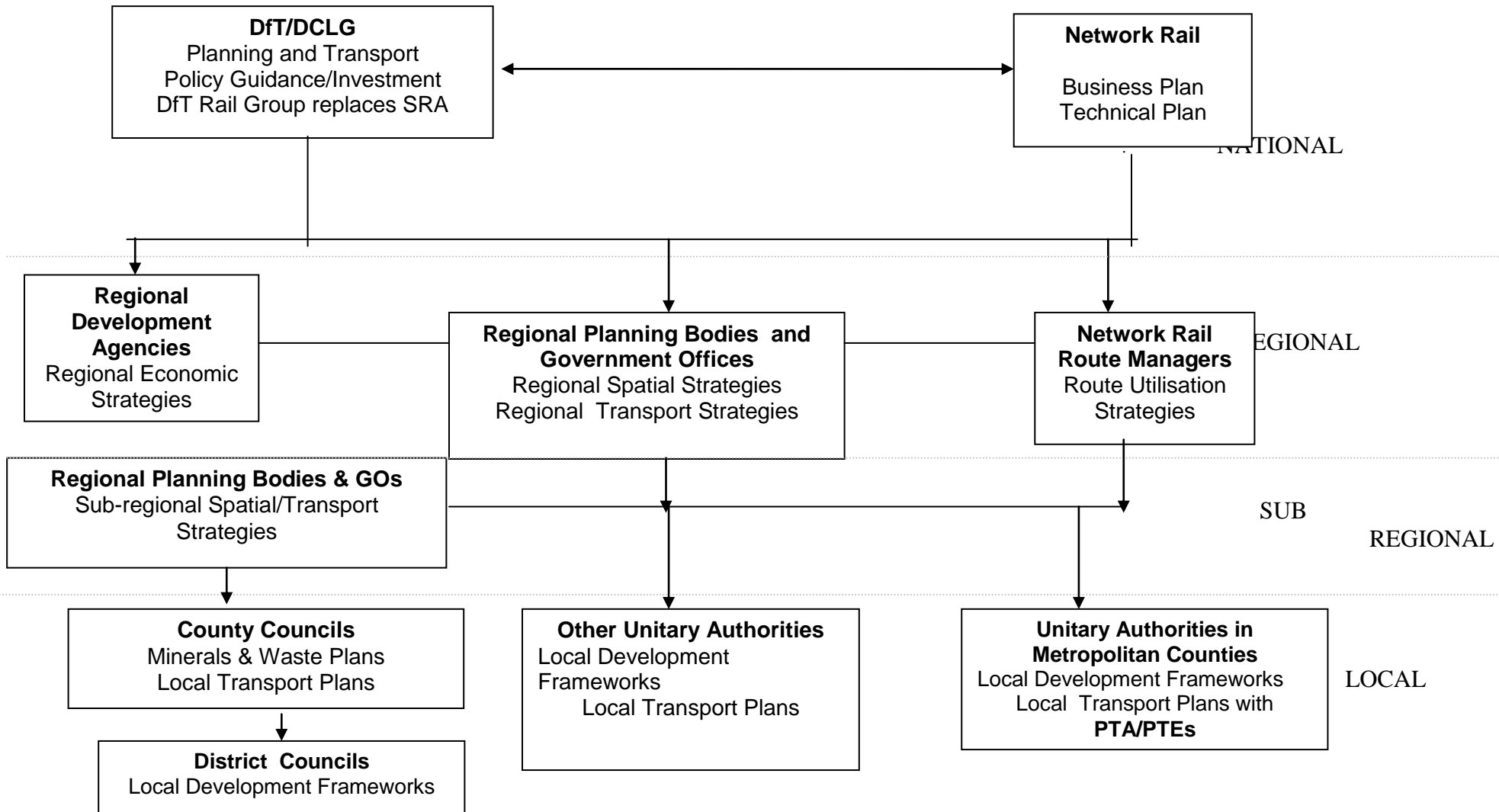


Figure 3: The Institutional Framework for Integrated Planning Around Rail (Dec 2006)



Note

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