THE CONTRIBUTION OF 'INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STUDIES' TO THE PROCESS OF URBAN TRANSPORT PLANNING

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 1995

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ABSTRACT

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of British local authorities commissioned consultants to undertake what have often been termed 'Integrated Transport Studies'. These are a variant of comprehensive transport studies which were undertaken in many British cities during the 1960s. Like their predecessors, 'Integrated Transport Studies' seek to provide policy recommendations to meet the objectives of the client(s), typically over a 20 year timeframe. However, advocates of the new style of study say they differ from their predecessors by examining transport policy in its wider urban context, concentrating more on broad strategy than detailed system analysis.

This thesis examines how 'Integrated Transport Studies' have been used in urban transport planning. It examines the process by which 'Integrated Transport Studies' are conducted and assesses the influence they have in particular policy settings. In doing so, it looks at how the studies interact with other influences on policy such as organizational and political interests and other sources of knowledge.

Birmingham forms the main case study. In 1988 Birmingham City Council became the first local authority in Britain to commission an 'Integrated Transport Study' (known as the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS)). The researcher was based in the Council for a year and used a qualitative research design which relied heavily on in-depth interviews with policy-makers. A short piece of analysis then compared the experiences of Birmingham with Leeds where the City Council had commissioned a broadly similar study in 1990.

The research concludes that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are rarely instrumental in bringing about new policies or resolving policy controversies. Participants in the policy process do, however, make use of studies in a number of ways including re-orientating the way issues are conceptualized, using them in advocacy settings to support their existing views, or providing the basis for client organizations to work together more effectively. The research also identifies a number of issues which influence how useful a study is to clients. They are grouped into three categories concerning the study design, the nature of their recommendations and the organizational context within which they are undertaken.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher is indebted to a number of people who have assisted in the conduct of this research. Firstly the supervisors, Professor Tony May and Dr Miles Tight from the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, and Mr Phil Swann of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities which, along with the Science and Engineering Research Council, were sponsors of the work. In addition, Dr Owen Hartley from the Politics Department at the University of Leeds, provided valuable assistance on some of the political aspects to the work.

The field research could not have been undertaken without the help of all those who were interviewed or supplied information in other ways. A list of interviewees is contained in Appendix B. Special mention should, however, be made to all the staff of the Transport Planning Division in Birmingham City Council who put up with my inquisitiveness for a year! In particular I wish to thank Chris Haynes, Trevor Errington and Mike Cooper.

Much appreciation also goes to the people who took the time to read over and comment on some of the draft chapters. Mr Nick Partridge, head of strategic planning and research in Birmingham City Council devoted much time to painstakingly read and comment on the Birmingham chapters whilst Adrian Pope of Leeds City Engineers department and Roger Pickup, Deputy Director General of West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive gave comments on the Leeds chapter.

Also thanks to Moose, Catherine, and all those around the dartboard at the Cardigan Arms in Leeds who provided a welcome escape from the work on numerous occasions.

Finally, I wish to thank all those people who have supported and encouraged my interest in transport; in particular my mother and father, Mr Ian Alexander my secondary school geography teacher at Balerno High School, and Dr John Whitelegg, geography lecturer at Lancaster University. I am greatly indebted to them all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Automobile Association
ACC	Association of County Councils
ACG	Annual Capital Guideline
ADC	Association of District Councils
AGT	Advanced Guided Transit
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
BCC	Birmingham City Council
BCDC	Black Country Development Corporation
BCITS	Black Country Integrated Transportation Study
BITS	Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study
BNRR	Birmingham Northern Relief Road
BR	British Rail
BRF	British Road Federation
BUMP	Birmingham United Against Motorway Plans
CAT	City Action Team
CEPOG	Chief Engineers and Planning Officers Group
COBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
DOE	Department of the Environment
DOT	Department of Transport
DTp	Department of Transport
ELR	East Leeds Radial
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HETS	Highway Engineering and Technical Services
HFA	Halcrow Fox Associates
HIL	Highway improvement lines
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ICC	International Convention Centre
ICE	Institution of Civil Engineers
IRR	Inner Ring Road
IT X p.x	Interview Transcription, volume, page number(s)
ITS	Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds
JATES	Joint Authorities Transportation and Environmental Study
JDT	Joint Data Team
JTPU	Joint Transportation Planning Unit
LATS	Leeds Advanced Transit System
LCC	Leeds City Council
LDC	Leeds Development Corporation
LPAC	London Planning Advisory Committee
LRT	Light Rail Transit
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
MCC	Metropolitan County Council
MP	Member of Parliament
MRR	Middle Ring Road
MVA	Martin Vorhees Associates
NEC	National Exhibition Centre
NRTF	National Road Traffic Forecasts
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
OFTPA	Oscar Faber TPA

PEL	Protected Expenditure Level
PSBR	Public Sector Borrowing Requirement
PSI	Professional Social Inquiry
PTA	Passenger Transport Authority
PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
PTEG	Passenger Transport Executive Group
PTRC	Planning, Transportation, Research and Computation
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SACTRA	Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Appraisal
SCA	Supplementary Credit Approval
SHN	Strategic Highway Network
SOBETMA	South Birmingham Environmental Traffic Management
SOBRAG	South Birmingham Road Action Group
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SDG	Steer Davies Gleave
TPA	Transport Planning Associates
TPD	Transport Planning Division
TPP	Transport Policies and Programme
TSG	Transport Supplementary Grant
TSU	Oxford University Transport Studies Unit
UBR	Uniform Business Rate
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UTC	Urban Traffic Control
VAL	Rapid transit technology operating in Lille, France
VIPS	West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive's public transport model
WM	West Midlands
WMCC	West Midlands County Council
WMJC	West Midlands Joint Committee
WMTS	West Midland Transport Study
WOR	Western Orbital Road
WYPTA	West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority
WYPTE	West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
PACEC	PA Cambridge Economic Consultants

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

> "... the rational comprehensive model remains unchallenged as a metaphor describing transportation policy-making ... We know (little about the) social, economic and political meaning of planning and decision-making processes ... Research is needed on the nature of planning, decision-making and implementation in their social contexts."
>
> (Wachs, 1985, pp.523,522)

The dominance of the rational model as the way by which policy-makers and the media explain decisions is not unique to transport policy - it is true of most public policy. Politicians and officials inform the public that they have carefully considered all the policy options, and concluded that the chosen path is the best means of achieving the publicly-stated objectives. Thus the public is informed by the promoters of a light rail system that:

> "two hundred thousand more cars are forecast for the West Midlands roads by the year 2000. Our roads cannot cope.
>
> A new solution is required if crippling congestion is to be prevented. Midland Metro provides such a solution. ...
>
> (In addition), where the tracks run, prosperity follows.
>
> Rundown areas are revitalized, new investment and business are attracted, the environment is improved, and, above all, the quality of life is improved for all."
>
> (Undated (circa 1989) Centro publicity brochure for the Midland Metro light rail system)

Edelman (1967) suggests the scientific culture of western society helps explain this tendency to espouse the rational model:

> "In a culture in which science and logic are hallowed as the roads to truth, it is to be expected that the state ... should emphasize the appeal to reason ... (and make) a formal appeal for support of the policy adopted on the ground that it is logically demonstrable that it will serve the widest public..."
>
> (p.135)

Allison (1971) contends that the rational model is deeply ingrained in the way most people comprehend events:

> "We speak of occurrences not as unstructured happenings but rather as ...*decision* ... *policy* ... *action*. ... These terms derive their meaning from a conceptual web, the major strands of which constitute the (rational) model."
>
> (p.28)

If an explanation, though not necessarily a defence, for the use of the rational model in describing and comprehending policy-making is readily forthcoming, quite why transportation research should appear to be so dominated by the rational paradigm escapes such easy explanation. To quote Wachs (1985) again:

> "From efforts to incorporate behaviour in disaggregate travel demand models, to studies refining transportation system performance measures, to projects that determine transportation cost functions, most transportation research is oriented to 'support rational decision-making'."
>
> (p.522)

Perhaps it is because, as Weiss (1977) suggests, most academic researchers are themselves rationalists who believe that solutions to societal problems are arrived at through intellectual analysis. Nevertheless, it seems that transport research is more tied to this paradigm than other subject areas. Altshuler (1979a), one of the few political scientists to have studied transport policy, suggests one reason for this might lie in the fact that:

> "Public works programs in transportation have traditionally been staffed by engineers, who have conceived their activities as almost purely technical. To a remarkable degree ... political scientists seem to have taken them at their word. ... Economic regulatory programs in turn have been debated mainly in terms of procedural fairness and economics ... political scientists have been content to leave them to lawyers and economists."
>
> (p.x)

The dominance of the rational research model cannot, however, be explained by suggesting that there is no other way by which transportation research can be conducted. Wachs (1985), himself an advocate of rational techniques, also recognizes

that there are alternative ways of looking at transportation policy. Basing his discussion on the writing of Graham Allison (1971), he suggests that the same policy issues typically viewed from the rational perspective can equally legitimately be explained by viewing the policy process from an organizational or personal perspective. For instance, from an organizational perspective, it would not be surprising that in order to alleviate congestion, a highways body would recommend a new road, whilst a public transport body would recommend a new public transport system. Similarly, from a personal perspective, a council's pro-cycling policy might be explained by the fact that the highways committee chair is a keen cyclist. Allison (1971), whose research sought to explain the Cuban missile crisis, suggests that by combining different perspectives, the understanding of the policy process can be enhanced.

This research loosely adopts this approach as it tries to identify the varying influences on urban transport planning. The broad question it seeks to consider is how influential apparently rational analytic techniques are in the process of policy formulation. It is hoped that this might help researchers who follow the rational model gain a greater understanding of how their analysis is used in policy-making. Ultimately this could help to enhance relationships between researchers and policy-makers, by identifying types of research which are useful and less useful to the requirements of policy. Weiss (1977), and Schön and Rein (1992) argue that much research undertaken by analysts and designed for use by policy-makers is actually inappropriate for their consumption, primarily because it seeks to oversimplify what are often extremely complex policy dilemmas. As Weiss (1977) comments:

> "Administrators, bureaucrats, and legislators ... place a greater premium on negotiating differences and reconciling divergent views than on reaching scientifically elegant solutions."
>
> (p.9)

The research focuses specifically on what have been termed integrated transport studies. In the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of local authorities commissioned consultants to conduct such studies in order to identify long-term transport strategies for their areas. The process of undertaking an integrated transport study appears to reflect the rational model, with an emphasis on stating objectives, predicting future

conditions, analysing alternative policy options, and devising a preferred strategy which meets the objectives. Put simply, this thesis is a critique of how integrated transport studies contribute to urban transport planning.

If policy was explained solely by the rational model then the recommendation of an integrated transport study might be a sufficient explanation for why particular policies were being pursued. To the casual observer of the policy process this might indeed appear a suitable explanation for why a particular local authority was pursuing a light rail policy, for instance. An underlying assumption which has driven this research is that policy-making is not quite as simple as this. Therefore in seeking to identify the contribution of integrated transport studies to policy-making, the research also looks at the political and organizational context of policy-making to identify equally important influences.

The research also assesses whether it is correct to comprehend the study process as a purely intellectual exercise based on established theory of how the transport system functions. A common criticism of rational models of decision making is that they rely on complete knowledge of the decision environment. For an issue as complex as urban transportation, this level of understanding is unlikely to be available and it is therefore likely that studies will incorporate a number of assumptions about relationships between variables. Also, it seems plausible that if policy-making is subject to political and organizational influences then it might be equally true for studies themselves.

In observing how influential studies are in the policy process, the research seeks to identify the variety of ways in which they are used. As the literature review will make clear, analysis is often used by policy-makers in ways which the analyst might not actually anticipate or intend. Finally, the research tries to understand the circumstances - in terms of the policy context, the study characteristics and the nature of the study findings - which affect study use.

The thesis is laid out in the following way. Chapter 2 discusses integrated transport studies and compares them to comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s with which they have some similarities. It goes on to compare both types of study with

theories of decision-making. Chapter 3 reviews literature on how participants in policy-making make use of analysis and ends with a set of questions to be investigated in the course of the research.

Chapter 4 explains the methodology and research design which was adopted in the research and chapter 5 introduces the main case study, Birmingham. Chapter 6 looks at the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS) and the next three chapters (7-9) consider how BITS was subsequently used in different policy issues. Chapter 10 draws conclusions from the Birmingham analysis.

Following completion of the Birmingham research a brief study was made to examine whether the observations about BITS were also shared by the experiences in Leeds where the City Council commissioned a similar integrated transport study as part of the process of drawing up the Leeds Transport Strategy in 1991. Chapter 11 presents the findings from the Leeds case and compares them with the Birmingham experience. Chapter 12 summarises the research findings and considers their implications before outlining some thoughts for further research.

CHAPTER 2 'INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STUDIES' AND PLANNING THEORY

2.1 Introduction

As chapter 1 noted, the aim of this research is to examine the contribution of 'Integrated Transport Studies' to the urban transport policy-making process. 'Integrated Transport Studies' are intended to aid local authorities in the development of long-term (typically 20 year) transport strategies. A number of local authorities commissioned such studies from consultants in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This chapter begins by identifying the rationale for, and process of, an 'Integrated Transport Study'. It then looks at comprehensive transport studies, undertaken in many local authorities in the 1960s and early 1970s, and are generally regarded as the predecessors to the present-day integrated studies. It then goes on to compare the thinking contained in the two types of study with three different theories of how public policy is made.

2.2 The comprehensive transportation studies of the 1960s

It was in the 1950s that cities in the United States began using "scientific" transport planning techniques to develop long-term transport plans. They sought to predict future patterns of travel demand for an area and then design a transport system capable of dealing with this demand, subject to various constraints, like financial resources.

In the early 1960s Colin Buchanan, leading a Government committee investigation into how British cities should act in the face of rapidly rising traffic levels, recommended the transport study as an essential tool to aid the planning process[1]. The mathematical techniques used in the studies gave transport planning an aura of scientific prowess. As Keefer (1964) noted, plans would now be based on "real facts and figures, not on intuitive judgements" (p.47). The October 1963 editorial of Traffic Engineering and Control added,

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[1] The Committee report, "Traffic in Towns" was published by HMSO in 1963.

"Only ... (with a transport study) ... can soundly based decisions be made in regard to the planning of urban areas, the forms and extent of transport to be provided and its allocation as between, for instance, such alternatives as urban motorways and public transport. ... Transportation studies ... are the prerequisite to planning and must precede and not follow policy decisions both as to the form the future transport system should take and as to how urban areas can best be developed to provide for the modern desire for mobility."

(p.347)

In 1964 the Government instructed local authorities to undertake transportation studies. The studies began with a statement of the overall objectives on which planning the transport system was to be based. For the West Midlands Transport Study (Stage 2) the objectives were:

a) freedom to use private transport within the limits set by the acceptable levels of congestion on the available highway capacity;

b) minimum restraint on the use of private transport consistent with the balanced operation of the total transport system;

c) the provision of adequate transportation capacity for the economic prosperity of the area based on the pattern of land use envisaged in existing development plans and the developing regional strategy;

d) the implementation of existing highway design standards;

e) the continuation of the policy that the cost of public transport operation should be borne mainly by its users retaining the current fare policies;

f) the maintenance of a basic public transport system in terms of route coverage.

(West Midlands Joint Transportation Study Group (1974), para.12.5)

There were four stages to the analytic process - trip generation, trip distribution, modal split, and assignment. Trip generation involved dividing the study area into a large number of relatively small zones and constructing trip matrices for travel between zones in the base year. This would require a household survey and cordon surveys to identify travel patterns. The household survey would also record details of household size, car ownership, number of people employed and income levels. Using this information it was possible to calculate trip rates of household categories

based upon car ownership and income levels. By applying predictions of future economic and population growth to the base year household categories, changes to the number of households in each category for the design year of the study, typically 20 years ahead was forecast. This produced new rates of trip generations.

Trip distribution allocated the growth in trips to the zones using modelling techniques which took account of the land-use functions of the zones and the costs of travel between zones. Some studies examined the effects of changes to land-use configurations on travel patterns, though the feedback implications of transport investment on land-use were not considered.

Taking account of likely future travel conditions, the modal split mechanism allocated forecast new journeys across modes, whilst the assignment model allocated trips to the transport network and identified points where highway capacities would be overloaded.

Policies were then tested to examine how well they overcame the identified congestion problems in the design year and an economic evaluation of alternative plans would also be performed. The output of a study would be a recommended plan of investment to be implemented in the period up to the plan's design year.

Because the studies assumed increasing car ownership, most trip growth was forecast to be by motor car. Given that the objectives of the studies rarely sought to restrain motor traffic, they invariably recommended substantial investment in the highway network. Most studies, however, recognized that it would not be financially or physically possible to cater for all forecast traffic growth and therefore recommended some investment in public transport and occasionally limited traffic restraint. For instance, the West Midlands Transport Study recommended some rail investment, and parking restraint in critical areas such as central Birmingham.

The exact mixture of investment in transport facilities was, however, seen to be a technical question for the studies themselves to determine, as is illustrated in the following discussion between an MP and a civil servant during the House of Commons Sub-Committee investigating urban transport planning in 1972:

"Mr John Hall MP: In paragraph 12 (of the Department of Environment's submission) you refer to the statement made by the Ministry in launching the SELNEC (South East Lancashire North East Cheshire) plan, namely, that a "solution to the transport problem of our cities will call for a *sound balance* between the private car and public transport." What does that phrase mean, if it means anything?

Mr Berry (DoE): I think this is a recognition of the fact that, as I think we have said before, all analyses show that in the conurbations one cannot cope with unrestrained demand for vehicular traffic and therefore one has to seek a balance between the provision of roads in particular and all public transport."

Mr John Hall MP: What is the "*sound balance*"? -

Mr Berry (DoE): This is intended to be the object of the study process."

(Minutes of Evidence to Government and Home Office Sub-Committee on Urban Transport Planning, Volume 1, paras.131-132. Italics added by researcher)

A number of implicit beliefs underlay these studies. Altshuler (1974), discussing studies conducted in the United States during the 1950/60s, identified five major beliefs held by transport planners which are equally applicable to the UK studies:

"1. Transportation planners assumed that there was a general public consensus that the mission of transportation planning was to provide the most cost-effective means of expanding the highway network. Because of this consensus, little attention needed to be paid to those who opposed the transportation policies and programs designed to achieve this objective.

2. This consensus on the purpose of transportation planning was expected to last a long time because it was based on long-term economic and cultural trends (eg the steady growth of motor vehicle travel) that were becoming permanent elements of society. The vision of a future heavily dependent upon the automobile for mobility was firmly engrained into the professional attitudes of most planners and engineers.

3. Transportation planners were confident that they could plan for the public without ever dealing directly with elected officials or affected citizens. The assumed public consensus discussed above gave planners a clear mandate for their activities, which when combined with their expertise, left little doubt that the planners were the critical actors in providing the "best" solutions to the problems facing the community.

4. The collective concern of the transportation profession was to perfect techniques that would demonstrate the "one best way" to solve given problems ...

> 5. Transportation planning was comprehensive in its regional scope and was structured to produce comprehensive network plans to accommodate long-term forecasts of travel demand ..."

The comprehensive studies, and the plans they produced, have been attacked on a number of counts. The studies placed great emphasis on mathematical modelling techniques. Mathematical models are simplifications of the real world and contain assumptions about relationships between variables. These assumptions may be broadly accurate reflections of how society functions, but there again they may not.

Thomson (1972) commented that many studies made the questionable assumption that the demand for travel was independent of the provision of transport facilities. Some studies predicted a decline in public transport use but also assumed that the public transport system would not contract. Thomson (1972) described this assumption as "worse than useless" (para.11). He pointed out that the London Transport Study predicted an increase in public transport patronage, even though ridership had been in decline for 20 years and the consultants were forecasting a rise of car ownership by one million and recommending 300 miles of new urban motorway. Thomson commented that,

> "This kind of prediction, in my view, borders on the irresponsible and would be generally rejected as such if the reasoning behind it were expressed in common language rather than mathematics."
>
> (para.11)

The studies made many assumptions about the policies which would be followed in the planning period up to the design year. Thomson argued that the forecast demand for travel in the design year, calculated largely on the basis of predicted levels of income and car ownership, presupposed policies on transport expenditure, land-use policy, population and employment distribution, and motor taxation. Thus, he pointed out, forecast demand was only the demand on the basis of one set of policy assumptions. He suggested these policies were the very thing the studies should be seeking to advise on instead of taking them as given.

Thomson also commented that the studies were preoccupied with the traffic functional aspects of urban transport and, in particular, traffic congestion. He argued

that six other aspects of the urban transport problem - parking difficulties, accidents, overcrowding of peak hour public transport, inadequate public transport services in off-peak hours, pedestrian difficulties, and environmental degradation - were largely ignored.

Plowden (1972) commented that by comparing the future performance of the transport system with the present situation, the studies implicitly assumed that the present was acceptable and therefore ignored problems inherent in the existing situation.

The objectives of the studies were often too general to allow the plan to be developed on an objective basis. Taking the example of the West Midlands Transport Study (Stage 2) objectives (see page 12-13), for analysts to come up with identical plans they would all have to agree on what "acceptable levels of congestion" were, on what "the balanced operation of the total transport system" was, on what "the provision of adequate transportation capacity for the economic prosperity of the area" was, and on what "a basic public transport system in terms of route coverage" looked like; yet these would appear to be highly subjective judgements. Furthermore, analysts would have to agree on the trade-offs between these objectives.

By the early 1970s the forecasts on which the plans were based were becoming discredited. The 1960s were characterized by confidence in the future and thus predictions of rapid economic growth (and car ownership) formed the basis of most studies. In 1973, however, the Middle East War sparked the oil crisis and a world-wide recession ensued. Economic growth slowed and so did traffic growth.

Nevertheless, the slower than expected rate of traffic growth was as much due to incorrect relationships being used in the transport models as with the economic recession. A survey of 31 transport studies carried out by Evans and Mackinder in 1980 calculated, that on average highway trips were overestimated by 41 percent and public transport trips by 32 percent. These could not be completely explained by errors in car ownership and population growth forecasts, therefore implying some errors in the model building. What is more, they discovered that for none of the forecasts in the studies would a "no change" scenario in relation to the base year have

been markedly less accurate than the forecasts generated. Indeed, for some indicators - including important ones such as income and highway trips - a "no change" scenario would have been more accurate.

The author of the West Midlands Structure Plan review of 1978, alludes to the fact that the West Midlands Transport Study was based on an inadequate knowledge base:

> "(The West Midlands Transportation Study) forecast that if any of their 1981 recommendations were not implemented the result would be absolute traffic chaos and confusion. Only a small proportion of the recommendations have been carried out, we are now approaching 1981 and there is no indication of absolute chaos and traffic congestion arising. ... There is some doubt as to whether such a situation ever does arise. Something else happens."
>
> (West Midlands County Council Structure Plan Report of Survey 1978, para 5.2 - 5.3)

Attempts to implement plans led to further difficulties. Transport policy objectives changed, with the emphasis in the early 1970s being increasingly placed on measures to promote public transport both for energy conservation and social objectives. Revenue support for public transport, a measure ruled out or ignored in the transport studies, became a key policy instrument of many local authorities.

Opposition to major elements of the plans, particularly the major road proposals, but also traffic restraint policies (such as those proposed in Birmingham), emerged amongst pressure groups and politicians. Without the power to impose their plans on the population, professional planners began to witness their visions being compromised. Speaking in 1973, Sir Colin Buchanan, the man who had originally proposed the undertaking of the U.S.-type studies, noted with disdain the opposition of the Greater London Council Labour Group to some of the highway proposals contained in the Greater London Development Plan:

> "I and my colleagues, and many other planners, have striven earnestly over the past 10 years to devise balanced policies for many urban communities. Now we are seeing the results of years of patient and devoted labour thrown out of the window in what seems little more than short-term political advantage. ... What is the hope for long-term

> planning or for staff morale in this kind of atmosphere?" (Buchanan, 1973)

2.3 An overview of 'Integrated Transport Studies'[2]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of local authorities commissioned consultants to study the transport needs of their areas over the next two decades. May (1991) describes these studies as 'Integrated Transport Studies'. Though there is no formal definition for what an 'Integrated Transport Study' is, the term is used in this thesis to cover those contemporary studies which broadly share a set of common characteristics.

'Integrated Transport Studies' have a number of similarities with the comprehensive transport studies described above. For instance the process is largely similar, with studies seeking to predict future travel patterns and identify problems that the future holds for achieving a set of stated objectives. They examine alternative transport strategies to overcome these problems, which leads to the identification of a preferred transport strategy.

Like most of the comprehensive transport studies, Coombe (1991) describes 'Integrated Transport Studies' as "top-down" studies and, in doing so, distinguishes them from "bottom-up" studies which involve a more detailed assessment of the transport system and examine specific detailed problems, such as junction delays, rely on larger amounts of data and more detailed modelling techniques.

So whilst both 'Integrated Transport Studies' and comprehensive studies examine the transport system from the same perspective, they also differ from eachother in a number of important ways. 'Integrated Transport Studies' tend to begin with a vision statement which outlines the client's aims for the area. This provides the context for defining the transport objectives which are typically more broadly-based than those contained in the comprehensive studies of the 1960s.

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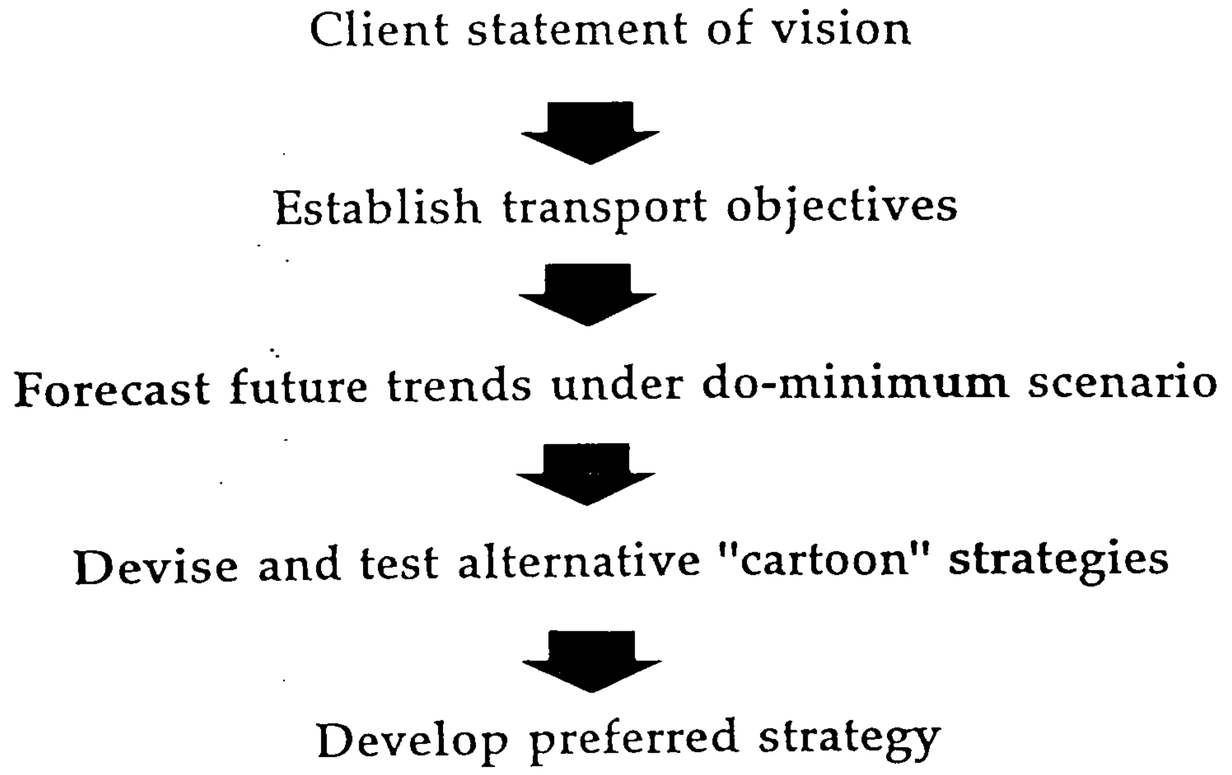
[2] Much of the discussion of integrated transport studies which follows is based upon two papers - Bates (1991) and May (1991).

'Integrated Transport Studies' also differ from their predecessors in the level of detail they investigate the transport system. Usually the consultant will use what data is available from the clients rather than conduct new travel surveys. The model used in a study is a 'strategic transport model' (Bates, 1991), suited to broad-brush analysis of policy themes rather than a detailed assessment of particular schemes. These factors and shortcuts adopted in the modelling mean the time taken to undertake an 'Integrated Transport Study' is typically a matter of months rather than years for a comprehensive transport study.

The intention here is to offer a broad outline of the thinking behind, and process of, an integrated study (see Figure 2.1). For convenience reference will generally be made to the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS) (MVA 1989a) since a detailed examination of its contribution to policy-making forms the centrepiece of the field research.

Figure 2.1 Outline of an 'Integrated Transport Study'



The first 'Integrated Transport Study' was undertaken in 1987 by The MVA Consultancy and Colin Buchanan and Partners for the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC); its aim was to help the Secretary of State for the Environment to produce strategic advice for the London boroughs in producing their unitary development plans. In 1988 Birmingham City Council, in conjunction with the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive and the City Action Team (comprising representatives of the regional offices of Central Government departments),

commissioned The MVA Consultancy, in association with PACEC economic consultants and urban design firm the Tibbalds Colbourne Partnership to undertake what became known as the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS). This was completed in 1989 and, in the following years, many other local authorities to commission and their own studies[3].

Typically, the study begins with the client's statement of vision which seeks to encapsulate their broad objectives. In Birmingham the vision statement was:

"a) Birmingham and the nation: ... the City Council seeks to consolidate the City's status viz a viz competing regional centres, and to secure for the city a national/international standing equivalent to that of other major European provincial capitals (The alternative would be for the City Council to leave the city's status to other agencies and to market forces).

b) Birmingham in its region: ... The City Council will foster the City's distinctive central roles in relation to spreading regional patterns of economic, physical, and social interaction. (The alternative would be to accept the general pressures towards dispersal and homogeneity of function).

c) Birmingham's citizens: ... The City Council will seek to provide a social and cultural environment which allows all ... groups to play a satisfying and distinctive part in the City's life (The alternative is to accept the pressure towards social and economic polarisation, maintaining distinctiveness, but blighting the life chances of individuals)."

(A transport strategy for Birmingham, internal BCC document, 6/7/88)

Within the context of the vision statement, a set of transport-related objectives are identified. In Birmingham, these were five fold:

1. Efficiency in the use of resources;
2. Accessibility within and outside the city;
3. Environment including townscape and safety;
4. Economic regeneration;
5. Practicability including financial feasibility.

(MVA, 1989b)

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[3] For instance Leeds, Edinburgh, Avon, Coventry, the Black Country districts, and the Merseyside districts.

Where appropriate, each of these objectives is considered against a range of impact groups defined by characteristics such as spatial location, socio-economic group, mobility, journey purpose, mode, and operators.

In practice therefore, 'Integrated Transport Studies' adopt a more comprehensive analysis of transport's role in the functioning of an urban area than the principally traffic-functional comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s. This seems to be the result of a changing societal context within which the modern-day studies are undertaken, with less of a preoccupation simply with movement and the needs of the motor car and more concern for issues such as air pollution and safety.

The first analytic step of the study is to construct a base matrix. This seeks to represent the travel patterns within the study area in a base year. Due to the short timescale for conducting a study (typically 6 - 8 months) and the wide range of policies and interactions to be tested, a relatively simple modelling exercise is necessary. The study area is therefore split into a small number of zones based upon the broad land-use and travel patterns of the area. In the case of the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS), 12 zones were used; this contrasts with almost 150 zones used to describe Birmingham in the West Midlands Transport Study[4]. To permit the construction of travel matrices, the consultants usually seek to ensure that the zone boundaries are compatible with existing survey data. There is not usually the time or resources to justify gathering new data solely for the purposes of the study.

Short cuts in the modelling can also accelerate the study process. Many 'Integrated Transport Studies', including BITS (but not Leeds), omit a mathematical description of the road network. Trips are assigned to zones and road types using a fixed routeing method. The effect of congestion on the road network is calculated using an area speed/flow relationship which relates a zonal principal road flow/capacity index to an inventory of road speeds.

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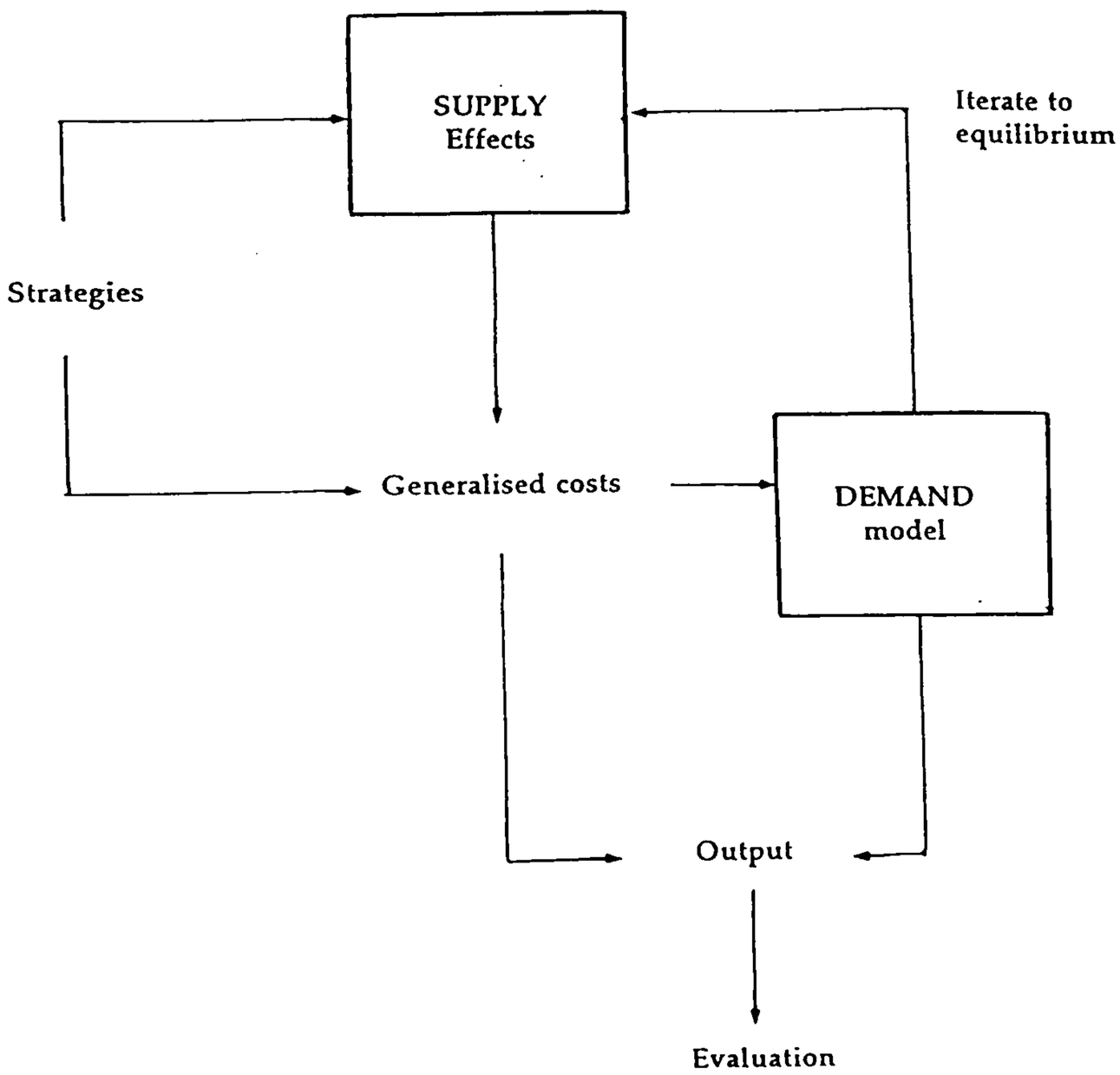
4 Nevertheless, whilst termed an integrated transport study for the purpose of this research, the Leeds Transport Study undertaken in 1991 contained 78 zones, significantly more than BITS.

An external forecasting model is applied to the base matrices to produce new travel matrices for the design year of the study. The model can apply a range of predicted changes to land use activities, car ownership rates, population and employment. The changes in travel demand produced at this stage are independent of any changes to transport supply.

It is the transport model's task to modify the demand for travel between modes. The transport model has two elements - a demand side and a supply side (Figure 2.2). Through increases to forecast travel demand, the generalized cost (time and monetary cost) of travel increases because of congestion, overcrowding, and searching for parking. On the basis of travel elasticities, these increases in generalized cost lead to a reduction in demand for travel by that mode. Within the model an iterative process brings the supply and demand into line with one another. The behavioral relationships used in the transport model tend to be drawn from experience elsewhere rather than from close observation of behaviour in the study area itself.

Figure 2.2 The transport model. Source: Bates, 1991.



Different transport policies (for instance increases in road supply or changes in public transport fares) can be input into the model in order to test their impact on the performance of the transport system. In models which use speed-flow relationships, changes in highway capacity are input by adjusting the vehicular capacity of study zones. Changes in pricing, for instance car parking, and also in public transport can be input directly to the generalized cost matrices used for determining modal split.

Studies first of all seek to forecast travel conditions under a do-minimum level of transport investment; that is if only existing committed schemes are implemented. The do-minimum strategy is applied to the travel matrices for the design year which were derived from applying the external forecasting model to the base matrices. The analysis of the transport system performance under a do-minimum strategy enables the identification of future transport problems. Evaluation draws on a variety of sources. In Birmingham, quantitative monetary assessments were made of certain economic indicators - for instance, user time, operating and accident costs. Quantitative assessments were also made of issues relating to accessibility, and noise pollution. Qualitative judgements, based on the professional judgement of the consultants, were made for issues such as pollution and visual impact. Finally the client provided estimates of the capital cost of implementing strategies. Some studies, including BITS, calculate a benefit/cost ratio for the different strategies.

Having produced a do-minimum forecast, the next task is to draw up and test a set of alternative transport strategies covering infrastructure, management, and pricing policies. Like their predecessors, 'Integrated Transport Studies' are not entirely comprehensive in their analysis of policy options. For instance fuel taxation policies tend to be ignored. Furthermore, a combination of the lack of available data, the small number of zones and their large size, mean that integrated studies often do not deal with short trips and ignore modes of travel such as walking and cycling which are predominantly used for local journeys.

The tests aim to examine the performance of individual measures and help to identify potential synergy between measures. They are not therefore necessarily designed to test real potentially successful strategies, but do provide a starting point for subsequently doing so. Variations to each strategy can be made to reflect different

levels of investment. In order to realistically reflect changes in transport supply, the testing of alternative strategies containing infrastructure projects involves inputting possible real schemes to the model.

Evaluation of strategy tests involves examining their effectiveness in relieving problems identified in the do-minimum scenario. Sensitivity testing can be used to examine the performance of the transport system in the light of different pricing structures (for fares and road pricing), journey times, or frequency by particular modes. The next step is to identify those elements of the alternative test strategies which can go towards making up a preferred strategy. The preferred strategy is likely to be a combination of measures from the tests which collectively enhance the performance of the transport system. Robustness testing can be used in an attempt to ensure that the preferred strategy remains appropriate in the light of alternative forecasts of land use, economic growth (and hence car ownership), and population.

The preferred strategy developed by the consultants will, as with the test strategies, comprise actual schemes; May (1991) however, stresses that this should not necessarily mean that those schemes must be implemented:

> "Inevitably at this stage the specification becomes more detailed, but it is still possible to refer to levels of investment, or areas of the city to be treated in a particular way, without having to justify specific schemes in detail. Indeed, such a policy statement should provide the context within which more detailed appraisal of specific schemes, or determination of priorities for the expenditure of specific budgets, can be conducted."
>
> (p.236)

The actual nature of the recommendations offered by the consultant are somewhat dependent upon the requirements of the client. Birmingham sought a set of principles which would guide investment decisions over the next 20 years, and more detailed guidance over issues being faced in the short term consistent with the long-term strategy. On the whole, 'Integrated Transport Studies' tend to place more emphasis on providing a framework to guide decision-making rather than a blueprint of specific schemes to be pursued.

2.4 Policy-making theories

To understand further why the studies of the 1960s were generally seen to be unsuccessful as a basis for policy formulation, and to emphasise further the differences between them and 'Integrated Transport Studies', it is helpful to turn to theories of policy-making. Three theories are presented, each of which to varying degrees is intended as a description of actual policy-making and also a normative theory of how policy ought to be made. It will become evident that each places a different level of emphasis on the importance of analysis, such as a transport study, in policy-making.

a) The rational model

The comprehensive transport studies carried out in the 1960s were based upon the analytically rational model of decision-making (Van Houten, 1989). According to this model, decision-making consists of a number of structured steps. The analyst[5] makes a ranked statement of his[6] objectives and identifies the barriers to their achievement. He then identifies all of the ways in which the objectives might be achieved and assesses the consequences of each. From this he is then in a position to select the course of action which provides the highest pay-off in relation to the objectives set. To the rational decision-maker there is a correct solution to a given problem and that solution is determined by reason. Decision-making is therefore a purely cognitive process; the only input which would not necessarily be based on reason would be the initial setting of objectives.

The problems with this model as a basis for, or an explanation of, societal planning are numerous; many have already been touched upon in the discussion of comprehensive transport studies. Fundamentally, the model requires a great deal of knowledge relating to issues such as the problem, its causes, and consequences of alternative courses of action. Whilst this might be feasible in relation to simple problems, it is rarely realistic in more complex circumstances, like attempting to

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[5] Here the term analyst is used in much the same way as Lindblom (1959) uses the term administrator - to any person involved in making, and advising on, policy.

[6] For convenience, throughout the following discussion the masculine pronoun is used.

understand the dynamics of a transport system. A further criticism concerns the requirement that all alternative actions and all combinations of alternatives are investigated - a costly and potentially infinite task.

The problem of inadequate knowledge has led to variations on the rationality model. Mannheim (1940) distinguished between "functional" and "substantial" rationality[7]. Functional rationality was his term for the analytical rationality model presented above. For social planning purposes, Mannheim took a critical view of this model. He said that it required inter-connected problems to be divided into small manageable parts. He argued this led to a loss in comprehension of the overall problem consequently which could therefore lead to functional decisions being detrimental to society.

Whilst the *process* of Mannheim's substantial rationality model might be broadly in line with the functional model (objectives, problems, analysis, solution) the information requirements were reduced. Mannheim (1940) described substantial rationality as:

> "an act of thought which reveals intelligent insight into the interrelations of events in a given situation."
>
> (p.53)

This "intelligent insight" did away with the notion of fully understanding complex situations. Mannheim saw substantial rationality as a way of maintaining an integrated, holistic view on a complex issue. Analysis of a problem would be provided by experts who could think in an integrated manner and who were driven by social responsibility. Substantial rationality concerned itself both with the selection of objectives and identification of means to their achievement, whereas functional rationality was merely concerned with the rationality of means to pre-set ends.

As Van Houten (1989) points out, it seems strange that planners sought to develop detailed models of complex systems (like urban transport) in the 1960s, some two

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[7] Other writers have used different terms to highlight the same distinction. For instance, Etzioni (1968) distinguishes between instrumental (functional) and comprehensive (substantial) rationality.

decades after Mannheim had made these observations. Because different issue areas are all ultimately interconnected, all analysis is functional to an extent (Lindblom, 1990). The comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s were functional in the sense that they looked primarily at matters relating to transport and, more specifically, traffic. As a result, the proposals were strongly resisted by people who faced losing their homes to make way for roads.

Meanwhile, to overcome the criticism that the rational model requires an infinite investigation of alternative measures in order to identify the best means of achieving particular objectives, Simon (1957) developed the theory of 'satisficing'. Instead of examining all alternatives, he argued that people practised a less rigorous form of rationality in which they selected the first option tested whose consequences they deem to be 'good enough'.

Aside from these intellectual problems, the rationality model falls upon more practical difficulties as a method for societal planning. Whilst rational models presuppose that actions are selected on the basis of a pre-established list of ranked values, Lindblom (1959) suggested that in practice decisions were based upon a simultaneous examination of policies (means) and objectives (ends). This threatens the notion that once objectives have been set, the rest can be left to technical experts. As Altshuler (1965) comments:

> "The comprehensive approach (to planning) implies that politicians need only approve general policy statements periodically, leaving the rest to be deduced by experts. Politicians not unnaturally react to this idea with hostility. They recognize that if they are to be the actual deciders of policy, they must exercise their influence continuously, at levels of generality sufficiently low so that their decisions may affect the matters of interest to their constituents. ... [T]hey must never let administrators persuade them to set the cut-off point too high. ... Pressure groups have a similar interest to politicians. ... The ideal of comprehensive planning ... casts doubt on the very value of public discussion, at least after the stage of determining general goals."
>
> (pp.316-317)

Furthermore, society is dynamic - values (peoples' conception of what *ought to be*) change over time, economic conditions change, and technological change introduces new solutions to problems. Therefore what might appear rational at one point in time

will not necessarily appear so in the future. Long term plans are clearly prone to becoming outdated as a consequence of such changes.

Critics of the rational models became increasingly vociferous as the evidence of the failures of analysis to solve society's problems became increasingly evident in the 1970s. As Lindblom (1979) argued:

> "Perhaps ... (we should attempt) a comprehensively planned actual rebuilding of a city, ... or one big integrated implemented solution to environmental decay ... For many people these are happy visions, but except in rare circumstances they remain impossibilities. ... An operative, integrated solution to a problem is a vast collection of specific commitments all of which are implemented. The odds of agreement among political elites or citizens on these vast collections are extremely slim.
>
> Moreover, among those who draw back from agreement will be many informed and thoughtful leaders and citizens who know that many of the specific elements embraced in the integrated program are bound to be mistaken. They believe that of any large sample of attempts at social problem-solving, a large number will always turn out to have missed the mark or to have worsened the situation."
>
> (p.521)

Similarly, Wildavsky (1979) suggested that because of its inherent weaknesses, planning (which tends to be equated with rational decision-making), had to adapt, so much so that it was actually little different from any other form of policy-making:

> "The more planning fails to secure intended results, the more it tries to become relevant by accommodating itself to social forces. Consequently, by shortening time horizons (annual plans), by reducing the need for prediction (adaptive planning), and by limiting coercion (indicative plans which merely point the way), planning becomes indistinguishable from whatever means of decision it was meant to supplant."
>
> (p.120)

b) Incrementalism and politics

The incrementalist theory was first presented by Charles Lindblom in 1959, in a paper entitled "The Science of Muddling Through". The paper set out to fundamentally attack rational models of decision-making, though it does have some similarities with the less exacting 'satisficing' model put forward by Simon (1957).

The incrementalism theory has two distinct, but related, elements (Lindblom, 1979). The first is the notion of incremental politics. Lindblom took as his starting point the lack of agreement over societal goals. He argued that government actions continually had to try to balance different interests. From the incrementalist's perspective, the test of a good policy is not therefore that it solves a particular problem but instead that it commands widespread agreement from different interests and offers marginal improvements to current conditions. The need to achieve agreement in the short-term tends to mean that little attention is given to the long-term; typically policy decisions signal small - incremental - changes from existing policy.

The second, related but distinct element of his theory was the notion of incremental analysis. Lindblom suggested that analysts consider alternative policy measures which are only marginally different from those currently being practised. This serves as an acknowledgement that the consequences of actions are rarely known in advance. Small changes in policy also provide the opportunity for error correction. Analysis is further simplified by the common tendency to fragment problems (as in Mannheim's functional rationality model). Government agencies are established to look at the problem from their own particular specialized perspective. Lindblom argued that this was no bad thing, since ideally, aspects of a problem neglected by one agency would be picked up by another agency. In this way, Lindblom suggests that each interest or value had its own watchdog, ensuring that no interests on a particular issue are overlooked. This structure also helps to reinforce the incremental nature of policy, since no one set of interests is allowed to dominate another (in a process termed "partisan mutual adjustment"). Through such accommodating behaviour, Lindblom says that policy can develop an appearance of being co-ordinated:

> "(participants') mutual adjustments of many kinds ... will to some degree co-ordinate them as policy-makers. In many circumstances their mutual adjustments will achieve a co-ordination superior to an attempt at central co-ordination. ... Such co-ordination as, with difficulty, our governments achieve will often owe more to partisan mutual adjustment than to attempts at central co-ordination."
>
> (Lindblom, 1979 p.522)

Though it is widely accepted that incrementalism has a good deal of validity as a descriptive theory, critics have questioned it on normative grounds. Since it requires

widespread agreement in order to make any policy change, Dror (1964) suggests the incremental account is a prescription for the status quo, and a strategy of "no effort".

Etzioni (1968), acknowledging that incrementalism is common in Western societies, remarks that the need for consensus building leads to action coming later than necessary, and the need to make cautious moves means that action is often less than is necessary; "overdue change" becomes the perennial problem of democratic society. Janis and Mann (1977) suggest that the lack of long-term vision which exists in the incremental model can result in a "zig zag to unanticipated disaster" (p.34). Lindblom (1979, 1990), acknowledged the strategy had not been effective in alleviating many of the problems in U.S. society but suggested this had much to do with veto powers of business which blocked even incremental change and also to society's indoctrination by politicians and schooling which increased citizens' resistance to policy change. Etzioni (1968) also criticised the notion of partisan mutual adjustment on the basis that in reality not all groups had equal access to policy-making. Lindblom (1979) accepted the problem, but argued centralised policy-making would not necessarily correct this imbalance and was often a way of maintaining inequalities.

c) Mixed Scanning

Etzioni (1968) suggested there was a middle way between rational decision-making and incrementalism:

> "a strategy that is less exacting than the rationalistic one but not as constricting in its perspective as the incrementalist approach, not as utopian as rationalism but not as conservative as the incrementalist, not so unrealistic a model that it cannot be followed but not one that legitimates myopic, self-oriented, non-innovative decision-making. The strategy is mixed scanning ..."
>
> (pp.282-283)

His basic argument is that policy decisions can be divided into two (or more) categories - those which are fundamental and large-scale, and those which are incremental and small-scale. He suggested that whilst fundamental decisions are rarer, they are more important and help to set the direction for future incremental decisions.

Etzioni argued that societal decision-makers (eg government) should take contextuating decisions - that is fundamental decisions on policy direction - in a substantially rational manner. Through a review of all the relevant alternatives, the decision-maker selects the one expected to serve his core values and objectives best. An alternative course of action is rejected if it meets any one of three factors - the means are not available, the basic values of the decision-maker are violated, or it conflicts with the values and interests of those whose support is essential.

Within the overall societal direction offered by fundamental decisions, day-to-day incremental decisions are made. The taking of these incremental (or "bit") decisions involves some degree of input from citizens. In other words, whilst government sets the policy direction, society as a whole has some say over the detailed application. As Camhis (1979) notes, unlike the rational planning model, the mixed scanning theory sees planning as a continual process which incorporates implementation.

Reviews of the fundamental policy direction would continue to be undertaken intermittently in order to identify potential problems with the strategy, identify better alternative courses of action, or to examine whether what appears to be a problem at the level of incremental detail were actually a step in the right direction when viewed from the broader perspective. Incremental decisions would continue to be made unless it became clear that the direction of policy is becoming wayward; then a fundamental review of direction would be made once again through a contextuating decision. Alternatively, the incremental bit decisions might prepare the ground for the taking of a fundamental decision.

The mixed scanning strategy has not avoided criticism itself. Camhis (1979) points out that Etzioni does not explain how the consequences of fundamental alternatives are known. On this point, mixed scanning may suffer from the same intellectual inadequacies as the rational model. Secondly, Camhis questions how an alternative is selected on the basis of an agreed set of values when Etzioni himself acknowledges that ranking values is an impossible task in rational societal planning. Thirdly, Camhis questions whether societal decision-makers have the right to keep a part of society in suffering in the belief that, in the end, it might be for the benefit of society

as a whole; again, he points out, decision-makers often do not know what the consequences of action will ultimately be.

2.5 Summary

Comprehensive transport studies undertaken in the 1960s were widely criticised for their failure to accurately predict future travel patterns accurately, even with vast amounts of data at their disposal. The plans they produced quickly became outdated in the light of changes in the planning environment which led to their recommendations of heavy road infrastructure investment being seen to be both undesirable and unaffordable.

'Integrated Transport Studies' are essentially a specific variant of a comprehensive transport study which seek to avoid a number of criticisms levelled at their predecessors. For instance, they seek to examine broad changes in the transport system, placing less emphasis on detail. This is reflected in their data requirements and the timescale it takes to undertake a study. Whilst, therefore less comprehensive in the amount of detail which they view the transport system, they do nevertheless resemble the 1960s' studies in terms of their process, and 'top-down' approach to viewing the transport system.

'Integrated Transport Studies' tend to start from a recognition that transport serves a much wider range of functions than was the case when the comprehensive studies, with their emphasis primarily on catering for vehicle movements, were undertaken. In effect therefore, 'Integrated Transport Studies' have swapped one set of difficulties - those of understanding in detail how the transport system operates - for another equally difficult task - understanding how transport affects a whole series of other issue areas like the economy and the environment.

'Integrated Transport Studies' tend to place less emphasis on detailed recommendations and more on broad strategy. Whilst this may go some way to enhancing the robustness of study recommendations in a rapidly changing policy environment, long term guidance may still be vulnerable to unforeseen changes.

The three decision-making models presented in this chapter go some way to offering a descriptive outline to the process of policy-making and suggest different levels of input for the role of analysis, such as 'Integrated Transport Studies', in policy formulation. At one extreme, the analytically rational model sees policy-making as a purely intellectual exercise, other than for the setting of objectives. At the other extreme, the incrementalist model emphasises the political nature of policy-making with policy being derived from an interaction of different interests. In between, Etzioni's model (which has some similarities with Mannheim's substantial rationality model) sees a role for analysis in terms of establishing broad policy direction whilst leaving detailed decisions to political methods.

The comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s seem to have many similarities with the analytically rational model, particularly in their attention to detail. In contrast, 'Integrated Transport Studies' have a greater resemblance to Etzioni's and Mannheim's models, with more emphasis being placed on a broad overview of the transport system and a more substantial overview of transport's role in the urban system. In practice, however, many analysts argue that policy-making actually resembles the incremental model. The next chapter advances the discussion about how 'Integrated Transport Studies' might be used by policy-makers in urban transport.

CHAPTER 3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF ANALYSIS TO THE POLICY PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 described 'Integrated Transport Studies' and the comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s before considering three different theories of policy-making. This chapter reviews literature about how analysis is used in policy-making. First of all it considers who the main participants in urban transport policy are. Then it considers the various ways in which they might make use of analysis before turning to consider the factors which might affect use. It ends with a statement of questions which will guide the research.

3.2 The urban transport policy-making context

Traditionally, explanation of urban policy-making of whatever nature, has focused on three principal groups of actors - local government politicians, the local government bureaucracy, and pressure groups (see for instance Hall (1980), Cherry (1988), Grant (1976)). Each of these three groups is described below.

a) The politicians

Local authority councillors are elected to represent a particular electoral ward by the local population. The councillors hold formal responsibility for council policies. All councillors sit on the full council, but only a proportion sit on each of the various committees and sub-committees which are responsible for particular service areas (such as social services, education, highways, planning). It is in the committees that many of the policies of the council are made, the full council serving merely to ratify many committee decisions. For issues which cross committee boundaries, joint committees may be established. Committee chairs tend to be appointed from the ranks of the majority party and shadow chairs are appointed by the opposition parties. Policy-making by the majority party may on occasion involve all of that party's councillors or all the councillors of a relevant committee, but often only a small group of councillors - perhaps the committee chairs and the council leader - will be actively involved in policy-making.

Young (1979) has coined the term "assumptive world" to describe the outlook which councillors and officers in local government bring to their work. A councillor's assumptive world is formed by a combination of his or her personal *interests* (for instance, their career ambitions, status, and power) and his or her *values* (relating to things that they believe in and want to see achieved from a political or personal ideological[1] standpoint, but which are not related to personal interests).

b) The bureaucracy

Local authorities are broken down into specialist departments based on particular service areas (eg. highways, planning, social services, education). Departments are led by chief officers who advise and liaise with elected members, particularly the chairs of the relevant committees. Each council has a chief executive, one of whose tasks is to co-ordinate the work of the different departments.

The conventional view is that departments carry out the policies of the elected members and service the committees. Allison (1971), however, contends that bureaucracies are not disinterested bodies and that they also play an important part in determining the nature of policy. He says departments tend to develop sets of standardised operating procedures to deal with issues which they face on a day-to-day basis. These procedures are influenced by the skills and the perspectives with which members of the organization receive through their professional training. As a result, politicians receive a diagnosis of the issue at hand - in terms of problem definition, relevant information, and possible alternative courses of action - which is structured by the organizational culture.

Allison also argues that politicians find it difficult to guide the activities of organizations because the standard operating procedures which organizations develop and the tendency for organizations to have their own parochial interests - typically concerning their health (measured by the level of their budget or staff size) - require much effort to overcome.

Despite this, changing the activities of organizations is not impossible. Typical methods by which behaviour might be changed include increasing or decreasing

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[1] Taken here to refer to a combination of values, assumptions, and beliefs.

departmental budgets. Alternatively when faced by a major failure of the activities of an organization, politicians may be able to bring about significant change:

> "Confronted with an undeniable failure of procedures and repertoires, authorities outside the organization demand change, existing personnel are less resistant to change, and key members of the organization are replaced by individuals committed to change."
>
> (Allison (1971), p.85)

Like politicians, officers have a particular assumptive world in terms of interests and values. In contrast to the politicians, however, the values which officers bring to the job will be influenced not so much by political ideology, but by professional ideology acquired from their membership of the professional bodies concerned with their discipline[2] [3] (Leach et al, 1991a).

c) Pressure Groups

Grant (1989) suggests pressure groups can be defined as individuals or groups outside the formal government machinery who seek to influence policy, although government departments may also act in similar ways, for instance when the budget is being decided. Grant distinguishes between insider and outsider pressure groups. Insider groups work closely with government, who view them as legitimate interests. Outsider groups are not regularly consulted by government. They may be groups who would like to have closer relationships to government; alternatively they may prefer to operate as outsiders, for instance, if their views are not those held by mainstream political parties.

These three sets of actors - politicians, the bureaucracy and pressure groups - are sometimes referred to as the "iron triangle" (Sabatier, 1988). Whilst they go some way to identifying the participants in policy-making, a number of influences are ignored. Sabatier (1988) suggests analysis of policy-making needs to consider all relevant tiers of government and:

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2 For instance, bodies such as the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) or the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

3 Stewart (1983) suggests that the thinking of committee members can over time become conditioned by the professional ideology of the servicing department.

> "journalists, researchers, and policy analysts who play important roles in the generation, dissemination, and evaluation of policy ideas."
>
> (p.131)

The way in which different participants interact in policy-making has been the subject of much debate amongst political scientists. Kingdon (1984) suggests that policy-making consists of three distinct streams. These are a problem stream which is made up of information on a particular issue, a policy stream/community which contains researchers and pressure groups who put forward options for dealing with the problems, and a political stream which consists of elected representatives who take decisions. He argues that policy decisions are made when the policy stream comes up with feasible solutions to problems and the politicians find it politically advantageous to approve then. Whilst Sabatier (1991) welcomes Kingdon's broadening of the participants in policy-making beyond the iron triangle, he suggests that the political and policy streams are in practice more closely intertwined than Kingdon suggests.

A more conventional approach has centred on policy networks or sub-systems which contain all those groups interested in a particular issue, such as urban transportation. Jordan (1991) suggests that within a specific policy network there will be a dominant policy community which contains members of the network who share broadly the same policy goals and have a common understanding with one another. Other groups in the network with different value systems will try to weaken the influence of the dominant community.

Sabatier (1988) adopts a broadly similar line in his theory of policy subsystems. These contain all those actors involved in a particular issue area (for instance, urban transportation). Within the subsystem exist competing advocacy coalitions, groups of actors from different organisations who share similar goals and a set of core beliefs. Conflict between different coalitions is mediated by "policy brokers", actors whose main concern is to ensure that the subsystem remains stable.

Sabatier (1988) and others (Dunleavy (1980) and Leach et al (1991a)) argue there is also a need to consider how the context within which policy is made influences policy itself. Sabatier (1988) calls these influences exogenous variables, Leach et al (1991a)

term them contextual characteristics, and Dunleavy (1980) terms them structural influences. Leach et al (1991b) remark that such characteristics,

> "represent a series of (relatively) objective features of the situation within which the responses to the given situation are developed. They represent the "given" factors within which all the actors - up to a point - have to work."[4]
>
> (p.5)

Sabatier suggests that the exogenous influences on a policy subsystem can be broken down into those which are fairly stable and those which are dynamic. The relatively stable factors influencing transport policy would include what Leach et al (1991a) term spatial/territorial characteristics - factors such as the population, the size and spatial patterns of the particular urban area. For instance, a high density urban centre would be more conducive to supporting a mass public transport system than a centre of low density. Other relatively stable factors include the fundamental social values held by society, and local government boundaries. The dynamic exogenous factors which might influence transport policy include changes in the governing political party, changes in economic conditions, and the impact of policy decisions from neighbouring subsystems (for instance air pollution or economic development) decisions might affect the urban transportation subsystem. Sabatier suggests it is these external changes, which are likely to lead to the replacement of a dominant coalition with a subsystem.

3.3 Research and analysis as the basis for policy-making[5]

Wachs (1985), himself a proponent of rational analytic techniques in transportation research, notes that:

> "From efforts to incorporate behavioral disaggregate travel demand models, to studies refining transportation system performance measures, to projects that determine transportation cost functions, most

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4 Leach et al (1991a) remark that with all context-related influences, the "objective reality" of the situation may contrast sharply with the perception of the situation from the policy-maker's perspective.

5 In the discussion which follows, the terms research and analysis are used interchangeably.

> transportation research is orientated to 'support rational decision-making.'"
>
> (pp.522-523).

Perhaps the traditional notion of how analysis is used in policy-making is that it is instrumental in formulating policy. This is often termed the "Problem-solving" or "Engineering Model" of research use and it is this that pervades rational models of decision-making:

PROBLEM + RESEARCH = SOLUTION

As the literature already reviewed has noted, however, rational decision-making is rarely an accurate picture of how policy is made; it follows therefore that the instrumental model of research use is also likely to be rare. Carol Weiss, author of a number of studies on research utilization argues that this is indeed the case:

> "such uses no doubt occur, but when they do, they are likely to involve research done in-house by an agency's own staff. They are probably also likely to involve day-to-day operations, rather than larger issues of program and policy."
>
> (Weiss (1977) p.16)

Etzioni (1968) argues that the problem-solving is appropriate for many 'low-level' decisions but that political influences will always remain important for 'high-level' decisions:

> "expanded knowledge allows political elites to delegate some areas of decision-making to experts with the result that value and power decisions have "moved up" in the decision-making chain. ... The higher levels are and, we expect, will remain greatly determined by normative and political factors."
>
> (p.266)

Concentrating on areas of policy conflicts, Schön and Rein (1992) distinguish between policy disagreements and policy controversies. In the former, disputes can be resolved by turning to evidence drawn from analysis. As an example of where this would be the case they suggest determining how many youths are taking part in a drug rehabilitation program. Providing opposing sides can agree on the definition of a

youth and other criteria for measurement, the evidence collected should allow them to reach agreement. Policy controversies, however, are more difficult to resolve on the basis of available evidence. Disputes on issues like poverty, abortion, the Third World, environmental destruction tend, they say, to be "intractable, enduring, and seldom finally resolved" (p.4). In these instances,

> "Evidence that one party regards as devastating to a second party's argument, the second party many dismiss as irrelevant or innocuous. Or the second may easily patch his or her argument so as to incorporate the new argument within it ..."
>
> (p.30)

Alternative ways by which policy could be made without relying on analysis are listed by Weiss (1986). They include - appliance of customary procedures to new problems, improvisation, adjustment to decisions made by others, repetition of tried and tested solutions, negotiation, indirection, and searching to find problems with which to apply pre-selected solutions.

Lindblom's incrementalist theory clearly places less emphasis on the role of analysis in policy-making than the rational model. In later writing, Lindblom and Cohen (1979) argue that Professional Social Inquiry (PSI)[6] is only one possible pathway to problem-solving in public policy. In political interaction, bargaining and consensus building replaces much of the need for analysis. In such instances, analysis is not made redundant - actors in the policy process still use analysis to base their stances - but its importance for problem-solving is reduced. Interaction and research are therefore not only competitive but also complementary to one another.

They suggest that the type of analysis necessary to aid interactive problem-solving is not necessarily PSI; ordinary knowledge is an equally important source of information. Defined, ordinary knowledge is knowledge which people acquire not through PSI, but through "common sense, casual empiricism, or thoughtful

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6 They include "statistical works, models of social processes, historical analysis, commentary, evaluation, and consultant work," in their definition of PSI. The engineering research model would fit this classification.

speculation or analysis" (p.12)[7]. Ordinary knowledge might be highly fallible, but it is thought to be true by the particular individual in question. Though everyone possesses ordinary knowledge, some people possess more than others.

Indeed, as Lindblom (1990) argues, PSI is actually dependent for much of its own insights on ordinary knowledge (or "lay inquiry"). He comments:

> "PSI has not empirically discovered, as has natural science, an invisible world possible to know only through professional inquiry. ... Their professional propositions are largely no more than refinements - however valuable - of nonprofessional propositions about familiar phenomena"
>
> (p.177)

Altshuler (1979) suggests the appeal amongst many US cities in the 1960s for rail-based rapid transit systems lay more on the basis of ordinary knowledge of policy makers than on rational analysis -

> "whether one's concern was the economic vitality of cities, protecting the environment, stopping highways, energy conservation, assisting the elderly and handicapped and poor, or simply getting other people off the road so as to be able to drive faster, transit was a policy that could be embraced. *This is not to say transit was an effective way of serving all these objectives, simply that it was widely believed to be so.*"
>
> (p.36) (Italics added by researcher).

Lindblom and Cohen (1979) suggest social learning, like interaction and reliance upon ordinary knowledge, is another mechanism whereby problems can be solved without the need for a thorough analysis. For problems requiring social learning, citizens must learn to adopt different behaviours before a problem can be tackled. This, they say, can often only be achieved through personal experiences rather than through research about implications of unchanged behaviour.

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7 Making a similar point, Schön (1987) suggests that this sort of knowledge might be derived from sources which include PSI.

3.4 Non-instrumental roles for research and analysis

The suggestion that analysis is only one input into the process of policy-making, should be supplemented by the assertion that it plays multiple roles within the policy process.

According to Lindblom and Cohen (1979), in interactive situations, research can help participants to act more effectively; that is, findings are used by partisans to back up their arguments. This recognizes that no matter how objective or disinterested the analyst might be, those who utilize research findings are often involved in a competitive environment where research can provide useful ammunition in debate. Lindblom and Cohen comment:

> "It is partisans who appear to display an eagerness for the ammunition that new PSI findings provide. ... PSI is an effective counter in policy negotiations. Relevant concepts, ideas, questions and findings from PSI will be interjected into the debate because at least one partisan will find it to his advantage to do so."
>
> (pp63-64)

In such circumstances, the research might be used to score points against alternative viewpoints, convince those who sit on the fence, and encourage existing supporters (Weiss, 1977). Lindblom and Cohen suggest that often it is the side which has the "better numbers" that wins the argument. Friedrich's (1970) study discovered that partisans commissioned researchers who were known to be sympathetic to their view to produce supportive results. Wachs (1985) suggests that in consultancy settings, the assumptions which form the basis of a piece of technical analysis might be selected to produce results which are favourable to the client's perspective.

Research might also play a post-decisional role as a legitimating or rationalizing function; here it is used as window dressing to justify decisions made on other grounds, or only slightly influenced by research (Lindblom and Cohen, 1979). Whilst such uses might appear to be mis-uses, Lindblom and Cohen suggest this is often not the case,

"It (the research) may test the decision, that is, ask whether grounds can be found through PSI for setting aside a decision reached through ordinary knowledge and analysis. It may also commend the decision to others without whose consent it cannot be made effective. It also satisfies strong desires of decision makers to see their decisions in a perspective of rational thought, and this is in many cases a useful form of self-testing."

(p.81)

Steiner and Gove (1960), quoted in Edelman (1967), provide an illustration of the legitimatory function. They examined public policy formulation in the U.S. State of Illinois and discovered that legislators often made up their minds on how they would vote on a particular debate through reference to the views of pressure groups, and through logrolling[8] arrangements. Nevertheless, in the instance referred to in Edelman's book, legislators got a Professor of Law to appear at a committee debating a Tax Bill in order to give their decision an air of rationality. As a legislator later commented,

> "Our arrangements (for votes) were concluded before the hearing ever started, but it was absolutely essential that members who had agreed to vote against the Bill be furnished with a "cover" - with an impressive witness whose competence was unquestioned so that they could offer an explanation of their votes. The professor furnished that cover."
>
> (p.77)

It seems research findings could play a similar function; indeed Cable (1974) suggests that the Greater Glasgow Transportation Study might have done just this:

> "(providing) powerful underpinning for the less rigorous recommendations of planners and engineers. For the mystified councillor, the Greater Glasgow Transportation Study gave weighty evidence of "scientific" proof which helped to banish intuitive doubts."
>
> (p.606)

Quite how widespread the rationalizing function of research is in public policy-making it is hard to say, for discovering the reasons for policy decisions requires the

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8 Logrolling involves the exchange of votes between different partisan groups in such a way that each group benefits. Carley (1981) describes it as "I'll vote for you on this issue if you'll vote for me on that." (p.64).

searching of areas often closed to public scrutiny. A German study by Hannes Friedrich (1970) discovered that two-thirds of Government officials questioned cited the political functions of research work, including using it to justify decisions already made, or which would have been made without the research being undertaken.

Other uses of research appear to lie between the extremes of the engineering model and the rationalizing function. An analysis by Patton et al (1977) of how U.S. health program evaluation studies were used, concluded:

> "none of the impacts ... was of the type where new findings from an evaluation led directly and immediately to the making of major , concrete program decisions. The more typical impact was one where the evaluation findings provided additional pieces of information in the difficult puzzle of program action, thereby permitting some reduction in the uncertainty with which any federal decision-maker inevitably operates."
>
> (p.145)

Weiss and Bucavalas (1977) describe another use of research as the 'enlightenment function'; here:

> "research may sensitize decision makers to new issues and turn what were nonproblems into policy problems. ... In turn, it may convert existing social problems into nonproblems. ... It may drastically revise the way that society thinks about issues (eg. acceptable rates of unemployment ...)"
>
> (pp.15-16)

They suggest that through enlightenment, research can challenge the views held by decision-makers, so long as the findings are not regarded as completely unrealistic. The enlightenment function of analysis is of particular interest to Sabatier[9]. He argues that within a policy subsystem there are different advocacy coalitions - groups of individuals and organizations who share similar beliefs and therefore seek broadly

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9 Sabatier (1988) suggests that the enlightenment function of research often occurs over the long term. He suggests that a period of a decade or more is required in order to be able to observe this impact. Clearly this is not possible in this research, given that the first integrated transport study was completed in 1989. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that there might be some evidence to suggest whether or not the studies serve enlightenment functions.

similar objectives. He suggests that over time, analysis can help to change some aspects of an advocacy coalition's outlook.

Sabatier differentiates between three levels of a person's belief system - fundamental deep core aspects (eg, the role of humans in society), near core (related to fundamental aspects, but concerning issues like the role of government, environment versus economic development), and secondary aspects (the nature of policy to achieve the fundamental and near core beliefs). Sabatier suggests that generally when people from different belief systems take part in debate, a "dialogue of the deaf" (p.155) occurs whereby each group produces a barrage of arguments which are ignored by opponents. This is particularly the case, he argues, when the arguments are concerned with the fundamental beliefs of particular groups. Research is more likely to re-orientate a person's, or a coalition's, views when it questions secondary aspects of a belief system. This might be where it questions whether policy A is actually the best way to achieve a particular objective, or where it raises questions about the seriousness of a problem.

Other uses for research might include getting different agencies responsible for a particular issue to work co-operatively. Keefer (1964) argues that improving co-operation between planning agencies was enough to deem a comprehensive transportation study a success, even if none of the explicit policy recommendations were ever implemented. Weiss (1977) suggests that research might be deliberately commissioned so as to avoid taking any immediate action. The desire of an organization to demonstrate its own progressiveness might be another use; Brewer (1973) cites research involving computer simulations which, he suggests, contain a certain degree of "sexiness".

3.5 Factors affecting the utilization of analysis

What then are the characteristics of research which is used by policy-makers, either in direct problem-solving ways or the alternative uses outlined above? Patton et al's (1977) analysis of the use of health programme evaluation studies concluded that the commitment of individuals to the research and its findings was the most crucial influence on research utilization. They stated:

"The specifics vary from study to study but the pattern is markedly clear. Where the personal factor emerges, where some person takes direct personal responsibility for getting the information to the right people, evaluations have an impact. Where the personal factor is absent, there is a marked absence of impact. Utilization is not simply determined by some configuration of abstract factors; it is determined in large part by real, live, caring human beings."

(p.188)

Weiss and Bucuvalas (1977) suggest that research findings need to be intelligible and the recommendations need to be related to issues which the decision-maker can do something about; additionally they suggest the research ought to be seen to be technically competent, though others have argued that this is not always necessary[10]. Research, they say, is more likely to be used if it supports a position held by the potential user. In this context, Brewer (1983) suggests:

> "ideological and technical information must be reconciled. ... (technical information will therefore often) be believed if convenient, rationalized and adapted if necessary, and ignored if not."
>
> (p.182,185)

Lindblom and Cohen (1979) suggest that where PSI contradicts ordinary knowledge it is less likely to be listened to. If a number of studies come to question the received wisdom, however, PSI might cumulatively help to reform ordinary knowledge. Much would seem to depend on whether views are held dogmatically or tentatively; as Edelman (1977) notes:

> "Dogmatic believers reject information incompatible with their cherished opinions, but people who are sensitive to the tentative nature of their opinions take pains to seek out conflicting evidence."
>
> (p.20)

Lindblom and Cohen argue that usually PSI is seen to be *dependently authoritative,* ie. it is only likely to be believed if it confirms ordinary knowledge. Patton et al (1977) cite material from one of their interviews with a health programme evaluator which makes this point explicitly:

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10 Majone and Quade (1980) comment that on occasions, technically inadequate studies have been quite effective in influencing thinking.

> "If there's a surprising finding (in analysis) it should be rare. I mean, everybody's missed this insight except this great evaluator?! Nonsense!" (p.154)

Ascher (1978) suggests that research based on computer simulation can often attract attention through the progressive image it portrays. Citing the debate stimulated by the Meadows (1972) report *The Limits of Growth* which predicted environmental disaster by the end of the 20th Century, Ascher suggests[11] -

> "The clearest source of the impact of *The Limits of Growth* was the use of computer simulation modelling to generate the forecasts. Even if the argument was not original (it was, Ascher says, a standard environmental position), it was for the first time "demonstrated" by what appeared to be explicit, objective, scientific methods."
>
> (p.35. Words in brackets added by researcher)

3.6 Summary of literature review and implications for the contribution of 'Integrated Transport Studies' to policy-making

'Integrated Transport Studies' would appear to recognize many of the limitations of the functionally rational planning model described in chapter 2, instead favouring the substantial model which has similarities with mixed scanning. The studies start from a recognition that the transport system seeks to serve a wider range of objectives than simply those which are traffic functional in nature. They place emphasis on broad brush analysis and policy guidance rather than the detail of the 1960s comprehensive studies. This interpretation is based on May's (1991) assertion that the use of particular schemes in drawing up of the preferred strategy does not mean that these schemes must be implemented. Of course, this is one individual's interpretation and it is not to say that this is how all actors involved in decision-making will regard the preferred strategy.

It has also been suggested that analysis is rarely instrumental when it comes to policy formulation; instead a study is likely to be only one of many inputs into policy-making. Studies may also be used in other ways such as by partisan to further their

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11 Ascher says the ability of a forecast to attract attention of policy-makers does not mean that the forecast will actually influence the action taken by policy-makers. There is, he says, little evidence of the Meadows report actually influencing policy.

side of an argument, or enlightening policy-makers to think about policy. Levels and types of use would seem to depend on a variety of factors concerned with the nature of the study advice, the attention it commands and the particular policy context.

The issues raised by the literature can be summarised in a set of questions which will form the basis for conducting the research:

1. **How accurately do 'Integrated Transport Studies' predict future changes to the transport system and are studies based on a large amount of highly verified theory about how the system functions?**

2. **Is an 'Integrated Transport Study' simply an intellectual exercise, or are organizational and political influences also important in the conduct of a study?**

3. **Is the advice offered by an 'Integrated Transport Study' instrumental in policy formulation and problem-solving?**

4. **Do 'Integrated Transport Studies' provide a framework capable of guiding the direction of specific future decisions, as in Etzioni's mixed scanning strategy?**

5. **Is there evidence that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are used in ways other than formulating policy, problem-solving or providing a framework for policy-making, such as improving relations between organizations, enlightenment, partisan functions, and enhancing legitimacy for policies?**

6. **What characteristics of an 'Integrated Transport Study' and the context within which it is undertaken, seem to determine how useful a study is to clients?**

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The issues examined in this research represent a narrower set of interests than existed at the outset of the PhD. A discussion of how the precise focus was determined is given in appendix A. This chapter explains the research design and research methodology adopted.

4.2 Selection of the case

To conduct the research it would be necessary to consider how 'Integrated Transport Studies' were actually used by policy-makers. This would therefore require contact with policy-makers, primarily at the local government level. Given the likely intricacies of policy-making there seemed to be justification for seeking to base the research actually in the field - that is, spend some time in local government settings.

The process of selecting which local authorities to study was guided by a number of principles; firstly it was agreed that the emphasis should be primarily, but not necessarily solely, on metropolitan districts since it was they, through the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, who were sponsoring the research. Secondly there was the need for at least one of the authorities studied to have undertaken an Integrated Transport Study. Subsequent comparison with the planning process in an authority which had not conducted a study was not ruled out, but it only seemed sensible to take this decision in the light of an investigation of how a study was used.

Birmingham City Council appeared to offer a number of strengths as a basis for a case study. Firstly, it had been the first authority to commission an Integrated Transport Study. In 1988 the MVA Consultancy, in partnership with PA Cambridge Economic Consultants and Tibbalds Colbourne, undertook the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS) on behalf of the City Council, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, and the City Action Team (comprising representatives of the regional offices of the Departments of Transport and Environment). Four years had elapsed since its completion and this would therefore allow some insight into

how the study was used by policy-makers. One of the supervisors for the research, Professor May, was also a director of the MVA Consultancy and, in this capacity, had been involved in BITS; he therefore had a number of contacts with City Council officers which, it was hoped, would help in trying to gain approval for the research. Another attraction of studying Birmingham was that since the completion of BITS, the other six districts of the West Midlands conurbation[1] had commissioned 'Integrated Transport Studies' and all had subsequently worked together to produce a joint submission for transport funding to central government, termed the "package approach". An obvious question meriting investigation was how influential the integrated studies had been in bringing the package approach to fruition.

4.3 The Birmingham/West Midlands case: research design and methodology

With the help of the AMA, arrangements were made to make a presentation of the research proposal to the West Midlands Principal Engineers Group's monthly meeting in November 1992. Senior engineering officers from each of the seven West Midland districts sit on this group.

The presentation identified the main issues of interest to the researcher and stressed the desire to concentrate the initial stages of the research largely on Birmingham, but to widen the scope of analysis to the seven districts for the investigation of how the package approach developed. Flexibility in the research approach was stressed - it was explained that this was partly because it was difficult to formulate specific questions without first of all experiencing the policy environment, but it was also to allow interesting lines of inquiry which emerged during the course of the study to be investigated[2]. It was made clear that the aim of the research was to understand the nature of the policy process and not to bring a set of personal values to the

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[1] Solihull, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley, and Walsall.

[2] This latter point highlights the notion of discovering "grounded theory", an approach to research advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Whilst acknowledging the need for research to test pre-formulated hypotheses (deductive research), they argue that research should also seek to generate hypotheses (inductive research). This can be done by continuously searching for patterns in the data being collected, and guiding further search on the basis of the emerging theory rather than on the basis of a prior plan.

investigation that would lead to the possibility of criticisms of any persons or organizations. The proposal was accepted by the officers present and arrangements were subsequently made to move to Birmingham at the beginning of January 1993.

Birmingham City Council provided the researcher with study facilities in the Transport Planning Division (TPD), situated in the Engineers Department. The TPD had approximately 25 staff, five of whom were supplied by the city's Planning Department and the rest by the Engineers Department. Its responsibilities include the council's transport policy, transport modelling, and outline design for transport schemes.

Access was given to both the TPD library and the engineering library which together housed an almost complete set of policy documents of relevance to the transport policies of Birmingham in post-war years. The engineering library also held minutes and reports of the council committees, newspaper cuttings of transport and planning matters from local and certain national daily newspapers.

A number of tasks occupied the first three months of the research. Considerable time was spent seeking to identify the shifts in transport policy which had occurred in Birmingham in the years leading up to the commissioning of BITS in 1988. The aim of this was to place BITS in context since it was perceived that if the research began straight away with an analysis of BITS itself, the significance of its recommendations might be exaggerated. There was no easy way of deciding how far back to go in the investigation of past policies, since any cut-off date was in some way artificial. The decision was therefore taken to review all available post-war policy documents, but with more emphasis being given to those written in years immediately preceding the BITS report.

Meetings of the council's Joint Economic Development, Planning, Technical Services, and Public Health and Environmental Services Strategy Sub-Committee ("Joint Strategy-Sub") were attended, as it was the main council committee concerned with transport policy issues and its monthly meetings were open to the public. The Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) and its planning sub-committee meetings were

also attended on a regular basis. Committee meetings were helpful in identifying the key personalities whom it might be useful to contact in the course of the research.

Visits were also made to a number of City Council ward sub-committee meetings; these were organized on a monthly basis for groups of neighbouring electoral wards and gave the local electorate the opportunity to question local ward councillors about council policies. At the meetings attended by the researcher, City Council officers were involved in making presentations on the recent council transport policies developed for the south of Birmingham. Discussions with officers in the TPD suggested it might be interesting to examine how influential BITS had been in this policy issue and the ward meetings proved extremely useful in providing further background to the proposals.

Other tasks in the initial months, included gaining insights to the policy process in Birmingham through informal conversations with officers in the TPD, and getting to know the city and its transport system somewhat better through sampling the public transport routes and walking some of the main roads.

From these inquiries, three policy issues were identified for which it seemed there might be merits in examining the impact of BITS in particular detail. By focusing on specific policy issues, it was believed that the impact of BITS could be carefully assessed. Light Rail was a central element of the BITS recommendations, but from the literature search it became apparent that there was a history to the plans dating back to well before BITS. There therefore seemed to be some merit in investigating what influence BITS had on the policy's development. Secondly, there was evidently a history to the transport policies in the south of the city. Finally, for reasons previously aired, the package approach seemed to offer research opportunities.

By April the historical search of policy documents was largely complete and attention turned to studying BITS itself. The TPD had a full set of background papers prepared by MVA which explained how the study was undertaken. These were examined in conjunction with the final report. In addition, the council committee papers showed the BITS recommendations adopted by councillors. Finally, newspaper cuttings were

reviewed for the period just before, during, and after the study was undertaken to examine how it was reported to the public and any public reaction to the findings.

These sources of information allowed a picture of the study process to be constructed, but gave little insight into the views of the study participants. Two client groups had overseen BITS - a working party which met quite regularly and comprised officers from the chief executive's, engineers, and planning departments of the City Council, the PTE, and the regional offices of the Departments of Transport and Environment, and a steering committee which met less regularly and comprised chief officers from the engineering and planning departments of the council, the Chief Executive and the Director-General of the PTE. It seemed important to meet these participants, particularly those from the working party, to gain an insight into how the study was conducted and discover their thoughts about the study. Letters were therefore sent to each working party participant explaining the aims of the research and enquiring about arranging a face-to-face interview. Positive replies were received from all the participants and prior to each interview, a two page list of issues for discussion was sent out.

Interviews typically lasted about one hour and with the respondent's permission, was recorded on audio-tape. The list of issues sent to the respondents beforehand acted to guide the discussion but, unlike a more structured interview schedule, did not restrict it. This allowed some lines of inquiry to emerge which might otherwise have been overlooked. An attempt was also made to reduce the formality of the interview by making it more like a conversation than a question and answer session[3]. At all times the aim was to try and understand the issues from the respondent's perspective. Upon completing each interview, the tape was transcribed into a field notebook. Following completion of the transcription each tape was then stored and no interview has been recorded over.

By now it had become evident that the time allocated to undertake the Birmingham/ West Midlands work had been seriously underestimated. In addition to the BITS

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3 Such an approach, advocated by Taylor and Bogdan (1984), also makes the interviewer play a more active role - not only do they have to obtain answers but they also have to learn what questions to ask and how to ask them.

interviews, there was still the need to consider what general policy changes had occurred in the aftermath of BITS, and undertake the three detailed case studies, each of which was expected to take one and a half months to complete. Permission was gained from the City Council and from supervisors to extend the period of stay in the TPD to Christmas.

The BITS interviews were undertaken during July and over the next five months the research work became more intensive. It was decided that the best way to make progress on the three case issues and the general context of BITS would be to cover all issues simultaneously, initially through a systematic analysis of newspaper cuttings and committee reports over the relevant time periods. This would avoid the danger of there being times when no progress could be made due to awaiting new sources of information. Once this process had been more or less completed for the pre-BITS period, attention turned to doing the same task for the post-BITS era.

The newspaper cuttings and committee reports tended to give greater detail to the nature of policy-making than the official policy documents did. Committee reports were useful in highlighting the details of schemes, and the policy options considered. Minutes provided some insight into what councillors thought of proposals, but they were often short summaries of what had been said and councillors were not named. Newspaper cuttings identified the prominent public figures associated with proposals, and the arguments used to promote or oppose schemes. There remain doubts about the accuracy of the reporting of policy-making in the local press, however. Murphy (1976) lists a number of potential problems, suggesting it is more attractive for a local paper to cover a number of stories superficially than to look at a few in depth. Added to this there is the problem that local papers rely on local contacts in the council for many of their stories. By undertaking investigative reports which delve deeper into an issue a paper risks creating an air of distrust with contacts.

In summary, the committee and newspaper reports often raised more questions than they answered. For instance rarely did they explain why a particular actor held the views they did, or why the outcome of a particular decision was A and not B. The key to eliciting answers to these questions was qualitative in-depth interviewing of participants involved in the policy process. It was important that these were

undertaken after other sources of information had been consulted for three reasons: firstly, to be able to ask relevant questions, secondly, to understand the respondent's reply, and thirdly, to avoid wasting the respondent's time gathering information which could have been collected from more readily available sources.

Introductory letters seeking to arrange an interview were sent out to potential interviewees outlining the aims of the research offering to send a more detailed summary of the issues which were of particular interest to the researcher, should the respondent so desire. Appendix B lists those interviewed during the conduct of the research.

The length of each interview ranged from three hours to half an hour, though an hour was fairly typical. Some of the respondents were interviewed more than once.

For interviews concerned with the development of a policy - LRT, South Birmingham, or the package approach - a narrative style of interviewing was used to elicit the information. Essentially this required the respondent to recall as best they could the pattern of events and their part in them. The researcher's role was to encourage the respondent to elaborate on issues which were not immediately clear, to try to guide the narrative back on course on occasions when the respondent went off at a tangent, and to seek to elicit recollections of respondent's attitudes towards the events. On issues such as seeking views on the contribution of BITS to the policy-making process, the sessions reverted to a more traditional interviewer - informant basis though on no occasions were the questions pre-formulated - instead, a sheet of paper was usually kept in view, listing the key issues that needed to be covered.

The investigation of the case studies of light rail and South Birmingham continued until the end of the field research in December. In the final two months of the year some people interviewed earlier were re-interviewed in order to clarify and probe further some of the research questions. It was at this stage of the research that questions which might be regarded as slightly more sensitive were also put to respondents, and some of the researcher's personal interpretations of events were tested to see whether respondents agreed with them.

Though Christmas 1993 marked the end of the period of time spent in the City Council, some interviewing - particularly concerning the package approach, continued into 1994. For the package approach investigations, the intention had originally been to conduct interviews with officers and members from all seven districts of the West Midlands (and the PTA/E). It soon became clear, however, that it was unnecessary to interview such a large number of people, since the views and narrative elicited from the key actors who were interviewed first, was judged to have provided a suitable level of detail[4].

By the beginning of 1994 it had been decided that the attempt to investigate the similarities between the Birmingham experience and other authorities should, for practical reasons principally concerned with time, be limited to a single additional case.

4.4 The Leeds case: research design and methodology

The selection of Leeds as the single additional case was based on a combination of research-based and practical considerations. On nearing the completion of the research in Birmingham the idea of a comparative study between an authority which had undertaken an integrated study and one which had not, did not seem to be a particularly sensible line of inquiry. It seemed too deterministic to make inferences about the effects of having, or not having, commissioned a study.

What seemed more achievable was to examine whether there were uses of integrated studies identified in the Birmingham example which could also be identified in another authority that had recently commissioned a study like BITS. Leeds had commissioned a study similar to BITS in 1991 as part of the process of developing the Leeds Transport Strategy. The staff of the Institute for Transport Studies had good

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[4] This follows the process of "theoretical sampling" advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Under this procedure, cases (ie. respondents) are selected on the basis of their ability to add further insight into a particular issue. Interviewing stops once the researcher feels that the full range of perspectives has been gathered - ie. when interviews with additional cases produce no new insights.

contacts with officers at the City Council and the fact that, during 1994, the researcher was based in Leeds added to the attraction of selecting it as the subsidiary case.

During 1994 therefore, a similar, but briefer, methodology was applied to Leeds as had been developed for Birmingham. Copies of the Leeds Transport Strategy and associated documents were read. The public library kept copies of local papers on microfilm, and maintained indexes giving dates of all articles about particular transport topics. Relevant articles from the years either side of the transport study were read to give some understanding of the context for the study. Finally contact was made with a small number of officers and councillors who could provide a deeper insight into the policy process and the part played by the transport strategy. As with the Birmingham/West Midlands case, all interviews were tape recorded.

4.5 Difficulties experienced in the process of the research

No fundamental problems were experienced in the course of the research but there were certain minor difficulties. One lay in the relationship between the issues being investigated and the values of the researcher. Environmental issues had been quite influential in developing the researcher's interest in transportation policy but it was important to try to set aside these values during the course of the research.

There was also sometimes an unconscious tendency to view issues from a rationalist perspective; that is, rather than examining *why* policies were being pursued, attempting to consider whether the arguments for the policies, and the policies themselves, *were correct* in that particular circumstance. This was particularly true of the investigation of light rail, since a considerable body of North American literature, read in the literature review stage of the research, had been critical of the policy.

Interviews themselves provided a number of hazards. In the earliest ones it was discovered that with tape recorders, anything that can go wrong will go wrong! Some problems were experienced with the interviewing itself - early on, it proved quite difficult to listen to a respondent and, at the same time, prepare the next question. On some occasions it seemed to be more difficult to develop a conversation, particularly

if the respondent had not received, for one reason or another, a note explaining the issues to be discussed prior to the meeting.

Some respondents were better at recalling information than others, but by interviewing a number of participants involved in a particular policy it generally proved possible to piece together a broad picture of how and why events took the course they did. More problematic was that in some instances different respondents had contradictory recollections of events. In these circumstances, the recollections of other respondents were put to the interviewee in an attempt to discover whether there was a genuine disagreement or whether the two views were actually more compatible with each other than at first appeared - sometimes for instance, it was clear there were a number of factors that contributed to a decision, though each participant only recalled one.

A further unanticipated problem which became apparent in the course of interviewing was that because of the complexities of decision-making and the large number of actors involved, it was sometimes difficult to identify why a particular decision had been made, and who had influenced that decision. Booth (1988) comments that decision-makers often have difficulty in identifying what input they have on a decision and this was particularly true when investigating why highway construction had been promoted in south Birmingham in 1987 and 1991. The fact that on both occasions these proposals had been abandoned, appeared to contribute to a tendency for councillors to attribute responsibility for the measures to officers, and some officers to attribute the responsibility to departments other than their own!

Transcribing of interviews was a time consuming exercise and as interviewing became more intense in the final months of the research, it became impossible to keep up with the task. Many were transcribed in the writing up stage of the research.

Regarding the reliability of the findings presented, Mishler (1986) argues that there is never one true interpretation of a set of events, but instead different truths from different perspectives. Factual inaccuracies relating to events were reduced through proof reading of the field research chapters by a small number of people involved in

the case study topics, but, the interpretation presented is the personal one of the researcher. As Van Maanen and Kolb (1985) suggest:

> "The fieldworker's understanding of the social world under investigation must always be distinguished from the informants understanding of the same world. ... To argue that we have become part of the worlds we studied, or that we understand them in precisely the same way as those who live within them would be a grave error."
> (p.27)

CHAPTER 5 THE BIRMINGHAM CASE: CONTEXTUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND TRANSPORT POLICIES UP TO THE MID-1980s.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies some of the contextual characteristics of Birmingham and the surrounding area relevant to the understanding of the case study research findings. It then briefly considers the development of the city's transport system up to 1986 - the years beyond this are covered more fully in the main research chapters.

5.2 Birmingham and the West Midlands conurbation

Birmingham, which has a population of 1 million, is located in the West Midlands conurbation (Figure 5.1) which is home to 2.5 million people. The conurbation developed on the basis of engineering and metal manufacturing industries with one particular specialization being motor vehicle manufacturing. The 1970s, however, were characterized by a marked decline in the conurbation's economic fortunes as a result of the world recession which badly affected industries which the West Midlands had become over-reliant upon. Between 1971 and 1985, 320,000 jobs were lost in the conurbation. This represented a 23% decline in the workforce, compared to a 4% decline nationally. Unemployment was running at 18.4% in 1986, some 5% above the national average[1].

5.3 Transport policy in Birmingham up to the late 1960s

Whilst Birmingham's transport system originally developed around railways, canals, and trams, the motor car began to make an appearance on the city's streets at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1918 the Council approved a plan to upgrade the city's road system in a bid to cater for traffic growth. It included widening twelve radial roads and linking them

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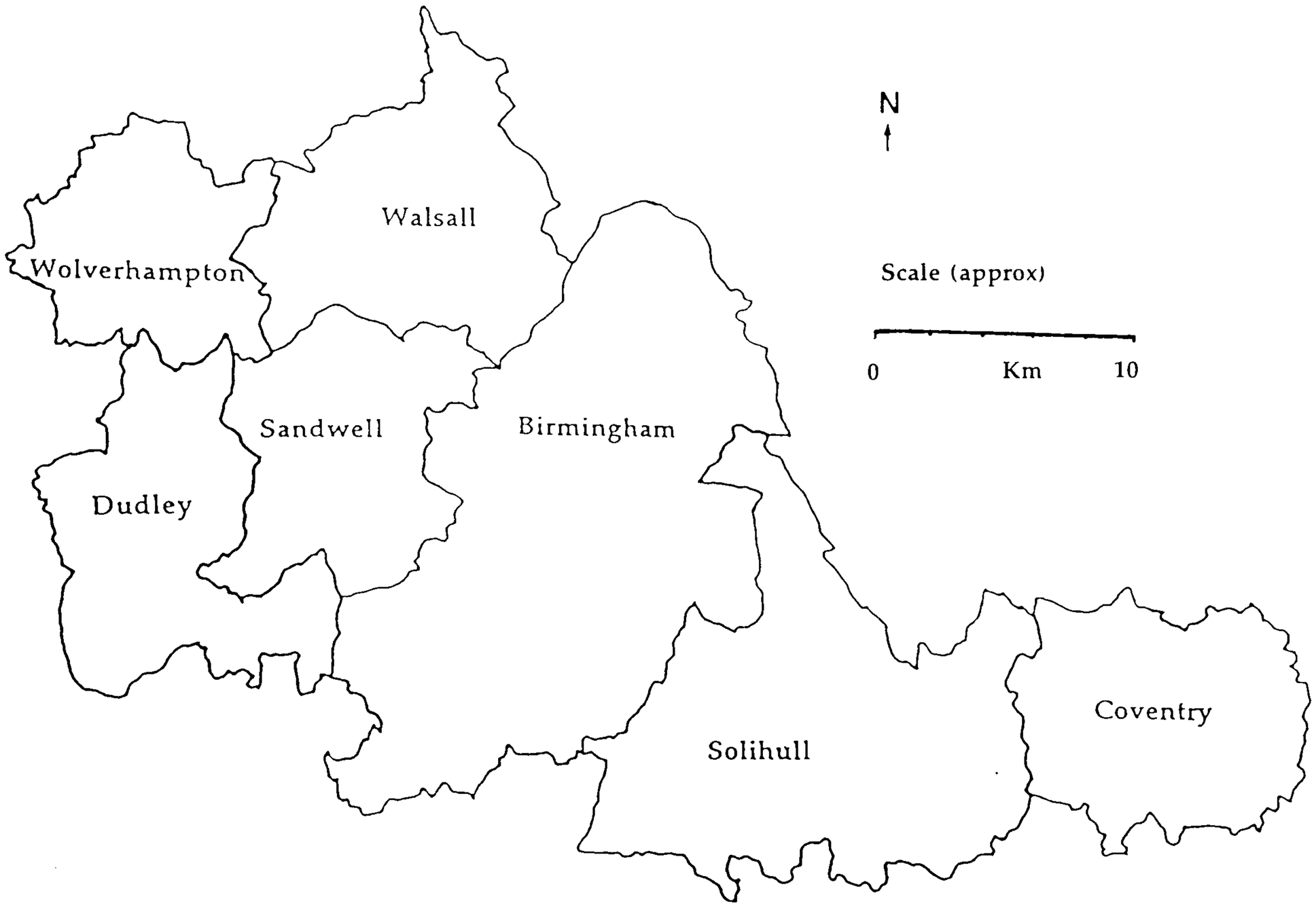
[1] West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee Unitary Development Plan issues paper, presented to Birmingham City Council (BCC) Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 14/7/86.

by means of an Inner Ring Road approximately half a mile from the city centre, and an outer ring road approximately 3 miles further out.

Figure 5.1 Birmingham and the West Midlands conurbation



Little progress was made on these plans until the post-war period when Birmingham, particularly the city centre, was extensively redeveloped in an attempt to cater for motorisation. The City Council's draft development plan, published in 1952 carried an extensive list of road schemes for the next 20 years. Whilst the IRR was top priority, there were also proposals to by-pass shopping centres, relieve congestion on the major arterials, continue construction of the outer ring road, and begin construction of an intermediate ring road at a distance of 1.5 miles from the city centre. The Ministry of Transport also proposed linking Birmingham into a national road network with three motorways, one taking a north eastern route around the edge of the city (the M6), another running along the western edge of the city (the M5), and a third linking these two along the southern side of the city (the M42). To

link the city centre with the motorway system, a motorway standard link road, the A38(M) - or Aston Expressway - would be built from the IRR to the M6 (see Figure 6.1).

There was general agreement between councillors and Herbert Manzoni, the powerful City Engineer from 1935-1963, that strenuous efforts should be made to cater for the motor car whenever possible. Speaking to the annual conference of the Association of Municipal Corporations in 1959, Manzoni remarked:

> "Restriction is not the way (to deal with traffic). You have got to welcome the traffic. You have got to realize that it is an indication of a high and increasing standard of living. This country, we hope, is going to be wealthier than it is today. The wealth will be divided so that everybody has a share of it. We all hope that. ... Therefore we have got to welcome the cars into our town centres, not push them out by restricting them."
>
> (Municipal Journal, 11/59)

Construction of the Inner Ring Road was seen as an important, indeed "indispensable", part of the city centre redevelopment plans (Birmingham City Council proceedings 9/3/43, p.259). Manzoni anticipated that such a road would almost completely eliminate road traffic congestion in the city centre (*Birmingham Mail* 13/2/52). In 1956 the Ministry of Transport approved funding for its construction. The city centre was to resemble a building site for the following 15 years as the road - part tunnel, part elevated - began to take shape.

During the inter-war period, Birmingham's public transport had become increasingly based on the motor bus and in 1949 the Council approved, and then implemented, a policy of converting the remaining tram and trolley bus routes to motor buses. As car ownership grew, however, public transport use declined, leading to operating deficits on both buses and railways.

Partly in response to traffic growth and declining public transport patronage, in 1964 the Ministry of Transport persuaded all the local authorities in the West Midlands conurbation to take part in a joint study of likely future transport investment needs using techniques described in chapter 2, section 2.3.

Stage 1 of the West Midlands Transport Study, undertaken by consultant Freeman Fox, Wilbur Smith, was primarily analytical but in 1967, the local authorities agreed to take the work forward in a second stage to produce a transport plan for 1981 which combined highways, public transport, and parking policies. The transport objectives of this part of the study concentrated on freedom to use the private car and the maintenance of a basic public transport network which would be largely self-financing[2].

The approved investment plan for the conurbation was costed at £212.9m (1970 prices), almost £13m above the maximum likely available resources for the 1968-1981 period identified by the Ministry of Transport. The majority was to be allocated to highways whilst public transport investment was to be concentrated on upgrading existing rail lines and new stations. Because of the perceived impossibility of catering for all traffic demand to the centre of Birmingham, the plan advocated limiting the number of commuter parking spaces to ensure that 88 percent of peak hour trips to the city centre were made by public transport.

5.4 Policy from the late 1960s to 1986

By the late 1960s enthusiasm for urban road building was on the wain. Urban motorways increasingly faced protests from residents who lived on the line of the proposed road[3]. There was also growing recognition, fuelled by the 1963 report "Traffic in Towns" (Ministry of Transport, 1963), that it would be simply impossible to cater for all traffic in urban areas. These concerns, in combination with the declining health of public transport contributed to a national rethink about how transport policy should be delivered in the conurbations.

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[2] For full statement of objectives for WMTS stage 2 see chapter 2, pp.12-13.

[3] See Starkie (1982).

The 1968 Transport Act established Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives (PTA/Es) in five conurbations, including the West Midlands[4]. These took responsibility for public transport operations from councils and were given the task of co-ordinating public transport, both bus and rail. The PTA comprised councillors appointed from the constituent districts whilst the PTE was the department responsible for implementation.

In 1972 the Local Government Act took reorganisation a stage further with the establishment of metropolitan county councils (MCCs) in six conurbations[5], including the West Midlands (figure 5.1). The MCCs became an upper tier of local government taking responsibilities for highways (other than motorways and trunk roads which remained the responsibility of Central Government) and strategic land-use policies away from the districts, and public transport policies from the PTAs (though the PTE's remained in existence).

Establishment of the MCCs was followed by reform to the financial mechanisms for funding local transport. From 1974 revenue and capital local transport expenditure became eligible for Transport Supplementary Grant (TSG) awarded by central government. The TSG system was designed to meet four aims -

1. Facilitate the development of comprehensive transport plans;
2. Eliminate bias between capital and revenue expenditure;
3. Distribute grant to reflect local needs;
4. Reduce central government controls over expenditure.

(Truelove, 1992 p.37)

The system was introduced, however, at a time of public expenditure restraint because of the oil crisis of 1974 and ensuing world recession. Under Labour control the West Midlands County Council had already started to cut back on highway expenditure as it pursued a policy of cheap public transport fares. A road programme

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4 Strathclyde, Merseyside, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, and Greater Manchester (between 1968-1974 known as South-East Lancashire - North-East Cheshire (SELNEC)).

5 West Midlands, Merseyside, Tyne and Wear, Greater Manchester, South and West Yorkshire. In addition, PTE's were established in South and West Yorkshire.

was still maintained, though it became clear that the WMTS recommendations were no longer realistic with limited resources, nor politically desirable.

Despite the emphasis on public transport, there was little political desire to penalise the motorist. No effort was made to restrict the number of parking spaces, as recommended by WMTS, and as the West Midland's County Planner, Alfie Wood, recalled, his idea of extending pedestrianisation in Birmingham city centre beyond the small number of streets closed to traffic in 1973, did not get very far:

> AW: ... having a traffic free centre of Birmingham was at that time a pork chop in a synagogue, if I could put it that way - it really was unthinkable for many people ... certainly with councillors in Birmingham. ... At that time there was free parking on most of the streets in the city centre. ... (The proposals) didn't get anywhere, in that first stage (of the County).
>
> AF: Politically?
>
> AW: Yes entirely. ... The feeling (was) that you mustn't chase the motorist. Simple as that.
>
> (IT 2 p.208,219)

The Conservative administration of WMCC between 1977 and 1981 put more emphasis on highway investment than revenue support for public transport and whilst Labour revived a cheap fares policy on returning to control in 1981, this was largely undermined by Central Government controls on public expenditure.

In 1986 the metropolitan county councils were abolished by the Conservative Government, with highways and strategic planning responsibilities passing back to the district councils and public transport to the PTAs. This was one of a series of changes to the framework for the delivery of urban transportation policy which set the context for the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study. It is to this which the research now turns.

CHAPTER 6 THE RATIONALE FOR THE BIRMINGHAM INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION STUDY (BITS)

6.1 Introduction

In 1988 the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS) was commissioned by Birmingham City Council and two partners - the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, and the City Action Team (comprising representatives of the regional offices of Central Government departments). This chapter examines the policy context - both national and local - within which BITS was undertaken. It then considers the motives behind the commissioning of the report and seeks to ascertain the roles the clients expected BITS to play - such as instrumental, enlightening, partisan or legitimatory.

The chapter then turns to consider the study process itself and seeks to discover the extent to which, once the objectives were established, the study followed the rational model of decision-making. Some of the initial reactions to the study findings are then outlined and the final section offers an interpretation of the events and some interim conclusions.

6.2 The national context for BITS

The election of a Conservative Government in 1979, and its subsequent hold on power throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s had far reaching implications for the direction of British society. Under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives set about implementing policies which were heavily influenced by "New Right" thinking. Before looking at how these policies affected urban transport, the fundamental ideas upon which the Government's programme was based need to be considered.

Economic policies were based on the tenets of liberalism. Advocates of liberalism (Adam Smith, Friedrich von Hayek) argue that the free market, rather than the state, provides the most efficient means of promoting economic prosperity. The market emphasises the freedom of individuals to pursue their own ends. For liberals, freedom is "the single most important value which a social and economic order can provide

and maximise" (King, 1987). Freedom implies an absence of coercion applied by any person or the state to another individual's behaviour. Liberals regard coercion as damaging ,

> "because it ... eliminates an individual as a thinking and valuing person and makes him a bare tool in his achievement of the ends of another."
>
> (Hayek, 1960, pp.20-21)

Furthermore they believe that the unplanned transactions of the market place create a "spontaneous order" (King, 1987 p.14).

Liberals say the free market creates competition between producers and instills a profit incentive and responsiveness to the demands of consumers. These characteristics are seen to be absent from the workings of the public sector which is regarded as inefficient and unresponsive to consumer demands.

As a normative theory liberalism therefore prescribes a minimum of Government intervention in the economy. The state's role should be limited to providing a legislative order within which the market can operate, correcting distortions in the market, or making up for market failures - for instance dealing with externalities created by the market (as in pollution) or providing certain public goods (such as roads) which might be beneficial to society as a whole but which no individual or group would pay for since the expense could not be recouped through profits.

Where the state operates in other areas, for instance in supplying goods and services which could be supplied by the private sector, Public Choice theorists[1] contend that the state is wasteful. They also contend that politicians and bureaucrats act primarily out of self-interest - the politician seeks to maximise votes by promises of large public expenditure programmes while the bureaucrat seeks to enlarge his/her budget and department. In combination, public choice theorists argue that these forces lead to an expansion of the size of government and the oversupply of goods and services.

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1 Public Choice theory is an element of New Right thinking which seeks to apply economic principles to politics.

During the 1980s the Conservative Government advocated the goals of lowering state involvement in the economy and seeking to give individuals freedom to choose their own lifestyles with vigour. Urban transport policy was affected by policies to further these ends in a number of direct and indirect ways.

Cutting and redirecting public expenditure

Committed to a lower level of involvement in the running of the economy, the Government enthusiastically adopted a monetarist economic policy. Monetarism was based on a belief that the state's prime economic objective should be to control inflation. The best way to control inflation was seen to be by limiting the money supply - that is the amount of money in the economy.

Mrs Thatcher believed that an expanding Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR)[2] led to growth in the money supply[3]. Therefore, by reducing the PSBR, and hence public expenditure, it was believed that inflation could be lowered.

Monetarist principles were only one reason for seeking reductions in public expenditure; the Government's liberal beliefs also provided the argument for public expenditure reductions. In 1975, public expenditure represented 50 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Conservatives aimed to reduce this to 41 percent by 1992. As Butcher et al (1990) comment, the Conservatives believed that during the 1970s:

> "An inflated public sector had led to high taxes and this had contributed to disincentives to work and invest; to social malaise, by creating larger numbers of dependents on the public sector; and to increased expectations which government could not realize."
>
> (p.57)

Through the 1980s legislation was introduced which sought to reduce the expenditure of local authorities. Capital expenditure was easier to control than current expenditure because local authorities relied on central government capital grants. Between 1985/6

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[2] PSBR represents the amount by which government spending exceeds government receipts.

[3] This theory has been heavily contested (see Butcher et al, 1990, pp.57-58)

and 1988/9 local authority capital transport expenditure fell by 18 percent in real terms. On current expenditure, local authorities had the ability to increase the local rates to raise additional resources. Nevertheless, the Government was also committed to controlling current expenditure and the 1984 Rates Act gave it the power to rate-cap high spending authorities. Further controls were introduced in subsequent years with the introduction of a Uniform Business Rate (UBR)[4] and the Community Charge (1988 Local Government Finance Act) which was an attempt to make all citizens pay towards council services, thus making councils more accountable to their electorate when setting a charge level. Between 1985/6 and 1988/9, local authorities' real current expenditure fell by 7 percent.

A number of specific changes were made to the funding of transport expenditure. Against a perception that local government was spending excessively on revenue support for public transport, the Government introduced the Protected Expenditure Level (PEL) for revenue support in 1983. If authorities exceeded the Secretary of State's PEL, they could be challenged in court by local ratepayers. Then in 1984, transport secretary Nicholas Ridley announced that the Transport Supplementary Grant system was to be reformed. He commented that councils had spent excessive amounts of TSG on public transport revenue support and had not advanced on road construction to the extent the Government would have wished. Mr Ridley was widely regarded as a friend of the motorist, Hamer (1987) describing him as the "most sympathetic minister (to the road lobby) since (Ernest) Marples" (p.64)[5].

In order to achieve consistency between the Government's transport objectives and the transport policies of local authorities, Mr Ridley announced that from 1985, TSG would no longer be available for revenue support, or expenditure on local roads. In future revenue support would have to be funded from the rates (subsequently the

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4 The Government set a standard rate across the country, rather than allowing local authorities to set one at their own discretion. The UBR is collected nationally and redistributed to local authorities on the basis of a national formula.

5 Ernest Marples was Minister of Transport between 1959 and 1964. During this time he expanded the motorway construction programme and enthusiastically acknowledged the idea of redesigning urban areas in order to cater for the needs of motor traffic.

community charge, then the council tax), and Rate (subsequently Revenue) Support Grant (RSG). TSG would only be awarded for capital highway schemes on roads which were used by a high level of long distance traffic (ie. roads of more than local importance and by-passes)[6]. In addition, the Government would authorize local authorities to borrow a small amount of additional resources, colloquially termed headroom, to fund minor works (schemes under £1m)[7].

Alongside these changes Mr Ridley announced that the Section 56 grant system, originally established through the 1968 Transport Act but merged into the TSG system in 1974, would be re-enacted in order to fund major public transport capital projects costing in excess of £5m and offering at least a 7 percent rate of return.

The effect of these changes was to reduce local authority expenditure on public transport (revenue and capital) by some 63 percent in real terms between 1984/5 and 1987/8, whilst local authority highway expenditure remained relatively steady, increasing by 0.6 percent (HM Treasury, 1989).

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[6] The 1988 Local Government Finance Act, which introduced the Community Charge, also made these changes to TSG law.

[7] At the same time TSG was reduced to 50 percent of scheme costs with the other half being met by local authority borrowing. An Annual Capital Guideline (ACG) was issued by the Government to each local authority. This was an advisory figure and represented what it believed each local authority should spend on highways in the coming year.
The ACG comprised TSG and enough borrowing cover for local authorities to meet their own 50 percent of the scheme costs. After subtracting these two elements, the excess ACG represented the discretionary element termed headroom. The Government maintained that local authorities could fund additional transport expenditure by using capital receipts generated from policies such as council house sales. Nevertheless, Sanderson (1989) suggests these receipts were often allocated to service areas with higher political priorities - for instance education, housing, and social services. From 1991/92 bridge strengthening for 44 tonne lorries and local safety schemes became eligible for TSG. A further element of local authority capital transport expenditure came from supplementary credit approvals (SCA) issued by the Department of Transport. Unlike headroom, SCAs had to be spent on projects which the DOT awarded them against - typically schemes which involved more than one local authority or involved the local authority and a transport operator.

Removal of local authority functions

State services were subjected to market disciplines through policies of denationalization, contracting-out of services, and deregulation (Dunn and Smith, 1990). As Hodgson (1984) notes, policies such as these were very much part of a "moral crusade" by the New Right. In this respect, their implementation was seen as a good thing in itself, quite apart from their effect on the quality of service provided.

In transport, the privatisation policy began with the deregulation of the long distance coach industry in 1980 but in 1983 its implications for urban transport became clear when Nicholas Ridley announced controversial proposals to deregulate the bus industry[8]. In the metropolitan areas this policy would serve to severely reduce the responsibilities of the PTA/PTEs.

In unveiling these proposals, Mr Ridley spoke of the rising operating costs of bus services, the rise in bus subsidy, and the decline in patronage[9]. Deregulation would remove bus services from the control of politicians and introduce competition to the industry:

> "Competition provides the opportunity for lower fares, new services, more passengers. For these great gains, half measures will not be enough. Within the essential framework of safety regulation and provision for social needs, the obstacles to enterprise, initiative and efficiency must be removed."
>
> (Nicholas Ridley, quoted in *Local Transport Today*, 25/7/90)

Local government reform

A third area of change to have a significant effect on the urban transport policy framework in the conurbations was the reform of local government in 1986. This

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8 The *Financial Times* (16/7/90) described Nicholas Ridley as "the most influential free marketeer in the Government", a highly principled man, who would push through policies even if they were deeply unpopular.

9 Hansard (12/7/84) p.1382.

abolished the six English metropolitan county councils, and the Greater London Council.

The Conservative's claimed that the MCCs had become an unnecessary tier of government, whose abolition would save £1bn of public expenditure. Opponents of the abolition and political commentators, suggested the Government was also keen to abolish them for party-political reasons (Flynn et al, 1985). By 1983 all the MCCs were Labour-controlled and pursuing a range of interventionist policies (such as heavily subsidised public transport) which were at odds with the Government's market-based thinking.

With their abolition, highway responsibilities other than trunk roads and motorways passed to the metropolitan districts. Some services, including public transport were transferred to conurbation-wide joint boards (Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs)) controlled by elected representatives from each of the constituent districts.

It is therefore within the national context of an attack on public expenditure, a narrowing of the area of political life, and a reform of the local government system that the BITS report needs to be considered.

6.3 The local context for BITS

In Birmingham, the Technical Services Committee acquired formal responsibility for highway matters following the abolition of the West Midlands County Council. In an attempt, however, to ensure that transportation policy was co-ordinated with the Council's planning and economic development objectives, a Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, bringing together members from the Economic Development, Planning, and Technical Services Committees, was also established. Initially this met on a quarterly basis, but the workload which it had to deal with resulted in it meeting monthly from 1991.

On the departmental side of the Council, the City Engineers Department and the Development Department shared responsibility for transport; a joint Transport Policy Division being established.

The transportation policies being pursued in Birmingham in the immediate post-County years need to be viewed in the context of the political priorities of that period. In the light of the deteriorating economic situation in the West Midlands, the Labour Party had been elected to power in Birmingham in 1984 with job creation as the central theme of their manifesto. In order to remedy the economic problems, the City Council saw a need to broaden the city's economic base, and in particular, promote office development and business tourism. To do so, the view taken by the key figures within the ruling Labour Group was that Birmingham needed to raise its profile, in particular on the national and international stage[10].

As part of this policy many parts of the city centre were to be redeveloped and a series of public/private sector prestige projects were constructed, including an International Convention Centre (initially authorised under the previous Conservative administration), a new five star hotel, an International Sports Arena and an office/market place development. Proposals were also drawn up to redevelop the 1960s Bull Ring shopping centre beside the city's main railway station, Birmingham New Street.

In further attempts to raise the city's international profile, Birmingham began staging an annual motor race, the Birmingham Super Prix on the roads through the city, and bid unsuccessfully for the 1992 Olympics, and again for the 1996 games, although this time it lost out on the British nomination to Manchester.

In March 1988 an international symposium - the Highbury Initiative - was held in the city. This drew together various urban planners from around the world with the objective of exploring ways of strengthening Birmingham's economic activity and improving its physical environment. One work group summarised their impression of Birmingham as,

> "a city in a tearing hurry, addicted to instant success, biggest, first, pragmatic, profitable, ..."
> (The Highbury Initiative, Proceedings)

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10 This was not the view of those on the left of the ruling Labour Group. They believed that to finance many of the prestige city centre projects, money was diverted away from some of the more basic service areas, for instance housing, education, and social services.

The Council's City Centre Strategy, launched in July 1987, reflected this view:

> "The City's basic policy stance is to "welcome" and "promote" activity. No activity should be lost for lack of a suitable site".
>
> (BCC, 1987a)

Graham Shaylor, the Director of Development, speaking in December 1987 indicated some of the transport policy implications of this approach -

> "Accessibility equals competitiveness. We are seeking to establish what the highway network should be post-1991. ... With 23 million people living within a 2 hour car drive, the city centre has great potential for expansion. ... At the moment we have 16,000 parking spaces in the centre and we are planning to increase that to 22,000.
>
> But we do not know if even that will be enough."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 2/12/87)

Between 1986 and 1988, measures to improve city centre accessibility and enhance the attractiveness of the city centre were the first priorities for the City Council's TPP submissions. Pedestrianisation was to be implemented on many of the city centre shopping streets. The Inner Ring Road was seen as a restriction on the city centre's development and to allow the centre to expand, proposals were drawn up to downgrade role of the IRR as a traffic street, and turn sections of it into urban boulevards. Around the Inner Ring Road new sites would be found to construct short stay car parks.

Good accessibility to the city centre was seen to be required by both highways and public transport. A number of radial road improvements were planned, some of which were ex-County schemes though others were more recent initiatives. The major schemes are illustrated in Figure 6.1 and summarised below -

* The A457 was upgraded to dual carriageway standard from the Middle Ring Road to the city centre.

* Investigations began into identifying which road should be improved to dual carriageway standard between the Middle Ring Road and the city boundary in order to provide access to the city centre from the west of the city. The A457 Dudley Road was selected, but after opposition from local residents and traders, the scheme was delayed.

* Long-standing plans for a Northfield by-pass, a dual carriageway project on the A38 Bristol Road, were given a programmed start date of 1992.

* Where the A38 Bristol Road passed through the Bournbrook Shopping Centre proposals existed to widen the road with the demolition of adjacent properties.

* A flyover linking Bristol Road (A38) to Bristol Street, over the Middle Ring Road was included in the 1987 Transport Policy and Programme submission (BCC, 1987b).

* It was planned to improve the A34 Walsall Road at Lancaster Street close to the city centre, in order to complete the entire road to dual carriageway standard.

* In 1987 proposals for a new £74m dual carriageway standard road - the Heartlands Spine Road - to link the A47 near the Middle Ring Road to the A452 and the M6 through the Birmingham Heartlands Urban Development Agency area[11], were unveiled. This would provide access to the redevelopment area, and also provide a new radial route to the city centre.

* The ongoing construction of the M40 motorway from Oxford to the M42 on the southern edge of the city boundary led the City Council to investigate options for a new link road to the city centre, primarily in the belief that the new motorway would present significant economic development potential to the City and that without a new link, roads in the south of the city would become overloaded[12].

In addition, the City Council inherited an ongoing work programme of upgrading the Middle Ring Road to dual carriageway standard, whilst the Department of Transport had plans for orbital road construction on the north-east edge of the city - the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR), and also to the west of the conurbation - the Western Orbital Road (WOR). Together, these DoT plans would complete a motorway box around the entire West Midlands conurbation.

On the public transport side, the PTA/E had succeeded in keeping alive the concept of a light rail system for the conurbation, after the proposals were aborted during the

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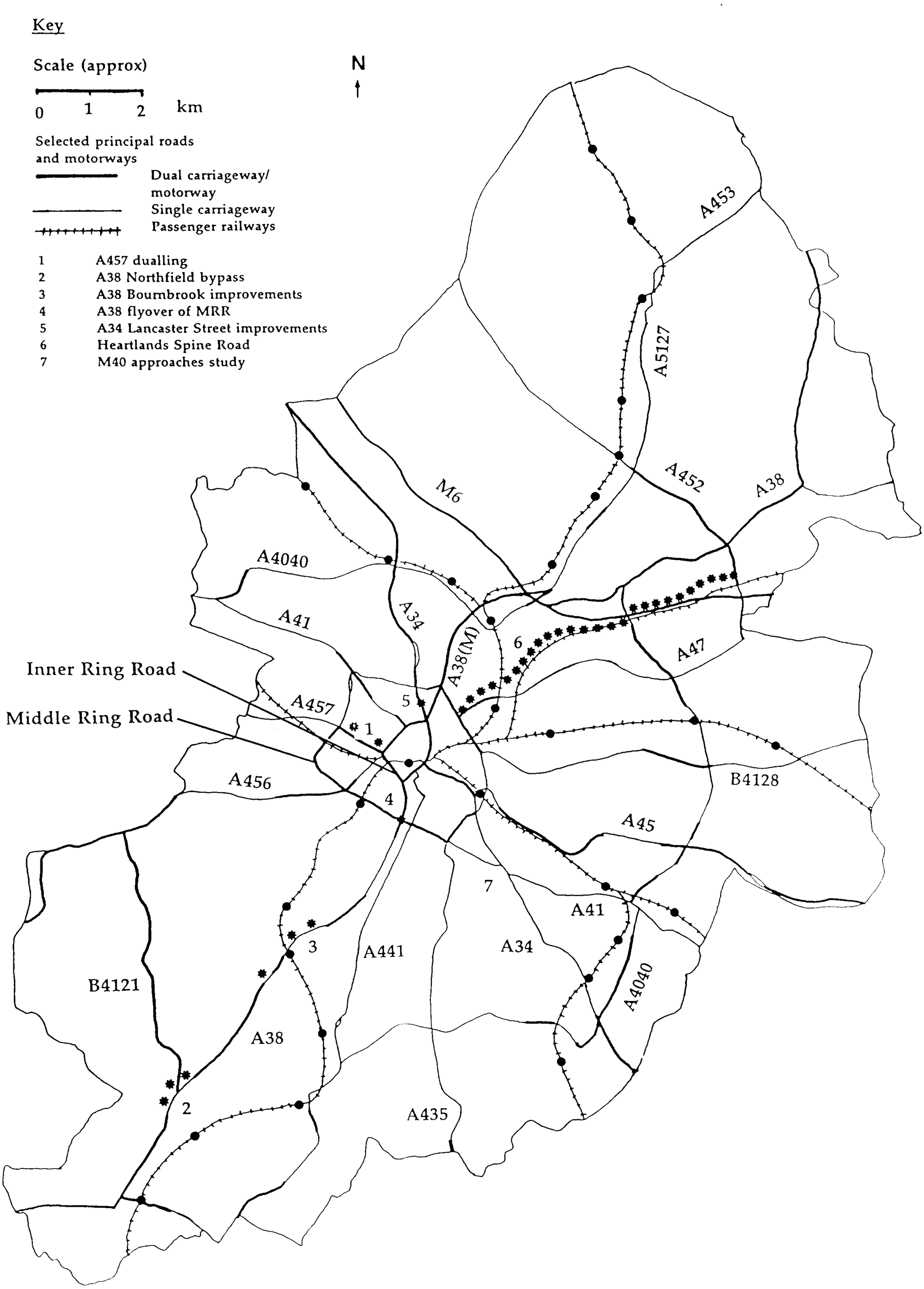
[11] The Heartlands Urban Development Agency was a public/private sector partnership set up with the objective of regenerating the Heartlands area of East Birmingham.

[12] See chapter 9.

Figure 6.1 Main Transport Proposals in Birmingham in the period 1986 - 1988.



County's existence[13]. Birmingham, along with the other six districts in the conurbation, agreed to the idea in principle. Indeed, in a report to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, the City Engineer and the Director of Development acknowledged that improving accessibility to the city centre solely by car would be -

> "impossibly expensive (and socially divisive), while a system dependent mainly on bus for access to congested urban centres is doomed to long term decline."
>
> (Report to the BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 10/11/86)

6.4 The impetus for BITS

The key influence in bringing about the commissioning of BITS was the arrival of Roger Taylor, the Council's new Chief Executive, in 1988. Before moving to Birmingham in 1988, Roger Taylor had been Chief Executive of Manchester City Council. It was during his time at Manchester that he became interested in undertaking an examination of the future transport needs of an urban area. To understand the origins of BITS it is necessary to look at his experiences in Manchester.

With the abolition of the Greater Manchester County Council in 1986, Manchester successfully fought to become lead authority of the Greater Manchester PTA. Consequently, Roger Taylor acquired the role of Clerk to the PTA. These two responsibilities (Chief Executive of the City Council and Clerk to the PTA) provided him with formal involvement in both the highway and public transport policies which would affect Manchester. He recalled that at the time of the County's abolition, there were a number of transport issues which were of pressing importance to Manchester:

> "... we were struggling with (bus) deregulation, we were trying to come to grips with light rail, we were trying to get the heavy rail spur into Manchester Airport, and we were also trying to make some sense out of the strategic highway network through and immediately around the city."
>
> (IT 4 pp.148-149)

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[13] See chapter 8.

In Roger Taylor's view the fragmented structure of responsibilities for transport was threatening the economic and social needs of the city. He therefore encouraged the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) to develop a policy stance on the overall urban transport policy framework. Consequently in 1987 the Association published *Oiling the Wheels*, a report designed to highlight the problems which local authorities were experiencing with the administrative and financial framework. Roger Taylor played a central role in its writing. The report called for a review of the transport capital grant system in order to correct an alleged imbalance which favoured highway schemes against public transport, and major schemes against minor. Furthermore the report called for Government controls on local authority capital expenditure to be lifted, and for trunk road responsibilities to be passed to local authorities.

The report had little impact in convincing Central Government of a need to change direction[14]. As Roger Taylor noted,

> "It was I think, probably rather too early and rather too simplistic; but anyway it was a first attempt by local authorities to revisit the issues of looking at the transport needs of a community as a whole, driven by the wider economic imperatives of the conurbation."
>
> (IT 4 pp.149-150)

Roger Taylor was also an active member of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). SOLACE held regular meetings with the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Transport, who in 1987 was Sir Alan Bailey. Through these meetings, Roger Taylor began to believe that Sir Alan had some sympathy with the difficulties local authorities were citing. He therefore wrote to the Permanent Secretary, commenting:

> "I know there's all this dislike amongst ministers about the idea of looking at integration of transport investment strategies and so on and so forth, but couldn't we possibly think about just revisiting the issues of how all these pieces fit together ... from the point of view of ... the economic and social needs of a large urban community?" (IT 4 p.149)

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[14] One barrier to change, in the view of Mr Taylor and Mr Phil Swann - the AMA's transport officer was the presence of Mr Nicholas Ridley, the architect of many of the changes, as Secretary of State for the Environment until 1989. This kept him closely involved in local government matters.

Somewhat to Roger Taylor's surprise, the idea was welcomed by Sir Alan Bailey and in the latter part of 1987 Mr Taylor went to London to discuss the matter further:

> "I put to him the idea that purely, purely, as an experiment, and without prejudice to any part of Government policy, it might be quite nice to ask the question of a conurbation, what was likely to happen to its transport system if we didn't do any more than we were doing at the moment; and how far was ... (the) laissez faire (approach) going to suit the economic and social needs of a regional capital?"
>
> (IT 4 p.150)

Again Sir Alan thought this to be a good idea. On returning to Manchester, however, Taylor had to put the idea to one side due to other more pressing matters. In early 1988 he moved from Manchester to take up his new post of Chief Executive at Birmingham City Council.

On arriving at Birmingham, Roger Taylor was immediately struck by the state of the transport policy-making machinery:

> "... I was dismayed at the absence of any serious strategic thinking about transportation in the City Council - it was awful.
>
> I mean there was no real effective sharing of ... policy considerations between the planners, who appeared to be the only people interested in transport strategy, and the highway engineers, who appeared to be only interested in building roads.
>
> There was an absolute stand-off between the City Council and the PTA about the priorities for light rail in terms of routes ...
>
> Furthermore there was no concept of thinking about rail services ... and there was absolutely no appreciation or understanding of the role which the airport was playing."
>
> (IT 4 p.150)

Derek Rawson, the City Engineer, recalled one of his first meetings with Roger Taylor:

> "(He) came and said, 'Well you know, show me your transportation policy' - and we really hadn't got one. We were building roads ... we'd taken over the County Council's TPP and had pushed it forward ... (but) for that first 12 months (following abolition of the County) we were really (still) doing the County Council's plan."
> (IT 2 p.138)

Taylor was keen to create a power base in the Council and he saw transportation as an ideal area in which to make a start:

> "transportation was an unoccupied territory and I was a new Chief Executive looking for areas where I could quickly build a power base; and transportation, which I knew something about, was an obvious example. And it needed to be done."
>
> (IT 4 p.151)

To achieve this he strengthened the transportation role of the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee and created a rule that all reports to the Sub-Committee had to be signed by himself, as well as the Director of Development and the City Engineer:

> "that meant that I was able to take very dominant control over getting something done in the transportation field."
>
> (IT 4 p.154)

He also established a Chief Officers' Transport Group which brought together officers from the Development and City Engineers departments with himself in order to discuss transportation issues. He also contacted Sir Alan Bailey once again and suggested that the study initially planned for Manchester, should instead be done in Birmingham. At the same time he invited City Council officers to put forward suggestions as to how a study might be conducted.

6.5 The BITS process

Mr Taylor shared Alan Wenban-Smith's (the City's Assistant Director of Development) view that a study should not start from the idea of simply examining future transport demand patterns and developing a transport plan accordingly, but instead should consider what sort of city was desired, and how transport could help to achieve this. Whilst in favour of a degree of quantification in the study process, Alan Wenban-Smith wanted to avoid the detailed transportation studies of the 1960s -

> "I was very anxious indeed that the emphasis should be on policy analysis rather than on numbers ... (but) I was (also) anxious ... that it shouldn't be a sort of waffle exercise. ...

> (If it were an essay), you could only judge the ideas on whether they actually sort of seemed reasonable ... and do they sound right. I mean that's a pretty unsatisfactory (technique) - particularly if you're trying to persuade people to do serious things in terms of changing major programmes of expenditure and so on."
>
> (IT 3 pp.64-66)

Mr Wenban-Smith's ideas were accepted, and he went on to write the brief and manage the study which became known as the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study (BITS).

The context for the study was set out in a paper presented to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee meeting in July 1988. This began from a "vision statement", written by Mr Wenban-Smith, which was orientated towards promoting the city centre:

> 1. Birmingham and the nation: ... The City Council aims to consolidate the City's status vis a vis competing regional centres, and to secure for the city a national/international standing equivalent to that of other major European provincial capitals (The alternative would be for the City Council to leave the City's status to other agencies and to market forces).
>
> 2. Birmingham in its region: ... The City Council will foster the City's distinctive central roles in relation to spreading regional patterns of economic, physical, and social interaction. (The alternative would be to accept the general pressures towards dispersal and homogeneity of function).
>
> 3. Birmingham's citizens: ... The City Council will seek to provide a social and cultural environment which allows all ... groups to play a satisfying and distinctive part in the City's life. (The alternative is to accept the pressure towards social and economic polarisation, maintaining distinctiveness, but blighting the life chances of individuals).
>
> (A Transport Strategy for Birmingham, report to BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 6/7/88)

This led to the formulation of a number of objectives which an integrated development/transport strategy should serve:

- to enhance city wide, regional and international accessibility to the city centre, as the regional locus for higher level services.

- to create the environment, space, and mixture of economic and cultural uses within the city centre which will both attract investment and give citizens pride in belonging, and visitors a sense of place.

- to provide the quality of access to national route systems (rail and road) that will attract investment in new industrial products and processes to locations that are tied in local trade and labour market patterns.

- to provide a high concentration of living space that is nevertheless attractive, and provides for a full range of incomes, tenures, household types and lifestyles.

- to ensure accessibility of employment opportunities from the places where people live.

(A Transport Strategy for Birmingham, report to BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 6/7/88)

The report noted that a "high level consultancy exercise" was necessary in order to provide the City Council with a framework for formulating transportation policy over a 20 year time frame.

The City Council then invited two other organizations to join as clients and make a financial contribution to the study. West Midland PTE (subsequently renamed Centro), and the regional offices of the Departments of Transport and Environment, represented via the City Action Team (CAT)[15], both accepted the invitation.

A conscious decision was taken by the Chief Executive, the City Engineer, and the Director of Development, that neighbouring districts would not be invited to participate in the study, since in Derek Rawson's view, had they been invited:

> "... we'd have argued the toss of what the terms of reference were going to be."
>
> (IT 2 p.136)

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15 In 1985 the Government established five City Action Teams across the country. Bringing together the regional offices of the Government departments, they were designed to co-ordinate economic regeneration policies for the inner cities.

The brief to prospective consultants required them to:

a) Prepare representative scenarios for transport to and within the City, quantified in broad terms, and covering:

- national and local factors which will influence change in transport demand, and use/role of different modes.

- a range of indicative forecasts based on "known" changes that are taking place (ie. infrastructure developments ...), together with a range of reasonable outcomes for those changes that are less easy to predict (ie. economy, employment, population, car ownership ...).

- the likely levels and sources (public and private) of resource inputs to transport services/infrastructure, and the degree to which these are variable according to policy options adopted by the clients.

b) Following presentation/consultation with clients on a), this should lead to recommendation of a strategic overview on the broadest time/mode/ purpose/geographical dimensions ... The purpose of this is to provide the clients with a strategic orientation on transport that is robust enough to remain valid in a wide range of economic and technological circumstances.

c) Within the context of the above, formulate and appraise a medium term (5-10 year) transport strategy by area/mode/corridor, within the context of a realistic level of resources.

(Revised terms of reference for BITS, 19/10/88)

It was hoped that part c) would help the clients answer a number of more detailed questions which included: how to balance the aim of good accessibility to and within the city centre with environmental objectives, how to deal with commuter flows from adjacent local authorities, how to capture the benefits of the M40 without serious environmental consequences[16], and how to service the Heartlands UDA area.

The six month study was expected to cost somewhere in the region of £80,000 - £120,000[17]. Tenders for the study were received from seven consultants and the Chief Executive chaired a selection panel which chose The MVA Consultancy (in

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16 In April 1988, opposition forced the Council to backdown on proposals for a new link road from the M40 to the city centre. See chapter 9.

17 The final cost of the study was £137,000.

partnership with PA Cambridge Economic Consultants (PACEC)[18] and the Tibbalds Colbourne Partnership[19]) in the light of the balance they proposed between strategic vision and technical detail, their experience[20], and their value for money (Report to BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 19/10/88).

On the client side, two groups oversaw the undertaking of the study - a steering group which met infrequently and comprised the Chief Executive, senior representatives from the Development and City Engineers Departments, and Centro, and a working party which met more frequently to discuss technical aspects of the study. This consisted of representatives from the City Engineers, Development, and Central Executive departments, CAT, and Centro.

The level of politician involvement in the study was relatively low. Three informal meetings were held between the consultants and elected members during the course of the study, but according to Nick Partridge of the Central Executive's Department the members

> "were quite content for Roger Taylor to get on and do BITS: 'He's our new Chief Executive, we've appointed him ... let him do it and prove it's as useful as he says.'
>
> (IT 1 p.157)

MVA suggested the establishment of a Review Committee which would meet four times during the course of the study and would include representatives from groups such as transport operators, other local authorities, chambers of commerce, and pressure groups. Professor May, a director of The MVA Consultancy and member of the team involved in BITS, regarded this as a valuable method of ensuring that relevant objectives and possible policy measures were not ignored, and also to gain feedback on the preferred strategy. This suggestion was not initially followed up by

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18 PACEC provided the economic, social, and demographic forecasting input to the study.

19 Tibbalds were responsible for townscape and urban design appraisal.

20 In 1987 MVA had undertaken a broadly similar study in partnership with Colin Buchanan and Partners for the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) as part of the development of strategic planning advice for London.

the clients, and it was only towards the end of the study that two meetings were held with an invited audience of external organizations.

The study itself began in September 1988. MVA divided the process into four stages:

Phase IA	The development of economic, financial, and demand forecasts, a forecasting and evaluation methodology and a prediction of transport problems in 2010.
Phase IB	The specification of a range of possible transport strategies for tackling these problems.
Phase II	The assessment of these strategies, and the preparation of a preferred strategy as a context for more detailed transport planning over the next 20 years.
Phase III	The appraisal of a series of more specific transport policy issues, both within Birmingham and at a regional and national level.

(MVA, 1988)

In the light of the vision statement, discussions with the clients, and analysis of the policy documents of the clients, MVA identified five transport policy objectives:

1. Efficiency in the use of resources;
2. Accessibility within and outside the city;
3. Environment, including townscape and safety;
4. Economic regeneration;
5. Practicability, including financial feasibility.

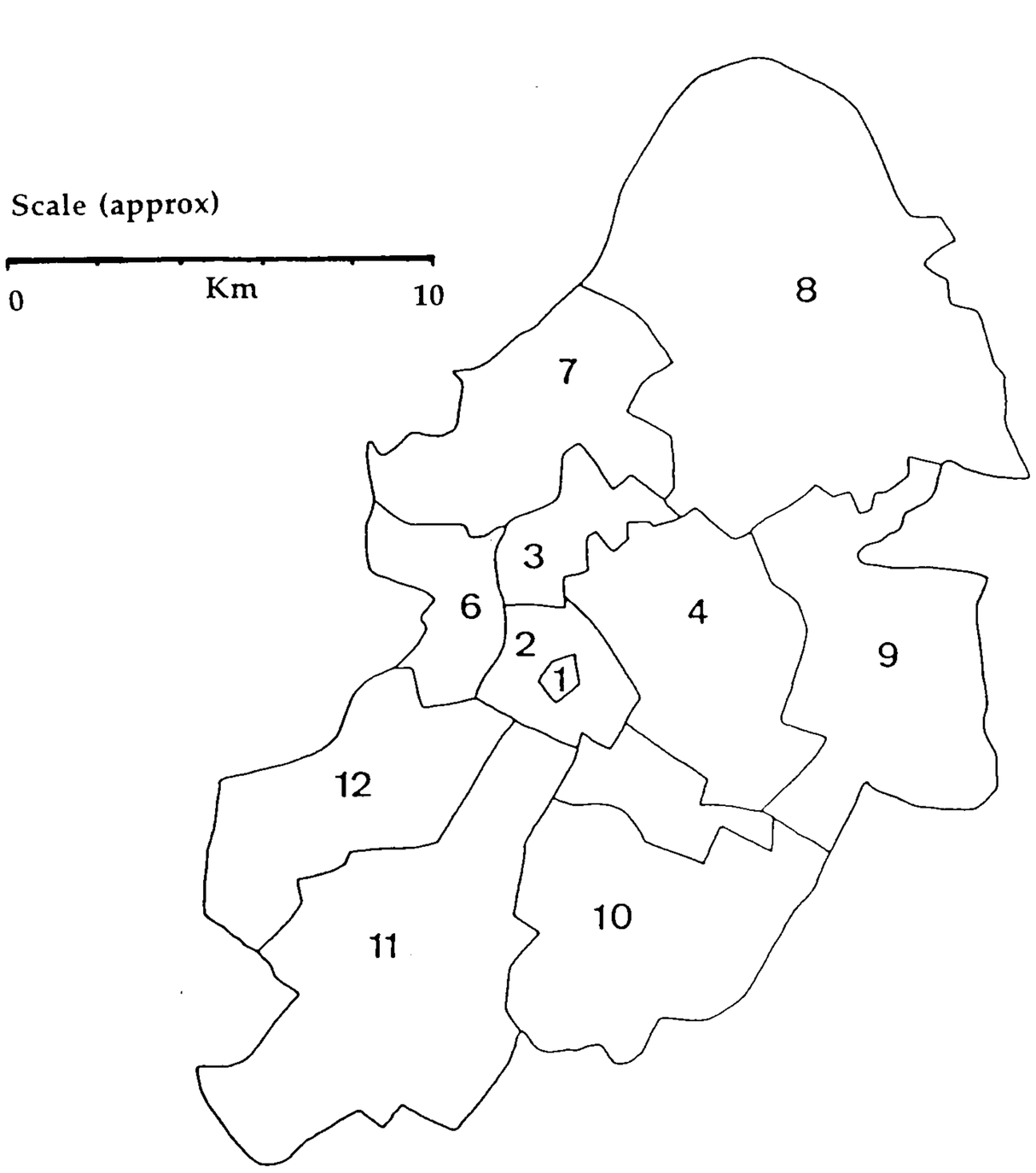
Whilst the steering group agreed that the primary objective was economic regeneration, the objectives were not prioritised, partly because economic regeneration potential was seen to be related to the other objectives through improvements to accessibility, reduced congestion, improved environment, and improved image (MVA, 1989b).

In contrast to the comprehensive studies of the 1960s, time and resource constraints prevented new surveys of travel behaviour being carried out to provide data for BITS. Instead the spreadsheet-based study relied on data from the now obsolete West Midlands County Transport Model, the PTE and the West Midlands Joint Data Team (JDT) - a body funded by the seven West Midland metropolitan districts.

The consultants chose a coarse zoning system for the study, dividing Birmingham into 12 zones - more than 130 fewer than the West Midlands Transport Study of the 1960s had used for the same area. Zones 1 and 2 covered the central area, zones 3-6 represented the inner city areas and zones 7-12 the outer area, delineated on the basis of transportation corridors. Each zone was an aggregation of zones used in the West Midlands County Transport Model.

MVA selected 1985 as the base year for the study. The base matrix for road traffic was constructed with the aid of data from the West Midlands model. Based on census data, this provided morning peak hour trip matrices for 1981 and also forecasts for 1991. By interpolating between the datasets, MVA produced a new 1985 base matrix, sectored to the BITS zones. To improve matrix accuracy in the central area, it was calibrated against the Middle Ring Road cordon count of 1985. Because of time constraints, off-peak conditions were not represented.

Figure 6.2 The zoning system adopted for BITS. Source: MVA, BITS Final Report



Unlike the studies of the 1960s, MVA did not develop a mathematical road network description and instead used area speed/flow relationships to measure deteriorations in road traffic speeds as traffic levels grew. In order to establish the relationship for 1985 it was first necessary to develop a BITS vehicle-km matrix. This was done by multiplying the County model's zone trip matrix data by zone distance matrix data and then compressing to BITS sectors to produce a matrix of total vehicle travel in the base year. A fixed routeing method was used to assign the traffic, measured in vehicle kilometres, to the study zones. Professional judgement was used to select the proportion of zone to zone travel within each zone and travel was divided between a principal and secondary road network. An index of principal network usage was then calculated by dividing the modelled principal road vehicle-km by an inventory of principal road vehicle-km capacity, constructed using Ordnance Survey maps and the JDT's highways inventory database. By relating the index to a similarly-constructed inventory of principal road speeds a speed/flow relationship was produced.

To produce public transport base matrices, the consultants used data from the PTE's Volvo VIPS model which had been constructed using 1985 survey data. Separate matrices were developed for bus and rail, again sectored to BITS zones.

To assist forecasting likely travel conditions in the horizon year, 2010, PACEC developed a series of four possible economic and population forecasts based upon the following national/local conditions:

i) Weak UK growth, strong city
ii) Weak UK growth, weak city
iii) Strong UK growth, strong city
iv) Strong UK growth, weak city

After discussions with the clients it was resolved that the chosen scenario for the transport modelling would be that represented by slow national growth (2% per annum growth in GDP) and a strong city. Under this scenario, employment in the city was forecast to fall 6.5% and population fall by 3% by the year 2011 (see Table 6.1). On the basis of income forecasts supplied by PACEC and a Department of Transport forecasting methodology, MVA produced forecasts of car ownership rates for the horizon year (Table 6.2). Applying these forecasts to the fixed trip rates produced

forecasts for trip generations whilst trip attractions for each zone were based on forecast employment data and fixed attraction rates. In generating the forecasts the consultants assumed that all growth would be accommodated by private car.

Table 6.1 PACEC economic and population forecasts for BITS ('000s). Source: MVA, 1989c.

	1986	2001	2011
Total employment	514.80	497.28	481.17
Manufacturing employment	161.73	128.81	110.86
Service employment	207.34	221.44	225.20
Other employment	145.73	147.03	145.11
Total population	990.7	969.2	958.1

Table 6.2 Household car ownership forecasts of BITS. Source: MVA 1989c

1981		1985		2010	
Households with:					
Car	No car	Car	No car	Car	No car
178 000	176 000	188 000	185 000	269 000	140 000

Two methods were used to test the impacts of investment strategies on travel demand. For changes in highway infrastructure and traffic management, the network capacity of the zones was simply adjusted. Road user charging, car park charges and public transport infrastructure investments and fares were input directly into the generalised cost matrices[21]. The mode-split model altered the demand in the light of changes in generalised cost. This used relationships based upon work MVA had previously undertaken on the Manchester Metrolink.

Evaluation of the strategy tests drew on a variety of sources (Table 6.3). An economic evaluation framework converted the transport model data into annual monetary values for six factors - highway operating costs, public transport operating costs, user

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21 Private vehicle generalised cost included parking and access time, parking and access costs, in-vehicle travel time and in-vehicle travel costs. Public transport generalised cost included walk access time, wait time, in-vehicle travel time and fares.

time costs, highway accident costs, parking and road user charge revenue, and public transport fare revenue. Clients provided estimates of the costs of different strategy elements whilst the consultants used their own professional judgement for matters such as pollution, and severance.

The evaluation process was also designed to consider issues of equity through assessing the implications of transport strategies for different impact groups defined on the basis of socio-economic class, area of the city, type of transport, journey purpose, and transport operators.

Table 6.3 Methods of evaluation. Source: Jones D., May A., Wenban-Smith A. (1990)

OBJECTIVE	SOURCE
Efficiency	
Capital, maintenance	Clients
User time	Model
Operating costs	Model
Accident costs	Model
Accessibility	
Local access	Model
Parking access	Model
Regional access	Qualitative
Environment	
Noise	Model
Pollution	Qualitative
Visual, severance	Qualitative
Practicability	
Capital, maintenance	Clients
Operating costs, revenue	Model
Operation, enforcement	Qualitative

The first strategy test was to examine the effect of a do-minimum transport investment scenario. The do-minimum scenario embodied only those schemes which the clients deemed to be already committed (see Appendix C).

There was a disagreement between Alan Wenban-Smith and representatives from the Department of Transport over whether the Department's Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) and Western Orbital Road (WOR) should have been treated as commitments. Wenban-Smith suggested that the finance for these schemes could be better spent on infrastructure improvements within the West Midlands conurbation. Ultimately the Department's view that they should be treated as commitments was accepted[22]. Peter Langley of the Department of Transport explained why this stance had been taken:

> "(the schemes were) in the national roads programme ... we weren't looking for any extra support for them, we (just) felt they were a given factor in the transport system. ... By the time BITS was commissioned, effectively the decision to proceed with these schemes had already been taken, in terms of financial allocation."
>
> (IT 1 pp.175-176)

The do-minimum scenario predicted that between 1985 and 2010 there would be a 28 percent increase in total travel with travel into the city centre increasing by 45 percent. Though there would be some increases in rail use, the majority of the growth would be in private car use. The consequences of the do-minimum scenario were anticipated to be a worsening of congestion throughout the day, deterioration in accessibility between zones, increased pressure on city centre car parking and increases in air pollution, noise pollution, and accidents (MVA, 1989a).

Whilst one of the purposes of the do-minimum scenario was to provide a benchmark against which the performance of alternative investment scenarios could then be judged, MVA acknowledged that the do-minimum might be an overestimate of future problems as, in practice, levels of travel demand would be constrained by congestion[23] (Note prepared by MVA for BITS steering and working group).

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22 Roger Taylor, Birmingham's Chief Executive, had also agreed that in the light of the disagreement, the City Council's official view would be to accept these schemes as commitments. As Nick Partridge noted in a letter to the researcher there was no desire to upset the Department of Transport on this matter.

23 There is a difference of opinion on this issue amongst transport professionals and this was reflected in the views of some of the participants on the working party. Whilst one was of the opinion that most, though not all, of the traffic

Devising alternative transport strategies was based upon four principles - to test the impact of each of the main types of transport policy instrument, to identify complementarity between types of instrument, to reflect the constraints of the availability of finance and time to implement measures, and to keep to a minimum the number of separate strategy tests (MVA, 1989d). The initial tests were not expected to identify a preferred strategy, but were expected to provide the basis for developing one.

As a result of discussions between the consultants and the working party, three different scenarios were drawn up for testing:

Strategy 10 : Private Transport Infrastructure
"adopts the philosophy that, since the main growth is likely to be in demand for private transport, it is most appropriate to provide for it." (MVA, 1989d para. 3.1)

Strategy 20 : Public Transport Infrastructure
"adopts the philosophy that road construction will be unable sufficiently to cater for growth in demand for travel, and that the combination of light rail provision and other public transport service improvements should help to attract car users and hence reduce congestion and environmental intrusion." (MVA, 1989d para.4.1)

Strategy 30 : Pricing and Management
"adopts the philosophy that infrastructure provision is not necessarily a cost-effective way of resolving transport problems, and may serve to aggravate the problems caused by increased demand for travel, and that more can be achieved by low cost enhancement of the existing infrastructure and control of demand to match supply." (MVA, 1989d para. 5.1)

Variants of these were also examined such as a Strategy 21 which tested the performance of an intensive light rail system with lines in those corridors where congestion was forecast to be most severe. Each infrastructure-based scenario used real schemes to assess likely impact. Some schemes were included in all tests, though they were not actually commitments - for instance, dualling of the Middle Ring Road,

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growth forecast in the do-minimum would take place whether or not new highway capacity was provided, another believed that the conditions predicted by do-minimum scenarios in general were exaggerations of what was likely to happen, and that it was misleading to compare alternative investment scenarios to the performance of a do-minimum.

introduction of Urban Traffic Control (UTC), and British Rail rolling stock improvements. The specification of strategies was not made within a financial straitjacket since BITS was also intended to be used as a bid document to enhance Birmingham's claim for Government transport grant. Strategies were, however, subsequently assessed against likely levels of available finance. Similarly, legislative constraints which existed at the time the study was undertaken (for instance fare policies on buses in the light of deregulation), were not treated as constraints when it came to strategy development. Professor May, of The MVA Consultancy, explained the rationale behind this approach to strategy development:

> "There is a tendency (for clients) to say,'We can't consider these measures because of these constraints', whether it is investment ... public acceptability ... integration. ...
>
> What we were saying was: 'Look, you're planning 20 years ahead. Those ... constraints could be got rid of over that period of time'. ... Rather than hide behind them and say 'we can't do this because', the approach ought to be, 'here is something worth doing, here are the barriers to progress, now let's overcome these barriers to progress'."
>
> (IT 4 p.51)

The alternative strategies indicated how each of the main policy elements could help to improve future conditions over both the base (1985) year, and the do-minimum scenario and their performances are illustrated in table 6.4.

In comparison to the do-minimum case, the highways-based strategies were seen to offer little improvement to levels of congestion, the environment, or accessibility by public transport. Similarly the public transport strategies had little impact upon congestion, and whilst they improved accessibility for public transport users and enhanced the image of the city, they were judged to do little for private transport accessibility or for the environment. Furthermore, the consultants warned that if a public transport-based strategy were pursued, the Council would forego Government funding available for road improvements:

> "The relatively low level of investment in highways in these strategies means that the City Council would effectively be foregoing resources from central government in the form of Transport Supplementary Grant in order to concentrate on the development of public transport provision. The desirability of a strategy which does not maximise the

> use of available grant assistance, particularly in the context of the promotion of economic development objectives, needs careful consideration."
>
> (MVA 1989a, para.3.3.7)

The management-based strategy included a road pricing element around the Middle Ring Road. The model assumed that this would divert all through traffic out of the city centre. This had the effect of reducing city centre congestion levels both in comparison to the do-minimum and the 1985 base conditions, but MVA anticipated few benefits outside the charged area.

From the performance of these strategy tests, MVA then proceeded to devise and model an initial preferred strategy - Strategy 40. This combined elements from the test strategies in order to produce substantial improvements to transport system performance. The strategy placed emphasis on rail investment, and in particular light rail, to bring people into the city centre. MVA suggested that light rail had a number of benefits over heavy rail investment, including better city centre penetration, and the ability to run on-street. Furthermore they pointed out that heavy rail capacity in New Street station was restricted. A road pricing cordon at the Middle Ring Road was included to restrict vehicular access. In combination with a downgrading of the Inner Ring Road and upgrading of the Middle Ring Road, traffic in the city centre was expected to be reduced by 19% in comparison to the do-minimum scenario.

Road improvements were still warranted, however, especially to the orbital routes like the Middle Ring Road, which would help to remove traffic from the central area. In addition MVA included some radial highway improvements between the city boundary and the Middle Ring Road though the basis for their justification is a little unclear. In the BITS Phase II report they were justified in circumstances where they made "significant contributions to improving travel speeds" (MVA, 1989e para.6.3.3), The Final Report, however, made no mention of their role in improving travel speeds and instead advocated "modest" improvements where they would "achieve better connection to the orbital motorways, to ensure good quality access to major redevelopment areas, and to alleviate environmental problems in residential and shopping areas affected by existing radials" (MVA, 1989a para. 4.6.4).

PACEC believed that Strategy 40 would contribute to the economic development of the city, commenting:

> "The strategy improves the competitiveness of the central business district (in comparison to the do-minimum strategy) as a location for private services both in direct economic terms as well as environmentally. ... the transport system should help to confer net additional gains to Birmingham that would not otherwise be there if the do-minimum strategy is adopted."
>
> (Letter from PACEC to MVA)

Strategy 40 offered a benefit/cost ratio of 6.5 but this was considerably lower than the 13.7 offered by the management strategy (30) and 11.4 offered by the public transport strategy (20). Nevertheless, the consultants noted that the high ratio of benefit to cost for strategy 30 was due to its low cost and that it offered the lowest user time benefits of any strategy. With regards strategy 20, the consultants said the high benefits were "very sensitive to the assumptions made on bus lane performance and is in practice likely to perform less effectively than the preferred strategy" (MVA, 1989e para.5.2.3). In defence of the preferred strategy, MVA pointed out that it had the highest user time savings and the largest benefit/cost ratio of any of the infrastructure strategies (ibid).

A series of further strategy tests, based on strategy 40, were then made before the final report was published. Strategy 42 examined the effect of omitting road pricing from the preferred strategy. Strategy 45 examined the impact of lower economic growth rate assumptions and strategy 46 examined higher population and economic growth rates in the suburbs. The latter two tests were requested by PACEC.

The final preferred strategy was modified from strategy 40 in some respects. Notably, road pricing which had been an element of strategy 40, was no longer seen to be so important. The final report stated that:

> "The case for introduction of car use controls as an adjunct to the preferred strategy is not an overwhelming one. ... It is clear that decisions on such a policy do not need to be taken in the immediate future."
>
> (MVA, 1989a para. 5.7.6)

There were a number of reasons for downgrading the road pricing advice. The Development Department officers on the study groups were concerned that it might affect the health of the city centre economy. More generally there were concerns about how politically practical the policy was, and what the reaction to its inclusion in the final strategy might be. As the City Engineer Derek Rawson explained:

> "They (MVA) did talk about road pricing in BITS but we watered that down because we didn't want to frighten the politicians; the officers talked to MVA and said, 'Well you know, if you put it like that, its going to discredit the whole report. Don't take it out, but don't put it as positively as you've said.'
>
> ... Because we didn't want anything that would diminish its (the report's) stature. ... So it is in, but its not in the format that it was. ... I think it was not the right time or place to advocate it in the strength that they (MVA) wanted to. Its in; because we wanted to put it in, but we didn't want to frighten people. ...
>
> Because we wanted to get the Chamber of Commerce and people like that backing BITS and if road pricing was shown as an option that was nearly kind of coming in next year sort of thing, it would have got rid of all the good things in it (BITS)."
>
> (IT 3 pp.150-151)

MVA themselves were not entirely convinced that road pricing was essential to the success of the strategy. As Professor May recalled:

> "... We'd just come out of the LPAC study where we'd argued that road pricing was a pivotal issue. I certainly don't remember feeling anywhere near as committed to road pricing being a part of a strategy for Birmingham as I did in London, or as I did in Edinburgh[24] afterwards."
>
> (IT 4 p.50)

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[24] In 1990 The MVA Consultancy was commissioned by Lothian Regional Council, Edinburgh District Council, and the Scottish Office to undertake the Joint Authorities Transportation and Environmental Study (JATES) for Edinburgh.

The final preferred strategy produced the following results[25] (see also table 6.4):

* 4 percent reduction in vehicle km compared with do-minimum, but still 35 percent higher than present levels;

* speeds lower by 10 - 20 percent than today's, though again better than do-minimum;

* improvements in congestion levels in the wider city centre;

* higher economic rate of return than any solely infrastructure-based strategies;

* public transport accessibility improved over today's levels, except in the very north of the city;

* a parking shortfall, which could be remedied by new provision or car use controls;

* enhancement of the city centre environment by allowing pedestrianisation and the bridging of the inner ring road;

* deterioration of environmental conditions in the inner and outer city, though environmental traffic management measures could alleviate these problems;

* much enhanced potential for economic regeneration, particularly through improved accessibility and image.

(Adapted from Jones et al, (1990)).

Though the model was still predicting substantial increases in traffic flows, this was not greeted with any degree of alarm by the clients on the steering and working groups. Nick Partridge, head of strategic planning and research in the Central Executive's Department explained,

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[25] In the Final Report it is not always clear whether the results of the preferred strategy related to the initial strategy 40 (which included road pricing) or the refined preferred strategy (which omitted road pricing). For instance, in paragraph 4.3.3 of the Final Report, it is stated that the figures for peak period arrivals modal split in the city centre refer to the final preferred strategy (which omits road pricing). Nevertheless, the figures in table 4.3 of the Final Report on which paragraph 4.3.3 is based are the same as those contained in table 4.2 of the BITS Phase II report which related to the strategy 40 test (which included road pricing).

Table 6.4 Summary of Strategy Performance (Source: MVA, 1989a)

Strategy	Do min.	10	20	21	30	Preferred
Congestion						
City centre	---	---	--	--	+	+
Inner city	--	--	--	--	--	0
Outer city	--	-	--	--	--	-
Accessibility, public						
City centre	--	--	0	++	--	+++
Inner city	--	--	-	+++	--	+++
Outer city	---	--	-	+++	--	+++
Accessibility, private						
City centre	--	--	--	--	-	--
Inner city	--	+	--	--	--	+
Outer city	--	+	--	--	--	+
Environment						
City centre	--	--	--	--	+	+
Inner city	--	--	--	--	--	0
Outer city	-	-	-	-	-	0
Image						
City centre	0	0	+	++	0	+
Inner city	0	+	+	++	0	++
Outer city	0	+	+	++	0	++
Economic Regeneration						
City centre	--	--	-	0	+	++
Inner city	--	-	-	+	--	+++
Outer city	--	0	-	+	--	++
Economic Efficiency#		+	++	+	++	+

Key:
+++ Substantial improvement (compared with 1985)
0 No change
--- Substantial deterioration
Compared to do-minimum

> "economic regeneration was top (priority), city centre was key to that, there was an explicit ... political priority that we are not going to turn anybody away who wants to come to the city centre, so if this (traffic growth) was what the technical thing showed, then fine."
>
> (IT 1 p.160)

Having developed a preferred strategy, Alan Wenban-Smith asked the consultants to summarise it as a set of strategic recommendations:

> "I asked them to bring it out: 'Write it down for godssake - that's the bit I'm interested in. ...'
>
> You know, this business of clearly distinguishing longer term strategic recommendations from all the medium term stuff - I wanted the longer term stuff as it were to be timeless, independent of medium term stuff. There should be something which you could identify and say, 'That is the core of the strategic advice which is being offered here'."
>
> (IT 3 p.67)

The drawing up of the strategic advice went through a number of slight revisions in which some of the client representatives had an input. For instance the consultants suggested that one piece should be:

> "radial highway construction to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief."
>
> (Unpublished BITS Draft Report)

On the suggestion of one of the client representatives, this was modified in the Final Report to read:

> "radial highway construction **sufficient** to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief **within corridors**."
>
> (MVA, 1989a para.4.6.2; changes emphasised by researcher)

The Final Report offered the following strategic advice to the clients -

- enhancement of British Rail lines, and construction of new light rail lines in corridors not served by rail, as a means of substantially improving accessibility and reducing congestion on the approaches to the city centre;

- orbital highway construction so far as is needed to relieve, and enable the expansion of, the city centre;

- radial highway construction sufficient to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief within corridors;

- traffic management measures to:

  a) increase the capacity of the existing road system and improve bus operations;

  b) divert city centre traffic to orbital roads, and improve conditions for pedestrians in the city centre;

  c) ensure that the environmental relief enabled by radial road construction is achieved;

- integration of services on individual public transport modes to the extent permitted by the legislative and financial framework;

- enhancement of service levels where justified by changes in patronage, while retaining an integrated fare structure at a level close to today's fares (in real terms) as permitted by trends in patronage and operating costs.

(MVA, 1989a para.4.6.2)

Nick Partridge saw this advice as being the centrepiece of the BITS report:

> "The key thing about BITS is that famous page which says road construction for orbital movements, public transport - particularly rail - for into and out of the city centre, a bit of road construction if it will bring environmental relief and access within corridors, and traffic management. ...
>
> You don't always get such clear strategic advice from consultants when you appoint them to give you that. ... It doesn't try and tell you, 'Well in this situation that's the right answer, and in this one that's the right answer', but (instead it says) that this overall is the balance that we should be aiming for."
>
> (IT 1 p.158)

Doug Jones, MVA's project manager for BITS, believed the importance of the recommendations lay not so much in their ground-breaking nature, but rather in the fact that they could be supported by analysis:

> "I know some people within our own company said after (BITS was completed), 'What's it actually telling us that isn't obvious commonsense?' Maybe (that's true), but that commonsense has resulted from a reasoned and quantitative approach, it can be justified, proven, rather than just somebody's gut reaction."
>
> (IT 1 p.184)

Cost estimates of the preferred strategy were prepared; these showed that though the highways programme was probably achievable, the public transport element greatly exceeded likely available resources:

Cost of BITS recommendations to the year 2010 (1988 prices) MVA, 1989a[26]

a)	Highways	=	£385m	
		Of which :	£130m Trunk roads	
			£180m TSG eligible	
			£ 75m non-TSG	
b)	Public Transport (Rail)	=	£420m	

Estimated availability of resources to the year 2010 (1988 prices) MVA, 1989a

a)	Highways	=	£300 - 400m (excluding trunk roads)	
		Of which :	£180 - 220m TSG	
			£120 - 180m non-TSG	
b)	Public Transport	=	£140 - 200m[27]	

This breakdown of resources presented some problems as the consultants noted that:

> "In the context of the City Council's wider urban policy objectives, the rail infrastructure element is particularly important, given its potential for improvement of accessibility and encouragement of economic

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[26] The capital costs of the BITS strategy were based on client cost estimates of schemes. They excluded the costs of schemes which were included in the do-minimum, including the cost of the Department of Transport's Western Orbital Road and Birmingham Northern Relief Road. In addition, where LRT lines crossed into neighbouring districts, only the costs of the section of line within Birmingham were included.

[27] Resources relate to the entire West Midland PTA area covering seven districts.

> regeneration. ... Conversely, highway infrastructure investment is less central to the strategy, since the resulting improvements in congestion levels and accessibility will be small. even so, some highway investment is justified ..."
>
> (MVA, 1989a paras 4.6.3, 4.6.4).

MVA suggested that, should finance for the public transport elements not be forthcoming, a number of courses of action could be taken - the Department of Transport could be encouraged to change its Section 56 funding criteria which ignored the user benefits of public transport schemes, legislative changes could be sought to allow the transfer of funds from highways to public transport projects, or alternative sources of funding public transport projects (such as road pricing) could be considered.

Having set out the broad strategic advice in chapter 4 of the final report, in chapter 5 the consultants went on to examine the implications of the advice for individual transport policy instruments in the short and medium term. The aim was not to produce detailed prescriptive measures, but rather to suggest how the broad strategy might be applied in particular circumstances.

When the consultants completed chapter 5 they discovered they had gone into greater detail than the clients had expected. This was particularly true with the advice on the Heartlands Spine Road where the consultants were sceptical of the need to design it to the dual carriageway standard proposed. As Nick Partridge recalled, this caused considerable anger with councillors and at one stage "could have put the whole (BITS) exercise at risk"[28]. In the final report some of this detail was subsequently omitted or slightly modified so that it was acceptable to the clients.

The short and medium term advice supported the upgrading of the Middle Ring Road, advocating the upgrading of certain radial roads[29], recommending underground operation of light rail in the city centre. MVA also queried some schemes - though they supported the plans to build the Heartlands Spine Road to

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28 Letter to researcher.

29 See chapter 9 for a discussion of the role played by the BITS advice on transport policy in south Birmingham.

dual carriageway standard they added that efforts should be made to discourage attracting through traffic off the M6 and that to save costs the road could initially be built to single carriageway standard whilst retaining land for later widening (BITS Final Report, para. 5.3.25). They also questioned the merits of road widening planned on a section of the A34 between the middle and inner ring roads.

6.6 Initial client reaction to the preferred strategy

On the 29th June 1989, a presentation of the report was given by Professor May of The MVA Consultancy to members of the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee. An officer's summary report of the BITS exercise outlined the broad strategic advice and described how officers believed the Council should react to the short and medium term advice offered by the consultants was also presented (see appendix D). The officers report noted that:

> "Although the consultant's recommended strategy is vulnerable to shortage of public transport capital, it is clear from the work that has been done on alternative approaches that there is no other way of achieving both concentration of activity and accessibility without very serious (and counter productive) effects on inner/central area environment."
>
> (Report to BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee meeting 29/6/89, para.5.1)

At the Sub-Committee meeting members agreed:

1. That the broad transport strategy put forward by the BITS... be endorsed, and an agreed joint statement to this effect be sought from the other co-sponsors.

2. That this strategy be used as the basis for the transport content of the City's Unitary Development Plan, and that consultation and public participation on it be carried out in that context.

3. That the strategy be used as the policy basis for successive TPPs, commencing with that for the current year.

4. That your officers' recommendations on relevant short/medium term issues ... be agreed (see Appendix D).

5. That discussions be opened with Department of Transport, initially at officer level, about the level and balance of resources for capital investment between modes.

6. That a copy of the full final report be made available to each of the region's major transport providers and to neighbouring local authorities, and their responses invited.

7. That a popular summary in an attractive format be prepared, and that the views of relevant representative organizations for business, commerce and labour be sought, and reported back to this committee.

(Minutes of BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 29/6/89)

The first recommendation - that a joint statement endorsing the strategy should be made by the participating organizations - was never acted upon. Indeed, neither the WMPTA or the Department of Transport ever formally accepted the recommendations in the study as the basis for future investment. Mr Peter Langley, one of Department of Transport's participants on the study explained the difficulty of making such a commitment:

> "I think the study was a fairly broad brush logic-based study. ... Therefore the justification for many of the policies was very much at the logical level, whereas the Department of Transport's analysis is very much based on Cost-Benefit Analysis (COBA) etc.
>
> So the Department of Transport is having to say in a lot of cases, 'we go along with the idea of this, we think it all fits together very nicely, but we can't commit ourselves to support a particular proposal until we've seen the colour of your COBA/financial analysis'."
>
> (IT 1 pp.168-169)

Whilst there was little public comment on BITS from elected members, Roger Taylor, the Chief Executive of the Council, believed the message of the report matched the evolving thinking amongst councillors:

> "(The BITS recommendations) very much ... caught the political mood of the city in the sense that it (BITS) wasn't anti-car but it wasn't arguing for a massive programme of road construction. And it was very much supporting an emerging political line that actually it was probably time to spend a bit more energy and effort on public transport."
> (IT 4 p.157)

In addition, Taylor believed that BITS fed into the wider debate about the way that transport policy was formulated within an urban area:

> "I think that ... BITS demonstrated that you could have a realistic ... quite modest ... balanced approach to transportation in a big city which reassured the people who already believed that and showed the vast majority of people who didn't really understand it that you could actually start to play with the various mode components as a whole - it had a very enlightening effect."
>
> (IT 4 pp.162-163)

Amongst City Council officers, reaction to the message of the study was generally positive. Nick Partridge acknowledged that many of the individual policies were already being pursued prior to BITS, but believed it was important to have gone through a thought process:

> "... even though there were bits of existing policy wrapped up in ... (the strategy), the way they were presented and came together gave a feeling of newness to it all: 'here we have a properly thought out City Council transport strategy, its different because we're really going to promote public transport for bringing people to the city centre'."
>
> (IT 1 p.162)

Graham Shaylor, the Director of Development and Birmingham's Deputy Chief Executive, wholeheartedly accepted the message that there was a case for an increased emphasis on public transport:

> "(MVA) produced some analysis of potential spending that really convinced me. ... We weren't arguing for (extra) £m's, all we were saying was "that's the size of the cake, can we split it in different sized slices to the ones they were in now?" Which seemed to be a politically defensible stance."
>
> (IT 2 p.78)

On top of this he felt that the study "produced a common agenda and a common work programme" (IT 2 p.87) for officers from different organizations - the City Council and the PTE, and different departments within the Council.

The City Engineer, Derek Rawson, who had a forty year career of road building behind him, also accepted the findings. Graham Shaylor thought Derek Rawson had

been "intellectually captured" by BITS (IT 2 p.86). Rawson admitted that it was only in the late 1980s that he had begun to recognize that public transport had a role to play in urban areas, but he accepted the that there was a case for transferring some resources from highways to public transport:

> DR: "the problem was that ... when you looked at total (resources for the preferred strategy) we needed more for public transport than we were likely to get and we needed less for roads than we were likely to get; and there had to be a mechanism of putting some of the money that we would have got for roads into the public transport pot."
>
> AF: "And you were quite happy with that were you?"
>
> DR: "Oh yes."
>
> (IT 2 p.160)

One organization which reacted angrily to certain aspects of the BITS recommendations was the major local bus operator, West Midlands Travel. At one of the presentations given to external organizations towards the end of the study, their representative criticised the fact that they had not been consulted earlier on in the process, and suggested that BITS had underplayed the role of the bus, and had been deliberately designed to further the case for light rail.

Professor May, who had been one of the MVA representatives at the presentations, acknowledged that there was some legitimacy in the claim that buses had not been given adequate attention and he accepted that had bus operators been involved earlier on in the study process, this criticism might have been avoided:

> "It would have been a much more certain process of taking on board bus issues if they (operators) had been on the steering group and working group, but their presence on the review group certainly reminded us rather too late on that we hadn't given as much emphasis to the bus as we should have done."
>
> (IT 4 pp.45-46)

According to Nick Partridge, the lack of recognition given to the bus was also connected to deregulation of bus services which had taken them out of the control of

the PTA/E. In the West Midlands there was considerable inter-organizational rivalry between the PTE and the newly independent West Midlands Travel[30].

Though a summary of the BITS report was produced for the public's attention (part of recommendation number 7), it was never distributed. A full page report by the project manager, Mr Alan Wenban-Smith, did, however, appear in the *Birmingham Post* on the 11th July 1989 and some of the issues fed were subsequently discussed in the public inquiry into Birmingham's unitary development plan in 1991.

Given the rather low-key nature of the report's adoption, perhaps it is not surprising that there was little public reaction to the BITS report. One member of the public who did have views on BITS was Dr John Newson who at the time was working for the community pressure group Birmingham for People[31]. He had also attended the review group presentations given by MVA and was supportive of BITS in the sense that it had looked at the negative effects of road building and had helped to start a debate about transport policies in Birmingham[32]. Nevertheless, he did not believe that movement in itself was necessarily a good thing and therefore felt that the study's (and the Council's) objective of catering for all travel demand would ultimately be destructive for Birmingham:

> "I rang up MVA and said, 'having thought about all this I think by far and away the best option is the do nothing option ...'
>
> I was arguing that movement itself is not good; in fact restraint of movement is actually what makes ... people want to live in cities."
>
> (IT 1 p.186)

He thought the predictions of traffic growth in the do-minimum scenario were unrealistic since there would not be the space to accommodate such journeys or the reasons for these journeys to be made. He suggested that the study was

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30 Letter from Nick Partridge to researcher and conversation with James Isaac, chairman of West Midlands Travel at the time.

31 Birmingham for People was a planning pressure group established in 1988 as a response to the city centre redevelopment plans.

32 For how this debate moved forward after the undertaking of BITS, see the proceeding three chapters, in particular Chapter 9.

> "starting off with a non-question really - 'how can we respond to this doomsday scenario (of traffic growth)?'
>
> And then coming up with various answers - hundreds of millions of pounds of Metro lines (for instance) ..."
> (IT 1 pp.199)

It was MVA's forecast of an extra 30,000 trips into the city centre during the morning peak by 2010 of which he was most sceptical. Writing in 1992 he commented:

> "To have a large increase in traffic flows into the city centre over the next 20 years, we would have to see either: a rise of tens of thousands of people working in the city centre, which is not realistic, or see many more people commuting in from longer distances, or many abandoning public transport for the car as the way of going to work, which are very undesirable.
>
> BITS assumed that all these will happen, so its predictions should be considered not likely, not feasible, not desirable, as the basis for planning Birmingham's transport."
>
> (Newson, 1992, pp.10-11)

6.7 Interpretation and interim conclusions

This chapter shows that the idea to undertake the BITS report was originally conceived by Roger Taylor, Birmingham's Chief Executive. He had various motives for doing so and these might be placed into three broadly distinct categories - the national, the local and the personal. At the national level BITS was hoped to play a partisan role by supporting the emerging local government line that change in the Government's approach to urban transport policy was necessary.

At the local level, Roger Taylor saw an urgent need for a rethink of Birmingham's transport planning procedures, in the light of poor relations between the fragmented organizations responsible for policy and the lack of any clear direction for policy. This notion of policy drifting somewhat aimlessly reflects one of the chief criticisms levelled at the incremental model of policy-making. The decision to review the direction of policy seems consistent with the mixed scanning approach of a high order review at a point of crisis over present policy.

The emphasis of the study would seem to have been on offering long term strategic advice on policy. Nevertheless there was some more detailed advice on particular issues, and the preferred strategy was derived from a modelling exercise which tested the impact of real schemes. The breakdown between strategy and detailed policy mirrors Etzioni's distinction between fundamental and bit decisions.

Whilst some people were concerned about a lack of a coherent direction to the council's transport policy prior to BITS, there does not seem to be any evidence that there was fundamental concern about any particular policies being pursued. For instance, there was no fundamental questioning of the merits of light rail, or a roads programme. In this way BITS appears to have been intended, not so much as a way of completely re-writing the transport policies of the city, but as a way of bringing together organizations and departments around a single transport strategy for the city.

At the personal level, BITS was tied into Roger Taylor's desire to create a power base for himself within the City Council since he saw transport as an area in which he could quickly make an impact. This was another partisan aim for the study.

Whilst Taylor therefore recognized a need for the study, it appears that politicians were less concerned about the existing state of affairs. The study itself was undertaken with relatively little involvement from the elected members of the City Council. Nevertheless, this is not to say that, once the objectives had been set, the study was simply a technical exercise. Indeed it appears that there was considerable contact between participants on the client working and steering parties and the consultants throughout the course of proceedings. This provided the consultants with some degree of political steer to their work. The advice on road pricing is perhaps the most obvious illustration of where alterations to the report's draft recommendations were made in order to make them more acceptable to clients, though changes to some of the more detailed recommendations also took place. This seems to show that the precise balance between objectives can only be identified once the preferred strategy has been chosen. The final study recommendations were not therefore produced simply though intellectual analysis, but were also subject to some political influence.

This contradicts the notion in the mixed scanning and rational models that a ranked set of objectives can direct the analyst to a preferred strategy.

The bus operator's criticism that little attention had been paid to buses in the study, and the subsequent acknowledgement by the consultants that this claim did have some justification, raises an interesting question about the undertaking of technical studies. As chapter 2 noted, the rational model of decision-making assumes that all alternative policies should be studied in the process of arriving at a preferred option. Critics of this model claim that in most decisions there are far too many alternatives to examine, given the limited time and financial resources.

In the BITS process it appears that less analysis was given to policy options for which there was no strong support from client participants. As Professor May acknowledged, had there been bus interests represented on the study at an earlier stage, MVA might well have been reminded to give buses more attention. This suggests that a study is not simply a technical exercise, but may also be subject to organizational influences in terms of the emphasis it gives to particular measures.

It is not clear what the motives were for the minor changes which were made by the clients to the verbal strategic advice, as illustrated on page 93 of this chapter. It might have been the result of slightly different interpretations of the technical output from the strategic model, an attempt to make the advice fit the analysis more accurately, or perhaps a desire by the clients to make the advice match their own intuitive beliefs more closely. Whatever is the case, the finding does point to the fact that translating technical data into verbal statements is a subjective process. Brewer (1973) argues that the same is true when translating verbal statements of relationships into mathematical formulae for modelling purposes.

The reaction of client participants to the final strategic advice appears to have been broadly favourable. The Study's initiator, Roger Taylor, believed it had an enlightening effect - showing the merits of looking at an overall transport strategy. It might have been expected that those with a professional involvement with the road programme would have been concerned with the Study's conclusion that increased emphasis ought to be placed on public transport investment. The absence of such an

attack might be explained by several mitigating factors. Firstly, the funding implications of the preferred strategy implied only an incremental reduction in road building; BITS was certainly not anti-road. Furthermore, there was an increasing recognition amongst professional engineers that road-building would not ultimately solve the transport problems of urban areas and that public transport had an important role to play. The City Engineer, Derek Rawson, was one of those who had started to acknowledge this message.

The following three chapters examine how BITS was subsequently used in three different policy issues. Chapter 7 considers how the study influenced the national strategic debate about transport policy, though with particular reference to the impact this debate had on the West Midlands. Chapters 8 and 9 consider how the study affected more detailed thinking in Birmingham on two policies - light rail policy, and highways policy in the south of the city.

CHAPTER 7 BITS AND THE URBAN TRANSPORT POLICY FRAMEWORK

7.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to assess the contribution which BITS made to the national debate on urban transport policy. Therefore, the chapter concentrates on the strategic advice offered in the BITS report. Did the findings of the BITS report lead to changes in the transport policy framework by their own accord? Did BITS provide useful evidence for one side in a partisan debate? A second strand to this chapter is to consider whether the changes which occurred to the policy framework in the aftermath of BITS were sympathetic to or undermined the BITS preferred strategy.

7.2 BITS and growing concern about urban transport policy

It will be recalled from chapter 6 that BITS recommended a preferred strategy costing £805m to implement between 1990 and 2010. The highways element was expected to cost £385m, of which £180m was expected to be eligible for TSG, £130m was trunk road expenditure, and £75m was for local schemes. On public transport, £420m would be required, the majority of which would be spent developing a new Midland Metro light rail network. Current legislation and levels of finance were not taken into consideration in a way which would constrain the development of a preferred strategy; the document was after all partially intended to serve as a bid document. A review of likely available sources of finance suggested that whilst £300 - £400m might be available for highways, only £140 - £200m was likely to be available to support the public transport expenditure.

MVA recommended a number of ways by which the Council could seek to fund the strategy, ranging from searching for alternative sources of funding, transferring some existing resources from highways to public transport, raising funds from a road pricing policy, or encouraging the Government to change its own approach to urban transport policy.

The BITS findings supported the arguments which Roger Taylor and the AMA had been putting forward to the Department of Transport prior to the study, for instance

in the policy document *Oiling the Wheels*[1]. Phil Swann, the AMA's transport policy officer, found the BITS analysis extremely useful in putting the local authority argument to Central Government:

> "(Prior to BITS) we had begun to argue with central government ... (that) the split between TSG and other transport capital resources were hindering local authorities from implementing sensible transport strategies. And BITS ... illustrated graphically the consequences of that for one urban area.
>
> The key conclusion (of BITS) ..., as far as our work nationally was concerned, was the conclusion that Birmingham could by and large live with the total transport resources it saw being invested in the city ... [B]ut ... it would have too much roads money and not enough public transport money ...
>
> The BITS study ... was really the first time that some objective evidence was available to substantiate what we thought was the case."
>
> (IT 4 pp.96-97)

Not only did BITS present quantified evidence to support a more subjective belief[2], but Phil Swann also believed it presented the evidence in a way which could be easily understood -

> "certainly elected members (of AMA authorities) found (the BITS analysis) far easier to understand than anything else we (as AMA officers) had put to them ...
>
> I think the BITS analysis crystallized the argument in the form of a single example which people could understand. It was only after BITS was produced, for example, that we managed to get any national press interest in ... (the funding debate) because they could use the Birmingham example."
>
> (IT 4 pp.97-98)

Following BITS, AMA representatives returned to the Department of Transport to press for changes to be made to the legislative and financial framework. Derek

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1 See chapter 6.

2 In conversation, a number of client participants in the BITS process believed that the quantification gave the report's arguments added credibility; see chapter 10.

Rawson, the City Engineer of Birmingham City Council, was an officer advisor to the AMA. At a previous meeting between AMA and DOT representatives, he had begun a presentation by stating his intention to talk about integrated transportation. According to Mr Rawson, the Transport Secretary, Paul Channon, had immediately stopped him, commenting:

> "We don't talk about integration in Government circles - that means that you're forcing people to do things - people have got to have a choice."
>
> (IT 2 p.125)

On this occasion, the meeting was with the new Secretary of State, Cecil Parkinson. Mr Rawson was again invited to speak for the AMA. In the light of this previous experience he had been giving some thought to a term which would capture the essence of the arguments the AMA was seeking to push, but which would not generate ideological connotations which were at odds with Central Government thinking:

> "I opened by saying ... I'd been thinking on the train what to call it (the ideas about altering the funding rules for transport and looking at policy as an overall strategy) and I'd now decided to call it a 'balanced package'.
>
> I gave my 10 minute speech that I was allowed and the first thing that Parkinson said to his secretary ... was 'Well the first thing we're going to do is call it a "balanced package."'
>
> (IT 2 p.125)

In a letter to the Association following the meeting, Mr Parkinson noted that:

> "It is clearly important that there should be a balanced development of transport infrastructure in the urban areas, and that public transport proposals and highway proposals should be assessed in relation to each other so that the most effective means of improving local transport can be found. ...
>
> I would be happy for my officials to discuss with officers of the Association (AMA) how the Department might help in ensuring that a balanced programme is pursued."
>
> (Extract of letter quoted in *Local Transport Today* 21/3/90)

Despite this acceptance, Mr Parkinson maintained that local authorities currently had the ability to determine balanced policies. Phil Swann believed that there was still considerable scepticism of the AMA's arguments amongst Department of Transport ministers and civil servants[3].

If local authority representatives perceived the social and economic problems that the existing financial mechanisms might create earlier than Central Government, pressure for changes to transport policy grew in the late 1980s from a variety of other quarters.

In September 1988, the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, made a speech to the Royal Society which drew attention to scientific research which suggested that the man-made production of carbon dioxide (through the burning of fossil fuels by amongst other things, power stations, and cars) was leading to global climatic change (the 'greenhouse effect').

The greenhouse effect was just one of a catalogue of environmental issues that contributed to the state of the environment becoming a major public concern. A Mori/*Sunday Times* poll in July 1989 found that 35 percent of people saw environmental issues as their greatest concern, a significant increase from the 10 percent recorded by the same pollsters in October 1988 (*Local Transport Today*, 4/4/90).

Faced with a link between the motor car and environmental damage, and with the DOT forecasting that traffic would grow by between 83-142 percent by 2010 (DOT, 1989), the Government's transport policy was increasingly brought into question. As Richard Tomkins of the *Financial Times* commented:

> "To the extent that the non-interventionist approach to transport is seen as letting more and more people stew in their cars in traffic jams, its credibility has been largely blown."
>
> (*Financial Times*, 29/11/90)

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[3] Based on interview with Mr Swann.

The AMA submitted evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee[4] during their review of the Government's Transport Expenditure Plans for 1990/91 to 1992/3. Their submission noted that in urban areas there was a need for a:

> "balanced strategy comprising a mix of highways and public transport schemes. ... The example of the BITS is a good illustration of the need for change"
> (paras.43-44).

The Committee's recommendations broadly mirrored those of BITS:

> "Over the last two or three years the focus of transport policy has been changing. The DTp forecast of road traffic approximately doubling over the next 35 years caused widespread concern and has concentrated minds on the consequences of such growth. ...
>
> It is neither realistic nor desirable to expect road provision to increase at a similar rate to demand. ...
>
> In urban transport, our recent inquiries into roads and into light rail show evidence of a renaissance of public transport which is set to gather pace through the 1990s. The two main forces at work are traffic congestion and environmental awareness ...
>
> The time may have come for a fundamental change in the way Government provides grant aid for local authority transport investment. At the local level, road and public transport schemes are closely interlinked but their methods of funding are not ... We recommend that the Government investigates possible financial mechanisms by which one or more L.A.s could receive a block grant for transport provision which would allow them to determine objectives."
>
> (House of Commons Transport Committee, Report on the Government's Expenditure Plans for Transport 1990/1 to 1992/3, para.4)

During the winter of 1989/90 there was open disagreement between the Secretary of State for Transport, Cecil Parkinson, and the Secretary of State for Environment, Chris Patten, over transport policy and the role of the motor car (*Local Transport Today*,

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[4] The function of committees is to oversee the policy of government. Though they have no legal powers to influence policy, they can offer recommendations which might be taken on board by government.

8/8/90). Mr Patten believed the NRTF to be unacceptable and, in contrast to Mr Parkinson, sought a shift of policy to increase the costs of private transport and promote public transport.

This disagreement was seen to have been largely won by Mr Parkinson who gained support from the Treasury and the Prime Minister for less stringent measures, reflected in the Government's White Paper on the Environment, "This Common Inheritance" (DOE, 1990), (*Local Transport Today*, 8/8/90). The document did, however, acknowledge the role of public transport, particularly in urban areas, accepted the need to consider the implications of out-of-town retail developments on existing town centres, and stated the Government's commitment to give funding for bus priority measures and traffic calming. Improvements to vehicle fuel efficiency were seen by the Prime Minister and the Transport Secretary as the way to tackle some of the environmental problems of cars. Speaking at the Better Environment Awards for Industry in March 1990, Mrs Thatcher announced:

> "We are not going to do without a great car economy. ... Much of our economy would collapse if we did without that."
>
> (*Financial Times* 17/3/90)

Nevertheless, for pragmatic reasons, increasing urban road capacity became less realistic. Facing considerable public opposition, the Government backed down on a set of road-building options for London in March 1990, choosing instead to pursue traffic management measures in an effort to improve traffic flows (see House of Commons Transport Committee, 1990).

7.3 Towards the "package approach" to transport investment

Whilst the Government's approach to urban transport policy came under increasing fire, any move towards restriction of vehicle use cut across an ideological persuasion of liberalism and individual freedom of choice. A Department of Transport internal document printed in January 1991 noted that the Government's objectives were to provide "choice for the traveller and investment in infrastructure to make that choice a reality" (DOT, 1991). Similarly, speaking in 1991, Malcolm Rifkind, the Secretary of State for Transport commented:

"I don't think in a free society you can simply dictate to the public whether they should or should not be permitted to use the motor car ...

People at the end of the day will choose the mode of transport which meets their own requirements in terms of cost and convenience. ... [T]he most convenient mode of transport for most people will always be the motor car. ...

Governments cannot decide how individual people travel. In a free society people will have to come to their own judgement."

(Extract of interview conducted for undergraduate dissertation)

The AMA refined its own arguments in the policy document *Changing Gear* published in July 1990, again citing BITS to support the calls for change. Other organizations published their own policy statements (for instance Institute of Civil Engineers (1989) *Congestion*, Association of District Councils (1990) *UK Transport: A Balanced Approach*, Association of County Councils (1991) *Towards a Sustainable Transport Policy*, Royal Automobile Club (1992) *Cars and Cities*), all of which reflected similar points about the need for better public transport in urban areas, though restraint on the use of the motor car was seen as an option for the longer term, if at all. Within the context of *Changing Gear*, the AMA, in association with the Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG), published the working paper *Transport Investment: The package approach* (AMA/PTEG 1990) which focused upon two aspects of the current transport framework which they sought reformed - finance and joint authority grant submissions.

The financial arguments centred on the two separate grant regimes for highways (TSG) and public transport (Section 56). Even if local authorities had a transport strategy which included both highways and public transport measures, the document pointed out that for grant purposes they were assessed by two separate divisions within the Department of Transport. Furthermore, the Government's expenditure plans for 1990/1-1992/3 indicated that it planned to provide considerably more expenditure for TSG schemes than for Section 56 (HM Treasury, 1990). The Department of Transport suggested that this difference was because of the better value for money offered by road schemes. The AMA, however, argued that the two modes were assessed against different grant criteria anyway - TSG assessments took account of user and non-user benefits, whilst section 56 assessments only considered

non-user benefits, the Government saying that user benefits were captured through the farebox[5]. The AMA suggested that the Department of Transport should award grant towards a package of public transport and highway measures, all of which would be assessed against the same grant criteria.

The second change the AMA sought was for neighbouring local authorities (and the PTA/E) within a conurbation to be able to submit joint grant applications as it argued that transport problems and needs within a conurbation often crossed district boundaries.

In February 1991, representatives of the AMA and the PTEG met with civil servants from the Department of Transport to discuss the ideas contained within the "package approach" paper. The DOT noted that there were certain practical problems with the Association's proposals, given that much grant was already committed to major TSG schemes, the DOT had a desire for individual scheme assessment, and that expenditure between transport modes was determined at a national level[6]. Despite these problems and scepticism about whether a group of local authorities would be able to agree to submit a conurbation-wide bid, the DOT invited the AMA to submit an example of what a package would look like (Minutes of meeting between the AMA, PTEG, and DoT, 20/2/91).

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[5] Sanderson (1989) suggests that this difference in assessment techniques reflected a more deep seated set of Government beliefs including responding to individual choice through increasing the supply of road space, and the contribution roads were perceived to play in economic development. Furthermore, he suggests it reflects the influence of road lobby pressure groups.

[6] According to Liz Gilliard, who in 1994 was the civil servant in charge of urban transport policy at the Department of Transport, the origins of the expenditure bias in favour of roads lay partly in the tendency of local authorities to see road schemes as a solution to problems in their own right and partly because local MPs typically lobbied for new road schemes rather than public transport measures. Individual scheme assessment was designed to streamline, and thus accelerate, the process of scheme appraisal. The tendency for local authorities to see road schemes as solutions in their own right might be partly explained by the government's decision to make TSG a capital only grant in 1985. In 1988 the DoT acknowledged that this was making local authorities skew their bids for highway expenditure towards schemes likely to qualify for TSG (DOT, 1988).

7.4 The West Midlands package submission

In Birmingham, the Central Government funding framework was beginning to jeopardise the fundamentals of the BITS strategy. Whilst it required approximately equal expenditure on highways and public transport, the 1991/92 expenditure settlement approved £26m capital expenditure on Birmingham's highways but only £6-9m for capital expenditure on public transport across the West Midlands conurbation[7].

Influenced by BITS, Birmingham's neighbouring districts undertook their own 'Integrated Transport Studies'. Solihull commissioned The MVA Consultancy to undertake the Solihull Transport Study (MVA, 1989f) which was completed in 1989. Coventry, in association with Centro, appointed TPA Consultants to conduct the Coventry Transport Study (TPA, 1990) which reported in 1990, whilst the four Black Country districts of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley, in association with the PTE (Centro), and the Black Country Development Corporation (BCDC) appointed TPA Consultants and Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd to undertake the Black Country 'Integrated Transport Study' (BCITS) (TPA, 1991) which was completed in 1991.

The studies were all based upon different forecasts of future economic growth rates for the conurbation as a whole. Nevertheless, their undertaking meant that, collectively, an examination had been made of the transport needs for the conurbation. A report of the Chief Engineers and Planning Officers Group (CEPOG)[8] to the West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee[9] noted that:

> "All of the studies identified a consistent significant shortfall in probable financial resources and made a strong case for greater support from central government to avoid problems that would

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[7] Report to BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 12th April 1991.

[8] CEPOG is the main focus for inter-district chief planning and engineering officer liaisons within the West Midlands.

[9] This is a sub-committee of the main inter-district member-level forum, the West Midland Joint Committee.

> otherwise occur. The studies recommend balanced packages ... which need to be implemented in a harmonised manner."
>
> (West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee, 28/6/91)

Table 7.1 summarizes the funding requirements for each of the preferred strategies to the year 2010[10]. The table shows that collectively, the strategies were anticipated to exceed expected available resources by £1.3bn. Even the BITS strategy was estimated to require an additional £300m.

Given that the West Midland districts had all commissioned integrated strategies, the AMA saw the conurbation as providing a suitable basis for a trial package submission. As a first step towards this, the 1991 TPP submission by Birmingham City Council was made in conjunction with Centro, and included a prioritised list of schemes. The top two schemes were both public transport measures - the top priority being line 1 of the Midland Metro light rail network[11]. A similar submission was made by the Black Country districts. Birmingham's prioritised submission had relatively little impact on the Department of Transport's grant settlement; only the seventh priority - a highway scheme - was approved. As Derek Rawson, Birmingham's City Engineer acknowledged, however, little thought had gone into producing this initial submission:

> "The first package bid - when Birmingham did it by itself and the Black Country did their own - they were what I would call "wish lists" - in other words they were all the ... schemes that you wanted to do. All it was was a list of schemes ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.149)

Within the West Midlands conurbation, the capital expenditure settlement awarded for 1992/3 further undermined any desire to see a more balanced pattern of expenditure between highways and public transport. £80m was awarded for highway projects (£27.1m in Birmingham) and only £5m for public transport.

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10 It should be noted that in some cases the notion of 'balanced packages' relied on a rather loose definition of the term balance. In the Black Country study for instance, highways accounted for 81 percent of the recommended expenditure.

11 See Chapter 8.

On the 31st July 1991 a meeting of the West Midlands Joint Committee agreed to the principle of a joint conurbation-wide package submission in 1992. The committee report, prepared by the Chief Executive of Solihull (who was the Secretary to the West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee), noted that a prioritised conurbation submission would mean some district schemes might have to be sacrificed in the interests of the conurbation as a whole, but that at least priorities would be made by the districts rather than Central Government.

Table 7.1 Infrastructure requirements for WM district transport strategies to 2010 at constant 1990 prices. Source: Report to BCC Joint Economic Development, Planning and Technical Services (Strategy Sub-) committee, 22/7/91

	Coventry*	**Birming-ham**	**Black Country ****	**Solihull**	**Total**
Public Transport					
LRT	110	392	330	90	**922**
Bus and Rail	20	28	40	10	**98**
Highways					
M/ways and trunk roads	75	0***	960	75	**1110**
Major schemes	45	310	500	50	**905**
Minor Schemes	40	75	160	25	**300**
Total	**290**	**805**	**1990**	**250**	**3335**
Estimated Available Resources	**130**	**500**	**1290**	**120**	**2040**

Notes:
* Costs extended to 20 years by choosing top of range figures.
** Black Country = Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell, Dudley.
*** BITS identified £130m of road improvements in Birmingham as being trunk roads (Heartlands Spine Road and A457 Dudley Road). Subsequently the DOT announced it did not intend to provide resources to trunk them. The cost of these schemes is therefore recorded under the "major schemes" category.

In September 1991, the West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee met in Solihull to discuss the package approach. Representatives from the AMA and the Department of Transport also attended on invitation. Derek Rawson, a central proponent of the concept, made a presentation advocating the merits of a conurbation-wide submission. Though the principle was accepted, there were initially

some suspicions amongst representatives from Birmingham's neighbouring districts about why Birmingham officers should be so keen on the idea. Some suspected that the package approach was a ploy by Birmingham to win extra resources. These suspicions might have been raised for a number of reasons. For instance, Birmingham's geographical dominance of the West Midland region had led to a more intensively used transport system, a point which Birmingham used in the past to argue for higher than average TSG settlements from Central Government (BCC 1989 TPP submission p.10), whilst in relation to district boundaries, Birmingham had historically pursued "big brother" expansionist tendencies (Sutcliffe and Smith, 1974). As Mr Rawson recalled:

> "I got a right rollicking from quite a number of (district representatives) in the fact that I was actually looking after myself; because Birmingham was the centre (of the conurbation) and (they believed) the top three or four things (in a joint submission based upon an assessment of transport investment requirements) must be Birmingham's priority.
>
> So I said: 'I don't know (what the priority list will look like) and neither do you ... If you're going to go into a joint undertaking voluntarily ... you're going to determine ... priorities yourself, locally, and not let the DOT in London determine them.
>
> ... because one thing is certain - there's not enough money to do everything that we all want to do. So priorities have got to be made somewhere - its either going to be in the West Midlands or its going to be in Marsham Street (DOT Headquarters) ...
>
> (I)f you want to do it in the W.M. then in fact you've got to abide by whatever result comes out ... There'll be some winners and some losers - at the present time we don't know who is a winner and who is a loser but are you prepared to put your hand up to the principle and abide by the decision?'"
>
> (IT 2 p.136-137)

Throughout early discussions of the package concept in the West Midlands there was also some disagreement amongst the districts and the PTA/E about whether it was about gaining extra resources for the region or redistributing existing resources so that a greater proportion of it went to public transport projects. Centro and some authorities, including Birmingham, accepted that there was a case to switch some existing resources to public transport. Derek Rawson, Birmingham's City Engineer, was fully supportive of the position. A highway engineer since 1954, he recalled that

it was only in the late 1980s that he had begun to recognize that public transport had a major role to play in urban areas. BITS had been an important - though not the only - influence which led to this changed awareness. He admitted that it had not been altogether easy to advocate the principle that some highway expenditure should be switched to public transport:

> "if you agree that the total amount of money is not going to be any more and that basically we want more for public transport than we do for roads ... On that argument there will be less work for the Engineers Department (of the council). I accept that. That's one of the things I've accepted and I never thought I would argue for ...
>
> But so what? I'm sorry, you can't spend your life building things that are not needed. ... That's been one of the most difficult things for me to come to terms with and go round advocating. Having spent my life building lots of roads and then saying, well now,'Was I right?' And basically now saying, 'Well yes, there is another way of doing it.'"
>
> (IT 2 pp.162-163)

Other authorities, like Dudley, whose investment requirements were seen to be primarily road-based (Table 7.1), took the view that the package approach should be about increasing overall levels of transport expenditure instead of redistribution. Speaking in 1994, Dudley's Borough Engineer, John Eastwood explained his views on what the package was about:

> "My view (about the aims of the package) is crystal clear, my view ... is it's to do with getting funds into the West Midlands region. And if that's at the expense of any other region, so be it. ... I'd like to see ... a shift of spend from national roads programme to local roads programme or national transport expenditure to local transport expenditure ...
>
> When it comes to the balance of what we should spend, Dudley's greatest needs at the moment are highway improvement needs ... Dudley will be investing more in roads than public transport this century."
>
> (IT 4 pp.125-126)

Nevertheless, in acknowledging that there were disagreements over the concept of the package, the principle seems to have been accepted reasonably smoothly. The explanation for this might lie partly in the institutional background to relationships between the districts.

Prior to the establishment of the West Midlands County Council in 1974, there had been a history of voluntary joint relationships between the West Midland district members and officers. Derek Rawson believed these were important in explaining the joint-working on the package:

> "although the package approach shows a willingness of the seven districts to work together, this is no new thing. ... even before the County Council, there were ... joint groups working in the (West) Midlands ... There is a long history of talking together and co-operation voluntarily ...
>
> I think that's a very big thing when you come to talk about the package approach because there's been a history of co-operation on the acknowledgement that if you co-operate, you will win some and you lose some."
>
> (IT 2 pp127-128)

Despite a drive towards independence following the County's abolition, where joint working was necessary it was facilitated by good relationships between districts at both officer and politician level (Leach et al, 1991a)[12].

Rod Pitham, Assistant Chief Executive of Solihull and Assistant Secretary to the West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee, believed that the friendships at both officer and politician level, were essential to achieving the joint working on the package:

> "I *enjoy* meetings at member and officer level. We talk about strategic issues affecting the West Midlands ... there is a wealth of experience and a willingness to make it work for the benefit of the West Midlands area. I place so much emphasis on that - we do work so well together. Members are all on first name terms ... officers are the same ... there are marvellous professional and political working relationships ... that make it work."(IT 4 p.111)

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[12] Historically the seven districts had always been ideologically moderate (Leach et al, 1991a). When the County was abolished, six out of seven of the authorities were under Labour control. The seventh, Solihull, was a Conservative district, but its leader worked hard to ensure close working relationships with the other districts, and hence reduce any parochialism (Leach et al 1991a). In 1986 the West Midlands Joint Committee was established as the main forum for joint working at a political level. Below this the districts agreed to establish a Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee for which Conservative-controlled Solihull was given lead authority status.

Progress towards acceptance of the package by Central Government was slower than in the West Midlands, but changes to the Department of Transport's structure at the end of 1992 saw the establishment of an Urban Transport and General Directorate whose remit was to take a more holistic view of traffic and public transport aspects of urban transport policies. Then in May 1992, the Department's TPP circular (DOT, 1992) announced that as an experiment, the West Midland districts in association with the PTA would be invited to submit a package bid as the basis for their 1993/94 grant application. This would be purely as an experiment, to allow the Department to examine the potential benefits of such an approach.

Quite how the Government's acceptance came about is unclear; however, some friendly persuasion during a dinner conversation between the Conservative leader of Solihull district, Councillor Fraser Mitchell, and the Transport Secretary, John MacGregor, is regarded as being one important factor, and something for which Councillor Mitchell was later applauded by the West Midland districts[13].

In devising the first joint package submission, all the districts and Centro submitted capital schemes costing over £1m to an assessment framework. The framework (see Table 7.2), scored each scheme against a series of objectives relating to transport and wider issues such as land use, economic development, environment, and strategic benefits to the conurbation. Only some of the scoring was based upon a quantitative prediction of scheme impacts. The scoring was undertaken by officers from the districts and Centro, before being viewed by politicians from the West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee who could request further analysis if they so desired. John Eastwood, Borough Engineer of Dudley MBC claimed that the assessments were done as objectively as possible:

> "What we've always accepted is that there can be a situation of winners and losers. ... As officers we do not arrange to manipulate the figures in any way, (or) to actually alter the technical ranking - that technical ranking was done as reasonably as it could be done. It was done by Assistant Chief Officers working collectively. ...
>
> At the end of the day (schemes) tend to sift themselves out by their ability to start ..."
> (IT 4 p.124)

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[13] Evidence based on interviews with participants in the package approach development.

For the 1992 submission a total of 28 schemes (20 highway and 8 public transport) were assessed. In an attempt to make the submission realistic to likely available resources instead of a "wish-list", only the top six schemes (all with 1993/94 starts) were initially selected to form the basis of the submission (Table 7.3).

In the summer of 1992, however, the package submission ran into some political difficulties. The May 1992 local elections saw a collapse of support for the Labour Party. The political control of three districts - Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton - changed and changes in the leadership of Solihull, Coventry and Sandwell changed so that only the leader of Birmingham remained the same. The PTA chairman also lost his seat and for a short spell the PTA had no overall control, though Labour soon regained control of it through a byelection victory in Dudley which gave them control of that council.

During the period of drawing up the package, however, it was Conservative-controlled Dudley which posed the greatest threat to the concept's survival. The incoming Conservative Group wanted to see the improvements to the A4036 near the Merry Hill out-of-town shopping centre included in the package submission. They suggested that it should replace the Western Orbital Link Road scheme (also in Dudley) which was sixth priority in the package. If this alteration was not accepted, Dudley threatened that it would remove its support for the top priority in the submission, line 1 of the Midland Metro light rail system which ran between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. A meeting of district leaders on the 2nd July authorized officers to appraise the A4036 improvements and it was subsequently included as priority no.6, replacing the Western Orbital link[14].

The inclusion of highway schemes like the A4036 improvements, which would aid the Merry Hill development, conflicted with many of the districts' desires to maintain the vitality of town centres. Some politicians, however, recognized that it was inevitable that conflicts would occur between local needs and the wider needs of the

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14 Information based on interviews with participants involved in the West Midlands Package submission.

Table 7.2 Example of scoring framework used by West Midland districts to rank package schemes costing in excess of £1m. Example illustrates the framework assessment for line 1 of Midland Metro (First Priority in the 1992 Package submission). Scores are proxy for impact against each indicator, measured on a graded scale. Source: WMJC, 1992.

Scheme name	Scheme Description/ State of Readiness	Individual Element Rankings								
Local authority		Net Cost	Safety Benefits	Transport Benefits	Environ-mental Benefits	Economic Benefits	Community Benefits	Modal Share Benefits	Strategic Benefits	Overall Ranking
		£m			Justification					
Start Date										
Midland Metro Line 1	Will provide light rail service between Bham Snow Hill and Wolver-hampton.	100	++++	++++	+++	++++	+++	++++	++++	1
Centro		High benefits across the range despite cost. Strategically important. Trendsetter in impact on modal share and new form of transport. Serves West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Bilston Centres as well as Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Links to redevelopment sites.								
1993/94	Tenders out in October 1992 Contract to be let summer 1993									

conurbation, but that this should not block the package's progress[15]. Tom Magrath, corporate planning manager with Centro, reflecting on the first two years of package submissions, explained:

> "There's a recognition amongst all eight partners that the success of the package depends upon mutual goodwill and mutual support; ... there's equally a fear that this is a potential County Council approach to things and people are very scared that we don't get back to that situation ... People want to protect their own autonomy.
>
> Because of that, each of the districts and Centro accept that schemes are going to come forward which politically aren't popular ... local interests are always going to be different in some respects from strategic interests.
>
> ... so far we've been able to ... get the balance between local and strategic held in a way which doesn't undermine the political commitment to the package."
>
> (IT 3 pp.134-135)

Even the districts' unanimous backing to line 1 of Midland Metro was based on certain qualifications, as John Eastwood, Borough Engineer of Dudley recognized:

> "we (Dudley) have consistently agreed that line 1 of Midland Metro is our highest priority investment. Now I think the crunch would come if ... (the Department of Transport) said, 'Well you can have (funding for) that (Metro line 1) but nothing else for X years ...'
>
> Now if in fact that sort of issue was presented to us (Dudley), that might make us think ... long and hard (about the joint submissions) ... And I think we wouldn't be alone on that."
>
> (IT 4 p.121)

Another setback to the submission came on the 8th June 1992 when the Secretary of State for Transport, John MacGregor, wrote to the acting chairman of the PTA, informing him that there was no chance of finding funding to allow the go-ahead for Midland Metro line 1 - the top priority of the package - in the coming financial year. The district politicians, annoyed that the announcement was made only a matter of

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[15] For instance, minutes of the BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 12/4/91 and comments made by Councillor McCabe, Chair of Birmingham City Council Technical Services Committee in respect of Merry Hill improvements still being priorities at BCC Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 28/6/93.

weeks before the package was to be submitted, agreed to keep Metro line 1 top priority as a statement of commitment to the project; nevertheless, in apparent response to the Minister's comments, a seventh scheme - a highway measure in Sandwell - was included in the submission (Table 7.3)[16].

The outcome of the joint submission was approval for two road schemes ranked second and fourth in the submission. The Secretary of State for Transport, John MacGregor, however, acknowledged that the West Midlands package submission offered certain benefits and announced on 15th December 1992 that it would in future be the preferred way of funding local authority urban transport expenditure, a point formalized in a Department of Transport circular issued in April 1993 (DOT, 1993). This stated that:

> "The Department recognises there is a need for a more comprehensive assessment of transport needs in deciding what funds to allocate to local highway and transport authorities for road and public transport proposals in urban areas. It follows that funding mechanisms must be adapted to suit the mix of measures required in each area." (Para. 30)

In the initial years of the package approach, the Government decided that any changes to the funding system would be made within the existing legislation, though in the longer term, legislative changes were not ruled out. Since the rules governing TSG and Section 56 scheme eligibility were both written into Parliamentary Acts, this served to limit the degree of flexibility open to local authorities in funding their package submissions. Nevertheless, to provide a worthwhile degree of flexibility to local authorities, from 1994/95 measures costing under £2m would be supported by the Government issuing a block of credit approvals which local authorities would be free to choose how to allocate[17].

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[16] The first submission did not include a single major road scheme of Birmingham's choice, though whether this was the result of technical assessment, a political move to ensure the support of other districts for the package principle, or a statement of the City Council's commitment to public transport measures, is unclear.

[17] Except local safety scheme funding, which continued to be earmarked centrally.

Table 7.3 Major schemes included in the West Midlands package submission for 1992. Source: WMJC, 1992.

Priority	Scheme	Authority	Highway/ Public Transport
1	Midland Metro line 1	Centro	Public Transport
2	North-South Road Phase 2 (A444)	Coventry	Highway
3	Snow Hill Station Phase 2	Centro	Public Transport
4	Wednesfield By-Pass (A4124)	Wolverham-pton	Highway
5	Cross City line improvements	Centro	Public Transport
6	Merry Hill improvements (A4036)	Dudley	Highway
7	All Saints Way (A41)	Sandwell	Highway

In 1994/95, the first year of the new system, 46 local authorities made package submissions. Of these, however, only 13 were judged by the DOT to be satisfactory, with the Secretary of State picking out the West Midlands submission for particular praise (DOT Press release, no.509, 15/12/93). Though the West Midland authorities received a settlement of £93.6m there was again, however, no authorization given for their first priority scheme, Midland Metro line 1, though the second priority, a group of traffic management measures for South Birmingham, was funded in full[18]. The small number of successful package submissions seemed to reflect the fact that many authorities were at the stage which Birmingham found itself in 1991. As Liz Gilliard of the Department explained,

> "(On the whole) there is a tendency (for local authorities) to say we need a ... change, and then the package bids come in and it turns out to be that same road scheme they've been bidding for X years, but they've now called it a package and they've put a bus station in."
>
> (IT 4 p.130)

[18] See Chapter 9, section 9.6.

She went on to explain that letters were sent to the unsuccessful authorities informing them:

> "all you've done is put together your favourite schemes and called them a package. You haven't actually stated your objectives, you haven't said what you're trying to achieve, you haven't said how these things complement eachother and how individually or as a whole they will achieve the objective ...
>
> We're looking for them to start where we did. I mean we actually got to the position of saying to Ministers: 'What do you want to happen to urban areas?'
>
> ... (L.A.s) have to say what they want their towns to be like. They (L.A.s) probably are working to some vague, slightly unspecified, but mutually understood pattern of achievements and all we want you to do is make that transparent."
>
> (IT 4 p.131)

The Government's position was clarified further in May 1994 with the publication of supplementary guidance notes - drafted by Liz Gilliard - on the package approach for 1995-96. Whilst local authorities had some freedom in designing their own strategy, it had to be consistent with the Secretary of State's own objectives for urban transport which reflected a shift towards environmental objectives which now included promoting alternatives to the motor car:

- improve the urban environment by reducing traffic congestion and by encouraging the use of alternatives to the private car;
- make transport safer;
- provide good quality transport to assist development of the urban economy;
- consider the needs of non-transport users, and of cyclists and pedestrians.

(DOT, 1994)

Within the Department of Transport urban transport funding became merged in the Local Transport Policy Division. Authorities making package submissions were required to outline how the measures proposed fitted into an overall strategy and how each measure complemented the others. The predicted impact of all schemes had to be presented in the submission, though the level of detail for schemes costing under £2m was not expected to be great. For schemes costing in excess of £2m, a

separate summary of economic and financial performance was required, whilst for schemes costing over £20m a comparative economic and financial assessment was required to show that alternative, lower cost alternatives had also been considered.

The difference between highway and public transport assessment was partially corrected by the development of a Common Appraisal Framework, developed partly in response to the BITS findings. Birmingham City Council and Centro commissioned the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds and The MVA Consultancy to conduct initial development work in 1991. Subsequently a group of local authorities in association with the DOT, commissioned MVA, Oscar Faber TPA, and the Institute for Transport Studies to develop this work into a practical Common Appraisal Framework (MVA, ITS, OFTPA, 1994). The 1994 supplementary guidance broadly accepted the concept and advised local authorities on a simplified version to use in their package submissions. Nevertheless, the Department maintained the view that costs of public transport capital investment should, as far as possible, continue to be captured from users, or developers who stood to benefit from increases in land-values.

Liz Gilliard explained that the package approach was a way for Government to ensure value for money from an increasingly tight budget:

> "(Its) about less money ... there's a public spending squeeze. And every ... area of expenditure is given less every year. So given that we've got increasing pressure on resources we need to maximise the value of that. The package approach is about that ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.133)

The 1995/96 capital allocations produced a 4.5 percent cut in local authority transport expenditure (*Local Transport Today*, 5/1/95). This restriction on expenditure, in combination with a desire to see the best use made of existing infrastructure, led to a restriction on the number of new starts for high cost capital schemes and an increased emphasis on low cost measures including traffic management measures like bus lanes or park-and-ride intended to achieve modal switch to public transport, and demand restraint measures such as narrowing roads or reducing city centre car

parking[19]. As Liz Gilliard noted, ministers no longer favoured complete freedom of travel choice in urban areas, a point which the West Midland package submission of 1993 had failed to anticipate:

> "They (the West Midlands) had a good package but they were stressing it in terms of choice, thinking that was the right sales pitch. And our ministers said: 'Choice? We can't give the ... (public) choice. ... choice is ... useless - they'll all get in their cars ... You know what we get from choice, we get congestion. You've got to make it difficult (for motorists).'
>
> So there does come a point where you recognize you're just not going to get efficiently working cities out of ever expanding choice ..."
>
> (IT 4 pp.142-143)

The package approach, now a nationally accepted concept, had its roots firmly embedded in the West Midlands, a point which Derek Rawson, who retired as Birmingham's City Engineer in 1993, was keen to stress:

> "(the package has) enhanced the (status of the) West Midlands. (In relation to TSG settlements) it's not done any harm in that either. And that's really what it's about isn't it - getting resources for your region."
>
> (IT 2 p.162)

What is more, he had few doubts about why the West Midlands had taken the lead role in the funding debate:

> "however we argue it - whether we like what BITS said or not - what BITS did led us into the AMA, led us into discussions with the Department (of Transport) and it led us to the leadership of transport thinking in local authorities ... There's no doubt about that ... we pulled the other districts along with us ... (and) it all started with BITS and back in Roger Taylor's office."
>
> (IT 2 p.139)

Roger Taylor shared this view:

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[19] Interview with Liz Gilliard.

"I'm absolutely sure that (without BITS) you wouldn't have the DOT moving ... towards saying to all metropolitan areas, look, see if you can actually start to look on a balanced basis at the way in which you're dealing with transportation issues of the conurbation."

(IT 4 pp.156-157)

7.5 Interpretation and interim conclusions

This chapter has sought to consider two broad points of interest; firstly, what role BITS played in the funding debate, and secondly, whether or not the changes to local authority funding, which took place following BITS, were sympathetic to the preferred strategy's implementation.

On the first point it is important to recognize that from the start the study was intended to further the argument that central government, with its emphasis on the market and a bias towards road building, was threatening the economic and social fabric of urban areas. Up until BITS, Roger Taylor and more generally the AMA, had been arguing with little success that the existing urban transport policy framework was not delivering the transport policies which urban areas required (see chapter 6).

The AMA used BITS as evidence to further this argument when lobbying Central Government on the need for change. The subsequent development of the package approach, with its emphasis on an overall transport strategy for an area and a flexible funding regime, would appear to sit neatly with the thinking which was promoted by BITS. Whilst BITS is perceived by a number of people to have been an important influence on changing transport policy, it did not bring them about singlehandedly. The timing of BITS was in many respects fortuitous. A variety of factors - some immediate concerns (congestion, the political impracticalities of road building), others longer term predictions (NRTF, global warming) - imposed themselves on the policy arena. These helped carry the debate in a direction which was broadly consistent with what BITS had concluded. As Derek Rawson commented:

"I think that really, we started it (BITS) unwittingly at the right sort of time because transportation, rather than roads, started coming on (to) the political agenda nationally and locally, and also in national discussions on tv and in the press ... road pricing began being talked

> about, canals and cycling - all things like that ... I think we just tapped into it ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.140)

Over time, and aided by changes to government ministers, perhaps most notably Mr Ridley's departure[20], the arguments for more emphasis on public transport and the merits of an overall transport strategy lost much of the controversy that they may have previously had (see for instance TSU, 1991). By the 1990s there was a growing consensus amongst politicians, professionals, and the public that these were sensible ways to proceed. The Government's ideological leanings towards freedom of choice, low state intervention, and supplying more roadspace to meet demand were seen as increasingly untenable.

In the West Midlands, BITS furthered the joint working on package submissions, given that the initial impetus for the West Midlands Package submission came from the fact that all districts had undertaken integrated studies, by and large as a consequence of BITS. Good organizational and personal relations between the districts and Centro were also important in ensuring progress.

On the second theme explored in this chapter - whether the changes have made the BITS preferred strategy more realizable - it is impossible to say at this stage whether the BITS preferred strategy will be successfully implemented, since this requires knowledge of the future. For the moment, the response also rests on judging success in terms of implementing the measures recommended and not on the outcomes - that is the impact of policies - being in line with the BITS forecasts. Acknowledging these qualifications to the discussion, it is useful to distinguish between two levels of policy detail in much the same way as Etzioni (1968) does in his mixed scanning approach.

At the level of overall policy direction (Etzioni's "fundamental decisions") the package approach appears to have reflected the BITS philosophy, given that it emphasised looking at the overall transport requirements of an urban area instead of looking at modes (and schemes) individually. Though Central Government maintained control over the direction of policy through setting objectives that local authority policies

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20 According to interviews with Phil Swann and Roger Taylor.

must be based around, these were more sympathetic to the BITS preferred strategy. In this respect it seems that the changes supported the thinking encapsulated in BITS.

Despite this congruence, the transport policy debate inevitably moved on following BITS; BITS was still advocating some radial road construction within Birmingham to cater for some of the traffic growth - whereas the thinking of Central Government (and indeed amongst Birmingham councillors - see Chapter 9) ruled much of this out. Similarly, the environmental emphasis of transport policy only really rose in prominence following BITS and some officers argued that had the study been conducted two or three years later, environmental objectives would probably have been given greater attention[21].

Despite this shift in overall policy direction, at the detailed programme level (Etzioni's "bit decisions"), the Government seemed to favour an incremental approach to change. It intended to work within the existing legislation, to focus funding on low cost measures[22], and encourage local authorities to monitor the effects of policies and alter policies in the light of experience gained. Therefore whilst fundamental direction was seen as remaining fairly steady, the precise nature of polices would change in relation to circumstances. Peter Langley, one of the Department of Transport's representatives on the BITS study, felt BITS itself needed to be viewed in this light:

> "My view is that strategies take 10 or 20 years to evolve ... I don't think it's even possible to say that having had BITS completed that we now have a strategy for transport in Birmingham. I think its going to take a long time for the results of BITS to feed into Birmingham's own thinking ... BITS is only one step along the road ...
>
> BITS can't be judged in such a short space of time - I think that's the point."
> (IT 1 p.171,173)

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[21] Interviews with Trevor Errington, team leader of the policy section in the Council's Transport Planning Division, and Nick Partridge, Head of Strategic Planning and Research in the Central Executive's Department.

[22] It could of course be argued that the Government's preference for low cost schemes has more to do with public expenditure restraint than with any firm belief in the incrementalist approach. Nevertheless incrementalists would argue that any major change in policy is difficult to make if it interferes with other policy areas, something which a significant increase on funds to public transport capital projects would do.

The changes in national policy towards urban transport since BITS shows the merits of a study considering policy options which at the time a study is conducted, might appear infeasible. As Doug Jones, one of MVA's staff involved on the BITS report pointed out:

> "I mean Birmingham would be a bit sick now if they'd designed their strategy on the assumption that they couldn't swap funds from one kitty to another and therefore were spending money on roads just because that was what money was available for."
>
> (IT 1 p.183)

At the detailed level of policy the expenditure allocations for urban transport -in particular for large scale public transport projects - did not appear to bode well for the implementation of the BITS strategy[23]. If therefore, the success of BITS is to be judged not only in changing the fundamental direction of policy, but also securing the resources to fund the elements of the preferred strategy, its success (to date) seems to be more limited. It is to the contribution of BITS to more detailed local policy decisions which the research now turns.

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[23] Chapter 9 illustrates that finance is in fact only one barrier to implementing the more detailed elements of a strategy.

CHAPTER 8 THE CONTRIBUTION OF BITS TO A LIGHT RAIL PLAN FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

8.1 Introduction

This is the first of two chapters to examine the contribution which BITS made to a particular policy issue facing Birmingham City Council. Chapter 6 noted that BITS recommended light rail as a central element of a transport strategy for Birmingham. The aim of this chapter is to consider how BITS contributed to the policy's development.

The chapter begins by seeking to explain the origins of light rail proposals in the West Midlands. This is necessary in order to establish at what stage BITS came into the policy's development, and indeed whether BITS was instrumental in bringing the policy to fruition.

Having identified the stage of the policy's development that BITS came on the scene, and the issues which the Council was facing at this particular point in time, the chapter goes on to consider how the policy progressed following BITS. The final section offers some interpretation and interim conclusions.

8.2 The emergence of rapid transit proposals in the West Midlands

In May 1981, the Labour Party won control of the West Midlands County Council from the Conservatives. Labour's manifesto had been titled *Travel our Way* - a phrase intended to reflect the importance that it proposed to give to public transport policies. Phil Bateman was one of the new Labour councillors. An ambitious man of Canadian origins, Councillor Bateman was a former British Rail guard who had been actively involved with the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR). He was a strongly committed supporter of public transport and whenever he travelled home to Canada he would see new rail-based rapid transit systems[1] and wonder:

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1 Canadian cities were amongst the leaders in introducing light rail technology to their cities. Edmonton, Alberta introduced an LRT system in 1977, Calgary introduced a system in 1981. Toronto upgraded its street-tram technology to LRT and constructed a new line - the Scarborough line. Vancouver later followed suit.

> "why the hell we hadn't got anything quite like that in the United Kingdom ..." (IT 2 p.14)

Councillor Bateman was made vice chairman of the Public Transport Committee in 1981 before being appointed chairman in 1982. During this time his interest in rapid transit systems grew as he sought out more information about them from transport journals.

A more senior Labour councillor who was to develop an interest in rapid transit systems was Councillor David Sparks. He had been elected on to the County Council in 1977. With Labour taking control of the County in 1981, Councillor Sparks became deputy leader of the Council and chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee.

In November 1981, Councillor Sparks and the chairman of the County Highways Committee, Councillor Len Clark, attended the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) Planning and Transportation Committee meeting. On this occasion it was held in Newcastle Upon Tyne and as part of the events, participants were given a tour of the Tyne and Wear Metro system which opened in a number of stages between 1980 and 1984.

Shortly after returning to the West Midlands, the County Planner, Alfie Wood, and the County Surveyor, Stuart Mustow, suggested to Councillor Sparks that rapid transit might be a policy worth considering in the West Midlands. Mr Wood had long been a proponent of tramway systems and had both a professional and a personal interest in tramways and railways. He thought that the change of political control in the County provided an opportunity for a system to be seriously considered, so he suggested a study trip to see systems operating in other European cities. Asked why he had not suggested such a trip whilst the Conservatives had been in control of the County Council he explained:

> "Well it would have been a waste of time suggesting it ... during the previous administration; they weren't interested - the Conservatives wouldn't have touched it ... because it would have meant massive public expenditure.
>
> I felt they (the Labour administration) were more inclined to look favourably on public expenditure of that sort of order ... (Although,

> also) I think the Conservatives were slower in accepting the role of public transport ..."
>
> (IT 2 pp.234-235)

From previous visits to mainland Europe, Mr Wood had gained considerable experience of how tramway systems could enhance city centre environments. He also believed a system would improve the image of public transport in a way that the cheap fare policies of the Metropolitan County could never do, and might lead to some, albeit limited, opportunities for economic regeneration.

The itinerary of the study trip involved visits to cities in Germany and also Lyon in France. Not all of the councillors on the County Council were convinced of the merits of these investigations; indeed the council leader, Councillor Gordon Morgan, at first believed the idea to be somewhat unrealistic. Nevertheless, as Councillor Sparks explained, this was no barrier to making progress:

> "I was vehement with him - I really did argue very strongly. And the (County) Council - it's like a medieval kingdom ... where the barons (the chairs of committees) have far more power than the king (the council leader); and if you got one or two of the barons together they would always overrule the king. ... I was also deputy leader of the County then. So we forced it through ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.278)

The European trip seemed to bolster the enthusiasm of the participating councillors for a rail-based rapid transit system. It became clear that areas much smaller in size and population than the West Midlands conurbation already had systems or were considering introducing the technology. As Councillor Bateman recalled:

> "(we) suddenly realized that even towns as small as 120,000 were planning for LRT. ... And here we were ... a conurbation of 2.7 million people, densely populated. ... Good country for LRT."
>
> (IT 2 pp.14-15)

On returning from Europe, some officers from the County's Joint Transportation Planning Unit (JTPU)[2] were instructed to begin technical investigations into devising a possible rapid transit system for the West Midlands. These investigations were conducted as part of the structure plan review process, initiated by the Labour Group in response to the growing economic problems facing the West Midlands region in the early 1980s, and a desire for the structure plan to reflect the objectives of the Labour Group.

Councillor Bateman saw a rapid transit system as a way of providing an improved public transport system, and also assisting in the economic regeneration of the County. He believed a rapid transit system could raise the profile of the West Midlands:

> "... what we needed was that kind of new image - I've written many an article saying, 'Well if its glamorous for San Francisco, and its glamorous for Sacramento, and its glamorous for Paris, why shouldn't we have it in the West Midlands?' "
>
> (IT 2 p.25)

Councillor Sparks believed that a system could serve a number of initiatives. Firstly he was pro-public transport and felt that a public transport policy based simply upon cheap fares was lacking in imagination. At an intuitive level he thought that a new rail-based rapid transit system would get the public out of their cars and onto public transport since "they (the public) weren't into buses" (IT 2 p.285).

Economic factors were also an extremely important explanation for Councillor Spark's interest in rapid transit. He was an active campaigner for the West Midlands region. In 1983 he became chair of the West Midlands Economic Forum, a lobbying body comprising local authorities, trade unions, industry and commerce. He believed that large construction projects like a rapid transit system could raise the profile of the area:

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[2] The JTPU brought together officers from the County Surveyor's Department, the County Planning Department, and the PTE.

"because I've always believed ... that you do need some flagship type projects - you've got to have something big to keep the place ticking over. ...

If you're not into big things you might as well shut up shop. ... This is the difference between Manchester and Liverpool, between Warrington and Widnes. ... One place just cries in its bloody beer all the time and sod all happens, and the other gets on with it and they go for projects ..."

(IT 2 p.285)

Whilst sceptical of the degree to which a system could influence economic regeneration of derelict land, he did think rapid transit would have some impact in this way. Of greater certainty was the employment which would be created by constructing a system. In 1983 he addressed the Labour Party Local Government Conference and suggested that rail-based systems should be Labour Party policy for all the major conurbations:

> "I thought that ... at the height of a depression, one of the things they (central government) could do would be to commit themselves to a programme of rapid transit systems in UK cities ...
>
> The bottom line to me (was that) planners were overselling public transport as being linked to economic investment ... (but) at the end of the day, it was undoubtedly the case that people would be employed to tunnel, or to put track down, to build rolling stock, and to operate the things. So there was a genuine job creation exercise that was worth doing in itself per se."
>
> (IT 2 p.287)

This argument for a rapid transit system was particularly strong in the West Midlands which was home to the Birmingham-based railway rolling stock manufacturer Metro Cammell. In the early 1980s Metro Cammell was keen to win new work because a major contract for London Underground was expected to finish in 1983. As an article by Price in the July 1982 edition of *Modern Tramway and Light Rail Transit* noted,

> "Metro Cammell will need to find other work to fill the gap ... (it) is well aware that light rapid transit is one of the most promising fields. This explains the ... help it offers to city planning authorities and urban transport administrations."
>
> (p.282)

Metro Cammell gave some assistance to the West Midlands County Council, looking briefly at possible systems and routes. Speaking in 1984, Councillor Sparks said that he hoped that the contract to build the West Midlands system would be awarded to Metro Cammell and British Rail Engineering Ltd, adding:

> "This is an example of trying to take the initiative rather than just reacting to job losses and factory closures."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 2/7/84)

Other reasons for Councillor Sparks' support for a system lay in its potential to link up the new development taking place in Birmingham city centre[3], and to demonstrate the County's ability to undertake strategic projects in the wake of open hostility towards the metropolitan counties from the Government:

> "you've got to remember, the metropolitan counties didn't just see themselves as county councils, they saw themselves as new local government units that were quasi-European regional units and we wanted our regions to be compatible to European regions."
>
> (IT 2 p.289)

Whilst enthusiastic councillors were promoting the concept of rapid transit to their colleagues, officers in the JTPU were gradually drawn into full time involvement on the project, becoming part of a specific Rapid Transit Team. External consultants were appointed to assist in undertaking certain aspects of the technical studies. Halcrow Fox Associates (HFA) undertook mode comparison work. Their terms of reference were to investigate proven technologies. Three possible modes of rapid transit were examined - busway (purpose built rights of way for ordinary buses, like those used in Redditch New Town), light rail[4] (a street running or segregated system, a more advanced version of traditional European tram systems) and automated transit (a driverless rail-based system running primarily on elevated track). Guided bus was not assessed since it was not regarded as a proven technology, whilst bus priority lanes were rejected because they were not regarded as a rapid transit system.

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[3] See Chapter 6.

[4] Also termed Light Rapid Transit (LRT).

Despite some reservations on the need for any such system[5], HFA came out in favour of light rail technology because of factors including its image, its proven success in other cities, its lower capital costs in comparison to automated transit, its ability to attract substantially more patronage than busways and only marginally lower numbers than automated transit (HFA, 1983). In parallel with the study of alternative technologies and demand, the consultants Roger Tym and Partners undertook an examination of the economic impact of a rapid transit system. They came forward with a positive assessment of a rail-based system's potential to improve the image of the West Midlands and in doing so, enhance the area's redevelopment prospects (WMCC JTPU, 1984).

In June 1984, the final WMCC JTPU report, *Rapid Transit for the West Midlands* was published and approved by county councillors. The report recommended a 10-line light rail network centred on Birmingham, with the possibility of extending the system out to the Black Country (see figure 8.1)[6]. The proposals were given a cautious welcome by some of the constituent districts within the West Midlands conurbation. Birmingham City Council agreed with them in principle[7].

8.3 Failure to implement the proposals

By 1985 the County Council was under a death sentence, with abolition planned for April the following year. Councillor Sparks believed that there was no possibility of beginning construction of an LRT route in the length of time available, particularly in the light of the public uproar that had greeted the implementation of a guided bus experiment in Birmingham in 1984[8].

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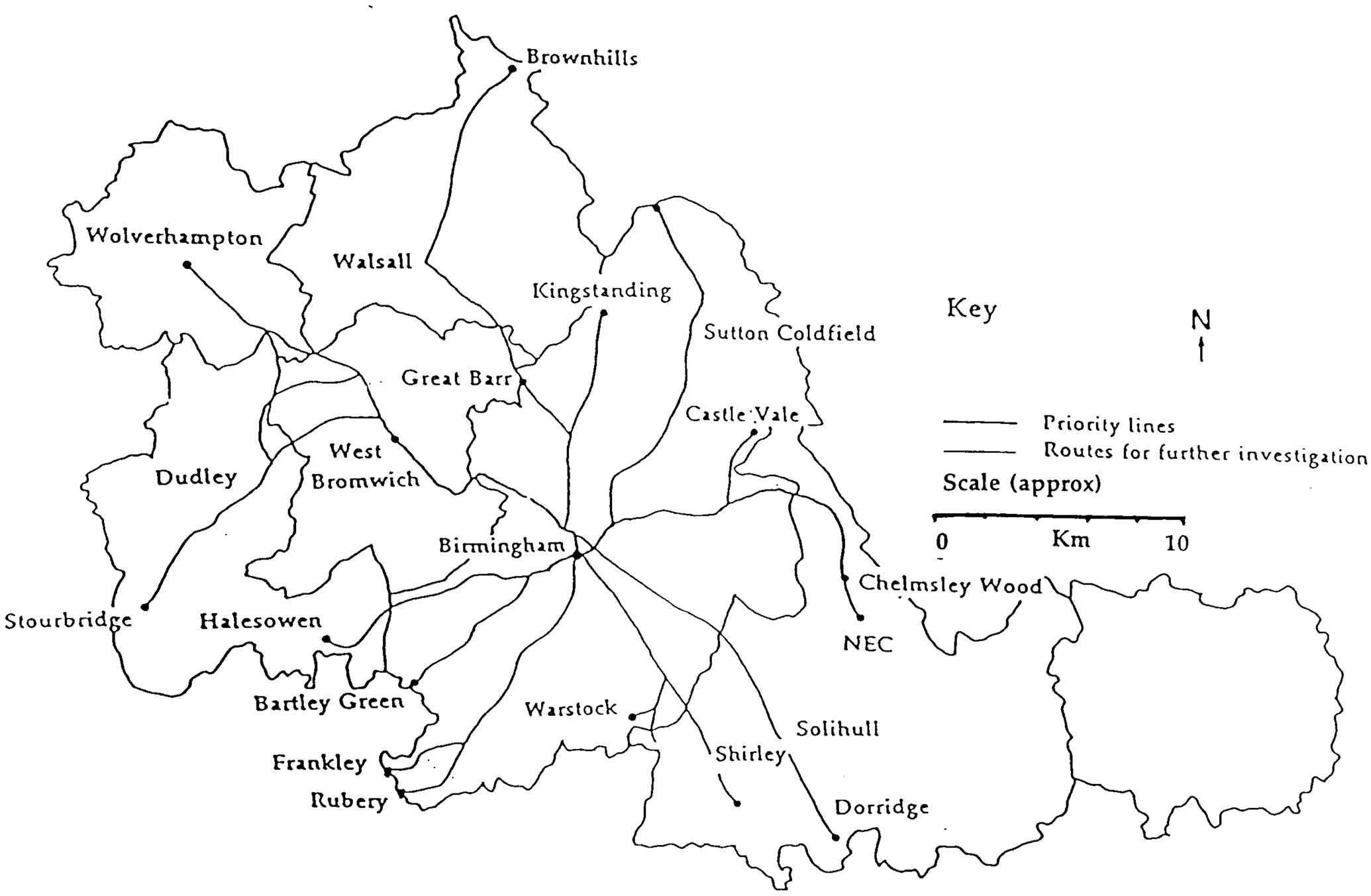
5 The final report by HFA began with a word of caution about the need for any form of rapid transit given that public transport patronage was in decline and the consultants did not regard traffic congestion as being serious.

6 Within the 10-line network, four priority routes were identified.

7 Minutes of the Birmingham City Council Planning Committee, 20/9/84.

8 The experiment had involved the uprooting of many trees on the road it ran along.

Figure 8.1 The West Midland County rapid transit network unveiled in 1984



Councillor Bateman, on the other hand, was concerned that local government reorganization might set back the proposals a number of years and that the districts would be parochial and therefore not take forward the proposals jointly in a way which would benefit the conurbation as a whole (*Birmingham Evening Mail* 25/11/85). Some councillors also believed that getting the go-ahead for a first line could provide a fitting memory of the County Council[9].

As chairman of the Public Transport Committee, Councillor Bateman took the lead role in instructing officers to select a first route and produce a Parliamentary Bill which could be submitted by the PTE to Parliament in November 1985[10]. The selected route ran from Birmingham city centre to Castle Bromwich in the east of the city. It offered high demand potential but also involved considerable levels of

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9 Information derived from interviews with participants involved in the events.

10 A Private Parliamentary Bill was required in order to get authorization for a rail project of this nature.

property demolition. In June 1985 the proposals were unveiled, provoking a public outcry; 238 properties were to be demolished, 140 of which had been covered by highway improvement lines. City councillors and the local MP called for the route to be withdrawn (see for instance *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 15/6/85 and 2/7/85).

Some County Councillors were equally unhappy with the proposals, including some of those in the ruling Labour group. Councillor Sparks was asked to help with the public relations in an attempt to save the proposal, but, with the County facing abolition, he believed it to be a no-win situation and declined. He did, however, arrange a meeting with councillors from Birmingham City Council at which he said:

> "You mustn't allow the way in which the County Council have cocked up this rapid transit system, to affect your view of rapid transit per se ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.283)

Despite changes to the plans, including a proposal to submit a Bill to allow construction of the two mile city centre stretch of line with the rest of the alignment being determined at a later date, the plans were abandoned in November 1985. Aware that the route still did not have the support of the City Council or the local MP (who could block the Parliamentary Bill), the Bill's promoter - the Director General of the PTE, James Isaac - refused to submit the Bill to Parliament.

8.4 Light rail under the districts

The failure to implement the proposals in 1985 and the subsequent abolition of the County Council in April 1986, did not lead to the end of light rail proposals in Birmingham or the West Midlands as some had feared. Indeed, in January 1986, three months before the abolition of the County Council, the plans had received a significant boost when the Secretary of State for Environment rephrased the draft County Council Structure Plan policy on rapid transit. The draft version, prepared by the County Council in 1983, had said that an application for Government funds to construct a system would be brought forward within the plan period which ran to 1991. However, the Secretary of State amended the text to read:

> "The development of a fully integrated rapid transit system ... *will* be commenced by 1991"
>
> (West Midlands County Council, 1986 transport policy 5. Emphasis added by researcher).

The controversy over the County's aborted proposals did, however, lead to a setback in progress, during which time the cities of Manchester and Sheffield overtook the West Midlands in the queue for Government grant.

Whilst highways and land use policies returned to the districts, the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) took over responsibility for public transport across the former West Midlands County area and established a Strategic Planning Committee whose terms of reference included looking at the development of a light rail system in the former West Midlands County area. The Strategic Planning Committee established a Rapid Transit Working Party of members which included four councillors from Birmingham. On the officer side the County's rapid transit team was retained.

Councillor Bateman had become a councillor on Wolverhampton Borough Council in 1984 and this allowed him to become vice chair of the PTA in 1986:

> "When the County Council closed and the PTA set up a week after, I was there again ... hanging on, trying to keep afloat a public transport policy of which LRT was a much bigger issue than ever it was when it was first considered ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.17,19)

With the County's abolition, the idea of rapid transit needed the support of the individual districts as well as the PTA if it was to be successfully taken forward. It was the four Black Country districts (Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, and Sandwell) who initially maintained the policy's momentum. Their Chief Executives drew up an outline network designed to meet four objectives - link existing town centres, serve major new developments, assist economic regeneration, and integrate into the British Rail network.

In October 1986 the Black Country proposals were presented to the PTA. The PTA instructed the Rapid Transit Team to work with officers in the district councils to prepare and evaluate a light rail network for the Black Country.

Councillors on Birmingham City Council were keen not to be left out of these investigations. In November 1986 the Council's Joint Strategy Sub-Committee passed a resolution re-affirming the Council's commitment to rapid transit as a policy, calling on the PTA/E to undertake studies into rapid transit for Birmingham, and for these studies to be treated on an equal footing to those of the Black Country. The PTA's Rapid Transit Working Party subsequently agreed to examine the Black Country and Birmingham network as a single entity, with parallel investigations for a separate network in Coventry.

Study trips abroad were arranged for Councillors and other interested parties. The Grenoble system was seen to be the model upon which the West Midlands system would be based. Like the study trip in 1982, the experiences abroad helped to raise enthusiasm for the project. As Councillor Fred Chapman, Birmingham's Planning Committee Chairman commented:

> "I saw it (LRT) working in Nantes in France. ... I was keen on the philosophy of it before I saw it; I was wedded to it as soon as I saw it ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.24)

In September 1987 the PTA launched the Midland Metro LRT project and unveiled an outline plan for an £800m system. Funding of the network was expected to come from three sources - European Regional Development Fund grants (50 percent), Central Government (25 percent), and the private sector (25 percent).

Private sector finance, a form of funding which had been largely rejected by the County Council, was to be encouraged in the light of the Government's support for joint public/private sector infrastructure projects. The private sector was keen to invest in the Midland Metro system, partly because of the property boom in the late 1980s and the London Docklands experience, where a light railway had been part of the development (*Independent*, 11/9/87).

The arguments for the system were broadly the same as those used to promote the County Council system, though there was more recognition given to the technology's alleged ability to reduce traffic congestion. The new PTE Director General, Bob Tarr, wrote in the first edition of the PTE's publicity newsletter *Transit West Midlands*:

> "LRT schemes like Midland Metro ... will help to save the urban areas of the country from total traffic snarl up in the 1990s. ... Although not a total panacea for road traffic congestion without other measures, ... Midland Metro and similar systems will help to avoid much larger investment in massive road schemes which will destroy towns and cities."
>
> (*Transit West Midlands*, No.1, October 1988)

On the PTA there was all-party support for the Metro concept. Councillor Don Lewis, a Birmingham Councillor, was the leader of the Conservative opposition group:

> "You cannot tell them (the public) what to do ... British people will not accept that. ... If you can't produce a (public transport) system which attracts them out of their cars, then forget it. ... That's why I'm very much in favour of Metro."
>
> (IT 4 pp.75,77)

Publicity brochures espoused the virtues of Midland Metro:

> Q: "Who'll feel the benefits of Midland Metro?"
> A: "Everybody"
>
> Why Midland Metro is needed:
>
> The West Midlands economy is now recovering; many will benefit from the new prosperity. But, as in London and many other cities, the revival of the economy is inevitably bringing even more trucks and cars - hence more traffic chaos on the roads. This is only the start, two hundred thousand more cars are forecast for West Midlands roads by the year 2000. Our roads cannot cope.
>
> A new solution is required if crippling congestion is to be prevented.
>
> Midland Metro provides such a solution. ...
>
> And for the quarter of a million people in the West Midlands who find the existing forms of public transport difficult to use, like the mobility handicapped, the elderly, or parents with pushchairs and shopping, it will unlock the door to independence.

> (In addition), where the tracks run, prosperity follows.
>
> Rundown areas are revitalized, new investment and business are attracted, the environment is improved, and, above all, the quality of life is improved for all.
>
> (Undated (circa 1989) Midland Metro publicity brochure)

The Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce supported the system. As Tony Bradley of their Home Policy Department explained, the system would provide industry with lower transport costs as a result of reductions in congestion, and the construction of the system would create employment opportunities for local firms[11]. Motoring organizations like the RAC and the AA supported the principle of LRT[12], though the British Road Federation (BRF) attacked the concept in its submission to the West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance conference in 1993[13].

Public reaction to the project was largely limited to letters in the local papers. There was little public opposition to the project[14], though Dr Barry Simpson, a lecturer from Aston University's Civil Engineering department, whilst not opposed to the project per se, criticised the legitimacy of some of the claims made about what the system would achieve, and subsequently criticised the PTA's choice of route alignments.

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[11] Interview with researcher.

[12] RAC "Cars in Cities" report, also Hansard 22/7/90 p.74.

[13] In interview, Paul Everitt the BRF's assistant director explained that the organization's view towards light rail was more sympathetic than the BRF's submission might have indicated. Nevertheless, as an organization designed to represent member's road interests, he pointed out that the BRF does little active lobbying for such systems.

[14] One or two individuals wrote regularly to the local papers suggesting the system was the result of "rail buffs" on the PTA, wondering how environmentally acceptable routes would be found, asking what evidence there was to support the arguments that the system would reduce congestion or help the mobility impaired, and accusing promoters of drawing spurious comparisons between what happened in London's Docklands and what might happen in the West Midlands.

8.5 Birmingham's concerns about the project

Amongst officers in Birmingham City Council, there was some disappointment about the nature of the Midland Metro investigations carried out by the PTA/E. A report of the Director of Development, to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee in October 1987 noted that there had been no assessment of a viable network, nor investigations of how integration between transport modes was to be undertaken. The corridor/ alignment studies were not of a detailed enough nature to answer questions about costs, ridership, property take or development opportunities. Finally there had been little consideration given to funding the system.

The report said the City Council recognized the importance of public transport for serving the city centre, and the problems caused by declining bus patronage and a restricted rail system operating with worn out rolling stock; however:

> "LRT is therefore an avenue to be explored, but it cannot substitute for bus and rail nor indeed should it."
>
> (Light Rail Transit, Report of Director of Development to Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 26/10/87)

The report suggested that the PTA was concentrating on light rail at the expense of other modes:

> "There is a severe danger that the glamour attaching to LRT is distracting attention from the fact that other modes need development too - whether or not LRT goes ahead. Already the PTA seems to be taking a narrower view of the benefits of electrifying the Stourbridge to Dorridge (heavy rail) line, than of the benefits of LRT - perhaps because it could be seen as competing for funding and support with LRT.
>
> The central point that the city (council) needs to make to the PTA is that while LRT is a "good thing", it cannot be regarded as the only answer to all problems."
>
> (ibid, paras 9,10)

Councillor Sir Stan Yapp, a member of the Council's Joint Strategy-Sub Committee and also Birmingham's lead member on the PTA, reacted angrily to the report. In particular he was irritated about the criticism made of the PTA's rumoured choice for

line 1 - a route running from Wolverhampton to Birmingham Snow Hill along the track bed of a former railway line (see figure 8.2). The Director of Development, Graham Shaylor, couldn't see the point of this line:

> "I was far from convinced that the number one line from Wolverhampton to Snow Hill was a sensible option. I couldn't see any reason why you had to reopen an old railway line that lay parallel to an existing line. ...
>
> I felt looking at our (Birmingham's) international ambitions and our economic needs, our best bet ... would be to link the NEC and the city centre through Heartlands - that was the route I'd have spent all my pennies on if I'd had the chance ..."
>
> (IT 2 pp.80,81)

Councillor Yapp said negative comments about the line "could set the City Council against the other authorities in the area" (Minutes of Joint Strategy Sub-Committee 26/10/87)[15]. At the end of October a meeting was organized between councillors from Birmingham City Council and the PTA. Following this the chairman of the City Council's Economic Development Committee, Councillor Albert Bore, announced that the City Council,

> "unequivocally support the idea of a system and hope to see a successful Bill piloted through Parliament to allow construction to begin by 1990."
>
> (*Evening Mail*, 30/10/87)

Nevertheless, a working party of city councillors meeting in November 1987 resolved that they could not support the Snow Hill to Wolverhampton route in isolation - it had to be part of a network (Minutes of Working Party on Light Rail Transit proposals, 20/11/87). It soon became clear that the line councillors and officers of the City Council wanted to see built was that described above by Graham Shaylor,

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[15] The route also passes through the districts of Sandwell and Wolverhampton, both of whom were keen on the line.

heading east from the city centre via the Heartlands Development Area to the National Exhibition Centre[16].

Whilst councillors and officers on the City Council were supportive of the concept of light rail, it appears that it was still regarded as a PTA/E initiative and something which should complement, rather than be an integral part of, the Council's own transport policies[17].

The Council's own policies remained primarily highway based, as the example of the Council's response to the opening of the M40 on the southern edge of the city illustrates[18]. In this instance light rail was seen to be a longer term option which was:

> "considered beneficial irrespective of any highway improvements"
>
> (Joint Report of the Director of Development and City Engineer to the Joint Strategy Sub-committee, 22/2/88)

In February 1988 the PTA announced that line 1 of Midland Metro would indeed be the one from Wolverhampton to Birmingham Snow Hill (see figure 8.2). The decision to select this line appears to have had little to do with transport considerations. The section between Snow Hill and West Bromwich had been part of the County Council plans unveiled in 1984. Under the County it had been identified as the line which was the fourth highest priority for construction, based upon the economic development potential within Sandwell district. In 1987 much of this land was transferred to the control of the Government-backed Black Country Development Corporation.

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16 As early as September 1987 the second line of the Metro network was rumoured to be this line from Birmingham to the NEC (see *Evening Mail*, 25/9/87).

17 At a political level, there was little overlap between Birmingham's members on the PTA and the Council's Joint Strategy Sub-Committee. There was a suggestion that leading city councillors treated the PTA as a board on which to appoint out-of-favour councillors. Another suggestion to explain this lack of overlap lies in the tendency for councillors who had an interest in public transport to be appointed to the PTA and for councillors with highway interests to join the Technical Services Committee.

18 For a detailed analysis of this issue see chapter 9.

Following the failure of the County's first light rail proposal, James Isaac, who remained the Director General of the PTE until late 1986, recommended that the Birmingham to West Bromwich line was the PTA's best chance of ensuring a quick build:

> "I (said) ... that the one chance we've got is of looking at the West Bromwich line which is the weakest line (of the four line priority network identified by the County Council), but on the other hand, having regard to the way the Government behaves and the way politicians behave, there's ... two benefits about the West Brom proposal: one is you don't pull any houses down, and the other is because it goes through an urban development corporation.
>
> The Government's already shown ... in (London's) Docklands that they're quite prepared to agree ... (to the Docklands Light Railway) because ... it went through the London Docklands Development Corporation. They will accept that many of the benefits cannot be proved because they are dependent on the development of the area.
>
> Therefore, I said, if we can say that some of these benefits are in relation to the Black Country UDC then we don't have to have such a rigid financial (assessment). ...
>
> And once people see this thing running by the end of 1990, they will be so pleased with it, they will be prepared to go ahead with the main line (from Birmingham to the NEC) in time for Birmingham to have the Olympics in 1992."
>
> (IT 2 p.195)

The decision to extend the route from West Bromwich up to Wolverhampton appears to have been largely for political reasons. Wolverhampton Borough Council, of which Councillor Bateman - the PTA Chairman and initiator of the County's investigations into light rail - was a member, had been the driving force behind the resurrection of the LRT plans in 1986 and the Labour Group had included a commitment to LRT in that year's election manifesto. In addition, bringing in Wolverhampton and Sandwell to the first line minimized the potential of antagonism which might have been created between the Black Country districts and Birmingham had the first line been entirely Birmingham-based[19].

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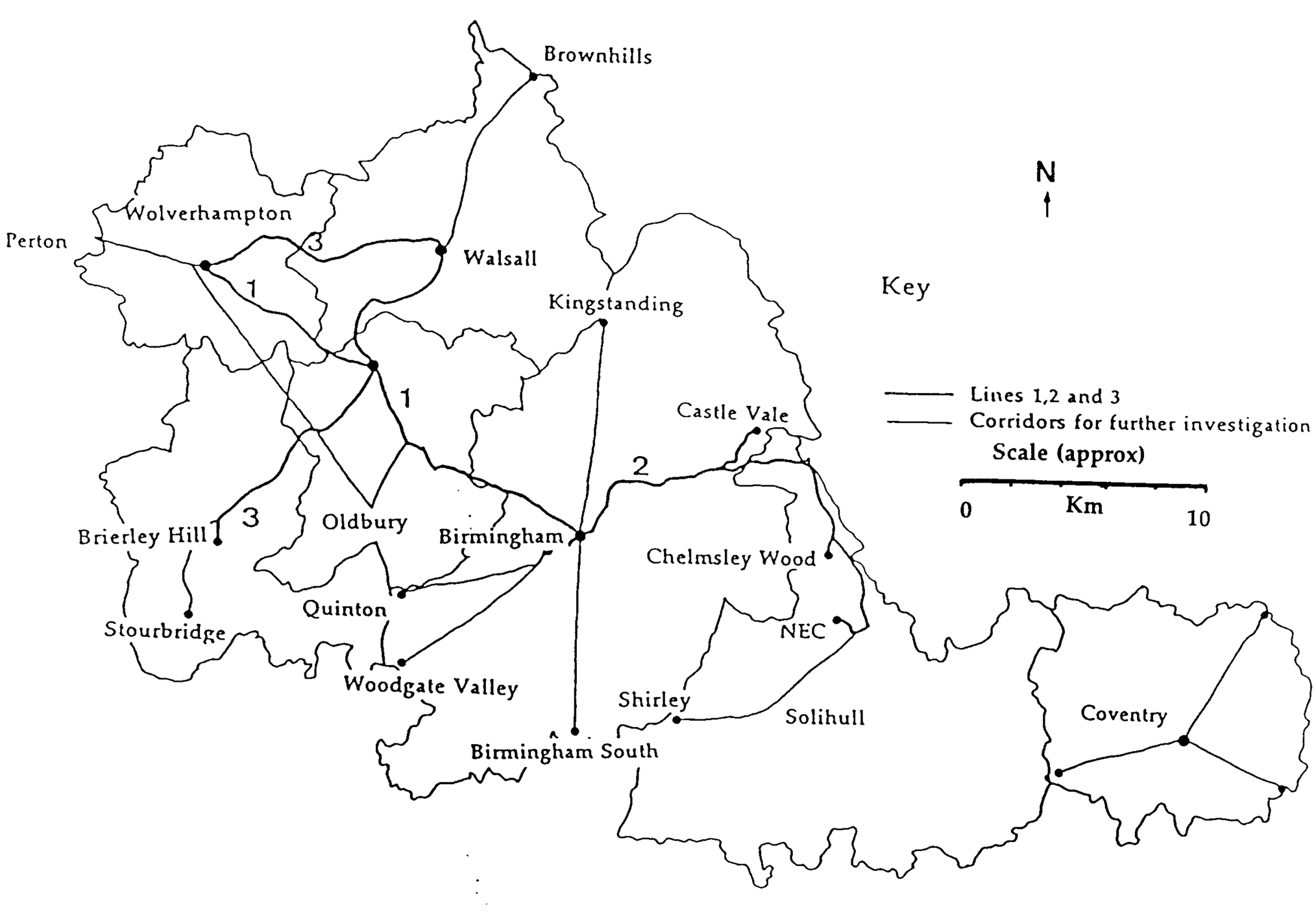
19 Based on interviews with participants in debate. Traditionally there had been a degree of distrust between Birmingham and its neighbouring districts who had regarded the city as a powerful big brother.

In November 1988 the PTE submitted a Parliamentary Bill for Line 1 which passed through unopposed, receiving Royal Assent in November 1989.

Figure 8.2 Midland Metro lines 1,2 and 3 and further corridors for investigation. Source: Centro (1992).



8.6 BITS and the light rail debate

It is against a background of unhappiness amongst some of the City Council officers over the PTA/E's handling of the Midland Metro project that BITS' contribution to the debate should be viewed. As Roger Taylor reflected:

> "There was an absolute standoff between the City Council (officers) and the PTA/E about the priorities for light rail ... it had become a hostile stand-off because of the personalities involved ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.150)

Prior to the undertaking of BITS, Birmingham's new chief executive, Roger Taylor, had met with the PTE's Director General, Bob Tarr, to discuss the Midland Metro

project. It was agreed that the City Council needed to form its own view on how the Metro project should develop. After all,

> "It is the City Council, not the PTA, who can consider how a rapid transit system can be related to the development of the City as a whole, and not only to other transport systems."
>
> (Midland Metro, Report of the chief executive, city engineer, and director of development to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 20th July 1988)

The report said BITS would provide members with a basis for taking strategic decisions on Metro. Whilst BITS would be a review of transport policy, it appears that the aim was not so much to question the very fundamentals of whether the city should pursue light rail, but rather to look at how light rail should fit in to the overall transport planning of the city. As Roger Taylor commented:

> "I hoped to get out of it (BITS) ... a validation and some rather higher level support for light rail ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.156)

The PTA wanted to submit a Parliamentary Bill for two more routes in November 1989. This would require a decision on the routes to be taken by early 1989 and BITS was seen to need to fit into this timescale. As noted in section 8.4, many of Birmingham's officers and councillors favoured an LRT route from the city centre out to the NEC/Airport via Heartlands.

Roger Taylor succeeded in persuading the Director General of the PTE, Bob Tarr, to assist in funding BITS, and so help to ensure that the PTA/E felt some ownership over the findings. Bob Tarr was keen that the BITS study should look at new forms of public transport[20]. Ian Hobbs, the PTE's representative on the BITS working party, recalled that his remit had been to:

> "'get some LRT out of it' and not to offend Birmingham or anyone else with suggestions of nasty things like parking restraint."
>
> (IT 1 p.231)

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[20] Information derived from interviews with participants in the BITS process.

The BITS do-minimum strategy predicted substantial traffic growth by the year 2010, including a 30,000 increase in persons crossing the Birmingham Middle Ring Road in the morning peak period (see table 8.1). Two test scenarios considered the effect of light rail; Strategy 20 was based on three light rail lines alongside other public transport policies (including bus priorities), whilst Strategy 21 examined the effects of a more intensive eight line LRT network. In each of these tests, the PTE's line 1 from Wolverhampton to Birmingham was included on the basis that it was the PTE's first choice of route rather than it necessarily being a key requirement in transportation terms. Other than light rail, no other form of new public transport (for instance guided bus) was tested in BITS.

Compared against the do-minimum scenario, Strategy 20 was predicted to achieve a slight shift in modal split from private to public transport at the Middle Ring Road cordon, though MVA commented that the effectiveness of bus priority measures had probably been over-estimated (MVA, 1989a). Strategy 21 was seen to produce a considerable increase in rail use but primarily at the expense of the bus. Indeed, city centre arrivals by car were actually higher in Strategy 21 than Strategy 20 (see table 8.1).

Against other objectives, the intensive light rail strategy was expected to provide much improved public transport accessibility to all areas of the city, and an improved image, and economic regeneration potential compared to both the base (1985) situation and the do-minimum scenario (see table 6.4).

The initial BITS Preferred Strategy (Strategy 40) combined elements of all the tests, including road pricing which was subsequently rejected by the Council. The strategic advice offered by the consultants included the recommendation that rail investment should involve the:

"enhancement of British Rail lines, and construction of new light rail lines in corridors not served by rail, as a means of substantially improving accessibility, and reducing congestion on the approaches to the city centre."

(MVA, 1989a para. 4.6.2)

It included LRT lines along the Hagley Rd, Bristol Rd, Walsall Rd, to Wolverhampton and the NEC. MVA also advocated converting some British Rail lines to LRT in the long term. The cost of the light rail proposals was estimated at £276m, though this

Table 8.1 BITS forecast peak period arrivals in zones 1 and 2 (Birmingham Middle Ring Road) Source: MVA, 1989e.

	Strategy				
Mode	1985	Do Min	20	21	40
Car	45 100	71 400	64 400	67 200	58 800
Bus	53 900	51 800	57 400	28 000	33 600
Rail/LRT	11 000	16 800	18 200	44 800	47 600
Total	110 000	140 000	140 000	140 000	140 000

Notes:
1985 = Base modelled; Do min = Do Minimum strategy; 20 = Public Transport, Low LRT investment; 21 = Public Transport, High LRT investment; 40 = initial preferred strategy (includes Road Pricing).

The data represents the modelled output. In practice, the 1985 modelled was somewhat different to the actual observed flows in 1985, as is shown below:

	Modelled	Actual	Accuracy
Car	45 100	67 830	0.66
Bus	53 900	43 042	1.25
Rail	11 000	14 919	0.74
Total	110 000	125 791	0.87

(Source: Modelled - MVA, BITS Final Report; Actual - BCC 1989 TPP)
Given the inflated nature of the bus users, and the model's prediction that the majority of LRT/Rail users transfer from the bus, it seems likely that the modelling over-estimates LRT patronage, and also underestimates traffic growth.

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only represented the cost of the sections of line within the Birmingham area. All recommendations were qualified by the need to examine them in greater detail using the proposed West Midlands Transport Model and the PTE's own public transport model (VIPS).

The impact of Strategy 40 on peak hour travel to Birmingham city centre was to produce a large growth in rail use, but still largely at the expense of the bus. Arrivals

by car were still seen to be significantly higher than in 1985 and only substantially lower than the do-minimum because of the imposition of road pricing (see table 8.1). On the basis of the BITS report, City Council officers recommended that lines to Kingstanding, NEC, Weoley, Quinton, and Wolverhampton ought to be accepted in principle, with further work being required to determine their practicability. Regarding the conversion of British Rail lines to LRT, officers suggested that this should be accepted, so long as it did not prevent investment to the existing heavy rail system. Officers of the PTA/E voiced concern that the BITS recommendations to convert the cross-city rail line from Redditch to Litchfield to LRT was delaying the Department of Transport's assessment of electrification proposals for the line (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 1/7/89).

In April 1989, before BITS had been completed or approved, the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee was informed that MVA were going to recommend LRT for the NEC corridor (see figure 8.2). Members formally resolved to approve detailed investigations into a route to enable Centro to prepare a Parliamentary Bill for submission in November.

8.7 Light rail in the aftermath of BITS

Reflecting on the contribution of BITS to the debate on light rail, Roger Taylor, the Birmingham's chief executive commented:

> "I think it (BITS) was a major boost to the City Council's commitment to light rail - I think it helped enormously with light rail; it got us past any further doubts about line 1 (though he acknowledged it didn't actually consider line 1's merits) because it enabled us to think about line 2 and the other lines ... and ... the productive role which they had."
>
> (IT 4 p.163)

He also believed that the BITS process had improved relationships between officers of the City Council and the PTE, something which persisted after the study's completion:

> "(after BITS) we were having working dinners with the PTE, with all the chief officers of the Council there ... about once every 2 or 3

> months. ... I mean we were doing a lot together, but I think it flowed from the early willingness for people to participate in BITS to begin with. No question in my mind."
>
> (IT 4 p.158)

Nick Partridge, of the Central Executive's Department, believed that whilst previously light rail had been seen as primarily a PTA/E initiative, BITS had shown that there were good reasons why LRT should be a central part of City Council policy:

> "(Prior to BITS) there's no doubt that the PTA/E was convinced that public transport - rail - was the way to bring people into the city centre. But that wasn't necessarily shared by the City Engineers and the Technical Services Committee because it wasn't anything to do with them. Their business was roads and highways. ...
>
> (Prior to BITS) there was no agreement (between the PTA/E) ... and the City Council about the promotion of LRT."
>
> (IT 1 p.158)

Meanwhile Chris Haynes, divisional engineer in charge of the city's Transport Planning Division thought BITS gave "some comfort on quality public transport" (IT 1 p.217) and remarked that had BITS not come out in favour of LRT then the Council might have decided:

> "'Well it isn't worth it'. ... I mean we could have pulled the plug on it at that stage."
>
> (IT 3 pp.92-93)

Tom Magrath, a corporate planning manager at the PTE, who until 1990 had been a member of the PTE's rapid transit team, believed that BITS, and the 'Integrated Transport Studies' done by the other West Midland districts, made light rail, and public transport in general, a key plank of overall urban policy rather than just a narrow functional policy:

> "I think they (the integrated studies) were the next step in a sequence if you like: I think (Midland) Metro started off changing consciousness, but it was still very much in terms of public transport for its own sake. ... (The studies said) better public transport is actually a legitimate way of providing extra transport capacity overall ...

So they (the studies) were extremely important, because they made public transport a sort of ... legitimate policy; rather than a nice idea which you shove in your ... plan.

... There's a lot of good things that everyone likes to talk about but not do anything about. And actually ... what ... (BITS) ... did for a start is ... say ...(public transport) is actually an integral part of future urban policy and therefore you do have to start taking it seriously.

I think the idea of rapid transit originally was to be part of a better public transport system ... in constructing the arguments for it, one could see the whole range of community benefits which rapid transit could deliver. What we found out (through the studies) is actually that its not just rapid transit which can deliver that wide range of benefits, its actually having a proper transport strategy."

(IT 3 pp.122,130-131)

In November 1989, the PTA submitted a further Parliamentary Bill, seeking powers to construct two further lines of Midland Metro. Whilst line 3 would link the Black Country towns, thus bringing Dudley and Walsall districts into the network, line 2 was proposed to run from Birmingham to the National Exhibition Centre in Solihull (figure 8.2).

Funding of the project required approval, and resources, from Central Government. In order to achieve this, light rail schemes had to pass the Government's Section 56 grant assessment. In 1989, however, the Department of Transport introduced new Section 56 assessment criteria which made approval more difficult. The new system meant grant was only payable in relation to the non-user benefits of a project. The Government argued that user benefits from public transport schemes would be captured through the farebox.

Though Metro line 1 subsequently passed the Section 56 appraisal, the Department of Transport had no specific grant source available to fund LRT projects, final approval had to come from the Treasury. By the early 1990s the Treasury was tightening its grip on public expenditure in the light of the national economic recession. Despite BITS' support for light rail, Peter Langley who had represented the DOT on the BITS working party did not believe it had made funding the system any more likely:

"If you ask ... whether this study (BITS) has made it more or less likely that the Department of Transport would provide resources for Midland Metro line 1, I would have to say in answer to that, I don't think it's made any difference. ...

At the end of the day, however strong the case and however well tied in it is to the strategy, the fate of funding on Midland Metro line 1 is always going to come down to how much money the Treasury makes available nationally." (IT 1 p.174)

Sheffield started to receive grant-aid for its Supertram LRT system in 1990 and Roger Freeman MP, the Transport Minister, announced that unless the economy improved there would be no more schemes approved until 1996 (*Birmingham Evening Mail* 24/7/92). He assured the West Midlands, however, that Midland Metro line 1 was "top of a list of one" (*Birmingham Post* editorial, 24/6/92).

The General Election in 1992 provided an opportunity for getting the go-ahead for Metro. Neil Kinnock, the opposition Labour Leader, and John Prescott, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, had both visited the West Midlands and made positive comments about the Metro project (*Birmingham Post* 2/9/89 and 28/4/90). Peter Snape, the Labour MP for West Bromwich East, suggested that if elected, Labour would switch resources from construction of the Black Country Spine Road to Midland Metro line 1[21] (*Birmingham Post* 28/1/92). Labour, however, lost the 1992 general election. Speaking in 1993 Phil Bateman, one of the chief proponents of light rail, noted:

> "I have no doubt in my mind that had Labour won the general election, the light rail worries that currently exist in this County would not be there."
>
> (IT 2 p.31)

Despite the lack of progress, the seven districts remained committed to the Midland Metro plans. Even when the 1992 local elections changed the political configuration of three of the seven West Midland districts, created a hung PTA, and ousted the PTA

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21 Metro line 1 was proposed to run parallel to the Spine Road.

Chairman Councillor Phil Bateman from his Wolverhampton seat, support remained solid[22]. As Councillor Don Lewis, the shadow PTA chair noted:

> "generally the approach (on Midland Metro) has been non-political. ... It's been seen as ... being an asset for the region in the long term and each district will be sharing some of it eventually."
>
> (IT 4 p.81)

As he also explained, the light rail project was one of the PTA's most important responsibilities:

> "I mean if we don't achieve the Metro, what do we exist for really? Only as a subsidising outfit running concessionary fares and subsidising rail travel. Apart from that what's left?. ... We've got to establish a stronger identity ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.80)

The development of the package approach to transport funding led to the districts collectively submitting an annual bid for transport grant to the Department of Transport, with a prioritised list of capital schemes[23]. In each year's submission from 1992 - 1994 line 1 of Midland Metro was given top priority. Though rejected for funding in 1992 and 1993, in 1994 the Government gave a guarded approval for the scheme, promising some funding as long as two conditions were met. The first was that in order to try to ensure that the line met its stated objectives of congestion relief, the districts should implement complementary traffic restraint measures. Furthermore, the Government stipulated that further local contributions should be made to the £145m project. In July 1995 agreement was finally reached and the project was given the go-ahead.

As a consequence of the slow progress on Midland Metro, however, Birmingham City Council turned to alternative policies. In a BITS review meeting in 1992, the City's Assistant Director of Planning, Alan Wenban-Smith, noted that there was a need to

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[22] The Conservatives won control of Dudley and Wolverhampton whilst Walsall, formerly Labour controlled, became a hung council. Shortly afterwards, however, Labour regained control of Dudley through a by-election, and this also allowed them to regain control of the PTA.

[23] The package approach was discussed in Chapter 7.

place increasing emphasis on things given lower priority by BITS - namely bus priority measures and heavy rail investment. This shift was encouraged by the Government. In the letter stating the Government's inability to fund the Midland Metro line 1 project in June 1992, the Secretary of State for Transport, John MacGregor, actively encouraged bus priorities as a lower cost alternative.

8.8 Interpretation and interim conclusions

It is too early to say whether the BITS recommendations will be breached by an inability to implement light rail. Rather than speculating on the future, this chapter has sought to assess the role of BITS in the context of the development of light rail plans in the West Midlands, and more specifically in Birmingham.

In the sense that BITS reviewed transport policy and recommended the City Council to pursue light rail, it could be said that Birmingham pursued LRT *because of BITS*. Nevertheless, to believe that the explanation for the attraction of light rail lay solely on the basis of such technical analysis oversimplifies the policy process. BITS was clearly not instrumental in bringing about light rail as a policy in Birmingham, or the West Midlands. The impetus for light rail came through a combination of political interests, professional knowledge, personal values, and experience (seeing systems elsewhere) and ordinary knowledge about what the system might achieve. The technical analysis (for instance mode comparisons) came only after these inputs had created the impetus to pursue the policy. Like chapter 6, this again raises questions about whether technical studies are likely to generate new policies.

By the time BITS was commissioned there was a good deal of political and organizational momentum behind the proposals for light rail. The policy was also supported by many pressure groups, both from environmental and industrial backgrounds. Line 1 was going to Parliament, network evaluation studies were being carried out by consultants appointed by the PTE, and a second Parliamentary Bill was planned by the PTA for the following year. Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the PTE was keen for BITS to come out in support of light rail; the quote of the PTE representative suggests that functional organizations participating

in studies of this nature bring their own narrow organizational objectives to the table. In effect, BITS presented proponents of light rail with another hurdle to jump.

BITS did not really provide any new knowledge about what a light rail system - on its own - could do for Birmingham; previous studies and the ordinary knowledge of decision-makers had acknowledged the possible image effects of light rail, its ability to attract some motorists from their cars, and the potential to strengthen the city centre and assist in urban regeneration.

The BITS recommendations to pursue light rail were consistent with the values of the majority of the influential actors within Birmingham. Even though some officers were unhappy about the PTA's choice of line 1, there is nothing to suggest that there were fundamental doubts about the merits of light rail technology. The BITS analysis actually did nothing to lift this unease about line 1 - it did not for instance provide any new knowledge about the line which showed it was a good line to select. Indeed, the consultant did not even look at the line's merits during the course of the study.

Despite these observations, BITS does seem to have played a useful role in relation to light rail. Firstly, BITS seems to have added to the weight of evidence in support of a light rail system. Secondly, the process appears to have enhanced relations between the City Council and the PTE in a manner which benefitted the Midland Metro project. It seems that it was the process, as much as the analysis, which might have been responsible for reducing the tensions between some council officers and the PTE over line 1. Thirdly, BITS changed light rail from being seen as a functional policy measure to one which was part of a substantial policy outlook. Up until then, it seems that whilst LRT had been supported by the City Council, but had been very much a PTA/E initiative. BITS gave good reason for the City Council to feel that it also "owned" light rail.

In chapters 6 and 7 it was suggested that BITS reflected a belief in the mixed scanning theory, and that subsequent changes in Central Government thinking have supported this line. Chapter 7 noted that Central Government's view of transport strategies was that they evolve over time and that they should, on the whole, consist of low cost measures. To Central Government the fundamental direction is about improving

public transport, not implementing light rail. BITS, however, included light rail as a fundamental element of the strategic advice. Here there appears to remain friction between the two strategies of central and local government. Given Central Government's higher position in the hierarchy of responsibility for urban transport policy, implementing light rail remained problematic. This led Chris Haynes, the head of the Council's Transport Planning Division, to reflect that:

> "(BITS) raised the expectations on (Midland) Metro and hasn't really delivered ...
>
> (IT 1 p.220)

This friction presented local authority practitioners with the dilemma of whether investing in low cost public transport measures achieved the same as investing in a number of capital intensive light rail lines? Were they the same or different strategies? As Chris Haynes pointed out:

> "... the problem is if you don't do certain investments - eg. Metro, does that all mean that the balance of the strategy ought to be altered? ... should you be putting more in bus priorities? ... it isn't a very clear strategy if you can change things that much."
>
> (IT 1 pp.218-219)

CHAPTER 9 BITS AND HIGHWAY POLICY - THE SOUTH BIRMINGHAM EXPERIENCE

9.1 Introduction

As mentioned in chapter 6, the question of transport policy in the south of Birmingham was one of the issues which had given the City Council difficulty in the run up to commissioning BITS.

The issue was one of the most important transport policy questions to face the Council in the immediate aftermath of BITS. It therefore provides an opportunity to examine the role BITS played in a specific policy issue.

9.2 Early road proposals for the south of the city

Whilst the Aston Expressway and the dualling of the A34 Walsall Road were undertaken on the north side of Birmingham, there were no similar measures undertaken in the south of the city during the 1950/60s. Figure 9.1 illustrates the main road pattern in the south of Birmingham.

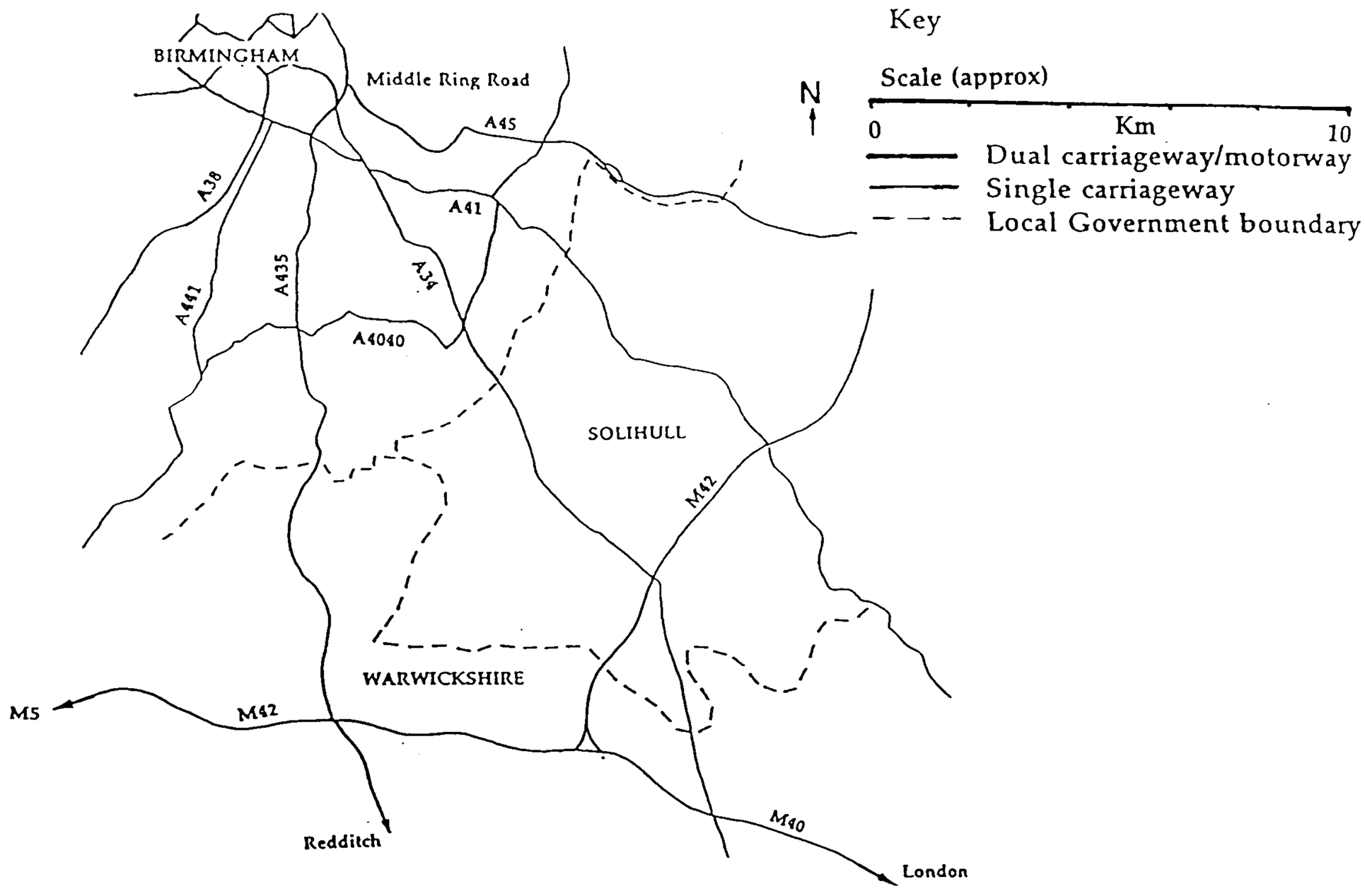
The radial roads pass through a number of district centres which provide shops and other services for the local population - the A435 Alcester Road passes through Kings Heath and Moseley, the A34 Stratford Road passes through the centres of Springfield, Sparkhill and Sparkbrook, whilst the A41 Warwick Road passes through Acock's Green. In socio-economic terms, the areas of Kings Heath and Moseley are relatively prosperous - home to many professional middle class citizens living in nineteenth century owner-occupied housing. Further east, Sparkhill and Sparkbrook are less prosperous and home to much of Birmingham's Asian community.

Plans for building dual carriageways in the south of the city date back to 1917 when highway improvement lines (HILs) were laid down on most of the city's radial roads (see chapter 5).

In 1957, however, the Public Works Committee approved a line for a Kings Heath by-pass, designed to two lane dual carriageway standard; this would run to the east of

the shopping centre situated on the A435. To the north of the Kings Heath by-pass it was proposed to construct a new road alignment adjacent to the railway so that Moseley Village was also by-passed. To the south of Kings Heath, the existing A435 road alignment would be widened. This project was included in the 1960 Approved Development Plan as a project to be constructed between 1966 and 1971 (BCC, 1960).

Figure 9.1 The main road network in South Birmingham.



The recommended plan of the 1974 West Midland Transportation Study (WMTS) advocated upgrading the A435 Alcester Road and a section of the A34 Stratford Road to dual carriageway standard by 1981 (WMTSG, 1974). The improved A435 would serve to link the city centre with the M42 motorway which the Ministry of Transport proposed to construct along the southern edge of Birmingham (figure 9.1). Much of the A435 between the city boundary and the proposed junction with the M42 had already been dualled by Warwickshire County Council. Neither of these projects came to fruition during the next seven years.

By the early 1970s, the peak hour flows through Kings Heath High Street were at capacity, forcing some traffic to rat-run through residential streets (Report on the

Kings Heath By-Pass given by the County Surveyor and County Planner to the WMCC Highways Sub-Committee, 19/12/74). Nevertheless, a vigourous opposition to the by-pass and the associated property demolition was mounted by local residents. In May 1973, the leader of Birmingham City Council, Councillor Stan Yapp, announced that the by-pass scheme would be put on ice, pending an "informed decision" (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 15/5/73). Mr Borg, the City Engineer and Surveyor between 1963 and 1974 regarded the Kings Heath by-pass as being the most difficult scheme he had to deal with in his time at Birmingham. As he recalled,

> "The (by-pass proposal) came at a time when one had to ask oneself, had the period of undeniable outright emergency (to cater for traffic) passed? ... And are there now supervening considerations ... which compel us to say from now on you are going to have to be rationed ... in terms of highway capacity and car usage ... as against the retention of your front garden or whatever it may be?"
>
> (IT 4 p.15)

In October 1973, Councillor Yapp informed the Council that it would be up to the newly created West Midlands County Council (WMCC), of which he was to be the leader, to determine the fate of the Kings Heath bypass, though, as the future leader of the County Council, he stressed he did not envisage it being part of the programme (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 2/10/73).

In 1977 the line of the by-pass was revoked by the incoming Conservative administration on the County. The County Surveyor, Stuart Mustow, pointed out to Councillor David Bevan, the Highways and Transport Committee chairman, the implications of such a decision:

> "... the great problem was that everybody knew that the ring motorway, the M42, was going to be built and it was going to have a relatively limited number of accesses and one of them was going to be on the A435. ... We (officers) said to him (Councillor Bevan) ...:
>
> 'The facts are such; ... you can drop it if you wish but recognize the implications of that and you really need to have an alternative. What's your alternative?'
>
> So of course there was a tendency at the time to say we'll improve the railway line(s) which was never an alternative actually in that context."
>
> (IT 1 pp.255-256)

9.3 Response to the motorway proposals

By the early 1980s, the section of the M42 between the A34 Stratford Road and M6 to the north-east of the city had opened (see figure 9.1). The 1982 WMCC Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP) submission acknowledged that much of the traffic from the south-west of the conurbation to Birmingham would arrive in the city via the Aston Expressway. Nevertheless, it commented that when the M42 was completed it was likely that there would be a need to increase road capacity in the south of Birmingham. Now, however, the favoured road for upgrading was the A41 Warwick Road; it was proposed that this would be dualled between the County boundary and the Middle Ring Road (see Figure 9.2).

In December 1984 the Department of Transport announced that the M40 London to Oxford motorway would be extended to the edge of Birmingham, ending at an interchange with the M42 between the A435 Alcester Road and A34 Stratford Road (see Figure 9.1). The County Council recognized that the construction of the M40 would probably lead to traffic increases on the A435 and that further investigations would be necessary to determine an appropriate response (1985 TPP submission).

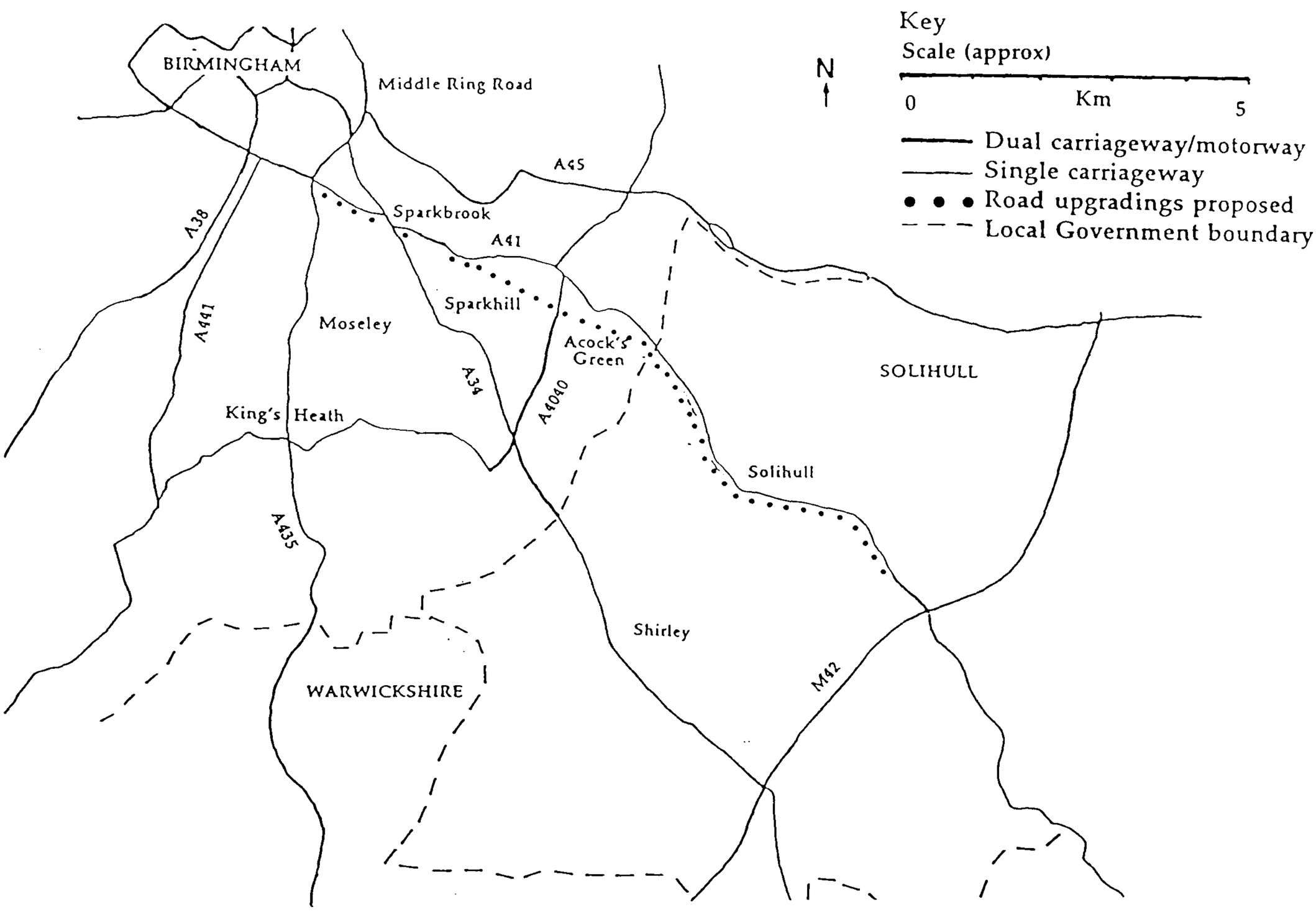
With the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986, Birmingham City Council picked up investigations into the effects of the M40. The City Engineers Department had highways responsibilities, though the Development Department was also involved in highways matters, particularly where land-use/development issues were concerned. Technical Services Committee was the committee with formal responsibility for highways matters, though an Economic Development/ Planning/Technical Services Joint Strategy Sub-Committee was established in an attempt to ensure that transport issues were co-ordinated with the Council's planning and development objectives.

In 1986 the Labour-controlled City Council was undertaking a number of high profile city centre initiatives aimed at boosting the City's economic fortunes (see chapter 6). Senior officers and councillors on the City Council anticipated that there would be development opportunities arising from the construction of the M40, particularly if

there were good road connections provided to the city centre. As Mike Taylor, a planner in the City's Development Department explained,

> "it was the whole image building (thing) - you know, promoting the city centre, ... (the belief was) there's no point having somewhere like this (the city centre) if you can't get to it by highway."
>
> (IT 3 p.22)

Figure 9.2 Road proposals for South Birmingham in the early 1980s



A report submitted by the Director of Development and the City Engineer in July 1987 to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee noted that the M40, when opened in 1991,

> "provides major development opportunities, and is likely to significantly influence the level and composition of traffic in the southern half of the city ...
>
> (Areas where economic development opportunities) will be most enhanced as a result of the M40 will be those on the periphery (along the M42). Spin-off to the city centre and to sites within the conurbation

> will depend to some extent on how the City's own road network connects up to the new route."
>
> (M40/South Approaches Study, Report to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee 27/7/87, paras. 1,5)

Detailed knowledge of the impacts of the M40 opening were not known at the time, though the report estimated that the increase in peak hour demand on the southern radials would be in the region of the capacity of a dual carriageway/limited access road. The report presented a number of alternative courses of action which the City Council could follow -

> i) To create a totally new radial route linking the city centre to the M42;
>
> ii) To radically increase the traffic capacity of one or more existing radial routes (eg the A38 or A41 which already had significant upgradings proposed which could be enhanced and accelerated);
>
> iii) To improve the traffic capacity of several existing routes by traffic management and moderate improvement works over and above those already programmed;
>
> iv) To do nothing more than is already programmed and allow traffic to find an equilibrium level of congestion;
>
> v) To carry out minimum highway works but to make substantial investment in public transport including the possibility of Light Rail Transit.
>
> (M40/South Approaches Study, Report to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 27/7/87, para.11)

The Sub-Committee agreed to await more detailed assessments of the alternatives in six months time, before committing itself to a particular course of action. In the meantime, councillors and officers held meetings with ministers and civil servants from the Department of Transport to investigate the possibility of securing Central Government financial assistance for any necessary road improvements. The Government suggested that they would be willing to assist in financing a highway scheme[1].

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1 Information derived from interviews with councillors and officers and of the City Council.

Meanwhile, in September 1987 the City Engineer asked the PTE to investigate the potential for a light rail line in the south of the city, but replying in February 1988, the PTE's Midland Metro[2] team leader concluded that it would not be possible to have a route constructed in time for the opening of the M40 in 1991. In addition, there was no alignment which would not involve the demolition of significant amounts of property - on-street running was ruled out because of the high levels of existing traffic flows and the need to maintain access to frontage properties[3].

In February 1988 a more detailed assessment of alternative responses to the M40 was presented to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee. In all, nine different alternatives were investigated - eight involving significant road investment, and one being a do-nothing option. There was no discrete public transport option; one had been drawn up by an officer but it had subsequently been decided to include its elements in each of the other options. It was proposed that public transport promotion, through bus priorities and rail service enhancements would be used to attract local trips out of the highway network in order to free up spare capacity for "essential long distance traffic" coming off the M40 (M40/South Approaches Study, Joint report of the Director of Development and City Engineer to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 22/2/88).

Each alternative option had been assessed in line with the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Appraisal (SACTRA) guidelines. This included an examination of environmental effects, property take, the financial cost of the option, and the economic benefits to traffic. The design standards of the highway options was based upon traffic predictions made by consultants TPA for the Department of Transport. They had anticipated that most traffic from the M40 would arrive in the city centre via the signed route which was the M42/M6 and the Aston Expressway. Nevertheless, they predicted that the M40 would lead to 10 percent traffic growth in the south of the city; this did not include the possibility of the M40 creating new generated traffic.

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2 Midland Metro was the name of the PTE's LRT project.

3 The PTE was, however, keen to investigate a long-term LRT option with the City Council.

Mike Taylor of the Development Department had been involved in the process of identifying alternatives and assessing their performance -

> "We looked at it (the assessment) from a rational point of view, but I mean the goalposts and the rules were established at a higher level. ... We made rational choices on the basis of the parameters given ... (which were) highway based, look to see which is the least damaging ..."
>
> (IT 3 p.23)

The assessment came down in favour of a combination of measures centred around an £86m tunnelled version of the A435 Kings Heath by-pass scheme which had been abandoned some ten years earlier (figure 9.3). Technically it was seen to be the best choice:

> "in terms of: its ability to generate economic and development benefits; it is the most direct and fastest in terms of journey time; and has the highest road capacity."
>
> (M40/South Approaches Study, Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 22/2/88, para.7.2)

There were other, more pragmatic, attractions of this option; it would, for instance, relieve Kings Heath High Street and Moseley of some traffic. In addition, unlike some of the other options, it lay entirely within the City's boundaries so it did not rely on other local authorities to make their own road improvements. It was also expected to stand the greatest chance of receiving national funding because it was the most direct route between the motorway and the city centre.

The other elements of the officers' recommendations were the gradual improvement of the A34 Stratford Road/A4040 Fox Hollies Road/A41 Acock's Green by-pass (figure 9.3) so that it could cater for local traffic, and improvements to public transport - bus lanes in the short term, with light rail as a longer term possibility.

At the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee meeting, the chairman suggested that all the recommendations should be noted and put out to public consultation before a final decision was taken. The public consultation began, however, only three months before the May local council elections in which there was a chance that Labour could lose

control of the Council. Furthermore, a number of marginal wards existed on the A435 Kings Heath/Moseley corridor. As Derek Rawson, the City Engineer, later recalled,

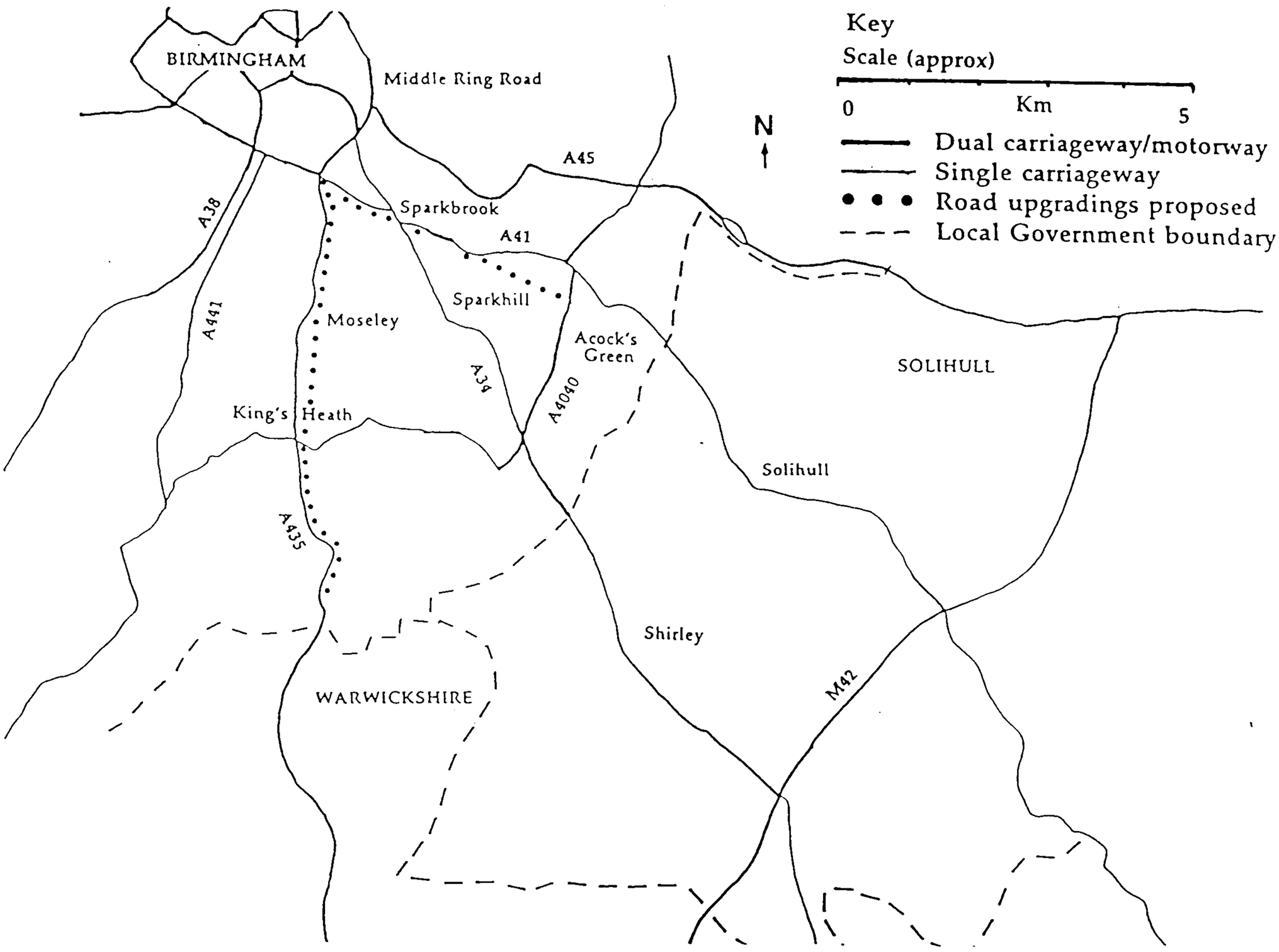
> "We were invited (by members) in February to do the public consultation. ... When we had to go out (and consult) at that time, it was quite clear it wasn't going to go through. ... One thing I've learnt ... in my career is that timing of proposals is as important as what's in them. ...
>
> Once you started talking in the build up to an election at public consultation, the impetus of (the) anti-road (campaign) in that area was so great that nobody would have got in (been elected) unless they nailed their banners to the anti-road lobby."
>
> (IT 2 pp.143,145)

Many of the residents in Moseley and Kings Heath quickly organized against the road proposals. In addition to objecting to the proposals on the basis of the destruction that they would cause, South Birmingham Road Action Group (SOBRAG) argued that, far from bringing commercially beneficial traffic into the city centre, the proposed highway would attract through traffic which would otherwise have avoided Birmingham by keeping to the motorway box which encircled the city (the M5, M42, M6).

Councillor Eve Brook, a Labour member for Moseley, became chairperson of SOBRAG. Though not the only Labour councillor opposing the measures, she was well aware that she was in a minority:

> "Labour had won power in Birmingham in 1986 on the back of unemployment and economic development and it was very much seen by the Labour group, particularly the older working class councillors, ... that anything that stopped economic regeneration ... was a bad thing. ... They ... had been brought up on the notion that Birmingham's saviour was the car. I mean we made them here ...
>
> I would have thought that only about 20 of us within a group of about 60 ... were anti- this whole proposal. And most of that third were from South Birmingham anyway and so had a direct interest."
>
> (IT 3 pp.7-8)

Figure 9.3 The favoured alignments for improved highways in 1988



The Council Leader, Councillor Sir Richard Knowles recalled with typical candour that the road proposals had created much argument amongst Labour councillors:

> "There were two schools of thought in the Labour Group; those people from the Perry Barr area (in the north of the city) who had a bloody great road driven through (the A34 Walsall Road was widened in the 1960s) ... those people in the Coventry Road area who had the same thing done to them ... Their view was: 'why the ... hell should we be devastated and then the affluent buggers in Moseley/Kings Heath get away with it?'
>
> (IT 3 p.182)

The proposals became a central electoral issue in the affected Council wards and in March senior Labour councillors announced that all the proposals would be dropped in three months time if the widespread public opposition remained.

The proposals were formally abandoned at a meeting of the full Council in mid-April. A motion was passed which noted that there might still be a need for smaller scale road improvements, spread across the radial routes in the south:

> "We consider that the motorway box (the M6, M5 and M42) was designed and planned for the traffic going from north to south, east to west, and vice versa and that a breaching of the box would not be of advantage to the economic growth of Birmingham.
>
> We appreciate that several roads may well need upgrading to cope with the extra traffic that might be generated and ensure that road anarchy is avoided."
>
> (Meeting of the full Council, 12/4/88)

In July 1988 the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee received a new report from the Director of Development and City Engineer. This set out proposals for further technical work in line with the April 1988 resolution. The investigations would seek to produce a package of measures combining highway and public transport improvements. The highway improvements would not be designed to provide a new road that could attract through traffic away from the motorway box which encircled Birmingham. Instead any improvements would be designed to the standard of a 40mph two lane dual carriageway, with at grade junctions, pedestrian crossings and minimum demolition. Six different highway options would be investigated:

i) A435 Alcester Road
ii) Yardley Wood Road/Stoney Lane[4]
iii) A34 Stratford Road
iv) A34 Stratford Road/A4040 Fox Hollies Road/A41 Acock's Green bypass
v) A41 Warwick Road
vi) A45 Coventry Road

At the meeting, the chairman of the Technical Services Committee (the parent committee responsible for highway matters), Councillor Redmond (Fox Hollies ward), commented that if the Fox Hollies/Acock's Green option were chosen, the opposition to the recently abandoned Kings Heath proposals would be made to "look like a prayer meeting" (*Birmingham Post* 21/7/88). In his opinion the obvious route to select

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[4] Yardley Wood Road and Stoney Lane form a minor radial road which runs parallel, but between, the A435 and A34.

would be along the A34 Stratford Road (Minutes of the Joint Strategy Sub Committee 20/7/88). In response, the chairman of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Fred Chapman (who was also chair of the Planning Committee), suggested that it was likely that there would be opposition to whichever route was selected (ibid).

It was at this same Sub-Committee meeting that members agreed to commission BITS. Publicly, little was heard about the South Birmingham issue in the months during which BITS was being undertaken.

9.4 The BITS recommendations for South Birmingham

In June 1989, the BITS final report was published. As explained in Chapter 6, there were two levels of advice given in BITS - the strategic and the detailed. To recap, the strategic advice was as follows -

- enhancement of British Rail lines, and construction of new light rail lines in corridors not served by rail, as a means of substantially improving accessibility and reducing congestion on the approaches to the city centre;

- orbital highway construction so far as is needed to relieve, and enable the expansion of, the city centre;

- radial highway construction sufficient to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief within corridors;

- traffic management measures to:

  a) increase the capacity of the existing road system and improve bus operations;

  b) divert city centre traffic to orbital roads, and improve conditions for pedestrians in the city centre;

  c) ensure that the environmental relief enabled by radial road construction is achieved;

- integration of services on individual public transport modes to the extent permitted by the legislative and financial framework;

- enhancement of service levels where justified by changes in patronage, while retaining an integrated fare structure at a level as close to today's

> fares (in real terms) as permitted by trends in patronage and operating costs.
>
> (MVA 1989a, para.4.6.2)

The question of how the Council ought to respond to the challenges presented by the M40 was one of the detailed issues the MVA Consultancy had been asked to consider. Four options were considered:

a) Enhance the A435;
b) Improve Yardley Wood Road[5], linking it to either the A435 or the A34;
c) Combination of the A34 and the planned Acock's Green by-pass;
d) Localised improvements including the current proposals for the A41.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the BITS analysis still predicted substantial vehicular traffic growth throughout the city. In the light of this, the final report noted that in South Birmingham:

> "The strategic study suggests that, without road improvements, this area would experience some of the lowest speeds in outer Birmingham. It seems clear, therefore, that some radial road improvements are justified, whatever the scale of the traffic generated by the M40."
>
> (MVA, 1989a para. 5.3.13)

The consultants went on to comment that any improvements should be aimed at improving accessibility to the M40/M42 from within the corridor, rather than to provide a new route to the city centre. Nevertheless,

> "it must be expected that they will be used in part for this purpose,"
>
> (MVA, 1989a para 5.3.13).

The consultants favoured the upgrading of two roads so that the benefits in terms of accessibility and environmental conditions were spread more widely. They recommended that:

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[5] Yardley Wood Road is a radial road which runs parallel but between the A435 and A34.

"Because of the environmental problems at their inner ends, the Yardley Wood Road and A34 Stratford Road routes do not appear appropriate ...

Given the existing commitments to its improvement, and its proximity to Tyseley[6], the A41 appears to be a strong contender. If this can be improved in Solihull as well as in Birmingham, it will take pressure off the A435. ... This would mean that lower cost improvements at King's Heath could well be sufficient to protect this area from any additional traffic."

(MVA, 1989a paras. 5.3.14, 5.3.15)

MVA suggested that for traffic coming off the M40, the A435 should be signposted for Birmingham (South), whilst the M6/A38M and the A41 should be signposted for Birmingham (city centre)[7]. Under these circumstances, environmental measures could be taken to downgrade Yardley Wood Road and Stratford Road.

Regarding public transport, it was recommended that the rail lines in the south of the city could be converted to light rail over time, bus priority measures could be investigated for the A435, and the potential for a park-and-ride site at Earlswood, south of the city boundary and close to the M42, should also be examined.

Though the performance of all these measures would need to be tested using the proposed West Midlands Transport Model, it was anticipated that they would be substantially cheaper than the £93m which the original road building proposals in 1987 were now estimated to cost[8].

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6 Tyseley was an area in which the council was seeking to promote industrial development.

7 This would seem to contradict the statement made in paragraph 5.3.13 that the road improvements should concentrate on improving access from within the corridor, rather than to the city centre.

8 Following the completion of BITS, the MVA Consultancy undertook a short study for Solihull MBC, known as the Solihull Transport Study. This was completed in October 1989. One of the main issues it addressed was how Solihull ought to react to the opening of the M40. MVA commented that Solihull MBC ought to support the minor improvements to the A435 proposed in BITS, because the A435 did not pass through Solihull. Nevertheless, based on forecast traffic growth in the Solihull district of between 50 and 100 percent by 2010, MVA suggested that either the A34 or the A41 would also need to be upgraded within the borough.

In June 1989 the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee meeting accepted the broad strategic advice embodied in BITS and also many of the more detailed points. In relation to South Birmingham, however, officers made no recommendation on how the consultant's advice should be used.

9.5 Policy following BITS

As seen in chapter 6, one of the pieces of strategic advice which BITS conveyed was that there ought to be a slight shift away from investing in roads and towards public transport. Alan Wenban-Smith, the Assistant Director of Development (Planning) commented:

> "BITS demonstrated ... that if you went ahead on the sort of road investment basis, you didn't in fact achieve a strong central city ... and in the process of not providing it, you buggered up everything else in between ... It simply didn't work."
>
> (IT 3 p.71)

Nevertheless, Trevor Errington, the team leader of the policy section within the Transport Planning Division, believed the message was not immediately absorbed by sections of the Engineers Department where the culture had traditionally been based upon building roads:

> "its quite clear that ... (for) sections in the Engineers Department, it (BITS) meant nothing ...; the ideas contained in it and so on meant nothing. They were still going ahead designing big roads, building big roads ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.67)

MVA considered the merits of both of these options. The upgrading of the A34 would require the widening of the road through Shirley town centre, or the construction of a relief road. The A41 meanwhile, had less potential for capacity increases. MVA therefore recommended that upgrading the A34 with either a relief road avoiding Shirley town centre or the widening of the existing road, was the best option. They pointed out, however, that:

"It is important to note that this advice, favouring the A34 over the A41, is contrary to that given to Birmingham on the basis of conditions solely within the city." (MVA, 1989f, para.4.4.2)

BITS did not, however, conclude that there should be no road building - it advocated orbital construction and limited investment on radial routes. The City Engineer, Derek Rawson believed that BITS supported the view expressed in the Council resolution of April 1988, that some road improvements on the southern radials were necessary:

> "... (BITS) said (upgrade) certain radial routes ... And one of the radial routes that BITS was implying was the south of Birmingham. There had always been, from County and even pre-County days, the road improvements for that particular corridor from the M40. It wasn't something that ... we'd dreamt up after the County or that had come out of BITS; they'd been there ... for donkeys years."
>
> (IT 2 p.143)

The City's TPP submission of July 1989 therefore noted that:

> "The chosen strategy supported by BITS for future improvements ... is now the A41 for highway improvements and the A34 for public transport improvements, with Highgate Road[9] as a link to the Middle Ring Road. ... BITS also recommends consideration of conversion of heavy rail lines to LRT and the use of bus priority measures. Park and Ride measures in association with the heavy rail routes close to the motorway network are also being pursued."
>
> (BCC 1989 para. 10.1.3)

By now, however, there was no possibility of Birmingham having new highway capacity ready for when the M40 extension opened in 1991. Government ministers and the Department of Transport were still keen for Birmingham to undertake road improvements to link the motorway to the city centre. The Roads Minister, Robert Atkins MP, opening part of the motorway on the 19th December 1989, criticised Birmingham City Council's response:

> "Birmingham City Council has known about this motorway coming since the late 1960s/early 1970s and appear to have been dragging their feet in making preparations for it. I hope they realise that there is work to be done and I await their proposals in due course. The ball is in Birmingham's court. We have consulted them and it is now up to them to submit their proposals. I doubt if there is a more keenly awaited new road in the whole of the country than the M40."
> (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 19/12/89)

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9 Highgate Road links the A34, just north of the junction with the A41, to the Middle Ring Road

In September 1990 a report by the Chief Executive, the City Engineer, and the acting director of Planning and Architecture[10], was given to the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee. This reiterated the belief that the M40 would probably produce increased traffic flows in the south of Birmingham, through reassigned traffic and traffic generated because of the road's contribution to economic growth. The report went on to note that,

> "Under the city's chosen strategy, travel demand in the south and south east sector of the city as predicted by the BITS model, is anticipated to increase by over 50 percent above 1988 levels even with heavy investment in public transport."
>
> ("Access from the city to the M40", Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 26/9/90, p.1)

Officers recommended that the way forward would be to undertake a combination of measures -

a) Limited (on line) improvements to the A45 Coventry Road in Sheldon, Yardley, and Small Heath. Electrification of the Solihull rail line.

b) Use of one of the existing improvement lines on the A41 Warwick Road or the A34 Stratford Road for completion of a 2 lane dual carriageway; use of the other road for bus priority measures.

c) Use of either Yardley Wood Road or A435 Alcester Road corridor for a second carriageway with ground level junctions with the other route again having bus priority measures (or alternatively LRT).

d) Investment in park and ride and rail service enhancements, including the possible re-introduction of services on the Camp Hill freight line.

("Access from the city to the M40", Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 26/9/90, p.3)

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[10] Graham Shaylor, the director of development, retired from the City Council in 1990. In the summer of 1990 the ruling Labour Group disbanded the Development Department. In its place, two new departments were established - Planning and Architecture, and Economic Development. This reflected a shift away from the belief that economic development was concerned with big projects; instead emphasis was to be placed on training, investment, and promotion. It also reflected an increased emphasis being placed upon urban design and the built environment.

The report stated that outline proposals would be brought to the Sub-Committee in the new year, prior to taking them out to public consultation.

In January 1991 the final section of the M40 was opened. The immediate traffic impact was relatively minor in South Birmingham. Doug Hyde, the team leader of the Studies section in the Council's Transport Planning Division commented,

> "The increases went up as high as 6 or 7 percent in a couple of places on a couple of routes - maybe 10 percent in the very rarest example. But in some places there has been no change and some routes actually went down for a period ...
>
> And again, whether that 6 percent increase was due to the M40, nobody knows - it may have been natural growth, shopping centres, science parks, etc."
>
> (IT 2 p.123)

In the same month, the chairman of the Technical Services Committee, Councillor Redmond, ordered silence over the Council's plans for dealing with traffic in the south of the city (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 11/1/91).

The Council's proposals were unveiled in April 1991 and immediately sparked a public row between Councillor Redmond and his vice chairman on the Technical Services Committee, Councillor Bhagat Singh. The original proposals, supported by BITS, to upgrade the A41 Warwick Road would have involved the construction of the Acock's Green by-pass within Councillor Redmond's Fox Hollies Ward. The whole scheme would have involved the demolition of 196 properties. Apparently as a consequence of Councillor Redmond's protests, it was now proposed to switch the main upgrading from the A41 to the A34 Stratford Road[11]. The Stratford Road, however, passed through the ward of Councillor Singh and the Council Leader Richard Knowles and to bring it up to dual carriageway standard would require the

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[11] This information comes from a combination of newspaper reports and interviews with councillors.

demolition of 166 properties[12]. Councillor Singh denounced the proposals, though Councillor Knowles expressed fewer concerns:

> "Well I was a bit ambivalent ... I thought, well there were possibilities on it because the roads were there - we'd actually got the (highway) improvement line (laid down on the A34 Stratford Road) ...
>
> It wouldn't be too difficult to drive a dual carriageway along the first bit of the Stratford Road (from the Middle Ring Road to the junction with the Warwick Road) ... (In that section of road) there's a couple of pubs there which are pretty redundant since half the population there are now Muslim and at least shouldn't be drinking even if they are ...
>
> All I'd have been concerned is to save the buildings of some distinction which were there, like Ladypool Primary School which is a Chamberlain building, the Church next to it and St Agatha's."
>
> (IT 3 p.189, IT 4 p.5)

The Technical Services Committee report noted the need to cater for the 25000 extra vehicles per day in the south of the city which were forecast in the BITS preferred strategy.

Councillor Steve McCabe was a left-wing Labour member of the Technical Services Committee who had come onto the Council in 1990. He was to play an important role in the future direction of transport policies in South Birmingham. Aware of the growing national environmental interests, and of the park-and-ride policies in Oxford where he had worked, his initial instinctive reaction to hearing about the highway proposals was that they were a "crazy idea" (IT 2 p.52) -

> "here we are in Birmingham saying,'we believe in an integrated transport strategy (ie. BITS), a basic element of it is to have ... major dual carriageways in the south of the city.'"
>
> (IT 2 p.52)

At officer level there was also some concern about whether the proposals were in line with the BITS preferred strategy. Trevor Errington of the Transport Planning Division,

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[12] This information was collected by the Stratford Road Action Campaign. According to John Newson, a campaigner against the road proposals, such information was not available to councillors taking the decisions. In total, the Council's proposals would lead to the demolition of 256 properties.

thought that whilst the BITS strategic advice on radial roads could justify the construction of certain by-passes in the city:

> "... it did certainly rule out the ... A34 Stratford Road proposal where you were going to build from the city boundary to the city centre a completely new road; that's not limited improvements to improve accessibility within the corridor to me."
>
> (IT 4 p.69)

Though acknowledging that there were traffic problems in the south of the city, Councillor McCabe believed that the highway plans were likely to attract more traffic and that the roads would soon be operating at capacity once again. He recognized, however, that many of his Labour colleagues did not share this concern:

> "Its easy for me to be cynical, but I suppose in a city which in a sense made its living for so long on the motor car industry, and where that level of environmental damage in terms of road building had already happened in the north of the city, I think there was a feeling that: 'Look this is economically necessary, we've done it in the north, so what's the difference?'
>
> ... I think ... people were just inculcated with a motor car culture ... (They) believed that you need fast access to the city centre if you really want to make Birmingham economically successful. ... It was very traditional thinking."
>
> (IT 2 p.54)

Before the Technical Services Committee met to discuss the proposals, the Council Leader Dick Knowles met the Labour members and reminded them that the party whip was on and all the Labour members would therefore be expected to vote in favour of the A34 proposals. Councillor McCabe recalled:

> "That didn't go down terribly well - Councillor Bhagat Singh, ... (the) vice chair (of Technical Services), was very unhappy with that; I was equally unhappy and there were ... other people who ... shared our unease. So ... I scribbled an amendment to the proposals ... which basically said something to the effect that we won't proceed with these (proposals) until there's been a full and exhaustive public consultation. There was a bit of to-ing and fro-ing with the wording but eventually the essence of that remained ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.56)

The original recommendation on consultation had read,

> g. Officers be asked to draw up detailed proposals on which a public consultation exercise can be undertaken later in 1991.
>
> (M40 South Approaches Study, Joint Report of the Chief Executive, City Engineer, and Director of Planning and Architecture, to Technical Services Committee, 23/4/91)

The amendment changed this to read,

> g. that support be given, in principle, to a package of proposals, but this committee promises full and wider consultations before any highway or traffic flow proposals are undertaken. (Minutes of the Technical Services Committee, 23/4/91)

Councillor McCabe believed this amendment could provide the Council with a get out clause, and it enabled those who were unhappy about the plans to vote for them. The committee agreed to accept the recommendations:

> a. Members support the principle of a "package" of proposals based on both highway and public transport improvements in the A435 Alcester Road/Moseley Road/A34 Stratford Road, and A45 Coventry Road corridor to address the traffic problems ... in that order of attention[13].
>
> b. Members support maximising the use of existing capacity on the Moseley Road/ Alcester Road (A435) including: additional parking and traffic management measures within Kings Heath.
>
> c. Members confirm that their preferred option for the A34 Stratford Road is improvement to dual carriageway standard as far as the Middle Ring Road ...[14]
>
> d. Members support the proposals for grade separation and accompanying minor improvements to the A45 Coventry Road.
>
> e. Members support implementation of the public transport measures described in this report (bus priority measures, rail park and ride,

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[13] The improvements to the A34 Stratford Road would increase vehicle capacity by 10 000, the A435 traffic management measures would cater for an extra 7 500 vehicles, as would the A45 measures. This would create capacity for 25 000 vehicles, the number forecast in BITS.

[14] The wording of this recommendation is significant for it asks members (councillors) to confirm ***their*** support for the A34 dualling; this suggests that the choice of road was not an officers' recommendation but was established by members themselves.

electrification of the Solihull rail line, increased capacity on the Coventry rail line, new rail links in the longer term).

f. ... the decisions taken should be publicised and a period of consultation undertaken on the principles adopted with Centro, Solihull MBC, and transport operators.

g. that support be given, in principle, to a package of proposals, but this committee promises full and wider consultations before any highway or traffic flow proposals are undertaken.

(Minutes of the Technical Services Committee 23/4/91)

Roger Freeman, the Government's transport minister, visited Birmingham the day after the Technical Services Committee had met. Commenting on the City Council's proposals he noted,

> "I am not opposed to road widening in principle. The general presumption must be in favour of councils striving to ease urban congestion by widening, straightening, and improving arterial roads. What local people want to see are better roads. ... The message to Birmingham City Council is 'pull your finger out'. They are responsible and we cannot provide a grant to help solve the problem unless Birmingham is very clear about what it is going to do."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 25/4/91)

The chairman of Birmingham's Planning Committee, Councillor McCloughlin, was equally forthright in his views -

> "We are giving choices that the vast majority of people will not want. But we have an overriding duty to make sure that traffic is moving rather than have Birmingham at a standstill at certain times of day."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 26/4/91)

The proposals went out to public consultation in the summer of 1991. By now the Labour Group had conducted its annual reshuffle and Councillor Bhagat Singh had been removed from his post as vice chair of Technical Services, being replaced by Councillor McCabe[15].

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15 It is not entirely clear why this change occurred. Whilst the Labour leadership denied that it had anything to do with the road plans and the conflict between Councillor Redmond and Councillor Singh, Councillor McCabe thought this

As with the reports to Council committees, the public consultation literature on the proposals referred to BITS -

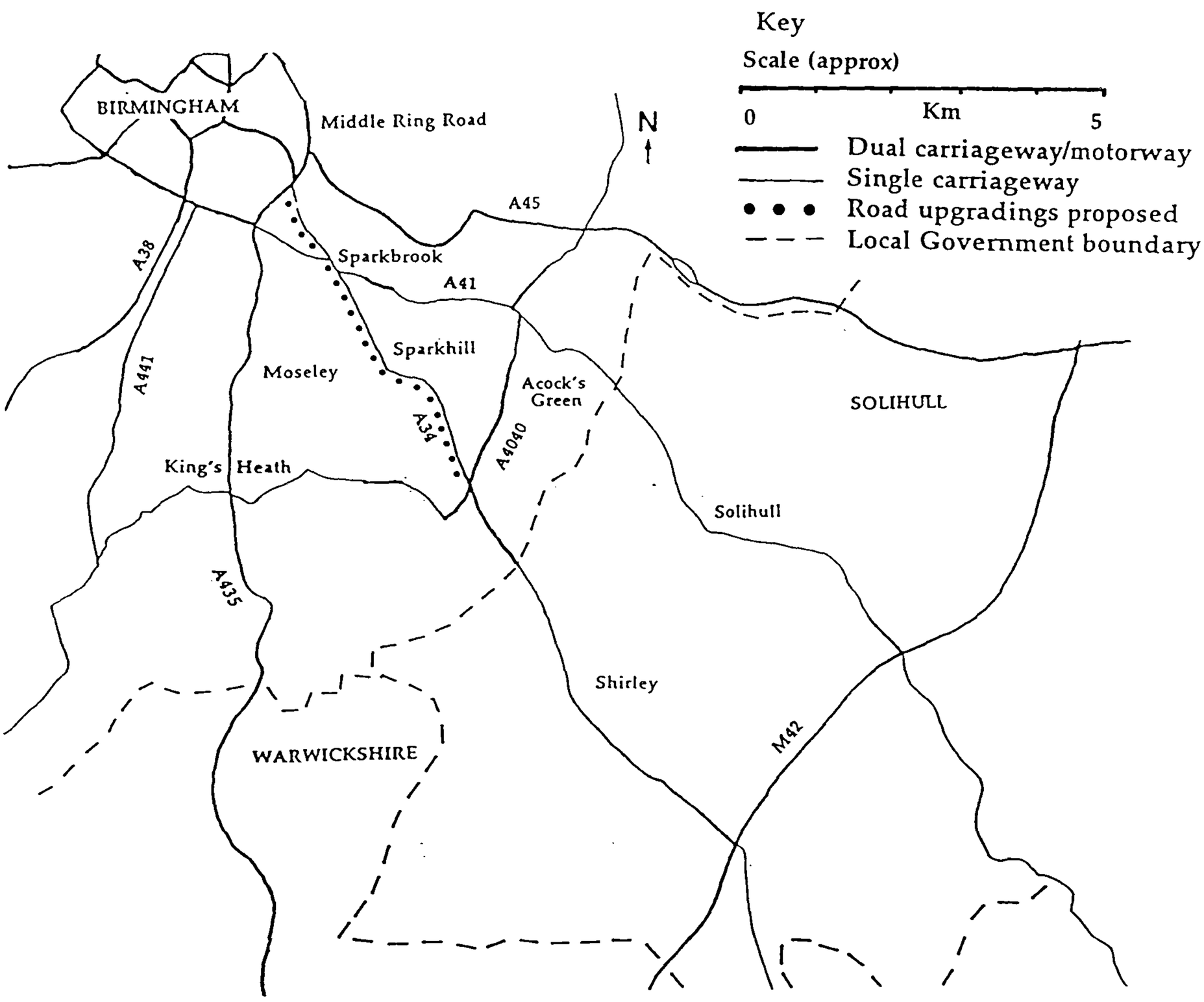
* BCC has adopted most of the recommendations of BITS. This study has predicted increased TOTAL TRAVEL DEMAND in the south-east sector of more than 50 percent over the next 20 years.

* BITS recommends that these increases be accommodated by improvements to Rail, Bus and Road travel with Light Rail (Midland Metro) as a longer term provision.

* Even with places for 30,000 extra passengers per day on buses and trains, capacity on the roads for at least 25,000 extra vehicle journeys per day will still be required.

(*M40 and South Birmingham,* public consultation leaflet)

Figure 9.4 The Council's favoured highway proposals in 1991



probably was a contributory factor.

Dr John Newson was one of the campaigners at the front of the opposition to the highway proposals. In his book "Cars versus Communities", he questioned the arguments used to justify the proposals:

> "During the consultation, the engineers[16] admitted that the M40 was not the real issue - although the M40 problem was in fact the problem they had been asked to solve by councillors and the public consultation had been given the title of "M40 (and South Birmingham) road improvements and public transport"[17].
>
> (Newson J. (1992), p.6)

In conversation, he elaborated on this point:

> "(On the need for the new roads) Sometimes it was described as vehicles coming off the M40 but when they (the officers) were pressed on that in various ways they said,'really its justified by the general increase that will take place as forecast in BITS.'
>
> ... I think there was an ambiguity in BITS as to whether the numbers that they (the consultants) were generating were a dreadful warning ... or were they saying in some neutral sense, that this is what is likely to happen, we can't tell you whether this is a good thing or a bad thing ... or were they saying as the engineers claimed, these are like the weather, these are kinds of inevitable facts which will come to pass and we'd all better get round and cater for them.
>
> Now that wasn't entirely the consultants' fault - I remember them saying right at the beginning of the (BITS) process, 'You know, we can do a technical process, but we can't tell you how to evaluate whether these are good or bad things ...'
>
> (IT 1 pp.189-190)

Councillor McCabe believed that the BITS forecasts had been used to give extra justification to proposals which would have been put forward anyway:

> "I think the figures themselves - I think they were used to support an argument rather than really be the justification for it; that might have become quite blurred ..." (IT 2 p.53)

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16 The public consultation was carried out by officers from both the City Engineers Department and Planning and Architecture.

17 Letters sent out in June 1991 to organizations making them aware of the public consultation noted that the package of measures proposed were *"in response to the traffic impact resulting from the opening of the M40."*

Certainly some people portrayed the BITS forecasts as being the central reason for the highway plans. In July, Councillor Redmond, the Technical Services Chairman, remarked:

> "We have to plan for another 25,000 cars a day so we must find ways of keeping traffic moving."
>
> (*Birmingham Post* 25/7/91)

Opposition to the proposals mounted over the summer. Four pressure groups dominated the campaign. BUMP (Birmingham United against the Motorway Plans) was concerned primarily with the A435 proposals. Birmingham Friends of the Earth opposed the entire plans. The Stratford Road Action Campaign was the main campaign group on the A34. Finally there was Birmingham for People, which had been formed in 1988 to oppose some of the city centre redevelopment proposals.

Roy Hattersley, the deputy leader of the national Labour Party and MP for the Sparkbrook parliamentary constituency through which the A34 passed, sent a note to a public meeting organized to discuss the plans stating -

> "I have made it clear to the councillors who support the proposal that since it is not to be implemented before the general election I shall use all my influence within the new (Labour) Government to make sure that the scheme is vetoed."
>
> (*Birmingham Evening Mail,* 20/7/91)

Opposition also came from other local MPs, councillors, small businesses, who were concerned about the number of business premises which would be demolished, and doctors concerned about the health effects of extra traffic[18].

The pressure groups focused their attacks on the environmental impacts of extra traffic and the effect the proposals would have upon community life. Anne Lee, the Chair of the Stratford Road Action Campaign, believed the A34 Stratford Road had been chosen for political reasons:

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18 Based on interviews with participants; also see *Birmingham Post* 13/8/91, *Express and Star* 30/8/91.

"One of the things which made me so angry was I thought I'm sure this Council think they can get away with it in Sparkhill because its a working class ... community ... - its not like Kings Heath ... and they probably think they're not going to have any effective opposition in Sparkhill, and we were determined to show them that wasn't the case."[19]

(IT 3 p.105)

She also argued that slow moving traffic shouldn't necessarily have been seen as something for the Council to be ashamed of -

> "instead of being defensive ... be positive about it, and say: 'This is one of the things about Birmingham ... we don't knock down our communities so that traffic can speed through ..."
>
> (IT 3 p.106)

Attempts were made to highlight discrepancies in the logic of the Council's arguments. John Newson commented,

> "They (the Council) say that traffic is killing the city centre and what they want (there) is pedestrianisation. ... If this is right for the city centre, why is the exact opposite of this - more traffic, bigger roads, knock down the shopping centres - right for South Birmingham?"
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 23/8/91)

The PTA meeting also criticised the City Council for failing to consult them fully over the plans (*Birmingham Evening Mail*, 28/9/91). Though Council officers stressed that public transport was an important element of the plans, some opponents of the road proposals remained unconvinced. In John Newson's opinion,

> "what they (the Council) had in their balanced strategy was some notions about public transport, with no details and means of implementing them and no agreement from the PTA ... and some road systems ... which had been ... properly planned out ... and for which they could easily get the money from the Department of Transport ... So I think people became aware that the so-called public transport options were a fig leaf really."
> (IT 1 p.203)

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[19] Councillor Knowles, whilst not himself advocating the A34 Stratford Road dualling because of this, was under little doubt that this was one of the reasons other councillors had favoured the Stratford Road option.

Councillor McCabe attended some of the public meetings organized to discuss the highway proposals as a Council representative. It became increasingly clear to him that senior councillors had underestimated the degree of opposition to the plans. He also found the arguments of the residents and campaigners opposing the roads increasingly compelling. It was the argument about who the proposals would benefit which particularly struck him:

> "... I suppose what became the crucial thing in it for me was that it became very obvious that the people we were talking about (helping by widening the road) weren't the people who lived in Birmingham. We were actually talking about destroying fairly substantial communities, localized shopping centres, neighbourhoods, to build huge roads to bring people in from outside Birmingham into the city centre. It just began to feel to me that this can't be right - I mean we're elected to represent the people of Birmingham - this can't possibly be right."
>
> (IT 2 pp.58-59)

Despite the opposition, some councillors continued to speak in support of the plans, though rarely in face to face meetings with opponents. In August Councillor Redmond commented:

> "Birmingham is an accessible city. Its prosperity depends on good accessibility and retaining accessibility will have a beneficial effect ... You can't have this increase in traffic every year with exactly the same capacity."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 23/8/91)

In addition, certain business interests were keen to see improved links to the M40 and M42. The Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce campaigned strongly for good road access to be provided to the city centre[20,21].

Councillor McCabe met the Council Leader, Councillor Knowles, on a number of occasions over the summer in an attempt to persuade him to withdraw the proposals.

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[20] Information based on an interview with representatives of the Chamber.

[21] Another organization who might have been expected to support the proposals, the AA, actually came out against the road elements. A spokesman was quoted in the *Birmingham Post* on the 22/4/91 as saying that new roads in inner cities were no longer appropriate.

Councillor Knowles began to think that traffic management measures might be a better alternative to follow. It seems he was also under some pressure to drop the plans from Roy Hattersley who did not want to be faced with a potentially embarrassing local matter in the run up to the general election[22].

In September 1991 Councillor Knowles announced the proposals were to be abandoned. He took the decision the evening before the Labour group was due to meet to discuss the plans:

> "I suppose it was me who stopped it because I certainly made the statement ... which was almost flying by the seat of my pants ... without any reference to the Labour Group, that this sort of rape of Sparkbrook had to be stopped! ... I anticipated the will of the Labour Group, shall we put it like that."
>
> (IT 3 p.179, IT 4 p.1)

On October 1st 1991, the full Council agreed to the withdrawal of the highway proposals and to instead pursue a new approach to developing a strategy in the south of the city which would not include major highway construction[23].

It appears the decision to drop the proposals was based on a recognition that politically it was simply going to be extremely difficult to build a road through the area. A report prepared for Labour Councillors which was leaked to the press noted that:

> "(political problems caused by the road plans) are of much more pressing concern than the actual transport issues. Both the Tories and Liberals are capable of making great political capital out of the issue."
>
> (*Birmingham Post*, 3/10/91)

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[22] This suggestion is based on interviews with persons involved in the south Birmingham issue.

[23] In the light of public opposition, Solihull MBC who had been pursuing the idea of upgrading the A34 in line with the advice in the Solihull Transportation Study, were forced to abandon their proposals at a meeting of their Joint Public Works and Amenities and Planning Committee on the 9th of December 1991.

This view was supported by Councillor Andy Howell, who like Councillor McCabe was a young, rising figure within the ruling Labour Group and had opposed the road proposals:

> "I think people have realized now that they just won't get a (major road) scheme through. I think they've accepted that. It doesn't mean that they're all born again environmentalists, it just means that on a pragmatical basis they know its always trouble."
>
> (IT 3 pp.8-9)

Mike Taylor of the Planning Department also agreed that pragmatism had forced the road plans to be axed:

> "I think we've ... accepted the inevitability that you cannot ride roughshod over local opinion ... If you could have built by-passes about Sparkhill/Sparkbrook or Springfield, they would have probably been acceptable. But because the opportunities were not there its a matter of horses for courses ..."
>
> (IT 3 p.40)

The basis of a new approach towards transport policy in the south of the city was set out by Councillor McCabe in a report he wrote to the Labour group executive which comprised the leader and his main senior allies in the group. In it he argued that,

> "I thought we should go for a much more fundamental look at what BITS had actually said and how they (the group executive) could interpret that in a way that would enable them to construct a policy that was more in keeping with what people were asking for."
>
> (IT 2 p.60)

The October meeting of the full Council approved the new approach. Interestingly, as with the previous highway improvements, BITS was used to justify this new approach. The motion read:

> "This Council reaffirms that traffic problems within Birmingham should be resolved on the basis of the Birmingham Integrated Transportation Study strategy ... The main elements of this strategy as applied to South Birmingham would be:
>
> * an integrated approach, so that transport measures are brought forward through a local planning exercise, which also considers

and makes proposals for, the economic, environmental, housing, and urban renewal issues in the area;

* a higher profile for rail improvements in South Birmingham (including LRT);

* improve highway capacity - mainly through traffic management measures;

* allocating increased road capacity to buses both on and off the Strategic Highway Network;

* comprehensive traffic calming between Strategic Highway Network routes, and on SHN with shopping centre core area."

(Minutes of the Full Council meeting, 1/10/91)

The failure of the road proposals meanwhile had implications for the Council structure. The Joint Strategy Sub-Committee took over responsibility for transport policy issues from the Technical Services Committee. Additionally, the Chief Executive became the lead officer to the Sub-Committee, reflecting the Council's desire for a corporate approach to transportation policy. To strengthen the environmental say in devising Council transport policies the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee was enlarged by appointing representatives of the Public Health and Environmental Protection Committee to it. In addition, to improve co-ordination between the City Council and the PTA, it was agreed that the PTA chairman could also attend meetings of the Strategy Sub-Committee in a non-voting capacity.

Councillor McCabe believed these reforms helped to change the way in which transport policy was viewed:

"I think its significance ... was it took a problem out of one arena - Technical Services - and it put it into another arena; and
a) it changed some of the personalities which had an impact;
and
b) it actually opened up the potential for looking at transport differently ... as serving economic, environmental, and social interests ..."

(IT 2 p.61)

9.6 The South Birmingham Study

It is too early to examine the effectiveness of the new approach, termed the South Birmingham Study, in finding answers to the problems faced in South Birmingham. Indeed, the study was still in the process of being undertaken when this research was undertaken. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the approach do serve to illustrate a method by which policy was able to be taken forward.

There were three components to the administrative structure of the South Birmingham Study - a focus group, a design team, and the Council committees.

The focus group was attended by a number of Labour councillors including Councillor McCabe who was the lead councillor for the study, Councillor Andrew Howell a Kings Heath member with broadly similar views on transport to Councillor McCabe, and Councillor Stewart Stacey who was also chair of the West Midlands PTA Planning and Development Committee. Officers were supplied by the Planning and Architecture, City Engineers, and Central Executive departments. Finally, representatives from the pressure groups who had opposed the road proposals - BUMP, the A34 Action Campaign, Friends of the Earth, and Birmingham for People - were invited to contribute to meetings. The focus group initially acted as a think tank through which ideas for how to take the study process forward were discussed.

The design team was a group of officers who were involved in drawing up particular schemes for possible implementation. Schemes would initially be presented to the focus group who would offer comments and suggest who should be consulted in the particular area where the scheme was to be implemented. The Council Committees, and in particular the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, gave formal approval to whatever measures were to be implemented.

Alan Wenban-Smith, the Assistant Director of Planning and Architecture (Development Planning), was appointed project manager of the Study. Meanwhile the Chief Officers' Transport Group - chaired by the Chief Executive, or his

representative, steered the study. A Centro representative was also invited to attend these meetings[24].

The South Birmingham Study was intended to take 18 months to complete and involved three stages. Stage 1 was to investigate the potential for short term public transport and traffic management measures, and to develop a new approach to public consultation. Stage 2 would investigate the need for, and feasibility of, large scale public transport measures. Stage 3 was intended to narrow down the investigations of large scale public transport investment and examine a limited number of alternatives in detail.

There were three major aspects to the public consultation approach developed in stage 1 of the study. Briefings on the study purpose, including a tape-slide show explaining the study's background were given to ward sub-committees, local newspapers and interest groups. Public opinion and travel behaviour research was carried out amongst local residents, to help identify trade-offs which local people were willing to make and in so doing, help to guide the later stages of the study. The third element was to consult with local groups - for instance residents' associations, school children, old peoples day centres - both in the course of developing possible measures and when it came to implementation of specific schemes[25]. This process of consulting with the public over measures both before and after schemes were designed, was a significant difference from the public consultation which the Council had undertaken for the earlier road proposals.

Whilst councillors and pressure group campaigners on the focus group were united in their opposition to the previous highway plans, Councillor McCabe commented:

> "I think everyone was a bit more vague about where they went from here."
> (IT 2 p.63)

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[24] The PTA had passed a resolution on 28/8/91 requesting that Centro representatives should be involved in the study and that a balanced package of measures, including Midland Metro should be developed for the south of the city.

[25] Other consultees include bus operators, neighbouring local authorities, and the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

In May 1993 Councillor McCabe replaced Councillor Redmond as chair of Technical Services Committee which increased his influence over transportation policy. He believed he knew which direction he wanted the Council's transport policy to move:

> "I would say I am fairly confident about where we're going ...
>
> I envisage that in about ... 5 or 10 years time, people will be much more selective about the trips they make into the city centre because ... people who live in Birmingham will actually have fairly well established, thriving local shopping centres ...
>
> And I hope that people who are coming to Birmingham to visit or for business will actually be able to park coming off the M40 ... (at a place where) they will be able to go to a barbers or a coffee shop, and get on some sort of fast bus or guided bus or other transport system into the city centre ...
>
> People will see that there are alternatives (to the car) and that they 're actually quite feasible, and I think we'll see a much more responsible and selective use of the car for particular journeys ..."
>
> (IT 2 pp.69-71)

Finding measures which would be acceptable to local residents was one of the key ground rules for the whole of the study, though as Councillor McCabe explained,

> "I don't think you can say you'll get total agreement and I don't think you should say that total agreement necessarily means that the policy is right ...
>
> ... (W)hen you think that you've managed to get the best balance you can between people movements and anticipated people movements, and what the public tolerate, then that for me, within a broader notion that you try and put greater emphasis on public transport and more selective use on the role of the private car, then that for me is the right way to go."
>
> (IT 2 p.67)

Despite this consultative approach to policy, he was still confident that it would be possible to ensure his vision was met:

> "AF: When you're working in that bottom-up approach, can you have an overall vision of where you want to go?
>
> SM: Yeh, well I believe you can. I mean I think that's where things like BITS are still effective - you can actually still fall back and

acknowledge, 'Well, yes we do have some over-riding considerations - we need to actually protect the economic base of the city centre, we need to actually allow for ... certain numbers of people movement's within certain corridors and we need to predict to some extent what they might be in 10 - 15 or 20 years time.'

So you can still have some overall view about where you're going but you don't actually have to achieve it all in one fell swoop. The danger of that grand plan approach is when you get it wrong its wrong forever at enormous cost. With a more incremental approach you can adjust it as and when circumstances and conditions change."

(IT 2 p.66)

The measures which were identified in the process of stage 1 of the study included bus priority measures, minor junction improvements, traffic calming in residential areas, signing, and the provision of parking bays.

As a link between stages 1 and 2, the MVA Consultancy in association with independent consultants, Tim Pharoah of South Bank University, and Professor Hartmut Topp, were appointed to carry out an environmental traffic management study. Drawing on examples of good practice from both the UK and Europe the intention was not to provide specific recommendations for specific locations, but rather to identify possible ways of managing traffic.

The MVA report, SOBETMA - South Birmingham Environmental Traffic Management proposed classifying roads into four categories on the basis of the balance in their functions between "traffic" and "living". Residential areas (termed "cells") would be given living priority and would be subject to traffic calming measures; distributor roads would be mixed priority, whilst roads designated as part of the Strategic Highway Network would be designated as traffic priority except where they passed through shopping centres; here a mixed category would be designated which meant that capacity for through movement would be maintained, but its environmental impact would be reduced.

SOBETMA suggested this could be achieved by treating mixed areas with a concept known as the "two-plus turns" approach. This involved a single traffic lane in each direction through the shopping area, except at road junctions where an extra lane would be provided to allow for turning traffic.

The SOBETMA report acknowledged that there might be a need for new road construction, particularly by-passes. Councillor McCabe agreed with this conclusion:

> "I mean I wouldn't rule out road building still ... The SOBETMA study ... really concludes that; it does actually acknowledge the need for by-passes and relief roads in certain areas ... but I think you could do a lot more to manage traffic and protect localized neighbourhoods ... and shops first.
>
> I suppose if there's a principle, I don't want us to build a dual carriageway anywhere in the city until I'm convinced that you need to build it and there aren't alternatives."
>
> (IT 2 p.65)

MVA recognized that the concepts had certain problems - for instance the traffic capacity would be of the same order that existed at present. Therefore, if implemented, there would be no provision for the 25,000 growth in vehicle trips which had been the basis of the BITS preferred strategy.

The ideas contained in the SOBETMA work were welcomed by most Labour councillors, and the ideas formed the basis for design work on the Stratford and Alcester Roads.

Implementing South Birmingham Study measures followed a process which Alan Wenban-Smith described as "strategic opportunism"[26], by which he meant that whilst it was important to maintain a sense of direction, there had to be flexibility in implementation to suit the availability - and different sources - of finance.

The consultative process embodied in the approach did not, however, guarantee the avoidance of controversy. One traffic calming scheme designed to prevent traffic rat running through a residential area off the Alcester Road (A435) was withdrawn because residents objected to the idea of street closures and one-way streets.

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[26] See his paper "Getting the policies accepted: the uses of strategic opportunism", given to the PTRC Conference on "Integrated Urban Planning and Transport Policies", Cambridge, 29-30/6/93.

There were other barriers to the success of the South Birmingham Study. One of these was the local transport expenditure framework set by Central Government[27]. The package approach went some way to resolving this problem, indeed the South Birmingham Study was ranked the second priority in the West Midland districts' 1993 package submission (WMJC, 1993) and was awarded grant by the Department of Transport.

Councillor McCabe was also aware that his views on the direction of transport policy were not shared by some officers in the City Engineers Department -

> "... my own view is that within officer ranks I think there are some people ... who are still deeply sceptical (about the new approach) - I'm not saying that they would be able to undermine or sabotage them but I think they remain deeply sceptical ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.71)

The City Engineer, Mr Derek Rawson, who retired from his post in 1993, was one person who remained to be convinced of the merits of the approach:

> "(since 1991) we (have) looked at the idea of bus improvements, we've done one way systems, and god knows what - those are only palliatives - they're not a solution; because one thing that always worries me about my enthusiasm for the idea of public transport is whether it can deliver or not ...
>
> I don't think you will persuade a lot of people to get out of their cars and onto public transport until public transport gets better. (But) its a vicious circle - public transport won't get better until more people use it ... but more people won't use it until it gets better ...
>
> I think eventually there will have to be a road (solution in the south of the city), but I don't think it will be this century - and by that time we might have something that will keep vehicles out of the city."
>
> (IT 2 p.144)

One of Mr Rawson's concerns was that from a point when the Council's thinking had been based around highways and little else, the approach was now quite the opposite:

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[27] See Chapter 7.

"You see I think its unfortunate, because I think we're going to the other extreme. I think the original idea was that everything we did was road-based which we've now qualified by saying that really there is a need for some road, some buses, and some railways - but now we're going to the other extreme which says there shall be no roads. And I honestly believe that both the two extremes are wrong."

(IT 2 p.159)

Whilst also accepting the message contained in BITS, that extensive road building would not provide the city centre with adequate accessibility, the former Director of Development, Graham Shaylor, thought that South Birmingham was one area which did need extra traffic capacity:

> "I actually think that this South Birmingham concept is a cop-out ... I may be wrong, but I think the idea that you can actually dissipate everything is probably not realistic. I think you do need more (highway) capacity ..."
>
> (IT 2 p.84)

The changing approach to transportation issues in South Birmingham was just one example of a changing philosophy within the Labour Group, brought about by a change in the balance of power away from the right of the party towards the left. This shift was strengthened when Councillor Theresa Stewart replaced Councillor Knowles as Council Leader in 1993. The left of the party was more inclined to spend money on social services and education, and had publicly criticized the right's tendency to fund prestige projects in the city centre[28]. Councillor McCabe saw the South Birmingham Study approach as part of this bigger picture -

> "To some extent people my age who came up through Schumacher[29] and that, are now in positions which are influential ... The 1980s were a period when people were kind of preoccupied by ideas of money and economic development - it became an overriding obsession - it affected all political parties; the economy ... became dominant, and I think there's some evidence that that's now playing itself out."
>
> (IT 2 p.74)

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[28] See chapter 6.

[29] Schumacher (1973) wrote *Small is Beautiful: a Study of Economics as if People Mattered.*

Mike Taylor, who had been involved in the highway proposals in 1987/88 and was now day-to-day manager of the South Birmingham Study, noted that now -

> "You know, we no longer see the city centre as the great god that should be serviced at any possible cost." (IT 3 p.25)

For opponents of the road proposals, such as Anne Lee of the Stratford Road Action Campaign and Ian Cuthbert of Birmingham for People, the changed political direction gave them comfort in the future, even though roads like the A34 Stratford Road remained part of the Strategic Highway Network designated in the Unitary Development Plan. In January 1993 70 percent of the highway improvement lines in the south of the city were removed, including most of those on Stratford Road. As Anne Lee explained,

> "(on SHN designation), I accept it now that the improvement lines have gone - it goes back to the fact that (being) an SHN doesn't automatically lead to dualling. ... I actually think the City Council has gone through a major shift in its perspective on roads and transport - so that's one reason why being an SHN isn't such a threat."
>
> (IT 3 p.110)

The whole approach embodied by the South Birmingham Study became a model for how transport policies were to be determined throughout the city. Similar approaches were adopted for the A38 Bristol Road, A457 Dudley Road and A34 Walsall Road. The design of some of the road improvements that remained in the Council's plans were scaled down so that they did not cater for forecast traffic growth.

In response to the changing political direction, a subtle change was made to the BITS strategic advice at a meeting of the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee in June 1992. The BITS advice was laid out in a report about the Sub-Committee's workload for the coming year. Councillor Stacey, who was vice chairman of the Planning Committee, chair of the PTA's Development Committee, and had been a participant on the South Birmingham Study focus group, was unhappy with the advice which stated,

> "radial highway construction sufficient to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief within corridors."

He successfully argued that the word "only" should be inserted into the sentence so that it read,

> "radial highway construction **only** sufficient to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief within corridors."
>
> (Minutes of the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 29/6/92)

Councillor Stacey believed that by making this amendment,

> "ambiguity would be avoided and there could be no accusation of a continued desire to construct unwanted new major roads."
>
> (Minutes of the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 29/6/92)

In 1993 Nick Partridge of the Central Executive's department wrote a report for the Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, outlining the Council's approach to transport policy. This modified the wording of the BITS radial road advice once again, to read:

> "limited radial highway construction within specific corridors to provide environmental relief and to serve the transport needs of the corridor itself rather than facilitate "end to end" through traffic."[30]
>
> (Report to Joint Strategy Sub-Committee, 28/6/93)

With this change, the original recommendation on radial roads offered by the consultants (see chapter 6) had almost been turned on its head!

The new direction of transport policy signalled a changing workload for the City Engineers Department. As Nick Partridge noted,

> "The engineers had to accept a changing role. ... The cultural values inside the department were that road building was the top job and other things were lesser ..."
>
> (IT 1 p.158)

The capital roads design section was faced with a significant decline in its workload as traffic management measures became the Council's main priority. When the City

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30 Again, Councillor Stacey managed to alter the wording slightly so that *"needs of the corridor"* became *"needs within the corridor"*.

Engineer Derek Rawson retired in March 1993 there were no plans to find a permanent replacement. Interviewed following his retirement, he believed the status of the Department was being weakened:

> "I'm sorry that they've (Birmingham) not got a new City Engineer. ...That could ... signal the downgrading of the profession ...
>
> (After 1986), the Engineers Department became quite a powerful department. In fact it was a very powerful department until 12-18 months ago. And now because of the (increasing) role of public transport and things like that, I think we're actually losing out in the status symbol ...
>
> I think that ... one of the ways they (the new Labour administration) will stifle the influence of Engineers and Technical Services Committee is by amalgamating them with something else, so that they're diluted in influence ...
>
> I expect that within 12 months, the Engineers will either be split up or they'll be part amalgamated with Environmental Health or Planning. And that will effectively kill the voice of the big mega (highway) scheme ... which I think will be sad."
>
> (IT 2 p.158)

This was indeed the case, and in 1994 plans were announced to rename the City Engineers Department, the Transportation Department, appoint a Director of Transportation, and transfer staff currently jointly managed by the Planning and Architecture Department and Acting City Engineer to this new department.

The change was brought about partly through a frustration at political level that though the thinking behind the Council's policy was undergoing a rapid process of change, the pace of implementation was notably slower. Furthermore it was believed that the cultural values of the Engineers Department were not consistent with the new policies[31].

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31 Letter from Nick Partridge to the researcher.

9.7 Did BITS provide guidance on South Birmingham?

There was some disagreement as to which of the two policies - the highway improvements promoted in 1991 or those embodied in the South Birmingham Study - were actually consistent with what BITS had recommended. Chris Haynes, divisional engineer and head of the Council's Transport Planning Division was of the opinion that the highway improvements were more consistent than the current management-based measures:

> "what (BITS) recommended in South Birmingham isn't what we've now done in South Birmingham ... (the South Birmingham Study approach is) only in line with BITS in the very general nature ...
>
> (BITS) recommended that we concentrate on doing improvements out towards the M40 ... So it was actually saying we put more highway capacity into the A435 and the A41 ... that was what BITS said; that was part of the strategy!
>
> And what we have (now) done isn't that consistent with BITS - its more consistent with spreading the load and trying to give more emphasis on bus priorities than was given in BITS ... (but) BITS says there's little scope for doing modal switch on bus priorities ... BITS was LRT and some radial road improvements and that's not really what we're doing. So I would deny its consistent with BITS."
>
> (IT 3 p.94)

Alan Wenban-Smith had managed the BITS process but left the City Council shortly after the study was completed. In 1991 he returned to the Council and took up the role of project manager in the South Birmingham Study. His view differed from that of Mr Haynes:

> A W-S : "in one sense they (the road improvement proposals of 1991) were consistent with BITS - in the sense that in running the (BITS) strategic model, the levels of capacity and levels of expenditure which were assumed were you know - they ran using examples; ... So to that extent you could say there was a set of schemes that was consistent with BITS.
>
> But what they (the consultants) hadn't demonstrated was the only set of schemes consistent with BITS, and it was only consistent with BITS in the narrow sense of just the transport functionality. But the whole point about BITS was there was a great deal more to it than transport functionality - there was this whole question of what kind of city do you want?

So I mean it (the highway improvements) was consistent with BITS, but only consistent in an extremely narrow way in a) that it took account only of the transport side of BITS, and b) that it assumed that the set of schemes used as a cartoon for testing ... was in some sense the strategy. And both of those assumptions were wrong."

AF: "In your view?"

A W-S: "In my view."

(IT 3 pp.68-69)

He regarded the South Birmingham Study approach as the way in which BITS ought to be implemented on the ground. Other officers, for instance Trevor Errington (a qualified town planner), the policy section team leader within the Council's Transport Planning Division, and Nick Partridge (also a qualified town planner) of the Central Executive's Department saw the South Birmingham Study as building on the foundations laid by BITS. By doing so, it was possible to incorporate the increasing concern for environmental issues which had not been so important when BITS was commissioned. Roger Taylor, Birmingham's Chief Executive until 1994, agreed:

"BITS was never really terribly prescriptive and ... in my view, always recognized an organic process of revision and development in a transport strategy ... I mean the engineers argued very hard that the South Birmingham Study was not consistent with BITS but I'm not sure about that.

And I honestly don't think that mattered anyway, because ... what BITS had done was create a level of awareness in Birmingham about the interplay of forces within transportation and the different ways you could solve the problems ...

If when it came to the specific things in BITS, what we did wasn't entirely consistent with it ... it didn't really matter because the climate had been improved and in the end the solutions which work are the solutions the people are prepared to support. And I think you could argue fairly strongly that the South Birmingham Study was a fairly logical organic development."

(IT 4 pp.159-160)

Certainly the 1992 TPP Submission made BITS and the policies in South Birmingham appear consistent with one another -

> "The BITS considered the scale of improvements in this sector and recommended a combination of rail and road measures including bus priorities."
>
> (BCC, 1992 para.11.6)

The difference of opinion about which of the two approaches was consistent with BITS does, however, seem to point to a more fundamental disagreement on what the Council had signed up to when it accepted the BITS final report. Mr Haynes argued:

> "people confuse policy with strategy. Strategy comes from the military - its about ... putting a series of moves together in order to achieve an end. Policy could last for years and years and years - its not a series of moves ...
>
> I saw BITS very much as a strategy and not as a series of items you can pick and choose which ones you like and don't like - a series of policies as it were."
>
> (IT 3 p.85)

Nevertheless he recognized that not everyone shared this view,

> "I think different people interpreted it (BITS) in different ways. There are people who interpreted it just as a set of general principles which you can apply - limited highway improvements and so on ... but BITS itself had a very clear 'what's going to happen in 2010' and what particular issues should you pursue and try and achieve ...
>
> They (MVA) were allowing for traffic growth ... At the same time they were trying to manage that growth by encouraging use of public transport and so on; but I mean some people have interpreted BITS as no (traffic) growth and that isn't the case at all."
>
> (IT 3 pp.85-86)

Mr Wenban-Smith saw the BITS strategy as being the general principles rather than a set of measures or a set of forecasts -

> "My understanding is (that) a strategy is about a sense of direction, a set of purposes, which may be achieved in a number of different ways, but the strategy is the consistent combination of what you're trying to do and broadly how you're going to set about it.
>
> You can change the detail without affecting the strategy and what you sign up to when you sign up to a strategy is that we're trying to

> achieve that kind of outcome and broadly we're going to achieve it with this set of measures."
>
> (IT 3 p.69)

In this way, the measures which went to make up the preferred strategy, were not to be taken as essential elements of the strategy -

> "The whole purpose of a strategy, rather than a plan is that it offers you the flexibility to be able to adjust the detail according to opportunities, problems, circumstance. That's the advantage of having a strategy rather than a plan; the plan is inherently inflexible because it says 'this is how we're going to do it - Year 1 we're going to do that, year 2 that, and so on to Year 20'. It takes away all of the uncertainty except of course the uncertainty you can't control, which is most of it."
>
> (IT 3 pp.69-70)

Councillor McCabe's attitude towards BITS appeared similar to that of Mr Wenban-Smith's:

> "I think (BITS is) just a backdrop, its a useful reference point, but I don't think anybody should be standing up and saying we must do this because BITS says it. BITS says what you want it to say; it only really provides a fairly loose reference point and makes a series of predictions and projections about possible traffic impacts. So it doesn't logically follow that there's anything in it that's written in stone.
>
> (BITS) provides ... an acknowledgement of the variety of transport modes that are available and the fact that there needs to be some interplay with them, and there needs to be some recognition of where the city's going and what the issues must be."
>
> (IT 2 pp.66-67)

9.8 Interpretation and interim conclusions

The events in South Birmingham provide a good insight into the influences on urban transport policy-making and in doing so, they help to illustrate the contribution of BITS to a specific policy issue.

The revival of the highway plans in 1987 seems to have been brought about by a combination of factors; first there was concern about traffic growth and economic

potential arising from the construction of the M40. Coupled to these concerns, Central Government was keen to see a link road from the M40 to the city centre. Finally, in Birmingham there was a deeply held road building culture shared by officers - particularly, though not exclusively, in the City Engineers department - and senior politicians. Historically, increasing road capacity had been the standard answer to traffic problems. Though it is difficult to find hard evidence to support the hypothesis, a number of councillors and officers attributed the strength of this culture to the area's traditional reliance on the motor car industry for a large part of its employment. Speaking about using high car park charges to discourage car commuting into the city centre, the retiring Council Leader, Councillor Knowles, commented:

> "Now that's a difficulty in a city like Birmingham where the major manufacturing industry has been the production of the motor car ... - up until 20 years ago the main (industry) ... was Austin, Jaguar, Dunlop, Lucas, etc ...
>
> (So as the Council Leader) how can you say you are against the motor car?"
>
> (IT 3 pp.188-189)

The failure to implement the highway proposals in 1988 appears to have been brought about by political issues which came on the scene when the implications of the proposals became clear. There was wide opposition to the proposals amongst local citizens and Labour councillors in the south of the city. For the ruling Labour Group the question was no longer how to cater for traffic and draw the economic benefits of the M40; now it was how to minimize the political damage to the Labour Group of a set of deeply unpopular plans. It appears that the forthcoming local elections made senior politicians who supported the plans realize that the political cost of the measures was too great.

Following the failure of these proposals BITS was undertaken. As stated in chapter 6, BITS was seen to have signalled a way of thinking which encompassed different modes of transport and emphasised an increased role for public transport investment, with less importance being attached to highway construction. For those who felt that this had to be the way forward, BITS provided a useful piece of evidence which was specific to Birmingham. As Trevor Errington noted:

> "(Here) we had a document, done by respected transport consultants, saying the way forward can't be to build bloody great roads any more ... BITS actually gave you something you could hang those arguments on - quite explicitly to Birmingham; so you weren't applying generalist arguments."
>
> (IT 4 p.67)

The message, however, challenged the Council's traditional standard response that traffic problems should be solved by road building. The verbal strategic advice did not, however, translate smoothly to the local level in this instance. To understand the use of BITS it is perhaps worth examining the orientation of the key decision-makers at that point in time. First of all, Central Government was encouraging the City Council to make some improvements. On the City Council, the key players who had pushed the proposals in 1988 were still in position and still had concerns about the impact of traffic growth and opportunities the motorway might present for economic development. At officer level, the Engineers department was still quite powerful and the Development Department with its emphasis on the city centre was still in existence. At all levels, there seems to have been pressure to seek some road improvements in the south of the City.

The BITS strategic advice recommended some limited radial road improvements but it did not indicate where. Nevertheless, the detailed advice in chapter 5 of the final report recommended that some capacity increases were necessary and suggested upgrading the A41 with limited improvements to the A435. The modelled preferred strategy included an improvement scheme for the south of the city and to meet the traffic forecasts generated by BITS, it was estimated that capacity for 25,000 extra vehicles would be necessary.

Given the combination of the political and organizational will to increase traffic capacity on the southern radials, it is not difficult to comprehend that BITS could be seen to be consistent with making some improvements. Reference to it in the justification of the measures inevitably gave the impression that the measure was being pursued for purely technical reasons and partially masked the value basis of the policy.

The problems with a road building approach soon began to mount, however. First of all the BITS advice on which roads to upgrade clashed with political concerns. As a result, alternative roads were examined and the A34 Stratford Road emerged as the one for major upgrading.

Opposition to the proposals quickly began to mount, just as it had done with the proposals in 1988. Residents expressed concern that the inner city was being demolished in order to aid the city centre. Councillor's such as Councillor McCabe and Councillor Howell rose in influence within the Labour Group. Their values were different from those of the more traditional Labour councillors who had held power up until that time and promoted the city centre and seen transport problems as traffic problems. Instead they placed more emphasis on environmental and social objectives and saw the road proposals as creating more problems than they were designed to eradicate.

The subsequent shift to the South Birmingham Study approach reflected both the changing values of those in influential positions within the Labour Group and the pragmatic recognition that it simply wasn't possible to build a road through the area.

Whilst some engineers believed that the South Birmingham Study was not adhering to the strategy recommended by BITS, some planners thought that it was more in the spirit of BITS than the road proposals were. Meanwhile, Roger Taylor felt both sets of measure could be seen as consistent:

> "we all felt comfortable that the 1991 (road widening) proposals were broadly consistent with what BITS was saying ...
>
> But on the other hand, BITS was sufficiently equivocal ... to be able to argue with probably even more facility that the kind of approach we were subsequently adopting was equally consistent."
>
> (IT 4 p.159)

In the South Birmingham Study approach, the concept of controlling the future environment was greatly reduced. Much more emphasis was placed on finding policies which commanded agreement from local citizens. In this sense the policies

were perhaps as important (indeed, maybe more so) than the impact they had. As one officer commented:

> "I mean (in) the South Birmingham Study ... nobody bats an eyelid about the bloody modelling. If ... (a measure) has got brownie points or if it looks like a winner environmentally or if it appears its going to do the right thing it'll be introduced. And the modelling may be used as justification but it's only a very minor tool."
>
> (IT 3 p.51)

Some engineers took the view that any sense of future direction which BITS had provided had largely been lost as people chose which pieces of the strategic advice they liked and ignored those they did not. The most noticeable element of this selectivity regarded the road building element of the strategy. Mr Rawson, the City Engineer, noted that:

> "I think that what BITS, didn't say, as a lot of politicians who are public transport oriented want you to say it said - it didn't say you wouldn't improve any roads."
>
> (IT 2 p.143)

As Doug Hyde, studies team leader in the Transport Planning Division acknowledged, there was no longer a fixed policy for how much traffic growth new roads should be designed to cater for:

> "the way in which we're going ... is to design a road which fits in environmentally and appears to do the job on paper and then analyze it through the different growth scenarios and say that in such and such a growth scenario this is going to have problems. ... But ... we don't have a fixed policy in the Division for growth."
>
> (IT 2 p.116)

What the events show is two different uses of the BITS report. The first, which did not work, treated BITS as a technical document; the second, which was more successful, treated BITS as a piece of information which fed into a largely social, as opposed to largely technical, process of policy formulation.

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE BIRMINGHAM CASE

10.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the findings from chapters 6-9 and relates them to the questions raised at the end of chapter 3. Also presented is a limited amount of new evidence which did not fit neatly into the specific field research chapters, but which is felt to be relevant to an evolving argument.

10.2 Findings in relation to questions raised by literature review

1. **How accurately do 'Integrated Transport Studies' predict future changes to the transport system and are studies based on a large amount of highly verified theory about how the system functions?**

The forecasts of future travel demand made by BITS were significantly at odds with observed levels in the years following the study. This was most noticeable in the forecasts of persons crossing the Middle Ring Road in the morning peak. BITS forecast a 30,000 increase between 1985 and 2010 when, as Figure 10.1 shows, flows declined by almost 20,000 between 1985 and 1993. As the former City Engineer, Derek Rawson, remarked that this discrepancy "stuck out like a sore thumb" (IT 2 p.164). What makes this discrepancy even more unusual is that flows had been declining in the years leading up to BITS. In contrast, traffic growth across the West Midlands was higher than the BITS forecasts according to an unpublished internal monitor of the BITS report carried out by the City Council in February 1993. These observations suggest that BITS was quite inaccurate at forecasting certain important trends.

Ian Hobbs, the PTE's working party representative was dismissive of the assumption adopted in BITS that travel demand in the do-minimum would be the same as in any of the do-something scenarios[1]:

> "That (belief) is basically a load of rubbish. Every individual, before he makes a trip decides (where to go, whether to make the trip at all, and

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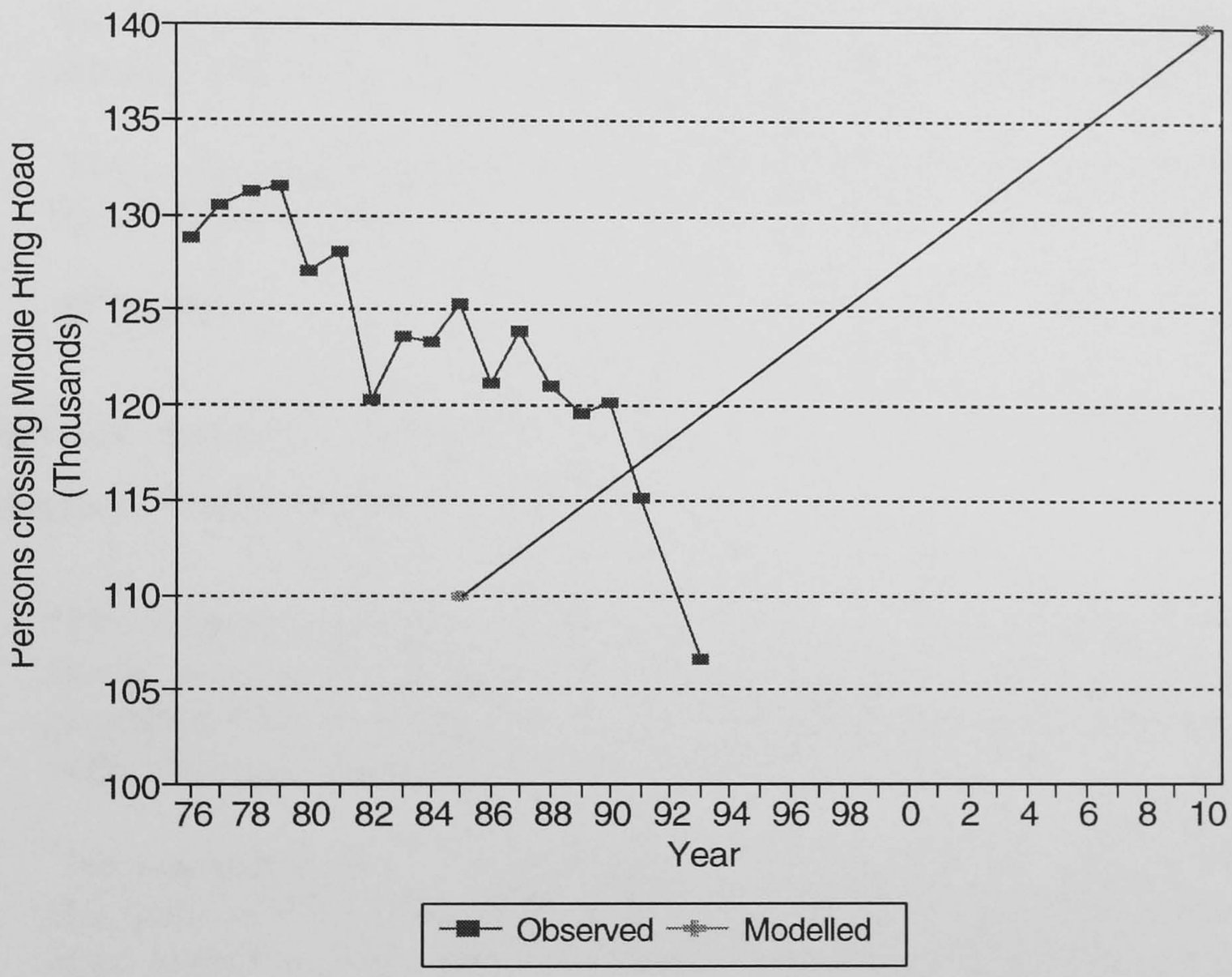
[1] As chapter 6 noted, the background reports to BITS did acknowledge that the do-minimum might be an over exaggeration of problems, but the do-minimum was used for all comparative purposes.

how much the trip will cost - time and money). If you believe that then you cannot believe that the do-nothing situation will generate the same trip matrix as the do-something. ...

(Therefore) all the horrors of the do-nothing situation are rubbish."

(IT 3 pp.168-169)

Figure 10.1 Birmingham Middle Ring Road inbound person crossings in morning peak (07.30-09.30); observed versus BITS modelled forecast for all scenarios. Source: BCC TPPs and MVA, 1989a. Note: No count conducted in 1992.



Chris Haynes, divisional engineer in charge of the City Council's Transport Planning Division, disagreed with this argument. He suggested that whilst transport infrastructure might induce some new travel, on the whole, demand in the do-minimum and do-something scenarios would be similar. The point to note here is not that one belief is right and the other is wrong, but that amongst transport professionals there is a clear divergence of view on the issue. If other analysts had undertaken BITS they could legitimately have used a different set of assumptions about future travel demand which would, quite possibly, have led to significantly different final recommendations.

Other assumptions in BITS were also open to question. Travel was implicitly regarded as economically beneficial and policies like light rail and certain road improvements were expected to enhance opportunities for economic development. Research into the linkages between the economy and transport infrastructure investment has, however, failed to bring about any degree of consensus on this issue. This lack of highly verified theory was clear in the South Birmingham roads controversy. Advocates of the 1991 road improvements believed the decision to drop them in favour of traffic management measures would harm the city economically; as Graham Shaylor, the retired Director of Development, noted:

AF: "Do you actually think now that there isn't a link, that Birmingham's actually lost out in terms of economic development potential?"

GS: "Yes ... the conurbation's new city centre will be in Solihull ... I think the city has lost out."

(IT 2 p.85)

In contrast, however, Councillor McCabe, who was an instigator of the South Birmingham Study, reflected:

AF: "The original approach of road improvements in South Birmingham - there was an argument that there was economic development potential. Do you think that you've actually lost development potential with this new approach you're taking?

CM: "No absolutely not. ... I think what we'll see is that ... the traders on the Stratford road, now that the Highway Improvement Lines have been removed, can actually borrow to develop their properties and businesses in a way they were prevented from doing. So there's localized economic development resulting directly from those decisions. ...

(Secondly), I think what will happen is that if we can successfully calm some of the residential areas in the outer suburbs, then people will actually be more prepared to relocate to Birmingham because it will be a more pleasant place to live. ...

I actually think that argument (that the road improvements would lead to economic development) was always fairly suspect." (IT 2 pp.72-73)

These examples demonstrate that for issues of central importance to a broad brush study there were important uncertainties in forecasting and in developing reliable theory about the urban transport system.

2. Is an 'Integrated Transport Study' simply a technical exercise or are organizational and political influences also important in the conduct of a study?

The research shows that BITS was not simply a technical exercise undertaken by consultants independently of the clients. Instead there was close contact between the consultant and clients throughout the study and the clients appear to have had influence on the study direction at two crucial times. Firstly they had some influence over the attention given to alternative policy measures in the study process. Professor May of The MVA Consultancy, acknowledged that had bus representatives been involved in the study at an earlier stage in the process, then it is likely that more attention would have been given to that mode's potential role. Meanwhile, the PTE's representative on the study recalled that his central task had been to lobby for light rail. He also recalled ensuring that the study examined a particular light rail network. Could there be a relationship between the measures a study looks at and the make up of the client representation? Trevor Errington, team leader of the policy section within the Council's Transport Planning Division believed there was:

> "Clearly the composition of the people on the steering party influenced the area that the study team looked at and the emphasis they gave to different areas."
>
> (IT 4 p.63)

There is also evidence to suggest that at least one client partner used tacit rules to ensure that a policy it was pursuing was given added backing by the study. As chapter 8 noted, Ian Hobbs, the PTE's representative on BITS was seeking to ensure light rail received support and, as a means of furthering this end, was under instruction not to upset the City Council by suggesting the consultants look at policies like parking restraint. Asked whether there were any elements of the preferred strategy which he objected to, Ian Hobbs commented:

> "Well you see, in a situation like that, if you're getting what you want, you don't really raise hell about somebody else doing the same."
>
> (IT 1 p.235)

Of course, not all client representatives are necessarily representatives of narrow functional interests. In the Birmingham case, planners, the chief executive and his

representative are examples of participants who are likely to have taken a more comprehensive outlook over the process, ensuring that functional interests did not dominate the study. Secondly, it is probably too deterministic to allege that representatives of functional departments will only seek their own policies; some might take more comprehensive overviews.

The choice of which measures to test and the level of attention to give to them is not simply based upon whether there is a strong lobby for that measure. After all, road pricing was analyzed in the Birmingham study and there was no apparent client support for it. What the research suggests, however, is that client backing for particular policies certainly helps to ensure that they are assessed. As Ian Hobbs also recalled:

> "I can't remember the particular circumstances ... but I remember saying we didn't like one particular combination of light rail (lines) and asking for another and getting it (assessed)."
>
> (IT 3 p.165)

John Newson interpreted the BITS process as a competition between functional interest groups, each seeking to get their policies included in the overall plan:

> "I think there was a battle on between the (Midland) Metro engineers who were trying all the time to justify their existence by proving the need for a big Metro, and the highway engineers who were trying to do the same sort of thing ...
>
> It looked like their (the consultant's) role was to arbitrate between the two sets of engineers ..."
>
> (IT 1 p.200,188)

Perhaps the best evidence to support the case that organizational perspectives do exert influence on the study process comes not from BITS, but from the West Midlands Transport Study conducted during the 1960/70s. Neville Borg, Birmingham's City Engineer between 1963 and 1974 and the chairman of the Technical Committee on WMTS stage 1, recalled importance of interest groups in the overall study process:

"This is a matter of history ... but so far as two or three of what you might regard as the highway lobby were concerned - and people always thought that I was ... in the highway lobby - ... (we) thought that the public transport (lobby) elements didn't make their strongest bids for a greater share of the cake. ... I still remember a feeling of some surprise that there wasn't a stronger fight - a stronger technical fight. ...

Whether they'd been so hammered by events or whether it was just a matter of personalities. But there wasn't the degree of force it seemed to me. ... They were certainly strong enough to say 'You highway chaps must make it possible for us to run our buses ...', but if you said to them 'What do you think is the maximum bid you could make for a share of the passenger traffic?', then they weren't as clued up as we the highway people were. I think they had been for long in what they saw as a losing battle.

If there was a Ministry of Public Transport ... I think we would have got a different kind of input into that study."

(IT 4 pp.17-19)

There is also evidence to support the view that the clients have some input into the consultant's recommendations in order to ensure they are politically acceptable. This was most apparent on the advice given on road pricing and the Heartlands Spine Road. In both cases the consultant's draft advice was altered for the final report in order to make it more acceptable to clients. The clients also had some influence on the wording of some strategic advice. The rewording of the advice on radial roads was a subtle, but nonetheless significant, change. A number of other similar changes are believed to have been made.

3. Is the advice offered by an 'Integrated Transport Study' instrumental in policy formulation and problem-solving?

There appear to be few examples of policies which were brought about solely because of BITS. At the national level, the study was perceived to be an important input to the change in thinking which led to the package approach. Nevertheless, other factors which contributed to this change included increasing public concerns about congestion and the environment, persistent lobbying of Government by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and a new Secretary of State for Transport. Nevertheless, it seems that BITS was instrumental in involving Birmingham City

Council's at the forefront of the local government campaign for the package approach.

Chapter 8 shows that light rail emerged from a complex interplay of factors including the values of influential participants in the policy-making process, personal experience of seeing systems in operation, an attraction to the technology as an end in itself, and ordinary knowledge about how a system might contribute to issues such as congestion reduction, an improved environment, or economic development. Indeed, technical analysis of any form, let alone an 'Integrated Transport Study', appeared to come after these influences had created some impetus for light rail.

Some officers on the BITS working party[2] suggested that had BITS come out against light rail it might have been abandoned as a Council policy. In this respect, by recommending light rail, BITS could be seen to have been instrumental in maintaining the Council's commitment. Nevertheless, whether BITS could have overturned the intuitive knowledge upon which light rail was based and the considerable political and organizational commitment to it remains an open question.

BITS does seem to have helped reduce the conflicts between some officers on the Council and the PTE over the choice of the first line for the Midland Metro network. Nevertheless, whether this was as a result of analysis seems questionable. BITS did not provide any new analysis which convinced Birmingham officers of the merits of line 1. Roger Taylor believed the study allowed officers to think about future lines and forget about their concerns over the first line. Perhaps the interaction between client representatives also helped people to understand eachother's views better. In the latter case, it was not therefore the analysis which was instrumental, but instead it was the study process.

Whilst the 1991 road improvement proposals for the south of the city were sometimes justified on the basis of BITS and designed to cater for the BITS forecast traffic growth, they cannot be explained solely by the study. Birmingham had a historical tendency to favour road building as a solution to traffic problems. The Engineers

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2 Interviews with Chris Haynes, Divisional Engineer in charge of the Council's Transport Planning Division and Ian Hobbs the PTE's Working Party representative.

department, with its concern for traffic, was quite influential at the time of the proposals. Many planners and councillors believed that the traffic growth would bring economic growth. In addition, Central Government was putting pressure on the City Council to make some road improvements in order to link the M40 to the city centre. Neither can it be argued that the South Birmingham Study was brought about by BITS.

There is some evidence to suggest that BITS may have been quite influential in the emergence of other measures, which did not form specific case investigations in this thesis. For instance, Chris Haynes believed the City's involvement in European projects was heavily influenced by the BITS advice. The commissioning of a city centre transport model was also seen as something which BITS had been influential in bringing about.

It seems that the BITS analysis on its own is rarely enough to explain why a particular policy is pursued. This is certainly true of major policy issues like the pursuance of light rail or a road building policy in the south of the city. I On matters of greater detail, for instance the commissioning of a city centre transport model, it was the professional judgement of the consultants (in effect their ordinary knowledge) and not the strategic model which was important[3]. Even in such instances, however, it is not clear whether the apparent relationship between study recommendation and subsequent action is overemphasized. Careful analysis of these specific issues would be needed to determine how important the study actually was in reaching a decision.

4. Do 'Integrated Transport Studies' provide a framework/strategy capable of guiding the direction of future decisions, as in Etzioni's mixed scanning theory?

Alan Wenban-Smith, the client-side project manager for BITS, wanted the study to provide a framework within which detailed policy-making could subsequently take place:

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[3] Of course, the difference between qualitative judgements offered by the consultant and their technical analysis is actually smaller than might first appear since the technical analysis is also based on a high level of what Lindblom and Cohen (1979) describe as ordinary knowledge.

"You know, this business of clearly distinguishing longer term strategic recommendations from all the medium term stuff - I wanted the longer term stuff as it were to be timeless, independent of medium term stuff ...

My understanding is (that) a strategy is about a sense of direction, a set of purposes, which may be achieved in a number of different ways, but the strategy is the consistent combination of what you're trying to do and broadly how you're going to set about it."

(IT 3 p.67,69)

He and others, including Nick Partridge of the Central Executive's Department saw the broad advice, translated from the modelled preferred strategy, as the central element of the BITS report:

- enhancement of British Rail lines, and construction of new light rail lines in corridors not served by rail, as a means of substantially improving accessibility and reducing congestion on the approaches to the city centre;

- orbital highway construction so far as is needed to relieve, and enable the expansion of, the city centre;

- radial highway construction sufficient to improve accessibility and permit environmental relief within corridors;

- traffic management measures to:

  a) increase the capacity of the existing road system and improve bus operations;

  b) divert city centre traffic to orbital roads, and improve conditions for pedestrians in the city centre;

  c) ensure that the environmental relief enabled by radial road construction is achieved;

- integration of services on individual public transport modes to the extent permitted by the legislative and financial framework;

- enhancement of service levels where justified by changes in patronage, while retaining an integrated fare structure at a level as close to today's fares (in real terms) as permitted by trends in patronage and operating costs.

(MVA, 1989a para.4.6.2)

The report also identified costs of the preferred strategy and suggested that the public transport element was more important than highways. Whilst it offered some detailed recommendations on how the strategy should be interpreted in specific instances, this was largely confined to medium term issues, rather than the full 20 years. Furthermore, in most instances the consultant recommended that the clients should make further investigations before finally selecting an appropriate course of action.

As chapter 7 noted, this concept of a strategy was slightly different to that of the Government which emphasised broadly similar policies but at a more general level such as promoting public transport rather than specifically light rail. This therefore suggests two different levels of broad strategy.

There was some disagreement within the council about the link between the strategic advice of BITS and detailed action. The experiences in South Birmingham provide the best insight into this dispute. The road proposals put forward in 1991 were designed to meet the modelled traffic forecasts contained in the BITS analysis. Their proponents saw them as consistent with BITS. Viewing the strategy from this perspective, the failure to implement the measures illustrated the problem of trying to apply technical solutions to issues involving value conflicts.

Nevertheless, others believed that the road improvements were inconsistent with the broader strategic advice of BITS. In the aftermath of their abandonment, there was a significant change in the Council's transport policy, reflected in the South Birmingham Study. Some saw this approach as more in keeping with the BITS recommendations. A third school of thought, put forward by the Chief Executive, saw both the road improvements and the South Birmingham Study approach as being consistent with BITS.

The South Birmingham Study approach reflected not only a change in the nature of policy measures but also a change in the balance of ends to which they were directed. The incoming politicians placed greater emphasis on environmental objectives and less on economic growth. Speaking in 1993, Councillor McCabe, the Technical Services chairman, commented:

"I think people are actually beginning to ask much more about the quality of life at the moment - I think that is actually a theme which will probably become much more evident in the 1990s ...

The 1980s were a period where people were kind of preoccupied by ideas of money and economic development - it became an overriding obsession ... I think there's some evidence that that's now playing itself out."

(IT 2 p.74)

Councillors decided to look at how BITS might be interpreted in these changed circumstances. As Councillor McCabe noted:

> "I thought we should go for a much more fundamental look at what BITS had actually said and how they (the Labour Group Executive) could interpret that in a way that would enable them to construct a policy that was more in keeping with what people were asking for."
>
> (IT 2 p.60)

The South Birmingham experience suggests different interpretations over what the BITS strategy actually was. As chapter 8 noted, this was also reflected in a lack of agreement over the public transport element of the strategy. Whilst some believed that the strategy simply advocated more emphasis being put on public transport policies, others saw it as advocating concentrating on light rail investment. When attention was switched to bus priority measures in the light of difficulties obtaining funds for light rail, questions were raised about whether this was still the same strategy being applied.

Broadly, the different interpretations appear to have followed professional lines. Planners (and some politicians) stressed the verbal framework and concepts which the study provided, whilst the engineers placed greater emphasis than the planners on the modelling and particular elements of the preferred strategy. This observation may have similarities with the one made in chapter 3 that interpretation of evidence in what Schön and Rein (1992) call a "policy controversy" will depend on the perspective from which the recipient of that information comes. Indeed, in discussing how the original objectives of an American university computer system became lost as different interests used it for their own ends, they highlight the fact that multiple interpretations of reports or policies is not something unique to BITS:

"discrepancies between the original intentions of policy designers and the meanings constructed for a policy object (*such as the BITS report*) in use are central to the idea of a 'policy conversation'. ... A policy object sent out into its larger environment functions as a message. Other actors in the environment who come into contact with that object must somehow make sense of it and figure out how to respond to it. The message of the policy object is not objectively contained in the thing itself, nor is it directly transmitted from the mind of the designer to the mind of the user. ...

> As in literal conversations, the meanings intended by 'speakers' in a policy conversation may be very different from the meanings constructed by 'hearers'. The intended users of a policy object may not 'get' the meanings intended by the designers, and even when they do, they may prefer the meanings they themselves construct."
>
> (pp.122-123) (words in italics added by researcher)

The actual understanding of the study message and the relationship between it and the policies pursued would seem to lie in the belief system of the individual concerned. The question of whether BITS provided Birmingham with a strategy that directed policy therefore depends upon whose view one seeks.

5. Is there evidence that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are used in ways other than formulating policy, problem-solving or providing a framework for policy-making, such as improving relations between organizations, enlightenment or partisan functions, and enhancing legitimacy for policies?

The commissioning of BITS was partly motivated by a partisan function. As chapter 6 noted, Roger Taylor, the City Council's incoming Chief Executive, believed that the Government's current framework for transport expenditure needed to be changed and he hoped that BITS would provide some support for this. Subsequently it was used by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities in this manner.

The study was also commissioned for personal motives (which are of course, partisan). The Chief Executive wanted to build a power base in the Council and saw transport as an unoccupied territory. BITS was one tool by which he was able to establish some control.

Roger Taylor believed the BITS process had gone some way to improving inter-organizational relationships between the City Council and the PTE. As Nick Partridge pointed out, previously policies of one had not been shared by the other:

> "... there's no doubt that the PTE was convinced that public transport - rail - was the way to bring people into the city centre. But that wasn't necessarily shared by the City Engineers and the Technical Services Committee because it wasn't anything to do with them. Their business was roads and highways.
>
> ... in as much as the policies were around prior to BITS, they weren't shared, they weren't in a position to be achieved at all."
>
> (IT 1 pp.158, 166)

It may have been the close working between the two organisations which helped reduce the conflict between some council officers and the PTE over the choice of a first line in the Midland Metro network. Some like Chris Haynes believed it gave greater support to the policy whilst Tom Magrath, a corporate planner in the PTE, believed it shifted the policy's justification from being a purely functional policy (public transport for its own sake), to part of a substantial policy to meet the city's wider aspirations.

BITS also facilitated the development of stronger relationships between the City Council and outside bodies. Following the study, a working party was set up with the Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce to discuss transport issues facing the city, under the title of the 'BITS Working Party'.

Another of the ways in which BITS proved to be useful was as an enlightening tool. The study was based around thinking about transport policy as a whole and as a means to other ends rather than as an end in itself. This seemed to change the way of thinking amongst some participants like the City Engineer Derek Rawson. As the Chief Executive, Roger Taylor, recalled,

> "... what BITS had done was create a level of awareness in Birmingham about the interplay of forces within transportation and the different ways you could solve the problems ..."
>
> (IT 4 p.159)

In relation to the South Birmingham road improvements, BITS may have served to test the decision - taken on other grounds - to seek to undertake these measures. In the South Birmingham Study, BITS seems to have been used as a piece of information which filtered into the thinking during policy-making. Councillor McCabe, who became the chairman of the Technical Services Committee in 1993 commented that:

> "I think it (BITS) is just a backdrop, its a useful reference point ...
>
> (It) provides ... an acknowledgement of the variety of transport modes that are available and the fact that there needs to be some interplay with them, and there needs to be some recognition of where the city's going and what the issues must be."
>
> (IT 2 pp.66-67)

Similarly, Nick Partridge[4] saw BITS as a piece of information which fed into thinking:

> "The way I see it is that our transport policy is developing and it develops in an action way; the South Birmingham Study definitely developed the policy. But its still developed on the BITS approach and that one page of BITS strategic advice; other things have got added since - such as you've got to put your green spectacles on ... or we've got to think a lot more about pedestrians in local centres - so the policy develops as you apply it to situations. (But) The one page (of strategic advice) is still relevant."
>
> (IT 1 p.159)

The City Engineer, Derek Rawson, noted that BITS also provided support for completing the dualling of the Middle Ring Road, which was useful in the light of increasing political opposition to road building:

> "(In the late 1980s/early 1990s) you had quite a number of the up and coming (councillors) ... who were anti-roads ... Consequently, it was just as well that really (through) the idea of BITS - we were able to tell them regularly that BITS wanted the orbital ring completion - the Middle Ring Road dualled ... I believe the way BITS came out gave credibility to the completion of the Middle Ring Road. That's my view of it."
>
> (IT 2 pp.158-159,164)

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[4] This view was shared by others including Alan Wenban-Smith, Trevor Errington, Roger Taylor, and Councillor McCabe.

BITS also became a piece of evidence cited in the ensuing debate about whether, beyond completion of the Middle Ring Road to dual carriageway standard, certain of its junctions with radial roads should be grade separated. Engineers, viewing the issue primarily from the traffic functional perspective, argued that grade separation was necessary in order to enhance orbital circulation, but some planners opposed such measures, citing the environmental implications, and the loss of land which could be used for economic development purposes. As the Chief Executive, Roger Taylor, recalled, both sides tried to further their cases by citing the BITS report:

AF: "Did the thinking of BITS not feed into issues like that (the Middle Ring Road junctions debate). Are those sort of arguments independent of this (BITS) study?

RT: "(Well) we're now talking early 1993 and everybody is now claiming BITS for their part - it's a bit like God on every side of the war - and BITS by that time was sufficiently far away for planners to say 'Well BITS is actually about environmental improvements and not upsetting people too much and (what's needed are) nice slow roads.' And the engineers are saying 'you need to upgrade something in order to make it (the road system) work.'"

(IT 4 p.160)

Asked whether he believed such partisan uses were typical for a study of this nature, Mr Taylor responded,

> "I think it decays to that; I think to begin with though, there was a considerable degree of unity about it."
>
> (IT 4 p.160)

It seems apparent that it was in these diverse functions that the clients obtained much of their value from BITS.

6. What characteristics of an 'Integrated Transport Study' and the context within which it is undertaken, seem to determine how useful a study is to clients?

Many participants in BITS believed that the quantitative element of the study made it more authoritative[5]. As the client's project manager Alan Wenban-Smith noted,

> "If you're trying to persuade people to do serious things in terms of changing major programmes of expenditure, ... people don't tend to find essays very convincing. ... Its something to do with culture. I mean if something is well argued, and logical ... I don't see any reason why that shouldn't be as convincing as a mathematical equation, but the fact is that culturally it isn't."
>
> (IT 3 p.66)

At the same time, however, Wenban-Smith was keen to ensure that the study had an element of discursive policy analysis - he did not want it to take the form of the transport studies of the 1960s which were data-driven. It seems that this mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis was a strength of the study. For instance, Phil Swann, the AMA's transport policy officer, remarked that it was the simplicity and clarity of the analysis of the costs of the preferred strategy which made the study particularly useful in the development of the package approach.

Whilst a degree of quantification was generally seen to be an important asset of the study, the importance of its accuracy is less certain. As already noted, the Middle Ring Road cordon forecasts, which the consultant's acknowledged were a critical element of the study, were quite at odds with observed counts in the years leading up to and proceeding the study. This might have been expected to lead to a review of certain policies contained in the preferred strategy, particularly light rail which would significantly increase capacity for journeys into the city centre[6]. The fact that such a review was not made adds support to the argument that technical analysis is

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[5] Interviews with Chris Haynes, Ian Hobbs, and Alan Wenban-Smith. The view was also shared by Doug Jones, of the MVA Consultancy and project manager of BITS One member of the study team, Peter Langley actually took the opposite view, feeling that it was the logic of the arguments that was important.

[6] Of course, light rail was recommended for reasons such as its expected aid to economic development as well as the need to cater for increased travel demand.

only one part of an explanation for why a particular policy is being pursued. Consequently, accuracy of analysis may not be as important an issue as whether the analysis supports the thinking and preferences of policy-makers.

It does not seem that the lack of availability of highly verified theory about certain aspects of the transport system was necessarily a handicap to BITS being seen as useful by clients. For instance, the clients do not appear to have questioned the assumptions which the study adopted for the relationship between infrastructure investment and economic growth. This assumption actually seems to have matched the intuitive beliefs of many of the client participants. Similarly, the assumption that travel demand would be the same in the do-minimum strategy as in the investment strategies seems to have been generally accepted even though at least one participant on the client working party believed this was incorrect. It may be that clients are more interested in the recommendations which a study makes, rather than the thought process through which they are arrived at.

The input which the clients had to the specification of the strategies seems to have ensured that the study addressed the issues which were of specific interest to themselves. For instance, the PTE representative on the working party was able to request that the consultant looked at a particular light rail network. Similarly, the input of the client into the final study recommendations also seems to have increased the likelihood that the study would be useful to clients. As Nick Partridge noted, had the draft recommendations on the Heartlands Spine Road been included in the final report, the whole study may have been discredited. Derek Rawson recalled that the draft advice on road pricing might have had a similar impact.

Despite BITS generally being seen to have been useful by the clients, it has also been noted that the study actually led to relatively few new policies. Similarly, BITS did not solve controversies such as how to deal with the traffic problems in South Birmingham. It seems therefore that such instrumental roles for studies are not crucial to determining whether a study is deemed useful.

One of the most frequent uses of BITS seems to have been for partisan functions, strengthening support for existing policies. This was the case with light rail, the road

improvements put forward for South Birmingham in 1991, and the Middle Ring Road improvements. It seems that the consultant here can play a particularly important role through his apparent objectivity and expert knowledge. Whilst not commenting on 'Integrated Transport Studies', Stuart Mustow, the former County Surveyor on the West Midlands County Council, believed that councillors could often be more easily convinced by arguments put forward by a consultant than by their own officers:

> "At the County we had a deliberate policy ... of doing as much in-house as possible. ... Now in retrospect it might have been rather more sensible to be rather more (flexible) in our use of consultants than we were. ... If you get somebody in from outside, they have the advantage of coming in fresh and if they present well, people say, 'Ah that's a different view.'
>
> They may have heard the view a hundred times before from their own people but it sounds fresh and it confirms and they're able to say afterwards 'Well of course we did that because that's what they recommended'."
>
> (IT 1 p.267)

Whilst it appears, to date at least, that the cost of the strategy was likely to be in excess of available resources, this has not led to the study recommendations being discredited as might have been expected. This seems to be because the strategy taken forward was not the detailed scheme elements upon which the costing was based, but rather the verbal framework which was not so sensitive to resource implications.

It is difficult to draw conclusions on whether it is useful for a study to address measures which are currently impractical for reasons which lie outside the client's immediate control. The BITS recommendations implied a major reform of the local government transport funding regime by Government. In the following years some progress was made on this matter through the development of the package approach. This would seem to support the view that there are merits in studies examining and recommending measures which might appear to be impractical at the present time. In contrast, however, one officer was slightly critical of the study's recommendations on bus fares and frequencies, since, he pointed out, neither the Council or PTE had control over these instruments. Similarly there were some concerns that the strategy was too dependent on light rail, funding for which might not materialise.

In this respect, much may depend on the wider policy context within which the study is undertaken and whether there appear to be "windows of opportunity" for changes in the wider policy framework. In the case of the package approach, there clearly was a growing concern amongst many involved in urban transport policy throughout the country that the Government's polices needed to be reformed. Furthermore, the Government recognized and accepted the need for change. In contrast, despite considerable lobbying from local government and other bodies, the Government did not accept the need to return the control of bus services to local government and did not support a major investment in public transport infrastructure.

The context in which the study was conducted had a number of other important influences on study usefulness. The strong interest in the study amongst some of the City Council officers seems to have ensured that it was subsequently put to practical use in instances such as the package approach. Similarly, the involvement in the study of officers from both the City Council and the PTE seems to have enhanced relationships between the organizations and key personalities within them.

The lack of political involvement in the study seems to have worked against study use. There is little evidence to suggest that councillors made much use of the study until 1991 when the new vice-chair of Technical Services sought to interpret BITS in a way that was in keeping with the new direction of council transport policy.

The timing of BITS also seems to have had an impact on the value which the study offered clients. The City Engineer, Derek Rawson, noted, it was able to capitalise on the increasing concern about urban transport problems which arose in the late 1980s.

10.4 Beyond Birmingham

Following the completion of research into the Birmingham case at the end of 1993, an analysis was conducted on policy making in Leeds. The actual rationale for selecting Leeds is explained in chapter 4. The intention was to investigate whether there was any evidence to show that the findings from Birmingham might be more than just case-specific. The chapter which follows presents the Leeds findings.

CHAPTER 11 THE LEEDS TRANSPORT STRATEGY

11.1 Introduction

In 1990 Leeds City Council (LCC) in association with West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority (WYPTA) and the central government-appointed Leeds Development Corporation (LDC) came together, and with the assistance of consultants, developed a transport strategy for the city to the year 2010.

This chapter reviews the rationale for developing the strategy and the process by which the strategy emerged. In doing so, it seeks to identify apparent similarities to and differences from the Birmingham 'Integrated Transport Study'.

11.2 Context-related characteristics of the Leeds area

Leeds developed in the nineteenth century on the back of the textile and mining industries. Nowadays, the population of Leeds district stands at approximately 710,000 meaning it has the second highest population of any English district, after Birmingham.

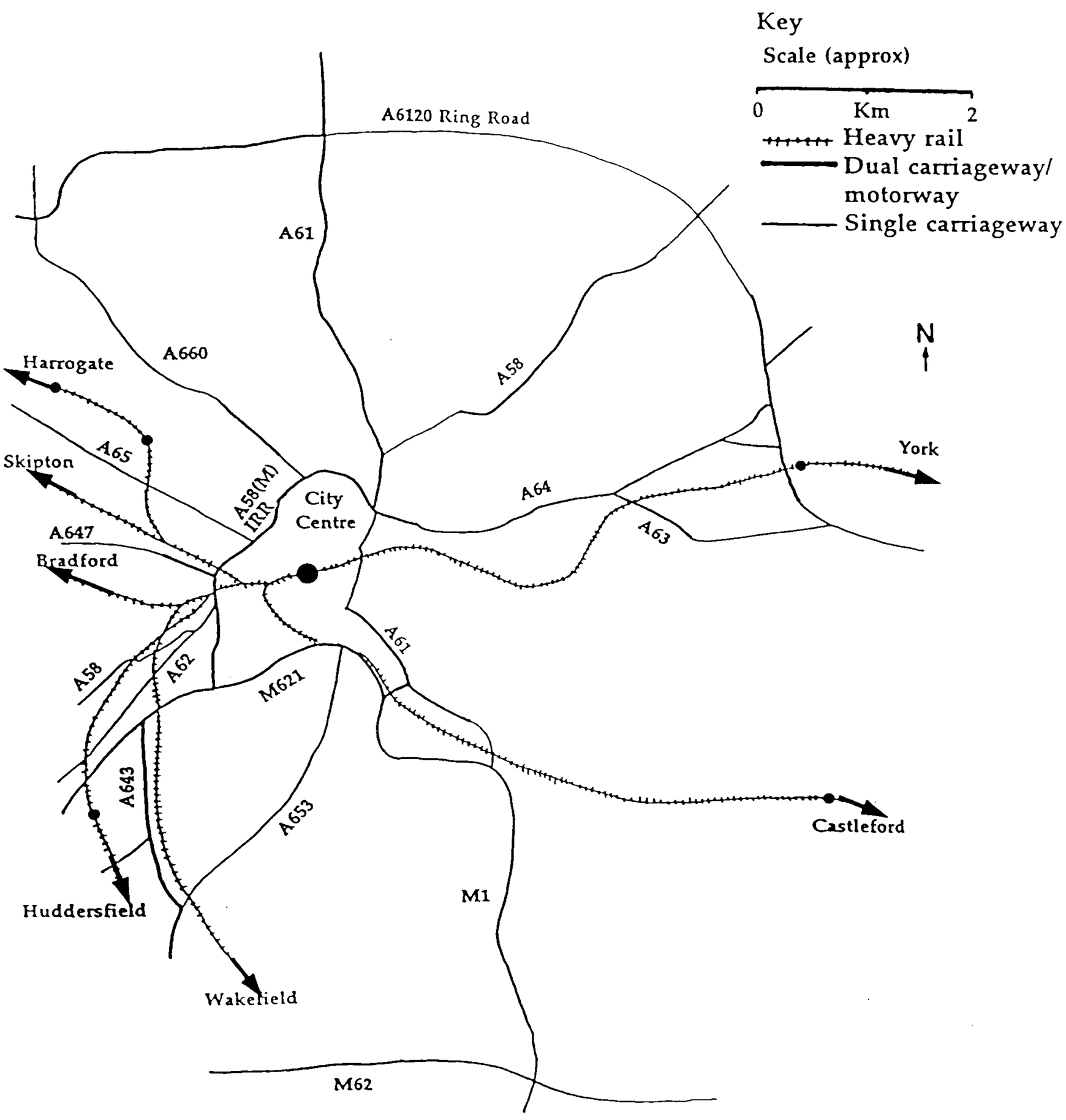
In 1974 the boundaries of Leeds expanded to absorb neighbouring boroughs and districts but, like Birmingham, responsibilities such as highways, public transport and structure planning were transferred to the new Metropolitan County Council and Passenger Transport Executive. West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council (WYCC) and the WYPTE covered the five districts of Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale, and Kirklees.

The abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986 saw most powers returned to Leeds City Council though public transport policy passed to the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority, a joint board covering the area previously controlled by the County Council.

The road system in Leeds did not develop to the same extent as Birmingham's in the 1950/60s. Few of the radial roads were designed, or upgraded, to dual carriageway

standard. Orbital routes were based on a partial outer ring road situated approximately 9km from the city centre, and an Inner Ring Road (IRR) bordering the central business district. Construction of the latter began in 1967 but it only encircled the northern edge of the city centre, providing a link from the M621 to the A64 York Road and thus helping to take some traffic out of the city centre (figure 11.1). The Ministry of Transport constructed motorways into the south of the city - the M1 from London and the M621 and M62 trans-pennine route linking Leeds with Manchester. Heavy rail routes link the city to all major urban centres in the immediate vicinity. In the city centre, Leeds was one of the first British cities to experiment with pedestrianisation - closing a fairly substantial amount of the city centre to traffic in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Figure 11.1 The major road and rail routes in the city



11.3 Policy from 1986 to the development of the transport strategy

To understand the impetus for the formulation of a transport strategy in 1990, some discussion of the organizational structure for transport responsibilities in the city following the county's abolition is necessary.

a) Highways

As highway authority[1], the City Council inherited a series of road schemes which had been proposed by the county. These particularly affected the east side of the city where the county had sought to link the Department of Transport's proposed 20 km motorway standard A1-M1 link road with the city centre by constructing a new road known as the East Leeds Radial. The Inner Ring Road was itself planned to be extended in two further stages (5 and 6) around the south eastern side of the city. Together, the East Leeds Radial and IRR Stage 6 were termed the Eastern Relief Road and the City Council regarded it as being of crucial importance to the city:

> "The City Council consider the Relief Road proposal to be of paramount importance in both complementing and maximising the benefits of the A1-M1 link and also improving accessibility in east and south Leeds and to the central area."
>
> (Leeds 1988 TPP submission, para. 4.13)

These schemes formed the basis of the City Council's initial road programme outlined in the 1986 TPP submission. The city also inherited other proposed improvement schemes which were to be reviewed in the following years.

In June 1989, the Council endorsed a highway strategy prepared by the Director of Highways, Engineering, and Cleansing Services. His report noted that Leeds was enjoying "an unprecedented boom in shopping, commercial and leisure development" (para. 2.1), and that a highways strategy was necessary to meet four broad objectives:

* to retain major traffic flows on main roads
* to provide adequate access from residential areas to employment

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[1] Many support activities such as major highways design and traffic studies were maintained at a county-wide level with the establishment of a consultancy body HETS (Highways Engineering and Technical Services) for which Leeds City Council was the lead authority.

* to remove extraneous traffic from city centre/district centres
* to ensure Department of Transport proposals provide maximum benefit to Leeds

(ibid para.4.3)

Ten major road schemes were identified as forming the basis of a highways strategy (see also Figure 11.2):

Central ring road improvements

1) Inner Ring Road stage 5
2) Inner Ring Road stage 6
3) Inner Ring Road stage 7
4) M621-M1 link road
5) Mabgate Loop

Radial improvements

6) Regent Street/East Street link
7) Hunslet Road dualling
8) Kirkstall/Holbeck Link/Kirkstall Valley
9) East Leeds Radial
10) Thwaite Gate link

Whilst many of the schemes had been in existence for some time, the plans introduced a further extension of the Inner Ring Road (stage 7) into the area owned by the Leeds Development Corporation[2] which, in combination with the M621, would provide a route that fully encircled the city centre. The strategy also included a Kirkstall Valley route - a road that would link the motorway network to the south of the city with the Kirkstall Road (A65) on the west side of the city.

According to *Local Transport Today* (6/9/89) these were the "most extensive inner city roads programme of any English city". The report of the Director of Highways did, however, acknowledge that highways were only one part of the transport system and that:

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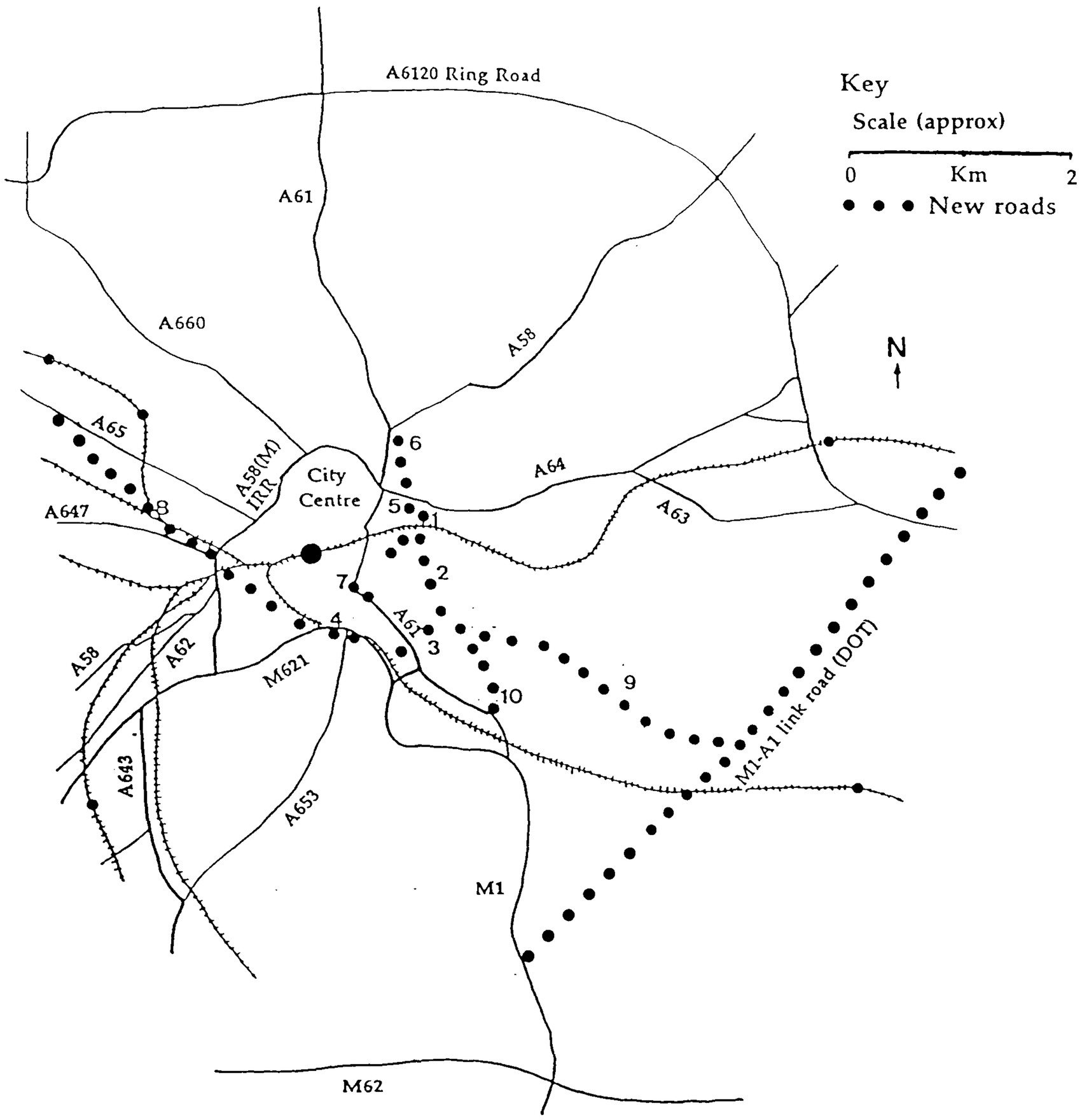
[2] Leeds Development Corporation was established in 1988 with the aim of regenerating 965 acres of land south of the city centre and 375 acres in the Kirkstall Valley on the west side of the city. In these areas it acquired development control powers from the city council.

"Whilst some new major road building is considered to be essential, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that a radical new means of public transport within an integrated transport strategy may well be the only effective way to overcome the problems and meet the significant challenge outlined above."

(Report of Director of Highways, Engineering, and Cleansing Services to Planning and Development Committee, 21/6/89, para.3.2)

Figure 11.2 The Leeds highway strategy approved in 1989. Source: adapted from Local Transport Today, 6/9/89. (Numbers relate to schemes mentioned in text, p.232)



b) Public transport

In 1980 the PTE's Operations Director had authorized investigations into alternative forms of public transport, apparently because of concern about the future prospects for the price and availability of oil (Tebb, 1992).

From these investigations, a trolley bus route had been proposed, initially for Bradford but subsequently a figure-of-eight network was drawn up for Leeds. An application for Section 56 grant was made in November 1985 but the Department of Transport rejected the proposals.

The PTA/E lost control of bus operations following deregulation in October 1986 and in 1987 the decision was made to produce a development strategy to examine options for major new public transport developments. It seems this was done partly in recognition that new public transport technologies were being proposed elsewhere in the country[3].

One of the options to be investigated was a light rail system along the A64 York Road corridor in Leeds, taking advantage of an alignment which had been reserved for possible future use in the 1970s West Yorkshire Transport Study[4].

In May 1987 the PTA agreed that detailed work should go into drawing up plans for a light rail route in east Leeds and that a joint steering group should be established with the City Council. The PTA saw a number of merits in developing a route to east Leeds, including the high demand potential, the overloaded highways, opportunities for segregated running, and major development opportunities along the alignment (WYPTA meeting, 29/5/87).

Consultants Steer, Davies Gleave (SDG) were appointed to look at the feasibility of five alternative routes, and Highways Engineering and Technical Services (HETS) were appointed as sub-contractors. Jim Steer, managing director of SDG, was involved in the study and recalled the uncertainty which surrounded the impetus for the investigations:

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3 Interview with Roger Pickup, Passenger Services Director in the PTE since 1986.

4 Conducted by consultants Wyt Consult, the West Yorkshire Transport Study was completed in 1977 and was the last of the comprehensive transport studies to be undertaken in the UK.

"(As the study progressed), we still hadn't had an answer to a question which was 'Well where have these five (alternative routes) come from and how did you pick East Leeds?'

Now there was no real answer to that. ... You could argue that the selection of East Leeds emerged from the Wyt Consult studies ... because when they (the PTA/E) looked at trams they said East Leeds is jolly good - its got these kind of former tram reservations ...

> So there was a kind of rationale but there was nothing objective which said it should be East Leeds and there was nothing objective that said it should be a tram rather than a guided bus, or a metro, or whatever else."
>
> (IT 5 p.43)

As the study progressed, councillors from the PTA and LCC visited various European cities to see rapid transit systems in operation. They visited Lille (Leeds' twin city) where they saw the fully automated VAL system which had opened in 1983, and Grenoble which used a more traditional (but technologically advanced) street running light rail vehicle.

In July 1988 the PTA chose to promote a Parliamentary Bill for a light rail system, based on the Grenoble technology, running from Leeds Town Hall to Cross Gates and Seacroft via the York Road. The cost of the 8.5km line was estimated to be £27m with an additional £11m necessary to extend the line out to the residential area of Colton.

The alignment was chosen on the basis of seeking to limit the possibility of controversy. Segregation from road traffic was to be sought as far as possible, as was the avoidance of property demolition, and efforts were made to ensure highway capacity was not reduced. Despite these efforts, opposition to the plans emerged. Residents in Colton and Seacroft complained, some raising concerns about the impact the route would have on property prices. Many residents complained to the City Council rather than the PTA (see LCC Highway, Engineering, and Cleansing Services Committee report 22/2/89). However, whilst the City Council had been represented at officer level on the PTA's joint steering group, it was essentially a watching brief and the PTA put all the money and resources into drawing up the proposals. As Jim Steer recalled:

> "gradually we (the PTA's consultants) pieced together the view that the City Council wasn't very keen on this (plan) at all."
>
> (IT 5 p.44)

As highway authority, the City Council was also concerned about the fact that the proposals threatened the loss of highway capacity at some major junctions on the A64 York Road. Ultimately, in the face of continued opposition from residents and the City Council, the PTA was forced to withdraw its Parliamentary Bill submission in November 1988.

The City Council leader, George Mudie, was personally opposed to the PTA's plan. His interest in the matter was not purely related to the fact that the PTA's route ran through his Seacroft ward. Mudie was by all accounts a visionary character[5] who wanted Leeds to be distinctive from other cities. As Adrian Pope of the Engineers Department recalled:

> "He (Councillor Mudie) wanted something which was going to put Leeds in the first league. ... You know, to say 300 other cities in the world had got one (an LRT system), meant George said 'Well I don't want one! I want something that's ready for the 21st century, not the 20th.'"
>
> (IT 5 p.3)

Councillor Mudie had been impressed by the VAL system in Lille and instructed Council officers to look into the feasibility for such a system in Leeds. Within a fortnight, officers produced a rough plan for an £800m system comprising four radial lines with a double loop system in the city centre. Some sections of the fully segregated route would be elevated and others would have been in tunnel.

The clear problem lay in funding the system - Lille had paid for it by a tax on local business but British councils had no such powers. It was also seen to be unlikely that the necessary level of grant would be forthcoming from central government. Officers informed Councillor Mudie that the only way the system could be afforded would be by introducing a complementary cordon pricing scheme on roads into the city

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5 Interviews with Councillor Walker, then Chair of Planning Services and also Labour Group Secretary, and Adrian Pope of the Engineers Department.

centre. Whilst this would require new legislation, officers believed this would not be an insurmountable problem. Councillor Mudie was uneasy with this idea - he did not want Leeds to be the first city in Britain to implement cordon pricing and therefore asked officers to investigate whether there was a cheaper system similar to VAL[6].

Officers turned their attention to a system being developed by Alan Bristow, a former director of the Westland helicopter company. Bristow had put some of his personal finance into developing a prototype automated system, known as Briway. Individual aluminium-bodied cars, each capable of seating 20 passengers would run on a 21 ft high elevated track supported by pillars. Bristow argued that the lightweight nature of the system would allow construction costs to be significantly lower than the VAL system.

Council officers appointed an American expert to study the technology and he came away convinced that it would work. Councillors and officers believed that central government might provide grant-aid for a demonstration route because it was using British technology. Furthermore, there was hope at one stage that Bristow would be willing to construct a demonstration track in Leeds at his own expense[7].

Councillor Mudie was impressed with the Briway technology but in early 1989 he stepped down as council leader, it seems in order to contest the Parliamentary seat of Leeds East, which he won in 1992. Councillor Jon Trickett became the new council leader and remained committed to the Briway technology. At a meeting of the Council's member working group on rapid transit in May 1989, officers were instructed to develop proposals for a Parliamentary Bill for a rapid transit system. Consultants Steer, Davies and Gleave, were appointed to look at the potential for a network and to make comparisons between Advanced Guided Transit (AGT - the term for the Briway technology), light rail, and guided bus. City councillors favoured AGT but saw guided bus as a fall back option or as a technology for use in corridors where demand was not enough for the elevated system; as Councillor Trickett explained:

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6 Information derived from interviews with participants in the events.

7 Information derived from interviews with participants in the events.

> "So far as I am concerned we are looking at Briway and guided bus, not supertrams (light rail)." (*Yorkshire Post*, 5/9/89)

Guided bus was being vigorously promoted by Yorkshire Rider, the major bus operator in Leeds. They had been attracted to it during a study trip to Essen in Germany originally intended to look at trolleybus technology. Dr Bob Tebb, development manager of the Yorkshire Rider Group, recalled:

> "(I think) The guided bus ... project ... came about entirely as a result of pressure from our company. ...
>
> (We were) finding ... congestion going through the roof; traffic's growing at 1 - 2 percent a year but that doesn't translate into 1 - 2 percent increases in journey time. ... (In the) Hunslet Road corridor ... between March 1988 and November 1988, the peak hour journey on that corridor from the edge of the city to the bus station averaged say 7.5 minutes in March, by November it was averaging 13 minutes. ...
>
> What had happened of course was that the road had gone from extremely busy to saturated ..."
>
> (IT 5 p.32)

In July 1989 the Council unveiled plans for two AGT lines - one to the city centre from Seacroft in the east, the other to the city centre from Middleton and a park-and-ride site beside the M1 in the south. The lines would be connected by a 1.6 km underground section in the city centre. The cost of the project was estimated to be £135m.

The PTA/E were unhappy with the Council's proposals and relationships between the two organizations, already low because of the 1988 light rail controversy, deteriorated further. The PTE had only been involved in the AGT proposals in a technical advisory capacity on a Joint Officer Working Group. The PTA chairman Councillor Simmons, who had spearheaded the aborted light rail proposals, criticised Briway as being too expensive and a "Disney world" type scheme which was "pie in the sky" (*Yorkshire Post* 1/6/89). A PTE report listed five potential problems with the system - public acceptability, scheme suitability, operational capability and costs, funding the construction of the system, and the effect of the system on other public transport (Report to WYPTA, 4/8/89).

Public opposition to AGT, which was now being marketed as the Leeds Advanced Transit System (LATS) quickly began to emerge. Residents in affected areas were unhappy with the property demolition which would be necessary to construct the system and also objected to the idea of an elevated system in their neighbourhoods. Liberal Democrat councillors launched outright opposition to the proposals and the Conservative group expressed some reservations. Local Labour and Conservative MPs called for the proposals to be withdrawn (*Yorkshire Evening Post* 16/10/89).

Councillor Trickett responded to critics by suggesting that LATS would not be suitable in residential areas and therefore cutting back the southern route from Middleton to the park-and-ride site, and the eastern route from Seacroft to St James Hospital. While Conservative councillors had by now decided to support the system, they doubted the viability of this truncated plan and called on Councillor Trickett to submit a Bill for the whole system.

Councillor Walker, the Council's planning committee chairman, recalled that in the face of mounting criticism, even Labour councillors who favoured LATS became increasingly lukewarm in their support:

> "(LATS) never had 100 percent political support in the Labour Group (on the Council), but then when the going got rough, it lost political support fairly quickly. ...
>
> It's all about electoral consequences - I mean you may still think its a damn good idea, but how the hell are you going to support it when you've got 90 percent of your constituents saying don't do it."
>
> (IT 5 p.22)

In November 1989 the City Council shelved the LATS plans. The truncated routes still had majority support on the Council, though they were opposed by Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Furthermore, it still did not have the support of all MPs in the area, and given this, it was unlikely that the Bill would pass through Parliament unopposed. As Councillor Trickett reflected:

> "We were in danger of an old fashioned local government exercise really, where the Council decides something and forces it on a city. And that's not my style."
> (IT 5 p.59)

The LATS scheme was abandoned and according to Adrian Pope, the city's transport policy was now in "total disarray"[8]. Councillor Trickett then persuaded the Council that the best way to move forward would be to try and achieve a consensus on an overall transport strategy for Leeds. The full Council resolved:

> "Council calls ... for cross party talks to try and establish an agreed consensus on transport strategy in Leeds and urges the opposition groups to put aside narrow political considerations in order to help ease the congestion which is clogging up the city centre and arterial roads."
>
> (Minutes of LCC council meeting, 1/11/89)

PTA chairman Councillor Simmons agreed this was the best way forward:

> "We realize we need a comprehensive strategy which might involve extension of existing railway lines, guided buses, supertram, and a limited building of new roads ...
>
> The slate is now clean. We are now for the very first time in a position where the PTA and LCC are working extremely closely together."
>
> (*Yorkshire Post* 3-4/11/89)

11.4 The development of a transport strategy for Leeds

The impetus for the Leeds Transport Strategy came about largely from politicians. The process was guided by a politician working party which comprised representatives from the City Council, the PTA, and also two officials from Leeds Development Corporation. Even though Labour had a large majority on the City Council, an equal number of councillors from Labour, Conservatives, and Liberal Democrats were represented on the working party. This meant that Labour could always be outvoted on any proposals which were put forward. Councillor Trickett, who decided the working party should be set up in this way, saw it as a reflection of his political style:

> "I think that the ... notion that a single entity, institution, or political party ... can claim to be able to operate exclusively in the interests of a city like Leeds or any big city which are always heterogeneous is a mistake. And although we have a huge majority for the Labour Party in Leeds I feel that, where possible, you ought to try to win people

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[8] Written correspondence with the researcher.

across to your ideas and perhaps that means that some of your ideas need to change as well. ...

I think really that the test of political skills is ... not can you impose your views ... I think the political skill is winning people across to a set of ideas and a set of policies and then being able to bring about change - that's really a political skill."

(IT 5 pp.60-61)

The working party's first meeting was in January 1990 and, over the following year, meetings were held on a monthly basis. Initially they were chaired by Councillor Simmons, the PTA chairman, but in September 1990 he resigned from both positions and Councillor Trickett therefore took on the chairmanship of the working party.

Supporting the politicians was an officer working group which had representatives from the City Council, PTE, the Development Corporation, the Department of Transport, police and transport operators. This was designed to provide technical support to politicians and also to manage consultants who were involved in the strategy preparation.

The transport strategy was intended to be closely integrated with other strategies which Leeds had developed relating to land use, economic development and green issues. It began from a vision statement which expressed councillors aspirations for Leeds:

> "To become, and to be recognized as, one of the principal progressive cities in Europe: a city with a diverse and successful economy, adapting to change, a city which provides a growing standard and quality of life for all its citizens, with a variety of facilities accessible to all and fairness and opportunity for all."
>
> (LCC et al, 1991 para.2.5)

From this point, a number of more specific objectives which transport ought to serve were formulated: achieving the status of a major European city, a city in which all citizens could prosper, a city centre whose environment would be renowned across Europe, a city which was one of the country's leading regional financial and service centres, a city which was seeking to broaden and strengthen its economic base, and

one in which a social and cultural environment was created which would attract visitors to the city (LCC et al, 1991).

More specifically still, four issues were identified which had to be addressed by the strategy - the future of the city centre, traffic growth, the potential for new public transport systems, and how to achieve equal access to transport for all people.

There were three elements to the study process - a transport model, a public consultation exercise, and a South Leeds alignment study to examine a possible route for a new public transport system. The first two elements were funded by the City Council and the PTA, whilst the development corporation assisted in funding the third.

In April 1990 consultants Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) were commissioned to develop the transport model that would test different transport policy themes. Alternative strategies were assessed on the basis of demand by mode, link flows, travel time or speeds, environmental indicators, benefits and costs. Capital and operating costs were separately calculated.

As in Birmingham, walking and cycling were not analyzed and the modelling was intended to test policy themes rather than specific schemes. The modelling was, however, considerably more detailed than that used in BITS. For instance, the study area was divided into 78 zones, 17 of which lay outside Leeds district. Also, unlike BITS, the model included a mathematical description of all major road links in the Leeds area and distinguished between two different types of traveller - those with a car available and those without. The reaction of each group to policy scenarios was modelled separately.

Trip growth rates took into account changes in population, employment, income and the DOT's National Road Traffic Forecasts. A slight rise in population was forecast in the study time period, whilst employment was forecast to rise by 12 percent.

The base year for the transport model was 1989. The first test was a continuation of existing policies theme. This consisted of £343m of currently programmed road

(£268m) and rail (£75m) investments. The model predicted that under this scenario peak hour vehicle trips would increase from 115,000 in 1989 to 145,000 in 2010 - a 27 percent increase. This was lower than the recorded growth rate in the years leading up to the study. Between 1979 and 1987 traffic grew 2.6% per annum (23% overall) and between 1987 and 1989 growth increased to 4.4%. The model predicted that peak hour vehicle trips into the city centre would rise 30% by 2010. This compared to a 60% rise in the previous twelve years. The slowdown in peak hour growth rates was attributed to a slower rate of economic growth and peak spreading. Off peak vehicle trips were expected to rise 60 percent by 2010, in line with the Government's national road traffic forecasts. Meanwhile rail volumes were expected to increase by 30 percent whilst bus use was forecast to remain static.

On the basis of these forecasts, SDG concluded that, even with the road investments presently planned, travel conditions would get substantially worse by 2010, with congestion levels 39 percent worse on radials, 38 percent worse in the city centre, and 30 percent worse across the city as a whole[9]. Accessibility to the city centre was expected to decline by 31 percent for motorists and by 15 percent for public transport users[10]. Environmental pollutants would increase by 70 percent[11,12] (ibid). The consultants then examined six alternative policy themes:

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[9] Congestion was assessed on the basis of selecting a sample of links on the network and indexing the changes in operating speeds forecast by the model.

[10] Accessibility measures were calculated on the basis by which the city centre could be accessed from a random point in Leeds, ie. unweighted by existing or future demand patterns.

[11] Pollution levels were calculated for a range of pollutants on the basis of calculating emissions from individual cars as a function of operating speeds and congestion levels.

[12] A number of sensitivity tests were conducted on the existing programme scenario. One was to cut back on the road investments and to include only those schemes judged to be committed - that included the IRR improvements and the Department of Transport schemes. This led to a worsening in congestion levels by 14 percent. A further sensitivity test looked at the effect of employment remaining stable and fuel price increases; under these conditions trip numbers fell by 7 percent but travel conditions were still substantially worse than in the original tests (LCC et al, 1991).

i) highways investment
ii) restraint (road pricing)
iii) improved bus and rail
iv) guided bus/light rail
v) automated guided transit (AGT)
vi) management techniques

On the highways theme, the model predicted an overall reduction in congestion levels of 16 percent and a 37 percent reduction in radial road congestion, yet curiously the final strategy report concluded:

> "That investment in more roads does not achieve an improvement in accessibility, according to the strategic transport model, merits reiteration. The additional car trips which would take place if there was a major highway investment programme would offset the anticipated congestion benefits."
>
> (LCC et al, 1991 para 5.4.4)

A restraint theme was cheap, gave reductions in congestion of 17 percent, but was expected to endanger the economic health of the city centre and produce significant user disbenefits for motorists.

Improvements to existing public transport were expected to produce modest reductions in congestion and some improvements to public transport accessibility. The tests of new forms of public transport covered three types of measures - advanced guided transit, light rail, and guided bus. Light rail and guided bus were tested together and AGT - which interestingly was costed at VAL levels rather than Briway - was tested on its own. The light rail/guided bus test produced limited user benefits, improved accessibility to the city centre, and some improvements to congestion levels. On AGT the consultants concluded:

> "The AGT system is probably too expensive to be adopted as a central part of Leeds' transport strategy. It could not be funded prudently out of local resources, and central government funding would not be forthcoming given the existence of alternatives with an order of magnitude lower capital cost, able to contribute a higher benefit/cost ratio. Moreover, a system which achieves total segregation throughout is not actually needed, and as experience has shown, is likely to encounter very considerable opposition in residential areas."
>
> (LCC et al, 1991 para.5.35)

The public consultation element of the study was undertaken in two stages in the latter half of 1990. Councillor Trickett saw it as essential if the transport strategy was to be successfully implemented:

> "It's easy to get a consensus when its conceptual ... (But at some point in time) there is a key step to be made ... which is the following one - you start to lay tram lines or change traffic flows. Now what then happens is you immediately, inevitably produce a not-in-my-backyard backlash ...
>
> Therefore it was absolutely imperative that ... we were able to demonstrate to those people then who did object: 'well we understand you're objecting because it goes down your street or something, but these are the views of the whole city of Leeds and we cannot allow your street to determine the whole future economy and transportation needs of the city of Leeds.'"
>
> (IT 5 pp.64-65)

The first stage of consultation was a public opinion survey carried out by the Policy Research Unit at Leeds Polytechnic. This consisted of 760 interviews and was completed in August 1990. The second stage was conducted by consultants Viewpoint Communications between September 1990 and November 1990. Based on the title "Think Leeds Talk Transport", it sought to explain future transport problems and needs and then to consider five themes for possible future policy direction[13]:

a) improve buses and trains
b) new types of public transport
c) new roads
d) extend traffic management
e) restrain car use

On the basis of the public consultation, Viewpoint concluded that there was potential for developing a transport strategy which commanded a broad consensus:

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[13] In the second phase of the work 295,000 leaflets were distributed to the public - one to every home - and a further 50,000 were circulated on buses. 4,000 booklets were produced and sent to community groups, businesses, and interest groups. In response, 48 written submissions were received from groups and 330 written submissions from individuals. Meetings were held with business organizations and other bodies to discuss possible ways forward.

"The consultation underpinned the most important lessons of the (opinion) survey, in particular that the people of Leeds want:

a) An effective and amenable public transport service
b) Safety on the roads, and in the streets
c) A clean friendly, environment

The consultation outlined in this report demonstrates that a consensus is possible. Differences in interest between groups within the city are inevitable. What our consultation has shown is an area of common ground between all groups. On this common ground lies the possibility for consensus."

(Viewpoint Communications, 1990 para.4.1)

There was little support for traffic restraint, as Viewpoint commented:

"... generally people in Leeds want to be 'wooed out of their cars', as one submission put it. This is one of the strongest points of common ground in the submission ...

Leeds people are not anti-car. They oppose punitive measures against the motorist. But they recognize that car use cannot continue to grow at its present rate without permanent damage to the environment."

(Viewpoint Communications, 1990 para.4.5.7 - 4.5.8)

It is not entirely clear quite how Viewpoint came to identify the elements of this consensus. They claimed it involved improving bus and rail, light rail, pedestrianisation, and improvements to road safety. Yet they did not include more road building, even though in the public opinion survey, the option of "building more and better roads" actually attracted the support of 73 percent of respondents - 7 percent more than supported "building a new light rail/tram/guided bus system".

Information from the modelling and the public opinion fed into the working party discussions. According to Councillor Walker, the Labour Group secretary and Planning Committee chairman, the news that a public consensus existed made the job of strategy development easier:

"Now I think its not a difficult political debate if there's a consensus amongst the public. ... So ... there was no political party thinking they could gain some advantage out of knocking hell out of the transport strategy, because there was nothing to gain ..."
(IT 5 p.23)

Councillor Trickett favoured pragmatic policies:

> "You see, I'm in the business of winning hearts and minds - I'm not an evangelist, I'm a politician who's out to try and find practical solutions and at the time we were looking at this (strategy), ... there was no consensus that the car was intrinsically a bad thing. ... So I may have my own private views about that but ... it's not up to me to evangelise and to try to change people's views.
>
> So what we decided to do was accept the existence in reality of a car orientated culture but ... to try to entice people into more modish, faster cleaner modes of transportation which were seen to be more efficient and modernistic ... than say the bus."
>
> (IT 5 p.62)

Indeed severe traffic restraint policies were hardly even considered by politicians, as Councillor Walker recalled:

> "I can't even remember road pricing being discussed (by the working party). It was politically off the agenda."
>
> (IT 5 p.24)

In February 1991 councillors approved a final strategy document which had been prepared with considerable input from Jim Steer of SDG. The 20-year strategy was estimated to cost almost £800m (table 11.1) and was summarised as:

1. Management measures, improved public transport access, and short stay parking in support of the enhanced city centre.

2. Focus on orbital roads (Inner Ring Road, Department of Transport schemes) for new highways to take out through traffic.

3. New radial capacity through high quality public transport serving park and ride facilities; long stay city centre parking supply growth to be controlled.

4. Traffic calming and other environmental measures to aid cyclists and pedestrians and to reduce accidents and to protect residential area; in the city centre air pollution from traffic to be cut by 10 percent by 2010.

(Steer, 1991)

More detailed comments were then offered on how the strategy could be interpreted in relation to specific measures. In the city centre it said the expansion of long stay

parking should be controlled and there should be further pedestrianisation. This latter point supported the commitment made by Councillor Trickett in 1989 to pedestrianise the shopping street, Briggate, within two years (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 20/7/90).

On radial movements, the recommendation was to concentrate on public transport improvements. Light rail, which was seen to be a tried and tested technology and one which could attract motorists from their cars, was recommended for corridors in the south-east, the north-west, and north-east not served by existing heavy rail. The strategy also, however, made room for guided bus. Yorkshire Rider had continued their campaign for a guided bus system whilst the strategy was being undertaken. In August 1990 a study tour took some councillors, including Councillor Trickett, to see the guided bus system in Essen, West Germany.

Table 11.1 Total estimated capital cost breakdown of the main elements of the Leeds Transport Strategy* (Source: LCC, 1991 table 13)

Category	**Scheme**	**Cost (£m) (1990 prices)**
Highways	Dept. of Transport identified trunk road and motorway schemes (notional estimate)	**150.0**
	Leeds City Council identified major highway schemes	**100.0**
Traffic management measures	Calming, road safety, pedestrianisation, cycling facilities, minor road/junction improvements, bus priority measures etc. (Does not include any specific city centre pedestrian or traffic schemes)	**100.0****
Rail expenditure	New stations and services	**9.0**
	New rail link to Stanks/Scholes	**1.2**
	Station park-and-ride facilities	**0.3**
	Station improvements, signalling and electrification	**76.0**
Bus expenditure	Guided bus	**10.5**
	Replacement of bus fleet	**50.0**
	Terminal improvements	**5.0**
	Infrastructure/information	**20.0**
New system	LRT (Stages I,II,III,IV)	**250.0**
Total		**772.0**

Notes:
* estimates do not include land costs
** current programme (approx. £5m p.a.) assumed to continue

As Jim Steer recalled, the presence of Yorkshire Rider's guided bus proposals did ensure careful consideration was given to it during scenario testing:

> "Really the feeling on buses was that you couldn't expect to ... get people out of driving with a bus based system ... But on the other hand you'd be lucky if you ended up with anything more than a three line LRT network. What (therefore) are you going to do with these (other) corridors?
>
> Yorkshire Rider had of course done some work on guided bus and there was a lot of interest in it and the resolution really was to say 'well we can't solve everything with LRT, I mean why worry - buses seemed to fit.'" (IT 5 p.50)

One of the City Council's executive directors, Ed Anderson, was in charge of the officer working group on the strategy and he agreed that Yorkshire Rider's proposals helped guided bus to be considered:

> "I think it's inevitable that because Yorkshire Rider ... had a specific interest in guided bus that obviously this exercise was going to consider very carefully the role that guided bus should play ... Had we not had Yorkshire Rider on the spot, able to feed in the advice, perhaps guided bus would not have been considered so seriously ..."
>
> (IT 5 p.58)

The strategy found no place for a Briway-style system. Councillor Trickett could not recall a single defining moment when it was finally abandoned:

> "when I became leader (people) were thinking of a single symptom (of the transport problem), a single cause, and a single cure. ... I was able to say 'let's try to disentangle each problem and try to solve them separately. ... Briway might be a solution in one part of the city, supertram (LRT) in others, heavy rail in another ...
>
> So therefore I was able to engineer a position where no one was asked to reject Briway but we were able to distract attention into other things. And the Briway thing didn't get dropped in a dramatic way, it just quietly passed to one side while we got pre-occupied with other matters."
>
> (IT 5 p.62)

On orbital highway investment, the Inner Ring Road improvements and Department of Transport schemes were seen as important elements of the strategy. Elsewhere,

SDG were not convinced of the merits of certain schemes which the Council had approved in their highway strategy of 1989. One of these was the Kirkstall Valley route. SDG did not believe this road was consistent with the overall strategy and were therefore inclined to recommend its exclusion. As Jim Steer recalled, this was relatively easy to recommend because it was facing considerable public and political opposition:

> "There was political support for knocking out the Kirkstall Valley Road, because it caused environmental problems, and the fact that it was inconsistent with the strategy had it gone ahead was relatively easy to deal with ... But really it was out (anyway) - ... politically it was out.
> (IT 5 p.48)

Bill Cotton, the City Engineer for Leeds from 1990-1994 agreed on this point:

AF: "Did it (the strategy) spell the end of schemes? I know SDG weren't too happy with the Kirkstall Valley route - I mean does the strategy say that and then do you drop it, or is it not quite so simple as that?"

BC: "No its not as simple as that. There was tremendous opposition to such a route anyway. ...You wouldn't have got that scheme through. ... policies reflect the mood of the public and where the public's going and what's practical and what isn't practical. ..."

(IT 5 p.41)

The recommendations on the East Leeds Radial (ELR) presented Jim Steer with some presentational difficulties. To him it seemed at odds with the strategy but there was, however, considerable political support for continuing with the scheme. As Steer recalled:

> "(The East Leeds Radial) was seen (by the Council) as being essential to regeneration of the Cross Green area. Our (SDG's) line on that was 'look if you're going to build ELR, you're going to find it extremely difficult to convince anybody you should also be allowed to have taxpayers money to build a light rail system. And its inconsistent with your strategy anyway, because its a new radial route and you're going to significantly increase radial capacity into the city centre.'"
>
> (IT 5 p.49)

He was careful to ensure that the advice given on this scheme raised these concerns, but not severely enough for the advice to be omitted by the Council from the final document:

> "Well it ain't easy (to write such a recommendation), you know that some people's feelings are going to be trampled on in the process ... With something like the East Leeds Radial, you know damn well they'd (the Council) rather you didn't raise any query about it and you're just trying to judge the line as to where you can put something that is going to be very difficult for them to say 'We're striking that out'.
>
> ... You know, if you can't win the argument on it, its no good you going away in the corner and writing it down - its just going to get knocked out again."
>
> (IT 5 p.53)

Table 11.2 Leeds Transport Strategy: evaluation in comparison to base (continue existing policies) theme. (Source: Leeds Transport Strategy, table 12)

Economic		Radials	Orbitals	City centre	Study area
	Congestion levels base index=100	88	94	82	88
		Car users	Public transport users Car / No car		Total
	User benefits (annual)	£25.6m	£18.9m	£14.8m	£59.3m
Accessibility		Car available		Car unavailable	
	City centre	+ 18%		+23%	
Environment		City centre		Study area	
	Air pollution	- 82%		- 13.5%	
	Noise levels	- 1%			
Fundability		Rail	Bus	Highways	Rapid transit
	Net capital costs	£86.5m	£85.5m	£250m	£250m
		Operating ratio (rapid transit)			
	Viability	1.6			

The strategy document suggested that the ELR "appears to fulfil a much more substantial need than certain other roads" (LCC, 1991 para.5.50) in particular, through

its ability to service industrial development. It was, however, suggested that the road should be designed to serve this industrial access function rather than providing a major new dual carriageway link to the city centre.

On traffic growth, the strategy did not recommend restraint measures for the reasons noted earlier. Instead, the policy would be one of:

> "controlling the growth (ie increase) in car traffic, but not seeking to reduce the existing level of car demand."
>
> (LCC et al, 1991 para.5.53)

The strategy document ended with a fairly detailed set of measures to be implemented over the 20 year period, despite the assertion that it was not to be regarded as a blueprint (see appendix E).

Following the completion of the transport strategy, work progressed on developing a more detailed transport strategy for the city centre. Surrounding the proposed expanded pedestrian area[14] would be a public transport box on which buses and the proposed light rail system would operate in two directions. Further out, a one-way three lane city centre loop road was proposed to enable general traffic to access the city centre. The scheme involved the upgrading of existing roads over a five year period, at a cost of £17.3m.

11.5 Using the strategy

Officers from the Council and the PTE believed that the strategy process had brought the two organizations closer together. As Adrian Pope recalled:

> "Oh (before the strategy) we were two separate organizations. (Now) on supertram, they're leading it but I'm one of the four main officers on the steering group. On guided bus, I chair the steering group, they're on it; on the city centre work that we did, they had officers on it, and we really haven't had a major fallout at all."
> (IT 5 p.16)

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[14] Briggate was closed except to buses, taxis and delivery vehicles in January 1993. The complete pedestrianisation of the road, however, remained an aspiration rather than a programmed commitment.

Similarly Roger Pickup, the PTE's Passenger Services Director remarked:

> "It (the strategy) has certainly helped officers like me. I mean there was a stage in the process when we (the PTE) were actually more or less officially welcomed to the fold if you like. Prior to that we had been looked on as outsiders. During the process we became looked on as insiders, so that we now work very closely with Leeds (City Council) on all sorts of transport issues when necessary."
>
> (IT 5 p.29)

In advancing the transport strategy, the Council agreed to raise its long stay charges for city centre car parking in 1993. Adrian Pope believed the coherence of the strategy enabled this to be accepted by organizations who might otherwise have been expected to oppose it:

> "On ... long stay (parking), we reviewed the price and it was far too cheap - and so we doubled it to £3.50 a day; ... We went (with the proposals) ... to the Chamber of Trade and for the first time in my knowledge, we actually got their comment: 'We've supported your strategy, the logic of what you are now saying on the pricing is faultless, ... we will support you.'"
>
> (IT 5 p.17)

Nevertheless, there was no firm policy on new long stay car parking provision, as the draft Unitary Development Plan made clear:

> "An important priority of the Transport Strategy is to seek to reduce the problems of peak hour congestion, whilst acknowledging that car travel remains the preference for many commuters. The approach is ... based on a balanced strategy which recognizes the need to increase the number of long-stay parking spaces but seeks to control the growth of car-borne commuting ...
>
> ... positive management of the growth in long-stay parking provision will be used as a strategic tool to alleviate peak hour congestion and reduce environmental conflicts."
>
> (LCC, 1993 paras.6.6.7-8)

Whilst the UDP spoke of seeking to restrain and discourage new long stay car parking in the city centre, in practice, individual developer proposals were to be judged on their merits. As the UDP pointed out:

> "In ... highway and environmental terms there would ... be concerns about allowing increased long-stay parking provision as part of new development (*in the vicinity of the public transport box*). However, where the possibility of a major redevelopment does occur, especially on the edge of the public transport box, there may be a need to adopt, by exception, a more flexible approach to ensure that an opportunity to secure a prestigious development for the city is not lost.
>
> Elsewhere within the core of the city centre (an area bounded by the Inner Ring Road to the north and the River Aire to the south), long stay parking provision will be possible to service major new developments."
>
> (ibid, paras.6.6.14-15. Words in italics added by researcher)

Leeds Development Corporation took a more relaxed view of car parking standards than the Council, since their primary responsibility was to attract new development. Government financial support for a guided bus project on the Scott Hall Road was authorised in December 1992 and the first system was due to be completed in mid-1996. In Bob Tebb, Yorkshire Rider's Group Development Manager's, view the support for guided bus in the strategy was essential to its advancement:

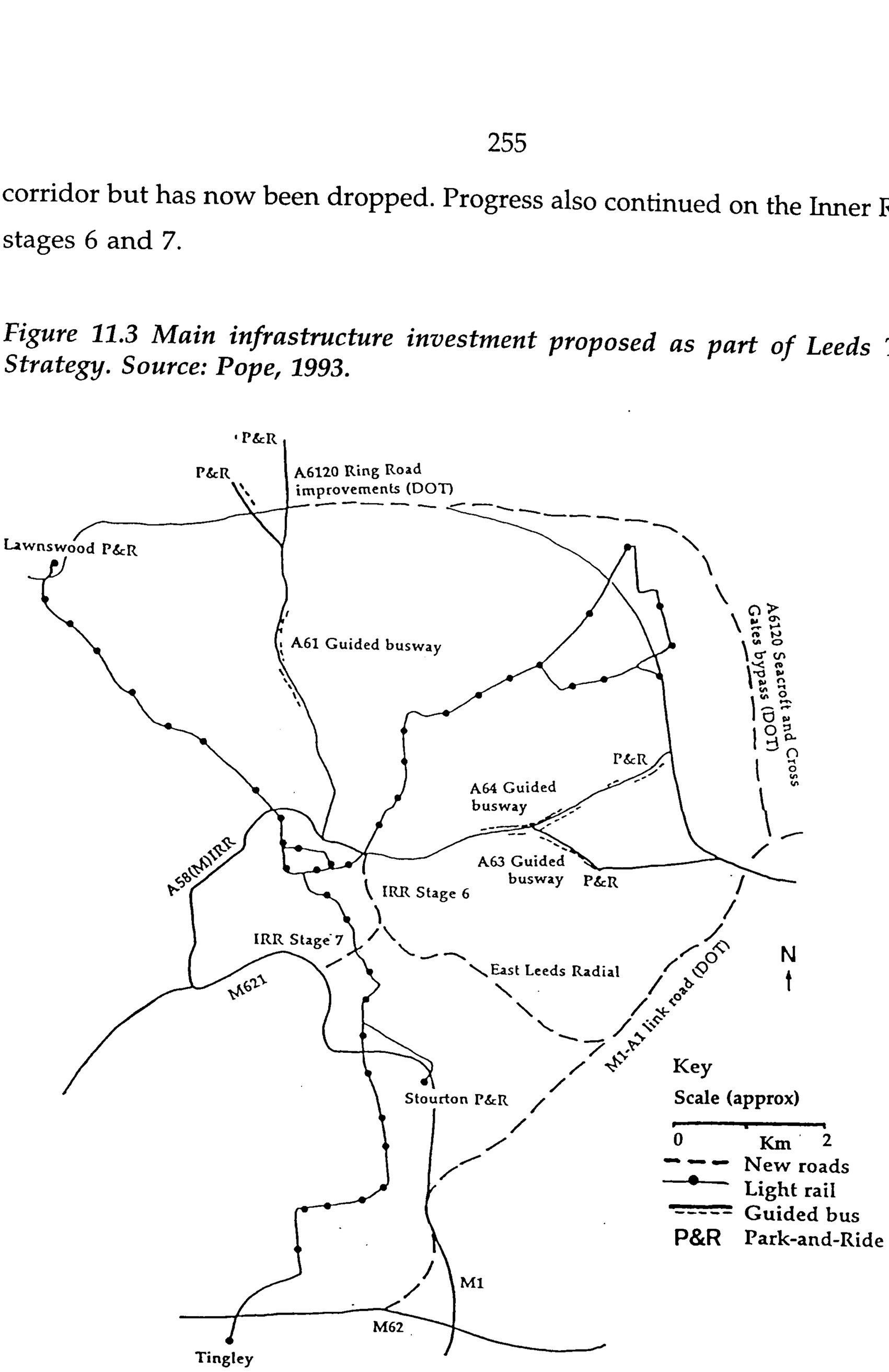
> "It (the strategy) strengthened the guided bus position. ... It couldn't happen without the City (Council's) support, and essentially the city would only formalize support for anything through the strategy."
>
> (IT 5 p.35)

In November 1991 councillors on the City Council gave unanimous backing to a light rail route from the city centre to Stourton and Tingley in the south of the city (figure 11.3). It received Royal Assent in July 1993. Detailed alignments for two further routes have been published for public consultation - line 2 to Headingley and line 3 to East Leeds.

On highways, the Council continued to promote the £17.8m East Leeds Radial, designed to dual carriageway standard throughout. The Kirkstall Valley route was, however, reviewed, for a time it was reserved as a possible future transportation

corridor but has now been dropped. Progress also continued on the Inner Ring Road stages 6 and 7.

Figure 11.3 Main infrastructure investment proposed as part of Leeds Transport Strategy. Source: Pope, 1993.



Adrian Pope believed that both the light rail and Inner Ring Road proposals had been furthered by the strategy:

"... the strategy helps us to do things; to go to Parliament and say ... we have had a unanimous vote in council for this supertram, works wonders. ... When a city has agreed something unanimously, Parliament isn't likely to stand in the way.

... when you go out with major road schemes - Inner Ring Road stages 6 and 7 ... in the past we'd have had a whole host of critics gunning

> for that road scheme; but because we could show how it fitted in the strategy, we think most of the opposition evaporated. ...
>
> Because it isn't a road scheme for its own sake, whereas previously it had been seen as (such)."
>
> (IT 5 p.16)

Roger Pickup, Passenger Services Director at the PTE agreed that having a strategy reduced the controversy over particular schemes. Speaking about the guided bus project, he noted that:

> "At one end of the Scott Hall Road, there was a scheme for turning a one way road into basically a two way bus corridor, which is quite important ... And I thought that would raise a lot of difficulties, but in fact it seemed to go through relatively easily ... I think because people can say, 'Well this is coming from the strategy, we are supposed to be putting in bus priorities where practical on the radials.' ... A lot of detailed argument that can start from scratch on any particular issue is forgotten about."
>
> (IT 5 p.30)

Outside the urban core, some Department of Transport schemes which were included in the strategy were withdrawn from the Government's road programme in March 1994; schemes so affected were the A6120 Seacroft and Cross Gates bypass, the dualling of sections of the outer ring road and improvements to the A63 west of the A1 (DOT, 1994b).

Despite the fairly detailed recommendations contained in the strategy document, neither councillors nor officers saw the strategy as a rigid plan to be adhered to under all future conditions. Speaking in 1994, Adrian Pope reflected:

> "Now at some point, five years, seven years on, the strategy will need reviewing. ... And what we therefore have is a strategy that's enabling us to move in the right direction at the speed which the politicians are comfortable with."
>
> (IT 5 p.15)

Indeed in November 1994, Councillor Trickett established a Transport Strategy Sub-Committee to consider issues arising from or affecting the transport strategy, including government planning guidelines on transport and land use planning which

encouraged public transport and restricting out-of-town developments (DOE, 1994), and the transport report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (1994) which reached similar conclusions. A report to the sub-committee's meeting in February 1995 noted:

> "there might be a need to sharpen the strategy's impact on environmental issues by (for example) the adoption of specific targets or by a commitment to give greater weight to environmental issues where there was a conflict between different objectives."
>
> (Report to Leeds Transport Strategy Sub-Committee, 15/2/95, para.4.3)

11.6 Interpretation and conclusions

It is important to stress that the Leeds research for this thesis was inevitably not as detailed as the Birmingham research and therefore the findings should be treated a little more tentatively. Before turning to the examine the questions raised in chapter 3 it is worth noting the similar reasons for developing the strategy in the two cases. Like in Birmingham, the impetus for the Leeds strategy appears to lie in problems of previous policy execution, particularly relating to public transport. There is nothing that suggests that it was undertaken simply because other local authorities had already undertaken similar exercises. It is also worth emphasising that the transport study conducted in Leeds was only one part of a much broader process of strategy development.

1. How accurately do 'Integrated Transport Studies' predict future changes in the transport system and are studies based on a large amount of highly verified theory about how the system functions?

The model validation for the 1989 base year am peak hour trips gave a closer fit to the observed than BITS, as Table 11.3 shows.

Table 11.3 Comparison of observed and modelled 1989 am peak hour trip volumes (study wide) (Source: LCC et al, 1991).

	Car available			Non-car available		All		Total
	Car	Bus	Rail	Bus	Rail	Bus	Rail	
Model	114800	9200	1100	17500	6900	26700	8000	149500
Observed	113000	7600	4600	20000	4300	27600	8900	149500

Overall, the forecast increases in traffic growth across Leeds district up to the study horizon year were lower than the years leading up to the study. At the time of undertaking this research, it was too early to say how accurate the forecasts would prove to be.

Like BITS, the Leeds analysis was based upon a series of assumptions which may or may not have been correct. The model assumed that the number of trips under all strategies would be the same and therefore no transport investment of any nature could generate a growth in total trips. Whilst many analysts believe that this is actually an incorrect assumption, the relation between transport investment and trip generation is still poorly understood.

The study was ambiguous on the question of whether new road investment would relieve congestion or whether it would attract new car trips, hence maintaining congestion levels. Whilst the model forecast congestion relief from new road capacity, the study text commented that additional capacity would simply be filled by additional car trips.

2. Is an 'Integrated Transport Study' simply an intellectual exercise or are organizational and political influences also important in the conduct of the study?

As in Birmingham there is support for the view that organizational pressures influenced the choice of strategies to test. The attention given to guided bus was largely explained by the fact that it was a policy then being pursued by the local bus operator Yorkshire Rider. It seems plausible that study recommendations might also have been influenced by these organizational and political pressures, though the former City Engineer for Leeds, Bill Cotton, thought this was taking causality perhaps a little too far:

> AF: "About the strategy, is it as much who's involved and what their interests are that determines what comes out?
>
> BC: "No, I think that's a wrong thing to say. ... It might be it determines what is considered ... it gets it on the agenda and gets it looked at."
>
> (IT 5 p.41)

Political considerations did, however, influence the consultant's advice on the East Leeds Radial; as Jim Steer admitted, it was questionable whether this should be part of a strategy which advocated increasing radial capacity by public transport improvements.

3. Is the advice offered by an 'Integrated Transport Study' instrumental in policy formulation and problem-solving?

As in Birmingham, it is difficult to find examples of policies which were being pursued simply because they were recommended by the technical study.

The initial interest in light rail did not emerge from a comprehensive study of the city's transport needs but instead from the PTE which was responsible for public transport. Political and organisational pressure built the policy up before the transport study was undertaken. Whether the study was instrumental in making the clients choose light rail instead of the Briway type design of system is a little unclear. As Councillor Jon Trickett recalled, there was no single defining moment when the Briway system was officially abandoned:

> "(When I became leader I started to say) Briway might be a solution in one part of the city, Supertram (light rail) in others, heavy rail in another. ... So therefore I was able to engineer a position where no one was asked to reject Briway but we were able to distract attention into other things. And the Briway thing didn't get dropped in a dramatic way, it just quietly passed to one side while we got preoccupied with other matters."
>
> (IT 5 p.62)

It seems therefore that the study was probably only one factor - albeit perhaps an important one - amongst many in the choice of new transport mode. The controversy over LATS had clearly made it a politically unappealing and the main proponent of the system, George Mudie, was no longer council leader. Meanwhile, light rail still had the enthusiastic support of the PTA/E.

Like light rail, the origins of guided bus also lay in the functional specialisation of the local bus operator Yorkshire Rider rather than the comprehensive analysis of a transport study. Lobbying by the bus company had ensured the concept had a

measure of political support by the time the integrated study was actually commissioned.

Road schemes also emerged from functional specialisations, this time of the highway engineers and the highways committee of the City Council. Schemes like the Inner Ring Road and the East Leeds Radial had existed for many years and were contained in the road strategy put forward by the City Engineer in 1989.

In all the cases listed above, it appears that intuitive knowledge of policy-makers was important in the reasons for them being supported and indeed for them actually emerging as policies in the first instance. Indeed, as far as is known, none of them originally emerged from a technical analysis of how to meet a particular need.

It also appears that certain policies which were not recommended by the study, for instance road pricing and the Kirkstall Valley route, were rejected as much by the clients as much for political reasons as for the fact that they were rejected by the study.

4. Do 'Integrated Transport Studies' provide a framework capable of guiding the direction of specific future decisions, as in Etzioni's mixed scanning theory?

Perhaps the most significant distinguishing feature between the process of developing a strategy in Birmingham and in Leeds was that the Leeds Strategy was a much broader based exercise involving the public, business and most importantly perhaps, politicians.

As noted in the Birmingham chapters, the strategy recommended by BITS did not in itself provide a framework which clearly influenced future decisions. It was argued in chapter 10 that for a strategy to provide any guidance it must be more than just a technical strategy and actually have the commitment of policy-makers. The combining of the technical analysis, public consultation and political discussions in Leeds seems to have produced a more robust strategy on which there was widespread support.

To date there have been no major crises in transportation policy like there were in South Birmingham. Whilst the greater political and public involvement in the strategy formulation seems to be an important influence in this, there may, however, be other elements of an explanation for this greater robustness. The organisational and political culture in Leeds does not appear to have been so bound up in road building as was the case in Birmingham. Therefore there was no tension on a comparable scale to Birmingham between the road building culture and the increasingly vociferous environmental lobby.

The timing of the two studies might also have been important in avoiding controversy. When BITS was undertaken the national context was in a state of flux with concern about urban road building and the motor car in the relatively early stages of development. By 1991 when the Leeds strategy was drawn up, there was perhaps a greater degree of certainty about the future direction of urban transport policy. In this respect, the retired Leeds City Engineer Bill Cotton offered an interesting viewpoint about whether a strategy leads or follows public opinion:

> AF: "So did the strategy reflect change (in policies) or promote it?"
>
> BC: "I think it reflects it. ... Because it had to be politically achievable. ... I don't think you come out with a whole new strategy and then ... convince people. Because you can't. ... People have got to be ready for it and they've got to be already thinking that way when you push it (the strategy) out at them. ... I think they (professions such as engineers or planners) do by and large have to follow fashions."
>
> (IT 5 p.42,43)

The Leeds strategy itself was closer to a blueprint plan that the Birmingham strategy, in that the broad verbal guidance was accompanied by a programme of schemes for implementation (see appendix E). This again might be partly explained by the greater political involvement in the strategy process and the greater certainty about the direction of the national transport debate which existed by 1991.

Of course, whether the strategy actually withstands inevitable problems such as changing values and financial shortfalls remains to be seen. Some of the Department of Transport road schemes contained in the strategy were withdrawn by the Government in the years after it was approved. Nevertheless, the strategy review

initiated in 1994 suggests that politicians themselves recognised that the strategy was not a blueprint and was instead something which would evolve over time.

On some policies, the strategy did not provide a clear guidance for future decisions, with city centre car parking policy being the most prominent example. Here it appears the economic development objectives of the City Council could be in conflict with the objectives of the transport strategy and decisions on individual applications for car parking seemed to be being treated on their individual merits.

5. **Is there evidence that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are used in ways other than formulating policy or providing a framework for policy-making, such as improving relations between organizations, enlightenment or partisan functions, and enhancing legitimacy for policies?**

Whilst there is little evidence that the study itself led to any new policies being formulated, gave added support to policies which were already being pursued. By extending the rationale for many policies outside the narrow realms of their functional advocates, the study, and more generally the strategy, enhanced the legitimacy of policies. Adrian Pope believed strategy had benefitted the proposed extension of the Inner Ring Road in this way.

Like in Birmingham, the process of strategy development, of which the study was a part, also appears to have served an important role in enhancing relationships between fragmented organizations responsible for the implementation of transport policies. In effect, studies seem to be important tools for allowing the clients, who up until then were not likeminded, to come together and find common ground. Reflecting on the Leeds strategy process, Jim Steer commented:

> "The real need at that stage (when the work on a strategy began) was to establish a strategy that everybody could agree on; and there's no doubt that they all disagreed before this exercise was done. The exercise was done and they agreed and they could support it. And they worked very hard on getting all round support, so MPs were briefed ... the public were informed ... the business community briefed ..."
>
> (IT 5 p.50)

What this emphasises is that one of the key roles of studies appears to be social rather than technical. Jim Steer believed that the interaction between participants in the strategy process was actually more important to achieving this aim than the technical analysis[15]. From the two cases, it appears that improving organizational relations is one of the central functions played by a study.

Evidence that the process of strategy development played enlightenment functions is less obvious than it was in Birmingham, though it does seem that transport was viewed in a more comprehensive manner following the strategy's approval.

The evidence of partisan functions played by the study and more generally the strategy is less evident than in Birmingham, perhaps because of the lack of any policy controversies in the immediate aftermath which could have warranted its explicit use in this way. Nevertheless, participants acknowledged that the strategy had served to strengthen the case for policies like guided bus and the Inner Ring Road, which were being promoted by particular functional bodies.

6. What characteristics of an 'Integrated Transport Study' and the context within which it is undertaken, seem to determine how useful a study is to clients?

Like in Birmingham, it appears that the lack of highly verified theory such as on transport's relationship to economic development and the impact of transport infrastructure investment on trips did not act as barriers to the study being useful.

As in BITS, client interests influenced the measures considered in the strategy tests (for instance testing guided bus) and the study's final recommendations (such as on the East Leeds Radial road). It is not altogether clear whether the clients had direct influence at these stages or whether the consultant was simply aware of the interests and directed the study accordingly.

Like in Birmingham, it seems that the study was more likely to be useful if its findings were compatible with client thinking than where they were contradictory. Where the findings were compatible they served to strengthen and legitimise the

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15 Speaking to researcher following interview.

existing policy stance. Examples include light rail, guided bus, and the upgrading of the Inner Ring Road. On recommendations which were expected to be unpopular with clients, such as the East Leeds Radial, the consultant chose to word the advice carefully so that whilst it continued to express disquiet about the policy, it would still be acceptable to the client.

Unlike BITS, the Leeds strategy development had a high level of input from politicians as well as officers. Of particular note was that the steering group contained equal numbers from each political party. Councillors and officers believed that these aspects of the strategy process helped to give the strategy a strong degree of political momentum and ensured the strategy was acted upon, following its approval.

A significant difference between the Leeds study and BITS was that the study was only one part of a wider process of strategy development which included public opinion research and consultation. Participants believed this was useful in making the strategy more robust. For instance, Councillor Walker argued that the alleged public consensus gave politicians more confidence in identifying a preferred strategy.

The council leader, Jon Trickett, also believed that public support received for the strategy would allow it to withstand backlashes from opponents of particular schemes. Whether this is actually the case remains to be seen for there were no significant controversies in the years immediately following the strategy's approval.

CHAPTER 12 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

12.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the key findings emerging from the research before considering what the implications of these findings may be for the contribution of analysis in urban transport policy-making. Finally, attention turns to possible avenues for further research on the contribution of analysis to policy-making.

12.2 Summary of research findings

Chapter 3 raised a series of questions about the contribution of 'Integrated Transport Studies' to the process of urban transport planning. The Birmingham case study findings were discussed around these questions in chapter 10, whilst chapter 11 considered the issues further with regard to Leeds. The main points are summarised below.

1. **How accurately do 'Integrated Transport Studies' predict future changes to the transport system and are studies based on a large amount of highly verified theory about how the system functions?**

Studies are faced with uncertainty about future trends in the transport system. However, whilst all forecasting is subject to uncertainty, the Birmingham case suggests that the critical forecast of Middle Ring Road peak hour flows were seriously flawed in the light of the observed trends.

Many aspects of the urban transport system are not that well understood and 'Integrated Transport Studies' therefore encompass assumptions which may or may not be correct. Notable examples from the Birmingham and Leeds studies included the relationship between transport infrastructure investment and trip generation or economic development. Whilst the former was a problem which the comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s faced, the latter was a consequence of the wider range of objectives which clients saw transport serving in the 1980/90s. Studies therefore have to rely on a high level of ordinary (or 'lay') knowledge which, though perhaps more informed than the views of the average citizen, may still be highly fallible.

2. Is an 'Integrated Transport Study' simply an intellectual exercise, or are organizational and political influences also important in the conduct of a study?

The presence of a particular client sectional interest seems to at least ensure that a particular policy measure will be considered by a study. Centro was keen to ensure that the BITS study gave consideration to light rail. Similarly, the consideration given to guided bus in the Leeds study appears to be related to the fact that it was being promoted by local bus operator Yorkshire Rider. Though they were not represented on the study working group, they had by then succeeded in winning the support of local councillors who were involved in the study.

Nevertheless, the absence of client backing for particular measures does not necessarily mean that a measure will be excluded from the study analysis. For instance, consideration was given to road pricing in the BITS study. In this respect it is perhaps the emphasis which a study gives to a particular policy which is influenced by client interests. In BITS the role of the bus, which did not have strong client support, was widely believed to have been underplayed. Professor May of the MVA consultancy, which undertook the study, suggested that had bus interests had greater representation then it is likely the study would have looked more closely at the mode's role in transport provision.

It seems likely that by affecting the emphasis which the consultant gives to particular policies, organizational interests are able to influence the final recommendations of a study. What is absolutely clear is that clients are able to influence recommendations to ensure that they are politically acceptable. In Birmingham, draft study advice on road pricing and the Heartlands Spine Road was altered in order to make it compatible with client thinking. In Leeds, the consultants were aware there was strong client support for the East Leeds Radial road and therefore included it in the study recommendations even though they acknowledged it was incompatible with the strategy.

3. Is the advice offered by an 'Integrated Transport Study' instrumental in policy formulation and problem-solving?

There is little evidence to suggest that the advice offered by 'Integrated Transport Studies' is instrumental in either bringing about a new policy or resolving a policy dispute which until then had proved intractable. This is not to say that instances do not exist; for instance, Birmingham City Council's involvement at the forefront of the package approach campaign and the search for a common investment appraisal formula seem to be explained largely by BITS.

More often, however, policies seem to emerge from a complex interaction of influences which may include analysis, ordinary knowledge of policy-makers, personal experience, functional perspectives of specialist organizations. The emergence of a light rail policy for the West Midlands was a particularly good example of this complexity. Similarly, policy controversies, such as South Birmingham, were resolved through political means, such as negotiation and compromise, rather than through expert advice. These observations all support Allison's (1971) argument that the rational explanation is only a partial explanation of policy and that a more satisfactory explanation requires examination of political and organizational influences.

4. Do 'Integrated Transport Studies' provide a framework capable of guiding the direction of specific future decisions, as in Etzioni's mixed scanning theory?

The difficulty in answering this question lies primarily in the fact that there is a difference of opinion in what defines a strategy. This was evident both between the cases of Birmingham and Leeds and between individuals within Birmingham. In both Leeds and Birmingham, however, an 'Integrated Transport Study' was only one input to setting the direction of policy.

In Birmingham, the direction of policy changed significantly in the aftermath of BITS as a result of political changes in the ruling Labour Group. Whilst some saw this as political thinking falling into line with the message of BITS, others believed the BITS strategy was subsequently interpreted selectively. In Leeds, the process of strategy development brought together political discussions, public consultation as well as

study analysis. This may partly explain why the strategy itself was more detailed in its description than BITS.

It seems that so long as the client's broad emphasis of objectives and policy preferences remains the same, the recommendations of a study remain relevant. If, however, these change or resources constrain implementation then the relevance of the study findings diminish, unless they are sufficiently flexible to permit their reinterpretation in the new circumstances. Where the latter is the case - and some thought that this was true of the way BITS was used - the extent to which the advice serves to guide thinking is, of course, questionable.

5. Is there evidence that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are used in ways other than formulating policy, problem-solving, or providing a framework for policy-making, such as improving relations between organizations, enlightenment or partisan functions, and enhancing legitimacy for policies?

It is in these alternatives to the instrumental function that the use of 'Integrated Transport Studies' appears most evident. In both Leeds and Birmingham, the study allowed the council and the PTA/E, who had previously not been in agreement, to find common ground. In Birmingham there is some evidence that BITS influenced the way some clients looked at transport policy, thereby serving an enlightenment function. In this way, studies seem to serve to make the existing fragmented arrangements for policy-making work more effectively. A study might test decisions made on other grounds (this might have been the case with the South Birmingham road improvements). In cases like the Inner Ring Road in Leeds, the study appears to have enhanced the legitimacy for policies.

The package approach, South Birmingham case and the Middle Ring Road debate all show evidence of partisan uses for BITS. A study may also be used or even commissioned for partisan purposes - BITS was intended to aid the Chief Executive's position in the Council.

6. What characteristics of an 'Integrated Transport Study' and the context within which it is undertaken, seem to determine how useful a study is to clients?

The research has identified a series of factors relating to the study process, study recommendations and study context which appear to influence whether a study is useful to clients. Before summarising them, it is important to stress two points. First of all the comments which follow are based on observations made in the research, but they are not intended to act as a checklist for those about to conduct or commission an 'Integrated Transport Study'. Clearly the observations have prescriptive implications but it is one thing to observe that a study is likely to be more useful to clients if politicians are involved in its undertaking, and quite another to ensure that politicians do become involved. If transport is simply not a political priority then no amount of persuasion may raise their enthusiasm for being involved in a study.

Secondly, none of the observations are necessarily peculiar to 'Integrated Transport Studies'. Instead, they are likely to be relevant to analysis aimed at the strategic level of policy-making in all areas of public policy. The issues may also be relevant for more detailed policy-making, though not on matters which are highly technical and contain little political involvement.

a) The design of studies

Studies should contain an element of quantification but not to the extent of that contained in the comprehensive transport studies of the 1960s

Most members of the BITS client working party believed that the quantification contained in the study made it more authoritative. As the client's project manager, noted, in western society, essays are not as convincing as a mathematical equation. At the same time, however, the use of the quantified side of BITS was relatively rare, and attempts to implement policies in south Birmingham which took account of the forecasts, eventually had to be dropped because of their controversy.

Policies such as light rail and the South Birmingham Study seemed to be based more on political factors and intuition than technical analysis. The most visible use made of BITS concerned the discursive elements and, in particular, the strategic advice. It

seems as though quantification adds authoritativeness to a study recommendations but is less important in actual policy-making.

Accuracy of forecasts is not essential to study use

The generally supportive views of BITS given to the researcher by clients, even in the light of significant inaccuracies of the Birmingham Middle Ring Road cordon forecasts, suggests that a study can still be useful even if the technical side of it is flawed. This may be particularly true where policies backed by the analysis are still supported by clients.

The use of highly verified theory is not essential to study usefulness

BITS and the Leeds Transport Study contained many assumptions which may or may not have been correct - for instance, it was assumed that transport infrastructure investment would aid the economy and similarly it was assumed that infrastructure investment would not influence total number of trips in the study area. On the connection between transport infrastructure investment and economic development, it seems that the assumptions used matched the ordinary knowledge of the clients. On the relationship between travel demand and infrastructure investment, however, the PTE representative on the BITS working party did not believe the assumptions the study employed. Nevertheless he did not challenge them. This might be because the interest of clients lies primarily in the study recommendations rather than the study process.

From these points it seems that where assumptions match ordinary knowledge, they are readily accepted. Furthermore, even if assumptions contradict the knowledge of clients, this will not necessarily affect the credibility of the study. A hypothesis to test would be that assumptions only adversely affect the credibility of a study where their implications are detrimental to client interests.

Clients should either have an input to guiding the direction of the study or consultants should be aware of the specific issues which the client wants addressed

In the Birmingham case, clients had input to the specification of strategy tests and were therefore able to ensure that the study satisfactorily addressed policies which they had an interest in, for instance light rail. In Leeds the consultant was aware of

the pressure for guided bus from the local bus operator Yorkshire Rider, and therefore gave due consideration to its potential role. It is likely that if consultants undertook a study without the guidance or awareness of client interests they would fail to examine the issues to the satisfaction of the clients.

Clients should either have an input to study recommendations or consultants should be aware of the political nature of policy-making

It is clear from the research on BITS that had the clients not had some say in the final recommendations, the entire credibility of the study could have been jeopardised. By advising the consultants to change the wording of the advice on Heartlands Spine Road and road pricing between the draft and final report, controversy was avoided. In Leeds it appears that the consultant was aware of the need to word the advice on the East Leeds Radial road carefully, since whilst it did not fit neatly into the preferred strategy, a recommendation not to pursue it would have been unacceptable to clients.

b) The nature of study recommendations

A study need not recommend any new policy ideas nor seek to solve policy controversies

The research has noted that the instrumental use of studies is actually relatively uncommon and that the use of a study often comes in a variety of other ways. It therefore follows that entirely novel recommendations are not the lifeblood of determining a study's usefulness to clients. Indeed, new policies recommendations may actually be unwelcome if they go against the thinking of clients or those whose support is necessary. This seems to have been the case with the road pricing advice in Birmingham.

Similarly, studies are unlikely to solve controversial policy issues. The question of how to deal with traffic in South Birmingham was not solved by BITS but instead by political means in which analysis played a supporting role.

Recommendations should generally be compatible with client thinking, but differences of view which do not threaten client interests may be welcomed

The research has identified one of the most important uses of a study as being to provide extra backing to clients' existing policy preferences. In this respect, it may be that it is the independent and expert reputation of the consultant which is particularly important to the client.

Some differences between client thinking and study recommendations can be welcomed, however. For instance Birmingham's City Engineer welcomed the way in which BITS conceptualised the transport policy in a different way to which he had traditionally done.

It seems, however, that recommendations which are significantly at odds with client thinking are not welcomed. In Birmingham, a number of examples of this friction can be identified - for instance the recommendations on road pricing, the Heartlands Spine Road and the conversion of the cross-city heavy rail line to light rail operation.

The importance of the level of resources required to implement a recommended strategy depends on how the client interprets the strategy

In Birmingham, the cost of the BITS strategy appears to be far greater than likely available resources. This, however, does not appear to have discredited the study since the City Council tended to emphasise the broad thrust of the strategy rather than its detail. In Leeds the situation was slightly different, since more emphasis was placed on the detail of the strategy. A shortfall in resources could therefore more easily be seen to discredit the strategy.

The question of whether a study should address policy options outside the direct control of clients depends on specific circumstances

The BITS recommendations relied on a change in the Government's urban transport funding regime. Following the study, local government successfully lobbied for limited changes through the package approach which were in line with the thinking contained in BITS. On the other hand, one City Council participant on the BITS working party believed that study recommendations on bus fares and frequencies were largely irrelevant since neither the Council or PTE had no say on these.

Similarly, there were concerns that the study placed too much emphasis on light rail which was unlikely to prove affordable.

It seems that much depends on the wider policy context within which a study is undertaken. In all three of the above cases there have been calls on the Government to change its policy position. However, only in the case of the package approach did the Government actually agree that the changes should occur.

c) The organizational context for the study

Politicians and senior officers should be involved in the study process

If a study is to be used by clients it seems self-evident that the key players in policy-making should be involved in its undertaking. In Birmingham, senior officers who had been involved in BITS were at the forefront of lobbying for changes in the way the Government allocated local transport investment.

Birmingham and Leeds present an interesting contrast in relation to the political involvement in the study process. The BITS study was undertaken with little input from politicians. Following the study, there still appears to have been confusion in the direction of transport policy - highlighted by the South Birmingham road controversy. A higher level of political interest in transport policy at the time the study was undertaken may have avoided this confusion.

The process of devising the Leeds strategy (of which the study was one input) was driven by politicians. Furthermore there was little controversy over transport in the following years which might be attributable to the political consensus which was achieved during the course of devising the strategy.

The importance of political stability to the use of a study depends on local circumstances

In Birmingham an unstable political background led to changes in transport policy two years after BITS. Somewhat ironically this actually made BITS more useful! Whilst the previous chairman of the Technical Services committee had shown little interest

in the study, the incoming one re-examined the study to see how it could be interpreted in a way which was consistent with the changed political priorities.

By contrast, in Leeds there was a general political consensus over transport policy in the aftermath of the strategy. Therefore even if there had been a change in political control of the Council after the strategy was approved, it does not necessarily follow that the strategy would have been discredited.

Organizations responsible for transport provision should be involved in the study

One of the important uses of a study seems to have been to allow different organisations who have previously not agreed on policy direction to come together and find common ground. Even in instances where there is no organizational friction, if the agreement of different organizations, departments, or individuals is necessary to ensure the taking forward of a strategy then it seems essential that they are involved in its development. Conducting a study without the involvement of relevant bodies or individuals could lead to new inter-organizational frictions. Furthermore, it is unlikely that bodies excluded from a study will feel any allegiance to the study recommendations. This was the view taken by the West Midlands Travel, the major bus operator in Birmingham, which was not involved in BITS.

The importance of involving pressure groups and the wider public in the study process is less clear

The representation of single issue pressure groups on the BITS working and steering groups was rejected by the clients, who believed that it would make agreement on a strategy more difficult. Nevertheless, the consultants remarked that had the BITS presentation meetings arranged with external interests taken place earlier on in the study process, then the study may not have overlooked issues like the role of the bus.

In contrast, politicians in Leeds believed the public opinion and consultation exercises which accompanied the Leeds study made it easier for themselves to identify a strategy which was in keeping with the desires of the community.

Clearly there are a number of different ways by which the public and pressure groups can take part in the development of a transport strategy. There are too many parameters involved to allow the issue to be satisfactorily considered within this

thesis. Much may depend on the motives behind the commissioning of the study. Given that one of the aims of the Leeds strategy was to take the controversy out of transport policy, most participants believed that the consultation and opinion exercise had been of considerable benefit. However, a study may be intended to improve relationships between organisations with responsibility for transport in which case a more closed exercise may be desirable. Alternatively, the study may be intended to feed into the preparation of a plan which will itself be the subject of public consultation. BITS for instance fed into Birmingham's Unitary Development Plan.

The timing of a study is an important influence on study use

BITS was undertaken at a time when transport was becoming an increasing public concern. The use of the study in the package approach lobbying was one of the benefits of this timing. Nevertheless, the lack of interest in the study amongst politicians suggests that they did not share these concerns. Indeed it was two years after BITS before councillors were in a position to re-address the issue of transport policy. Therefore politicians may have found BITS more useful if it had been undertaken then.

In Leeds, the study was commissioned at the time when transport was a political priority and this was reflected in the attention councillors gave to the strategy process (of which the study was a part).

Clearly, events taking place in the wider context within which the study is undertaken are important in influencing the use clients make of an 'Integrated Transport Study'.

12.3 Implications for policy-making

In summary, the research suggests that studies are not based on extensive levels of highly verified theory, and therefore rely on much lay knowledge which may or may not be correct. Furthermore, organizational and political factors seem to have some influence over the extent to which a study gives consideration to particular policies and the nature of study recommendations. Studies tend to be one of a number of inputs into policy-making and on their own they rarely seem to provide an

explanation for why a policy is being pursued. They appear to play important functions in ways such as enlightenment, enhancing inter-organizational relations, providing support for partisans and enhancing the legitimacy of policies. Use made of a study appears to be influenced by three factors - the context in which the study is undertaken, the nature of the study findings, and the study process. Implications of these findings are discussed below. Each heading relates to the theme of one of the questions which guided the research.

a) Improving the predictive accuracy and theoretical base of 'Integrated Transport Studies'

It is worth stressing the point that 'Integrated Transport Studies' are not intended to seek to predict future trends in the performance of the transport system in the same degree of detail as the studies conducted in the 1960s did. Therefore, accuracy is not of such crucial importance.

Nevertheless, efforts to improve the predictive accuracy of studies would seem to be inhibited by a number of problems. Forecasting will always be dogged by uncertainty which, as Hall (1980) describes, can take one of three forms relating to the planning environment, related decision areas, or the stability of values. This research suggests that some forecasting could be improved if greater consideration were given to its plausibility. The Birmingham Middle Ring Road cordon count forecasts contained in BITS appear to be a case in point. Here the forecasts of growth during the morning peak went against the observed trends. More careful checking of model output might have led to this being questioned. Of course, some forecasts may be deliberately skewed in order to provide the basis for advocating particular policies and whilst John Newson of Birmingham for People speculated that this might have been the case with BITS, there is no evidence to confirm this.

Improving the theoretical base of a study seems to be hampered by problems which are also difficult to resolve. The lack of established theory on matters like the impact of new transport infrastructure on economic development or traffic generation is not necessarily due to a lack of research and nor will more research necessarily bring a clear theory any closer. Research conducted on the links between the economy and transport infrastructure investment shows no sign of bringing a polarised debate (or

"policy controversy" as Schön and Rein (1992) would term it) to a resolution. Indeed, it is a good example of research adding to the disagreement, as Swan (1994) reflects:

> "the International Road Federation, ... has published reports ... which show the economic benefits accruing from new motorway construction. ... (Meanwhile) Greenpeace, ... has published a report indicating that there is "no link" between road building and economic prosperity." (p.2)

It seems likely that on matters like this the level of highly verified theory available to inform policy-makers will remain limited.

b) Organizational and political influences on studies

The suggestion that studies are not simply intellectual exercises, but are also influenced by the sectional interests who participate in the study process implies that if these interests wish to get their point of view considered, it is important that they are represented on the study steering or working group.

Whilst some consultants now use checklists to try and ensure that all different interests are included in a study, interest groups may not see this as a replacement for the benefits of being able to put across their views to the consultant and fellow participants first hand. Though it is not altogether clear how clients influence the direction of a study, Neville Borg's recollection of the West Midlands Transport Study Stage 1 (see p.209) suggests an adversarial approach in which interests use arguments and evidence to further their cause. Similarly, Ian Hobbs recalled asking The MVA Consultancy to look at an alternative light rail network to the one initially tested in BITS (p.208). Given that a consultant does not have an expert knowledge of all the relevant issues in a study, clients can provide insights which might otherwise have been overlooked.

Whilst the rational ideal sees research as being conducted without influence from political interests, the cases of road pricing, Heartlands Spine Road in Birmingham and the East Leeds Radial in Leeds show that study recommendations are subject to client influence. Whilst some might see such influence as interference, it appears that it actually ensures that the study is not rejected by the client out of hand on the basis of a small number of unacceptable recommendations.

c) The role of analysis in policy formulation

Except for low level decisions which are not politicised, Etzioni (1968) argues that most decisions will continue to have a high element of political input. In democracies the opportunities for rational decision-making on issues such as urban transport policy seem likely to remain low. Attempts to design rational solutions tend to only be rational from one particular perspective. Given the multiplicity of different interests apparent in urban transportation, the need for compromise and incremental change seem well established.

This thesis cites two examples of the failure of 'rational' solutions to be implemented. The first was the West Midlands County Council's attempt to build a light rail line along a route in East Birmingham which would have demolished over 200 properties. The second was the failure to upgrade roads in the south of Birmingham. In contrast the thesis shows the success of more cautious approaches, such as the South Birmingham Study where the social interaction of participants brought about an acceptable way forward.

d) The value of transport strategies

Whilst there is some disagreement about what defines a strategy, the term seems to command considerable support. The idea of a strategy seems to have a variety of appeals. In Leeds, the strategy provided a focus on which the PTE and City Council could both identify. Secondly in both Birmingham and Leeds it also enhanced the legitimacy for particular policies which had been developed by functional bodies. Perhaps it also spells out a certainty about direction and purpose as opposed to the muddling through of incrementalism.

In practice, however, there appears to be less difference between a strategy and incrementalism that the terminology suggests. In an issue like transport which impinges on a number of other policy environments such as education, health, land-use planning, economic development, and environment, the ability to obtain consistency of policies from the perspective of transportation is extremely difficult since there are many conflicting objectives. To an extent this limits the ability for a

transport strategy to move policy in any one particular direction. A further difficulty with the concept of a strategy (or any plan) is that it suggests that knowledge exists on how to achieve the particular goals set. In practice, however, knowledge of how to achieve the strategy goals is actually a major stumbling block.

e) Alternative uses for analysis

This research suggests that an understanding of how practitioners make use of policy-oriented research needs to cover a wide range of different possible functions, some of which might not have been anticipated by the analyst. Just because a piece of analysis is not used in the form it was originally intended by the analyst or the client, this does not mean to say that the research has not been useful. The examples of the 'Integrated Transport Studies' suggest that one of their primary uses was to improve relations between organizations. In policy controversies it has already been noted that research is often used as ammunition for one side than as a tool to brings the opposing sides round to agreement. This recognizes that no matter how disinterested the analyst may be in viewing the opposing arguments, research findings often provide a rich seam for partisans.

f) Factors affecting the use of analysis

The research has pointed to a number of different factors which might aid the relationship between policy analyst and practitioner. First of all, the variety of functions which practitioners use analysis for suggests that the traditional view of analysis primarily aiming to provide practitioners with information or advice on how to improve policy may be mistaken.

Indeed, alternative uses for research might prove more fruitful lines for analysts to direct inquiry. This researcher's own experience highlighted the difficulty of pursuing the instrumental model as a research approach; as Appendix A explains, the thesis was initially intended to seek to offer advice to policy-makers about how to improve the quality of decision-making. Yet through discussions during the first year with participants in the policy process it became increasingly evident that the complexities

of real-life policy-making meant there was a high risk that any advice would be inappropriate to practitioners.

Perhaps there is a case for teaching policy researchers and analysts and those in professional schools about the gap between what Brewer (1973) describes as theoretical and operational (real life) problem-solving. A greater understanding of the context within which practitioners have to operate, the constraints with which they operate, and the process through which policy is made. Such teaching might help to weaken the rational model's grip as the basis for how people think about policy.

Opportunities for ensuring analysis is used by policy-makers could also be increased if it has the personal commitment of those who are genuinely interested in the analyst's findings and the research covers an issue practitioner has some ability to do something about.

12.4 Further research

This thesis is in part a response to criticisms of transportation research by Wachs (1985) and Altshuler (1979) who observe the scarcity of research which has been conducted on transport policy from an administrative perspective. The ideas for further research presented below, seek to address issues which could usefully advance understanding further.

First of all, there is scope for further research on 'Integrated Transport Studies'. There could be a case for examining in more detail the process by which an 'Integrated Transport Study' is conducted. Such a piece of research would seek to examine how established theory, assumptions and client interests interact to produce a preferred strategy. It might try to answer questions like how the consultant selects the assumptions to use in the study (and whether the client has any input into these), how closely the clients analyze the modelling, and how much influence the client has over the measures the study considers. Research of this nature would help advance understanding as to the extent of cognitive input into a study and also advance understanding about the extent to which apparently top-down exercises actually take their direction from client interests. Such an exercise could be based on interviews

conducted with study participants' much in the same way as this study has been conducted. Given the nature of the questions being pursued, however, it might be advisable to conduct the work some time after the 'Integrated Transport Study' has been completed, when issues are no longer as sensitive. This, however, would rely on participants memories of events remaining accurate.

A broad-brush questionnaire or interview based study of a number of local authorities which have undertaken 'Integrated Transport Studies' could look at whether the observation from Birmingham and Leeds that studies advocate policies for which there is already considerable existing client support is a general phenomenon. If a questionnaire-based study were adopted it would be important to ensure that the individuals who's views are sought, are actually those who make the responses. A study could also ask clients to identify policy measures which were pursued directly because of study advice.

Research could be conducted on the concept of transport strategies. For instance, why do different people have different conceptualisations of what a strategy is? Does it differ along professional lines? Questions like this could be addressed through interviews with professionals from a number of different local authorities. Over the long term, how robust are verbal strategies compared to those which involve more detail over schemes? Do policy-makers find verbal strategies useful as guiding thinking on detailed policy issues or do they serve more as post-rationalizing statements for decisions which are taken on other grounds? Questions of this nature might require more detailed analysis of particular local authorities and specific decisions.

A study could examine what influences a local authority to review the transport policies it is pursuing. Do changes come about because of analytical findings throwing doubt on the value or need for particular policies or is technical analysis less important than changes in values or personalities in control? Some interesting insights were gained on the issue during discussions with proponents of the Midland Metro light rail project. On three occasions, proponents of the system were asked about their reaction to statements made by critics of the system. On one occasion, the criticisms were dismissed as "wrong", whilst on another the critic was dismissed as an

"academic lightweight" who could not influence the direction of policy! Again, detailed, qualitative research of particular policy issues could yield a great deal of insight into these matters.

Finally, there appears to be justification for analysing the role of forecasts in policy-making. Like more general analysis, forecasts are rarely neutral in their implications and this therefore raises questions about how they are used and indeed why they are made. For instance, are some forecasts deliberately produced to further the case of a particular partisan? Is the primary function of a forecast as an advocacy tool or do they serve other functions such as enlightening tools? How do opponents of a particular policy treat the forecasts used by that policy's promoter? Again, some insight into these issues could be gained by undertaking detailed analysis of the role particular forecasts have played in policy-making and interviewing those who were involved in their generating them, disseminating them, or contesting them.

APPENDIX A

Shaping of the research topic

The theme of the research was originally encapsulated in the title, given to the researcher in October 1991, which was:

> "To investigate the potential for the development of an integrated transport policy in urban areas."

From the outset there was an understanding that whilst this outlined the broad theme to be explored, the precise title and research questions, might be subject to change. It is perhaps useful here to explain the policy context for the research. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw concern grow about urban transport problems and the way in which urban transport policy was administered. Organizations with an interest in transport policy produced numerous reports seeking to offer solutions to the present problems[1]; on the whole these contained a number of common themes - more money for urban transport[2], a "better balance" of expenditure between highways and public transport[3], a level playing field for grant assessment of different transport modes[4], co-ordination or integration of transport policy[5] - both across modes and with land-use, more local authority control over transport expenditure[6], and the likely need in the future for some form of restraint on the motor car in congested areas[7].

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[1] See for instance: Association of County Councils (ACC) (1991) "Towards a Sustainable Transport Policy", Association of District Councils (ADC) (1990) "UK Transport: A Balanced Approach", Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) (1990) "Changing Gear", Friends of the Earth (FoE) (1987) "Getting There", Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) (1989) "Congestion", Royal Automobile Club (RAC) (1992) "Cars and Cities", Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) (1989) "Transport Planning in a New Era", Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University, (TSU) (1991) "Transport: the New Realism".

[2] AMA ibid, ACC ibid.

[3] AMA ibid, ADC ibid.

[4] AMA, RTPI, ACC, ADC ibid.

[5] AMA, ACC, ADC, ICE, RAC, and RTPI ibid.

[6] AMA, ACC, ADC, ICE ibid.

[7] ICE, ACC ibid.

Furthermore, a number of local authorities had recently completed - or were in the process of undertaking - what were commonly called 'Integrated Transport Studies', designed to produce long term transport strategies for their areas.

The initial months of the research were spent working through the policy documents and reading summary reports of a number of 'Integrated Transport Studies'. Given the researcher's initial conceptualization of the role of academic research in policy-making, and interpretation of the research brief, these initial lines of inquiry raised a series of questions for investigation which embodied the problem-solving model of research design. Areas of interest included considering whether there was an ideal form of organizational structure for urban transport policy-making, whether road pricing could be made more publicly acceptable, and whether land-use policies could contribute to solving perceived transport problems.

Between November 1991 and April 1992 meetings were arranged with local government officers from various planning, highways, chief executive and finance departments, and PTEs[8]. The aims of these meetings were to learn more about the policies currently being pursued, and probe in more detail issues which might be worthy of research. Each interview was tape recorded and notes were subsequently made of any of the important points raised.

In the spring of 1992 questionnaires were sent out to all metropolitan district chief executives seeking answers to a set of questions regarding council transport policies and perceived problems with the current legislative framework. The response rate was less than had been anticipated (a third of forms were returned) and many had been completed not by the chief executives, but by officers of different grades in the planning or highway departments. This presented analytical problems, particularly for comparing responses to questions concerned with the respondent's perception.

In learning about current policies the interviews and the questionnaires were invaluable, but in terms of identifying research questions, they were less productive, and they contributed to a growing belief that the research questions to which the work was directed were fundamentally flawed.

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[8] Appendix B lists the officers interviewed.

This belief was strengthened by turning away from transport literature. By reading about research methods and public policy-making, a conceptual model of a research approach which attempted to understand the policy process, rather than provide practical recommendations to policy-makers began to evolve. At the same time awareness of weaknesses in the problem-solving model, particularly for academic research, increased[9].

By early 1992, this reorientation had led to an interest in examining the role played by business in influencing urban transport policies, and in particular the question of traffic restraint policy. Problems with this idea began to emerge, however, when it was suggested by a colleague of Phil Swann - the AMA's supervisor of this research - that perhaps business was not directly influential and that the research might not discover anything of interest.

It was the summer of 1992 when the decision was made to focus attention on the contribution of 'Integrated Transport Studies' to policy-making. There were a number of attractions to this focus. First of all, the strategies which the studies tended to produce seemed to capture many of the arguments which were currently in vogue and were therefore broadly in line with the original research question. Secondly, the studies were generating considerable interest amongst transport professionals. Thirdly, it allowed questions to be asked about the process of policy-making which, through a literature search, had become of particular interest to the researcher. Finally, there seemed to be a good deal of agreement about what an 'Integrated Transport Study' was. The same could not be said for the term "integrated transport policy" which, it became clear from interviews, was a vague term which meant different things to different people.

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[9] See chapter 3, section 3.3.

APPENDIX B

People interviewed during the conduct of the research

In the first year of the PhD, general discussions about urban transport policy were held with:

Cllr Phil Bateman	Chair, West Midlands PTA
Keith Gardner	Assistant Chief Planner, London Planning Advisory Committee
Chris Haynes	Divisional Engineer, Birmingham City Council
Andrew Holmes	Transportation Department, Lothian Regional Council
David Howard	Director General, Tyne and Wear PTE
Bob Hughes	Chief Executive, Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Norman James	Merseytravel
Colin Jeynes	Chief Executive, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Russel Kilvington	Director, Steer Davies Gleave
Tom Magrath	Corporate Planning Manager, West Midlands PTE
Sinclair McLeod	City Engineer, Manchester City Council
Steve Morey	Finance Department, Birmingham City Council
Rob Mason	Transport planner, Liverpool City Council
Roger Pickup	Rail Services Manager, West Yorkshire PTE
Adrian Pope	City Engineer's Department, Leeds City Council
Tony Shelton	Leeds Initiative, Leeds City Council
Nick Vaughan	Transport planner, Greater Manchester PTE
Tony Young	Engineer, Greater Manchester PTE
Andrew Wild	Planning Department, Sheffield City Council

In conducting the Birmingham field research the following people were interviewed:

Association of Metropolitan Authorities

Phil Swann	Transport policy officer

Birmingham City Council

John Bird	Project manager, Planning and Architecture Department
Neville Borg	City Engineer, 1963-1974
Roger Boulter	Cycling officer
Trevor Errington	Policy team leader, Transport Planning Division
Chris Haynes	Divisional Engineer, Transport Planning Division
Doug Hyde	Studies team leader, Transport Planning Division
Nick Partridge	Head of Strategic Planning and Research in the Central Executive's Department.
Derek Rawson	City Engineer, 1984-1993
Graham Shaylor	City Planning Officer 1974-1986, Director of Development and Assistant Chief Executive 1986-1990.
Mike Taylor	Principal Planning Officer, Planning and Architecture Department
Roger Taylor	Chief Executive 1988-1994

Alan Wenban-Smith	Assistant director of Planning and Architecture
Cllr Eve Brook	Labour (Moseley), Chair of Social Services committee
Cllr Fred Chapman	Labour (Shard End), Chair of Planning committee 1984-1989, Chair of Joint Strategy sub-committee 1991-1993/4
Cllr Andrew Howells	Labour (Moseley), Chair of Education committee 1993-
Cllr Sir Richard Knowles	Labour (Sparkbrook) Council Leader 1984-1993
Cllr Steve McCabe	Labour (Brandwood), Chair of Technical Services committee 1993-

Department of Transport

Peter Langley	Network Management Department, West Midlands Regional Office
Liz Gilliard	Local Transport Policy Division

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

John Eastwood	Borough Engineer

Members of Parliament

Terry Davis	MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill

The MVA Consultancy

Doug Jones	BITS project manager
Professor Tony May	Director

Pressure groups and individuals

Tony Bradley	Home Policy Division, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Ian Cuthbert	Former campaigner with Birmingham for People
Paul Everitt	British Road Federation
Andrew Hawes	Home Policy Division, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Linda Jones	Chair of Birmingham United against the Motorway Plans (BUMP)
Anne Lee	Chair of the A34 Action Group
John Newson	Campaigner, Birmingham for People
Barry Simpson	Civil Engineering department, Aston University

West Midlands Planning and Transportation Committee

Rod Pitham	Secretary, and assistant chief executive Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

West Midlands PTE

Paul Addenbrooke	Retired senior officer

Ian Hobbs	Engineer, member of BITS working party
James Isaac	Director General 1977-1986, then Chairman and Managing Director of West Midlands Travel Ltd 1986-1990, Chairman and Chief Executive 1990-1992, Chairman 1992-1994
Danny Lamb	Member of the rapid transit team
Tom Magrath	Corporate planning manager

West Midlands PTA

Cllr Phil Bateman	Labour (Wolverhampton MBC) Chair of West Midlands PTA 1987-1992, advisor to West Midlands Travel 1993
Cllr Don Lewis	Conservative (Selly Oak) opposition spokesman

Former West Midlands County Council councillors

Cllr Phil Bateman	Labour 1981-1986, Chair of Public Transport Committee 1982-1986
Cllr David Sparks	Labour 1977-1986, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee 1981-1986

Former West Midlands County Council officers

Stuart Mustow	County Surveyor 1974-1986
Alfred Wood	County Planner 1974-1985

In conducting the Leeds field research the following people were interviewed:

Leeds City Council

Ed Anderson	Executive Director of Development
Bill Cotton	City Engineer, 1990-1994
Adrian Pope	Senior officer, City Engineers Department
Cllr Jon Trickett	Labour (Beeston) Council Leader 1991-
Cllr Brian Walker	Labour (Rothwell) Chair of Development Services

Steer Davies Gleave

Jim Steer	Director

West Yorkshire PTE

Roger Pickup	Deputy Director General

Yorkshire Rider

Dr Bob Tebb	Group Development Manager

APPENDIX C

Components of the five main strategies tested in BITS

BITS do-minimum strategy:

Highway infrastructure

- Middle Ring Road improvements costing £27m at Icknield Street, Spring Hill, Coventry Road and Camp Hill.
- Improvements to the Heartlands/Tyseley networks costing £2.5m.
- Improvements to A41 Warwick Road costing £2.5m and the A435 Alcester Road South costing £1.0m.
- The M40 costing £300m+.

Rail infrastructure

- Replacement investment, modifications to Proofhouse junction, Channel Tunnel

Air infrastructure

- New pier for British Airways, improvements to apron and baggage facilities.

Strategy 10 Private Transport Infrastructure

Highways

- Northern Relief Road (£200m)
- Western Orbital Road (£200m)
- Improvements to the Middle Ring Road costing 14.5m at Key Hill Link, New John Street and Lawley Street.
- Industrial access roads costing £18m at Tyseley and Heartlands.
- Radial road improvements:
  - Bournbrook Bypass (£16m)
  - Northfield Bypass (£9m)
  - Dualling of Hagley Road (£18m)
  - Dualling of Dudley Road (£16m)
  - Three junctions with Outer Ring Road (£6m)
  - Inner Relief Road for Sutton Coldfield (£6m)
  - Heartlands Spine Road (£74m)
  - A435-M40 Link Road (£93m)
  - Acocks Green Bypass (£15m)
  - Highgate Road - Middle Ring Road (£38m)
- Outer Ring Road improvements (£12m)
- Other schemes totalling £75m in cost
- Expanded parking supply of 6000 spaces (£54m)
- Environmental improvement schemes (£2.5m pa)

Highway management

- Highway management costing £11m

Bus/Rail infrastructure

Railway rolling stock improvements costing £34m

Strategy 20 Combined public transport

Highway infrastructure

- Middle Ring Road improvements costing £14.5m
- Northern Relief Road costing £200m
- Western Orbital Road costing £200m
- Industrial access roads in Tyseley and Heartlands costing £18m

Highway management

- Highway management measures costing £11m
- Major bus priorities on Stratford Road (£1m), Moseley Road (£1m), Hagley Road (£1m), Bristol Road (£1m), Coventry Road (£1m) and Soho Road (£1m).

Bus/Rail infrastructure

- Rolling stock improvements costing £34m
- New stations and track restorations costing £13m on cross city rail routes.
- Electrification £37m

Light Rail (costs relate to sections of line in Birmingham only)

- Birmingham city centre via low level line to Wolverhampton (£18.0m)
- Birmingham city centre via Heartlands to Castle Vale and Chelmsley Wood (£49.4m)
- Birmingham city centre via Coventry Road to Chelmsley Wood via NEC (£52.1m)

Also park-and-ride (£1.7m), new stations, bus and rail frequency increases, bus route density increases.

Strategy 21 Public Transport (LRT) approach

Highway infrastructure

- Middle Ring Road improvements costing £14.5m
- Northern Relief Road costing £200m
- Western Orbital Road costing £200m
- Industrial access roads in Tyseley and Heartlands costing £18m

Highway management

- Highway management measures costing £11m

Bus/Rail infrastructure

- Rolling stock improvements costing £34m

Light rail (costs relate to sections of line in Birmingham only)

- Birmingham city centre via Walsall Road and Kingstanding Road to Scott Arms and Bakers Lane (£67.9m)
- Birmingham city centre via Heartlands to Castle Vale and Chelmsley Wood (£49.4m)
- Birmingham city centre via Coventry Road to Chelmsley Wood via NEC (£52.1m)
- Birmingham city centre via Shirley rail line and Stratford Road to Earlswood and Monkspath (£56.9m)
- Birmingham city centre via Alcester Road to the Maybole (Druids Heath) (£40.1m)
- Birmingham city centre via Bristol Road and Quinton Road to Rednal, Rubery and Clapgate Lane (£78.3m)
- Birmingham city centre via Hagley Road to Quinton (£66.9m)
- Birmingham city centre via low level line to Wolverhampton (£21.9m)
- City centre tunnel network (£140m)

Park-and-ride costing £1.7m

Strategy 30 Pricing and Management

Highway infrastructure

- Middle Ring Road improvements costing £14.5m
- Improvements to eight Middle Ring Road junctions costing £45m
- Northern Relief Road costing £200m
- Western Orbital Road costing £200m
- Industrial access roads serving Tyseley and Heartlands (£18m)
- Highway environmental improvements (£50m)

Highway management

Measures costing £61m including downgrading inner ring road, road pricing, route guidance.

Bus/Rail infrastructure

Rolling stock improvements costing £14m and improved central bus interchange costing £30m.

Strategy 40: The initial preferred strategy

Highway infrastructure

- Middle Ring Road improvements costing £14.5m
- Improvements to eight Middle Ring Road junctions costing £45m
- Northern Relief Road costing £200m
- Western Orbital Road costing £200m
- A435-M40 link road costing £93m
- Acocks Green bypass costing £15m
- Highgate Road to Middle Ring Road costing £38m
- A4040/A41 dualling costing £2m
- Hagley Road dualling costing £18m
- Three junction improvements costing £6m

n.b. no mention of Heartlands Spine Road though it was included in final preferred strategy.

Highway management

- Highway management measures costing £30m
- Downgrading of the Inner Ring Road costing £25m
- Pedestrianisation costing £10m
- Other environmental improvements costing £1-5m pa
- Road pricing

Rail infrastructure

- Rolling stock improvements costing £20m

Light rail (costs relate to sections of line in Birmingham only)

- Birmingham city centre to Chelmsley Wood and Airport (£52.1m)
- Birmingham city centre via Hagley Road to Quinton (£66.9m)
- Birmingham city centre via low level line to Wolverhampton (£21.9m)
- Birmingham city centre via Shirley rail line and Stratford Road to Earlswood and Monkspath (£56.9m)
- Birmingham city centre to Walsall via Walsall Road and Kingstanding Road (no price given)
- Birmingham city centre to Rednall via Bristol Road and Quinton Road (£78.3m)
- City centre tunnel network costing £100m

Park-and-ride costing £1.7m

APPENDIX D

Detailed and short/medium term recommendations from BITS

The following summarises the consultants recommendations and the clients recommended response to them made by Birmingham City Council officers. All the advice was approved at the meeting of the Joint Strategy-Sub Committee on 29/6/89.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
1. Middle and Inner Ring Roads	
a) Upgrade MRR as part of a package	Accept: determine improvements to existing design/scale through local model work, and priority/programme through TPP.
b) Link of St Chad's and Paradise Circus underpasses - but review before commitment: high cost.	Accept: plus need to relate to property development to north of Inner Ring Road.
c) Link of Lancaster Street/ Masshouse underpasses not supported; also query Lancaster Street improvement.	Accept in part: Agree underpasses should not be linked. Instead, abandonment of Masshouse underpass should be considered. Review in context of traffic model results and Metro option chosen. Lancaster St improvement to proceed in the meantime.
d) IRR should be used mainly for short trips.	Accept: as applies to surface sectors of IRR; basis for evaluation of MRR/IRR schemes. Tunnel section of A38 IRR not affected - this can continue to take through traffic.
e) Signing to encourage access to central area sectors via MRR.	Accept: to be considered in model.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
f) Central area should be arranged as traffic "cells", with access from loops off IRR, and through traffic prevented.	Not accepted - "through traffic" should be induced away from the core by more attractive peripheral routes (eg.MRR). - 'loops' can make accessibility between one part of the city centre and another less direct/legible, in conflict with city aims - and can actually generate additional traffic. - In general, while major through flows should be prevented, careful physical design and selective traffic management should be used to achieve a compromise between access and environment (in accordance with Hilderbrandt principles) rather than "all or nothing", implied by strict application of cell/loop.
g) There us a case for retaining a link for general access traffic from Lower New Street to St Martin's Circus.	Not accepted: a great deal of care has been taken to ensure that the confluence of lower New Street will provide a completely pedestrianised entrance to the redeveloped Bull Ring - it is one of the design cornerstones of the scheme which the City (and Hilderbrandt) has urged. However a new link road from Stephenson Street to St Martin's Circus (Hilderbrandt proposal) would be supported - although its achievement is likely to be dependant upon private redevelopment schemes.
h) A traffic model should be constructed to provide further evidence for some of these works.	Accepted: in relation to City Centre Planning and Technical Services Committee have already agreed to proceed.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	***RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION***
2. Road construction	
General function of new radials is to distribute access to motorway box, environmental benefits, and (where required) access to MRR.	All of these recommendations are accepted (except where stated): to be followed through to UDP in terms of identifying corridors/criteria for improvement, and successive TPPs for programming of expenditure.
a) The main areas likely to benefit are north west inner city, and western and south east approaches to the city: specific schemes would be evaluated using the West Midlands model.	Further work using both MVA strategic and Joint Data Team Regional Traffic model will be necessary to design and evaluate projects in the context of the recommended strategy.
b) Some improvements in the South East corridor are needed whatever the level of traffic generated by the M40: - objectives of improving accessibility and environmental relief in the corridor are best served by lower grade improvements to A41 and A435 corridors rather than providing a new route to the city centre; access to Tyseley is an important consideration. - if full use is made of the already planned improvements to A41, the A435 improvements can focus on accessibility within the corridor, thus reducing the scale of improvement needed to Kings Heath.	No comments offered.
c) Signing and environmental management measures will be important to complement road construction and should be tested through the model.	Accept: implement as additional space becomes available.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
General function of "spine roads" for regeneration areas is as support to area, rather than channel for through traffic.	
d) Road improvement for Heartlands should be based upon the need to attract investment to the area, and as alternative to A38, rather than as a route through Birmingham.	Accept: schemes are being designed on this basis, and will follow through into 1989 TPP bid.
e) Trunking of Spine and Hagley Road should be on basis of providing trunk road access to city centre.	Accept: take up with DOT.
f) Design to discourage through use could reduce initial costs of Spine Road.	Accept partly: the appropriate design standard is critically dependent upon generating investor confidence. Local traffic model suggests 20% through traffic attracted at currently proposed scale, which would not counter-balance expected benefit. Follow through to UDP and TPP.
g) Economic regenerating effect of the roads proposed will depend on their alignment and integration with planning, land use and environmental policies.	Accept: to be followed through in detailed design, and local planning framework for Heartlands.
h) Urban design of new roads will be important, and should focus an input on built form, avoidance of severance and contribution to development.	Accept: could add "proper integration with the area through which it passes". For action by Heartlands.
3. Traffic management	
a) It will be appropriate to review the potential of Urban Traffic Control strategies, including increased use of signals for management of congested roundabouts.	Accept: UTC is in 1989/90 programme; examine scope for increased use of traffic signals linked through UTC.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
b) A detailed review of parking policy in the wider city centre would be desirable to ensure that efficient use is being made of all existing sites before new provision is made, and that such provision matches demand in each of the 'cells' of the area.	Accept in part: Although the cell concept is not accepted (see 1(c)), the broad matching of supply and demand at the local level of the wider city centre is. Take into account in current review of city centre movement/parking.
c) A signing strategy within the city should be developed , including new principal destinations, like Heartlands and ICC, and reflecting revised roles of routes like the A41 and IRR.	Accept: action as above.
d) The City Council should consider offering Birmingham as a testbed for one or more of the current applications of information technology.	Accept: open discussions with DOT; include in 1989 TPP.
4. Bus priority measures	
a) Study bus priorities in corridors such as A435, not served by light rail. Consider comprehensive application of with-flow bus lanes, and complementary environmental management.	Accept: discussions with PTE have begun on A435 and A34. Extend to further routes.
b) Bus access to the city centre should not be unduly constrained in the interests of the environment, since this could simply encourage increased car use. Specific consideration for corridors not served by rail.	Accept: include in city centre traffic management/environmental improvement/Metro study.
5. Environmental management	
a) Demonstration projects should be developed for environmental management in residential areas.	Accept: to be considered as component of local planning studies in current Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and Estate Action projects; wider network capacity consequences to be subject of a citywide policy review, leading to proposals for 1990 TPP.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
b) Any resulting loss of road network capacity should be regained by improved traffic management on principal roads.	Accept: review in 1990 TPP.
c) Sites should be identified for the application of traffic calming measures on main roads.	Accept: consult with road user bodies and emergency services. Review in 1990 TPP.
6. Car use controls	
a) A policy of car use control in the wider city centre peak would reduce car traffic by about 10%, and could generate funds for capital investment programme.	(a-f) Further consideration required: such measures are unnecessary in the medium term. In the longer term they could only be supported should other measures fail and the feasibility/practicability be demonstrated elsewhere.
b) Such a policy does not have to be pursued in the immediate future, it could be adopted late if necessary.	
c) Such controls would be best implemented initially within the IRR.	
d) Comprehensive parking control would be one possible means of implementation, but would require legislation.	
e) Delay and permit based controls of moving traffic are not recommended.	
f) Fiscal control on moving traffic is the most flexible means of control and could be possible in the 1990s.	
7. Rail improvements	
a) Develop combined heavy rail and LRT strategy.	Accept: consult with PTA; include in UDP.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
b) LRT preferable for local access - should consider Lichfield, Dorridge, Shirley, Longbridge services for conversion to LRT in long term (though electrification of cross city line committed).	Accept partly: timescales for LRT make it essential that vital improvements to BR local services are not foregone in the meantime, longer run conversion options are not closed by such an approach.
c) BR services should be maintained/improved to Walsall, Coventry, Wolverhampton and Stourbridge.	Accept: support implementation by PTA.
d) New LRT alignments should be developed to Kingstanding, NEC via Chelmsley Wood, Weoley, Quinton, and Wolverhampton (Low Level).	Accept in principle: further work is needed to ensure that practicable and viable routes can be developed. Include principle in UDP.
e) No case for orbital rail services.	Accept
f) Detailed alignments/evaluation should be assessed on basis of VIPS or WM model.	Accept in part: consider these modelling approaches complementary - both required.
g) New alignments should be subject to detailed urban design focusing on relationship to built/pedestrian environment.	Accept: requires integrated design team to be established as early as possible in route development.
8. City centre rail improvements	
a) Dorridge/N.Warwickshire lines should be linked to Wolverhampton/ Kingstanding lines.	(a-f) Further consideration: these proposals provide a starting point for detailed analysis, which is required before a firm strategy is adopted.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
b) Good interchange required in city centre including LRT link Snow Hill/New Street.	
c) NEC line should link to Weoley/ Quinton.	
d) In longer term electrified cross-city line could be diverted via Star site.	
e) LRT stations should be spaced across city centre.	
f) Direct BR link ICC/NEC could be provided by station as ICC, if sufficient track capacity.	
9. Public transport service levels/ integration/fares policy	
a) Radial bus services will reduce: replacement by rail services should limit patronage decline.	(a-d) Note: these are in the nature of findings rather than policy proposals
b) LRT frequencies upto 12/hr should be feasible (subject to capacity of common route sections).	
c) BR frequency increases of 20% in peak should be feasible (except to Coventry/Wolverhampton).	
d) Premium LRT fare likely to be self-defeating - will reduce ridership and non-user benefits.	
e) Counter integration effects and costs of 1985 Transport Act require further study.	Accept: request PTA to consider economic evaluation.
f) Strategic park-and-ride should be considered at Perry Barr, M6 (Junction 5), Widney Manor, Earlswood, Longbridge and Quinton (relate to city centre parking policy).	Accept: though consider further other locations most likely to be attractive. Carry out studies in conjunction with PTA.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
g) Consider local park-and-ride in areas of high car ownership/low bus penetration.	Accept: specific studies in conjunction with PTA.
h) Fare increase need to be considered in the context of congestion costs that result.	Accept: but ability to affect fares is limited to local rail, and then subject to PTA financial constraints.
Regional/national infrastructure	
10. Regional highway network	
a) City should support Birmingham Northern Relief Road and Western Orbital Road for the relief provided to M6 and opportunity for enhanced access to A38(M) and Heartlands, and on assumption that they represent value for money compared with alternatives.	a) Accept: need to press DOT for development of schemes for increasing local role of the M6 as soon as Birmingham Northern Relief Road available, and to argue against identification of it as a toll road, since this would run counter (as well as causing delay).
11. BR passenger services	
a) New Street station will continue to be the key hub: interchange opportunities should be exploited to the maximum, and high quality facilities encouraged.	Accept: current city centre local planning/environmental/traffic management/metro planning should reflect this key principle. Continue talks with BR designed to enhance facilities.
b) Capacity problems exist on New Street/ Coventry main line, not easily overcome by track changes, Opportunities for train size increase and diversion of non-passenger traffic should be explored.	Accept: pursue with BR and PTA.
c) Channel Tunnel: should press for at least some through services from start, to establish market base, plus easy interchange Euston/Kings Cross. Both Travelator and main line links should be encouraged.Accept: this is being pursued both through Section 40 Forum, and joint local authority associations. These steps should be endorsed, and support of MP's canvassed.	

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
12. BR freight services	
a) Private siding grant criteria should be widened to include environmental impact of lorries.	Accept: as 11(c) above.
b) Customs facilities post 1992 should be streamlined, and located at rail heads.	Accept: as above.
c) Bescot should be a major intermodal terminal for direct freightliner operations on a Trans-European network.	Accept: this is being pursued with other West Midlands districts, and as above.
d) To resolve freight/passenger conflicts a separate electrified route round London is needed (eg. Redhill/Reading/Leamington/ Birmingham). Operation via Solihull/ Sutton Park/Bescot would relieve New Street.	(d) and (e) accept: problems exist of freight/passenger conflict and of through freight loading gauge. Pursue as 11(c) above.
e) A Berne (the major European standard loading gauge) route from the Channel Tunnel should be pursued as a long term option. The route above is a suitable candidate.	
13. Birmingham International Airport	
a) The City Council should encourage balanced and sustained growth through the British Airways hub, leading to increased and direct short-haul services.	(a-f) accept: these issues no need to be taken up through the Airport Board, in consultation with Solihull and the other interests represented/involved.
b) Gateway status should be sought from Government to allow development of direct long-haul services.	
c) The airport should be linked by LRT to other major generators (Heartlands, city centre, ICC).	

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: NEXT ACTION
d) A45 link should be improved in the short term.	
e) A dedicated link to the M42 should be provided in long term.	
f) Constraints of road access and land for car parking should be tackled.	

APPENDIX E

Measures contained in the adopted Leeds Transport Strategy

Short term 1991-93	Medium term 1994-1999	Long term 2000/2010
Traffic management and highway schemes		
Major road schemes: * Drighlington bypass (DOT) Road * Inner Ring Road Stage 5 * Hunslet Road improvement * A1 improvements (DOT) * Review major highways programme (including Kirkstall Valley route)	* Inner Ring Road stages 6 & 7 * Thwaite Gate link * M1/A1 link & A1 improvements (DOT) * East Leeds Radial * Seacroft bypass (DOT) * A63 Selby Road improvements * Start of Outer Ring Road improvements (DOT/LCC) * M621-M1 link (DOT)	* Outer Ring improvements continued (DOT/LCC) *M62-M1 link (DOT)
Highway maintenance: * Enhanced road maintenance and street lighting programme (commencement) * New bridge assessment and treatment programme - inventory of highway conditions		
Traffic calming and management		
First cycle route(s) A642/A656 lorry ban Expanded road safety programme Expanded programme of crossings for disabled people Pedestrianisation of Queen Street, Morley Further residents parking schemes Review parking policies and standards Breakdown service	Further traffic calming measures Possible traffic calming/ pedestrianisation schemes of town and district centres Lorry bans associated with major road schemes Extension and upgrading of Urban Traffic Control system Further residents' parking schemes as required	

Short term 1991-1993	Medium term 1994-1999	Long term 2000/2010
Corridor and sector studies of local traffic and public transport problems		
Residential traffic calming schemes		
City centre schemes		
Refurbishment of pedestrian precinct	Pedestrianisation of Briggate (subject to traffic issues being resolved)	Further initiatives as opportunities arise
Pavements and lighting programme		
Car parks information scheme (Phase 1)	City Square improvement scheme	
Improvements to Woodhouse Lane multi-storey car park	New short stay public car parking	
Boar Lane new car park	Car park information scheme (Phase II)	
Preparation of policy for parking for disabled drivers	City centre cycle routes	
City centre transport studies		
Bus schemes		
Guided bus - experimental route	New Central Bus station	Upgrade ticket and information systems
Bus shelter programme	Replacement and upgrading of ticket machines	Bus-rail co-ordination measures
Better information systems		
Central bus station - interim improvements	Bus priority schemes	Bus shelter programme
Preparation of scheme for new central bus station	Guided bus schemes	Bus replacement programme

Short term 1991-1993	Medium term 1994-1999	Long term 2000/2010
Bus replacement programme	Bus shelter programme	
	Improve bus co-ordination facilities in local centres	
	Better information systems	
	Bus replacement programme	
Rail schemes (some projects partially funded by BR)		
New electric units for Leeds - Doncaster service	Leeds/Bradford NW resignalling	East Leeds track & signalling improvements
New class 158 diesel units to improve quality and capacity	Leeds/Bradford/Skipton Ilkley electrification	New stations east of Leeds - possible sites: *Osmondthorpe * Halton Dial * Seacroft Hospital * Scholes/Stanks * M1/A1 link Seacroft by-pass jctn
New stations: potential sites * Hawksworth/Armley	Leeds west end track & signalling (capacity) improvements	
Improvements to existing stations * platform raising * car parking * disabled access * refurbishment	City station improvement scheme	
	East Leeds central area station	New stations on other lines, if feasible.
Preparation of scheme for improving City Station	New electric rolling stock	New rolling stock
	New stations (normally with park-and-ride) including: * White Rose (if development proceeds) * Kirkstall * Calverley * Elland Road (in association with development)	New rail spurs and links

Short term 1991-1993	Medium term 1994-1999	Long term 2000/2010
	Extended car parking at other stations	
	Continued station improvements	

LRT Schemes (timetable subject to change due to changes in Government Private Bill procedure and funding resources)

South Leeds line 1: * Bill preparation * Parliamentary process * Funding	South Leeds line construction	Line 3 construction Line 4 construction
Line 2: * Bill preparation	Line 2: * Bill preparation * Parliamentary process * Construction	
	Lines 3/4: * Bill preparation * Parliamentary process * Funding	

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