

Rethinking local transport powers: a more balanced approach?

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KEY FINDINGS

by **Professor Francis Davis**,
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Overview of the Webinar

- ❖ Key findings on the imbalances of decision-making power in transport

(Funding / Differing priorities and inconsistent messaging / Capacity and capability / Disconnected approach to resilience)

- ❖ Recommendations

- ❖ Feedback Session

Take Home Message:

Recommendations

- Long-term funding and flexibility
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Capacity building and coordination
- Infrastructure investment and market shaping
- Clear and consistent Government messaging
- Strengthening local powers and authorities

Imbalance of decision-making power in transport:

Funding

- **Key barrier to effective decision-making**
- **Lack of funding certainty & flexibility:** *short-term funding allotments (1 year) prevent LAs from planning and delivering long-term improvements (3-5 years)*
- **Disparity between national & local funding**
- **Fragmented bus funding**
- **Short-term cycles hamper long-term change**
- **Uncertain funding hinders strategic partnerships and project delivery**
- **Competition for grants creates bottlenecks:** *resource management and project delay / urban bias / Grant competition and existing inequalities between LAs*

Imbalance of decision-making power in transport:

Differing priorities and inconsistent messaging

- **LAs struggle to balance national focus**
- **Lack of national support for reducing car dependency**
- **Limited control over infrastructure hinders development** (*rural LAs*)
- **Lack of influence on public transport**
- **Limited provider choice**
- **National delays & mixed messages**

Imbalance of decision-making power in transport:

Capacity and capability

- **Staff shortages** (*difficulty recruiting specialists in transport planning*)
- **Workforce strain** (*high workloads & limited resources*)
- **Burnout risk impacting work quality & efficiency**

Imbalance of decision-making power in transport:

Disconnected approach to resilience and decarbonisation

- **Fragmented funding**
- **Reactive vs. Proactive measures**
- **Mixed messages**
- **Limited local capacity**

Recommendations:

Long-term funding and flexibility

- *Stable multi-year funding to LAs*
- *Less restrictive grants*

Recommendations:

Collaboration and knowledge sharing

- *Collaborative funding models*
- *Streamlined applications*
- *Co-designing policy and interventions*

Recommendations:

Capacity building and coordination

- *Workforce development*
- *Improved inter-governmental coordination*
- *Strengthening district-county working*

Recommendations:

Infrastructure investment and market shaping

- *National investment strategy for local roads*
- *Better market shaping abilities*

Recommendations:

Clear and consistent messaging

- *Refreshed Local Transport Plan (LTP) guidance*
- *Framework for devolution deals*
- *Refreshed Transport Decarbonisation Plan*
- *Funding prospectuses*

Recommendations:

Strengthening local powers and authorities

- *Moving traffic enforcement*
- *Increasing local control over land use and planning decisions*
- *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revision*
- *Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) simplification*
- *Establishing a mechanism for LAs to challenge objections from National Highways on local/regional transport projects*

FEEDBACK SESSION

by Professor Graham Parkhurst,
Director of the Centre for Transport & Society
at UWE Bristol

Thank you